February 6, 2025

# Workshop 3A: Imagining Solutions

The workshops will have facilitated discussions on specific community issues that have been identified through the planning process. We will focus our discussions on the Theme Goals and Opportunities and Action Steps. Subject matter experts will be on hand to guide our discussions on the Opportunities and Action Steps.

## Route 611

Route 611, locally known as Easton Road, is a state highway that runs through Riegelsville Borough. On an average day, over 5,000 vehicles travel on this road. It is a two-lane road with a posted speed limit of 35 miles per hour. However, it appears that vehicles tend to travel above the posted speed limit through the borough. This is obviously a safety concern for residents. As the borough develops any potential changes or improvements to the road, it must work with PennDOT since it is a state-owned road.

### *What We Heard*

At the workshop, multiple concerns with Route 611 were brought up including the need to slow down traffic and reduce the amount of heavy truck traffic and adding sidewalks and crosswalks to Route 611 to make it more walkable. The community survey showed similar concerns with respondents expressing the importance of reducing speed on Route 611, making the borough more walkable and filling in sidewalk gaps throughout the borough to enhance public safety.

Lack of signage

- Signs that announce entering Riegelsville to let drivers know they are entering a residential area with people walking and biking
- Signs for hidden driveways – multiple residents felt leaving their driveway along Route 611 is dangerous and have gotten or nearly gotten into accidents
- Not enough signage to prevent trucks from turning where they should not be (going to bridge and turning onto Delaware)

Enforcement issues

- Residents expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of speed enforcement along Route 611; police presence is limited along Route 611 and people in the area are aware of this.
- Radar has been used in the past, but without much enforcement; residents suggested using traffic cameras in addition to radar to ensure that ticketing can occur for those speeding in the borough.
- Motorcyclists tend to speed along the road.
- An issue that was brought up was Riegelsville's proximity to Northampton County – police in the area are not really focusing on Riegelsville
- Suggested having one of the electronic radar signs that shows drivers how fast they are driving.

Truck turning

- Trucks can't go over the bridge to NJ, so they need to turn around near Riegelsville Inn, which can get backed up
- Main intersection at Delaware Road, trucks cannot turn up the hill and may need to get towed once they try.

Safety and Walkability

- Need more crosswalks and updating the existing crosswalks to have better/bolder lines
- Crosswalks with flashing lights would be beneficial

## *Where We Are*

- Radar speed signs were used and borough traffic study completed, borough is working with PennDOT to explore lowering speed limit
- Route 611 was recently resurfaced and restriped

## *Theme Goals*

1. Reduce vehicle speeds on Route 611 (Easton Road)
2. Create a safer environment for all users, especially pedestrians
3. Provide streetscape improvements to provide a safer and more inviting pedestrian environment

## *Opportunities and Action Steps*

Signage

- Place gateway signs and features at Spring Hill Road/611 and Durham Road/611
- Identify hidden residential driveways and provide cautionary signs
- Provide additional signage to make clear that truck access to Delaware Road is prohibited

Traffic calming

- Install bump outs and enhanced crosswalks and provide ADA Accessibility improvements to the Route 611/Delaware Road intersection
- Paint fog lines the length of Route 611 in the Borough
- Allow on-street parking in select areas along Route 611

Streetscape Improvements

- Fill in sidewalk gaps, fix sidewalks that are in disrepair or are too narrow, and remove obstacles on sidewalks
- Use signage, banners, gateways to create sense of place

Enforcement

- Coordinate with PA State Police for traffic enforcement (speeding and truck turning enforcement)

February 6, 2025

# Downtown

The borough's downtown area consists of a 13.5-acre commercial zoning district, on the east side of the borough, west of the Delaware River. The downtown area currently consists of a variety of commercial services including a few restaurants, auto repair services, a salon, and the Riegelsville Inn. In 2002, the Borough completed the Riegelsville Commercial District Plan which focused on economic development and revitalization efforts within the downtown area.

## *What We Heard*

Vacancies

- Many vacancies that need to be filled, can be in the form of destination places that will attract people to come to the borough, or offices that do not require the foot traffic.
- Difficult permit process for those looking to start a business in the borough
- Residents expressed that ideally, there would be a mix of tourist-focused and locals-focused shops that fill in the vacancies. Residents miss some of the smaller retailers like Lundy's and the Fig Tree that were once in the borough.

Parking

- Residents expressed the need for an increase in parking downtown in order to grow the downtown or fill vacancies with offices/uses that do not require much parking.
- Adding too many parking-intense uses will not work well for the borough.
- Borough has looking into renting the bank property for parking

Floodplain and Sewer Restrictions

- Floodplain issues make the permit process a bit more difficult
- No public sewer in the downtown – creates restrictions on growth in downtown.

Placemaking and Tourism

- 611 cuts through the downtown, making it more difficult to create a "Main Street" feel, as many other boroughs have.
- Beautification efforts are needed to create a more attractive downtown in the borough
- Appearance of some buildings is not inviting to visitors
- Tourists come from the train in NJ, walk over the bridge, and there is not much to catch their eye once they get into Riegelsville

## *Where We Are*

- Downtown Study (2002)
- Land use map
- Dealing with vacancies
- Lack of parking
- Sewage issues
- Looking for more of a sense of place/attraction to visitors

## *Theme Goals*

1. Create a vibrant downtown
    - Fill vacancies
    - Community events
2. Become more attractive to visitors (economic development focus too)
    - Winery Train
    - Working with other river towns
3. Create an accessible downtown for all
    - Filling in sidewalks
    - Parking

## *Opportunities and Action Steps*

- Beautification
    - Signage at both ends of downtown to create a sense of place
    - Review property maintenance codes
    - Improve streetscape along Delaware Ave and Route 611
    - Develop design guidelines for downtown
- Partnerships with surrounding river towns
    - Winery train across the river
- Potential sewer connections
    - Review options for public/community sewer which would allow for more 'intense' uses to be brought into the downtown
        - Being further reviewed in sewer section of plan
- Vacancies
    - Determine what the wants and needs of visitors and residents are to attract new businesses
    - Work with community development specialists to determine what businesses could work well
- Parking
    - Increase signage for parking in borough owned lot

February 13, 2025

# Workshop 3B: Imagining Solutions

The workshops will have facilitated discussions on specific community issues that have been identified through the planning process. We will focus our discussions on the Theme Goals and Opportunities and Action Steps. Subject matter experts will be on hand to guide our discussions on the Opportunities and Action Steps.

## Parks and Recreation

Riegelsville contains many natural resources that add to its quality of life and sense of place. These resources include the Delaware River, its floodplains and wetlands, and the Delaware Canal. The borough also contains areas of excellent soil for farming. Some of these areas have underlying carbonate geology that could potentially cause sinkhole and groundwater pollution problems for future development. The borough's parks and recreation resources include the public park, the multi-purpose trail, and the Delaware Canal State Park. The Riegelsville Borough Comprehensive Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan was completed in 2013.

### *What We Heard*

Preservation and Protection of River and Agricultural Lands

- Both river and agricultural lands are important
- River access at Canal Park
- Pedestrian bridge at south end of borough is privately owned; public access should be protected
- Ceader Family Trust Properties
  - Purchase of development rights through County Ag Preservation
  - Zoning Amendments to require larger lots (greater than 2 acres)

Parks and Recreation

- Better playground
- Adapt to users (continuing to adapt to a changing population)
- Friends of the Canal group (local organization) is strongly tied to the canal in New Hope and Yardley, rather than in the northern area where Riegelsville is located)
- 2013 Park Plan
  - Development of park near Riegelsville Trail
  - Improvements to the existing park
  - Fields
  - Playground is too small (look at Hellertown/Quakertown)
- Community/Traditions
  - Enhancement Committee: Picnics, car shows, parades, Halloween event, etc. to bring more social opportunities to the residents

### *Where We Are*

- Parks plan (2013)
- New Trails, preserved land
- Open space/Preserved land map
- Trails Map

### *Theme Goals*

1. Implement existing park plans
2. Increase access to Delaware River and Canal
3. Provide recreation opportunities for all ages and abilities
4. Continue to enhance community events and traditions

### *Opportunities and Action Steps*

Provide additional canal and river access

- Pursue pedestrian bridge from borough park to canal tow-path
- Work with Friends of Canal group to enhance efforts along the river in Riegelsville and surrounding area

Increase active recreation opportunities

- More equipment at playground in park
- Relocate baseball field from borough park so that both fields can be properly used

Hold additional community events

- Work with enhancement committee to provide more com-munity events including: car show, Halloween event, parades and picnics

Review potential opportunities for additional open space and recreation land

- Ceader Family Trust properties

# Sewer

Riegelsville Borough is served by public water and individual on-lot sewage disposal systems. Public water is received from two wells located nearby in Williams Township, Northampton County and a well located along the Delaware River near the borough's municipal park. Sewage disposal systems are either conventional septic systems, or in some cases, cesspools. Many of the systems are old and may need repair or upgrading. To maintain the effectiveness of the systems, the borough has enacted an On-Lot Sewage Disposal Management Program. One of the major limitations to new commercial development is the inability of smaller lots in the downtown area to handle increased sewage flows.

## *What We Heard*

Commercial

- Could looking for public sewer work just in the downtown? The R-3 zone is there as well with residences.
- Downtown development restricted by sewer

Residential

- Very expensive to upkeep old sewer systems
- Many on-lot sewer systems are failing; if public sewer is coming, now is a good time to do it.

Studies and feasibility

- 2018 study done
  - 28 acres in southern end of town that would be used for a community sewer system
  - Each property in the downtown would need its own individual pump to pump waste up to the community system.
- Borough needs to review the issue and investigate a Cost Benefit Analysis of a community system at this point in time

## *Theme Goals*

1. Provide affordable, sustainable, and environmentally safe sewage disposal
2. Ensure sewage disposal does not hinder economic activity
3. Determine options for future of sewer in the borough

## *Opportunities and Action Steps*

Review existing conditions

- Create an inventory of the borough's existing sewer conditions which includes an overview of individual homeowner septic system ages and quality
- Consider possibilities to enhance the downtown that do not strain the existing sewer capabilities

Evaluate potential public sewer options

- Work with outside agencies for technical assistance to research current and potential sewer options
- Conduct a Cost-Benefit Analysis to determine if long term costs of a public sewer system will outweigh the cost to residents continuing to use aging septic system infrastructure

# Resiliency

Borough residents have experienced frequent electric service interruptions from the Met-Ed distribution system. Reliable service is important to the residents and businesses of the borough. While the borough's residents enjoy the scenic and recreational resources of the Delaware River and Canal, stormwater and flooding issues have affected the borough.

## *What We Heard*

Electric service is unreliable

- Residents experience frequent power outages
- Maintenance is an issue (power lines holding up trees, ash trees impacted by EAB)
- Lack of accountability from MedED/First Energy and PUC is weak
- Can the borough and residents organize with other municipalities in the area?

Flooding from the river and canal is a problem

## *Theme Goals*

1. Ensure power interruptions are minimal
2. Protect life and property from flooding
3. Understand the community's vulnerabilities and plan for them

## *Opportunities and Action Steps*

Alternative Energy Sources

- Review zoning ordinance to ensure a variety of power sources are permitted in the borough
- Look into potential for generators for public buildings

Flood Mitigation

- Backflow valves for canal
- Stormwater Management improvements

Education and Planning

- Participate in hazard mitigation planning efforts to ensure the borough is able to receive potential state and federal funding available
- Educate residents on natural disaster preparedness