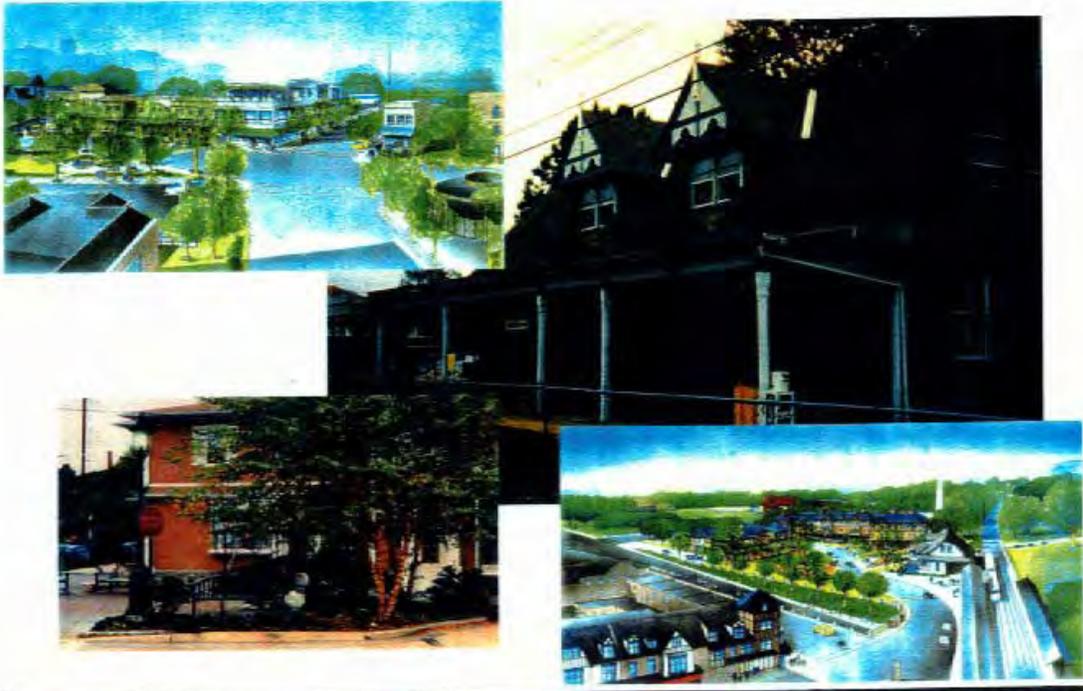


Swarthmore Town Center Revitalization Strategy



Prepared for:

Swarthmore Borough

Prepared by:

Urban Partners

with: **Kise Straw & Kolodner**

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This Swarthmore Town Center Revitalization Strategy is presented to the Swarthmore community by the consultant team and the Town Center Revitalization Strategy Task Force. Task Force members include:

Steward Warner, Co-Convenor	Peg Hebner	Scott Richardson
Andy Wasserman, Co-Convenor	Mary Ann Jeavons	Virginia Sale (1998)
Mark Bristol-Evans	Ezra Krendel	Stewart Spahr (1998)
Maurice Eldridge	Paul Mangelsdorf	Ken Wright
Mary Ferrell	Ruth Rahn	Susan Wright
Gail Gaustad		

The consultant team includes:

Urban Partners: James E. Hartling
Laura Memeger

Kise Straw Kolodner: John Gibbons

The work of the consultants and the Task Force has benefitted greatly from the enthusiastic participation of more than 900 members of the Swarthmore residential and College communities. Important assistance in communicating the Town Center discussions to the broader Swarthmore community was provided by the Information Resource Group and by Gloria Hamilton's internet website efforts. The consultants and Task Force acknowledge and greatly appreciate these supports.

Introduction

Swarthmore Town Center is the traditional commercial district of the Borough of Swarthmore, radiating outward from the SEPTA regional train station along the Chester Road extension and Park, Myers, Dartmouth, and Rutgers Avenues. The Town Center has historically housed a variety of retail, commercial, governmental and residential uses—a characteristic that contributes to the district’s role as a civic center for the Swarthmore community. Established to serve the needs of a compact and pedestrian-oriented borough, the Swarthmore Town Center now exists in a more regionally-oriented marketplace and faces the challenge of maintaining its special village character while asserting an effective role among the many commercial areas that have developed over time around it.

The Borough of Swarthmore has retained Urban Partners and Kise Straw & Kolodner to prepare a Swarthmore Town Center Revitalization Strategy. To oversee the preparation of this strategy, the Borough has formed a Town Center Revitalization Strategy Task Force, which includes representatives of a broad spectrum of Swarthmore’s individual and organizational interests.

The process for preparing this revitalization strategy has involved three phases. The first phase included a thorough analysis of the physical and economic conditions of the Town Center as well as the eliciting of input from the many individuals and organizations with interests in the Town Center area. The consultant team held many focus groups and public meetings and conducted several interest group surveys to identify the concerns and priorities of the community regarding the revitalization process. The consultants conducted extensive interviews with retailers, business and property owners, and others with specific interests in the Town Center to understand their perspectives as well.

The second phase of this process involved the preparation and refinement of the Town Center Revitalization Strategy. This report describes the Final Draft of that strategy as reported to the community by the Town Center Strategy Task Force. It reflects the Task Force’s careful consideration of a variety

of alternatives and the input provided by the community and represents the Task Force’s selection of key approaches and priorities to recommend to Swarthmore Borough Council and the broader community. This Strategy builds on Swarthmore’s current role as a freestanding, pedestrian-oriented village center and includes specific recommendations for public and private actions to stimulate and increase investment and activity in the district.

Once this strategy has been further reviewed by Swarthmore Borough Council, the consultant team will work with the Task Force and Borough Council to elaborate many of the details of implementation of the key strategy elements.

Effective implementation of these 34 strategy elements will require the participation of the Borough, the Swarthmore Business District Authority, Swarthmore College, a variety of other civic and cultural organizations, and many private businesses, developers, and property owners:

- many project activities suggested here will require—and will stimulate—substantial *private investment*. That investment should preserve and rejuvenate key community serving businesses, bring additional vibrant uses to the few currently underutilized properties in the Town Center, and selectively expand the Town Center through limited development of adjacent Swarthmore College property;
- *business and other civic organizations* will have key roles in promoting the Town Center and in programming events there;
- these private and civic efforts will be supported by targeted *public infrastructure investment* in streetscape and public space improvements.

Some of these project elements can be implemented rapidly—many even within the first year—while others may require five to seven years to complete. *These 34 project elements are structured to allow for largely simultaneous implementation: each project will support and reinforce others, but delays in implementation of specific projects will not prevent others from being completed.*

Guiding Principles of the Town Center Strategy

The consultant team received significant input from the Swarthmore community about the Town Center and its desired role as a commercial and civic district. Members of the community were invited to participate in this process through attendance at public meetings and the open meetings of the Town Center Revitalization Task Force. More than 20 focus group sessions were held with numerous civic organizations and interest groups.

Detailed surveys were e-mailed to all Swarthmore College students, faculty and staff requesting information about their use of the Town Center and revitalization concerns. The consultant team also greatly benefitted from a Borough-wide survey conducted by Councilwoman Alice "Putty" Willetts in the Spring of 1998.

Additionally, the consultant team conducted interviews with Town Center merchants, business operators and property owners to garner their views about the strengths, weaknesses and needs of the area.

Through these mechanisms, more than 900 Swarthmore residents; college students, faculty and staff; merchants and property owners have provided input to this Revitalization Strategy. The Swarthmore community is a diverse one and it is not surprising that there are several areas regarding the Town Center about which there is not a common view. However, several issues were raised by numerous participants in most of the public sessions and represent areas of nearly unanimous community agreement. These eight commonly held values, concerns and desires create the guiding principles for the Town Center Revitalization Strategy:

1. Residents overwhelmingly articulated their affection for the small town flavor of Swarthmore and emphasized the importance of maintaining this character. Swarthmoreans enjoy the mix of residential and commercial uses in the Town Center, its pedestrian-friendly village atmosphere, the ease with which pedestrians can access the Town Center from adjacent neighborhoods and the perceived sense of safety within the area.
2. The role of the Swarthmore business district in providing basic services to the community is highly prized by area residents. Critical basic services appreciated by the community include the Swarthmore Co-op, Michael's Pharmacy, Swarthmore Hardware, the Post Office, Borough Hall, the Swarthmore Library and annual civic events held in the area.



The Post Office Is A Prized Community Facility

3. There is wide recognition within the community of the need for some level of cosmetic improvements in the Town Center. Such improvements might include landscaping, lighting, new sidewalks, trash receptacles, benches, etc.



Deteriorated Sidewalks Cause Concern

4. Myers Avenue is considered by the community to be an underutilized parking resource that could possibly provide an important back entrance to the Swarthmore Co-op.
5. Swarthmore residents desire a broader array of community-serving retail services in the Town Center, including a bakery, a soda fountain, an ice cream parlor and a coffee house.
6. A broader selection of restaurants and the addition of other evening-oriented facilities within the Town Center is also desired.

7. Senior housing, located within or near the Town Center—allowing for easy use of the district’s civic and commercial services by residents—would be considered by Swarthmore residents to be a positive improvement to the community.
8. Swarthmore residents support the development of an inn having a restaurant within the Town Center to provide overnight accommodations for visitors to the College and to the community.

The consultants and Task Force members have examined various improvement alternatives aimed at reinforcing these eight key values and concerns. The Revitalization Strategy recommended in this report creates a framework which targets public and private investment to meet these priority community concerns.

Key Issues Affecting Revitalization of the Town Center

The Swarthmore Town Center Revitalization Strategy builds upon existing strengths of the Town Center and strives to alleviate the weaknesses that currently impact the area. The Town Center's chief *strengths* include the following:

1. Unlike other suburban communities in the Philadelphia region, the Swarthmore Town Center is a freestanding village with a unique and very special personality. The Town Center provides basic retail services to the community and is the location of the Borough's key civic facilities and functions. The area is a transportation hub, providing regional access via train, bus, and auto. The community has exhibited a very strong civic interest in supporting the Town Center and its activities.



Swarthmore Train Station

2. Despite its limited number of retail establishments, the Swarthmore Town Center is able to provide a diverse array of goods and acts as a community-serving retail district. The 26 Town Center retail businesses include ten convenience and service businesses which chiefly serve Swarthmore and surrounding communities (the Co-op, pharmacy, hardware store, cleaners, hair salons and barber shop,

etc.), ten shopping goods and other specialty stores (toy store, crafts shops, book store, etc.) and six restaurants.

3. Many of Swarthmore Town Center's retail anchors are longstanding businesses which have established strong support from the local community.
4. The Swarthmore Town Center's few specialty retailers have demonstrated that enterprising and creative entrepreneurs can be successful in attracting destination customers to the area.
5. The Town Center has a very strong residential base. In addition to the several large apartment complexes in and at the periphery of the Town Center, the area contains a large number of apartments located on upper floors of commercial properties. Town Center residents include a diverse mix of Swarthmore College students, professionals, elderly and young families. The area's very low vacancy rates are attributable to the Town Center's attractive, convenient and regionally-accessible location.
6. The Town Center's building stock features many attractive and architecturally significant historic resources.

However, in addition to these numerous strengths, there are *several weaknesses* that currently exist within the Town Center that inhibit its ability to serve as a healthier and more comprehensive commercial center for the Swarthmore community. These include:

1. A serious challenge in maintaining existing retailers and in any further retail expansion is the condition and limited physical size of the Town Center's properties. While niche specialty retailers can operate successfully in the small store spaces currently available in the Town Center, key convenience and

community-serving anchors currently housed in many of these buildings require larger spaces to operate economically. Over time, it is likely that continuing market forces will slowly convert existing smaller commercial space to niche destination retailers or professional offices, diminishing the role of the Town Center in providing basic retail services to the Swarthmore community

2. Many of the key retail anchors in the Swarthmore Town Center providing basic services to the community are being negatively impacted by trends affecting retailers nationally. Most severely affected are the Co-op, pharmacy and hardware store, each of which faces significant competition from larger chain retailers located nearby.



Swarthmore Co-op Needs Major Repairs

3. Several town center storefronts are being used by professional offices. This creates a discontinuity in the district's retail facade and limits ground floor space available for potential retail activities. The lack of suitably-sized office space in the Town Center constrains potential expansion by office users in the area.
4. The Co-op, a key retail anchor of the Town Center (generating approximately 25% of all Town Center sales) is in need of significant reconfiguration and repair to assure its long-term continued viability.

5. The existing base of retailers do not, for the most part, provide relevant merchandise or operate at the late hours necessary to attract a fairly captive Swarthmore College student population. SEPTA commuters are also an uncaptured potential customer base.
6. The Swarthmore area lacks sufficient hotel capacity to accommodate the needs of Swarthmore College and Borough residents. Currently, visitors to the community must stay at facilities at least 15-30 minutes away.
7. The condition of its public infrastructure—deteriorating sidewalks, inadequate lighting, exposed aerial utility lines, sparse street trees and poorly-maintained pedestrian underpasses—diminishes the attractiveness of the Swarthmore Town Center. Public open space and seating areas in the Town Center, though attractive, are greatly limited. Many sidewalks in the Town Center present difficulties for persons with disabilities.
8. Vehicular access to and circulation within the Town Center is complicated, resulting in motorist confusion and the endangerment of pedestrians at certain locations in the district.
9. Parking resources within the Town Center are perceived to be inadequate, due to insufficient management, metering and permitting policies and the psychological inaccessibility of a significant portion of the area's parking supply on Myers Avenue.
10. Town Center commercial properties account for a relatively small portion of the Borough's tax base, requiring residential property to bear a comparatively heavy burden of taxation. This issue is significant in light of recent tax increases for education and the impact of any future tax increases on the community.

The Revitalization Strategy recommended in this report seeks to build on these strengths and rectify these perceived weaknesses within a framework which targets public and private investment to meet these priority community concerns.

Goals and Objectives

Based on the concerns expressed by the community, and the strengths and weaknesses exhibited in the Town Center, the Town Center Revitalization Strategy Task Force identified the following Goals and Objectives Statement. These goals and objectives were carefully considered during the crafting of the Town Center Revitalization Strategy to assure that the strategy selected best articulates the interests of the Swarthmore community.

Goal A: To Protect and Maintain the Neighborhood-Friendly Village Character of the Town Center

Objectives:

- A.1 To maintain the Town Center as an area that is both safe and perceived to be safe to Swarthmore residents of all ages.
- A.2 To improve the condition of sidewalks and lighting in the Town Center so that the district remains accessible to all Swarthmoreans. This includes upgrading sidewalks and ramps so that the Town Center is more accessible to seniors and persons in wheelchairs and strollers and encouraging property owners to make their buildings as accessible as possible.
- A.3 To improve pedestrian accessibility to the Town Center. Currently identified areas of improvement include the upgrading of SEPTA underpasses, providing pedestrian crossings of Chester Road south of the train station and upgrading pedestrian walkways between Rutgers and Park Avenues and between Myers and Dartmouth Avenues.
- A.4 To retain the diverse array of retail, residential, commercial and civic uses in the Town Center.
- A.5 To expand opportunities for Swarthmore residents as they age to remain in the community through the encouragement of appropriate residential opportunities and services.
- A.6 To provide appropriate gathering places for Swarthmore's children and youth within the Town Center.
- A.7 To control the speed and volume of vehicular traffic in and around the Swarthmore Town Center to assure continued and improved pedestrian and bicyclist safety in the district.
- A.8 To expand the available civic facilities in the Town Center through the addition of comfortable and attractive public space, for informal gathering and recreation.
- A.9 To encourage the accessibility of the Town Center to bicyclists by developing connections between the Town Center and regional bikeways and locating bikeracks within the area.
- A.10 To encourage the expansion of activities at the Swarthmore Library to make this civic facility an even greater resource to the community.

Goal B: To Provide as Broad an Array of Basic Retail Services as is Possible within the Town Center

Objectives:

- B.1 To assure the long-term viability of the Swarthmore Co-op.
- B.2 To retain to the maximum extent possible other important community-serving uses in the Town Center, such as the drug store, hardware store, florist, banks, optician, hair salons, dry cleaner, etc.
- B.3 To actively attract additional convenience services that meet needs articulated by the community, e.g., more restaurants, a bakery, an ice cream parlor, a coffee shop, etc.
- B.4 To encourage property owners to make available store spaces which enable basic service businesses to more effectively compete and, therefore, remain as viable services to the community.
- B.5 To address the needs of residents and the college community for overnight accommodations.

Goal C: To Maintain/Increase the Economic Viability of the Town Center

Objectives:

- C.1 To maintain and increase the volume of retail sales in the Town Center through a variety of means, including expansion of off-site sales.
- C.2 To assure an adequate and safe supply of parking within the Town Center to meet the needs of the district's commercial, residential and civic uses.
- C.3 To effectively manage the inventory of publicly-available parking resources to maximize its utility to customers of Town Center retailers.
- C.4 To improve the effectiveness of the train station as an anchor which provides customers to Town Center businesses, contributes to the Town Center's attractiveness as a

residential location and contributes to the real estate values of the community.

- C.5 To improve circulation patterns so that entering, existing and moving around the Town Center in a vehicle is less awkward.
- C.6 To build upon the attractive and historic architecture of much of the Town Center and on prior investment in public spaces by adding streetscape features such as lighting, signage, landscaping and benches and by encouraging appropriate facade improvements by property owners.
- C.7 To investigate the eligibility of the Town Center for national and local historic district designation.
- C.8 To improve signage that defines the district for motorists on Route 320, train station commuters, the Swarthmore College community and others and to enhance people's understanding of the range of opportunities available in the district through placement of street directories, publication of promotional materials, etc.
- C.9 To program commercial and civic events that attract and expand the customer base for Town Center businesses.
- C.10 To maximize the customer draw of Town Center commercial businesses through joint marketing efforts, common business hours.
- C.11 To encourage greater use of the Town Center by Swarthmore residents.
- C.12 To encourage greater use of the Town Center by the Swarthmore College community, including students, prospective students, parents, alumni, faculty, staff and visitors.
- C.13 To encourage the use of ground floor space for retail uses within the Town Center and, to the extent possible, provide appropriately sized and configured office space which does not conflict with the need for ground floor retail uses.

Goal D: To Expand the Tax Base of the Community

Objectives:

- D.1 To maintain and enhance the value of Town Center real estate as a contributor to the overall Swarthmore tax base.
- D.2 To encourage more economical use of underutilized real estate within the Town Center; e.g., properties that are not fully occupied and land not yet effectively developed within its existing allowable zoning.
- D.3 To encourage new development that could significantly increase the Town Center's contribution to the overall Swarthmore tax base, such as an inn or assisted living facility, provided that this development is consistent with other community goals and objectives.

Goal E: To Minimize the Negative Impact of Commercial Development

Objectives:

- E.1 To assure that any future commercial development activity does not intrude into existing residentially-zoned areas.
- E.2 To protect the residential character of adjacent portions of Dartmouth, Park, Rutgers, Lafayette and Cornell Avenues from hazardous traffic flowing to or from the Town Center through effective control of traffic and traffic speed along those streets.
- E.3 To minimize the intrusion of negative impacts of commercial development on the adjacent residential areas, such as noise, trash, odors and other nuisances.
- E.4 To support the viability of adjacent areas by assuring that adequate on-street parking is available to residents via residential parking permits.

- E.5 To assure that any new development takes into account the preservation and maintenance of open green space resources and view corridors.
- E.6 To assure that any new development be consistent in scale and height with existing structures and fit into the established village fabric of the Swarthmore Town Center.
- E.4 To provide appropriate parking resources within the Town Center to meet Town Center demand and prevent negative impacts on surrounding residential areas.

Goal F: To Minimize the Negative Tax Impact of Town Center Improvements on the Citizens of Swarthmore

The Swarthmore Town Center Revitalization Strategy

The Swarthmore Town Center Revitalization Strategy seeks to build on the area's strengths and alleviate its weaknesses. Several alternative strategies were considered by the Town Center Revitalization Strategy Task Force before a preferred strategy was presented to the Swarthmore community at several public forums. That strategy has been refined to reflect the concerns and additional recommendations of community participants.

This recommended strategy identifies 34 key project elements (see **Map 1**) organized into the following six major areas, each of which will contribute to the realization of the Town Center Revitalization Strategy:

- A. Improve Appearance and Circulation in the Current Town Center
- B. Promote New Development Activity in the Current Town Center
- C. Strengthen Business Activity in the Current Town Center
- D. Protect Residential Areas Adjacent to the Town Center
- E. Promote College/Town Center Development West of S. Chester Road
- F. Encourage an Intergenerational Town Center

A. Improve Appearance and Circulation in the Current Town Center

One major theme of the Swarthmore Town Center Revitalization Strategy is the improvement of physical conditions, appearance and circulation patterns within the Town Center. The twelve such improvements recommended here will make the Town Center a safer and more attractive location for retailing, commercial, civic and residential activities.

1. Streetscape Improvements

Streetscape improvements, as recommended by the Swarthmore Business District Authority, should be undertaken within the Swarthmore Town Center. Recommended improvements include:

- reconstruction of sidewalks
- upgrading of existing lighting and installation of decorative lighting on Town Center sidewalks and public open spaces
- addition of street trees where missing along Town Center thoroughfares
- addition of special crosswalk paving
- widening sidewalks on the unit block of Park Ave. and reconfiguring parking from one-side angle parking to two-side parallel parking
- landscaping of Myers Avenue.

If sufficient funding is available at the same time as other improvements, the unsightly aerial utility lines on Park and Dartmouth Ave. could also be relocated underground.



**Wider Sidewalks And Two-Side Parking
Proposed For Park Avenue**

2. Improved Property Accessibility

Property owners within the Town Center should be encouraged to make their buildings as physically accessible as possible. This will help attract elderly residents, residents with physical disabilities and residents with young children in strollers to the Town Center area.

3. Princeton Ave. Underpass

The existing pedestrian underpass at Princeton Ave. is deteriorated and unattractive and provides poor access. This underpass should be upgraded to improve lighting, ventilation and accessibility.

4. New Pedestrian Walkways

The Town Center's mid-block walkways between Rutgers and Park Aves. and between Park Ave. and S. Chester Road should be upgraded. Currently, these walkways are difficult to find and follow and are poorly lighted. Improvement of these connections would enhance pedestrian linkages between parking and the Town Center core and support future alley retail and office uses.

5. Rutgers Avenue/S. Chester Road Safety Improvements

The Rutgers Avenue/S. Chester Road intersection is hazardous for both motorists and pedestrians. A new traffic light and reconfigured cartways, curbs, and walkways would help improve pedestrian accessibility to the Town Center and better regulate the flow of automobile traffic along S. Chester Road. A traffic engineering study should be conducted to verify the need for this improvement.

6. Lafayette Avenue Extension

Lafayette Ave. should be extended from Dartmouth to Myers to improve traffic circulation within the Town Center, to support the reconstruction of the Co-op, and to make more accessible the significant parking resources located along Myers Ave.



Extension of Lafayette Avenue To Myers

7. Signage Improvements

The Town Center's current lack of directional signage, together with its awkward location off S. Chester Road, makes it difficult and hazardous for visitors arriving by car, foot or train, to reach the area. Clear new signage should be added at entrances to the Town Center to identify the area to motorists on S. Chester Road, SEPTA commuters and the Swarthmore College community. New parking identification signage should also be provided to direct motorists within the district. As part of these improvements, a business directory listing the names and locations of Town Center businesses and civic facilities should be installed at the Train Station to alert commuters to the district's retail offerings. This directory could also provide information about upcoming special events, festivals and promotions in the Town Center.

8. Train Station Improvements

The Swarthmore Train Station is a historic resource that serves as a focal point of the Town Center. Improvements including the re-creation of an historically-appropriate canopy and forecourt enhancements should be made to exploit this architectural asset.

9. Bicycle Connections

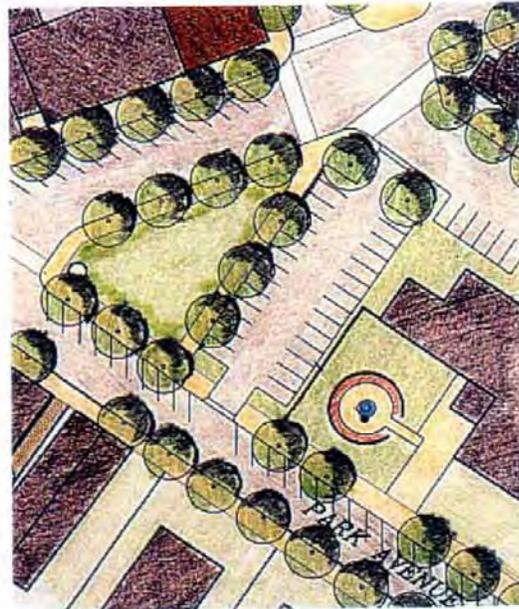
Bicycling to and within the Town Center is a favored means of transportation by Swarthmore residents. To encourage further bicyclist usage of the Town Center, connections should be developed between the Town Center and other regional bikeways. Additional bike racks should be located within the Town Center to provide secure parking alternatives to bicyclists patronizing the area.

10. Public Parking Management

The Borough of Swarthmore and the Swarthmore Business District Authority should continue their efforts to more effectively manage the inventory of publicly-available parking resources to maximize use by retail customers. Necessary changes to metering policies should be made and parking enforcement should be tightened to assure that convenient short-term parking is available for retail patrons. More effective approaches to parking management and traffic calming in the vicinity of the Post Office on Rutgers Ave. should also be explored.

11. Borough Hall Open Space

The Borough Hall parking lot could be reconfigured to provide an enlarged public plaza and a garden seating area fronting the Library. Several alternative configurations have been suggested, including some that realign Dartmouth Ave. These alternatives need to be examined through detailed design studies of this opportunity.



Reconfiguring The Borough Hall Lot Could Provide A New Plaza and Library Garden

12. Facade Improvements

Property owners and business operators should be encouraged to undertake facade improvements to reinforce the historic character of the area and to better convey the type of merchandise being sold to those passing through the district.

B. Promote New Development Activity in the Current Town Center

The most serious challenge facing Swarthmore Town Center is its limited physical building stock, which prevents the efficient use of space by existing businesses and impedes the location of new businesses – which could increase the retailing diversity and attract an enlarged customer base – into the area. A major theme of the Revitalization Strategy is the reconfiguration of the Town Center’s existing physical resources to provide more appropriately-sized locations for current and expanded retailing within the area. Five strategy elements are detailed here to encourage targeted private investment in the current Town Center area.

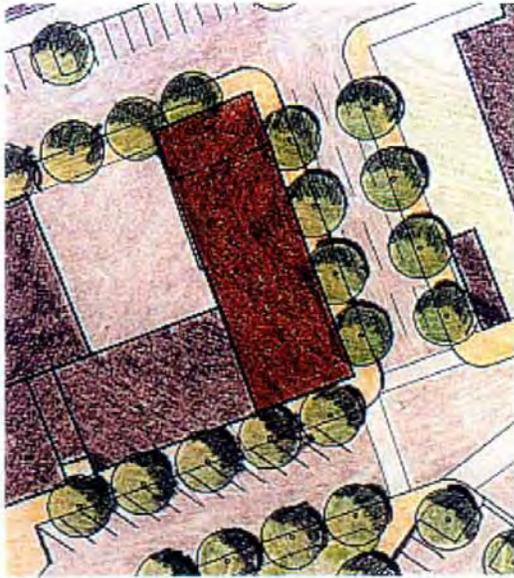
13. Reconstruct Swarthmore Co-op

The Swarthmore Co-op is encouraged to reconstruct and expand its building at its present location. The proposed Lafayette Ave. extension would provide the Co-op with greater building frontage as well as improve its accessibility to parking resources on Myers Ave. Reconstruction of this property needs to be planned carefully—possibly with phased development—to guarantee the continuous operation

of this critical community resource. Once expansion of the Co-op space has occurred, the Co-op could take on additional business functions, including a coffee house, bakery and convenience store. The new space could be designed to separate these functions from the main Co-op space, allowing the primary grocery store space to be secured while these functions provide extended early morning and late evening hours of operation.



Reconstruction Of The Co-op Will Retain A Key Community Anchor



Lafayette Ave. Extension Will Support The Reconstructed Co-op

14. Expand Swarthmore Hardware

Sales at Swarthmore Hardware—another important community resource—are constrained by the limited physical size of its facility. Swarthmore Hardware is encouraged to expand its selling space within its current site or elsewhere in the Town Center.



The Ingleneuk Restaurant

15. Expand Restaurant Development

Town Center restaurants are currently capturing only 12% of Swarthmore residents' restaurant purchases. 6,000 SF or more of additional restaurant space could readily be added in the Town Center to meet these needs. This strategy element encourages (1) the rejuvenation of restaurant activity in the Ingleneuk, (2) the active recruitment of restaurants to appropriately-sized available vacancies, and (3) the redevelopment of sparsely utilized properties along Myers Ave., in part for restaurant expansion.

16. Fully Utilize Current Real Estate

Given the physical constraints of the Town Center, it is important that all commercial real estate be developed and utilized to its maximum economic potential. All property owners should be continuously encouraged to achieve such maximum utilization of their properties. In particular, the two vacant floors of the 100 S. Chester Road property should be retented with active office uses and retailing geared towards off-site sales. The sparsely utilized properties along Myers Ave., between Park and the proposed Lafayette Ave. extension should be redeveloped to maximize their retail potential.



Sparsely Developed Myers Ave. Properties

17. Town Center Design Guidelines

Design guidelines should be established to assure that all new development is consistent in scale and height with existing structures and consistent in character with the established village fabric.

C. Strengthen Business Activity in the Current Town Center

Assuring that existing businesses in the Town Center continue to thrive and that appropriate new businesses are recruited are key thrusts of the Swarthmore Town Center Revitalization Strategy. Implementation of the following six strategy elements will promote business and civic activity within the Town Center.

18. Create Main Street Coordinator/ Economic Development Position

A Main Street Coordinator/Economic Development professional should be retained to coordinate the implementation of the business development and business district management aspects of the Revitalization Strategy. This coordinator would provide liaison among the Borough, the Swarthmore Business District Authority, Town Center merchants and property owners and others with interests in the revitalization of the Town Center and would be responsible for retail recruitment and business district and special events promotion.

19. Appropriate Property Tenanting

Owners of Town Center properties are encouraged to make their properties available for those uses most appropriate for location within the Town Center. Space available at ground level should be reserved, if possible, for retail users, preferably those providing basic services to the Swarthmore community, restaurants and other stores that reinforce the Town Center's current pattern of specialty retailing. Where possible, appropriately sized and configured space should be made available for office users as long as this does not conflict with the need for ground floor retail space.

20. Retail Business Recruitment

A concerted retail recruitment effort should be undertaken to attract appropriate new businesses to the Swarthmore Town Center. Businesses to be targeted include retailers that meet the basic service needs of the Swarthmore community, additional restaurants and specialty retailers that reinforce the current patterns of specialty retailing (e.g., unique crafts and gifts) that exist in the Swarthmore Town Center.

21. Merchants' Association

A Merchants' Association should be reestablished by area retailers to coordinate joint marketing and promotion efforts, to circulate informational materials about the district on a regular basis and to plan and undertake Town Center special events.

22. Civic Event Programming

Continuing efforts to host civic and special events within the Town Center should be encouraged. Activities could be undertaken by a range of participants, including the new Merchants' Association, the Swarthmore Business District Authority, the Borough, Swarthmore Library, the Rotary, Swarthmore College, etc. These civic events will attract and expand the customer base for Town Center businesses as well as promote the Town Center's role as the hub of the Swarthmore community's civic life. Particular efforts should be made to build on the strong civic anchor provided by the Swarthmore Library so treasured by the Swarthmore community as a civic facility that brings residents to the Town Center and provides opportunities for informal gathering in the area. The Town Center revitalization effort should coordinate with and support any future efforts by the library to expand its activities and programming for the community.

23. Swarthmore Technical Assistance Network

Swarthmore Town Center business owners should be supported with technical assistance to help them operate their businesses more profitably. This assistance could be organized through a volunteer network of professionals having skills in such areas as web-site development, off-premises sales via e-commerce, inventory management, practical approaches to marketing and presentation of merchandise, customer needs profiling, etc.

D. Protect Residential Areas Adjacent to the Town Center

In addition to the significant residential base within the area, the Swarthmore Town Center is surrounded on three sides by quiet residential neighborhoods. It is imperative to the community that efforts to revitalize the Town Center in no way diminish the quality of life in these adjacent residential areas. As a result, several elements of the revitalization strategy address the protection of the Town Center's near neighbors.

24. Maintenance of Current Zoning

In order to preserve the residential character of the neighborhoods surrounding the Swarthmore Town Center, no zoning changes should be made to allow the expansion of commercial uses into any currently-residential areas.

25. Installation of Stop Signs/ Pedestrian Rights-of-Way

Stop signs should be installed at intersections in and around the Swarthmore Town Center— including Rutgers Avenue at Cornell Avenue, Park Avenue at Myers/S. Chester, Dartmouth Avenue at Lafayette Avenue and Myers Avenue at Lafayette Avenue—to slow traffic, to prevent the build-up of speed as cars travel through the district and to allow for safe pedestrian crossings. Traffic engineering studies should be conducted to verify the effective-ness of this proposed signage and/or to suggest alternative traffic calming devices at these inter-sections. Signs alerting motorists to the pedestrians' right-of-way should be placed throughout the Town Center and its periphery.



Library Events Promote The Town Center

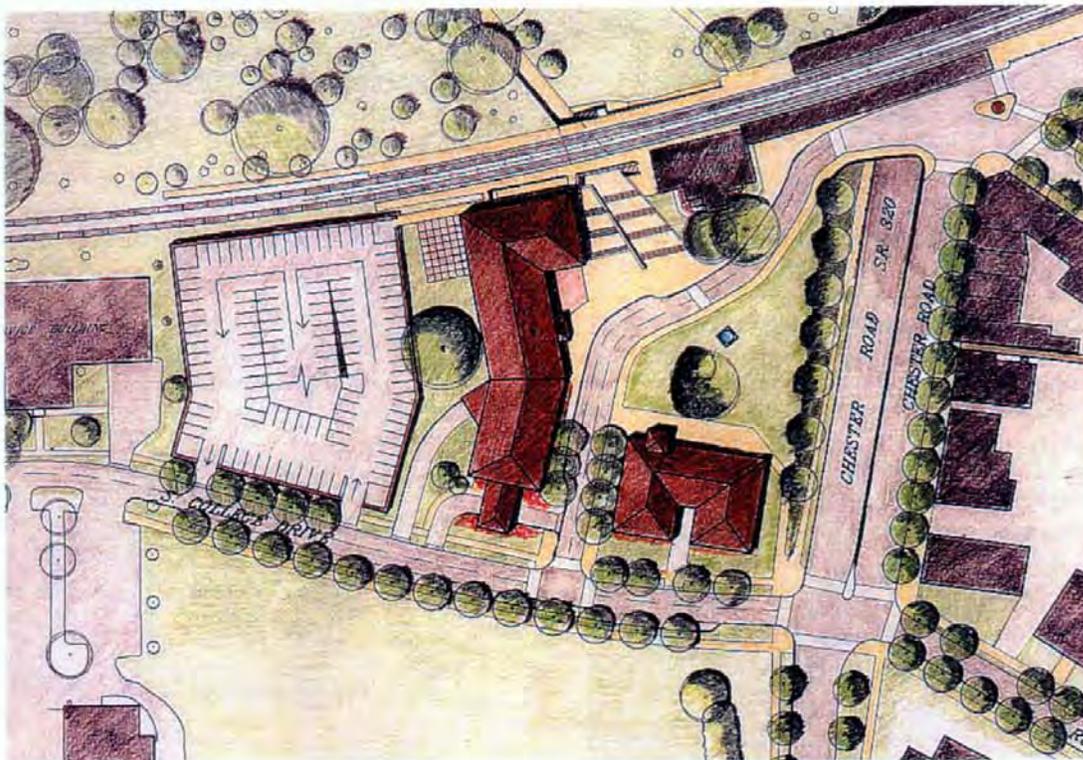
26. Expansion of Residential Parking Permit Program

Much as parking resources need to be made available to patrons of Town Center activities, so too must parking resources in the nearby neighborhoods be preserved for use by area residents. Swarthmore's residential parking permit program should be expanded as necessary to assure that area residents are not adversely affected by retail customers parking on their streets.

E. Promote Town Center Development West of S. Chester Road

The reconfiguration and more efficient use of space available within the current business district will provide only limited opportunity for growth and revitalization of the Swarthmore Town Center. Additionally, certain key development opportunities supported by the Swarthmore community will not physically fit within the existing business district. These encouraged opportunities include a 65-room inn with restaurant facilities, a college-related bookstore, additional restaurant/café facilities, and required parking facilities.

To capture these opportunities, this Revitalization Strategy recommends selective expansion of the Town Center (see **Map 2**) through limited development of Swarthmore College fields located immediately west of S. Chester Road between the Train Station and the current roadway connection to S. Chester Road across from Rutgers Ave. The six proposed strategy elements of this new development will help to better integrate the College into the Swarthmore community by providing a combination of activities and facilities attractive to both the Swarthmore and the College communities. The positioning and character of this proposed development is intended to minimize the intrusiveness of new development on the community's open space and scenic vistas.



Map2
Potential Town Center West Development

27. New South College Entrance

A new south college entrance should be developed at Rutgers Avenue and S. Chester Road to formalize what is now a very hidden connection to the college. New street patterns would be developed from S. Chester Road to the Swarthmore Train Station and Town Center to provide easier, safer access to and from the area by motorists and pedestrians, and to improve overall circulation in the Town Center.

28. The Inn At Swarthmore

It is recommended that the Borough and the College pursue development of a high-quality, small-scale inn (approximately 65 rooms) with a restaurant in this area. The height and architectural design of this facility should be consistent with the current Town Center character.

29. College Bookstore

The Swarthmore College bookstore could be relocated to a larger space in this area, possibly in joint development with a restaurant. The new bookstore space could provide expanded goods and services to the College community at a location that is also attractive to members of the general Swarthmore community.

30. Town Green

A new Town Green should be developed along S. Chester Road south of the Swarthmore Train Station as part of the new Inn/Restaurant/Bookstore development. The Green would encourage the staging of public events and festivals within the Town Center and provide an aesthetic passive open space that links the Swarthmore College campus to the existing Town Center.



Potential Town Center West Development Would Maintain The Current Swarthmore Character

31. Magill Walk Underpass

The pedestrian underpass at the Swarthmore Train Station should be improved to serve as an extension of Swarthmore College's Magill Walk. This improvement would also help to link the Swarthmore College campus with the Inn development, the Town Green and the rest of the Town Center.



Railroad Underpass At Magill Walk

32. Structured Parking

A two-level structured parking deck should be constructed behind the new Inn/Restaurant/ Bookstore development to service these new uses and to replace surface parking currently provided in this area for SEPTA riders and for the train station business tenant. Some existing College-related surface parking in this area could be relocated elsewhere within the campus. This new deck should be well-screened.

F. Encourage an Intergenerational Town Center

In considering the revitalization of its Town Center, the Swarthmore community has clearly expressed its desire to make the area attractive and welcoming to *all* residents of the community. Many of the strategy activities detailed above will support this objective, particularly those activities which increase public seating and gathering places in the Town Center. Two additional strategy elements further reinforce this objective.

33. Elderly Living Facility

A living facility for the elderly should be constructed in or near the Town Center, perhaps near the Strath Haven condominiums on Yale Avenue. This facility would allow aging Swarthmore residents the opportunity to remain in the community in residential accommodations that appropriately meet their needs in a location that is convenient to the amenities of the Swarthmore Town Center.



Centennial Park

34. Communication Mechanism for Youth

An effective communications mechanism should be developed between young Swarthmoreans and other stakeholders to encourage the continued respect for the needs of all Swarthmoreans in using the Town Center. Recent efforts by the Swarthmore Police Department to initiate this communications mechanism should be supported.

Priorities for Public Improvement Investment

While many of the activities recommended in this Revitalization Strategy will be achieved through private investment and business/civic efforts, implementation of many other elements will require government financial support of some form (be it capital or staffing costs). Various programs of the county, state and federal government exist to support such investments. In order to determine how best a limited investment by the Borough can be targeted and how Swarthmore should direct its energies in seeking assistance from other levels of government, the Task Force has established priority rankings for the implementation of Revitalization Strategy elements. Priority has been determined based on two inter-related objectives: (1) strategy elements that have been articulated to be of primary importance to the Swarthmore community should be implemented first, if possible; and (2) progress toward strategy implementation should be demonstrated through early completion of comparatively inexpensive public investment activities. All these investment priorities are established in the expectation of phased implementation supported by the strategic solicitation of financial resources from limited public sources over the course of the next five to seven years.

Highest Public Investment Priorities

The highest priority for public investment has been given to the following strategy elements:

Improve Appearance and Circulation

- Extend Lafayette Ave. to Myers to improve circulation and access to Myers Ave. parking.
- Provide a traffic light and timed pedestrian crossing at Rutgers Ave. and S. Chester Rd.
- Certain key streetscape improvements, including the planting of street trees where currently missing along Town Center streets, repair of damage sidewalks, the addition of special crosswalk paving to accentuate the pedestrian nature of the district, the improvement of lighting within the Town Center and the widening of the Park Avenue sidewalk by replacing the current angle parking with parallel parking on both sides of the street.
- Upgrading the pedestrian walkways between Rutgers Ave. and Park Ave. and between Park Ave. and South Chester Road to allow for better pedestrian circulation and allow for future development of alley retailing.
- Improving signage that identifies the business district and parking areas; provide business directory at Train Station.

- Improving bicycle connections and adding bike racks to Town Center.
- Reconfiguring Borough Hall parking lot to allow for a larger public plaza and library garden.

Strengthen Business Activity

- Securing funds for a Main Street manager/economic development coordinator.
- Providing financing to owners to improve their buildings as physically accessibility.

Protect Residential Areas Adjacent to the Town Center

- Install stop signs and pedestrian rights-of-way signs throughout and at periphery of district.

Encourage an Intergenerational Town Center

- Establishing effective communications mechanism between young Swarthmoreans and other Town Center stakeholders.

These strategy elements can be achieved in the short term, will have a significant impact on the revitalization of the Town Center, and will encourage the implementation of other private development activities contained in the strategy.

Secondary Public Investment Priorities

The remaining Revitalization Strategy elements that may require some form of public assistance were determined to be of secondary priority to the Town Center Task Force. While each is still believed to be an important component of the overall strategy, their completion is not considered to be as critical as the priority elements in terms of immediate revitalization impact or ability to encourage the implementation of private development activities. These elements include:

Improve Appearance and Circulation

- Certain streetscape improvements, including the landscaping of Myers Ave., the reconstruction of sidewalks with special paving and the relocation of aerial utilities on Park and Dartmouth Aves.

- Upgrading the SEPTA underpass at Princeton Avenue. The Task Force agreed that improvements to this underpass would be beneficial, but that immediate prioritization of this strategy element would have limited impact on the revitalization of the Town Center itself.
- Upgrading the appearance of the Swarthmore Train Station by replacing the existing canopy and improving the station forecourt.

Strengthen Business Activity

- Securing technical assistance for local businesses.
- Preparing and distributing promotional materials.
- Helping to finance appropriate facade improvements by property owners.

Summary of Public Investment Priorities

Highest Priority

- Extend Lafayette Ave. to Myers.
- Provide traffic light and timed pedestrian crossing at Rutgers Ave. and S. Chester Rd.
- Complete key streetscape improvements: plant street trees where missing, repair damaged sidewalks, provide special crosswalks, improve lighting, reconfigure parking and sidewalk widths Park Avenue.
- Upgrade rear pedestrian walkways.
- Improve signage.
- Reconfigure Borough Hall parking lot to add plaza & library garden.
- Create bicycle connections.
- Secure funds for a Main Street/Economic Development Coordinator.
- Support owners to improve physical accessibility of buildings
- Install stop signs and pedestrian rights-of-way signs throughout and at periphery of district.
- Establish communications mechanism between young Swarthmoreans and other stakeholders.

Secondary Priority

- Some streetscape improvements: special sidewalk paving, Myers Ave. landscaping, relocate aerial utilities.
- Upgrade SEPTA underpass at Princeton Ave.
- Upgrade Swarthmore Train Station canopy and station forecourt.
- Technical assistance for local businesses.
- Promotional materials.
- Help to finance facade improvements.

Approaches to Implementation

Implementation of the 34 project elements included in the Swarthmore Town Center Revitalization Strategy will require the participation of the Borough of Swarthmore, the Swarthmore Business District Authority, Swarthmore College, a variety of other civic and cultural organizations, and many private businesses, developers, and property owners.

Some of these project elements can be implemented rapidly--many even within the first year--while others may require five to seven years to complete. *These 34 project elements are structured to allow for largely simultaneous implementation: each project will support and reinforce others, but delays in implementation of specific projects will not prevent others from being completed.*

The Swarthmore Town Center Revitalization Strategy should be viewed as the framework for what is expected to be an evolving revitalization process. In the coming years, as the strategy is implemented and individual project elements are completed, *the community must continue to assess its revitalization goals, objectives and priorities and to revise and update the strategy to assure that it most appropriately meet Swarthmore's needs.*

In addition, the details of many projects have yet to be determined: the exact design of new public improvements and private development projects; the precise operation of parking and traffic management programs; the range of contingent uses for newly-constructed structures; the information to be provided in new signage. On-going community participation in the review of these details is critical to Swarthmore achieving the *quality* in the implementation of this strategy which the community expects and deserves.