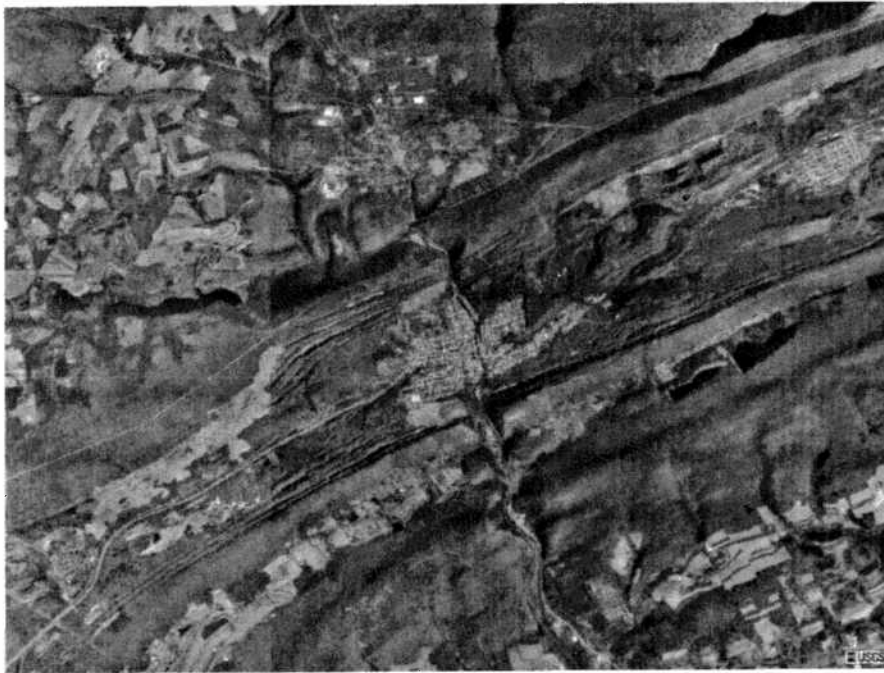


Tamaqua 2004 Partnership:

Celebrating Accomplishments and Beginning a Second Decade of Progress

A Report on Issues and Recommendations
from the October 2004 Reconnaissance Visit to Tamaqua
by the 1995 Countryside Institute Exchange Team



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We also want to thank the many other members of Tamaqua area communities who generously spent time with us to talk and visit. We very much appreciate your participation in our meetings and workshops. The care you show for your communities is the key to the future. We hope you will consider taking on leadership roles; you have much to offer.

We must also acknowledge Martyn Evans and Stephen Jones, members of the original 1995 team, who were unable to return in October 2004, as well as Greg Malaska who managed our visit in 1995. All three were critical to the success of the first visit and remain dear to us all.

IMPORTANT NOTE TO READERS:

As we said during every public presentation, we offer here our unvarnished observations and constructive criticism. It would double the length of the report if we were to preface each comment with the recognition that your hard work, progress, and achievements deserve.

You have opened your community to outsiders as very few are willing to do. If any of our comments touch a tender nerve or miss the mark, please know we offer the report with respect, humility and the intention to do no harm.

INTRODUCTION

Many remarkable changes have occurred in Tamaqua and the surrounding area since the team's initial visit in the summer of 1995. The stunning rehabilitation and reopening of the train station, installation of Depot Park, the newly established Eastern Schuylkill Recreation Commission, the opening of the Lehigh-Carbon Community College, and the addition of 450 new jobs in the Tidewood Industrial Park are a few of the most readily noticeable achievements. Further progress has been made in staffing and professionalizing key organizations. Downtown Tamaqua came into existence and hired a downtown manager, and TIDE has collaborated with other economic development organizations in the region. Underpinning all of this is a group of individuals who have maintained long-term, personal commitments of their time, expertise, enthusiasm, and financial support to the various causes and initiatives.

Led by the Tamaqua 2004 Partnership, these accomplishments, and the many others that occurred between 1994 and 2004, symbolize the first prolonged period of positive economic change, community revitalization, and civic engagement in Tamaqua in more than a generation. The community as a whole has a lot to be proud of. You have cleared many hurdles that seemed overwhelming just a decade ago.

The question then becomes, what next?

The team views this current period of time as critical in the ongoing effort to shape a vital future for Tamaqua. In the next 10 years and more, local officials, business people, citizens, and representatives of the many civic groups need to leverage the economic and civic momentum that has been building in the last decade. This will require taking a close and critical look at what is working and what is not. Having been through a 10-year process, it is probably clear to all stakeholders in Tamaqua 2004 that community development is, by its nature, unending.

While many problems have been addressed since the team's first visit, others have arisen and some problems that existed 10 years ago persist. Tamaqua will always have to recognize and respond to challenges brought on by the global, national, state, and regional economic forces, demographic change, and rising and falling local capacity to keep programs, projects, and plans moving forward. It's not unlike the job of a painter on the Golden Gate Bridge who starts on one end, finishes at the other, only to have to start all over again.

The Next Beginning:

Issues and Recommendations

The report is presented in seven sections. The first addresses overarching challenges facing Tamaqua related to partnerships and community-wide involvement. The next four sections correspond to the committees of Tamaqua 2004: Downtown Revitalization, Economic Development, Historic Preservation and Tourism, and Recreation. The last two sections briefly describe the power of youth and resources for further assistance.

For each issue area, the report describes approximately 30 issues and obstacles to success that the team observed or that were brought to our attention. Following that are about 56 recommended actions and strategies to guide Tamaqua in the next decade. We encourage Tamaqua 2004, borough officials, citizens, and all other stakeholders to regard our recommendations as objective assessments and suggestions for change based on our observations and feedback we received during the visit, our deliberations as a team, and our collective expertise from our work “back home.”

Visible Progress Since the Team's 1995 Visit to Tamaqua

- Beautifully renovated train station
- Lehigh-Carbon Community College
- A Recreation Commission was formed
- LCCC is free to Tamaqua high school students
- Salvation Army Community Center built
- Plans for pedestrian connections between college and downtown Tamaqua
- New synergy among local nonprofits
- Nonprofits are helping promote each other's events
- New National Register Historic District was formed
- 40 new façade improvements were completed on Broad Street
- 37 Historic Markers were installed—the first major Tamaqua 2004
- Depot Square Park was built
- A Main Street program was established and a Manager was hired.
- Key Opportunity Zones are being used to attract private investment.
- Residential Rental Inspection System has been initiated.
- And many, many more!

I. ORGANIZATION & MANAGEMENT

Organization & Management Issues

1. Tamaqua 2004 is admirably task- and event-oriented but lacks an achievable vision or plan for the coming years.
2. Tamaqua 2004 and its associated organizations need to focus and prioritize initiatives and activities; the current number of activities have stretched resources and volunteers very thin.
3. Many of the community volunteers who run the organizations and manage events are burned out and need assistance.
4. Despite big gains in the last 10 years, community members overall (i.e., those that are not directly involved in Tamaqua 2004 or related activities) lack pride and participation the communities deserve.
5. There is a need to reach out beyond the borough to coordinate activities with allied organizations.
6. Communication between and among business, nonprofit and government partners needs further strengthening.

Organization & Management Recommendations

1. The team feels strongly that the Tamaqua 2004 Partnership, other civic organizations, and Tamaqua area residents as a whole must now come together to define their vision for the future of the community. This can be accomplished through a series of community meetings like the one held during the team's visit in October 2004 and through other means, such as a Town Hall event open to the public and led by a neutral facilitator, or through focus group meetings with, for example, the elderly, local businesspeople, students, and groups of neighbors. There are many tools and technical assistance materials available in publications, through the Internet and from consultants to support a successful community visioning effort.

The primary outcome would be a vision statement (or set of statements) that represents a community consensus on the desired future for Tamaqua. It would serve as a guide for all individuals, borough representatives, Tamaqua 2004 committees, residents and all others engaged in the many programs, projects, events, and initiatives that will occur as Tamaqua progresses.

The team devised the following sample vision statement followed by some broad goals of what each sector of Tamaqua 2004 may be looking to achieve:

What a Vision Statement for Tamaqua Might Say

Tamaqua is a historic, picturesque community where people live, work, shop, and visit while enjoying the natural beauty of the area.

The vision can be achieved by:

- ❑ Refining and strengthening the retail, commercial, and residential mix of downtown Tamaqua
- ❑ Providing new recreational opportunities and choices for residents and visitors
- ❑ Protecting historic buildings, heritage sites and corridors, agricultural lands and forests, open spaces, and views
- ❑ Broadening the economic development strategy to include heritage tourism, Main Street, and industrial development

2. Agree on a vision statement as the basis for a community-wide comprehensive (or master) plan that includes detailed goals, objectives, and strategies outlining how the vision will be achieved. The Borough of Tamaqua staff, commissions, or a consultant would prepare the plan. When completed, it would comprise goals, policies, and objectives on many different aspects of the community, such as land use, transportation, housing, economic development, tourism, the environment, recreation, trails, intergovernmental coordination, among many other elements.

We recognize that Tamaqua may not have the financial resources or staff and volunteer capacity or expertise to prepare a community-wide comprehensive plan. We do stress, however, that the creation of a community-wide vision is much needed. Further many of the benefits that a comprehensive plan would bring can be accomplished in other ways. For example, a plan could be prepared for the downtown only, reflecting the importance of a downtown in ensuring the economic vitality of the borough as a whole. Also, each of the four committees of Tamaqua 2004 could prepare a work plan that acknowledges the community vision statement, sets goals for the future, and lists all activities and initiatives it intends to pursue in furtherance of the goals and the vision statement.

Whether or not a plan is produced, the key is to establish and maintain a lively, constructive, and on-going public conversation.

3. Rethink the organizational structure of Tamaqua 2004. A number of Tamaqua 2004 committee members and representatives of other volunteer-led groups have identified the need for making changes in their structure and workload. The realization that this needs to occur is a positive sign—Tamaqua’s most active citizens can see the forest for the trees!—and an essential part of community growth. We also heard from volunteers who were burned out after years of sitting on multiple committees, chairing special events, and throwing all their free time into making Tamaqua the improved place it is today compared to our first visit in 1995.

While it may be tempting for individual groups to begin making changes to their own structures in the wake of our visit and as a result of pressures that existed before it, we

think it will be most productive if the groups and committees work through the process of organizational change together. For the impatient, remember that while it will be slower than individual action, it doesn't have to be painfully slow, and it may prevent some wrong turns.

The team had several thoughts regarding the future organization, function, and composition of the Tamaqua 2004 Partnership. To broaden Tamaqua 2004 membership and spread responsibility more evenly among groups and individuals, reform it as a non-profit entity that offers annual memberships (or shares) to individuals as well as businesses and independent organizations such as LCCC. Also under this framework, a new, smaller, more powerful executive board could coordinate the activities of the various committees and organizations that would operate under the Tamaqua 2004 umbrella. The board would be responsible for keeping the community's "eyes on the prize;" moving forward to achieve the vision for Tamaqua that you desire.

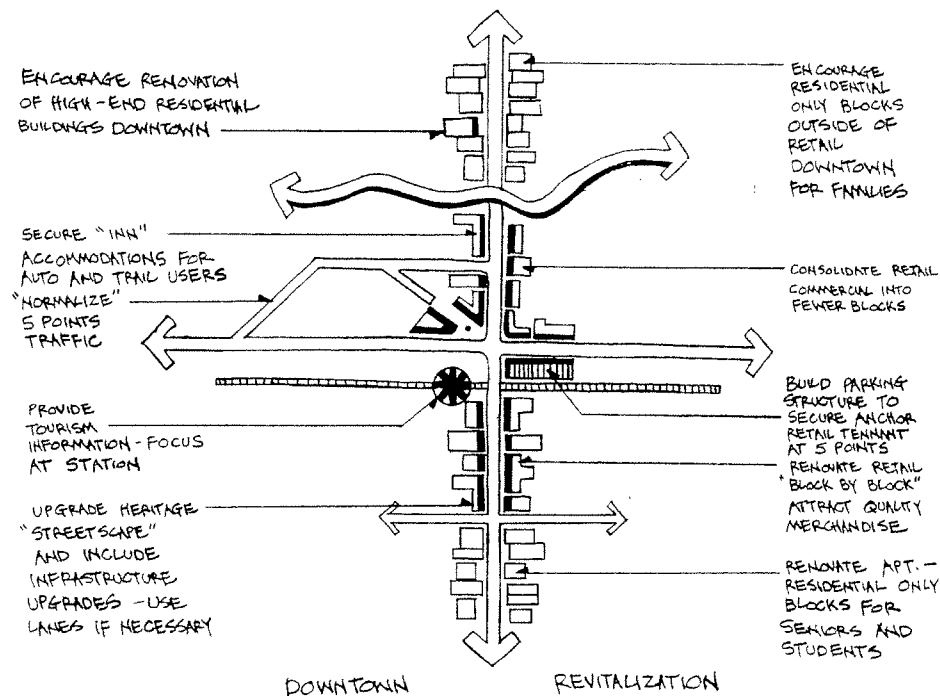
4. Choose new projects and initiatives rigorously. Regardless of what organizational structure Tamaqua 2004 settles on, it is important to keep in mind that there will always be more projects and good ideas than there are volunteers or time to take them on. This is a reality for every town that's working to make positive, lasting changes (even the ones that are regarded as success stories) and is reflective of the energy and spirit that Tamaqua 2004 volunteers bring to the community.

As a general rule of thumb, when a new project or initiative is put forward, it should be put to the following test:

- ❑ Will this new effort complement existing work and help tell the primary stories you've selected?
- ❑ Will it stretch existing resources and volunteers, or will it bring in new funding and people?

Again, the emphasis should be on programs and initiatives that are well-integrated with existing programs and initiatives, that fit into Tamaqua 2004's vision for the community, and that do not come at the expense of other existing and successful efforts.

II. DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION



The most noticeable, positive changes in Tamaqua in the nine years since the team's last visit have occurred on Broad Street and the surrounding area. The stunning rehabilitation and reopening of the train station, installation of Depot Park, the reopening of the flatiron building, and the numerous façade improvements made to individual businesses on Broad Street have all combined to create an improved appearance and renewed sense of economic vibrancy of the commercial district.

There are, however, lingering problems that stand in the way of Broad Street going from a good street to a great street. These problems also hinder downtown Tamaqua's ability to go from a being a good place to a great destination. While some of these problems are unique to Tamaqua, small towns and main streets across Pennsylvania and the U.S. share most of them.

Downtown Revitalization Issues

1. The Broad Street commercial district lacks good-quality retail and anchor tenants. Although the street level vacancy rate has decreased since the team's 1995 visit, there is no measurable improvement in retail mix. A number of the new stores have little curb appeal and combine to project a poor image of the certain blocks or portions of blocks within the district.

2. Common conditions in downtown, such as upper story vacancies, buildings in disrepair, and low rents, are all dampening the potential and desirability for new investment. These conditions may be exacerbating drug problems and property crimes.
3. The local code enforcement officers need additional training to identify and enforce housing and building codes.
4. Downtown Tamaqua has a housing shortage in several market sectors. In particular, there is shortage of middle-income housing for seniors, young families, and students.
5. The Broad Street business district is too long, spread out, and fragmented. There is not a sufficient concentration of businesses to generate steady foot traffic in any one part of the district. The effect is that the street can look devoid of people even in the middle of the day.
6. The streets, sidewalks, and play areas in the borough need maintenance and repair. (The team is aware that a number of capital improvements to sidewalks and streets are planned in the Borough in 2005.)
7. The Tamaqua Main Street program is not employing the power of all four “pillars” of the Main Street approach: Design, Organization, Promotion, and Economic Restructuring. Most resources now go toward special events and promotions to the exclusion of the other required strategies.
8. The Summerfest, Heritage, and Spirit of Christmas festivals attract large crowds of residents and visitors to downtown and are building Tamaqua’s reputation as a destination for fun and community celebration. However, you are not yet making the most of these opportunities by giving the crowds a clear take-home message about:
 - ❑ the town’s heritage,
 - ❑ a sense of what’s happening in town the rest of the year,
 - ❑ an invitation to return for future events.You are not getting the basic information about your visitors (who they are, where they’re from and what they want next year); input you need to increase the impact of each festival. And as these events continue to grow, so do the burdens of organizing and cleaning-up. Some merchants grumble that their businesses suffered during the Heritage Festival, saying that festival vendors took away storefront business.
9. Neither the Tamaqua Main Street program or the Tamaqua 2004 Partnership are being compensated for managing events on behalf of other organizations.
10. The lack of an updated land-use and economic development plan or strategy in the borough has made it difficult for the borough to address the problem of new development locating outside of the borough.
11. There are no formal incentives to encourage in-town development or accommodate a developer who may be looking at several sites in the borough. As a consequence most

developers choose to site their projects outside the borough. Further Tamaqua is not on national retailer's store location radar because of its size and proximity to larger markets.

12. Despite the improvements, there is still a sense of resignation or embarrassment on the part of some local residents as to the condition of the borough.

13. There is no public transportation option for young people who can not yet drive or for older residents and other adults who may choose not to drive. At the same time, basic needs, such as grocery stores, pharmacies, and doctor's offices, continue to be built outside the downtown, effectively cutting off access to these places by people who do not drive.

Downtown Revitalization Recommendations

Downtown has two key assets – historic buildings and a prime location (i.e., crossroads of two major highways). To capitalize on these assets the team recommends that a plan be prepared for the downtown area. It would contain goals and policies specific to downtown on land use, commercial and economic development, transportation, and housing. The basis for these goals would come out of the visioning sessions, focus groups, or town hall meetings that will have been held to prepare a new vision statement for all of Tamaqua. A major benefit of such a plan is that it would form a clear strategy for downtown development that would create a positive and predictable environment for potential private investors. In plain terms, it would demonstrate that the Borough knows what it is doing, knows where it wants to go, and is looking for new businesses to be a part of the progress.

A fundamental step in preparing a plan for downtown would be the preparation of two key studies that will form a knowledge base of current conditions and will serve as a roadmap for future actions. Even if a full plan cannot be prepared, the following studies are crucial to the future strategic improvement of downtown:

1. Conduct a Retail Market Analysis.

A retail market analysis identifies market trends in local and regional retail sectors using detailed demographic and retail sales data on local communities. Much of that data can be obtained from the U.S. Census of Retail Trade. The goal is to provide relevant information and analysis that can be used as input into the economic development strategy for downtown Tamaqua. A typical retail market analysis would include the following:

Step 1. Economic and Demographic and Trend Analysis. Census data from 1990 and 2000 would be used to describe the current and past characteristics of the local population, including trends in selected population, income, housing, commuting, and employment characteristics

Step 2. Delineation of Local Retail Trade Area and Competing Areas. Input from Tamaqua residents and retailers and retail sales data would be combined in a (i.e., a map, either computer-generated using a Geographic Information System

(GIS) or prepared by hand) that identifies the boundaries of the community's retail trade area. Competing trade centers and their respective trade area boundaries would also be identified and mapped.

Step 3. Retail Surplus/Leakage Estimation. 2003 data on retail sales is used to calculate the degree of surplus or leakage of retail dollars within specific retail sectors for the local trade area. This analysis helps to identify the strengths and weaknesses of specific retail sectors within a community by illustrating where consumers are spending their money within the region. ("Retail leakage" means, the loss of local retail sales that occurs when people shop in an area other than the one in which they live. "Retail surplus" means, the gain in local retail sales attributable to shoppers from outside the area.)

2. Conduct a Housing Market Analysis.

A study of the housing market in Tamaqua is needed to identify and quantify housing needs and unmet demand from existing residents and newcomers. The team heard two examples: a. an unmet need for middle-income housing for seniors and b. a shortage of upper-end housing, such as condominiums, lofts, townhouses for empty-nesters and people who may move to the area.

3. Install a gateway/identity marker at Five Points intersection. A new sign, concrete marker, or other edifice should be installed at the Five Points intersection to identify it as the center of Tamaqua. If it is a sign, it should display the same colors, logos, typeface or symbols currently installed at entry points to the borough in order to create a cohesive identity program.

4. Hire a downtown code enforcement officer. This individual would be responsible specifically for housing, building, zoning code enforcement in the greater downtown core area.

5. Clarify zoning policy in core area. --the downtown "area" needs to be defined and land use/zoning regulations need to be tightened.

6. Prepare illustrated design and community appearance guidelines or standards for commercial buildings. Such guidelines would apply to new construction and rehabilitation of existing structures should be prepared with input from and, when completed) provided to all property owners and developers. Such standards would help preserve and enhance the historic character of downtown and ensure that new construction or rehabilitation would not detract from it.

7. Prepare a property maintenance ordinance. Such an ordinance would contain minimum standards for building condition and upkeep.

8. Enact a historic preservation ordinance. Such an ordinance would provide added protection to buildings and structures within the designated National Register Historic District.

9. Reshape and refocus the façade improvement program. This program should be reshaped to achieve maximum impact. It should employ a block-by-block strategy; targeting the façade improvements in a few key blocks to maximize overall impact and benefit of the program. Such a new program should be marketed to storefront property owners and a press release should be issued to alert the media. Property owners would have a pre-determined period of time to respond and take advantage of grant, or forfeit the opportunity.

10. Specific Recommendations for the Management and Programs of Main Street Tamaqua

- A. Establish an aggressive membership and corporate sponsorship drive.
- B. Shift responsibility for recruiting corporate sponsorship and fundraising to board members and away from staff.
- C. Increase community awareness of downtown assets and programs.
 - 1) Establish a monthly e-newsletter and newsletter (if staff resources are limited, hire a professional to write, edit, publish, and mail the newsletter at no cost to Main Street, i.e. through the proceeds of selling advertising space in the newsletter. Make it profitable for someone else!) Highlight businesses and people in the district, report on upcoming infrastructure projects in the borough that will affect the downtown, promote upcoming events, and solicit volunteers to help with events.
 - 2) Develop a monthly “Coffee with the Mayor” event.
 - 3) Establish a quarterly “Main Street Exchange” - a meeting/forum for the downtown businesses. Topics could include window display, business plans, effective advertising, how to compete with Wal-Mart, visual merchandising, etc.
 - 4) “Celebrate Main Street” with a ribbon cutting and social for all new businesses.
 - 5) Establish a web page for Main Street Tamaqua.
- D. Design and build the downtown river walk.
- E. A functional, recreational, and aesthetic, river walk will allow people to transverse freely along the river to the downtown.
- F. Hold joint meetings of Tamaqua 2004 committees and other organizations periodically to improve communication. This is especially important with the degree of overlapping membership that exists. This approach could reduce the number of meetings that month for a few people! It may also point out advantages (and disadvantages) of merging certain groups or functions.
- G. Create a cable TV program featuring a roundtable conversation of leaders of the various groups, so they can talk about what each is doing. The audience will get an overview and the leaders may learn something, too! You’ll also increase visibility of your upcoming programs and your achievements, especially among seniors and couch potatoes.

11. Specific Recommendations Regarding Festivals in Downtown Tamaqua

- A. Establish a theme for each event and showcase a single message. Summerfest could be an “Outdoor Things to Do in Tamaqua” theme; the Heritage Festival seems suited to “Stories and Images from History;” and the Spirit of Christmas could focus on “Architectural Restoration and Downtown Beautification.”
- B. At both the Summerfest and Heritage Festival, create a point of focus by setting up a Main Stage from which you can make announcements, have performances and music, and draw people together several times during the day. Announcements could include: “The annual Main Street Volunteer Award winner is...., The raffle winner is...., Be sure to visit the blacksmith shop, The next walking tour will leave at 2 o’clock, The next festival will be on...., Look for special festival sales in the following stores, We are happy to welcome our newest merchants on Main Street,” etc. Drawing people together for a group experience and bringing their attention to the theme will increase the impact of the festival on your reputation.
- C. Hold a free raffle that allows you to collect names and contact information (mailing address, email address and phone for future announcements, publicity, fundraising, and volunteer recruiting.
- D. As part of the raffle, or separately, ask visitors survey questions: What draws you to Tamaqua? What would you add to this festival? Do you have a business idea for Main Street?
- E. Mobilize a clean-up crew so the exhausted festival organizers aren’t out there picking up trash as the sun goes down. Enlist maintenance volunteers from the Recreation Commission to take over this function. Or, arrange with a high school sports team or club to do it as a community service project. You could allow them to set up a fundraising event within the festival, such as carnival games for kids.
- F. Give merchants a chance to provide sidewalk services and products before hiring out-of-towners.
- G. Site “competing” vendors away from merchants with the same products.
- H. Challenge merchants to give festival-goers great reasons to go into their stores. Urge them to win business not by taking away competition, but by beating the competition.

12. Specific Recommendations Regarding Visitor Services

- A. Continue to create and improve attractions and alert your early visitors that this is a work in progress. As is true with any developing tourism program, certain elements lag behind others; if the attractions develop first, then facilities for visitor comfort and support need to catch up. Ideally, infrastructure would go in first, but it’s very difficult to fund such improvements until there are reasons to expect visitors.
- B. Set up a “Tourism Scouts” to test existing amenities. Each step of the way, they will keep track of what helped and what hindered, what works well and what to improve. These volunteers will first gather information from a variety of sources, then request additional information to plan a visit on a specific date by the “Scouts.” (It would be best to have an outsider make any phone calls, so nobody

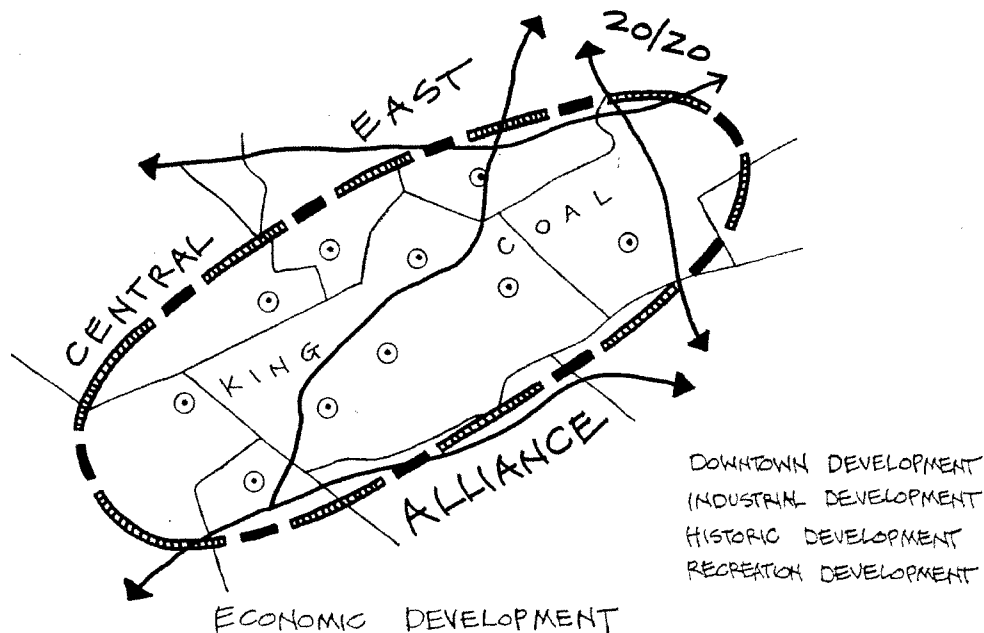
is tipped off that this is a test.) On the actual visit, they will assess which improvements are most needed first. (In a perfect world, the Scouts would be newcomers to Tamaqua, so their test would be unbiased and real. In the real world, you take anyone you can get to help!)

- C. Try attracting a coach company to include Tamaqua as a stop on a longer route. The American Coach Association would be a good point of access to this industry, unless you already have an entrée.
- D. Work with your regional tourism agency to be made part of a “Fam Tour,” visits by travel and tourism planners who could add Tamaqua to their offerings.

Summary

Three key factors are essential in order for downtown Tamaqua to realize its full potential as an economically healthy and vibrant core: (1) an unwavering commitment to succeed (2) setting the highest standards for both public and private investments and (3) a strong public/private partnership between Tamaqua “2004,” the city, and Main Street.

III. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



There has been measurable progress in industrial development in Tamaqua since 1995, in particular the job growth (from one employee to 450) in the Tidewood Industrial Park since 1994. Committee members also told the team that TIDE had increased the amount of integration and collaboration with the other economic development agencies in the area. As a result they are working together rather than competing for economic development prospects.

The economic development recommendations that follow are grounded in the team's consensus that the focus of economic development in Tamaqua must be broadened considerably to include more than attracting new or expanding existing industry. It must include historic preservation, heritage tourism, recreation, the chamber of commerce, downtown Tamaqua, and industrial development.

Economic Development Issues

1. The current approach to economic development in Tamaqua is focused solely on bringing in industry. Attracting and retaining industry should be treated as a key piece of an economic development strategy, but not the only piece.
2. Tamaqua's economic development strategy is dependent on factors outside its control e.g., global and national economic trends, government regulations, labor market.
3. TIDE's inner operations and goals are not communicated well to the public and other local leaders.

4. Unlike the other Chambers in the area, the Tamaqua Chamber of Commerce has no paid staff. This puts lot of pressure on the volunteer president, who already wears many volunteer hats and has professional responsibilities as well.

5. Regarding the new Wal-Mart proposed in the borough, studies from across the U.S. have shown that the stores have a serious negative economic impact on nearby downtowns and main streets (i.e., Broad Street), that while creating a high number of jobs, the positions are low-wage and the average work week for employees is kept below full time, meaning only a fraction of the employees qualify for health insurance and other benefits.

Economic Development Recommendations

The recommendations that follow relate to specific issues that the team observed or that were brought to our attention during our October 2004 visit. They also describe various economic analyses that we think need to be conducted for Tamaqua 2004, TIDE, Tamaqua Borough Council, and Schuylkill County to get a more solid handle on local economic conditions and to plan strategically and proactively for future growth.

1. Develop a multi-pronged economic development strategy for Tamaqua that includes industrial development but is expanded to include recreation, heritage tourism, and commercial and retail development. This will require identifying and quantifying the economic benefits of local recreation destinations, heritage tourism, and special events. It would measure sales tax revenue generated, tourism- and recreation-related sales, and annual grant receipts. The economic analyses described here should also take into account the recreation, preservation, and tourism economic sectors.

2. Conduct analyses of local economic conditions, future prospects, current strengths, and barriers to success. Analytical techniques that may be used include economic overviews and evaluations of comparative advantages and disadvantages. Both are described here.

A. Economic overviews. Techniques that look at the current and past composition of an economy.

- **Economic Base Analysis** measures the extent to which the local or regional economy is exporting goods and services to the rest of the world. The idea is that the more goods and services are exported, the more the local or regional economy will grow.
- **Shift-Share Analysis** shows how a local or regional economy has changed over time relative to a larger area, and breaks that change into various components: the influence of the overall national economy, the mix of industries in a local or regional area, and intrinsic local or regional conditions affecting certain industries.

- **Location Quotients** reveal concentrations of specific industries in a local or regional economy. This may help to identify the “traded sector” that drives economic growth.
- **Retail market analysis** (see Downtown Revitalization Recommendations above).
- **Market-Share Analysis** shows how an area’s share of a larger area’s business activity is changing over time.
- **Cluster Analysis.** Industry clusters are geographic concentrations of competing, complementary, or interdependent firms and industries that do business with each other and/or have common needs for talent, technology, and infrastructure. The firms included in the cluster may be both competitive and cooperative. They may compete directly with some members of the cluster, purchase inputs from other cluster members, and rely on the services of other cluster firms in the operation of their business. There are several methods used to conduct a cluster analysis, and it may rely on one or several other analytical techniques for economic development mentioned here (e.g., location quotients). The reference section of this report contains references and links to documents that explain cluster analysis in great detail.

B. Evaluations of comparative advantages. Techniques that explain why an economy is what it is, and why it has changed over time.

- Natural resources and supplies
- Building and land supply and markets
- Labor market
- Location relative to market and supplies
- Infrastructure and utilities
- Business clusters
- Amenity and other quality-of-life factors
- Housing costs
- Government policies

An appendix to this report includes a Competitive Evaluation Checklist as well as examples of how to conduct certain types of economic analysis and projections.

3. Identify strategies and measures that would foster encourage economic development in the context of quality growth.

These strategies may include the following:

- A. Coordinate economic development programs and support services
- B. Engage in business development
- C. Provide development incentives and financing
- D. Engage in business attraction and retention
- E. Educate the workforce

- F. Monitor and maintain an adequate land supply for potential development
- G. Provide adequate infrastructure to areas where development is desirable
- H. Provide a quality of life conducive to business innovation and a skilled workforce.

4. Appoint or hire an economic development officer. This position would be responsible for writing grants for state and federal funding, conducting the economic analyses recommended above (or managing the work of a consultant hired to do it), foster coordination, collaboration, and mutual support among the leaders of the various economic sectors in the community.

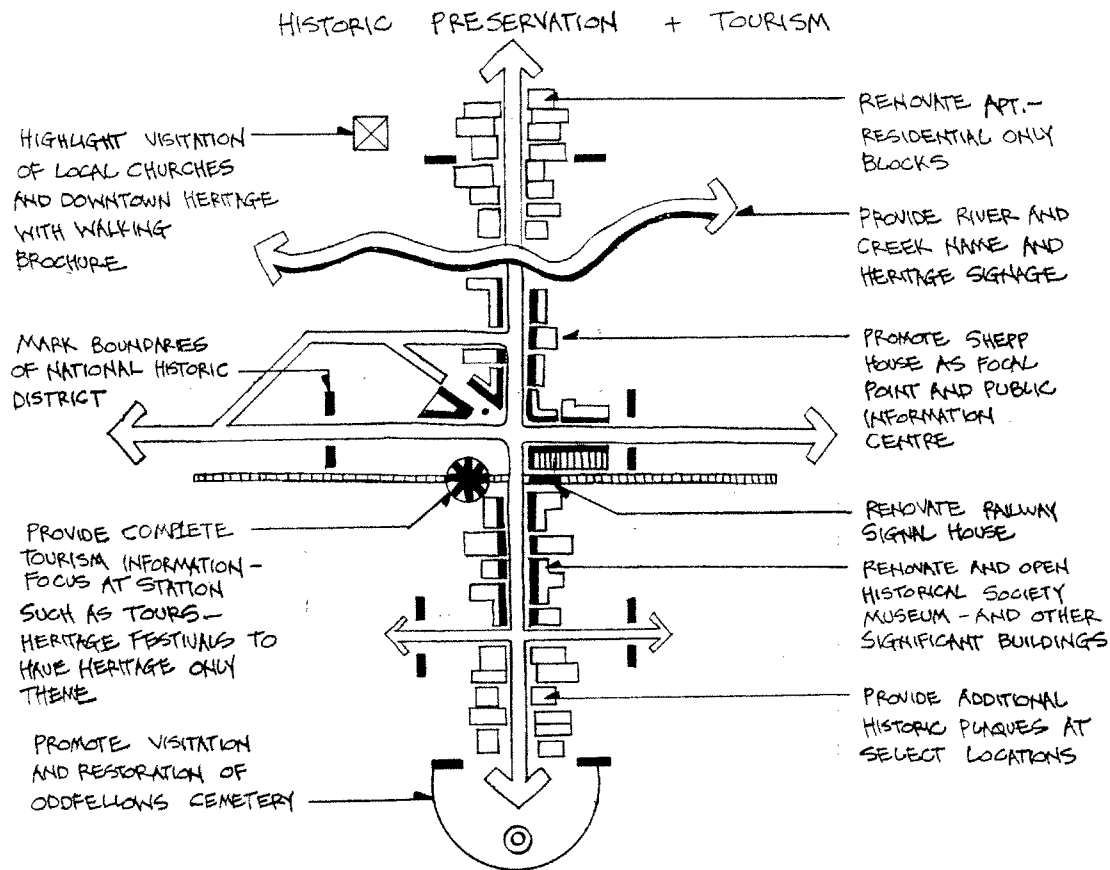
5. Support new entrepreneurs and business owners. Provide guidance on the ins and outs of doing business in Tamaqua, such as required permits, activities of the chamber, workforce development, etc.

6. Specific Recommendations Regarding the Tamaqua Chamber of Commerce

- A. Create a paid position for the Chamber of Commerce executive director.
- B. Increase chamber membership by launching a membership drive.
- C. Focus on providing services to members (e.g., training, small business loan counseling, hosting forums and networking opportunities, establish an awards program).
- D. Develop ties with Hazelton and other adjacent chambers to leverage their resources.

7. Make TIDE activities more transparent. The team heard from a number of people in the community that TIDE's role in improving the local economy and bring jobs to Tamaqua was unclear.

IV. HISTORIC PRESERVATION & TOURISM



Much of the success in Tamaqua since the team's first visit in 1995 has been with preservation and rehabilitation of historic buildings and sites. More than 40 buildings in downtown Tamaqua have restored their original facades, 38 historic markers have been installed denoting locations and events from the Molly Maguire era, and, of course, the train station is fully restored and reopened to much acclaim. There are still several issues that must be addressed with respect to preservation, ranging from the role of preservation and heritage in the Tamaqua area economy to some specific tasks that could bolster the good work that was accomplished in the last decade.

Historic Preservation & Tourism Issues

1. Tamaqua's heritage resources are not recognized as part of the overall economic development.
2. There are numerous dilapidated, vacant, and unrestored buildings in the historic district.
3. Historic preservation volunteers are spread across too many groups (i.e., SOS, Historical Society, Tamaqua 2004).

4. Local residents do not take pride in or support historic preservation efforts.
5. Downtown Tamaqua needs a good-quality bed & breakfast in the historic district that is open year round and on more than a “by appointment” basis.
6. There is no signage that identifies the entry points to the National Register Historic District.
7. The heritage festivals are growing and succeeding, but have room for yet more growth and improvement.
8. The improved façades are being coated with grit and grime from the fly ash trucks.

Historic Preservation & Tourism Recommendations

1. Develop and enact a historic preservation ordinance. The ordinance would establish standards for the rehabilitation, maintenance, and modification of any building on the federal, state, or local register of historic places in Tamaqua. It would include provisions on demolition of historic properties including a requirement for property owners to prove they would suffer economic hardship if the demolition permit was denied.

2. Consider merging the various groups involved in historic preservation into a single organization. The role of the umbrella organization would be the promotion and marketing of local heritage as well as restoring and maintaining specific sites.

3. Put restored buildings on the market. The historic commission should hand over restored buildings to viable tenants for new uses after the buildings are renovated.

4. Appoint a heritage tourism director.

5. Focus festivals on Tamaqua’s heritage as a tool to educate the public, celebrate history, and build membership.

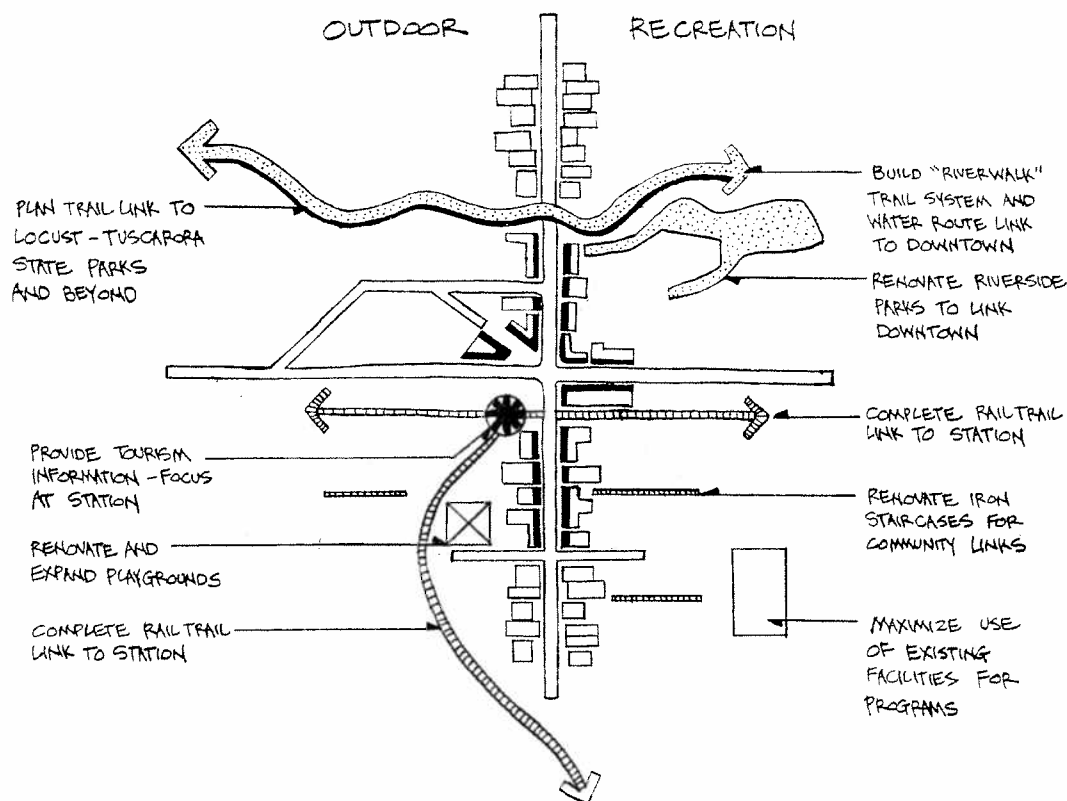
6. Sharpen the focus the Heritage Festival. Currently the Heritage Festival has the look and feel of a street fair or flea market with little reference or activities focused on Tamaqua’s heritage. Several recommendations (see also recommendation on page 13) on how to focus it include:

- A. Develop a theme for the festival.
- B. Add cultural, artistic, and literary components to the festivals to help distinguish both the event and Tamaqua that could attract a new visitors. This could entail a book fair, a fine art fair, or a variety performances by dance troupes, staged plays, and children’s theater.
- C. Find makers of higher-quality handcrafted local goods to balance out the generic flea market wares that currently dominate the booths.
- D. Screen the Molly McGuire film.

- E. Offer “themed accommodation,” such as overnight stays in miner’s homes/shacks decorated according to the Molly McGuire period.

7. *Research building maintenance and cleaning methods.* Find ways to prevent decades of dirt build-up. Check with the National Trust for Historic Preservation for information.

V. RECREATION



The Tamaqua 2004 Partnership is clearly aware that, after the excitement of ribbon-cuttings, new recreational facilities, like baseball fields, require maintenance. The irony is that, done well, maintenance is hardly noticeable. Done badly, it sets in motion a decline that can be hard to reverse. And because it's just not as exciting, it's harder to attract volunteers.

Just as the Recreation Commission has led the way by showing how municipalities can work together, it can also lead the way by developing recreation programs that engage new residents, too. New interests and unfamiliar cultures are an opportunity to innovate.

Increasingly, the recreation and health connection is being expanded from team sports on fields to a healthy activity all day long. The Centers for Disease Control and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, among others, are funding research and demonstration projects. Such funding will surely expand in the future.

The financial support of the Commission provided by the borough and townships demonstrate true cooperation. As the role of the commission grows there will be a need for increasing support of core functions. In austere economic times, recreation can be labeled as something less than an essential public function. Rather than fall victim to that thinking, it's important to inform your funding sources of your widespread and important role, as well as the value of physical fitness to quality of life in the Tamaqua area.

Recreation Issues

1. Current financial contributions limit capacity of the Commission.
2. There are on-going maintenance needs not being met at some of the facilities.

Recreation Recommendations

1. Specific Recommendations on Recreation Program Development

- A. Investigate new kinds of programming to serve changing interests in the community.
- B. Take advantage of statewide initiatives in Pennsylvania to create communities where people can be physically active as part of their daily routine.
- C. Offer pilot programs to reach long-time residents in new ways (seniors, mothers with children, teen activities) and to introduce newer residents to what is available.
- D. Offer pilot programs, or familiar programs in new locations, to reach all residents.
- E. Look for grants to support new or expanded programs for underserved residents.
- F. Consider how you can encourage more daily activities: pedestrian connections, such as the river walk; a measured walking loop on existing sidewalks in the downtown, with more challenging loops up and down hills (mark it with painted icons, arrows, and distances); a walking club with regular weekly outings; and a series of walk/run events that celebrate participation even more than competition.
- G. Reach out to a cross-section of “customers” to develop ideas and programs (for example, a focus group to meet twice a year to brainstorm and react to fresh ideas and approaches). This could include meeting with members of civic and church groups and students at schools. Even without doing a formal survey, just having those conversations will reveal good ideas that could lead to popular programs. More formally, convene a diverse group to serve as a focus group. By convening them over a free dinner (pizza or sandwich platter, for example, and drinks) and prompting the conversation with questions about current and potential recreation programs, you will learn more than enough to keep you busy for a year.
- H. As new recreation programs are developed, consider how to help residents be more physically active can encourage more daily activities: pedestrian connections, such as the river walk; a measured walking loop on existing sidewalks in the downtown, with more challenging loops up and down hills (mark it with painted icons, arrows, and distances); a walking club with regular weekly outings; and a series of walk/run events that celebrate participation even more than competition.

2. Recreational Operations Recommendations

- A. Build a regional maintenance team to complement your town-based maintenance efforts.
- B. Organize periodic region-wide maintenance days. A maintenance “SWAT” team could help with festival set-up and clean-up, too.

- C. First, establish a small group of volunteers in each municipality to assist with monitoring conditions and doing routine maintenance and clean-ups. It might be a good fit for retired senior volunteers, for example. Those volunteers could then recruit scout troops or high school sports teams to pitch in for community service.
- D. To attract attention and more volunteers, organize an annual region-wide Trails & Fields day. The idea would be (a) to build on the regional identity of the recreation program and (b) to mobilize enough volunteers to take on big, or widespread, projects. To inspire residents to work in another town requires a real campaign (this is true anywhere, not just in the Tamaqua area). The notion of “Community Pride” is a logical and powerful motivator. It may help to link up with annual, national volunteer-in-your-community-day programs; *Parade Magazine* has one, for example. The first Saturday in June is National Trails Day, sponsored by the American Hiking Society.

3. Marketing and Promotion Recommendations

- A. To attract attention and more volunteers, organize an annual region-wide Trails & Fields day. The idea would be (a) to build on the regional identity of the recreation program and (b) to mobilize enough volunteers to take on big, Market and distribute publicity about your rivers, trails and reservoirs through brochures, rack cards, web site and trail guides.
- B. Make the new Water Trail Guide available for sale.
- C. Build public awareness of rivers and watersheds by posting roadside identification signs.
- D. Build a case for increased municipal support to expand Recreation Commission’s capacity. (Everyone loves your work and results – build on it!)
- E. Help the community (and community leaders) to recognize the economic value of recreational assets by publicizing current studies. The National Recreation and Parks Association is a good source of information.
- F. Then, make the most of your assets by marketing and publicizing your rivers, trails and reservoirs in future editions of “Tamaqua Area Attractions” brochure, for example. Do a web page and an additional brochure focused on recreation for residents and visitors.
- G. Approach local businesses about selling the existing water trail guide.
- H. Look for grants to support new or expanded programs for underserved residents.
- I. Document the impact of recreation programs (black and white, just the facts) and anecdotally (colorful stories and testimonials by kids and adults who you’re your programs). Build your case for increased municipal support based on demonstrated quality-of-life improvements.

VI. THE POWER OF YOUTH

Team member John Monroe met with about a dozen high school seniors and came away from the conversation humbled. With the oversight and help of the principal, it was possible to set up an hour with a small group in a conference room at the high school. What struck him most was the sharpness of their observations, the maturity of their opinions and the way their hopes for Tamaqua fit the goals of Tamaqua 2004. Below are some highlights of their comments.

- Students need indoor places to hang out (like a movie theater, bowling alley, pool hall, recreation facility) and outdoor places where they won't get hassled.
- Drugs create problems that affect and annoy students as much as they do adults.
- Other towns show their support for high school sports teams with banners and parades; Tamaqua area towns should too.
- Scars on the land from mining create dangerous conditions.
- Fewer students are active in clubs and sports and community service. The ones who are active are on the verge of burn-out with so many balls to juggle. They need more kids to volunteer and share the effort.
- Improvements on Main Street are making a difference, but the remaining broken windows continue to look bad.
- They'd like to see more stores on Main Street, such as clothing, for example.

We recommend that Tamaqua 2004 engage these young people as board members and give them a role in programming of special events (e.g., see the recommendation above regarding staged plays or other cultural presentations). At a minimum Tamaqua 2004 should meet with them regularly, at least once each semester, to help brainstorm on problems and opportunities in the community that directly affect them.

VII. RESOURCES

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863 295 9422
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For more information on retail market analysis see:
Erwin, Elena, and Jason Reece. “An Overview of Retail Market Analysis.” PowerPoint presentation. Columbus, Ohio: School of Agricultural, Economic and Development Economics and The Ohio State University Extension. Available at http://www-agecon.ag.ohio-state.edu/programs/ComRegEcon/Retail%20Overview01_files/frame.htm

For a general description of a housing needs assessment see:
<http://www.housingdata.org/assessment/index.php>

For more information about industry cluster analysis see:
<http://www.worldbank.org/urban/led/cluster3.html> and
<http://www.eda.gov/Research/ClusterBased.xml>
http://www.sandag.cog.ca.us/rtatransfer/cluster_analysis.pdf

For information about community dialog, see:
www.publicconversationsproject.org
www.charretteinstitute.org
Kretzmann, John P. and John L. McKnight. Building Communities from the Inside Out.
John Kretzmann and John McKnight. Evanston, Illinois. 1993. [Distributed by ACTA
Publications, Chicago IL, 800 397 2282.

For information about management of nonprofit organizations and coalitions, see:
www.icl.org
www.boardsource.org
www.mainstreet.org

For assistance with community health and recreation issues, see:
National Park Service Rivers & Trails Program at www.nps.gov/rtrca
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation “Active Living by Design” at
www.activelivingbydesign.org/

For assistance with tourism see:
National Scenic Byways Clearinghouse at www.byways.org

Competitive-Evaluation Checklist

The following checklist can be used to evaluate a local economy relative to whatever external economies are determined to be the “competition.” This checklist is most useful when a specific industry is being considered, because different industries have different needs with respect to the key factors listed.

	HOW DOES THE LOCAL AREA COMPARE TO THE COMPETITION?		
KEY FACTORS	Significantly Advantaged	Not Significantly Advantaged or Disadvantaged	Significantly Disadvantaged
Direct inputs			
Natural resources and supplies			
Land			
Labor			
Factors that directly affect the cost of inputs and the revenues from outputs			
Location relative to supplies and markets			
Infrastructure and utilities			
Business clusters			
Factors that indirectly affect the cost of inputs			
Amenity and other quality of life factors			
Government policies			

Organization & Management Recommendations

- 1. The team feels strongly that the Tamaqua 2004 Partnership, other civic organizations, and Tamaqua area residents as a whole must now come together to define their vision for the future of the community.**
- 2. Agree on a vision statement as the basis for a community-wide comprehensive (or master) plan that includes detailed goals, objectives, and strategies outlining how the vision will be achieved.**
- 3. Rethink the organizational structure of Tamaqua 2004.**
- 4. Choose new projects and initiatives rigorously.**

Downtown Revitalization Recommendations

A plan be prepared for the downtown area.

1. Conduct a Retail Market Analysis.

Step 1. Economic and Demographic and Trend Analysis.

Step 2. Delineation of Local Retail Trade Area and Competing Areas.

Step 3. Retail Surplus/Leakage Estimation.

2. Conduct a Housing Market Analysis.

3. Install a gateway/identity marker at Five Points intersection.

4. Hire a downtown code enforcement officer.

5. Clarify zoning policy in core area.

6. Prepare illustrated design and community appearance guidelines or standards for commercial buildings.

7. Prepare a property maintenance ordinance.

8. Enact a historic preservation ordinance.

9. Reshape and refocus the façade improvement program.

10. Specific Recommendations for the Management and Programs of Main Street Tamaqua

A. membership and corporate sponsorship drive.

B. Shift responsibility for recruiting corporate sponsorship and fundraising to board

C. Increase community awareness of downtown assets and programs.

1) Establish a monthly e-newsletter and newsletter

2) "Coffee with the Mayor".

3) "Main Street Exchange"

4) "Celebrate Main Street"

5) Establish a web page for Main Street Tamaqua.

D. Design and build the downtown river walk.

E. Joint meetings with other organizations periodically to improve communication.

F. Create a cable TV program featuring a roundtable conversation of leaders

11. Specific Recommendations Regarding Festivals in Downtown Tamaqua

- A. Establish a theme
- B. create a point of focus by setting up a Main Stage
- C. Hold a free raffle that allows you to collect names
- D. Ask visitors survey questions
- E. Mobilize a clean-up crew .
- F. Give merchants a chance to provide sidewalk services and products
- G. Site “competing” vendors away from merchants with the same products.
- H. Challenge merchants to give festival-goers great reasons to go into their stores.

12. Specific Recommendations Regarding Visitor Services

- A. create and improve attractions and alert your early visitors that this is a work in progress.
- B. Set up a “Tourism Scouts” to test existing amenities.
- C. Try attracting a coach company to include
- D. Work with your regional tourism agency to be made part of a “Fam Tour,”

Summary

Three key factors

- (1) an unwavering commitment to succeed
- (2) setting the highest standards for both public and private investments and
- (3) a strong public/private partnership between Tamaqua “2004,” the city, and Main Street.

Economic Development Recommendations

1. Develop a multi-pronged economic development strategy for Tamaqua that includes industrial development but is expanded to include recreation, heritage tourism, and commercial and retail development. .

2. Conduct analyses of local economic conditions, future prospects, current strengths, and barriers to success.

A. Economic overviews. Techniques that look at the current and past composition of an economy.

- **Economic Base Analysis**
- **Shift-Share Analysis**
- **Location Quotients**
- **Retail market analysis**
- **Market-Share Analysis**
- **Cluster Analysis.**

B. Evaluations of comparative advantages..

3. Identify strategies and measures that would foster encourage economic development in the context of quality growth.

These strategies may include the following:

- A. Coordinate economic development programs and support services
- B. Engage in business development
- C. Provide development incentives and financing
- D. Engage in business attraction and retention
- E. Educate the workforce
- F. Monitor and maintain an adequate land supply for potential development
- G. Provide adequate infrastructure to areas where development is desirable
- H. Provide a quality of life conducive to business innovation and a skilled workforce.

4. Appoint or hire an economic development officer.

5. Support new entrepreneurs and business owners.

6. Specific Recommendations Regarding the Tamaqua Chamber of Commerce

- A. Create a paid position for the Chamber of Commerce executive director.
- B. Increase chamber membership.
- C. Focus on providing services to members
- D. Develop ties with Hazelton and other adjacent chambers

7. Make TIDE activities more transparent

Historic Preservation & Tourism Recommendations

- 1. Develop and enact a historic preservation ordinance..**
- 2. Consider merging the various groups involved in historic preservation into a single organization. .**
- 3. Put restored buildings on the market.**
- 4. Appoint a heritage tourism director.**
- 5. Focus festivals on Tamaqua's heritage**
- 6. Sharpen the focus the Heritage Festival.** Current Heritage Festival has the look and feel of a street fair or flea
 - A. Develop a theme.
 - B. Add cultural, artistic, and literary components to the festivals
 - C. Find makers of higher-quality handcrafted local goods to balance out the generic flea market wares that currently dominate the booths.
 - D. Screen the Molly McGuire film.
 - E. Offer "themed accommodation," such as overnight stays in miner's homes/shacks decorated according to the Molly McGuire period.
- 7. Research building maintenance and cleaning methods.**

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- B. create communities where people can be physically active as part of their daily routine.
- C. Offer pilot programs to reach long-time residents in new ways
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- E. Look for grants to support new or expanded programs for underserved residents.
- F. Consider how you can encourage more daily activities: pedestrian connections, such as the river walk; a measured walking loop on existing sidewalks in the downtown, with more challenging loops up and down hills (mark it with painted icons, arrows, and distances); a walking club with regular weekly outings; and a series of walk/run events that celebrate participation even more than competition.
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2. Recreational Operations Recommendations

- A. Build a regional maintenance team
- B. Organize periodic region-wide maintenance days. A maintenance “SWAT” team
- C. First, establish a small group of volunteers in each municipality.
- D. Organize an annual region-wide Trails & Fields day.

3. Marketing and Promotion Recommendations

- A. Organize an annual region-wide Trails & Fields day.
- B. Make the new Water Trail Guide available for sale.
- C. Build public awareness of rivers & watersheds by posting identification signs.
- D. Increased municipal support to expand Recreation Commission’s capacity.
- E. Help the community recognize the economic value of recreational assets
- F. Marketing and publicizing your rivers, trails and reservoirs. Do a web page and an additional brochure focused on recreation
- G. Approach local businesses about selling the existing water trail guide.

H. Look for grants to support new or expanded programs for underserved residents.
**Document the impact of recreation programs (black and white, just the facts) and
anecdotally**

VI. THE POWER OF YOUTH

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We recommend that Tamaqua 2004 engage these young people.