

5/5/2019

Oxford Group

Site Proposal Report



57 N 6th Street



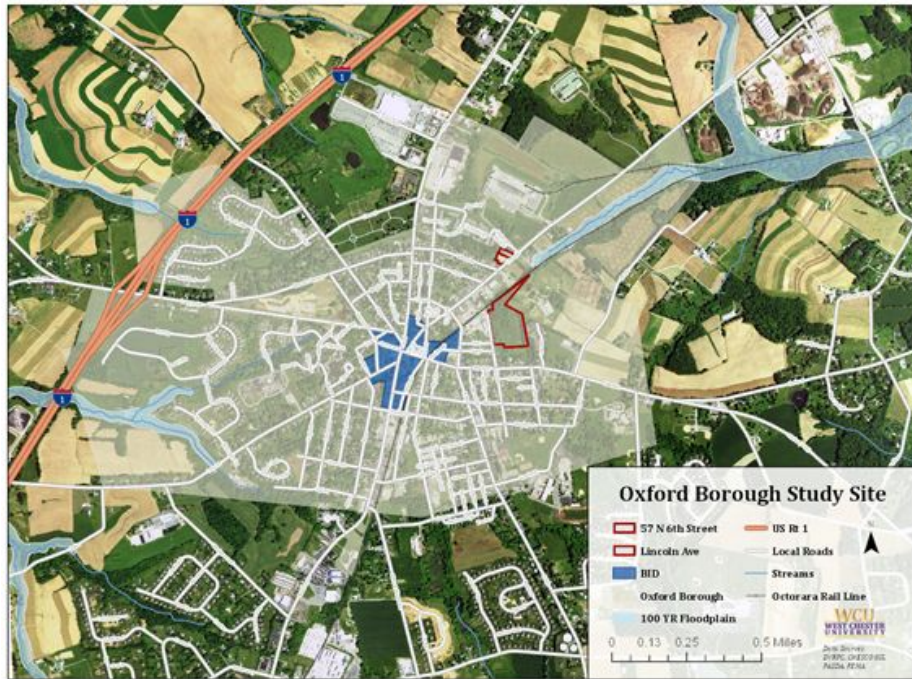
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PLN 405/605

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Purpose of the Plan

In partnership with the Chester County Economic Development Council (CCEDC), this project seeks to cast vision for the development of an identified Opportunity Site. In order to encourage and accommodate growth along the Route 1 Corridor, the CCEDC has identified several parcels for possible development. After site analysis of several different opportunity sites in Oxford Borough, a parcel was selected on N. 6th street.



Community Background/ Location

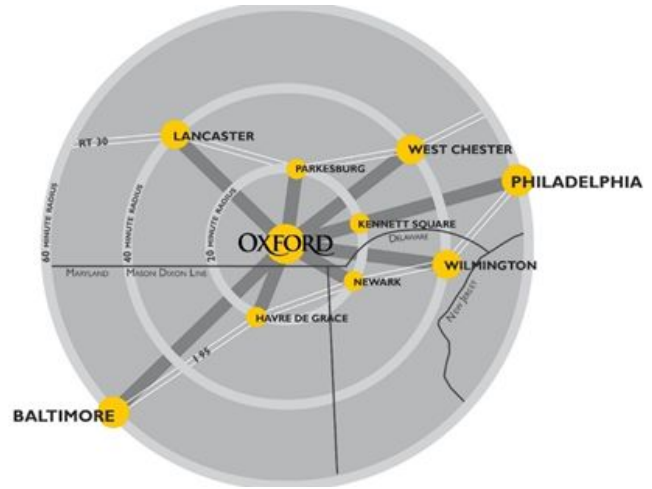
Setting

The Borough of Oxford, once called Oxford Crossing and Oxford Village, is located along the US Route 1 corridor in southern Chester County. It is surrounded by rural and agricultural communities.



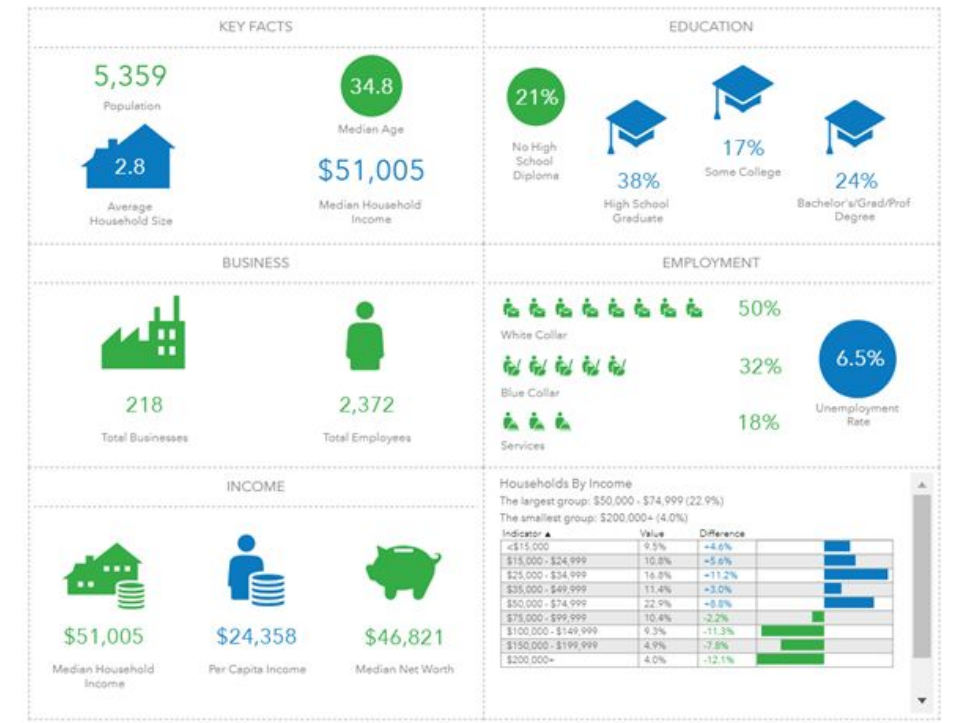
Located halfway between Philadelphia, PA and Baltimore, MD, Oxford was the perfect stopping point along the 2-day journey. Oxford is conveniently located about an hour away from Philadelphia (54 miles), Baltimore (56 miles) and Wilmington (28 miles) and about 45 minutes from Lancaster (27 miles).

Oxford Borough is encircled by Lower Oxford Township to the North and East Nottingham to the South. Due to its convenient location and its urban character surrounded by rural landscapes, the area has begun to experience widespread growth with Oxford serving as the hub. Comprising a total of 1.97 square miles and a population of 5,077, Oxford borough is relatively dense compared to the surrounding townships. According to Oxford Mainstreet, it draws from a larger population base of 26,000 people.



Population and Demographics

According to current US Census data, the population of the Borough of Oxford is 5,077 (2010). Based on the American Community Survey estimates, the median age of Oxford Borough is 34.8. (Figure 1). 24% of Oxford residents have a college degree. The median household income is approximately \$51,005, with a per capita income of \$24,358 (Figure 1). Of the

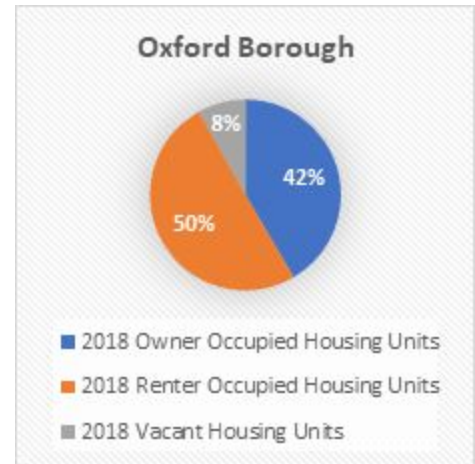


working population, 50% are employed in the white-collar sector, 32% work in blue collar industries and 18% work in the service industry (Figure 1). Oxford Borough has a 6.5% unemployment rate (Figure 1). There are 218 businesses within Oxford Borough that employ a total of 2,372 employees.

Housing

Based on US Census data from 2018, there are 2,046 housing units within the borough. Of this total, 851 housing units are owner occupied, 1,030 are rented, and 165 are vacant (Figure 2).

The average home value in the borough is between \$193,311 and \$204,508. In 2016, there were 1,878 households in Oxford, with 1,211 of those households being occupied by families. About 45.4% of households are owned by the owner.



Schools

Oxford Township is in the Oxford Area School District. There are six schools within this district, Jordan Bank Elementary (K), Elk Ridge Elementary (1-2), Nottingham Elementary (3-4), Hopewell Elementary (5-6), Penns Grove Middle School (7-8), and Oxford Area High School (9-12). There is also a catholic school called Sacred Heart located in Oxford. Lincoln University, one of the first historically black colleges, is also located just outside of Oxford Borough.

Regional Context

Towns/ Cities

Being located in southern Chester County, Oxford is conveniently located close to smaller towns and large cities such as Philadelphia. In thirty minutes or less, one can drive from Oxford to surrounding towns such as Havre De Grace, MD, Newark, DE, and Kennett Square,



PA. West Chester is just a 45 minute drive from Oxford. Cities such as Wilmington, DE and Lancaster, PA are also a 45 minute drive from Oxford. Oxford is near two major cities, Philadelphia, PA and Baltimore, MD, which are both about an hour and twenty minutes from Oxford by car.

Points of Interest

Within the borough, there are a number of local shops and restaurants. One example of this is Wholly Grounds which is a local coffee shop centrally located in Oxford's downtown. Just outside of the borough are several points of interest; The Herr's Snack Factory Tour and Nottingham County Park are just a ten minute drive from downtown Oxford. Longwood Gardens is a major attraction that is just twenty minutes outside of the borough. Plumpton Park Zoo is a local zoo in Rising Sun, MD that is also a twenty minute drive away.

Services

The Borough of Oxford has its own police and fire departments. The closest major hospital, Jennersville Hospital Tower Health, is 5.7 miles from Oxford; which is about a 12 minute drive. Oxford has a hispanic health center called LCH Community Health Center Oxford which is just outside of the borough. Oxford also has 11 churches in its borders.



Local Businesses

There are 72 registered business that operate out of the borough. Oxford is home to many local restaurants. Sawmill Grill is a local favorite, located in the middle of town that offers good food at affordable prices. It was the recipient of the 2015 Business of the Year Award in Oxford for its strong ties to the community. La Sicilia Pizza Pasta Grill is another popular restaurant in the borough that is also located in the downtown.



Lola's is a local boutique store in downtown Oxford that sells womens clothes. Another local business is The Maroon Hornet Comics and Collectibles Store.

Market Analysis

The retail market analysis was also prepared as part of the project. This research can assist in analysis used to recruit businesses, help existing business to expand or develop effective place making. The analysis was performed in the ESRI Community Analyst software platform. The methodology defines the Primary and Secondary markets based on drive times.

Primary Market - Defined as the geographic area within a 5-minute drive time. This Geographic trade area is where Oxford has a competitive edge due to proximity and access.

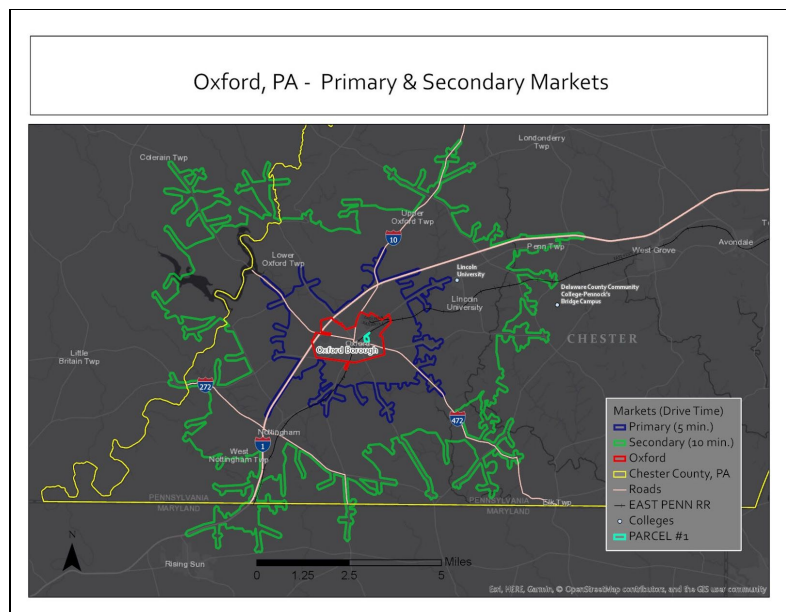
Secondary Market - Defined as the geographic area within a 10-minute drive time. This trade area extends beyond the Borough border encompassing the adjacent suburban developments.

Key demographic indicators are identified for each trade market.

Additionally, the top ESRI Tapestry profiles in each market are provided.

ESRI Tapestry segmentation classifies neighborhoods into groups based on a proprietary analysis of both

demographics and socioeconomic characteristics. These can provide insight regarding the customers in each market and which retail segments may be underserved.

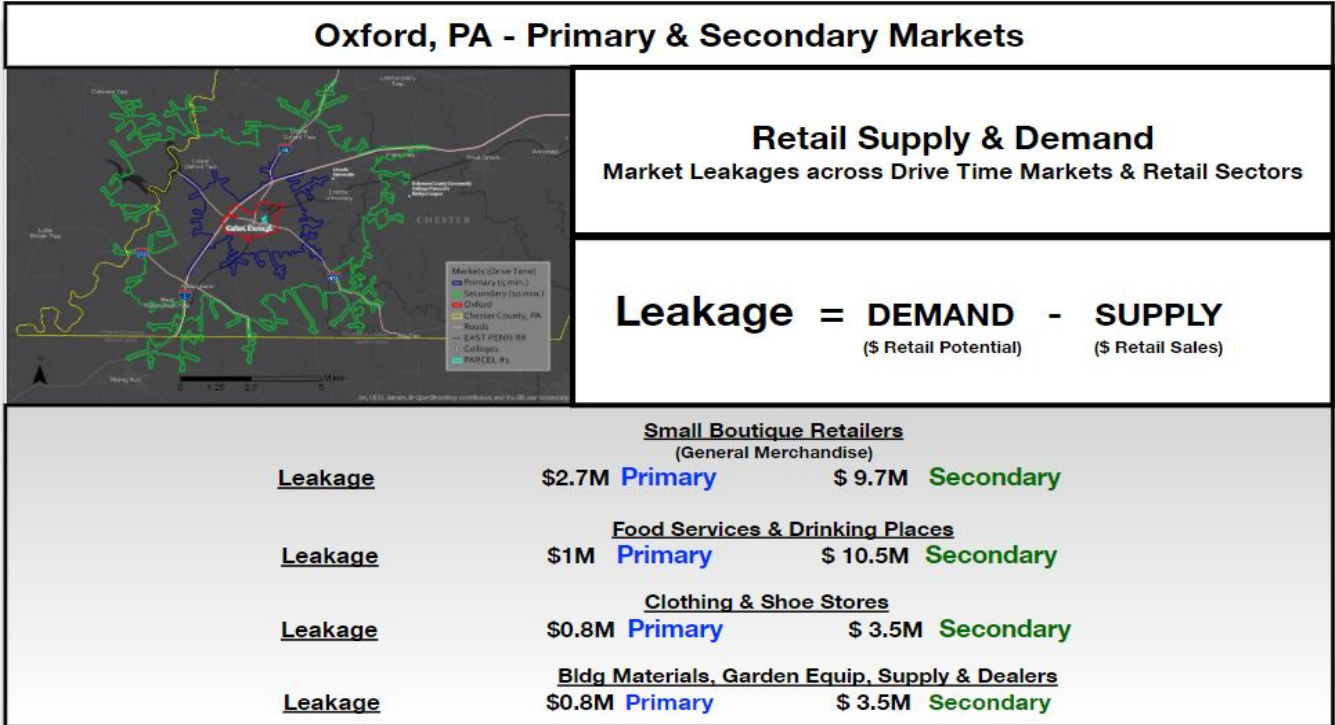


Key Demographics and Tapestry Segmentation

2018	Primary	Secondary
Population	8,626	24,417
Households	2,900	7,279
Median Household Income	\$60,198	\$74,216
Median Age	35.2	33.8

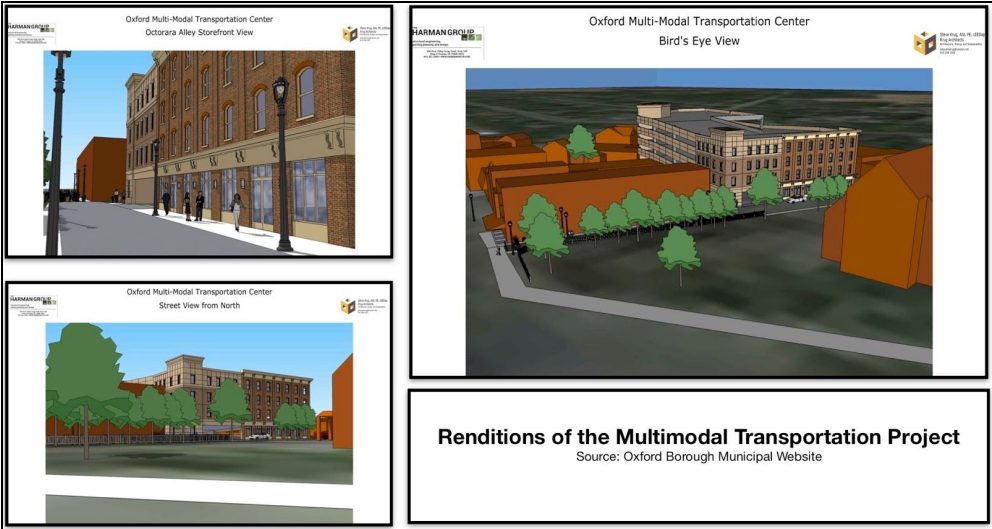
Median Home Value	\$249,942	\$277,948
Top Tapestry Groups	<p>1) Hardscrabble Road Neighborhoods in urbanized areas within central cities, with older housing. This slightly smaller market is primarily a family market, married couples (with and without children) and single parents. Younger, highly diverse (with higher proportions of black, multiracial, and Hispanic populations), and less educated, they work mainly in service, manufacturing, and retail trade industries. (ESRI)</p>	<p>1) Soccer Moms Affluent, family-oriented market with a country flavor. Residents are partial to new housing away from the bustle of the city but close enough to commute to professional job centers. Life in this suburban wilderness offsets the hectic pace of two working parents with growing children. They favor time-saving devices, like banking online or housekeeping services, and family oriented pursuits. (ESRI)</p>
	<p>2) Soccer Moms Affluent, family-oriented market with a country flavor. Residents are partial to new housing away from the bustle of the city but close enough to commute to professional job centers. Life in this suburban wilderness offsets the hectic pace of two working parents with growing children. They favor time-saving devices, like banking online or housekeeping services, and family oriented pursuits. (ESRI)</p>	<p>2) Green Acres Lifestyle features country living and self-reliance. They are avid do-it-yourselfers, maintaining & remodeling their homes, with all the necessary power tools to accomplish the jobs. Gardening, especially growing vegetables, is also a priority, again with the right tools, tillers, tractors, and riding mowers. Outdoor living also featuring: hunting and fishing, motorcycling, hiking and camping, and even golf. Self-described conservatives, residents of Green Acres remain pessimistic about the near future yet are heavily invested in it. (ESRI)</p>
	<p>3) Middleburg Neighborhoods transformed from the easy pace of country living to semi rural subdivisions in the last decade, when the housing boom reached out. Residents are conservative, family-oriented consumers. They are thrifty but willing to carry some debt and are already investing in their futures. They rely on their smartphones and mobile devices to stay in touch and pride themselves on their expertise. They prefer to buy American and travel in the US. This market is younger but growing in size and assets. (ESRI)</p>	<p>3) Hardscrabble Road Neighborhoods in urbanized areas within central cities, with older housing. This slightly smaller market is primarily a family market, married couples (with and without children) and single parents. Younger, highly diverse (with higher proportions of black, multiracial, and Hispanic populations), and less educated, they work mainly in service, manufacturing, and retail trade industries. (ESRI)</p>

The markets are analyzed in terms of retail supply and demand, showing sectors where leakage occurs. Leakage is present when the retail demand exceeds supply indicating consumers are making those purchases outside of the trade area. The leakages present in both markets for Small Boutique Retailers, Food Services and Drinking Places, as well as Building Materials or Garden Equipment represent opportunities when examined across the demographics and top ESRI Tapestry segmentations. Commercial development in these sectors would enjoy both a spatial and target market advantage.



Multimodal Transportation Center

To encourage and respond to both commercial and residential growth in Oxford, the Borough has recently broken ground for their Multimodal Transportation Center (MTC) project. The design is a four-story, five-level building that provides a parking garage for retail and residential development in



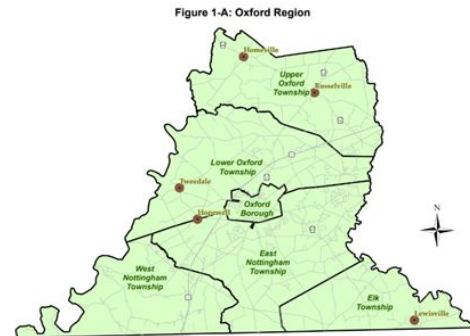
the borough. Lack of parking has long been a problem in terms of retail development in the central business district (CBD), especially along 3rd Street south of Market Street. The borough is very optimistic

that this facility will provide the missing piece for improving connectivity to local active transit networks and regional public transit systems.

Additionally, a new Borough Hall will house most municipal government offices in the structure. Construction has already begun on the 2,700 square foot facility. It is located on Octoraro Alley, which will also allow access to the commercial corridor on 3rd Street. Functioning as the Borough’s transportation hub, it will integrate local business, municipal management strategies, as well as park-n-ride initiatives. The project broke ground last week and its expected to be completed in approximately one year.

Comprehensive Plans

There have been several local and regional planning efforts that contribute to the vision and development of Oxford borough. In July of 2012, the Oxford Regional Multimunicipal Comprehensive Plan was developed under the guidance of the Chester County Planning Department.



This regional plan identified regional goals for land use, housing, economic development, community facilities and services, transportation, open space, agricultural resources, natural resources, historic resources, scenic resources, recreational resources and energy conservation.

Land Use Goal	to “provide for orderly growth and development by identifying regional and local centers for growth; ensuing compatibility between growth, transportation, and the protection of resources that define the Region’s rural character.”
Housing Goal:	to “encourage a variety of housing options, at densities appropriate for the growth areas of the Region, which address the needs of a diverse and growing population”
Economic Development Goal:	to “Recognize the importance of agriculture as an industry, support Oxford Borough as the traditional commercial center of the Region, and encourage targeted commercial and industrial development, redevelopment, and the advancement of a skilled and educated workforce.”
Community Facilities and Service Goals:	to “Provide and promote the establishment of accessible, efficient, and dependable community facilities and services for the health, safety, welfare, and educational needs of the Region’s residents within reasonable municipal fiscal limits.”

- Transportation Goals: to “Plan for a safe, efficient, effective, and diversified transportation system that is compatible with land use strategies and addresses both current and future transportation needs of the Region and adjacent communities, regions, counties, and states”
- Open Space Goals: to “Permanently protect, provide appropriate access, and maintain or restore open space lands through conservation easement and regulation to provide economic, ecological, public health, and quality-of-life benefits.”
- Agricultural Resource Goals: to “Promote environmentally and economically sustainable agriculture and the Region’s agrarian character through the protection of the farming industry, conservation of agricultural soils, and the recognition of agriculture as a viable land use.”
- Natural Resources Goal: to “Protect, restore, and maintain natural resource features and landscapes to sustain the Region’s economy, maintain watersheds, ecosystems, and public health, and to continue its rural character and quality-of-life.”
- Historic Resources Goal: to “Identify and preserve the historic resources that contribute to the Region’s heritage and protect these features and the surrounding historic landscapes from encroachment of incompatible development.”
- Scenic Resources Goal: to “Identify, protect, and maintain the integrity of scenic resources that provide the rural character and cultural feel of the Region.”
- Recreation Goal: to “Promote the establishment of, and the programming for, a safe, functioning, walkable, and well-maintained network of public parks, recreation corridors, and recreation and pedestrian facilities that maintain and improve the physical health, economy, and rural quality-of-life for residents of the Region.”
- Energy Conservation: to “Minimize energy consumption in the Region and incorporate the use of renewable and reliable energy sources to reduce energy costs and environmental impacts.”



Oxford Revitalization Plan Update

In addition to the *Oxford Regional plan*, Oxford Borough has developed an Oxford Revitalization plan. This plan, last updated in 2015, identifies the borough’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The strengths identified in this plan include the borough’s small-town character, community involvement, historic character, common community goals, prosperous surrounding

communities, diversity, strong residential community, and economic development led by Oxford Mainstreet Inc. (OMI) and the local Business Improvement District. Some of the weaknesses listed include the perceived limits in parking, the inability to retain desirable downtown businesses, public relations and perceptions, and code enforcement. The revitalization goes on to identify key opportunities. New marketing initiatives led by Oxford Mainstreet Inc. can capitalize on assets such as the Keystone Opportunity Zone designation and the character protected in the historic district. Many of the downtown buildings remain underutilized, with unoccupied second floors providing an ideal location for additional office and retail space. Lastly, the strong residential community in the borough and surrounding neighborhoods would benefit from additional recreational and entertainment venues for all ages. Despite the opportunities in Oxford, several threats still exist, including a lack of market rate housing, poor business retention, perception of crime and deteriorating infrastructure.

Survey of Borough Manager

The Borough Manager, Brian Hoover, was contacted to gain a better understanding of the assets, challenges, and vision for Oxford. Hired as Oxford Borough Manager in Fall of 2016, Mr. Hoover was previously Borough Manager for Glenolden in Delaware County for 13 years. He's also finishing an eight year posting by governor Corbett as president of the Pennsylvania Game Commission. During the meeting he mentioned that over the last five years, Oxford has seen the addition of 35 new business. Mr. Hoover indicated that the local assets were Oxford's location and the historic buildings and architecture. He also noted proximity to the Philadelphia-Baltimore corridor as well as significant employment drivers of Lancaster County and Wilmington Delaware. He cited the history of transportation development in the region, specifically how construction of the limited access US Route 1 decades ago removed some of Oxford's natural competitive advantage along the corridor.

He indicated that CHESCO authorities have often targeted affordable housing in Oxford and that the result has been a surplus when compared to the rest of Chester County. According to Hoover, the Borough has also seen a boom in new housing in recent years.

Mr. Hoover's perspective on development moving forward and strategy for the borough centers on retail development and diversification along 3rd Street in the CBD. In terms of diversification, he hopes for some utility businesses that could span the active hours of early-morning and later in the evening. These are currently bolstered by small local wineries, breweries, restaurants, and coffee shops. He

indicated things like men's apparel, butchery, or bakery. He also noted that more boutique style businesses seem to be the trend, as those are the types that have flourished over the last 5 to 10 year span. These types of smaller businesses are also the sector where local primary market demand exceeds local retail supply.

In terms of the parcel located at 57 N 6th Street identified as a CCEDC opportunity parcel #1, he indicated that borough management was firm on wanting to maintain industrial zoning in order to attract that type of use. It is situated on the railroad freight line which serves Herra and Flower Foods twice daily. The rail line is a core economic driver commercial point of pride in the Borough. These are two of the larger regional employers. In addition to agriculture, industrial food processing employs a large percentage of residents. He also indicated that a residential development plan at the site failed in the recent years.

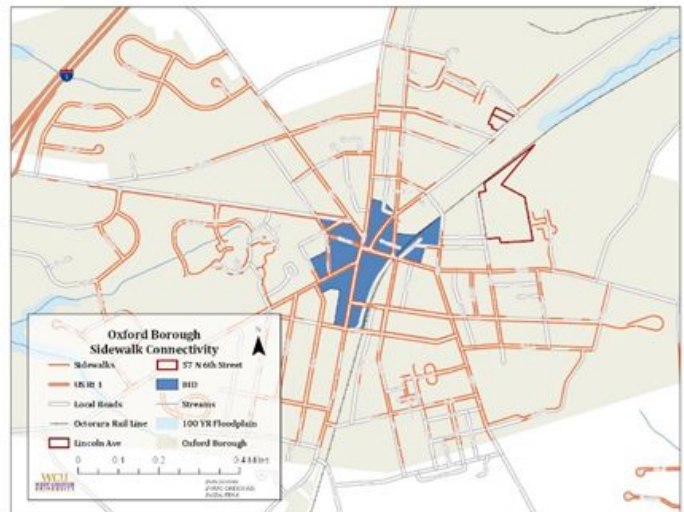
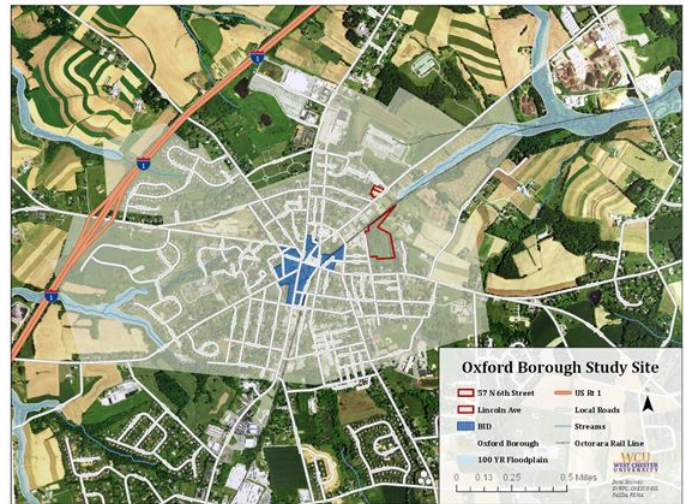
Opportunity Site

Chester County Opportunity Sites

Parcel 6-5-143 was identified due to its close proximity to main roadways and transportation arteries. From the North, there is adequate access with US Route 1 connecting to PA Route 10, which leads south into the center of Oxford. Being located on a passenger and freight rail line has prioritized the borough to move towards development.

Connectivity

These parcels are located along one of the artery roads leading into downtown Oxford. As Old Baltimore Pike, Lincoln Street was once the main thoroughfare leading in and out of Oxford. Currently, there are no sidewalks connecting



these parcels with the BID, however there are some existing sidewalks and there are plans for future sidewalk connections.

Parcel

Site Description

Parcel 6-5-143 is a 10.59-acre parcel which appears to be undisturbed and partially wooded, located at 57 N 6th Street. Currently, the only access to this parcel is on N 6th Street, which ends at the parcel and a food distribution warehouse. N 6th Street can be accessed from Market Street, Old Street or New Street; however, all of these access



points are from the southwest. Access to this parcel from the north is prevented by the active Octorara Rail Line, which runs along the northern portion of the parcel. The parcel is unique because it is bordered by industrial facilities along its northwestern border and residential areas to the south. In addition, its Eastern border is adjacent to the Oxford Village Residence apartment complex.

Infrastructure

Current conditions surrounding this parcel are not conducive for connectivity. This parcel is also restricted by the active rail line that separates this parcel from the BID and downtown area. This parcel is connected to public sewer; however, it needs to be connected to water. Infrastructure also appears to be



within close proximity to provide important utilities to improve the site for future use.

The only current access to the property is from 6th Street on the west side of the parcel. Adjacent, on the other side of 6th is Sunny Dell Foods Inc. Oxford worked with Sunny Dell and facilitated their relocation here. Through grants improvements were made on Old Street, which intersects 6th adjacent to both Sunny Dell and the parcel. These improvements improved stormwater issues that once impacted this site. Sunny Dell currently employs 100 people, has expanded twice since relocation, and has indicated another expansion in the immediate future.

In order to achieve best facilitation of any development at the site, infrastructure improvements to 6th street may be necessary. The segment from Old Street to the dead end at the freight rail would present challenges to any form of development at the site. While this can be traditionally passed on to any prospective developer at the site, unique design initiatives could expand the possibilities for the potential forms of development at the site.

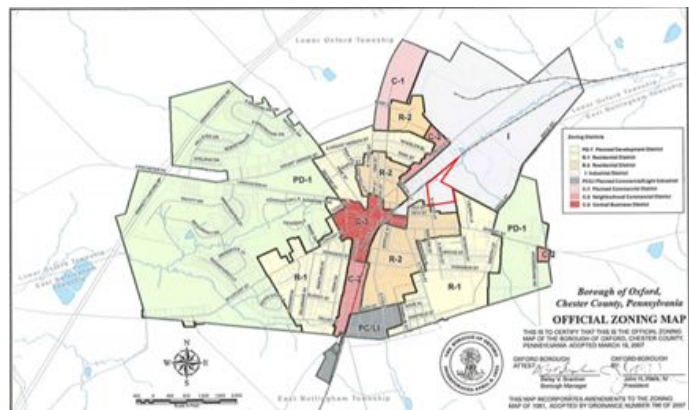


Physical Features

This parcel is relatively flat, with minimum and isolated areas of steep slopes. There are no streams or floodplains located on or near this parcel.

Zoning

Zoning for the property is considered I-Industrial District. This district allows for industrial uses that are compatible with the rural character of the Oxford region. The



permitted by-right uses in this district include research and development facilities; professional/business offices; certain types of manufacturing; warehouses; wholesale distribution; printing and publishing establishments; laundry and dry-cleaning plants; trucking terminals; passive agriculture; service shops; public utility facilities; vehicle storage; retail sales for goods produce on site or trade schools. The borough mentioned that it is unlikely a zoning change will be approved for this parcel, due to its proximity to the rail lines.

Vision/ Recommendations

Because of its proximity to both residential and industrial uses, development of this parcel must balance these two opposing land uses. Previously, the borough denied this lot for residential development, because of its location along the rail lines and the neighboring industrial uses. Although this parcel provides some development challenges, there are several options that could buffer residential uses from negative impacts while providing sensitive industrial uses.

Option #1: {By-right}



As addressed previously, there are several challenges with this parcel such as road access for larger vehicles and a need for sensitivity towards the neighboring residential uses. Current zoning of this parcel would allow for industrial uses such as a food processing plant, a recycling plant (as a conditional use), and other heavy industrial uses. This zoning would also allow for lighter industrial uses such as an office complex, shared coworking/makerspace, and a trade school. All of these options fall under permitted uses in accordance with Oxford Borough zoning ordinances. Industrial food processing is already a supported use on neighboring parcels, and natural expansion of these uses could be supported on this parcel. As explained in the previously, there is limited access to this parcel and many of the access streets could not accommodate larger vehicles such as tractor trailers. The neighboring food packaging

plant has additional access from a larger street, so expansion of this existing use could also provide truck access to the proposed parcel. Without easier truck access, it is unlikely that heavier industrial uses could be accommodated on this site, unless solely supported by rail access.

By seeking lighter industrial uses such as an office complex, shared coworking/makerspace, and a trade school, the need for large truck access could be minimized or eliminated. A coworking/ makerspace is also lucrative option for the borough as it will attract new small businesses, telecommuters and tradespeople looking to live and work in an urban center with pedestrian access. By developing a new coworking building, the borough is able to work towards its economic goals while attracting new, modern industry to the community. A trade school is a final option that would be beneficial for the borough since there are no trade schools in surrounding Oxford. An introduction of a trade school within the borough has potential to bring in new people from the surrounding areas into Oxford.

No matter the use, the proposed building will be on the north third of the parcel, near the rail line. This location would cluster this industrial site with neighboring industrial uses and provide a separation from the surrounding residential uses. To further the need to be sensitive to the surrounding residential uses, the borough should encourage and incentivize LEED certified construction. Not only does LEED certification require sustainable design, it also requires employee comfort and minimizes negative impacts. Since LEED certification requires site sensitivity, this will provide a highly level of protection to surrounding residential uses. Aesthetics are also considered in LEED certified buildings, as opposed to standard industrial warehouses, which may have a positive impact on surrounding home values. These environmentally sensitive practices are also more likely to attract new, innovative industries to the Oxford area, providing the region with a potential economic boost.

Option #1 Recommendations

- **Lighter industrial use such as a coworking/ makerspace or Trade School**
- **Separation of residential and heavy industrial land uses**
- **Environmentally sensitive design (LEED Certified)**
- **Zoning incentive for LEED Certified Construction or building retrofits.**



Option #2: {subdivision; industrial zoning along with public park}



The second option would require the use of subdivision. The northern portion of the parcel, located near the rail line would remain zoned as industrial with the same proposed options mentioned above. A subdivision would be required for the remaining land on the parcel. The subdivided portion, between the industrial use and residential use, would be developed as a public park. With one park located in the the borough, Oxford is currently lacking a large open space within the downtown area which makes a public park a fitting option. The park entrance would be on 6th Street and would provide a space for community interaction. With the addition of walking paths, a municipal park would also provide a pedestrian connection between the neighboring apartment complex and the borough’s downtown. A

sensitive industrial use paired with a municipal park could provide a possible solution that balances residential sensitivity while providing a buffer for industrial uses and important community services.

Option #2 Recommendations

- **Subdivision into two parcels**
 - Northern portion remaining industrial
 - Southern portion dedicated as municipal park
- **Municipal park would:**
 - Increase community spaces
 - Provide a buffer between industrial and residential land uses
 - Provide appealing community amenity that has been shown to increase property values.
 - Create pedestrian links between residential units and downtown.



Option #3: {two subdivisions, three individual parcels; industrial zoning with public park and residential housing}

The third option for the parcel would require three large subdivisions. Similar to option #2, this option includes a subdivision to allow for the creation of a municipal park, while keeping industrial uses

towards the rail line. An additional subdivision and zoning change will allow for the extension of current residential zoning on the southern portion of the parcel. With this subdivision, a proposed residential street would also extend the borough street grid, connecting the neighboring apartment complex with the existing residential street grid. This additional street would improve connectivity with the existing downtown.

Option #3 Recommendations

- **Subdivision**
 - Northern portion remaining industrial
 - Middle portion dedicated as municipal park
 - Southern Portion rezoned to residential (R-1 or R-2)
- **Municipal park would:**
 - Increase community spaces
 - Provide a buffer between industrial and residential land uses
 - Provide appealing community amenity that has been shown to increase property values.
 - Create pedestrian links between residential units and downtown.
- **Residential use would:**
 - Extend current street grid
 - Increase connectivity with Downtown
 - Provide much needed Market Rate housing

Vision #1: Single Family Homes



Vision #2: Town Homes



Conclusion

Although the selected opportunity parcel may need infrastructure upgrades in order to draw the type of business or industry desired by the Borough, with the proper incentives, the borough might have the opportunity to guide development. The adjacent property on the opposite side of 6th Street is Sunny Dell Cannery. Since relocation to Oxford, the business has thrived and expanded numerous times. The Borough also played a large part in their relocation to the site, securing the grant improvements (\$245,000) to alleviate flooding on the Old Street portion of the property. A similar strategy might be available to attract an appropriate form of business development to the opportunity site. Subdividing the parcel could also be an incentive to encourage a Sunny Dell expansion on a portion of the property along the rail line, while preserving the remainder for open space to the south adjacent to residential properties.

Since truck access to this site is difficult, other less traditional industrial uses were identified. These alternative uses include a trade school or coworking space/ makerspace. These by-right uses do not require large truck access and are more sensitive to the surrounding residential development. They are also more compatible with the future goals of the Borough, as they cater to a more diverse workforce that may be bolstered by the multimodal transportation center and downtown revitalization. Since this is in a prime location for pedestrian access and is a large undeveloped parcel, it is crucial to leverage this parcel for future needs and opportunity instead of current development patterns.

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<http://www.scccc.com/site-selection-opportunities.html>

GIS and Demographic Data

GIS data retrieved from <https://www.dvrpc.org>, <https://www.esri.com/en-us/home> and

<https://chesco.org/2198/ChescoViews>

Demographic data and market analysis retrieved from <https://communityanalyst.arcgis.com/esriCA/>