



# Community Revitalization in Allentown

*downtown and its neighborhoods, together, they'll grow*

# ALLENTOWN

T R A N S F O R M A T I O N

# Allentown ....

..... In March 2016 U.S. News & World Report listed Allentown as one of the best places to live in the United States.



Allentown is the third largest city in Pennsylvania.

Ideally situated, with direct routes 90 miles west of NYC and 60 miles north of Philadelphia.

The Lehigh Valley is home to 7 top colleges and universities.

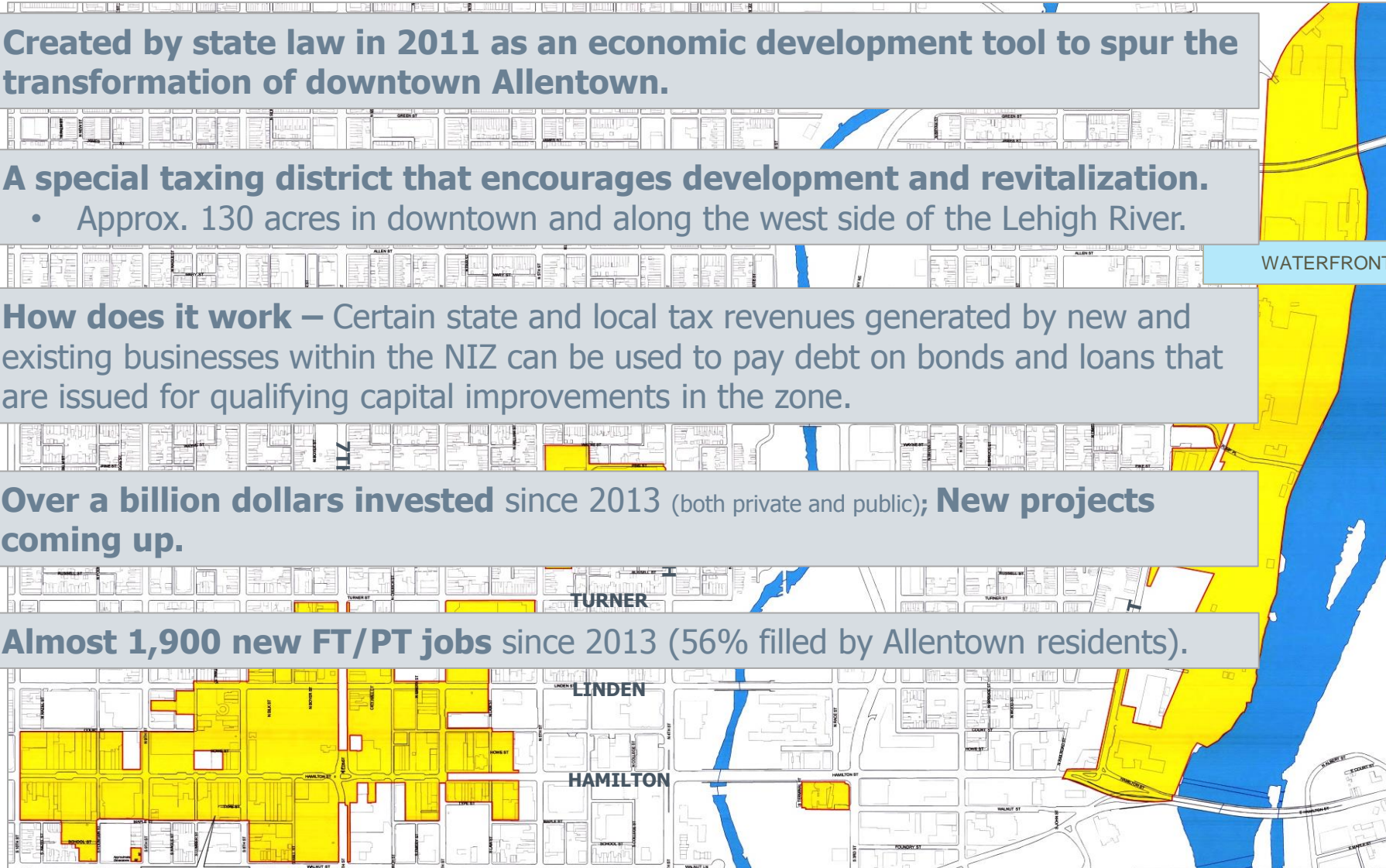
# Some Goings on in Allentown

- **Neighborhood Improvement Zone (NIZ)**
- **Downtown Urban Design Plan**
- **Lehigh Riverfront Development**
- **Re-Industrialization Strategy**
- **Upside Allentown**



# Neighborhood Improvement Zone (NIZ)

- **Created by state law in 2011 as an economic development tool to spur the transformation of downtown Allentown.**
- **A special taxing district that encourages development and revitalization.**
  - Approx. 130 acres in downtown and along the west side of the Lehigh River.
- **How does it work** – Certain state and local tax revenues generated by new and existing businesses within the NIZ can be used to pay debt on bonds and loans that are issued for qualifying capital improvements in the zone.
- **Over a billion dollars invested** since 2013 (both private and public); **New projects coming up.**
- **Almost 1,900 new FT/PT jobs** since 2013 (56% filled by Allentown residents).



# New Office Bldg. Butz Enterprises





# New Office Bldg.

Trifecta Technologies





# Commercial Rehabs on Hamilton Street

Federal Block



Allentown  
City without limits.







New Buildings  
(for office, residential, commercial, mixed-uses)  
City Center of Lehigh Valley

# New Buildings

(for office, residential, commercial, mixed-uses)  
City Center of Lehigh Valley



..... **in addition**, City Center of Lehigh Valley commissioned a landscape architecture and urban design studio to develop a phased vision for the landscaping of City Center's properties – called Center Green – with proposed short and long term improvements.





# Downtown Urban Design Plan

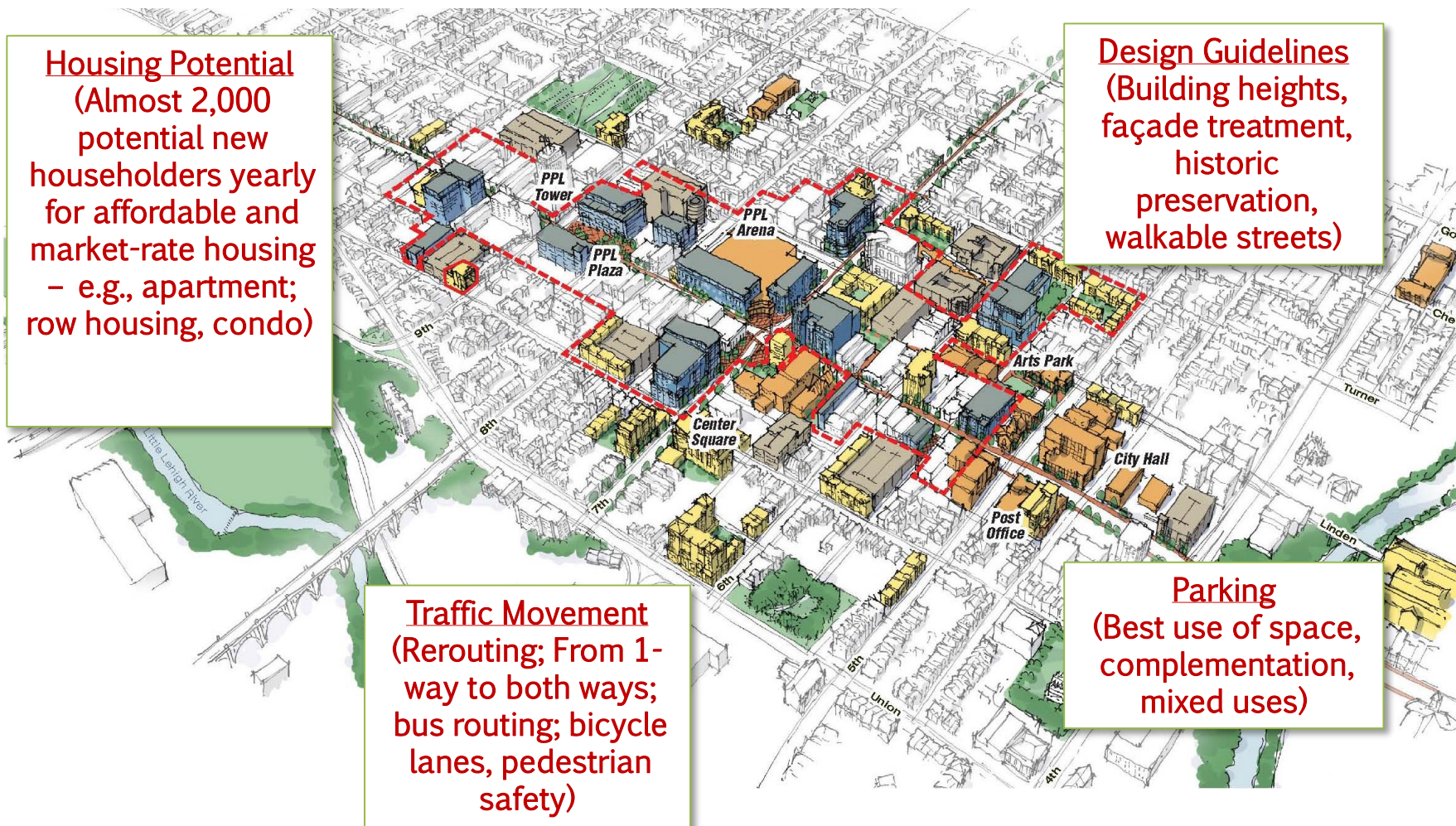
To accommodate the anticipated reinvestment

- Land use
- Urban Design
- Transportation
- Infrastructure





# Downtown Urban Design Plan



**Housing Potential**  
(Almost 2,000 potential new householders yearly for affordable and market-rate housing – e.g., apartment; row housing, condo)

**Design Guidelines**  
(Building heights, façade treatment, historic preservation, walkable streets)

**Traffic Movement**  
(Rerouting; From 1-way to both ways; bus routing; bicycle lanes, pedestrian safety)

**Parking**  
(Best use of space, complementation, mixed uses)



# Riverfront Development (Concept Plan)





# Riverfront Development (Concept Plan)

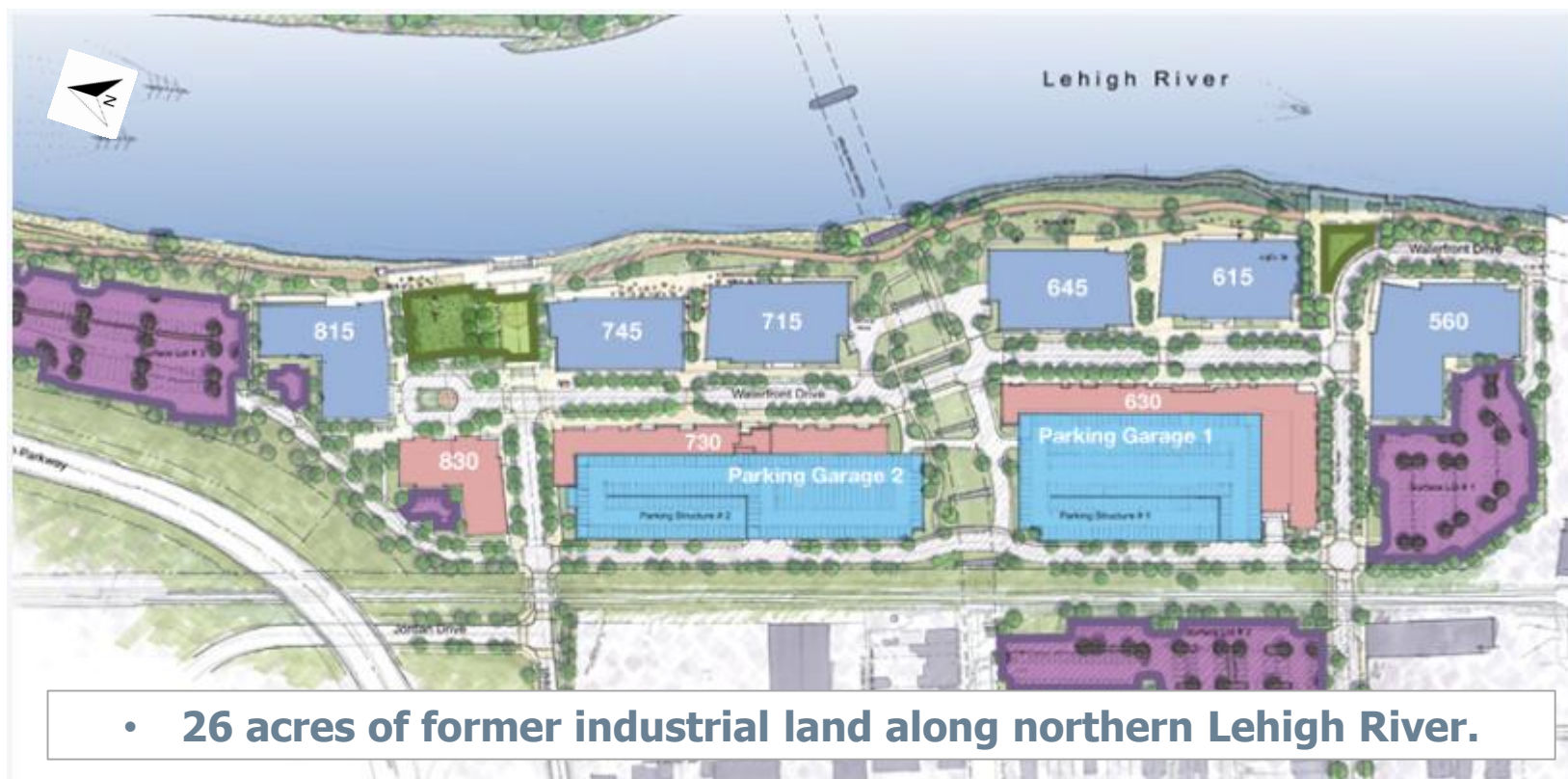




# Riverfront Development (Concept Plan)



# Lehigh Riverfront Development



- 26 acres of former industrial land along northern Lehigh River.

- Vision to transform into a mixed-use campus intended to enhance public areas of the riverfront and its neighborhood edge.

- Attracting new residents and businesses to the riverfront zones.



# Re-Industrialization Strategy

Revitalization strategy and land use plan that:

- identifies potential opportunities for economic development and job creation
- identifies public improvements/enhancements to improve access, public services, and aesthetics
- recommends any necessary zoning changes to better accommodate the economic development of the area, and serves as a model to transform similarly situated industrial areas



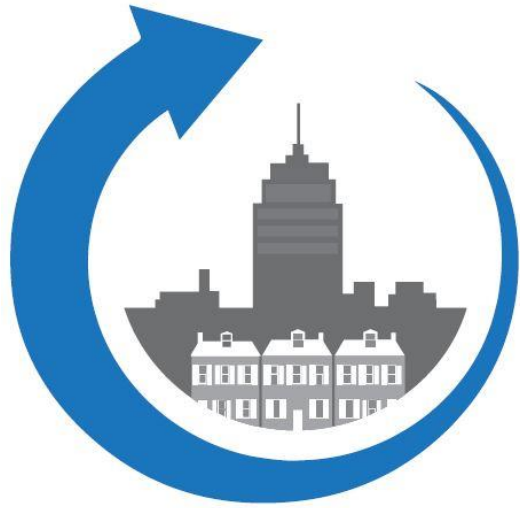
**Little Lehigh Industrial Corridor**



# Related Initiatives







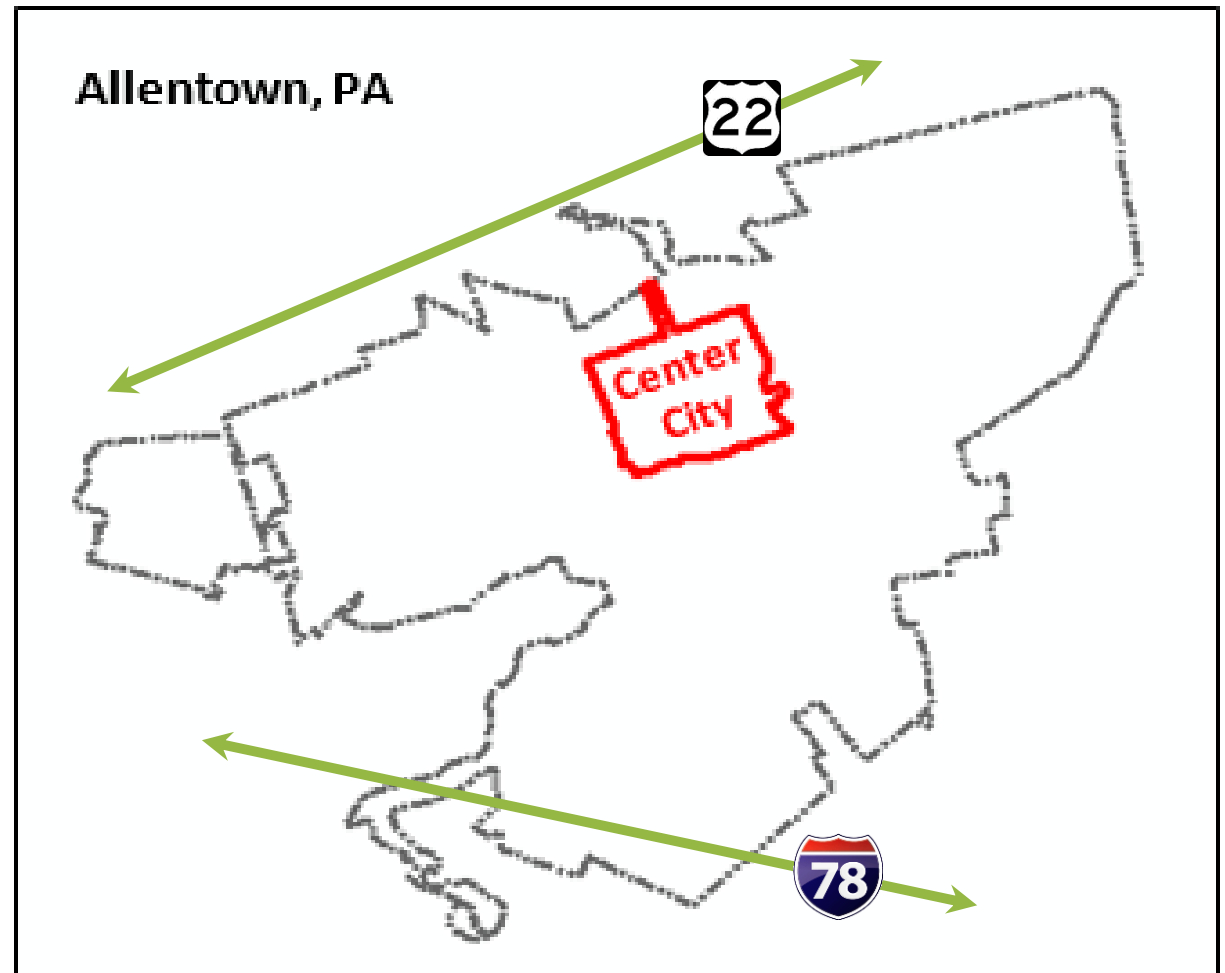
# UPSIDE ALLENTOWN

# Upside Allentown

Program Area

## Center City

- Right in the heart of Allentown
- Easily accessible from major highways
- Oldest and densest urban development in the region
  - Also the most economically-challenged



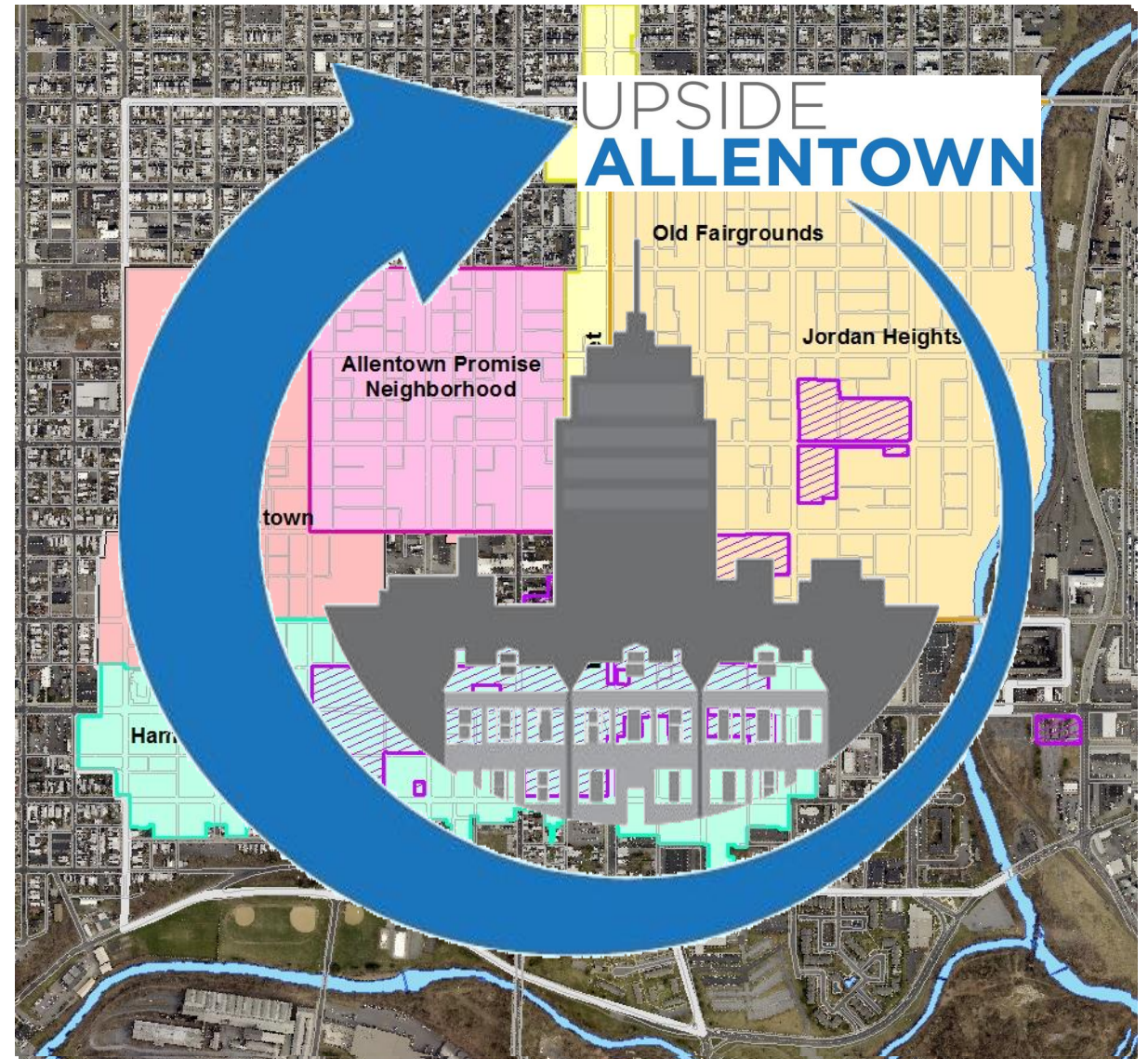


# Neighborhoods and Initiatives in Center City

- Jordan Heights and Old Fairgrounds HD
- Seventh Street District
- Old Allentown HD
- Allentown Promise NA
- Hamilton District

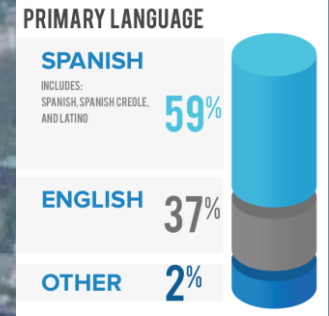
Each have their own concerns, aspirations, and goals (some similar; some related; some unique)

- ***NIZ (Neighborhood Improvement Zone)***





# Challenges and Opportunities



**Median Rent = \$600 – \$990**

## Housing Units

- 9,900 housing units
  - 86% are Occupied
    - by Renters (71% of total) and
    - by Owners (29% of total)
  - 14% are Vacant

	Program Area*	Allentown
Median Household Income	\$14,000 - \$31,000 <small>(this is a "range" taken from 7 census tracts that comprise the program area)</small>	\$35,000
Poverty Rate	32% - 55% <small>(this is a "range" taken from 7 census tracts that comprise the program area)</small>	26%
Unemployment Rate	23%	14%

**Median Sales Price (single-family) = \$43,000**

## Population

**Total of 27,100 persons**

- Major Race and *Ethnicity*
  - 21% of total = White
  - 14% of total = Black
  - 65% of total = Other Races } *61% Latino*
- Major Age Group
  - 32% of total = 18 years and younger
  - 6% of total = 65 years and older





# Upside Allentown

- Multi-faceted community revitalization strategy
  - Arts
  - Education
  - Physical Enhancements
  - Economic Development /Workforce Dev't
  - Public Safety
  - Housing
  - Communication
- Community-driven
- Funders and volunteers (90 – 110 people)
  - Area Residents
  - Local businesses
  - Non-profits
  - Faith-based organizations
  - Educators
  - Private and public entities



UPSIDE  
**ALLENTOWN**

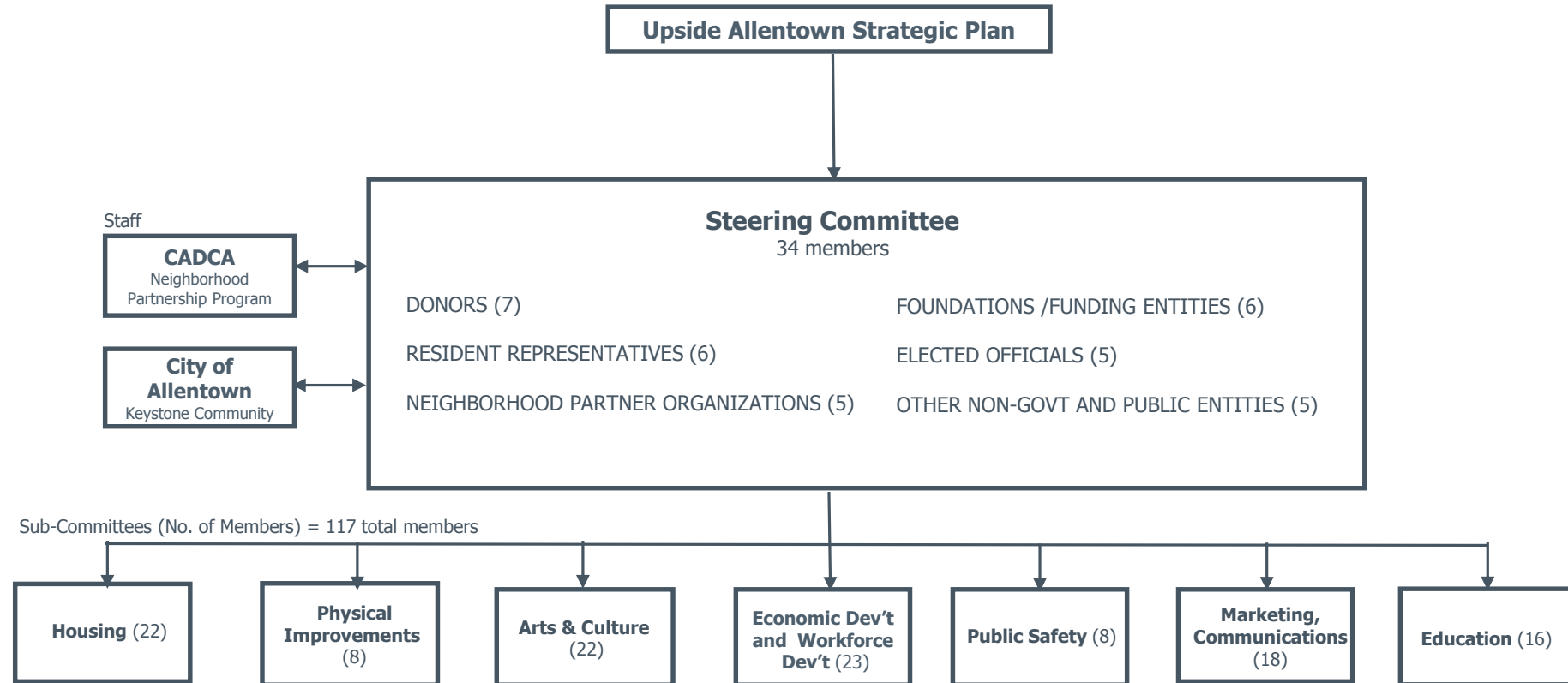
Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods



Center City, Allentown, PA

June 2014  
Last revision:  
07/06/15

# Organization





# Private Sector Involvement

DACDI (Downtown Allentown Community Development Initiative)

DACDI: Consortium of the (14) largest employers in LV and (3) local foundations

- Trifecta Technology
- Lehigh Valley Health Network
- Gross McGinley
- PPL (Pennsylvania Power & Light)
- City Center of Lehigh Valley
- Air Products
- Cross America Partners
- Duggan and Marcon
- Sacred Heart Hospital
- National Penn Bank
- Alvin H Butz
- Capital BlueCross
- St. Luke's University Health Network
- **Cross America Partners**
- Harry Trexler Trust
- Pool Trust
- Century Foundation



# Downtown Allentown Community Development Initiative (DACDI)

## Private Sector Involvement

### Mission

- DACDI provides effective and efficient coordination of private sector resources to lead the revitalization of center city Allentown.
- DACDI serves as a cohesive and stable base for the interface between economic and neighborhood development, and is an essential component for the collective quality of life of the City, and Region.
- Extensive engagement with public, nonprofit and neighborhood partners is a core operating principal and key to success.



# Downtown Allentown Community Development Initiative (DACDI)

## Private Sector Involvement

### Principles

- Assuring design and execution of an inclusive and comprehensive strategic vision that incorporates a thorough understanding of resident needs and priorities
- Encouraging efficient public sector coordination of objectives and resources
- Providing stable, consistent leadership, vision and strategy in the long term
- Providing private sector support as available to stimulate progress, leverage public sector and other resources, and respond promptly to emerging opportunities



# Downtown Allentown Community Development Initiative (DACDI)

Private Sector Involvement

## Education Initiatives

- Building 21: a new high school with a ground breaking approach, experiential learning based on each student's individual passion for learning, competency based model
- Business driven strategy to drive change through entire school district
- Community schools
- Leader in Me





# **Downtown Allentown Community Development Initiative (DACDI)**

Private Sector Involvement

## **Relationship with Upside and other local initiatives**

- Upside Allentown Plan
- Live Near Your Work
- Community Conversations
- Allentown Police Department
- United Way
- Allentown Promise Neighborhood
- Building 21



# Employment-Based Homeownership Assistance

**How It Works** – Through Neighborhood Homeownership Assistance, Lehigh Valley participating employers are offering grants to help employees buy a house within a designated downtown area. Grants cover closing costs and down payment on a first-come, first-served basis.

## Supplemental Programs

### Reduced Mortgage Rates!

Participating banks are offering mortgages with reduced closing costs and other benefits to LNYW participants.

### Facade-Improvement

The Upside Allentown Program is offering façade-improvement **grants of up to \$10,000** to eligible downtown homeowners.

## Program Guidelines

- Applicant must be an LNYW employee
- Applicant must be a first-time homebuyer
- If the property is in a designated area, the applicant must receive a grant from this program
- Applicant strongly encouraged to receive a grant from Neighborhood Homeownership Assistance
- Participating lenders will be offering reduced closing costs.
- Private mortgage insurance will be the responsibility of the applicant.

dollars received





# Cumulative Accomplishments

## HOUSING

- Residential rehabilitation
- Code inspections
- Home buyer incentives
- Commercial facades
- Senior housing
- Landlord seminars



Before



During



After



# Cumulative Accomplishments

## PHYSICAL ENHANCEMENTS

- Kicked off a campaign to improve safety by purchasing over 100 new pedestrian scale streetlights for installation
- Park redevelopment
- Installed 15 bicycle racks



# Cumulative Accomplishments

## PUBLIC SAFETY



- Installed 21 new high-definition surveillance cameras.
- Two additional bicycle patrol officers for select hours during the summer.
- Supported 35 middle school students in the two-week Youth Civilian Police Academy held by the Allentown Police Department.
- Supported the first Allentown Police Athletic League's afterschool basketball program at Trexler Middle School for 120 students.





# Cumulative Accomplishments

## ECONOMIC and WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- Pre-employment training program for residents seeking employment in the hospitality and restaurant business; 95 participated.
- Graduated 26 existing and/or prospective entrepreneurs in the neighborhood from the Community Action Development Corporation's Start Your Business program.
- Created and launched the Retail Mosaic for small business development.



# Cumulative Accomplishments

## EDUCATION

- Completed successful fundraising to provide most of the capital costs to enable the launch of the innovative new Center City high school, Building 21
- Continued to advance a Pay for Success project to provide private sector funding for high quality early childhood education for as many as 400 children



- Supported The Literacy Center's Young Empowered Students (YES) GED preparation and career counseling program for young adults, which has served over 100 students
- Funded an additional ESL class for 35 students from the Upside Allentown area at The Literacy Center
- Funded the Allentown School District's Equity Event for teachers and community leaders with keynote speaker Dr. Jeff Andrade-Duncan to kick off a community discussion of equity in schooling



**Rossany**  
**Additional ESL Classes for Upside Residents**



# Cumulative Accomplishments

## ARTS & CULTURE

- Began a planning process for strengthening the role of the arts in the city's revitalization
  - Contracted with nationally recognized consulting firm Corona Insights, Inc. to produce the first comprehensive Arts and Culture plan for the City of Allentown
- Finalized plans for public art enhancements through murals, arts park and arts walk enhancements

### Upside Allentown Cultural Plan Needs Assessment Report





# Accomplishments by Other Funders

## ▪ **HARRY C. TREXLER TRUST**

- Invested over \$5 million in projects related to the NIZ and City of Allentown parks, with over \$700,000 of new funding for Center City Allentown projects this year

## ▪ **LEHIGH VALLEY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION**

- Invested \$372,440 in the Upside Allentown area over the past 2 years

## ▪ **UNITED WAY OF THE GREATER LEHIGH VALLEY**

- Invested \$2 million in the City of Allentown, including the work of 44 different programs and 29 partners
- Supports an information and referral line for emergency services in the Lehigh Valley
- Provided funding and support for The Literacy Center, resulting in 199 women working towards their GED and becoming proficient in English

## ▪ **THE CENTURY FUND**

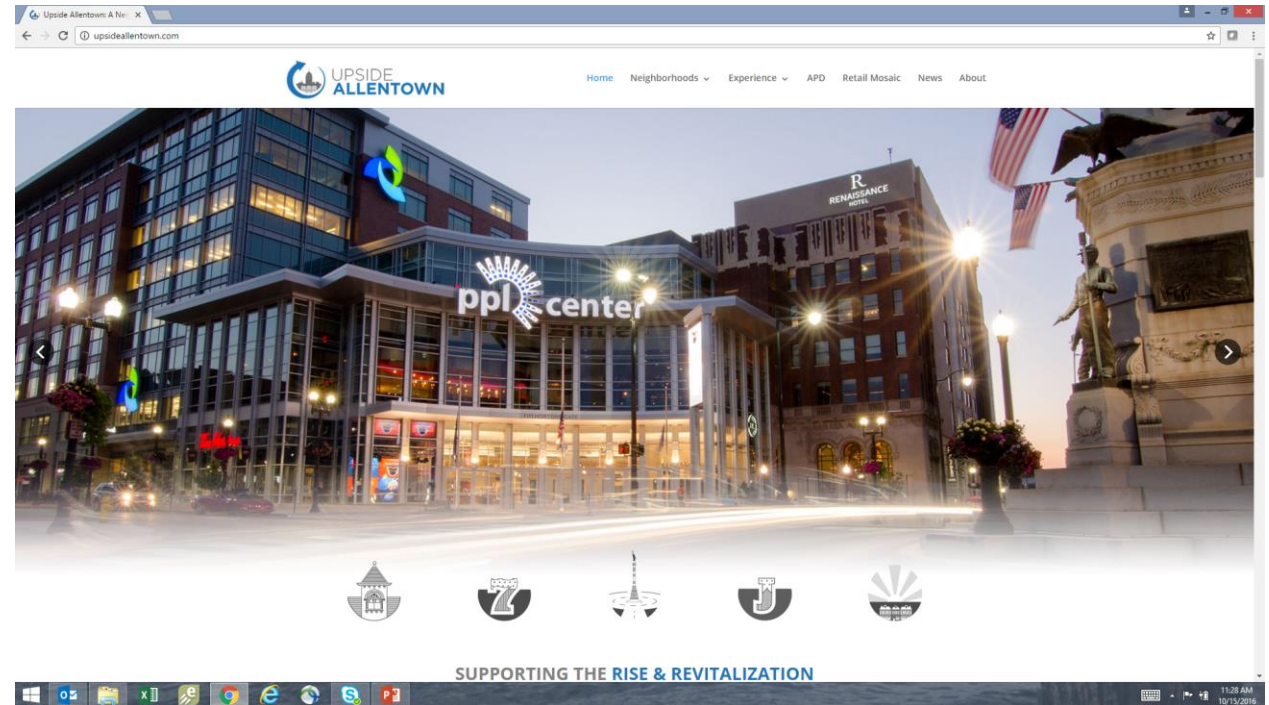
Invested \$740,000 in the Upside Allentown area through grants to 28 organizations

# Cumulative Accomplishments

## MARKETING, COMMUNICATIONS



- Website
- Videos
- Branding



# Outcomes



- Upside Plan includes 11 outcomes it hopes to achieve.
  - Property values / vacancy
  - Employment / income
  - Crime
  - Homeownership
  - Housing conditions
  - Quality of life



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[Upside Allentown](#)

[upsideallentown.com](http://upsideallentown.com)

[City of Allentown](#)

[allentownpa.gov](http://allentownpa.gov)

