



# Englishtown SDAT

*Out of the past, into the future.*

October 2007

A Sustainable Design Assessment Team Report

**AIA** Communities by Design   
ENVISION. CREATE. SUSTAIN.

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# Introduction

In 2007 Englishtown submitted a proposal to the American Institute of Architects (AIA) for a Sustainable Design Assessment Team (SDAT) to assist the borough and its citizens in addressing key issues facing the community. The AIA accepted the proposal and, after a preliminary visit by a small group in August, a multi-disciplinary team of professionals was formed to work with the borough. From October 21-24, 2007, the AIA's SDAT held a public charrette to work with local stakeholders on analyzing the community's issues and opportunities. The SDAT team used meetings with community leaders, public input and its professional expertise to produce a series of recommendations which were presented to the community on October 24, 2007. The following report provides a more detailed version of the findings and recommendations that were presented to the community.



## The Sustainable Design Assessment Team (SDAT)

The Sustainable Design Assessment Team (SDAT) program focuses on the importance of developing sustainable communities through design. The mission of the SDAT program is to provide technical assistance and process expertise to help communities develop a vision and framework for a sustainable future. The SDAT program brings together multidisciplinary teams of professionals to work with community stakeholders and decision-makers in an intensive planning process. Teams are composed of volunteer professionals representing a range of disciplines, including architects, urban design professionals, economic development experts, land use attorneys, and others.

Today, communities face a host of challenges to long-term planning for sustainability, including limited resources and technical capacity, ineffective public processes and poor participation. The SDAT approach is designed to address many of the common challenges communities face by producing long-term sustainability plans that are realistic and reflect each community's unique context. Key features of the SDAT approach include the following:

**Customized Design Assistance.** The SDAT is designed as a customized approach to community assistance which incorporates local realities and the unique challenges and assets of each community.

**A Systems Approach to Sustainability.** The SDAT applies a systems-based approach to community sustainability, examining cross-cutting issues and relationships between issues. In order to accomplish this task, the SDAT forms multi-disciplinary teams that combine a range of disciplines and professions in an integrated assessment and design process.

**Inclusive and Participatory Processes.** Public participation is the foundation of good community design. The SDAT involves a wide range of stakeholder viewpoints and utilizes short feedback loops, resulting in sustainable decision-making that has broad public support and ownership.

**Objective Technical Expertise.** The SDAT Team is assembled to include a range of technical experts (planners, architects, economists and others) from across the country. Team Members do not accept payment for services in an SDAT. They serve in a volunteer capacity on behalf of the AIA and the partner community. In addition, team members are required to refrain from accepting business in a partner community for two years after an SDAT program. As a result, the SDAT Team has enhanced credibility with local stakeholders and can provide unencumbered technical advice.

**Cost Effectiveness.** By employing the SDAT approach, communities are able to take advantage of leveraged resources for their planning efforts. The AIA contributes up to \$15,000 in assistance for each project. In 2008, each SDAT project is estimated to cost between \$20,000-\$30,000 total. The SDAT team members volunteer their labor and expertise, allowing communities to gain immediate access to the combined technical knowledge of top-notch professionals from varied fields (that would normally be more costly). Finally, the SDAT process employs a compressed schedule and the application of innovative public participation techniques to leverage resources effectively and produce timely results.

**Results.** Many communities want to become more sustainable but are immobilized by conflicting agendas, politics, personalities, or even the overabundance of opportunity. Further, many communities have not yet taken stock of their current practices and policies within a sustainability framework; others have identified issues of concern but desire assistance in laying out a plan of action to increase sustainability. The intense SDAT process and compressed schedule allows a community to capitalize on SDAT information quickly and build momentum for implementation of its plan. The SDAT includes the delivery of a formal report and recommendations as well as a follow up assessment.

# Introduction

Communities that have participated in the SDAT program include the following:

**Alexandria Township, NJ**  
**Oklahoma City, OK**  
**Northampton, MA**  
**Pittsfield, MA**  
**Forest City, NC**  
**Cache Valley, UT**  
**Reno-Tahoe-Carson Region, NV**  
**New Orleans, LA**  
**Longview, WA**  
**Guemes Island, WA**  
**Syracuse, NY**  
**Northeast Michigan**  
**Lawrence, KS**  
**Hagerstown, MD**  
**Tucson, AZ**  
**Englishtown, NJ**  
**Dubuque, IA**  
**Culver City, CA**  
**Central City, LA**  
**Albany, NY**



The SDAT program is modeled on the Regional and Urban Design Assistance Team (R/UDAT) program, one of AIA's longest-running success stories. While the R/UDAT program was developed to provide communities with specific design solutions, the SDAT program provides broad assessments to help frame future policies or design solutions in the context of sustainability and help communities plan the first steps of implementation. Through the Design Assistance Team (DAT) program, over 500 professionals from 30 disciplines have provided more than \$3.5 million in professional pro bono services to more than 150 communities across the country. The SDAT program leverages the pivotal role of the architectural community in the creation and support of sustainable livable communities.

***For more information about the SDAT program or the Center for Communities By Design, go to [www.aia.org/livable](http://www.aia.org/livable)***



## The Englishtown SDAT

The Sustainable Design Assessment Team (SDAT) project focused on several critical elements:

- The Downtown and Main Street
- Economic Development
- Land Use and Transportation
- Natural Resources and Heritage

### *Englishtown Today*

The Borough of Englishtown is one of 53 municipalities in Monmouth County with a total land area of approximately 0.57 square miles and a population of 1,933 (Monmouth County 2007 Estimate). It is completely surrounded by Manalapan Township, consisting of approximately 39,370 residents. Over the past decade, Englishtown Borough had the highest growth rate in the region, at 39 percent. In absolute numbers, however, its population growth of 496 persons was far less than surrounding Manalapan Township which saw an increase of close to 6,700 residents during that same decade.

The population lives in a diverse arrangement of 678 different kinds of households contained in a land-locked arrangement with all the essential ingredients it needs to create the sustainable future it desires. The community has outstanding natural resources—including acres of protected open space, a lake, streams, and an under-used community park. It has a fully developed physical infrastructure—including a variety of housing options, commercial, retail, office and industrial businesses, suitable roads, satisfactory municipal structures and public infrastructure.

The community is blessed with an engaged and active citizenry, including volunteers who help run the government and oversee provision of municipal services; business owners who donate their products and services to the local government while working to build a viable enterprise, and community leaders—of religious institutions, political office, as well as plain old residents—who step up in times of need to offer free parking, a helping hand and plenty of extra hours in late night meetings.

Englishtown was an early “crossroads” community first settled in the 1700’s, developing into a prosperous country town into the 1800’s and 1900’s. Small scale industry also developed in the mid 1900’s, and included a variety of services and goods. The American Revolutionary War has a significant historical connection to the town and immediate area. Englishtown was settled in 1726, and over its almost 300 year history the town’s fortunes have risen and fallen. In its recent history, the community has gone from being the center of the larger community of Manalapan to now being perceived as a “knock-off” remnant of its former self. The nearby flea market and drag racing track—both named after the community, but not actually part of it, seem to be hindering the community’s reputation in surrounding communities, while at the same time, serving as the only things that “put Englishtown on the map” with area tourists and other travelers.



# Introduction

## *Downtown and Main Street*

Englishtown's main street is the essence, backbone, and core of the town. It could and should serve as the nucleus and catalyst for Englishtown's identity and vitality. At the present time it is underutilized, there is a mix of use and a variety of building types, and it is constrained at each end by infringing development, as well as by periodic vehicular congestion. There is no sense of "town" or Center."

## *Economic Development and Historic Preservation*

Englishtown served as a staging ground for Continental troops during the Battle of Monmouth, the largest one-day battle of the war. The Village Inn on Main Street was used by George Washington during and after the battle. Washington also spent time at the nearby residence of Moses Laird on Main Street. However, the borough hasn't leveraged its historic assets and authentic heritage as a platform for the economic revitalization of its main street corridor. Englishtown also faces challenges regarding the need to preserve and enhance its unique historic assets. The borough does not have a local preservation ordinance to regulate and protect places of significance in the community. The borough also needs to improve local connections to other regional assets, such as the nearby battlefield park. There are several businesses in the area – mostly small – and a strong entrepreneurial spirit among the local merchants. Englishtown once had an industrial center and major labor force but little of this remains locally. Business enterprise appears to be fragmented and there is no apparent business association.





# Introduction



Heavy Traffic at the Village Inn



Downtown Traffic

## *Transportation and Land Use*

Regional growth patterns are exerting increasing pressures on Englishtown's local transportation infrastructure. While residential growth has remained modest in the borough, neighboring jurisdictions have experienced significant residential development that has fueled congestion in the borough's downtown. The Borough contains 10 zoning districts and has in place an informal "Master Plan". It is also shown as a "Designated Village Center" in the New Jersey Development and Redevelopment Plan. Following state guidelines, a "center" is defined as "a compact form of development with one or more cores (pedestrian-oriented areas of civic or commercial uses) and residential neighborhoods." Yet, there appears to be no overarching organizational structure for land use. There is a variety of housing, including low to moderate income, and senior facilities. The Borough is currently pursuing adoption of required elements under New Jersey's Cross Acceptance process of regionalism regarding growth and development review. Transportation problems abound – specifically with inadequate parking, and congestion along Main Street (and elsewhere). This is particularly apparent during "rush hour." Monmouth County planners have developed several plans to ease regional congestion, including improvements to major transit corridors and a proposal to develop light rail commuter lines on an existing freight rail line that runs along the southern border of Englishtown. A series of small transportation improvements have been identified as interests for the borough in the Monmouth County Development Plan, including sidewalks, improved signalized intersections, off-street parking, and an assessment of weekend traffic congestion.

# Introduction

## *Natural Resources*

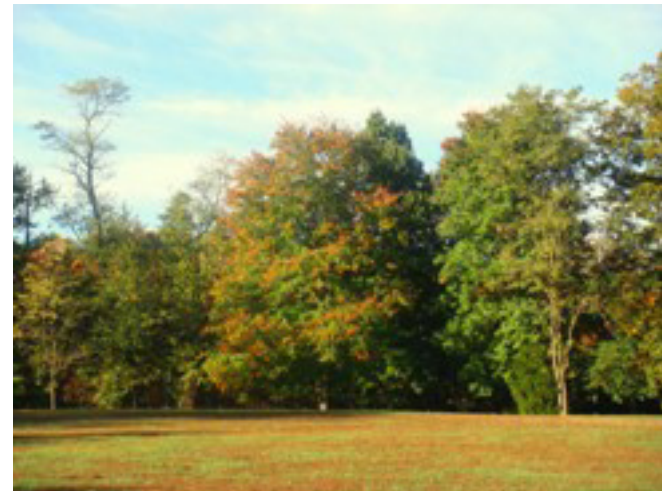
Englishtown is blessed with many natural assets relative to its small size. The jurisdiction is .5 miles square, but contains a lakefront park, recreational fields and significant amounts of undeveloped land that is zoned for conservation. However, existing parks are underutilized due to accessibility issues and a lack of clear linkages to other natural attractions.

## *Regionalism and Sustainability*

Englishtown is a small community that is increasingly affected by neighboring township and county activities. The challenge for the borough is to manage growth and change in a sustainable fashion – maintaining and improving upon its unique identity, while collaborating with and assessing the growth/development patterns of the broader community and region which surrounds it. New Jersey is one of many states that have created an Office of Smart Growth. The stated mission of the Office of Smart Growth is to “plan a sustainable and prosperous future for the state.” Under the direction of this office, the state has initiated a Cross Acceptance process through which local master planning is linked to multi-jurisdictional agreements at the regional level. The process will culminate in the production of a State Development and Redevelopment Plan that will provide policy guidance to officials at the state and local level. Therefore, Englishtown’s place in the regional and state framework is an important additional framework to consider as the borough pursues a variety of strategies to address its critical issues.

Englishtown is interested in maintaining its connection to this history, but also re-establishing itself as a vital “crossroads” community, especially in light of recent development and growth by Manalapan Township.

Capturing the essence of the Borough – what its history has offered, and what sustainable direction it can and should take – was the focus on the Englishtown SDAT project.



# Introduction

## Key Recommendations

The Englishtown SDAT addressed the elements of the environment, economy and equity in a holistic fashion – specifically, how the downtown, economic development, natural and historic resources, land use and transportation can form the basis of a unified strategy that fosters sustainable growth for Englishtown, and how this set of critical areas provides the foundation for the borough to partner successfully with the surrounding township and region. The SDAT Team concluded that Englishtown should apply a phased approach to its implementation process. Therefore, the key recommendations were structured around things that can be pursued ‘Today’ (immediately), things that should be implemented ‘tomorrow’ (the short and medium term future), and things that should be goals for the long-term. The following framework includes some of the key recommendations by the team:



### *Today*

**Create a Bus Stop.** The borough needs to petition for a bus stop along the existing transit lines that run through the borough. Following the SDAT process, the borough received offers of assistance from New Jersey state representatives to work with the borough on establishing a bus stop along the main street corridor.

**Develop an Historic Preservation Ordinance.** Englishtown needs to create a regulatory framework that can serve as a tool to preserve and maintain its important historic resources.

**Initiate the Plan Endorsement Process.** The Plan Endorsement process is a critical initial step into qualifying for state aid and assistance that the borough can leverage to take on its critical challenges.

**Establish the Englishtown ‘vision’.** The borough must re-establish its identity and vision for the future, building upon its important heritage and working toward an integrated effort to create the borough of the future. A common vision that shares widespread support in the community is of critical importance as the borough forms the partnerships that will make it successful in the future.

**Establish an Economic Development Merchant Committee.** The main street businesses, and the local merchants in other key economic areas in town, should work to establish a formal partnership that can analyze the current economic situation and build partnerships and strategies to enhance the local economic climate moving forward.

**Invest in enhancing the Main Street experience.** Englishtown’s main street can form the basis for a vibrant community center that supports the local economy, serves as an important gathering place, and enhances the borough’s image in the region.

# Introduction

## *Tomorrow*

Prepare a Sign Inventory. The borough currently has limited signage and wayfinding, and would benefit from a coordinated effort to map out its existing inventory and identify strategies to enhance the borough experience for visitors.

**Undergo Traffic Calming and Pedestrian Improvements.** Englishtown experiences fairly severe traffic on its modest main street corridor, with extreme street speeds and traffic congestion. The borough should invest in a range of traffic calming investments and enhancements to the pedestrian experience to improve the downtown, strengthen the local economy, and provide a vital community space for interaction.

**Establish the Village Center Designation.** The borough should begin working toward establishment of the formal Village Center designation to position itself for further investment in public infrastructure improvements and planning assistance.

**Hire a professional planner.** The ability to invest in and hire a professional planner for the borough would be a significant accomplishment for Englishtown that would have immediate benefits in the borough's ability and capacity to establish successful planning initiatives that continue to build on the ideas citizens put importance in during the SDAT process.

**Attain a Main Street Designation.** The Main Street corridor in Englishtown would benefit from becoming an official Main Street program, and could help it attract additional support and expertise as it pursues enhancements to the downtown.

**Conduct Market Analysis/Retail Recruitment Plan.** The downtown would be well served by a more formal market analysis of the retail environment in the region, and a subsequent retail recruitment strategy that will bring in additional retailers to help provide a vibrant mix of shopping and a critical mass of existing retail opportunities to attract residents and visitors.



# Introduction

## *Long-Term*

**Establish Sustainable Businesses.** The borough could provide incentives to attract more sustainable businesses, and to help convert existing businesses to sustainable practices. Englishtown could become a regional model for sustainable business and an attraction for those interested in healthy communities.

**Offer permanent trails and nature corridors.** The borough should consider bicycle and pedestrian paths to connect existing parks more effectively to each other and to recreational parks in neighboring jurisdictions.

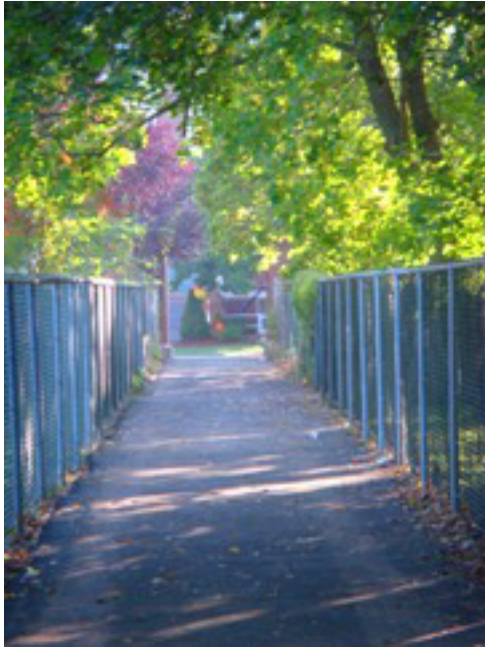
**Ongoing management of downtown.** As the downtown becomes more vibrant and healthy, the borough should establish a formal management program to maintain the quality experience for users of the main street and downtown and preserve it as an important defining feature of Englishtown.

**Commuter Rail.** As regional growth continues, and the rate of commuter traffic continues to increase, the borough should pursue regional mass transit opportunities to reduce its dependence on automobiles. The proposed commuter rail line at the town's southern border provides an excellent opportunity to reduce local residents' use of vehicles to commute.

**An energy efficient, carbon neutral community.** Englishtown should ultimately pursue becoming a carbon neutral community by signing onto existing commitments and making long-term investments in sustainability.

**Demonstrate, Educate, Celebrate.** Englishtown should seek to serve as a model for its citizens and residents, continually celebrating its heritage and unique value as a community.

In the following sections, the critical project areas and SDAT team recommendations will be explored in greater detail.



# Downtown

A downtown's physical quality plays an important role in consumers' decisions about where to shop for goods and services. In the last several decades the suburban shopping mall has eclipsed the traditional downtown as the place where most Americans prefer to shop. Shopping malls owe their success in part to a highly controlled environment where everything from lighting and signs to window displays and the design of shopping bags are engineered to boost sales. Mall designers employ sophisticated marketing tactics to ensure that customers are visually stimulated while walking in order to spend more time and money at the retail outlets contained therein. Ironically, the mall owes much of its success to traditional downtown design. Mall designers have for years used many of the same techniques gleaned from traditional storefront design, namely large glass windows to display wares and a consistent rhythm of doorways and windows that encourage browsing and draw customers inside. Today, many of the newest malls employ the "downtown look" and some even have gone to the extent of recreating traditional downtown buildings in an ever-evolving effort to boost revenue in an increasingly competitive market.

While malls may be visually stimulating, there are no distinct qualities that differentiate one from another. A community's unique design characteristics – the elements that reflect its past and explain the ways in which it developed – are found downtown, not at the mall. City squares, parks, public buildings, monuments alleys and traditional commercial buildings are the elements that physically define the town. Each downtown is a one-of-a-kind expression of its community's heritage, unlike any other anywhere in the world. It cannot be duplicated. Once gone it can never be replaced.

There is no single formula for downtown design. Rather, building owners and residents should appreciate and build on the strengths of downtown, whatever they are. Focusing on a town's distinctive assets is a way for those interesting in promoting a town to set it apart from other places and offers a chance for visitors reconnect with the unique historical and environmental characteristics that helped shape a place. Many downtowns, however, suffer from changes that are incompatible with the existing physical environment, and these changes often act to disconnect people and community. Insensitive alterations to buildings, heavy-handed approaches to managing traffic and parking, and the needless demolition of historic resources have done much to harm communities. Fortunately, many insensitive design treatments are reversible. Inappropriate coverings on historic buildings can be easily removed to reveal the intricate craftsmanship of the original architecture. Parking and traffic patterns can be changed to suit the needs of a traditional downtown, and derelict buildings can be returned to their former glory with sensitive rehabilitation. As long as these new alterations reinforce the town's defining characteristics and are well designed, they almost always lead to an improved environment – one that reflects the present as well as the past.

## *Elements of Downtown Design*

Downtown design encompasses many things, but for the purposes of this report is limited to :

**Streetscape.** Streetscape includes sidewalks, streets, lights, crosswalks, benches, tree plantings, overhead utilities and other elements that support downtown pedestrian and vehicular activities.

**Parking.** Parking areas include both on and off-street spaces. Parking areas may be public or private.

**Buildings.** Buildings of all ages and architectural styles contribute to the look and feel of downtown. Storefront location, building height, setback and window and door openings all create a sense of rhythm and continuity along the street, visually tying buildings together in a cohesive streetscape.

**Signs.** Signs are informational keys that cue visitors and customers to the location of a business, institution, or office. According to A Handbook for the Preservation and Improvement of New Jersey Historic Commercial Architecture, “signage is primarily informational and should be clear and simple.”

## Strengths/Assets

The three character defining features in downtown Englishtown are Lake Weameconk, Sanford Memorial Park and the Village Inn. The lake and the park provide recreational space for the citizens of Englishtown, and the Village Inn, a structure dating to 1723?? is a major historic site directly related to George Washington and the nearby Battle of Monmouth. The fact that all three sites are within easy walking distance

of each other is a blessing for Englishtown. The downtown historic district, with its quaint shops, restaurants, and churches connects these sites and forms a walkable corridor between them. Because of its central location, downtown needs to be functional and attractive, catering to the needs of businesses and citizens by providing adequate parking, traffic flow and pedestrian amenities.

## Streetscape Design

Why is walking a pleasure in some downtowns and a chore in others? The quality and appeal of businesses along the sidewalk is one factor, but perhaps of equal importance is how the community values pedestrian activity compared to that of motor vehicles.

What is the pedestrian experience in downtown Englishtown? Are vehicles always given the highest priority? To those attending the charrette at the Village Inn the answer was resoundingly clear—pedestrians are not a priority. During charrette-conducted community interviews, the number one concern of citizens was pedestrian safety followed closely by a perceived lack of parking downtown. Several factors contribute to this perception such as insufficient crosswalks, traffic signals timed in favor of moving vehicles, and fast moving traffic turning into crosswalks. The existing streetscape design does not provide a safe and aesthetic means of linking locations within downtown Englishtown. Sidewalks are present, but downtown pedestrian amenities are sparse and need to be enhanced if Englishtown wants to create a more economically sustainable downtown—a downtown where walking is encouraged and visitors feel welcomed.

# Downtown

## *Traffic Calming*

Pedestrians find walking next to fast-moving vehicles with no visual or physical separation unappealing. Good streetscape design allows vehicle access and parking, but prevents automobiles from dominating the streetscape by providing physical and visual buffers between sidewalks and traffic lanes. A buffer can be a tree, a parked car, or a newspaper rack – anything that shields people from moving vehicles.

One technique of calming vehicular traffic and making walking safer involves the use of bumpouts, an extension of the sidewalk into the street. Often used at corners and midblock crosswalks, bumpouts provide space for tree plantings and street furniture and allow pedestrian access. Bumpouts are safer for pedestrians because they reduce the distance of street crossings at crosswalks. Studies show that bumpouts with street trees are effective because approaching drivers perceive a narrower roadway and reduce speed accordingly.

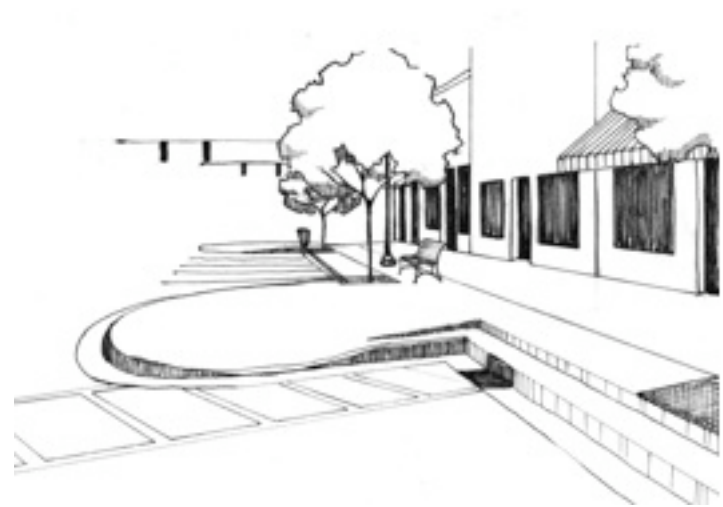


illustration of bumpout.



# Downtown

## *Trees – Visual Preferences Among Downtown Consumers*



Street trees are shown along Main Street in this historic photo, c. 1915.

Historic photos show that Englishtown was once home to a fine canopy of shade trees. These trees shaded sidewalks and helped make downtown a thriving center of commerce. As time passed, Englishtown lost its street trees, and presently many areas of downtown are devoid of any trees or greenery. Shade trees are an important piece of any downtown streetscape because they have the effect of softening the streetscape environment.

A study of the effects of shade trees on consumers' shopping preferences in Athens, Georgia found that the presence of a near continuous canopy of shade trees was associated with higher visual quality ratings of the downtown retail district.

Researchers showed local business owners and residents various images of downtown Athens. Some images showed a mature streetscape environment where large shade trees were present. Other images showed areas devoid of canopy. Respondents consistently favored those areas with a near continuous canopy of street trees over those images where street trees were absent.

District visitors also perceived the streetscape canopy to be an integral amenity of the city's shopping environment and stated that they would be more willing to frequent area businesses if a continuous tree canopy was present. The psychological appeal of trees to attract consumers to a downtown area cannot be overlooked.

Since there is a historic precedent for tree canopy in downtown Englishtown, trees should be considered an essential piece of any downtown redevelopment plans. Englishtown residents and business owners would benefit from a well-planned street tree planting program utilizing the latest in sustainable planting techniques. Structural soil trenches that allow for proper drainage and root growth are a good way to ensure the long-term health of street trees. The borough should also consider the services of a qualified arborist or the local cooperative extension service in selecting proper tree species.

# Downtown



Proposed parallel parking along Main Street.

## *Parking*

Parking is one of the most discussed issues among downtown merchants and business owners. Generally, complaints involve the amount of parking, but more commonly the problem is parking management.

There are two kinds of parking, on-street and off-street. On-street parking allows a limited number of people to park in front of their destination. Because of the high value of on-street parking, merchants and employees should be discouraged from parking in these spots so spaces can be kept available for shoppers. As stated previously, cars parked in these spaces also serve the purpose of visually and physically shielding pedestrians from moving vehicles in the street.

How does this apply to Main Street in Englishtown? Parking was clearly a concern voiced during the charrette. One quick solution would be to stripe the parallel parking spaces on Main Street, between Tennent Avenue and Water Street. Currently, parking is allowed there, but is somewhat dangerous because drivers may not be aware that parking is allowed. The addition of parallel parking not only provides additional spaces in front of businesses. The buffer of parking between pedestrians and moving traffic may provide visitors with the incentive they need to spend more time and money in an environment where they feel comfortable.

# Downtown

Over the long term, the Borough of Englishtown may consider the possibility of widening existing travel lanes along Main Street by two to three feet in either direction to avoid possible traffic conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles. Realigning the west side of Main Street between Water Street and Tennant Avenue and acquiring approximately 3-4 feet of property there can achieve this extra space.



Main Street streetscape concept showing parallel parking.

# Downtown

## *Off-street parking*

Off-street parking provides spaces for all-day parking by downtown employees as well as short-term parking for shoppers who cannot find a parking space on Main Street. Usually these parking spaces are located behind or to the side of downtown businesses. Ideally, parking lots should be close to downtown, clearly marked with signs, clean, and well lit. In Englishtown the existing parking lot adjacent to the Antique Mall, while convenient, is poorly designed and should be improved.

Many off-street parking lots can serve multiple businesses and users. The parking lot behind Frank's Church is well occupied on Sundays for mass; however, it sits virtually empty during the week when downtown businesses experience their greatest parking needs. Englishtown should encourage shared parking downtown with a clear, concise signage program. Businesses and institutions could be encouraged to participate in shared parking through incentives such as free Borough services like snow removal and leaf pick-up.

The charrette team identified several areas suitable for off-street parking that are convenient to downtown, but currently underutilized:

- Shared use of The Board of Education Building parking
- Expansion of the parking lot behind the Municipal Building to include the land behind Frank's Church and other adjacent parcels
- Redevelopment as parking of the large industrial area behind Rick's Saddle Shop on Water Street
- Redevelopment as parking of the area next to Sanford Park, adjacent to the water tower
- Improvement of the current parking lot on the south shore of Lake Weamaconk



# Downtown

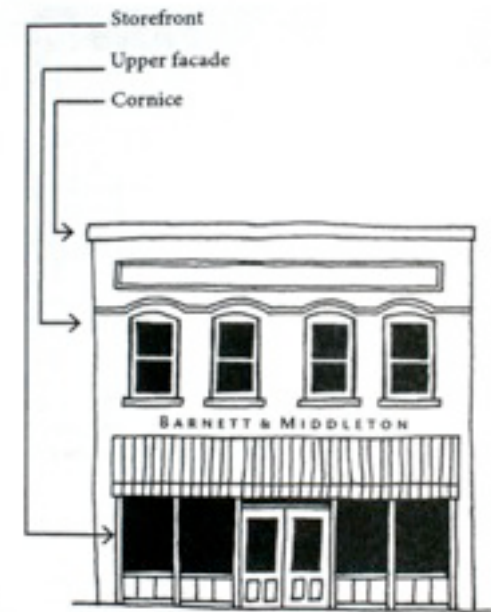
## *Downtown Buildings*

Most downtown commercial buildings built before World War II have facades consisting of three parts: a street level storefront, an upper facade, and a cornice. Each part is critical to the whole; if one is missing, the building will present an odd or incomplete appearance.

The storefront, essentially a large opening in the facade filled with glass, displays the store's products and provides access to the interior. The upper facade, the area between the storefront and the cornice, is often the most visible part of a building. This is where much of the architectural ornament will be found, features such as arches, stone detailing, and insets for business signs. At the top of the upper facade, the cornice provides a cap, a finishing touch, and a statement of completeness. Buildings of a century ago often had elaborate cornices, some extending well beyond wall surface.

According to Main Street New Jersey Design Guidelines,

If the historic storefront still exists, it should be retained and maintained. If the storefront has been altered but still retains some original features or fabric, new work on the storefront should focus on reversing inappropriate alterations. If a storefront has been completely replaced, new construction should be designed in relation to the building as a whole. If historic photographs are available, they should guide the design of the new storefront. In the absence of documentation, the storefront should be compatible with the rest of the building in materials, style and detailing.



The Three-part Facade.

# Downtown

## *Englishtown Downtown Architecture*

Englishtown is blessed with many architectural gems, many dating to before the Revolutionary War. A few buildings, like the Village Inn even played prominent roles in that war. As a result, these historic sites have been lovingly cared for and preserved by citizens. Downtown also has a healthy mix of commercial and residential buildings, some more architecturally significant than others, but all of them important to the history of the Borough.

One discouraging trend observed by the charrette team was the widespread use of vinyl siding on many of Englishtown's downtown historic buildings. Vinyl (and aluminum) siding diminishes the character of historic buildings by obscuring underlying architectural detailing. Changes to the character defining features of a historic building, such as distinctive clapboarding, scrollwork or decorative trim, have a negative impact on more than just that building; they also diminish the visual relationship between buildings in the historic district.

Owners that favor vinyl siding often cite the cost saving benefits of this product versus repainting, when in fact, painting may be a cheaper long-term solution. "A normal application of aluminum or vinyl siding is likely to cost from two to three times as much as a good paint job on wood siding...on wood two coats of good quality paint on a properly prepared surface can last from 8 to 10 years, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture...aluminum and vinyl siding should last 15 to 21 years before requiring additional maintenance." Vinyl siding is a short-term solution without long-term economic benefit.

Arguments that favor the use of vinyl siding also ignore the larger tourism and economic potential of a properly rehabilitated and aesthetically pleasing historic district. A district where the historic architectural features of buildings are visible and cared for is more appealing to visitors.



The Village Inn



An example of a parking sign.



An example of several types of appropriate signage.

## *Signs*

Business signs are often the most prominent visual elements downtown. Signs on historic buildings should be of a reasonable size, shape, color, material and placement. They should not overpower the buildings on which they are mounted. Public signs denote where important public sites like municipal parking lots and buildings are located. Public signs may also illustrate the locations of private businesses. All signs, public and private, should adhere to design standards agreed upon by the community and business leaders.

According to New Jersey Main Street Design Standards:

signage can be architecturally centered above the storefront bays in the 'signband' area of the storefront's cornice entablature. Hanging signs are acceptable but they may be obscured to the pedestrian by awnings and other signs. Simple identification signage can also be placed on the valence of an awning. A line of signage painted along the base of the shop window will effectively identify the products sold therein (and can then be reinforced by the actual products displayed above in the window). Wood or metal signs are appropriate in a sign band; plastic signs and internally lighted signs are not historically or aesthetically appropriate.

# Downtown

## *After the Sun Goes Down on Main Street*

One subject that affects the economic vitality of any downtown historic district is how pedestrians feel after dark. Do people shy away from downtown at night because they feel unsafe? Do visitors complain that the streetscape is dark?

Pedestrian scale street lighting is important to the continued economic viability of downtown Englishtown. Visitors should feel safe enough to visit the downtown area after sunset to continue their shopping and visit restaurants and cafes. Existing vehicular lighting on Main Street does not foster such activity. While the roadway is lighted, visitors and downtown employees may not perceive sidewalks and nearby parking areas as safe, enjoyable places to linger during the evening.



Shoppers lingering after dark in well lit commercial district.



# Downtown



Downtown Lambertville during a holiday parade.

## Recommendations

### *Short Term*

Englishtown has many of the ingredients for a successful, healthy and vibrant downtown. It has numerous historic and natural resources located within easy walking distance of each other and energetic and engaged citizens.

One of the first tasks that local elected officials and citizens should undertake involves exploring other successful historic downtowns in New Jersey. Local leaders should see what works elsewhere, what does not, and be prepared to judge the appropriateness of those successes for downtown Englishtown. A cursory examination of nearby small towns revealed that Lambertville, New Jersey might make a good first stop on this tour. Lambertville is small, but its citizens seem to be making the most out of their downtown.

Englishtown should also consider membership in the New Jersey Main Street Program. Access to this network of downtown programs will provide valuable information and support services. Membership perks include local conferences and trainings on the Main Street Four Point Approach to downtown revitalization and participation in the annual National Main Street Conference.

# Downtown

## *Easy Streetscape Solutions*

Short term solutions for downtown include:

Striping parallel parking spaces along Main Street between Tennent Avenue and Water Street

Re-striping existing crosswalks downtown and adding a mid-block crosswalk on Main Street at Hamilton Avenue

These are easy first steps that will slow traffic, provide more parking and create a more walkable downtown.



Proposed view at Tennent Avenue and Main Street showing building improvements and new sidewalks.

## *Longer Term*

The Borough of Englishtown should pursue New Jersey Department of Transportation (TE—Transportation Enhancement) funding for downtown streetscape improvements. Across the country, this is one of the most utilized funding sources for streetscape projects. This program requires a twenty percent local match to state funding of up to one million dollars. Typical improvements include new sidewalks, utility burial, pedestrian lighting, traffic calming measures and street trees plantings.

Preservation of historic resources like Lake Weamaconk, Sanford Park, and the Village Inn is already underway. The Borough should also consider protecting other downtown buildings and sites by creating a locally designated historic district. This process typically involves the creation of downtown design guidelines and design review within the designated historic district by a Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) staffed by local volunteers.

## *2026*

Looking to Englishtown's tricentennial in 2026 and beyond, there is potential for new downtown construction that is compatible with the historic district. The Borough should strive to create a critical mass of downtown building stock that is able to support a healthy mix of retail and service oriented businesses. An important corner where new construction should be considered is at the corner of Main Street and Tennent Avenue. This is a gateway into downtown and should reflect the community's goal of enhanced economic vitality, heritage tourism and pedestrian-oriented design.



Proposed view looking east down Tennent Avenue.

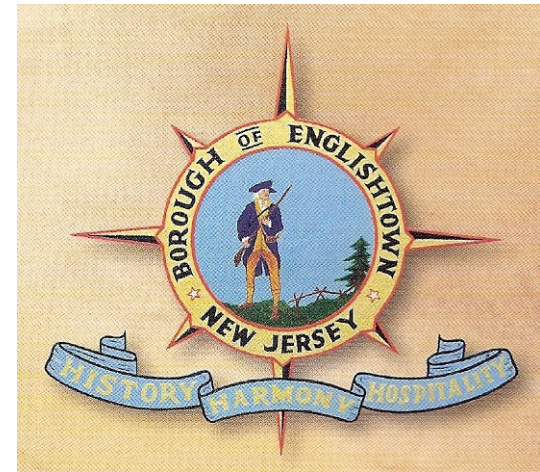
# Economic Development

## Creating a Vibrant Downtown Business District

An economically strong downtown is comprised of buildings that are occupied with highest and best use occupants. In addition, a significant residential component exists, both within the commercial district and closely adjacent to it, to complement out-of-town shoppers and ensure steady patronizing of the businesses. Businesses reflect goods and services that meet customer needs and preferences and are supported by market conditions. Further, business synergy is created by the right mix and placement of goods and services within the district. This synergy creates favorable conditions and convenience for shoppers and brings the “value-added” component necessary to move some marginal, yet desirable businesses toward success and move successful businesses to become more profitable and perhaps even expand.

Ideally, one or more market niches are developed within the commercial district to direct downtown business growth. The niche is built with consideration of the current business mix, and upon locational, cultural, demographic, and other market assets and advantages over other areas in the region. Examples of market niches include arts & culture, businesses to accommodate a moderate income Latino or Hispanic customer base, or an existing group of wedding businesses, sports and leisure or home products, for instance, that form a cluster appealing to a specific customer.

This section offers observations about current downtown conditions in Englishtown, with emphasis on the downtown business environment, and will integrate recommendations toward creating a vibrant business district and identifying potential market niches.



# Economic Development

## Strengths and Assets

### *Human Assets*

The most significant assets necessary for a community seeking to proactively plan for development are those stakeholders that are already invested and those who will make private philosophical and financial investments in the town. These include town and town council representatives, residents, business and property owners, real estate brokers, and others. Englishtown has an engaged group of stakeholders and citizenry that are supported by town, county and state resources that encourage smart growth, seek enhancement of place, and value downtown revitalization. A very large number of these stakeholders were present during the SDAT visit, which the SDAT team believes is an indicator of their interest in the future of the borough.

Another human asset of Englishtown is the nearby residential population. Census 2000 customer demographic figures indicate that 33% are age 35-55; 20% have children. More importantly, there are many new families with a “high level of education”; and the median household income is above the NJ average at \$77,000. Thus a strong base of potential customers appears to exist. Understanding and tapping in to the desires and preferences of this population as well as researching current availability of goods and services desired by this population will be integral to identifying a potential market niche and creating a strong, successful business mix in Englishtown. (This understanding will require additional targeted market research using primary and syndicated data which is beyond the scope of this SDAT visit.)



# Economic Development

## *Physical/Community Assets*

As previously mentioned, several of the primary physical/community assets of Englishtown include Lake Weamaconk, Sanford Memorial Park, the Village Inn, the creek that extends to North Main Street, and a potential bike trail within forested areas and near waterways that could encircle a large part of the downtown. Looking beyond Englishtown's central business district, historic Battleground Park is a significant cultural amenity that likely attracts both a local and regional audience. Boating, fishing, biking, walking are current and potential recreational activities in and around the central business district. These sports-, health-, and culturally-minded people comprise a significant customer group that could be developed to support existing and new downtown businesses, which suggests that a potential market niche should be considered upon development and linking of these physical assets. This niche could include items such as sporting goods, local handcrafted and regionally inspired gifts, historic and cultural activities, and organic foods, clothing and household products.



Potential Bed and Breakfast across from Hamilton Street.

# Economic Development

## *Business Assets*

Central business district assets include several well-established destination businesses, such as Rick's Saddle Shop, The Wood Shop, Fireplaces of America, Country Animal Clinic, and The Hanging Place. There are also numerous businesses that serve the local community, including restaurants/take-out food businesses (serving Chinese, Italian, Polish; sub shop, bakery, ice cream, breakfast fare), pet care, a laundromat, a liquor store that surprisingly sells a variety of convenience items, and others. A business park with a combination of retail and wholesale business exists, although it may not be leveraging its full potential for customers and product mix with downtown businesses. Finally, the presence of several significant historic residences dotted throughout the town warrants exploration of "bed and breakfast" opportunities, one specifically being on Main Street across from Hamilton Street.



Fireplaces of America



Rick's Saddle Shop

# Economic Development

## Obstacles & Impediments

While there are several obstacles and impediments to realizing strong business development in Englishtown, many of these issues can be addressed reasonably simply in the near- and long term timeframe. Others will take concerted effort, time and resources as they are more complex. It should be kept in mind that strong downtown business districts are managed over time to insure success.

An articulated, unified vision for the downtown is absent in Englishtown. When a majority of downtown stakeholders in Englishtown were asked to offer compelling reasons for a visitor or business prospect to come to Englishtown, they were unable to satisfactorily provide any. When asked about downtown “anchors” or destinations, they typically responded that “the racetrack and flea market are what Englishtown is known for.” Interestingly, neither of these attractions is actually located in the Borough of Englishtown. Development of a vision with town-wide input by downtown stakeholders is critical to proactive development of the downtown business district as well as the surrounding area.

As previously stated, several challenges concerned stakeholders. One was the presence of traffic from the race track and flea market, although some considered it an opportunity to cultivate a pool of new customers (and thus potentially a market niche.) Daily traffic was also a concern, stakeholders citing the large number of commuters and speed of travelers. Parking was another common concern due to limited parking areas and the narrowness of Main Street. In the near term, additional parking may be gained through coordinated use of church, bank, and industrial/retail park parking lots with significant promotion of this parking availability through signage and marketing.(trash cans out night before pick up.)

An additional impediment to Englishtown’s ability to develop a strong, steady customer base to support retail is that the business district currently lacks a critical mass of retail opportunities sufficient to both attract customers and give them reasons to stay for longer periods of time. Recent retail development on Wilson Avenue at the north end of Main Street includes a Quick Chek and strip shopping center with Dunkin Donuts, Trattoria Italian restaurant, a dance studio, etc., is not currently “connected” with retail in the central business district. A long portion of Main Street is inactive for retail, as it is undeveloped or is occupied with something other than retail. Thus shoppers are forced to choose one area over the other if they are parking only once which represents missed opportunities to gain retail sales.





# Economic Development

Furthermore, several downtown business operations at present are not favorable and are thus not promoting what one would expect for any successful retail “destination”, such one would find in Princeton or Lambertville. These involve issues such as dark or stagnant window displays, ineffective and excessive signage (that blatantly violates the town’s signage ordinance), trash cans visible well before and after actual pick-up, businesses largely closed at night, and lack of parking or wayfinding cues.

Beyond the need to address these types of business and downtown operations is the critical need to address infrastructure that customers of all ages and incomes now broadly expect in a first-class downtown, such as townwide WiFi or wireless Internet access.

A final impediment to reformulating a “vibrant, new Englishtown” involves the presences of several negative perceptions of the town, such as “the area is unsafe” and it “appeals to only low income.” In addition, there is concern that communication between the town and the business community is lacking and that the town is not “business friendly” using issues such as the length of time and information available about permitting, demolition, construction, etc. as examples of the difficulty of getting projects underway. Are these real issues, perceived issues, or both? These issues were brought up repeatedly by stakeholders.

Finally, Englishtown does not have a comprehensive plan to recruit appropriate preferred and sustainable businesses. In the absence of a unified plan for both business retention and recruitment, existing businesses will independently “do the best they can” and the retail mix will be shaped by the fluctuating market. This shaping “by happenstance” is not likely to bring highest and best use of properties or synergy of businesses that could be realized if proactive, solid plans, and someone to implement them, were in place.



# Economic Development

## Visions/Opportunities

Several opportunities exist for Englishtown, and they have potential to significantly expand the downtown business operations. These opportunities involve building vacancies, increasing retail area, and packaging “experiential” opportunities for day-trippers and overnight tourists to “linger longer” in Englishtown.

### *Building Vacancies*

While building vacancy in the business district is generally low, several key vacancies at entry points to the business district exist and present significant opportunities to add value to the existing business mix: from the north, a gas station property; from the south, a historic residence/décor shop with outbuildings; from the east, a bank at corner of Tennent and Main. In addition, two Manalapan/Englishtown Regional School District buildings (54 Main Street, between Water and Pine) may become available and present particular rehabilitation opportunity, considering structural integrity of the historic buildings, and likely presence of an auditorium, cafeteria(s), and perhaps even elevators.

Current ownership and leasing/development of these five properties, as well as the potential bed and breakfast locations, should be monitored immediately and closely. Establishing relationships with the owners and sharing plans about Englishtown’s vision and desired business mix is essential to ensure growth and development “by choice, not by chance.” The business park may present additional opportunity to expand Englishtown’s business offerings, while expanding the customer base. Both vision and plans for a desired businesses mix must be developed in the context of community-wide input and targeted market analysis.



# Economic Development

## *Increased Retail Opportunities*

To address Englishtown's need to offer a critical mass of retail opportunities sufficient to both attract customers and give them reasons to stay for longer periods of time, consider future retail development. The re-zoning of North Main Street between Pine Street and Gordon's Corner Road from R-MD (residential medium density) to accommodate commercial use should be considered, although commercial use should be kept within existing residential structures or infill that is compatible in size and scale to the existing. Current historic residences could then be used for specialty retail, such as gourmet kitchen shop, Internet cafe, a small scale book or music store with live entertainment, crafts, etc., which would activate an otherwise underused retail opportunity.

Further, if the previously mentioned school administration buildings were retrofitted for restaurant, theatre, or retail use, there would be additional parking and virtually uninterrupted retail offerings activating the entire strip between the north end of Main Street at Gordon's Corner Road and the south end at Park Avenue.



Gioielli Craft and Bead Store in Truckee, CA, a business in a residential building

# Economic Development

## *Packaging Opportunities to “Experience Englishtown”*

Look for ways to deliberately connect the previously mentioned physical assets (Battleground Park, Lake Weamaconk, Sanford Memorial Park, the Village Inn, the creek, and a potential bike trail) and then package and market these assets.

For instance, consider a package called “Experience an Enticing Weekend in Englishtown!”: The presence of the bed and breakfast inns, several good eating/dining options, the nearby Battleground Park, a bike rental (or bikes available at the bed and breakfast) and gift shops appealing to the heritage cultural tourist could provide sufficient activity for Friday night through Sunday activities.

Also consider “Experience the Outdoors in Englishtown!”: Bike and walking trails, sports in the park, a daylong events on a monthly or bi-monthly basis, and a summer-into-fall concert series in the park that would include food vending opportunities (offered first to downtown food merchants) could draw a casual customer that enjoys one or several meals during a day trip for outdoor activity. These customers could be local, regional, or beyond, depending on the activity and inviting repeat customers would be key to generating strong downtown retail activity.

Another example, “Experience Englishtown – The Real Destination!” could be marketed as a way to educate that “Englishtown is not the track or flea market.” This would involve the charter busses and traffic that apparently drive right through Englishtown to the raceway and flea market. Attracted to make a stop at one the schools that has been retrofitted for retail, food service and/or theatre, and with sufficient parking for the buses, visitors could easily move beyond the renovated school buildings and into the downtown for increased retail and food offerings, and keep a visitor in town for four or six hours. Bike rentals, walking paths, paddle boating or skating at the lake, ice cream, lunch or dinner at an Ethnic restaurant or eatery, and presence of a variety of retail shops would all make for an interesting morning/afternoon or afternoon/evening at any time of the year.

*Post Office Cafe*  
11 Main Street  
East Greenwich, R.I.



# Economic Development

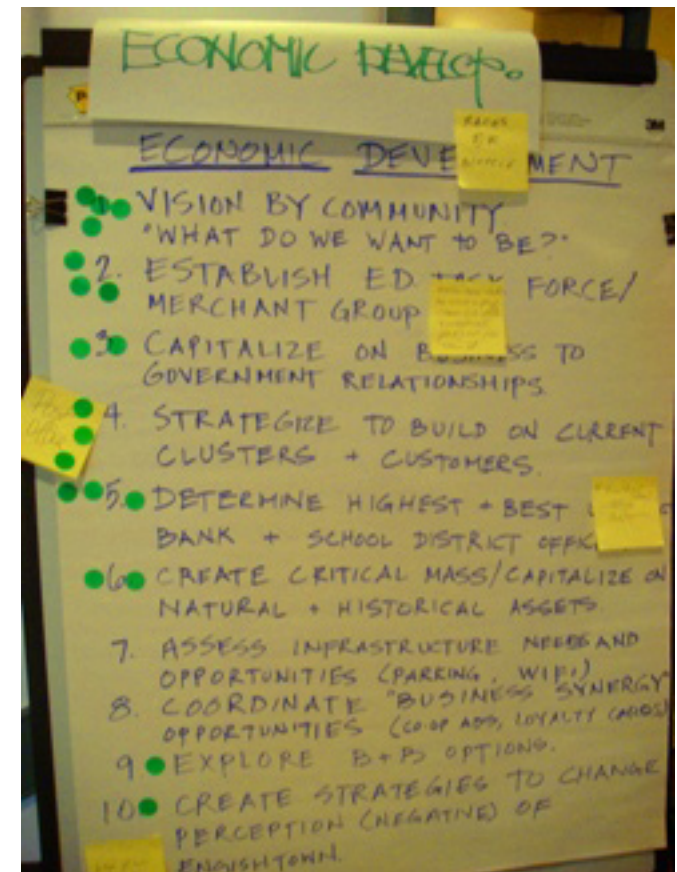
## Recommendations

The first strategy to creating a vibrant business community is the need to establish community-wide consensus on a five- to ten-year vision for the downtown. Several questions should be asked of the community stakeholders: What differentiates Englishtown from other nearby small towns? What combination of retail, historic/cultural, and recreational opportunities and assets are now, or could be, in place to draw local residents and workers, visitors, and business prospects and provide them with a unique experience? What obstacles to capitalizing on these assets may limit the potential of realizing the vision?

Community/physical assets identified during this SDAT visit could serve as key components of a community-wide vision as they have the potential to act as focal points or destinations to attract people to Englishtown (“reasons to come.”)

Negative perceptions regarding safety and “low income” must be addressed specifically and immediately in order to position and prepare Englishtown as a destination retail area and a place within which new businesses will want to locate. Upon fixing these issues, Englishtown will need to market and promote the facts consistently and often through a variety of media in order to change the ingrained perceptions.

Beyond establishing a vision and connecting and developing the community assets as previously mentioned, retention of both well-established and new businesses and recruitment of appropriate, sustainable businesses are two essential elements of creating a vibrant downtown business community. Strategies to address both should be created and implemented immediately.



# Economic Development

**Business Retention:** First, work with those who have already invested in the downtown, but consider that retention strategies are simultaneously recruitment strategies that attract both the desired customer and new businesses.

Begin to promote a “business-friendly downtown” by increasing opportunity for improved communication between the town and the business community via a quarterly merchant’s forum whereby issues are raised and solutions actively addressed. Topics may include alleviating parking issues and streamlining the licensing and inspections process. Forums such as this also create a positive impression for existing and prospective business owners.

To benefit merchants, a merchant’s association should be set up to accomplish tasks and develop activities that would be too burdensome for the town to be expected to take on. The association can:

- arrange training opportunities for merchants on topics such as merchandising, financing, signage, window display;
- encourage extending business hours on specific days;
- design a co-op advertising campaign, loyalty cards, or bounce-back coupons;
- create a downtown business directory;
- develop a website;
- be the “voice” of the downtown merchants to the local, county, and state government;
- create design guidelines and a small-scale façade improvement matching grant program for paint and signage;

- establish a low-interest financing program with local banks;
- act as “enforcer” of the town’s signage ordinance; and
- maintain the already-established building and business inventory



Projecting signage that is appropriate

# Economic Development



A well-lit window display

Existing merchants should be encouraged to look at the downtown as a “theatre”:

- display windows and outdoor display should be colorful, fresh, and well-lit, especially at night;
- signage should benefit retailers and promote an orderly image (per sign ordinance, no more than 20% of a window area covered; remove all unnecessary signage to alleviate “signage pollution”; consider allowing signs to be perpendicular to building front and front-lit;
- trash should be placed outdoors within 2 hours of pick-up and removed within 1 hour of pick-up;
- vacant spaces should be clean, both inside and out

Further preparation in “having the house in order” includes the need to address infrastructure issues such as WiFi and parking, and implement strategies to remove the negative perceptions identified earlier. These tasks need to be undertaken jointly by the town and, ideally, by a group of interest stakeholders which could be the recommended merchant’s committee or a separate committee that handles downtown issues.

# Economic Development

**Business Recruitment:** Englishtown must develop a plan to recruit appropriate preferred and sustainable businesses. This begins with a critical look at the current business and building inventory. The inventory is a key to planning for desired growth and recruiting businesses because it highlights assets and gaps in the business mix. Market analysis, including surveying current customers and reviewing and analyzing syndicated market data is a logical next step. As mentioned earlier, customer demographics suggest that a good base of potential customers appears to exist. Current and potential customers should be surveyed to find out what types of businesses they would like to see in the downtown, and then those preferences must be tested by targeted market research to be sure that there is a demand for those products that is not already being satisfied by a nearby retailer.

Recruitment of businesses also involves building on current assets, such as “developing clusters” or businesses that have complimentary products. Consider other potential or developing clusters comprised of either existing businesses, products, services that compliment one another, or individual businesses that could be cultivated based on current customers and real market demand (as could be identified through targeted market research). Home goods seems to be a developing cluster in Englishtown that could be expanded to offer lighting, home accessories, and fabric/window treatments, for instance, to complement the furniture and fireplace products now available. Shared customer groups are another asset that can be cultivated. For instance, destination retailers such as the saddle shop, fireplace business, and veterinary are attracting a moderate- to high income destination shopper from a trade area well beyond a five-mile radius. This can be an advantage for prospective retailers targeting a similar customer or market segment.



# Economic Development

Analysis of customer preference and other market data is then visualized in a strategic merchandising plan, a tool that guides business recruitment as it illustrates business type, co-tenancy, location, etc., identifies actual prospects to recruit.

Finally and of critical importance, in order to guide efforts within a proven model for downtown revitalization and management, Englishtown should actively pursue designation as a Main Street New Jersey program. As this is being explored, consider sending representatives (town staff and stakeholders that volunteer their time) from Englishtown to Main Street New Jersey's Downtown Revitalization Institute, which offers a quarterly series of training opportunities by nationally-recognized experts in downtown revitalization. Much like a mall, a vibrant business community requires on-going management, maintenance, and oversight to be effective. Do not allow the need for resources become an obstacle to further exploration of Main Street designation because a well-founded and executed fundraising campaign with a broad base of public and private partnerships can result in procurement of the needed funds for a non-profit Main Street program. The town and stakeholders will all benefit in the long run.



# Economic Development

## Recommendations

### *Immediate*

- Undertake a community-wide visioning exercise.
- Set up volunteer merchant's committee.
- Address downtown business operations and communications issues.
- Establish relationships with the owners of vacant buildings, the school district and explore possibilities for "bed and breakfast" venues.
- Consider desirability and possibilities of re-zoning current residential section for combined residential and commercial use.
- Initiate relationship with Main Street New Jersey personnel.
- Attend Main Street New Jersey's quarterly Downtown Revitalization Institute series of training.
- Determine possible market niches through

### *Short-term (next five years)*

- Actively engage additional volunteers within the merchant's committee for help with promotions, marketing downtown, etc.
- Consider establishing a non-profit organization to manage downtown activities and planning. The merchant's committee could evolve into the non-profit organization.
- Hire an economic development specialist (or an executive director for the non-profit) to guide and coordinate business retention and recruitment strategies, including "Experience Englishtown" opportunities.
- Pursue designation as a New Jersey Main Street community.
- Create and implement a strategic merchandising plan to recruit new businesses and realize a strong downtown business mix. (Implementation of such a plan will require consistent and ongoing oversight by an economic development specialist or other dedicated staff.)

# Economic Development

*2026*

- Ongoing management of downtown via a well-established Main Street program with sustainable funding and a paid coordinator, to oversee comprehensive program of downtown revitalization, including implementation of business development, marketing and promotions, design, and organizational strategies.





# Land Use & Transportation

## *Land Use/Transportation Background*



Greenway Vision.

Because the community is built-out, residents do not have to be as concerned about development as they might be if they had a lot of unprotected open space. At the same time, Englishtown should make sure the protected open space remains protected, and should work to facilitate the kind of development residents agree they want. Regulatory tools such as design guidelines can help the community achieve this goal. The open space currently protected in the community is not being used to its greatest potential. See the Connections portion of this report for ideas on what to do with the corridor of open space that starts at the lake and encircles the community. One idea that emerged during the SDAT charette is pictured below.

The current zoning in Englishtown allows considerable new infill growth and development, as there are large lots zoned for commercial development that may be coming on the market in the next few years, as well as relatively large spaces of undeveloped land zoned for residential development. After the final presentation of the SDAT team on October 24, 2007, the Mayor expressed his dreams of a mixed use commercial development on the site of the school department offices. Developing this space with commercial enterprises, coffee shops, pocket parks, bookstores, offices, and maybe even some artists live/work studios would close the gap between the historic heart of the town, the Inn and businesses around it, and the new development that is happening around Quick chek. It would create a continuous 10-15 minute walking tour filled with interesting things to see, buy, and visit.

# Land Use & Transportation

## Strengths and Assets

A major strength of the community of Englishtown is the clear vision of a number of municipal officials involved with this sustainable design assessment team. These people know what they want for their community. They, and the many residents who participated in the SDAT meetings held in October, 2007, want Englishtown to regain its former glory as the heart of Manalapan. They want Englishtown to be a destination and a place that residents are proud to call home. In addition to this clarity of purpose, a major strength in the community are the individuals who run the local government. This efficient, dedicated, hard-working, capable, smart, and motivated cadre of municipal officials providing excellent municipal services, including police, fire and public works. Combine that with active and engaged business owners/operators on Main street, and long-time residents, many with a classic American entrepreneurial spirit determined to bring people to the place they love and it's clear that Englishtown is a strong community lodged firmly in its almost three hundred year old history, with some lovely examples of colonial architecture serving as a physical reminder of this rich history. Given this clarity of purpose, following is a discussion of the strengths, assets, opportunities, and impediments facing Englishtown with respect to land use and transportation concerns.

Focusing on transportation, strengths and assets include ample on street parking combined with a number of available surface lots, some municipally owned and operated and others available for public use as long as they are not needed by the owners. Most roads in the town center have sidewalks making Englishtown a walkable community—an attribute for which homeowners across the country have stated they would pay extra. From a business perspective, the omnipresent crush of traffic on Main street is an asset, as a steady stream of vehicles pass by all the store fronts. A variety of state and local roads bring trucks, cars and buses, school buses NOT transit buses, to Englishtown all day long, seven days a week. Roads are wide enough to accommodate four lanes of traffic.



Current Zoning.

# Land Use & Transportation

Turning our attention to land use—both the physical division of land into parcels pre-determined for a variety of uses, and the regulatory tools the community's Planning Board has adopted over the years to govern the use of land—strengths and assets in Englishtown include good zoning that has produced a mixed use compactly developed community that includes downtown parks and natural space, conservation areas, diverse housing, a functioning Main street, an active Industrial park and popular eateries. The community implemented many recommendations of the last comprehensive planning process, and this history of planning combined with plan implementation is an important strength of the community. Ordinances are in place to incentivize infill development. Sign ordinances permit a variety of signage that allows businesses to do what they want to attract customers. Accessory apartments are allowed; home-based businesses are allowed. The land is densely developed and every inch of land is part of an existing parcel. Some parcels in the downtown residential neighborhood are quite large. If developers put in a road, there could be additional downtown residents. The municipal government hosts a series of events held at the downtown park year round. Three physical characteristics of the land in Englishtown emerged over the course of the SDAT. They are: the lake, the Inn, and the park. These three assets offer a foundation upon which to build Englishtown's future. Englishtown offers a variety of housing—single family, multi-family, assisted living, rentals, and apartments above shops. As mentioned the nearby “Englishtown” flea market and drag racing track attract many visitors to what they think is Englishtown.

Many organizations have developed tools to help communities thoroughly assess their land use and transportation strengths and assets. The Municipal Land Use Center at the College of New Jersey <http://www.tcnj.edu/~mluc/index.php> is a wonderful resource that should be used. In addition, if local planners and residents wish to undertake their own more detailed assessment of Englishtown's land use and transportation assets, you might wish to review the Smart Growth Leadership Institute's just released tools, available for review at [www.sgli.org](http://www.sgli.org).



# Land Use & Transportation

## Obstacles and Impediments

Transportation obstacles in Englishtown include an almost complete and utter lack of transit services in the community. Older adults and the differently-abled may avail themselves of a reservation only ride service, but residents interviewed describe it as difficult to access and disclosed that they rarely even try to use the service. Transit services are especially useful for the non-vehicular populations of young people and older adults. Oddly enough, all school children are now provided with bus service to and from school, even if they live within walking distance of the school. Pedestrians downtown report not feeling safe. Business owners are disturbed by the sound of considerable bus and truck traffic. Back-ups at the three intersections on Main street have prompted some drivers to start cutting through residential streets to avoid the lights. Business owners report a lack of downtown parking.

Land use obstacles and impediments include unusual lot sizes, extremely long and thin, resulting in considerable acreage of de facto undevelopable land. Variances have obviously been granted by the Planning Board, resulting in developments inconsistent with the underlying zoning. Regional perceptions of the community as an un-planned economically challenged place known only by a run-down flea market and a drag racing track are also obstacles and impediments facing Englishtown.

Other obstacles and impediments facing Englishtown include the threat posed by the agglomeration called Manalapan. Manalapan has taken over Englishtown's schools, recreation programs, and police and fire dispatch. State government is also perceived by some as an obstacle, in part due to a mis-guided attempt to purchase people's land in the area for a turnpike exit that never was built. Constrained federal, state and private foundation budgets create impediments to the realization of change in Englishtown. Traffic is an obstacle and impediment to the community—business owners fear that people will avoid the community as the traffic gets worse and worse. Truck and bus traffic in particular create obstacles as they threaten the walkability of downtown because they are so loud. Climate change poses a threat to Englishtown as it does to the whole world. And finally, negative mis-perceptions about Englishtown are an obstacle as they dissuade people from even visiting the place.



# Land Use & Transportation

## Visions/Opportunities

Transportation opportunities include the great network of sidewalks that need only some basic upkeep and maintenance. The width of the streets in downtown is also an opportunity, as there is plenty of space for bike lanes, on-street parking and other amenities. There is space and right of way for traffic calming enhancements. There is space in the conservation corridor for the development of off road multi use trails or paths. The roads that bring people through Englishtown are an opportunity, as are the new businesses settling into Main Street.

Land use opportunities include the Inn and the park which was used as muster grounds during the Revolutionary war. As mentioned, the old school department buildings on Main Street are perceived as a huge opportunity for Englishtown. Many residents and business owners would like to see that space re-developed as a mixed use office/retail/apartment/artist studio project. The Industrial park is an opportunity. Many communities have capitalized on an industrial heritage to develop eco-industry, capitalizing on the green movement. Englishtown has a densely developed downtown with buildings close to the street and small lot sizes. Other opportunities include the Town center designation. Englishtown is ahead of many communities in New Jersey in that it has already received Town center designation by the Office of Smart Growth. Englishtown needs only to maintain the designation. In addition to these opportunities, Englishtown also has a wealth of external resources, both human and financial, eager to assist the community. These include the Municipal Land Use Center (MLUC) mentioned previously, the Monmouth County Planning Department, the Office of Smart Growth, Representative \_\_\_\_, the New Jersey Transit agency, and the AIA.

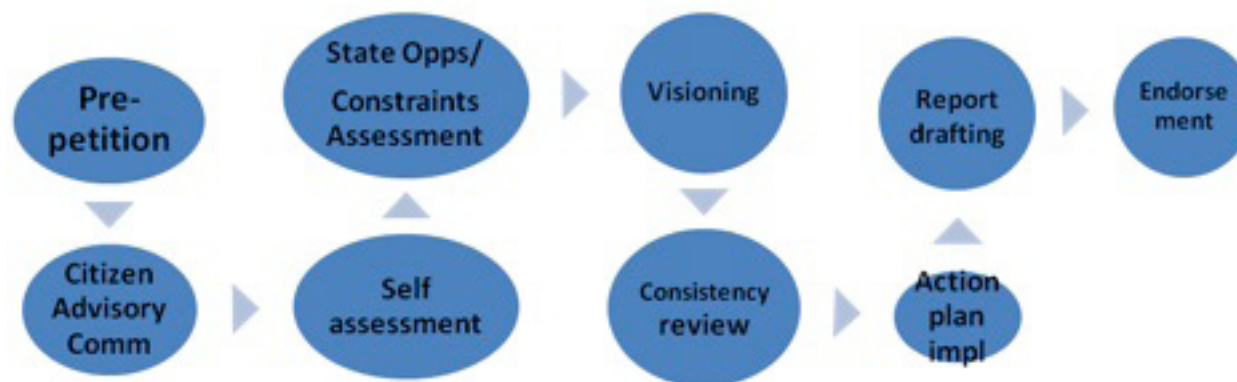
# Land Use & Transportation

## Recommendations

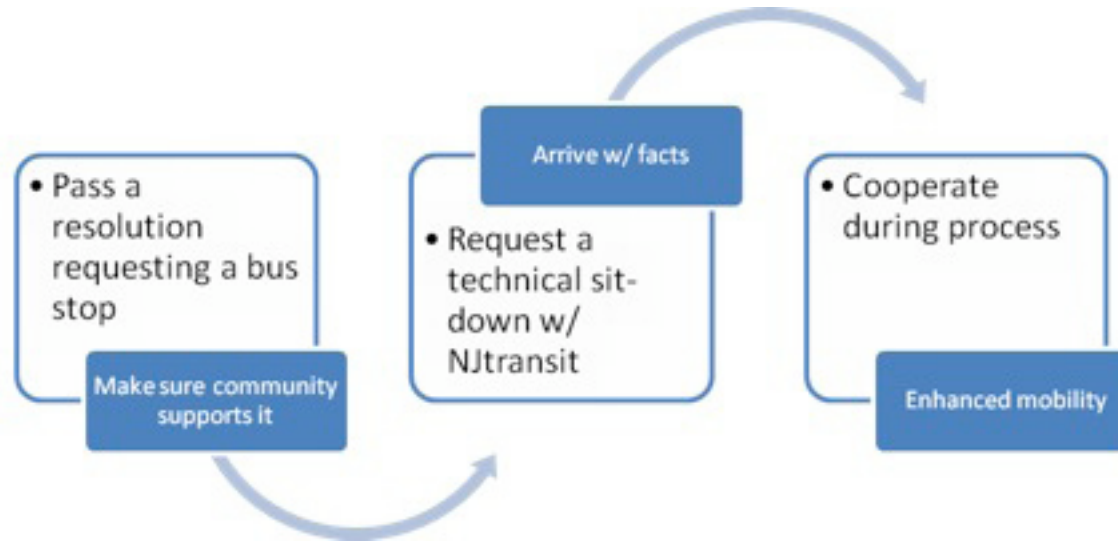
### *Immediate*

While it will not be immediately achieved, the first and foremost action Englishtown should take is to initiate the state's Plan endorsement process. This will require a Master Plan update, and the MLUC and Monmouth County planning department are both eager to assist with this effort. Some elements of the plan endorsement process are underway. This report can serve as the foundation of the self assessment element of the plan endorsement process. In addition, the SDAT charette process served in some ways as a community visioning exercise, but a more formal visioning process is still recommended.

The second most pressing recommendation of this report is that Englishtown must secure transit service immediately. Preliminary research suggests that the process of acquiring a bus stop is neither time consuming nor costly. Representative \_\_\_ has offered assistance. In addition, residents may want to consider creating a collaborative ride-sharing program. Organized car-sharing programs, such as Zip-car, could also be consulted although Englishtown probably does not have the vehicle miles traveled Zip-car likes before it invests in a community.



# Land Use & Transportation



NJ Plan Endorsement Process.

## *Immediate/Short-term recommendations*

Additional immediate or short-term action recommendations include hiring a community/economic development planner and requesting the County engineering department to conduct a signal timing study of the intersections on Main street with the purpose of improving the pedestrian environment. Concurrently, the County Engineering department will be asked to stripe all crosswalks and undertake studies necessary to create an all pedestrian signal at the intersection in front of the Inn. Painting of the crosswalks and installation of the all pedestrian light will be a launching pad for a comprehensive pedestrian rights and responsibilities campaign (education, engineering, enforcement, and encouragement) that will be funded by the Office of Highway Safety and NJDOT. We suggest including an idling reduction element in the education and enforcement elements of the campaign. (Lenox, MA has excellent resources [www.lwnorma.gov](http://www.lwnorma.gov)) and there is program development funding available from NJDEP. Idling reduction is an excellent way to introduce the public to issues of climate change and to some basic behavior changes individuals can take to make a difference.

A parking study is also highly recommended. It appears that there is both a scarcity and an abundance of surface level parking available in Englishtown. Business owners and municipal and regional planners need to know the precise amount of parking available in town. Proof of available parking goes a long way in marketing one's business. Along these same lines, an additional urgently recommended, and neither expensive nor time consuming action is a sign inventory--not a traditional MUTCD sign inventory, but rather a comprehensive inventory that includes businesses signs and that accomplishes multiple objectives: compliance with laws to ensure a safe traffic environment and unleashing the creativity of business owners and municipal officials to create an inviting and appealing environment. Finally, we recommend a comprehensive zoning review following the visioning—to make sure Englishtown has the tools the community needs to achieve its vision.

# Land Use & Transportation

## *Slightly Longer term Recommendations*

Slightly longer term recommendations include striping and signage to designate bike lanes on streets to both accommodate bicyclists, and also to narrow the streets, slow traffic, and create a more walkable and pedestrian friendly environment. Design guidelines for Main street could also help create a pleasing and comfortable outdoor environment. Historic designation of all eligible buildings is also recommended in this first phase of implementation.

## *Longer term*

All of the above mentioned recommendations could be meaningfully launched or completed in the first year of Englishtown's SDAT implementation phase. In years two and three, we recommend Englishtown start to use traffic calming to create and maintain a maximum pedestrian-friendly community. Building and maintaining an effective traffic calming program can take 3-5 years, so we encourage relatively swift action to start the process. We also recommend the community initiate the time-consuming process of developing an off-road multi use path—explicitly including horses, pedestrians and bicyclists—from one end of the town to the other on the designated conservation land.



# Land Use & Transportation

Other longer term recommendations include securing grant funds to transform the industrial park into an eco-industrial park. Perhaps the concrete foundation company would be willing to donate some space on their property to build a skate park. The re-development of the lots zoned C1-A is a pressing mid to long-term recommendation. This space will be re-developed following new urbanist, eco-friendly architecture 2030 standards. It will include green buildings, pocket parks, some landscaped parking, a café (or two), wifi, offices, artists' studios, a theatre, a youth center, and a day-care center. We also recommend re-developing the hair product factory, which may require brownfields clean up—as a municipal park on the lakefront with pedal boats, a warming house, a miniature boat regatta, boat rentals and possibly miniature golf—with a revolutionary war theme. An admittedly far-fetched idea that someone might want to pursue is the development of a Charter school focused on American history. The school could start small and use the Inn and the old school offices. Having a school in Englishtown would restore a feeling of independence and sustainability—that the community is in fact capable of educating its young. As stated in the economic development section and the Main street section, we also heartily recommend revitalizing the Main street business association. The municipality should also investigate the possibility of purchasing the vacant bank building in the center of downtown. It would be an excellent location for a satellite Post Office and a small business incubator. The municipality should also consider purchasing the vacant property next to borough hall and re-developing it into an access point for the new trail-park or perhaps a municipal parking lot with a tot lot.

## ***2026***

Looking to Englishtown's tricentennial, we hope to see commuter rail in your community. We also envision an energy efficient community full of thriving businesses and an engaged populace.

## ***Connections to other issues***

Land use and transportation planning and development is linked to all the other aspects of this sustainable design assessment.

## ***Resources***

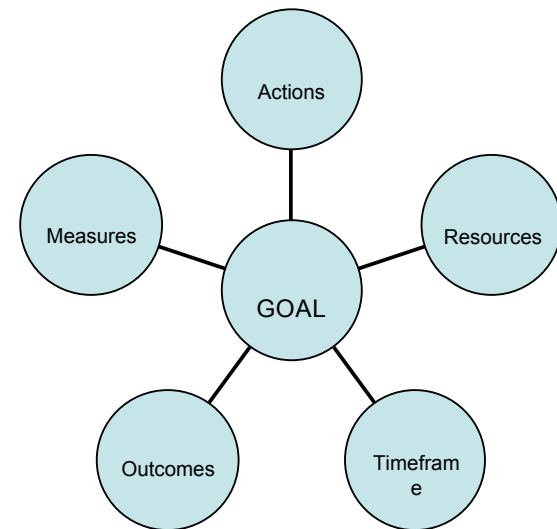
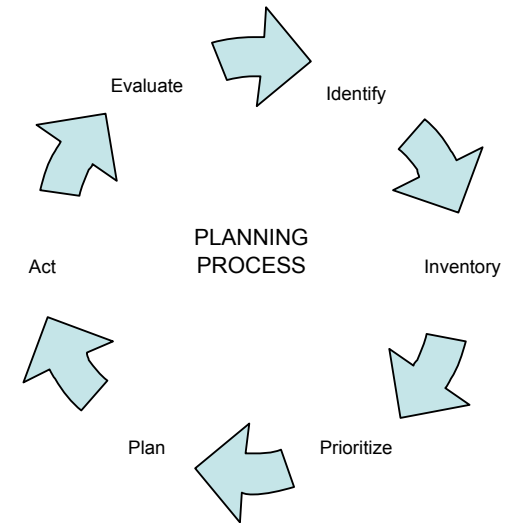
New Jersey Transit organization <http://www.state.nj.us/transportation/works/njfit/partnership/>

Municipal Land Use Center—the College of New Jersey <http://www.tcnj.edu/~mluc/index.php>

# Natural Resources

## Linking and Leveraging Resources

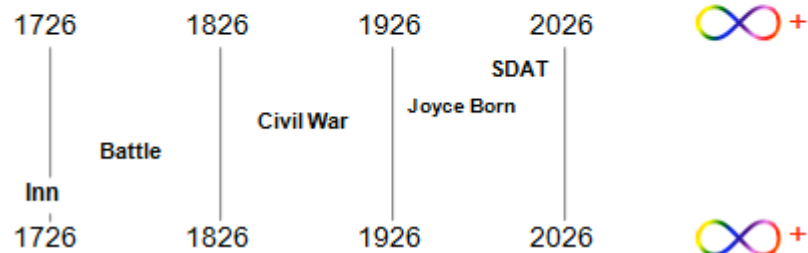
Englishtown is blessed with a number of important natural and historic resources. The borough will need to think strategically about how it can maintain, preserve and leverage these resources to build a vibrant community. It will require a clearly articulated planning process and accompanying strategies which allow all community partners to play a role in the process.



# Natural Resources

## Timeline

### Subsistence to Sustainability



## Background

Englishtown has a long, rich history, and a wealth of resources. During their first visit, several members of the SDAT team met with community leaders and identified four key types of resources valued by residents: recreational assets, historic heritage, arts and culture, and natural resources. Residents have many excellent ideas, as well as valid concerns about the use and management of these resources. What has been lacking is a focused plan for linking and leveraging the community's resources for its long-term benefit.

## Resource Inventory and Analysis

The inventory and analysis of specific resources within each of the four categories was drawn from the responses of residents who participated in the SDAT focus groups and from the site visits and documents reviewed by SDAT team members. While residents agreed on which resources are most important, it became apparent that all four types of resources are under-utilized for recreation, cultural enrichment, community celebrations, marketing or "branding" Englishtown, and promoting tourism and commerce.

# Natural Resources

## Recreational Assets

### *Strengths & Assets*

There was a consensus that Lake Weamaconk and Sanford Park are Englishtown's primary recreational assets. Stream corridors and conservation lands are potential quiet recreation areas and trail routes. The borough is within two miles of Monmouth Battlefield State Park and National Historic Site, which offers over 25 miles of walking trails. It is adjacent to the Manalapan Recreation Center, which, according to the Manalapan Township website, (<http://www.twp.manalapan.nj.us/Business.htm>), "is one of the largest recreation centers in the state, with 8 all-purpose fields, one football field, 6 baseball/softball fields, 2 roller hockey rinks, 6 tennis courts, 6 basketball courts, 2 handball courts, 2 shuffleboard courts, 2 bocce courts, 2 sand volleyball courts, a disc-golf course, 3 tot-lot playgrounds and fitness trail. Land has been purchased for an expansion of the facilities, which will add fields, a new Community Center, a bike path and many other uses."



### *Obstacles & Impediments*

Ice skating, a historic activity on Lake Weamaconk, is prohibited because of liability concerns by the borough's insurance company. Sanford Park is hidden behind the lots abutting North Main Street, with no visual connection to the street except one long, narrow pedestrian walk between six-foot chain link fences. The park sign reminds people of a cemetery entrance, causing further confusion. The only public vehicular access to the park is through the subdivision on West Dey Street, but there is no off-street parking. There is no pedestrian/ bike trail system linking Englishtown with Manalapan Recreation Center and Monmouth Battlefield, nor area schools and other trails and parks.

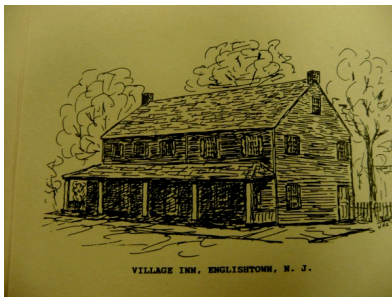
More overflow league sports and tournaments from Manalapan Recreation Center may be scheduled at Sanford Park. Increased use of the park by visitors will increase maintenance costs, which will need to be offset by user fees through a reservation system. Failure to provide safe, attractive sidewalk and trails to encourage walking and biking to local destinations, including schools, is linked to a decline in health and environmental quality by the U.S. Department of Transportation. This decline in walking and bicycling has had an adverse effect on traffic congestion and air quality around schools, as well as pedestrian and bicycle safety. In addition, a growing body of evidence has shown that children who lead sedentary lifestyles are at risk for a variety of health problems such as obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease (<http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/saferoutes/>).



# Natural Resources

## *Vision & Opportunities*

The lake was dredged several years ago to improve fishing and was restocked. It could be used for fishing derbies, model boat regattas, boating with canoes and paddle-boats, and picnicking along the shore. With resolution of the insurance concerns, ice skating could be reinstated, and celebrated with a winter carnival featuring skaters in period costumes. A replica of the railroad station could be built as a boat rental, bait and concession stand that could double as a warming hut in winter. The preserved lands and riparian corridors along Matchaponix Creek and McGellaird Brook form a green spine through which a pedestrian/ bike trail could be built, linking the neighborhoods within the community, and connecting them to trails through Manalapan Township and beyond to regional and state trail networks. With the links in place, these trails could allow some of the borough's children to walk to school rather than being bused, by providing "safe routes to school" (<http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/>).



## Historic Heritage

### *Strengths & Assets*

The Village Inn/ Davis Tavern located at the intersection of Water and Main Street was the primary historic resource recognized by residents, followed by historic homes, and the proposed development of a battlefield trail linking the historic locations in Englishtown associated with the Battle of Monmouth to the battlefield itself, starting at the Inn and including sites along the route such as Tennent Church and Molly Pitcher's Well. "Seasoned" residents' eyewitness accounts of history-in-the-making could be recorded as oral histories. The three H's on the borough's shield, History, Harmony, Hospitality, are the embodiment of the spirit and heritage of the community. Some historic resources, such as the mill and railroad station, are gone, but the mill pond lives on as Weamaconk Lake and the railroad tracks are still in use.

# Natural Resources

## *Obstacles & Impediments*

The Village Inn requires ongoing preventive maintenance. It is underutilized and underfunded. Old buildings such as the Village Inn decline with or without use. The key is striking a balance. Englishtown is not able to apply for funds from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) because it is not registered as a Certified Local Government (CLG). A historic district survey was completed and deemed National Register-worthy by the SHPO, but the nomination was never completed. Redevelopment of property may lead to the loss of other historic buildings and structures. The local knowledge and contributions of lifelong older residents will be lost if their stories are not recorded and transcripts placed in a local archive for public use.



## *Vision & Opportunities*

The Village Inn could be used for events such as receptions, reunions and small conferences that could take advantage of the grounds as well as the building. A gift shop on the premises or in an adjacent commercial building could augment event rental fees to help offset operation and maintenance costs. Englishtown could capitalize on its bragging rights as the home of the first Ford dealership in the state by hosting antique car tours and shows, and using vintage Fords as shuttles to the battlefield and around town for events. Use replicas of old Ford farm trucks as stands for street vendors or booths for farmers' markets. The mill foundation and history of Lake Weamaconk as the mill pond could be interpreted with signs and brochures.

## Arts and Culture

### *Strengths & Assets*

When asked to identify what Englishtown had in the way of arts and culture, one resident responded, “Good question...” Others identified the borough’s history and the need to market it. One resident has proposed an art salon to showcase and sell fine arts created by area artists. There is still at least one farrier/ blacksmith living in Englishtown, although he has to travel to the surrounding area to shoe horses. There are still working farms and orchards in the region surrounding Englishtown.



### *Vsion & Opportunities*

Revive home arts and agricultural skills related to the borough’s agrarian heritage, and skills like chair making and metal working as practiced by artisans of Washington Forge when it was in operation. Take advantage of the Upper Freehold Historic Farmland Byway by getting truck farmers and fruit growers from the surrounding area to help restore Englishtown’s historical status as the region’s crossroads of agricultural commerce. Host a regular farmers’ market and hold a fall fair to celebrate the harvest. Hold potato sack races during the harvest festival featuring elected officials and business leaders. Ask for help from the Monmouth County Arts Council (<http://www.monmouthartscouncil.org/>) to support local fine arts efforts like the proposed art salon. Provide live/ work space for artists and artisans in the industrial park on the former site of Washington Forge. Encourage a revival of chair making and metal working. Invite local farriers to open a blacksmith shop in town and demonstrate their skills in crafting custom hardware as well as in horseshoeing.



### *Obstacles & Impediments*

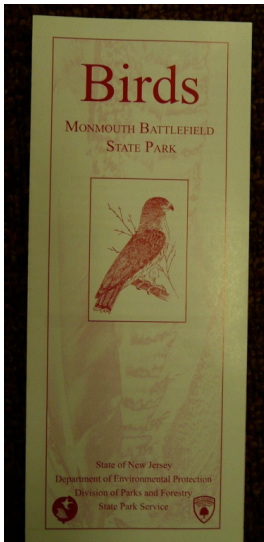
Arts and culture are virtually invisible to residents. Englishtown’s tradition of fine arts is in its future. The borough’s roots in agricultural production and trade are almost forgotten, along with the home arts, skilled crafts and land stewardship practices that supported the agrarian lifestyle. The memory of Englishtown’s agricultural past seems to have been lost with the demolition of the mill and train station, and the subdivision of the farms. The Englishtown Raceway Park and Englishtown Flea Market continue to draw people through, rather than, to Englishtown, using the borough’s name to usurp its historical position as the region’s commercial center. Manalapan Township is reportedly interested in absorbing Englishtown, erasing its cultural identity.

# Natural Resources

## Resources

### *Strengths & Assets*

Lake Weamaconk and Sanford Park made the residents' list as the primary natural resources, in addition to being identified as the top recreational assets. They are part of a larger network of wetlands, riparian areas and preserved open space linked by Matchaponix Creek, Weamaconk Creek and McGellaird Brook to the regional green space, surface water and groundwater system. The borough has a diverse community forest made up of its street trees and tree lawns, park and public landscapes, commercial landscapes, residential landscapes and natural plant associations on the preserved lands, including wetland and riparian plant communities. This forest is home to a variety of native birds, animals and plants, but no threatened or endangered species are within the borough's boundaries. The living soil that supports the community forest is an essential part of the web of life, providing the environment that enables the miracle of photosynthesis. Among the other basic resources the community has are clean air and adequate supplies of potable drinking water. There are scenic views and vistas across Lake Weamaconk, and potential scenic views into and out of Sanford Park and along the stream corridors.



### *Obstacles & Impediments*

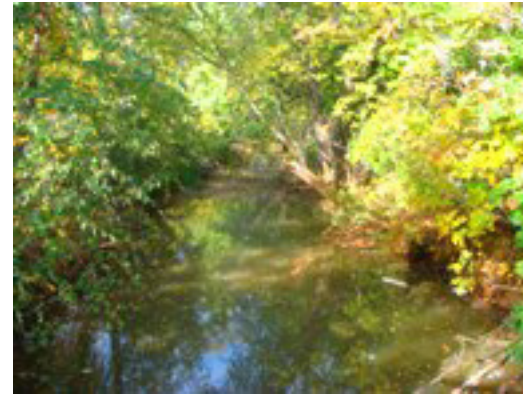
Sanford Park and Lake Weamaconk, identified by some residents as natural resources are actually a developed park and a historical mill pond. Basic natural resources such as healthy soil, clean air and potable water are taken for granted. Street tree planting projects have been undertaken from time-to-time in Englishtown, but, as in most communities, the trees are not always planted in the best locations with appropriate soil, adequate water and sufficient ongoing maintenance. Vegetation obscures views into and out of the stream corridors, Sanford Park, and the potential parking area for the park by the water tower, blocking visual and physical access for users as well as natural surveillance for safety. Birding is promoted at Monmouth Battlefield Park, but no bird brochures are available at the public venues and businesses in Englishtown. Any increase in traffic will bring more air pollution from exhaust fumes. Continued busing of school children will be an ongoing source of diesel exhaust, which is linked with childhood asthma and other respiratory diseases. Increased recreation in natural areas could create erosion if users travel off-trail, affecting surface water quality and native vegetation. Litter may also cause visual pollution and real threats to wildlife from swallowing or becoming fouled in plastic bags, lines, rings, and the myriad other unnatural objects that pollute our environment.

# Natural Resources

## *Vision & Opportunities*

Large street trees could be planted to provide spreading canopies to shade the streets, calm traffic, and clean the air. Before planting more street trees in the public way, assess the planting conditions, including location and size of planting pits, soil type and fertility, and water availability and quality. Tree lawns or pits should be at least eight feet wide to support medium to large trees, and wider if possible. If the street frontage is too narrow to allow adequate space for trees and maintain a clear zone for pedestrian travel of at least four to six feet, the trees should be planted behind the sidewalk, with permission of the property owner. Small ornamental trees and larger upright trees adjacent to roadways are easily damaged by trucks and buses. Large street trees can be pruned up to the required 13' height to allow passage of large vehicles beneath them.

Trails along the stream corridors and through the preserved lands could provide wildlife viewing opportunities and outdoor classrooms for school children. A nature center in Sanford Park would be a draw for artists and outdoor enthusiasts from outside the community, as well as providing passive recreation for residents, and a destination for students traveling through their outdoor classroom along the trail system from their school grounds.



# Natural Resources

## Recommendations

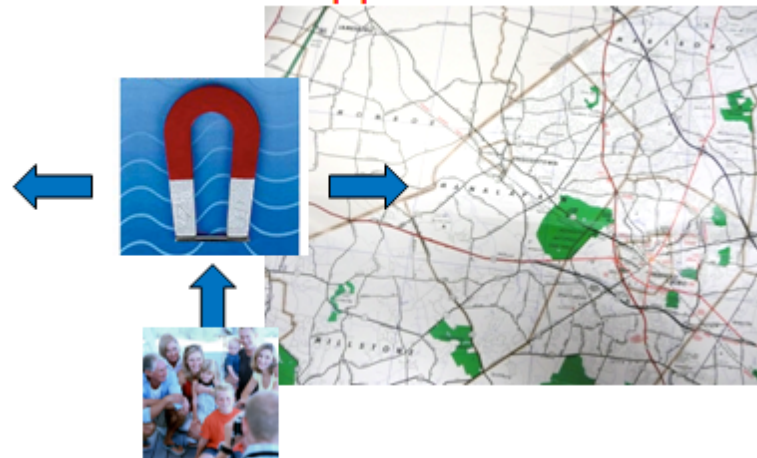
### *Marketing*

Take advantage of Englishtown's recreational assets, historic heritage, and cultural and natural resources to market it as a destination for recreation and historical tourism. Authentic celebrations of Englishtown's heritage by its residents will attract tourists. Developing the borough's resources to protect and enhance the quality of life for residents will send out ripples beyond fishing derbies in Lake Weamaconk to hook visitors on Englishtown as a travel destination. Capture raceway and flea market traffic by offering ongoing activities and special events that reflect the authentic history and genuine hospitality of Englishtown. Network with Monmouth County tourism, recreation and arts council staff members for technical help in developing these local programs, and include the programs in regional and state promotional publications. Provide more opportunities like the SDAT focus groups for Englishtown business owners, government officials and residents to network within the community. Linking Englishtown's human resources will enable the borough to more effectively link its recreational assets, historic heritage, arts and culture, and natural resources.



*Place finding, and not place making.*

## Attractions & Ripples



# Natural Resources

## *Themes*

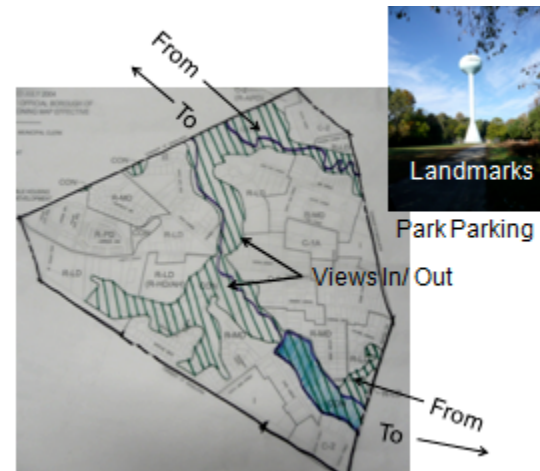
Use themes to develop and link resources, connecting places through time as well as through physical association along routes. The proposed Monmouth Battlefield Trail could be developed as an interpretive loop beginning and ending at the Village Inn. Other loop trails could begin on Main Street and lead people through Sanford Park, interpreting the wetlands and waterways, tying together the natural and cultural history of Englishtown while linking it to the larger agricultural region of Monmouth County. Weave cultural themes through seasonal events that celebrate Englishtown's agricultural and commercial heritage.



## *Circulation and Wayfinding*

Develop trails along the stream corridors as biking and walking paths to provide safe routes to schools, parks, businesses and other local destinations, and links to regional trail systems. Make a parking lot for Sanford Park by the water tower on West Dey Street. Selectively remove vegetation at the perimeter of the water tower parking lot and Sanford Park, and in strategic locations along the trails to provide visual and physical access, and natural surveillance for safety. Avoid "sign pollution" by using interpretive signage and brochures, landmarks like the water towers, and other way-finding clues like scenic views and vistas to lead people from place-to-place toward their destinations.

## Safe Routes



# Natural Resources

## *Short-term Actions*

Become eligible for funds from the State Historic Preservation Office by taking the steps to become a Certified Local Government (CLG), i.e., form a Historic Preservation Commission and adopt a Historic Preservation Ordinance. Upon obtaining CLG status, apply for historic preservation grants from the New Jersey Historic Trust and Save America's Treasures. For details, go to <http://www.nj.gov/dep/hpo/>.

## *Mid-term Actions*

Follow through with the historic district survey and get the district nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. Nominate local historic preservation projects and programs for awards from the NJ Historic Preservation Office to help publicize and promote heritage tourism. Apply for tree-planting grants from New Jersey Cool Communities <http://www.state.nj.us/dep/parksandforests/forest/community/>. Implement a community beautification awards program with a special category for tree stewardship.

## *Long-term Actions*

Maintain the Village Center Designation and press the state to follow through with its commitments under this program. Apply for New Jersey Smart Growth grants. Apply for DOT Safe Routes and Enhancements grants to fund trail development and streetscape improvements.

## *Connections to Other Issue Areas*

Englishtown's natural, cultural and historic resources made it the regional center of agriculture and commerce in the past. Linking these resources to provide recreation and alternative transportation routes, and leveraging them as marketing assets will promote a vibrant downtown today and contribute to economic and social sustainability in the future.

## *Vision for 2026*

With its green infrastructure set aside as protected land, Englishtown has already embarked upon the path to sustainability. By 2026, residents will walk and bike to local businesses, schools and events on safe, well-maintained trails and sidewalks with inviting streetscapes. Celebrations of local history and culture will reflect community spirit and attract tourists and recreationists to this vibrant regional hub.



## Resources

- Manalapan Township: <http://www.twp.manalapan.nj.us/Business.htm>
- Federal Highway Administration Safe Routes to School: <http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/saferoutes/>
- National Center for Safe Routes to School: <http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/>
- Monmouth County Arts Council: <http://www.monmouthartscouncil.org/>
- New Jersey DOT Safe Routes grants: <http://www.nj.gov/transportation/community/srts/>
- Bonnie Goldschlag, Assistant Director, Monmouth Co. Planning Dept., [bgoldsch@shore.co.monmouth.nj.us](mailto:bgoldsch@shore.co.monmouth.nj.us)
- Donna Drewes, Community Planner, Municipal Land Use Center, [drewes@tcnj.edu](mailto:drewes@tcnj.edu)
- NJ Smart Growth: [www.nj.gov/dca/osg](http://www.nj.gov/dca/osg)
- Smart Future Grants up to \$50,000
- Main Street Community Design
- Urban Parking Solutions
- Forestry – NJ Cool Cities: [www.state.nj.us/dep/forestry/community/grants.htm](http://www.state.nj.us/dep/forestry/community/grants.htm)
- Tree Planting Grants up to \$25,000
- Plant street trees to reduce urban heat island effect
- New Jersey Stewardship Incentive Program up to \$25,000 for tree-related projects
- Dorothy Guzzo, NJDEP, State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO): [www.nj.gov/dep/hpo](http://www.nj.gov/dep/hpo)
- Certified Local Government grants up to \$77,000
- Save America's Treasures Grants

# Conclusion

## Moving Forward

Englishtown once found itself at the center of the American Revolution. Today Englishtown finds itself at the center of a new revolution around sustainability. The borough faces challenges related to regional growth patterns, land use, transportation and economic revitalization along its main street corridor. Local residents that participated in the SDAT process have begun to build on Englishtown's gloried past by contributing some revolutionary ideas about its future. In order for Englishtown to achieve a revitalized sense of community, it must focus on integrating its approach to these core issues around a central vision for the township moving forward.

Englishtown is at a “crossroads” – and as suggested by the out building at the Village Inn, there are three doors to select from in directing its path into the future. The door to the left represents status quo. By choosing this path, Englishtown will continue to experience a range of struggles and frustrations because it will lack the necessary investments and partnerships to become successful. The door to the right might suggest a reactive approach. By choosing this path, the borough could seek to reject the partnerships and collective resources it will need to create a vibrant future, permanently damaging its ability to overcome today's challenges and exacerbating current conditions. It would fail to acknowledge today's realities. The door in the center – suggesting a setting balanced by its history and opportunity - is proactive, and offers a journey which could both maintain the setting and character of the community, and build upon it to sustain it.

In order for the borough to move forward successfully, Englishtown must understand how to apply the following framework:

**How to protect and preserve.** The borough and its residents have a host of tools and resources at their disposal that can be utilized to strengthen what they value most.

**Determining *what* to embrace, enhance and enrich.** There are choices and decisions to make regarding priorities for the borough, and those decisions will guide the future success for Englishtown.

**Deciding *when* to empower.** The borough has many local partners to seek assistance from, including the business community, the county and regional partners, local non-profits, and residents. It must be effective at engaging these constituencies and forming effective partnerships for mutually beneficial outcomes.



## *First, act small but think big.*

Overall, demonstrate by example, and walk the walk. The borough should accept the 2030 Challenge and move to sign the US Conference of Mayors' Climate Protection Agreement. As an initial step, the borough could appoint a representative to the New Jersey League of Municipalities Mayor's Committee on a Green Future.

## *Second, be bold and daring.*

The Englishtown SDAT process uncovered a number of bold ideas to consider for the future, and the borough should not hesitate to act boldly and pursue some of those ideas. The possibility of a commuter rail line to neighboring municipalities in the region is a bold idea with potentially dramatic benefits for residents and businesses. The concept of establishing a formal commitment to sustainable business practices reflects visionary thinking about the future, and should be considered as a dramatic commitment to the borough's overall vision moving forward. The possibility of having a new municipal building and improved government operations for the borough that serve as a showcase and visible demonstration of the municipality's commitment to sustainability is an exciting thought.

**Walk the Walk**  
Architects Leading the Sustainable Evolution™



# Conclusion

*Third, look back – spring forward - - - connect with the past, while building a bridge into the future.*

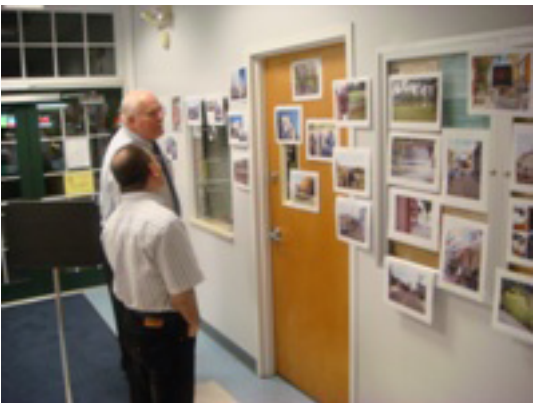
Englishtown should pursue the implementation of the SDAT recommendations with a firm sense of its heritage and unique value as an authentic community. The borough should seek to utilize its heritage and common narrative as an important building block in designing its sustainable future.

Englishtown's triple bottom line is its key to the journey ahead and the foundation for the borough's success. It has been with the community since its inception and serves as a reminder of how to move forward, and is emblazoned on the community emblem. Its branding of HHH – History, Harmony and Hospitality – serves as a reminder of what the community has been, is and should continue to be. History is the grounding element of the community, rich in its past and proud to share it. Harmony has been a guiding principle, by striking a balance among its natural and human resources. And Hospitality, portrayed by the community and its citizens who openly care about their environment and their willingness to share their bounty and gifts with friends and visitors.

The SDAT provided an overview and critical assessment regarding the team's perception of Englishtown's history, direction, and interest in moving toward a sustainable future. It identified a list of recommendations for moving forward. The borough is well grounded by a realistic and practical community and a group of honest and direct individuals. This is reinforced by a strong business owner commitment and a dedicated municipal staff. Englishtown has a valuable scale and a special small town character. It has, unique to most other small communities, a valuable historical heritage and context, which gives it purpose and authenticity.

The time is right, and the time is now. Many of the pieces are in place, and the assembly process is ready to commence. Together – with leadership, commitment and partnership it is time to move onward and upward.





# SDAT Team

## Dennis Andrejko - Team Leader

Dennis A. Andrejko, AIA, is principal of Andrejko + Associates and Associate Professor of Architecture at the University at Buffalo, State University of New York. During 1990-1999 he was Interim Chair and Director of Architecture; heading the School of Architecture and Planning's Department of Architecture, consisting of both undergraduate (pre-professional) and graduate (professional) degree programs servicing over 400 students. His primary teaching responsibilities include upper division and graduate level design studios; and energy, environment and technology courses – focusing on sustainable and passive solar design. At the School of Architecture and Planning he serves as the AIAS Faculty Advisor and the IDP Education Coordinator. He received a Bachelor of Architecture, cum laude, at Arizona State University and a Master of Architecture in Advanced Studies at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. While at MIT he was part of the research group that developed transparent insulation (Heat Mirror), now commonly used in window applications. He is co-author of *Passive Solar Architecture: Logic and Beauty*. He is a registered architect in New York, California and Arizona and has extensive passive solar and sustainable design experience, with projects in over 20 states. He currently serves as New York Regional Director on the AIA National Board, and is a member of SDiG – the Sustainability Discussion Group.



## Carmine Fischetti - Main Street/Downtown

Carmine Fischetti has worked with the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) for five years as lead designer with the Georgia Main Street Program. Based in Athens, Georgia, the office produces conceptual designs for historic building rehabilitation projects, site plans, park and streetscape master plans, and training publications. A multi-disciplinary approach combining historic preservation, architecture and landscape architecture shapes most every project. An advocate for good design in everything from logos and graphics to buildings and master plans, Carmine travels the state dispensing design advice to the one hundred plus cities in the Georgia Main Street network.



## Diane Laird - Economic Development

Diane Laird is the State Coordinator of Delaware Main Street and Delaware's Downtown Initiatives, and works within the Delaware Economic Development Office. For the past ten years, she has overseen, coordinated, and conducted technical services focused on non-profit organizational development and outreach, design issues, downtown image-development and promotion, and economic development to ten local Main Street programs throughout the state of Delaware. Diane recently co-authored the "Recruitment and Retention Menu of Services for Participating Delaware Main Street Programs" which outlines an 18-step process for downtown economic development. One overarching principle of this Menu is to build local, grassroots capacity to plan and implement strategies for sustainable, community-driven, downtown business development. She currently serves on the work group for state coordinating Main Street program designation to qualify coordinating programs nationwide.



## Catherine Miller - Land Use & Transportation

Catherine Miller is a Principal Planner in the Land use / Environment section of the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission. Catherine is responsible for sustainable development, focusing most recently on the promotion of clean energy and energy reduction, conservation and efficiency. Catherine has 22 years of professional experience in community development and planning—starting with two years in the Peace Corps in Cameroon, Central Africa, passing through the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and ending up in the Pioneer Valley. She has expertise in participatory planning, smart growth, sustainability, clean energy, and the intersection of land use and transportation planning.



# SDAT Team

## Susan Crook - Natural Resources

Susan Crook is the founding principal of SCA, which provides planning and design services that integrate regionally sustainable practices with historic landscape preservation. Her training as an English teacher and experience with grant-writing are invaluable as she assists clients with project funding, public relations and community involvement. She is concerned about food security, safety and quality, and looks for chances to help preserve or revive local farms and gardens, and to support buy local campaigns in the projects she undertakes. Ms. Crook directed the only two Historic American Landscapes Surveys (HALS) conducted in Utah to date, and serves as the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) HALS Liaisons Coordinator, as well as the Utah HALS Liaison and Utah ASLA Trustee. She serves as co-chair of the Vibrant St. George steering committee, a community organization seeking to revive declining neighborhoods in the heart of St. George, Utah, where she lives and works.



## Joel Mills - Director, AIA Center for Communities by Design

Joel Mills provides process expertise, facilitation and support for the Center's Sustainable Design Assistance Team (SDAT) and Regional and Urban Design Assistance Team (R/UDAT) programs. In this capacity, he works with AIA components, members and partner organizations to provide technical assistance to communities across the country on sustainability and urban design.

His experience includes community-based technical assistance, process design, facilitation and training across a number of fields including juvenile justice reform, local government, education, family strengthening, civic media and emergency management. During the 1990s, Mr. Mills spent several years supporting international democratization initiatives by providing technical assistance to parliaments, political parties, local governments, civic and international organizations. His scope of work included constitutional design and governing systems, voter and civic education, election monitoring and administration, political party training and campaign strategy, collaborative governance, human rights and civil society capacity building. He maintains active memberships in the International Association of Facilitators (IAF), the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2), and the Mid-Atlantic Facilitators Network. He also serves on several public and private boards.





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