

Borough of Tamaqua
South Ward Neighborhood - Elm Street Plan
Executive Summary

History: Pennsylvania’s Elm Street Program assists municipalities in rejuvenating residential and mixed-use areas adjacent to their central business district. Pennsylvania based its Elm Street Program on its successful Main Street Program, which targets downtown commercial districts. Central commercial areas and the neighborhoods that surround them are linked. Vibrant neighborhoods provide customers and a labor pool for downtown businesses. In turn, a healthy downtown improves the quality of life in nearby neighborhoods. The idea behind the Elm Street Program is that communities should plan the future of these two types of areas together, instead of treating them like separate entities.



The area under study in this plan is the South Ward Neighborhood, which lies adjacent to the Borough’s West Broad Street and South Center Street Business District. This area is defined on the east by the border of Rt. 309 (Center Street), on the west by the Borough of Tamaqua boundary, on the north by West Broad Street (Route 209), and on the south by the properties bordering Orwigsburg Street. The exact boundaries can be seen on the project map.



The Elm Street Program also provides three types of state grants to municipalities, which are planning grants to prepare five-year revitalization strategies, operational grants for hiring a professional Elm Street Manager to oversee implementation of the five-year strategy, and reinvestment grants to fund physical

improvements recommended in the five-year strategy. The Borough received a planning grant to prepare an Elm Street Neighborhood Plan and has hired Ogden Consulting, LLC and Daniel Schroeder Historical Restoration and Design Consultant as the planning consultant for this project.

Mission: The South Ward Neighborhood Committee established the following mission statement:

The South Ward Neighborhood Committee is dedicated to working with and supporting existing community organizations in efforts to promote home ownership, reconnect with Downtown Tamaqua and address neighborhood safety issues. The Committee will work with current and former neighborhood residents and community organizations to improve the neighborhood park, assist neighbors and make improvements to the make the neighborhood a better place to live, work, play and raise a family.

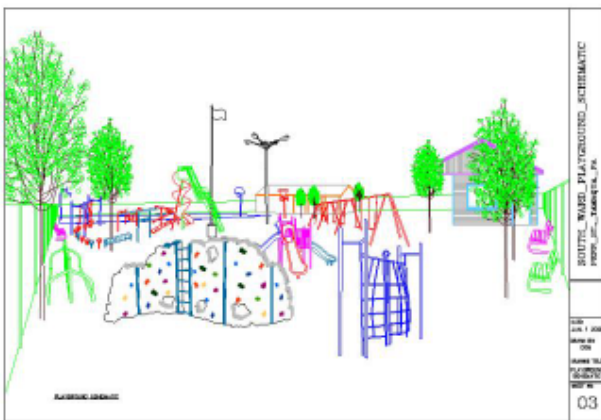
Goals: Within this neighborhood, the goals of the Elm Street Program are:

- To improve physical appearances by enhancing exterior building conditions and the local streetscape;
- To connect with revitalization activities happening in nearby commercial areas;
- To create and sustain neighborhood organizations that will help prevent decline; and
- To devise a vision for neighborhood revitalization and a comprehensive strategy to carry out that vision.



The Plan: In order to develop as successful of a project as possible, the Borough, South Ward Neighborhood Committee and the consultants held a series of public meetings to solicit public input into the plan development process. A housing inventory was completed; existing programs, systems, resources and

current municipal codes were reviewed. Volunteers developed a photographic inventory of their likes and dislikes. Through this process, the neighborhood assets and challenges were identified. These have been translated into goals, objectives and specific tasks consistent with the five elements of the Elm Street Plan: Clean, Safe & Green; Design; Image & Identity; Neighbors and Economy; and Sustainable Organization.



The Elm Street Plan for neighborhood improvement includes the following goals and objectives. A copy of the complete Plan can be obtained at the Borough of Tamaqua office.

Clean, Safe and Green Goal: Create an area where every resident and visitor can feel safe on

neighborhood streets, take pride in the neighborhood and live in a well-maintained environment.

Objectives:

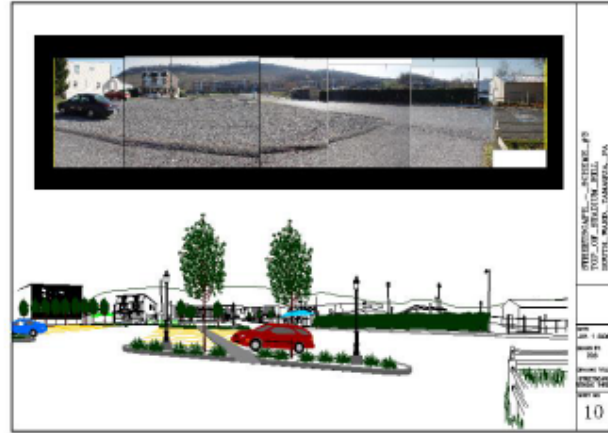
- a) Improve the South Ward Playground – address inconsistent maintenance, safety hazards, deteriorated basketball court and create better playground design.
- b) Create Community Gateways at the corner of Spruce and Hunter and the western entrance of Stadium Hill to present welcome entrances to the neighborhood and eliminate perceived problem areas.
- c) Maintain a clean environment through the cooperative effort of municipal employees, public service groups and school district.
- d) Increase public awareness of recreation facilities/programs in the neighborhood.
- e) Increase availability and access to walking trails.
- f) Improve lighting on streets and walkways.
- g) Improve residential parking, particularly in winter.
- h) Improve curbs, sidewalks and walkways to downtown.
- i) Establish South Ward Volunteer Fire Company and Tamaqua Salvation Army as neighborhood emergency shelter.

- j) Consistent house numbering; street signage.
- k) Consider traffic calming methods to improve traffic flow and lower speeds.
- l) Seek cooperative strategies to support shared rides and local transportation.

Design Goal: Encourage partnerships of existing resources to create a neighborhood design that provides for a safe, attractive and economically viable community for its residents.

Objectives:

- a) Develop standard rehab guidelines for “typical” South Ward properties.
- b) Develop programs to encourage general property maintenance (painting, pressure washing, weeding) and assist persons unable to complete regular maintenance.
- c) Encourage Borough to focus capital improvements and pilot programs in South Ward.
- d) Develop a property review committee to encourage redevelopment appropriate to the neighborhood needs.



Neighbors and Economy Goal: Enhance and promote initiatives to improve existing housing; increase opportunities for personal, family and neighborhood growth.

Objectives:

- a) Create a system to provide consistent code enforcement of all properties and rental inspection program.
- b) Implement programs to entice property owners to restore and improve existing properties.
- c) Strengthen relationships with local organizations and institutions to further develop potential of residents.

- d) Strengthen partnerships with development organizations to promote commercial opportunities.



Blueprint Community program.

Image and Identity Goal: Seek opportunities to improve the image of the South Ward as perceived by the neighborhood and others.

Objectives:

- a) Conduct Annual Homecoming Events to promote community pride.
- b) Establish South Ward Newsletter to create awareness.
- c) Develop neighbor helping neighbor campaign.
- d) Encourage and promote positive media awareness of neighborhood initiatives.
- e) Actively participate in and promote in the

Sustainable Organization Goal: Create a sustainable organization responsible for the management of volunteers, development and dissemination of information and fund raising strategies to achieve the goals of the South Ward Neighborhood.

Objectives:

- a) Establish an Elm Street Coordinator with a clear, concise management structure.
- b) Develop a consistent theme for the neighborhood.
- c) Develop resources to enhance presentations, improve communications, and manage information effectively.
- d) Establish sponsorship programs to help fund community projects.
- e) Establish recognition programs to reward performance.

The development of the South Ward Plan would not be possible without the dedication and support from numerous volunteers, organizations, businesses, elected officials and employees of the Borough of Tamaqua, PA DCED, PA Downtown Center and most importantly, the South Ward Neighborhood Committee and residents.