



BACKGROUND ANALYSIS

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Jenkintown's central business district is concentrated along Old York Road from Washington Lane to Cloverly Avenue, providing a dense mix of retail and office uses. Significant commercial activity is also located along West Avenue, as well as smaller streets surrounding the Old York and West intersection. Another cluster of office development is at the western edge of the borough near the Jenkintown SEPTA station, although associated retail services are located across the tracks in Cheltenham Township.

The major focus for Jenkintown's commercial base, as well as its overall image, is the traditional business district centered around the intersection of Old York and West. Since this business district is geographically located at the top of a hill, it is referred to as "Uptown." The physical layout of Uptown, with its historic buildings and intimate streetscape, lends to a small-town atmosphere.



"Uptown" contains many historic commercial buildings along Old York Road.



"Uptown" continues along West Avenue with specialty shops and service retail.

Jenkintown rests amid a wealthy area of suburbs in eastern Montgomery County. Estimated median income for 2000 was \$55,604, while the average income for households with children was \$84,443. Jenkintown residents also have high educational attainment, with 93% holding high school diplomas and 43% with college degrees. With this strong demographic base, the borough is well known for its quality school district. These factors make Jenkintown attractive for employers seeking educated workers, businesses seeking to locate near disposable income, and families seeking quality schools.

Previous Planning Efforts

In past decades, Jenkintown was a regional commercial center known for its department stores and specialty retail shops. With the departure of major anchors such as Strawbridges and Bloomingdales and increased retail competition from neighboring communities, Uptown began to show signs of distress. Responding to the economic changes shaping Jenkintown, the borough in 1980 commissioned a planning study by Venturi, Rauch & Scott-Brown (the "Venturi Study"). It identified a series of problems the borough is still struggling with today: lagging business along Old York Road, inadequate parking, competition from area malls, and the departure of key businesses among them.

The Venturi study's central recommendation - to create a new main street shopping district off of Old York Road on Johnson and Leedom streets - never occurred. Instead, many of the trends identified in 1980 progressed, with Uptown experiencing increased storefront vacancies, poor building maintenance, ongoing negative impacts from traffic along Old York Road, and a lack of coordination among businesses.

Concern about Uptown has revived with a flurry of recent activity, in particular the efforts of the Jenkintown Community Alliance (JCA). In 2000, the JCA conducted surveys of Jenkintown residents and business owners that gathered information and helped define community priorities. When asked what types of improvements could be made to the business district, residents prioritized the following:

- More/improved parking (71%)
- Different businesses (57%)
- Façade improvement (44%)
- Landscaping (33%)
- Improved signage (21%)
- Rest areas (19%)
- Better lighting (15%)
- Other (15%)

Other key findings from the JCA survey are included in Appendix 1.

The 1980 Venturi Study, while full of sharp analysis and valuable recommendations, never had adequate community support and largely fell short of implementation. Current planning efforts stand in marked contrast, with strong involvement from the borough council, Jenkintown Community Alliance, and Jenkintown Business Association. The creation of a new town square demonstrates a growing capacity to create a new vision for Uptown and affect change.

Existing Tax Base

Sustaining a healthy tax base is a major concern and challenge for Jenkintown. In particular, Jenkintown residents want to ensure strong financial support for their school system. Considering Jenkintown's small size and fixed residential base, a major economic development objective for the borough is to maintain and strengthen its overall tax base via commercial development.

A review of Montgomery County assessment records shows that Jenkintown relies upon its commercial tax base significantly more than most municipalities in the county. As shown in Table 1, there are currently 206 commercial properties in the Borough of Jenkintown. This accounts for 11.1 percent of the borough's 1,860 total properties - a higher percentage than any jurisdiction in the county. For Montgomery County as a whole, commercial properties comprise only 3.8 percent of all real estate holdings.

Montgomery County assessment records also detail the total assessed value attributable to commercial properties by jurisdiction. Based on current assessed values (1999), commercial properties in Jenkintown account for \$89,486,950, or 27.2 percent, of the borough's total assessed property value of \$328,675,120. In comparison, the average percentage of total assessed values in commercial properties at the county level is 17.6 percent. As shown in Table 2, Jenkintown ranks fifth out of Montgomery County's 62 municipalities in the value of its commercial properties as a percentage of total assessments. Only West Conshohocken, Upper Merion, Plymouth, and Upper Gwynedd have higher percentages of total property assessments in commercial uses.

Jenkintown residents and businesses face relatively high property tax rates compared to other Montgomery County municipalities (see Table 3). The combined property tax rate for the borough of Jenkintown and its school district is 23.211 mills (one mill = \$1 in taxes per \$1000 in assessed value). This is the fifth highest rate among Montgomery County municipalities behind Pottstown, Cheltenham, Norristown, and Hatboro; the county average is only 18.23 mills. Of Jenkintown's 13 local general fund and school district taxes, only the property tax rate for the school district has changed over the past few years. Since 1998, it has grown about one mill each year from 17.5 mills to 20.35 in 2001.

Table 1: COMMERCIAL PROPERTIES IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Jurisdiction	# Comm. Properties	Total Properties	% Total	Rank
Abington	682	19,987	3.4%	32
Ambler	167	2,074	8.1%	5
Bridgeport	139	1,628	8.5%	3
Bryn Athyn	7	402	1.7%	53
Cheltenham	408	11,122	3.7%	30
Collegeville	73	1,392	5.2%	20
Conshohocken	181	3,174	5.7%	16
Douglass	111	3,748	3.0%	37
East Greenville	37	1,095	3.4%	34
East Norriton	170	5,201	3.3%	35
Franconia	75	4,442	1.7%	55
Green Lane	22	223	9.9%	2
Hatboro	225	2,665	8.4%	4
Hatfield Borough	54	987	5.5%	17
Hatfield Township	247	5,950	4.2%	27
Horsham	297	8,778	3.4%	33
JENKINTOWN	206	1,860	11.1%	1
Lansdale	340	5,267	6.5%	13
Limerick	166	6,370	2.6%	41
Lower Frederick	37	2,113	1.8%	52
Lower Gwynnedd	100	4,035	2.5%	44
Lower Merion	963	21,831	4.4%	25
Lower Moreland	102	4,478	2.3%	47
Lower Pottsgrove	127	4,336	2.9%	38
Lower Providence	226	8,244	2.7%	39
Lower Salford	120	4,677	2.6%	42
Marlborough	37	1,552	2.4%	45
Montgomery Township	181	9,296	1.9%	50
Narberth	101	1,520	6.6%	12
New Hanover	48	3,189	1.5%	58
Norristown	789	10,178	7.8%	7
North Wales	63	1,278	4.9%	21
Pennsburg	86	1,127	7.6%	9
Perkiomen	30	3,150	1.0%	61
Plymouth	362	6,027	6.0%	14
Pottstown	597	8,448	7.1%	11
Red Hill	40	887	4.5%	23
Rockledge	75	959	7.8%	6
Royersford	89	1,521	5.9%	15
Salford	16	1,037	1.5%	57
Schwenksville	28	520	5.4%	18
Skippack	87	3,440	2.5%	43
Souderton	166	2,276	7.3%	10
Springfield	257	7,189	3.6%	31
Telford	68	1,526	4.5%	24
Towamencin	87	6,204	1.4%	59
Trappe	75	1,425	5.3%	19
Upper Dublin	160	9,629	1.7%	56
Upper Frederick	12	1,360	0.9%	62
Upper Gwynnedd	108	5,706	1.9%	51
Upper Hanover	63	2,325	2.7%	40
Upper Merion	430	10,546	4.1%	28
Upper Moreland	337	7,766	4.3%	26
Upper Pottsgrove	44	1,862	2.4%	46
Upper Providence	79	6,576	1.2%	60
Upper Salford	27	1,300	2.1%	49
West Conshohocken	34	747	4.6%	22
West Norriton	143	6,313	2.3%	48
West Pottsgrove	128	1,668	7.7%	8
Whitmarsh	248	6,510	3.8%	29
Whitpain	210	6,517	3.2%	36
Worcester	58	3,391	1.7%	54
County total	10,645	281,044	3.8%	

Table 2: COMMERCIAL AND RESIDENTIAL ASSESSMENTS IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Jurisdiction	Comm Assess	Res Assess	Total Assess	% Comm	Rank	% Res	Rank
Abington	\$562,764,441	\$2,700,488,235	\$3,819,495,926	14.7%	28	70.7%	26
Ambler	\$52,342,030	\$197,890,060	\$295,471,900	17.7%	20	67.0%	35
Bridgeport	\$34,431,833	\$116,199,590	\$181,423,343	19.0%	15	64.0%	42
Bryn Athyn	\$14,779,950	\$74,355,990	\$140,928,650	10.5%	39	52.8%	58
Cheltenham	\$376,182,474	\$1,481,113,650	\$2,195,520,805	17.1%	23	67.5%	33
Collegeville	\$51,196,330	\$192,002,720	\$311,180,740	16.5%	24	61.7%	47
Conshohocken	\$95,566,720	\$261,981,630	\$428,422,095	22.3%	8	61.2%	48
Douglass	\$52,875,713	\$387,886,423	\$516,696,880	10.2%	41	75.1%	18
East Greenville	\$7,481,750	\$86,963,010	\$111,291,250	6.7%	49	78.1%	12
East Norriton	\$195,154,960	\$615,439,140	\$1,016,622,470	19.2%	13	60.5%	51
Franconia	\$37,504,370	\$569,123,574	\$764,678,150	4.9%	53	74.4%	19
Green Lane	\$5,355,240	\$17,865,130	\$28,571,250	18.7%	16	62.5%	46
Hatboro	\$71,590,140	\$266,170,975	\$400,389,005	17.9%	19	66.5%	36
Hatfield Borough	\$18,740,340	\$86,087,020	\$119,124,170	15.7%	26	72.3%	24
Hatfield Township	\$209,918,020	\$604,978,690	\$1,087,343,316	19.3%	12	55.6%	54
Horsham	\$560,458,217	\$1,262,285,445	\$2,268,743,301	24.7%	6	55.6%	54
JENKINTOWN	\$89,486,950	\$210,196,390	\$328,675,120	27.2%	5	64.0%	42
Lansdale	\$144,261,140	\$512,533,510	\$838,656,518	17.2%	22	61.1%	50
Limerick	\$160,652,551	\$711,230,050	\$1,966,407,984	8.2%	45	36.2%	61
Lower Frederick	\$8,814,570	\$227,263,610	\$259,347,170	3.4%	56	87.6%	2
Lower Gwynnedd	\$94,579,120	\$930,080,980	\$1,277,671,180	7.4%	48	72.8%	23
Lower Merion	\$949,930,355	\$5,946,635,318	\$8,031,957,090	11.8%	36	74.0%	20
Lower Moreland	\$55,087,320	\$803,409,382	\$1,004,409,992	5.5%	50	80.0%	8
Lower Pottsgrove	\$78,307,925	\$431,172,140	\$598,158,044	13.1%	34	72.1%	25
Lower Providence	\$267,222,226	\$1,052,502,317	\$1,520,117,489	17.6%	21	69.2%	30
Lower Salford	\$102,739,970	\$684,698,770	\$906,016,790	11.3%	38	75.6%	15
Marlborough	\$9,574,920	\$151,197,560	\$199,472,860	4.8%	54	75.8%	14
Montgomery Township	\$359,420,120	\$1,310,053,162	\$1,875,267,272	19.2%	14	69.9%	28
Narberth	\$48,641,090	\$248,411,760	\$307,860,180	15.8%	25	80.7%	7
New Hanover	\$15,253,219	\$369,309,350	\$452,727,399	3.4%	56	81.6%	6
Norristown	\$221,744,932	\$609,541,070	\$1,063,055,372	20.9%	11	57.3%	53
North Wales	\$12,970,610	\$130,546,720	\$165,938,410	7.8%	47	78.7%	10
Pennsburg	\$27,184,030	\$90,129,265	\$147,287,210	18.5%	17	61.2%	48
Perkiomen	\$11,005,780	\$362,720,930	\$441,461,570	2.5%	61	82.2%	5
Plymouth	\$650,815,898	\$729,737,990	\$1,574,280,873	41.3%	3	46.4%	59
Pottstown	\$184,039,162	\$546,783,810	\$1,017,472,091	18.1%	18	53.7%	56
Red Hill	\$14,649,280	\$70,377,214	\$108,957,704	13.4%	33	64.6%	41
Rockledge	\$16,762,240	\$94,844,370	\$121,112,910	13.8%	32	78.3%	11
Royersford	\$26,116,570	\$122,279,190	\$185,207,700	14.1%	31	66.0%	39
Salford	\$4,536,200	\$132,167,750	\$157,472,720	2.9%	60	83.9%	3
Schwenksville	\$5,775,330	\$38,446,280	\$58,138,510	9.9%	43	66.1%	38
Skippack	\$29,847,271	\$414,356,164	\$660,669,705	4.5%	55	62.7%	45
Souderton	\$46,297,660	\$220,248,140	\$314,207,560	14.7%	28	70.1%	27
Springfield	\$113,471,320	\$1,074,956,150	\$1,403,277,480	8.1%	46	76.6%	13
Telford	\$18,522,340	\$152,455,900	\$221,106,600	8.4%	44	69.0%	31
Towamencin	\$110,466,397	\$770,587,391	\$1,056,639,108	10.5%	39	72.9%	22
Trappe	\$28,145,103	\$179,521,150	\$237,623,063	11.8%	36	75.5%	16
Upper Dublin	\$349,347,331	\$1,702,743,030	\$2,320,538,311	15.1%	27	73.4%	21
Upper Frederick	\$2,772,000	\$140,219,500	\$175,882,730	1.6%	62	79.7%	9
Upper Gwynnedd	\$502,623,824	\$734,787,400	\$1,382,121,684	36.4%	4	53.2%	57
Upper Hanover	\$20,200,025	\$238,512,631	\$368,395,416	5.5%	50	64.7%	40
Upper Merion	\$1,630,744,819	\$1,416,710,760	\$3,583,709,039	45.5%	2	39.5%	60
Upper Moreland	\$341,375,862	\$919,748,781	\$1,522,082,413	22.4%	7	60.4%	52
Upper Pottsgrove	\$10,998,640	\$193,815,650	\$219,203,500	5.0%	52	88.4%	1
Upper Providence	\$310,738,750	\$898,126,308	\$1,410,307,335	22.0%	10	63.7%	44
Upper Salford	\$6,201,250	\$168,459,000	\$201,610,068	3.1%	58	83.6%	4
West Conshohocken	\$122,581,575	\$79,077,890	\$249,216,545	49.2%	1	31.7%	62
West Norriton	\$124,043,520	\$669,171,946	\$993,846,938	12.5%	35	67.3%	34
West Pottsgrove	\$15,422,260	\$106,839,690	\$153,329,250	10.1%	42	69.7%	29
Whitemarsh	\$247,068,150	\$1,127,642,754	\$1,702,703,355	14.5%	30	66.2%	37
Whitpain	\$443,588,400	\$1,380,526,910	\$2,007,938,849	22.1%	9	68.8%	32
Worcester	\$24,364,233	\$588,024,650	\$779,203,712	3.1%	58	75.5%	16
County total	\$10,404,734,766	\$38,613,631,965	\$59,256,646,070	17.6%		65.2%	

Table 3: TAX RATES IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Jurisdiction	Property Tax (mills)	Rank	Bus. Priv. Tax	Mercantile Tax
Abington	22.916	6	4	1.5
Ambler	16.53	47	0	0
Bridgeport	13.98	57	0	0
Bryn Athyn	7.95	62	0	0
Cheltenham	28.5911	2	4	1.5
Collegeville	18.7	23	0	0
Conshohocken	15.84	51	2	1.5
Douglass	13.768	58	0	0
East Greenville	18.971	19	0	0
East Norriton	20.001	15	1.5	1.5
Franconia	18.15	26	0	0
Green Lane	17.071	43	0	0
Hatboro	23.954	4	0	0
Hatfield Borough	17.6858	37	0	0
Hatfield Township	18.0108	30	0	0
Horsham	19.051	18	0	0
JENKINTOWN	23.211	5	4	1.5
Lansdale	18.0278	29	0	0
Limerick	17.133	42	0	0
Lower Frederick	17.75	34	0	0
Lower Gwynnedd	14.93	53	1	0.75
Lower Merion	14.917	54	1.5	1
Lower Moreland	21.4845	11	2	1.5
Lower Pottsgrove	22.656	8	1.5	1.5
Lower Providence	18.081	27	0	0
Lower Salford	18.813	20	0	0
Marlborough	17.071	44	0	0
Montgomery Township	18.6348	24	1.5	1.5
Narberth	16.477	48	1.5	1.5
New Hanover	14.778	55	0	0
Norristown	25.5781	3	1	1
North Wales	17.9348	31	0	0
Pennsburg	17.701	35	0	0
Perkiomen	17.69	36	0	0
Plymouth	15.44	52	1.5	1.5
Pottstown	28.8389	1	0	0
Red Hill	17.271	41	0	0
Rockledge	22.436	9	1.5	1.5
Royersford	18.79	21	0	0
Salford	19.25	17	0	0
Schwenksville	18.443	25	0	0
Skippack	17.5508	38	0	0
Souderton	20.0135	14	0	0
Springfield	19.715	16	2	1.5
Telford	20.5	12	0	0
Towamencin	17.9058	32	0	0
Trappe	17.36	40	0	0
Upper Dublin	17.837	33	0	0
Upper Frederick	13.658	59	0	0
Upper Gwynnedd	18.0468	28	0	0
Upper Hanover	16.871	46	0	0
Upper Merion	11.591	60	1.5	1.5
Upper Moreland	18.709	22	3.5	1.5
Upper Pottsgrove	22.866	7	1.5	1.5
Upper Providence	16.3384	49	0	0
Upper Salford	17.5	39	0	0
West Conshohocken	10	61	0	0
West Norriton	20.464	13	0	0
West Pottsgrove	21.556	10	1.5	1.5
Whitemarsh	15.8783	50	1.5	1.5
Whitpain	14.55	56	0	0
Worcester	17.04	45	0	0
County total	(avg) 18.23			

Note: Millage rates are for local municipality and school district taxes combined.

Another notable aspect about Jenkintown's tax rate structure is the emphasis placed on office compared to retail uses. The borough's business privilege tax for office uses is 4 mills for the municipality and school district combined - tied for highest in the county with neighboring Abington and Cheltenham townships. Meanwhile, the retail mercantile tax is 1.5 mills, less than 30% the rate for office uses. This tax differential for office and retail uses has allowed Jenkintown to sustain revenues as its commercial base shifts increasingly toward office.

In a review of local tax revenue sources, the business privilege tax on office uses stands out as the most significant contributor to the borough's budget. As shown in Table 4, it yields twice as much to the borough's general fund as the local real estate tax and is several times larger than the contribution from the mercantile tax. (Approximately 65% of local real estate tax revenues come from residential properties, and 25% from commercial.) Revenue growth from business privilege and mercantile taxes has been an important factor in Jenkintown's ongoing ability to meet the costs of providing borough services.

Table 4: MAJOR BOROUGH TAX REVENUE SOURCES

Year	Business privilege	Real estate	Mercantile
2001 (through Nov.)	\$941,864	\$435,005	\$157,700
2000	\$880,418	\$433,050	\$87,110
1999	\$728,287	\$449,720	\$95,377
1998	\$681,513	\$502,496	\$74,775
1997	\$501,495	\$480,402	\$93,276
1996	\$464,773	\$446,854	\$78,880
1995	\$456,658	\$459,854	\$73,187

Source: Borough of Jenkintown (general fund only)

Retail and Office Market Conditions

Eleven realtors familiar with Jenkintown retail and office properties were interviewed to gauge commercial market conditions. While the recent macroeconomic downturn has slowed activity, there are signs of both strength and concern in Jenkintown's commercial market. A full roster of active commercial businesses is included as Appendix 2.

Retail Real Estate Market

For retail, there are a limited number of new stores in renovated buildings that are commanding higher rents and contributing to a new atmosphere in Uptown. However, much of the retail market is experiencing strain and vacancy, as current and prospective retailers cite problems with inadequate foot traffic, lack of destination stores, and poor building condition. This split in the retail market is reflected in Jenkintown rental rates. Newly renovated, central locations draw more than \$20/SF, while the rest of retail in the borough hovers between \$8-\$15/SF, with most in the \$10-\$12 range.

Regarding the problem of prolonged commercial vacancies, realtors point to the role of landlords who refuse to lower prices or make building improvements. Long-standing vacancies of a year or more have occurred in buildings with rental asking prices of \$12-\$18/SF for retail and \$12-\$16 for office.

Jenkintown competes with Willow Grove and Keswick for retailers and is generally considered more desirable than Cheltenham but less accessible than several sites in Abington. Realtors said that competitively priced Jenkintown spaces often lose out to neighboring communities due to Jenkintown's limited parking.

In recent years, demand for retail space has been particularly strong among restaurants, as well as first-time retailers seeking low rents. However, some restaurants that have expressed serious interest have avoided locating in Jenkintown due to parking concerns. The Gap and other retail anchors also have considered locating in Jenkintown, but say they cannot find adequate space or parking, and desire a more uniform retail environment.



Newly renovated buildings in "Uptown" draw the highest rents for retail.

Office Real Estate Market

Most of the current demand for office space in Jenkintown comes from service-oriented firms (medical, financial, law) and professional consultants. Demand remains fairly strong in multi-tenant buildings such as the former Strawbridge's and Bloomingdales department stores, which have been converted to office complexes with limited retail. Jenkins Court and Rydal Square - major contributors to the borough's tax base - have maintained high occupancy levels and tend to re-lease vacant space within a few months. Modern multi-tenant office space in the center of Uptown has experienced higher vacancy rates, with realtors again pointing to parking difficulties. Rents for these multi-tenant buildings range from \$16-\$22/SF.



Jenkins Court is a signature building in the suburban office market.



Offices above retail is not working for many "Uptown" properties due to their age.

Office demand is relatively weak in second floor spaces above storefronts in Uptown. These spaces tend to be smaller, not equipped with modern amenities, and often face barriers in coming up to code. Rents can be as low as \$8/SF. With high demand for rental housing units in Jenkintown, there is notable pressure to convert this type of office space to apartments. More than 20 such conversions have occurred during the past two years.

Jenkintown office space is considered comparable in price and attractiveness to space available in Huntingdon Valley and Horsham, and less expensive and attractive than space in Fort Washington. Accessible parking was suggested as a major factor for the success of the office developments near the Jenkintown SEPTA station on Greenwood and West avenues.

Assets and Weaknesses

Overall, realtors cite several features of the borough that attract businesses. Many appreciate Jenkintown's small-town feel. Retailers enjoy the friendly environment and opportunity to get to know their clientele. Office users in particular favor the pedestrian environment. Jenkintown's high income and education levels draw retailers and employers, along with its location between Philadelphia and the suburbs. Some businesses are attracted by Jenkintown's transportation accessibility, while others benefit from heavy exposure and traffic along Old York Road.

According to realtors, aspects of Jenkintown that businesses find unattractive are:

- lack of accessible parking (especially for retailers),
- poor retail mix,
- lack of magnet destination stores,
- low foot traffic,
- limited retail hours,
- older commercial spaces that are small and have inadequate infrastructure,
- traffic congestion,
- zoning and regulatory barriers, and
- the high business privilege tax.

At the November 2001 meeting of the Jenkintown Business and Professional Association, participants noted several recent changes in Uptown that have had a positive impact on business. The new town square was viewed as a needed physical and mental gathering point for the community. Most felt that it has increased foot traffic in the area, especially with the walkway between West Avenue and the park, and drawn people to Uptown for events such as the annual jazz festival. While most felt the park has been a good investment, some complained of low usage and a missed opportunity to redevelop the site for increased parking.



Most business owners believe Jenkintown's town square is a major asset.

Participants also noted that redevelopment of several properties adjacent to the square has provided a boost for Uptown. Some suggested that the most important recent change in the business community has been increased interest in improving Uptown.

Economic Development Issues

Through discussions with the Jenkintown Revitalization Task Force, the Jenkintown Business and Professional Association, retailers, realtors, and other members of the community, the following have emerged as key economic development issues and concerns:

Tax Base

Maintaining an adequate tax base is a particular challenge for such a small borough. Jenkintown has always relied heavily upon its commercial base to support local schools and other municipal services. Since the departure of major retail anchors such as Strawbridges and Bloomingdales, the trend within Jenkintown has been toward increased reliance upon office uses - both in converted department stores and scattered throughout Uptown's older buildings. While retailers and office workers seek a healthy Uptown to support their businesses, Jenkintown residents recognize that a strong commercial base is key to supporting the town's quality of life.

Parking

Parking has long been a priority economic development issue for Uptown. Retailers in particular complain that insufficient parking limits business development and expansion, preventing potential shoppers from stopping in Jenkintown. In particular, the lack of on-street parking on Old York Road provides a barrier to retailers seeking to draw customers out of their cars. A series of small parking lots and on-street parking is available off Old York Road, but can be difficult to locate. Despite the addition of banners on Old York pointing to parking lots, access to these lots remains confusing to the uninitiated shopper.



The "Balkanized" parking lots near Old York Road limit perceived parking supply.

Use of key metered parking spaces by merchants and employees is cited as another factor contributing to the parking shortage. Prior efforts to curb this practice have seen little success. Business community members indicate that the community may support a multi-story parking structure as a solution to address parking shortages. At the same time, some believe that Uptown's overall parking supply is adequate, and that shoppers and employees only need to be made more aware of the spaces that already exist.

Retail Mix

Residents and businesses frequently raised the need for an improved retail mix in Uptown. While individuals praised many of Uptown's specialty shops, they stressed the need to diversify Jenkintown's retail base and bring in more modern shops. This diversity is especially important given Uptown's nature as a walking district.

Individuals mentioned the need for major destination stores, as well as "basics" such as hardware and food stores. The growing number of restaurants was largely seen as a positive trend that should continue. While individuals were interested in attracting new merchants, they also expressed concerns about potentially losing key current businesses, such as the state liquor store and movie theater.

Vacant/Run-Down Properties

A significant barrier to business attraction and improving Uptown's image is the presence of vacant and run-down properties (see Figure 1-1). Even with pockets of strength throughout Uptown, vacant properties and poor building upkeep are seen as holding back development.

One reason cited for the persistence of such problem properties was absentee landlords who either refuse to lower rents or sales prices to fill vacant spaces, or fail to make needed improvements. Several individuals suggested creating incentive programs to spark redevelopment of these properties, including improvement loans or incremental tax abatement structures. Others called for increased building maintenance enforcement.

See Appendix 3 for a list of commercial properties currently for sale or lease. Appendix 4 has a list of key commercial properties in Uptown as identified by the Jenkintown Revitalization Task Force.

Streetscape/Facades

Uptown's inconsistent streetscape was identified as another limit on commercial growth. Even with Jenkintown's historic buildings, the lack of cohesive architecture and signage fails to create a unique sense of place. Several merchants complained that lackluster window displays, along Old York in particular, fail to bring in customers or draw attention from passing cars. Common recommendations included the implementation of design standards, façade improvements, signage to orient shoppers to stores and parking, and additional trees in the business district.



Inconsistent facade and streetscaping treatments detract from Uptown's historic charm.

ECONOMIC ISSUES: Key Commercial Properties



LEGEND

- 000 West Ave. vacant
- Properties of concern
- Properties for lease or sale.

Scale: 250 0 500 feet

Traffic/Pedestrian Issues

Heavy traffic and high speeds along Old York Road make it unfriendly to pedestrians and retail customers. The barrier of Old York effectively splits the retail district in half, as pedestrians are hesitant to cross to stores on the other side of the street. In addition, the steep grade of the hill along Old York Road and narrow sidewalks limit pedestrian traffic. Increasing the ease of pedestrian crossing and creating a buffer from traffic could help businesses on both sides and create a more coherent district along Old York.



Heavy traffic and high speeds create a hostile pedestrian environment along Old York.

Retailers located along Old York Road offered different perspectives on through-traffic - some said heavy traffic volume increased their business through exposure while others said high speeds prevented cars from stopping. New commercial and pedestrian activity around West Avenue and the town square are largely seen as a response to the traffic and parking challenges posed by Old York.

Business Community Involvement

Many observers pointed to the lack of a cohesive business community as a barrier to improved retail and office development in Jenkintown. While the Jenkintown Community Alliance and Jenkintown Business and Professional Association have created considerable momentum for a unified approach toward Uptown, the challenge of bringing together a community with many independent business operators remains. This independent attitude is embodied by the results of the 2000 Jenkintown Community Alliance survey, which found that 70% of retailers thought that similar businesses to their own would detract from their business.

Individuals said that a unified business community was necessary to forge and implement a coherent vision for Uptown, as well as address long-standing concerns around parking, business attraction, retail mix, and the physical environment. Many hoped that the business community would provide leadership to pressure property owners to turn around derelict and underutilized properties, coordinate extended retail hours, and market and promote Jenkintown.

Image/Marketing

Observers noted that Jenkintown's existing commercial strengths and assets are not being adequately promoted. Realtors in particular said that Jenkintown suffers from a poor image and lack of marketing. Several suggested an intensive effort to establish an image for Uptown, recruit new businesses, and promote existing ones.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Both real and perceived threats to public safety can seriously diminish the quality of life for residential neighborhoods and reduce the attractiveness of commercial areas. Fortunately, Jenkintown does not have major public safety issues. According to the Revitalization Task Force, Borough residents feel that there is a high police profile and a low rate of violent crimes. The Jenkintown Police Department has also validated this general consensus. Their law enforcement approach involves one-on-one interaction and mobile/foot patrols, which has enhanced police and citizen communication. As a result, the community often assists the police in identifying potential criminal activity before it happens. Similar to other tightly knit communities, Jenkintown does not have numerous violent crime reports that are prevalent in urban communities. In 1999, there was a 1.03% chance of being the victim of a crime in Jenkintown, and a 0.13% chance of being the victim of a bodily crime. Even though criminal activity is limited, the Task Force and the Police Department reported numerous quality of life issues, such as juvenile behavior, automobile speeding, and auto/pedestrian conflicts. The Task Force believes that these quality of life issues should be monitored and addressed to maintain the community's level of confidence with the Police Department, and to enhance the overall stability of the residential and commercial areas.

Juvenile Behavior Issues

The Jenkintown Police Department routinely investigates juvenile complaints from residents and the commercial district for noise, vandalism, loitering, and other nuisance issues, such as skateboarding on private property. The Police Department and the community at-large share the same concerns for the preservation of private property, liability, and the safety of the juveniles themselves. Specific areas of concern for these problems include: the Jenkintown Plaza, the Verizon Building, Jenkins Court, the Grace Presbyterian Church, and School District property such as tennis and basketball courts. The Police Department has suggested that a new recreational facility may help to reduce the number of juvenile complaints.



Grace Presbyterian Church property is frequently used by skateboarders.

The Police Department also faces other challenges that are activity based and require professional services and enforcement. Complaints of drug activity and underage drinking are received, and the Department continues to be participants in the Montgomery County District Attorney's Task Force on Narcotics. Criminal cases of all types are routinely promulgated with the Borough, and prosecutions are effected at the local magistrate and ultimately the District Attorney's Office for trial.

Auto/Pedestrian Conflicts

According to the JCA's Vision Statement, Jenkintown should remain "walkable" with safe pedestrian environments throughout the commercial and residential communities. Business owners inherently know that patrons are pedestrians at some point along their way to their store, whether patrons walk across a large parking lot or around the corner to the store. Residential communities also depend heavily on a sense of pedestrian safety to thrive. If neighborhood streets are perceived as dangerous for children and seniors, the housing values diminish and less people use their neighborhood streets to exercise, socialize, or play. Jenkintown has many areas where pedestrians feel comfortable, but there also are many areas where pedestrians are too close to speeding traffic and are confused by crossing signals and crosswalk locations.

In many instances, Jenkintown's crosswalk striping is intermittent and unremarkable. Fundamentally, crosswalks provide pedestrians with a sense of safety because the crosswalks alert motorists to the possible presence of pedestrians. The safety of pedestrians crossing Old York Road is important not only to the business patron, but also to the neighborhoods on either side of Old York Road. Children need to cross the street for school and recreation facilities. It is obvious to the community that Old York Road is a difficult corridor for pedestrians to cross at almost any location in the Borough. Especially of concern is the area between West Avenue and Rydal Avenue where there is a gap in traffic signals, so that a pedestrian would have to jaywalk or walk about 750 feet out of their way to cross the street at a signalized crosswalk. In 1998, the Borough hired Traffic Planning and Design, Inc. to analyze the traffic volumes at the intersection of Old York Road and Vista Road for a traffic signal. Due to the low traffic volumes entering Old York Road from Vista Road, the intersection was deemed unwarranted for a signal by PENNDOT standards.



Community leaders believe that a signal crossing is needed at Vista Road and Old York.

Another difficult location for pedestrians to cross Old York Road is located at its intersection with Washington Lane. With the Foxcroft Square shopping center at Fox Pavilion Drive, there are pedestrians trying to cross at this intersection. Transit riders also use this intersection when they disembark from the SEPTA 77 bus. Pedestrians also use the intersection of Old York Road and Wyncote Road/Fox Pavilion Drive to access the shopping center. Currently, there is not a separate left turn phase for Wyncote Road entering Old York Road. Where pedestrians are present, a signal without a left turn phase and several turning vehicles will cause a conflict between pedestrians crossing with the green light and vehicle turning left with the green light. In 1999, Abington Township hired Gilman & Company to analyze this intersection to determine if a separate signal phase was warranted. Fox Pavilion Road received a left turn phase, but Wyncote Road was determined unwarranted by PENNDOT standards.



The expansive intersection of Old York and Washington is cited as a problem for both vehicles and pedestrians.

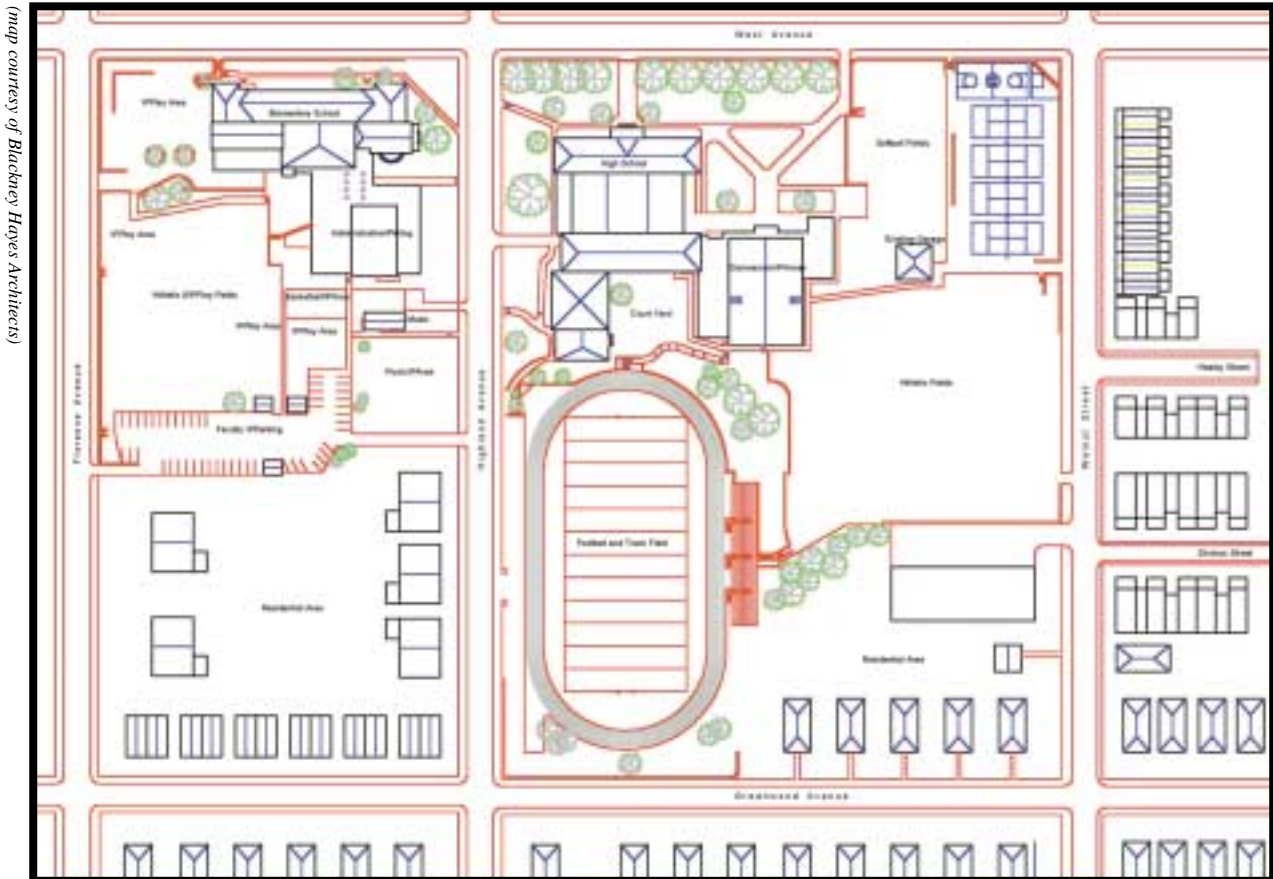
Automobile Speeding Issues

Automobile speeding can also degrade quality of life in neighborhoods and commercial areas by causing noise and jeopardizing the safety of pedestrians, bicyclists, and automobile drivers. According to the Revitalization Task Force, speeding frequently occurs on Old York Road, Walnut Street, West Avenue, Washington Lane, and Runnymede Avenue. It is especially important to calm traffic near Jenkintown's Public Schools, Immaculate Conception Catholic School, and Abington Friends School, which are respectively located along West Avenue and Walnut Street, on West Avenue, and along Washington Lane. Traffic Planning and Design, Inc. analyzed the speeding patterns along Walnut Street in the same 1998 study conducted for the Old York Road/Vista Avenue intersection analysis. The study concluded that 85% of drivers are speeding at an average of 31 mph, and 15% are going at higher speeds. Borough officials have suggested that traffic calming devices might be an option for areas with speeding problems.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

School District of Jenkintown

The School District of Jenkintown owns approximately 20 acres that includes an elementary school, a high school, various sports fields, tennis courts, and playground areas (see map). In 2001, the School District hired an architecture firm to develop a Master Plan for priority campus projects. Since the District's property also functions as the Borough's open space and recreational facilities, the Revitalization Task Force believes that the District's community-wide issues should also be addressed as part of the Borough's Master Plan.



The School District's 2001 Master Plan highlights areas of concern for the entire Borough, such as open space and public safety.

Transportation Issues

The School District of Jenkintown is considered a walking school district, so no busing is provided for the students. However, many parents drive their children to and from school for various reasons. This has created a traffic congestion problem during certain times in the morning and afternoon. The traffic congestion, in turn, causes a hostile pedestrian environment for those students that walk to school. The School District proposes two solutions to address the traffic safety issues: additional school zones and a designated drop off zone.

The School District is also concerned about pedestrian safety along Highland Avenue throughout the school day. Traffic and pedestrian conflicts occur when high school students must travel between the schools to get to the cafeteria and specialty classrooms in the elementary school. Therefore, the School District proposes that the section of Highland Avenue between the two schools be closed to thru-traffic during school hours.

Open Space and Recreation Issues

The School District's property provides almost all of the open space and recreational facilities for the Borough's 1000 children, such as basketball and tennis courts, ball fields, and playgrounds. Since facility improvement and maintenance is a significant financial burden, the School District and the Borough are currently exploring ways for cost sharing.

- Community Playground - The "Jenkintown Playground Project" is a prime example of effective cost sharing between the School District and the Borough. The only community playground is located at the Jenkintown Elementary School adjacent to Florence Avenue. The last major effort to improve the school's playground equipment occurred in 1988. Now, a group of residents organized under the JCA is generating broad support for a community-built playground. The coalition is in the process of raising \$75,000 to replace existing equipment in the school's play areas and to design and build a new playground at the corner of Florence and West Avenues. The School Board has approved the project, the Borough Council has committed \$10,000, and the JCA is providing accounting services.
- Recreational Facilities - The School District and the Borough are also exploring another potential cost sharing project, leasing the school's tennis courts and adjacent ball fields. The School District owns four tennis courts near the corner of West and Walnut Avenues. According to the District's 2001 Master Plan, the tennis courts should be demolished and rebuilt due to unstable subsurface conditions that will necessitate continual and costly maintenance.

Public Safety Issues

The School District has persistent low-level vandalism problems, such as graffiti, clogged storm drains, uprooted railings, and broken windows. District officials believe that improved street lighting and regular police patrols may help reduce these vandalism problems. In particular, street lighting would be useful at the entry to the faculty parking lot on Florence Avenue and at its exit on Highland, at the corner of West Avenue and Walnut Street, and at the pedestrian exit adjacent to the tennis courts on Walnut Street.

The School District is also concerned with its compliance with the American Disabilities Act (ADA). Since the Borough uses certain school facilities for community events, such as town meetings and elections, the District would like to explore cost sharing techniques for making public access points ADA-accessible.

Jenkintown Fire Companies

Jenkintown has two fire companies: Pioneer Fire Company, established in 1885; and, Independent Fire Company, established in 1889. Jenkintown is similar to other municipalities in Montgomery County that have multiple fire companies. For instance, the neighboring townships of Cheltenham and Abington each have five fire companies. Although there have been discussions in the past to unite Jenkintown's fire companies, they remain separate to this day. Recently, Borough officials have raised the issue once again to unite these companies to effectively manage limited resources in a fully developed community.

Over the last few years, the Pioneer Fire Company has been investigating expansion options. Pioneer currently owns a two-truck facility at the corner of Greenwood Avenue and Leedom Street. They also purchased the properties behind their facility, including two auto shops along Leedom Street and the enclosed garages within the block's interior. Pioneer has debated two expansion options: along Greenwood Avenue or along Leedom Street. At this time, Pioneer believes that the expansion option along Leedom Street is more feasible because it owns the necessary properties.



Pioneer Fire Company intends to expand its facility in the near future.



Independent Fire Company is located one block away from Pioneer.

Parking Issues

Because Jenkintown has retained the form and character of a traditional mixed-use suburban town, parking requirements within the community are very diverse. The following types of parking resources are all needed: residential parking, commercial/retail parking, office parking, school parking, church parking, and transit station parking.

Figure 2-1 shows the primary non-residential parking areas and their relationship to each other and to the town's residential substructure. The areas covered by these parking sheds are the areas where it is most critical to explore means of increasing or better managing the parking supply. According to the Revitalization Task Force, there are two main parking concerns to be addressed within the context of this study:

1. Ensure that retail establishments have enough nearby, short-term, easy-to-find parking to survive and thrive; and,
2. Minimize the conflicts between residential parking and church, retail, and transit parking.



Parking is limited for Uptown because Old York contains four travel lanes.



On-street parking is well-utilized along West Avenue near Jenkintown High School.

The backbone of the current parking supply in Jenkintown is the on-street parallel parking system that pervades the borough. **Figure 2-2** illustrates the distribution of these spaces and indicates where additional restrictions exist. Unless noted, there are no restrictions on parking. Occasional restrictions occur one day per week (typically Tuesday or Thursday) where the allowable parking spaces "flip" to the opposite side of the street, which permits regular street cleaning and prevents unnoticed long-term abandonment of vehicles.

While there is much parking available within the borough, the demand for parking is less evenly distributed than the supply. In many areas of the borough, particularly on the eastern, southern, and far northern edges, the on-street parking is very lightly utilized since houses have ample off-street parking. In other areas, particularly those locations that are overlapped by parking demand for a nonresidential use as shown in **Figure 2-1**, the on-street parking supply is often strained.

TRANSPORTATION ISSUES: Major Jenkintown Parking Sheds



Figure 2-1. Major Jenkintown Parking Sheds

Pedestrian Circulation Issues



Jenkintown Station is a valuable part of the borough's commuter rail infrastructure.



A narrow streetscape defines and limits Old York Road through Jenkintown.

The suburban commuter railroad-oriented model on which Jenkintown is based relies on pedestrian circulation to connect residents and businesses with each other and with regional transportation facilities. As with many similar suburban towns across America during the second half of the twentieth century, the quality of Jenkintown's vital pedestrian environment has been eroded in favor of the limitless accommodation of motorists.

As the flaws of the auto-oriented suburban model continue to emerge, historic suburban centers like Jenkintown have begun to rediscover the value of their proximity to regional transit and of the pedestrian-oriented scale of their streets. As a result, many towns are now focusing on the reinstatement of their original pedestrian-oriented circulation patterns, through the rebuilding of pedestrian facilities and through traffic calming programs aimed at making streets safe and pleasant for all users-not just motorists.

The degree to which this can be accomplished in Jenkintown varies depending on specific areas and streets. While there is much leeway on the flexibility of adding traffic calming measures to and/or changing the street configurations of low-volume Borough-owned roadways, there is less immediate flexibility on what can

be done to higher-volume State-owned roadways, particularly Old York Road. Nonetheless, there are noticeable deficiencies on numerous streets, including Old York Road, that begin to suggest a strategy for vastly improving the pedestrian circulation characteristics of the borough.

TRANSPORTATION ISSUES: On Street Parking Inventory



LEGEND

- No Parking
- - - - - Parking Allowed (Occasional Restrictions)
- - - - - Parking Allowed only 6pm to 8 am



Figure 2-2. On Street Parking Inventory

Streetscape Elements

On many streets within Jenkintown, certain critical streetscape elements are missing or inadequate, or the arrangement of streetscape elements is not quite appropriate for the multi-purpose function of the street. The most striking example of absent elements and eroded pedestrian character is illustrated by **Figure 2-3**, which highlights areas where there is no landscaped or hardscaped separation between the sidewalk and the travel lanes. Such a lack of buffer vastly diminishes the pedestrian's perceived-and sometimes actual-level of safety. Of particular note is that the entire length of Old York Road is without such an adequate buffer, which is exacerbated by Old York Road's high traffic speeds and lack of on-street parking. The remainder of the roadways in **Figure 2-3** have some sort of buffer between the sidewalk and the pavement, often just an eighteen-inch-wide grass strip that has a disproportionate positive effect on a pedestrian's sense of safety.

Streetscape Elements

Streetscape elements that contribute to pleasant and safe pedestrian circulation include the following:

- Presence of sidewalks
- Width of sidewalks
- Spatial separation between sidewalks and traffic lanes (*i.e. landscaping, bicycle lanes, on-street parking*)
- Trees and other landscaping
- Appropriately-scaled lighting
- Narrow travel lane widths conducive to low speeds

Traffic Speeds



Wide pavements and low traffic volumes contribute to a pleasant walking environment along Greenwood Avenue.

Without exception, high traffic speeds detract from the pedestrian environment. While an adequate buffer between pedestrians and moving traffic lanes may increase the pedestrian's sense of safety, the presence of fast-moving vehicles provides constant reminders (both visible and audible) that the roadway is built for cars more so than people. The reduction of vehicular speeds through traffic calming and the "right-sizing" of a streetscape can help to achieve a better balance and strive to create the image of an environment that is built for everyone. (Note: Additional information on automobile/pedestrian conflicts and speeding issues is provided on pages 13 and 14 under Public Safety.)

TRANSPORTATION ISSUES: Inadequate or Nonexistent Sidewalk Buffer



LEGEND


 Segments with no or inadequate buffer



Figure 2-3. Inadequate or Nonexistent Sidewalk Buffer

Since Jenkintown is a compact borough, the reduction of vehicular speeds on any of its roadways would not be a significant detriment to travel times, with total lost time through the borough on the order of seconds. For example, if a motorist travels at posted speed limit of 25 mph rather than 40 mph through the length of Jenkintown's business district along Old York Road (roughly ½-mile), the increase in total travel time is only 27 seconds, which is virtually negligible in the context of a 30-minute commute.

While there is little available speed data for Jenkintown's streets, it is readily evident on many roadways that posted speeds are being frequently exceeded. In 1998, a consultant (Traffic Planning and Design, Inc.) measured speeds on Walnut Street near Willow Street for a one-hour period and concluded that the 85th percentile speeds for northbound and southbound traffic were 32 mph and 31 mph, respectively, despite the fact that the roadway is posted for 25 mph. The 85th percentile speed is the level at or below which 85% of traffic travels and 15% of traffic exceeds. Generally, for planning purposes, the 85th percentile speed should be no higher than the posted speed limit.

Intersections

There are numerous intersections within the borough where the pedestrian conditions are less than optimal for a variety of reasons. The primary conditions degrading pedestrian circulation at many intersections include the following: incomplete crosswalks, faded crosswalks, and/or large curb radii.



Faded crosswalks and large curb radii define the intersection of Old York and Rydal.

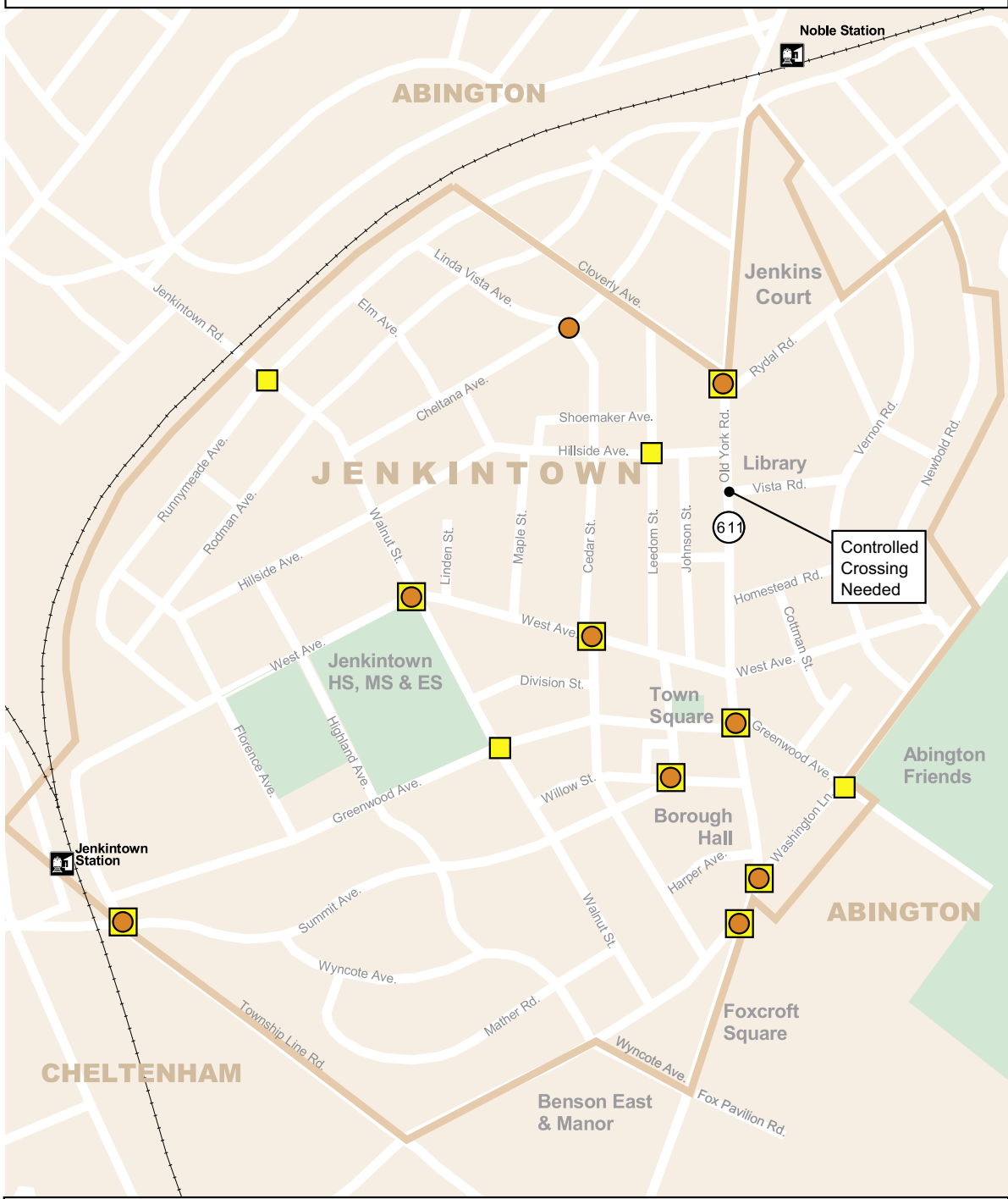
At many intersections, crosswalks are marked along only three of the four streets. Some of these intersections are signaled, and in accord with PENNDOT standards. Nevertheless, this situation means that two of the corners are not directly connected with each other, forcing pedestrians to cross unprotected or out-of-direction. While this may seem like a minor inconsistency, the effect on the pedestrian's psyche, especially in the context of a cross-town walk, is very significant. In addition, faded crosswalks define some intersections, again contributing to the perception of lack of attention to pedestrians.



Large curb radii create a long pedestrian crossing at the intersection of Old York and Washington.

Pedestrian crossing distances are expanded as curb radii are increased. Moreover, larger curb radii allow for higher speed turns that further detract from the pedestrian's sense of safety. Some of the large curb radii within Jenkintown result from the oblique angle at which many of the streets intersect, but may still allow for a fair degree of beneficial curb realignment.

TRANSPORTATION ISSUES: Intersection Issues



LEGEND	● Challenging Geometrics
	■ Crosswalks Incomplete

Figure 2-4. Intersection Issues

Figure 2-4 highlights many of the intersections that exhibit these issues, which may be addressed by re-striping, new crosswalks, or major geometric realignments. The "geometric challenges" identified in the diagram include large curb radii and other difficulties posed by oblique-angle intersections.



Existing pedestrian signal at Greenwood and Washington is confusing for the uninitiated.

Additionally, the manner in which pedestrians are signaled at certain intersections is not ordinary. The present method of signaling pedestrians is through the use of a standard design traffic signal modified to focus the viewshed of the signal onto the pedestrian pathway. For the unseasoned user, this system is unconventional and somewhat confusing, especially since the pedestrian signals are at times out-of-sync with those for the corresponding vehicular movement. Options for improving this situation are to replace the signals in question with traditional "walk/don't walk" pedestrian signals, or simply install signs that clearly label and identify the existing pedestrian signals as such.

Transit Issues

Jenkintown is fortunate to be framed by two SEPTA regional rail stations, the Jenkintown station to the west and the Noble station to the north. The entire borough is within reasonable walking distance of one of these two stations, yet many people (residents and visitors alike) are often unwilling to walk these distances due to the breakdown of pedestrian quality in certain areas of town.

Figure 2-5 illustrates the amount of the borough covered by ¼-mile and ½-mile walksheds from the two commuter rail stations. The ¼-mile circle represents the distance most people are willing to walk to a primary regional transit facility, regardless of the quality of the walking environment excluding significant safety hazards or non-traversable barriers. The ½-mile circle represents a comfortable walking distance given very pleasant pedestrian conditions and an overall safe walking environment. Looking at Figure 2-5, it becomes very evident how an improvement in pedestrian quality could enhance transit usage in Jenkintown and thus decrease overall traffic volumes.

Furthermore, Jenkintown is served by two SEPTA bus routes, each of which connects one of the two commuter rail stations with the town. Route 55 travels from the Olney station of the Broad Street Subway along Old York Road through Jenkintown, past the Noble train station, and further north to Doylestown. Route 77 travels from Chestnut Hill to Jenkintown via the Jenkintown train station, then along Township Line Road, Old York Road, and Greenwood Avenue (and along Washington Avenue on the return trip) through the southeastern corner of the borough.

TRANSPORTATION ISSUES: Commuter Rail Walksheds and Bus Routes

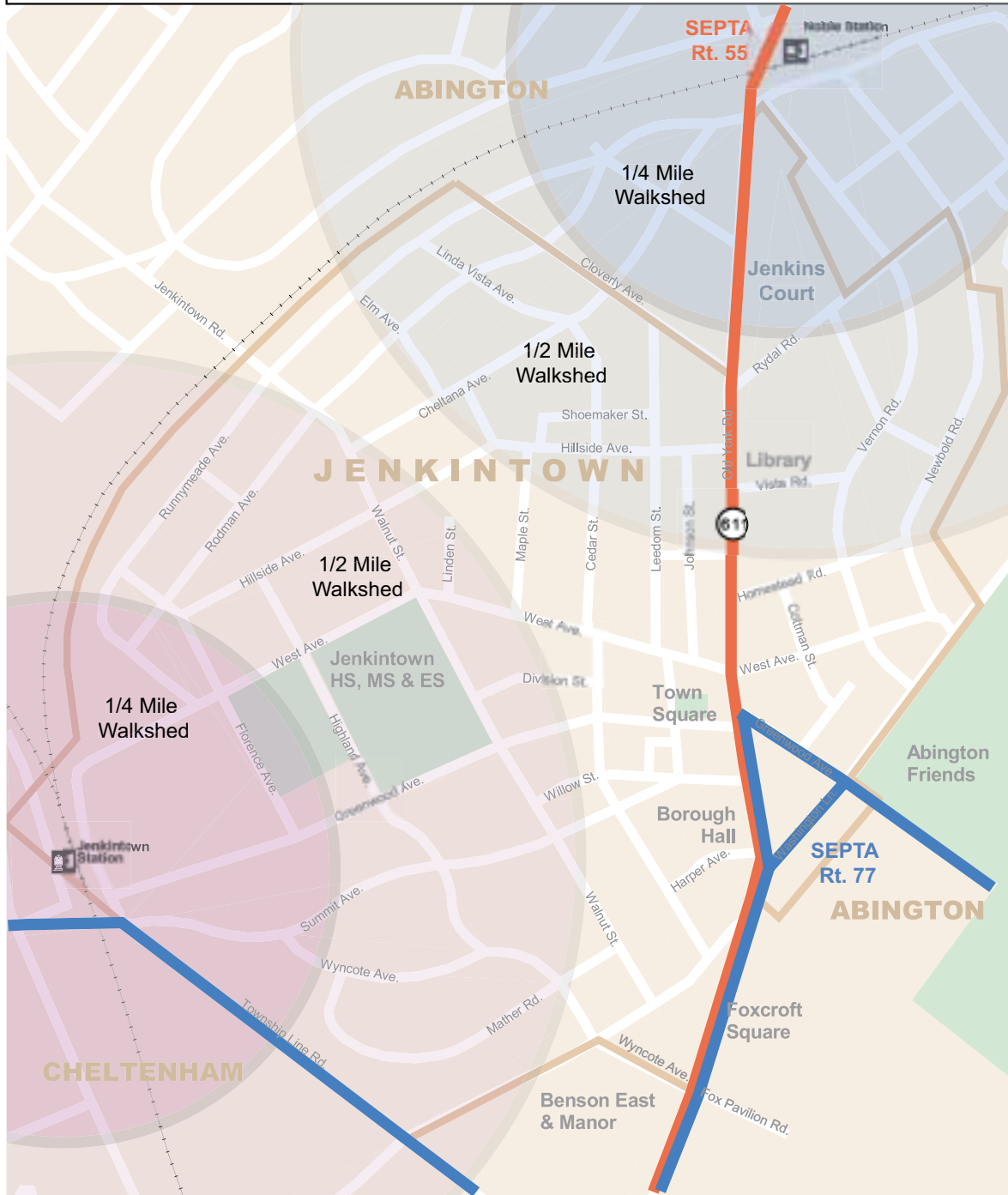


Figure 2-5. Commercial Rail Walksheds & Bus Routes

Jenkintown's Bus Service

Approximate frequencies on these routes are as follows:

	ROUTE 55	ROUTE 77
Weekday peak periods:	10 minutes	60 minutes
Weekday middays:	20 minutes	60 minutes
Weekday evenings:	30 minutes	Service ends at 7 PM
Saturday afternoons	20 minutes	60 minutes
Sunday afternoons:	30 minutes	60 minutes

While it may be practical for commuters to use the Route 55 to connect to and from the Noble train station during the peak periods, at all other times the uncertainties in making transfers makes it impractical to use the Route 55 to travel a relatively short distance within the borough to or from the station. In addition, due to the infrequent service for the Route 77, making transfers between the Jenkintown train station and the Route 77 to get to Uptown would be very impractical. The infrequency of bus service further underscores the need to improve pedestrian conditions.

Many of the bus stops within Jenkintown (particularly along Old York Road) are very close together relative to system standards and could potentially be rethought in conjunction with an overall streetscape and pedestrian enhancement plan. There may be opportunities for the borough to define and enhance heavily used "signature" stops with benches, shelters, and improved lighting.

Bicycle Circulation Issues



Due to its width, West Avenue is an informal bicycle route through Jenkintown.

Bicycle circulation within the Borough of Jenkintown is very informal. In most cases, bicyclists share space with cars within the street's paved width, particularly on residential side streets. In other cases, in particular Old York Road, lack of space and high vehicular speeds within the paved area cause many bicyclists to instead use the sidewalks, or avoid the Old York corridor altogether.

While shared and unmarked conditions are perfectly adequate on low-volume, slow-speed residential streets, there are numerous roadways within Jenkintown where the streetscape elements of the road do not deter the threat of high-speed traffic. The reorganization and resizing of these elements would be just as beneficial to bicyclists as to pedestrians. In some cases, the addition of bicycle lanes could help to cost-effectively "right-size" a street and reduce a driver's tendency to speed, as well as provide bicyclists with their own designated space.

HOUSING

Housing diversity is the foundation for a stable community, where 'cradle to grave' housing accommodates people at every stage of life. This foundation is relatively solid in Jenkintown, which contains a total of 2085 housing units according to the 2000 U.S. Census. There are large, multi-family apartment complexes adjacent to the Jenkintown train station, as well as expensive single-family, detached housing. Throughout the rest of the Borough, singles and twins are the norm. The Uptown area contains a greater variety of housing with many row homes, some singles and twins, and apartments above storefronts. Jenkintown's diversity of housing types is available within walking distance of schools, transit, parks, and stores.

Housing Tenure

The 2000 U.S. Census contains a wealth of information that is useful for analyzing Jenkintown's housing tenure. As Table 1 indicates, Jenkintown's housing units were 35% renter-occupied and 65% owner-occupied. This owner-occupied percentage is close to the national percentage of 66%, but it is lower than Montgomery County's owner-occupied percentage of 73.5%. Since Jenkintown's owner-occupied percentage has increased over the last two decades, housing tenure is not a major issue for Borough officials.

While only 13 housing units have been added to the community since 1990, the demand for housing has increased as shown in Table 1. The vacancy rate for rental units was 7.3% in 1990, and fell to 2.6% in 2000. The owner-occupied housing vacancy rate also fell, but not as substantially; it was 1.1% in 1990 and 0.7% in 2000. If the need for rental units is not met with new apartments above storefronts or new apartment complexes, the Borough may witness additional conversions of existing homes into rental units under the current zoning code.

Table 1

JENKINTOWN	1980	1990	2000
Total Population	4,942	4,574	4,478
Total Housing Units	2,108	2,072	2,085
Total Occupied Housing Units	2,012	1,953	2,035
<i>Owner Occupied</i>	50.25%	66.2%	64.9%
<i>Renter Occupied</i>	49.75%	33.8%	35.1%
Total Vacant Housing Units	96	119	50
<i>Homeowner Vacancy Rate</i>	0.5	1.1	0.7
<i>Renter Vacancy Rate</i>	6.1	7.3	2.6

Data from the US Census Bureau

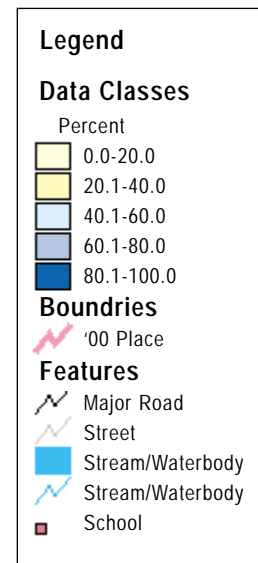
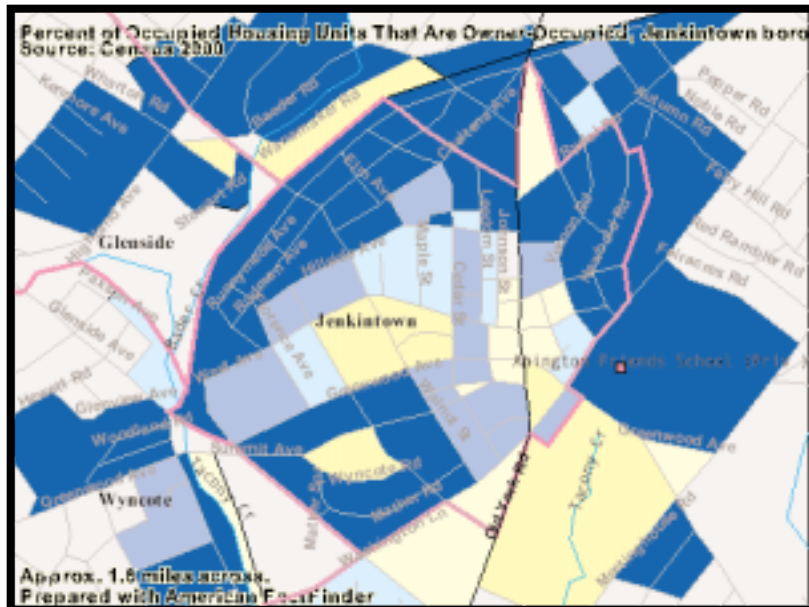


Figure 1: Percent of Occupied Housing Units that are Owner-Occupied

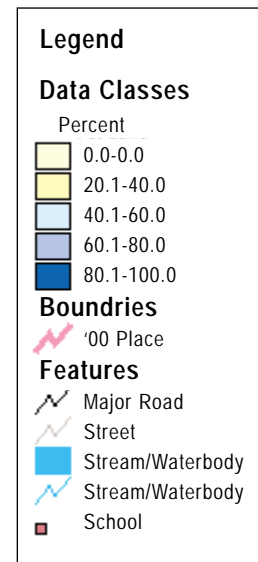
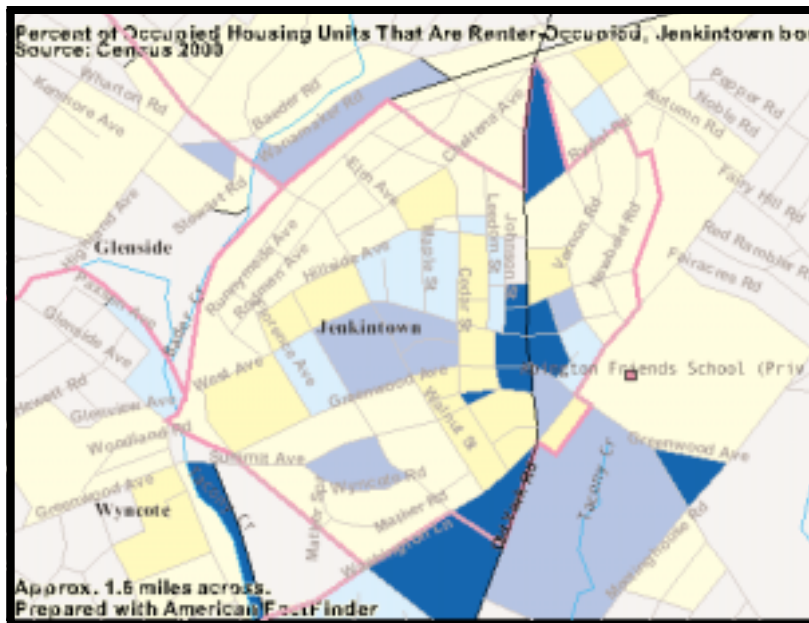


Figure 2: Percent of Occupied Housing Units that are Renter-Occupied

Figure 1 and 2 clearly show the pattern of owner and renter occupied housing. Owner-occupied housing is located, predominantly, on the periphery of Jenkintown, while renter-occupied housing is situated in the borough's core area. Comparing census data between 2000 and 1990, however, shows that there has been an increase in owner-occupied housing between Cedar St and Old York Rd. The comparison also shows a decrease in owner-occupied housing south of Greenwood Avenue. These two changes cancel each other out in the overall housing tenure figures, but they do indicate a diversifying housing stock.

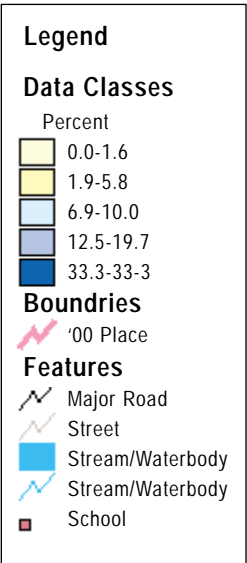
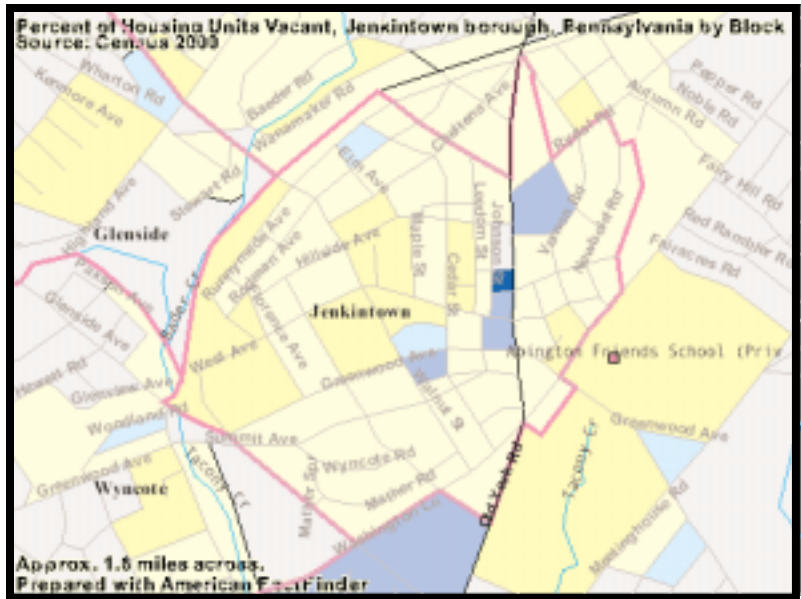


Figure 3: Percent of Housing Units Vacant

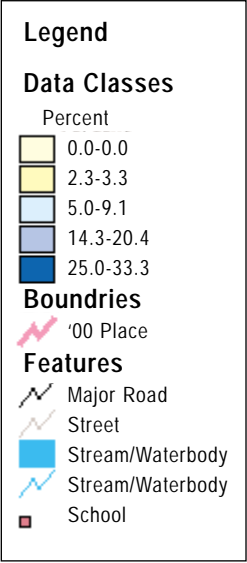
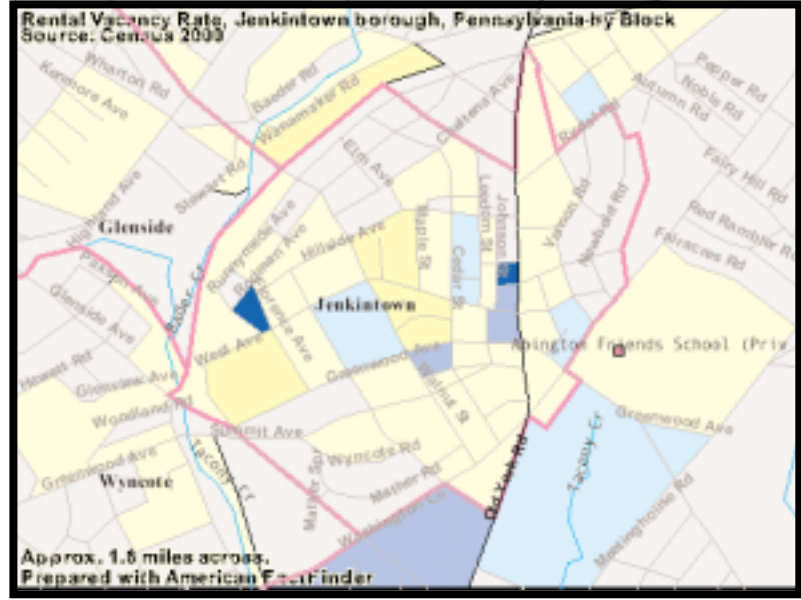


Figure 4: Rental Vacancy Rate

In 2000, the vacancy rate for rental units and owner occupied units were 2.6% and 0.7% respectively. Both Figure 3 and 4 illustrate a concentration of vacancy rates in three locations: along Old York Rd, between Cedar St and Leedom St., and between Division St. and Willow St.

Housing Values

In 2000, Montgomery County's record of housing sales indicated that 95 housing units were sold in Jenkintown and the median price of these units was \$95,000. Table 2 breaks median housing prices into the housing category to show that there is an even distribution of housing sales between housing types and prices.

TABLE 2

2000 Jenkintown Housing Values	All Units	Single Family Detached	Single Family Attached	Multi Family, Condominiums
Median Price	\$95,000	\$179,500	\$93,000	\$83,500
Number of Sales	95	30	27	38

Montgomery County

A Jenkintown real estate report by Coldwell Banker, describes community characteristics that also impact property values. According to the report and in line with Task Force comments, community amenities enhance property values in Jenkintown. The Jenkintown public school district is one of the best school districts in the state. 90% of Jenkintown public school graduates continue onto four-year colleges. Also important to housing values, the commute time to work for residents of Jenkintown averages 25.2 minutes. Only slightly longer than the national average commute time of 24.3 minutes, as reported by the 2000 US Census. On average, the Borough of Jenkintown's populace tends to have above average income per household, \$55,604, while Pennsylvania's median household income is \$34,437. The average income of Jenkintown households with children is also high at \$84,443.

Substandard Housing

The Revitalization Task Force classified most of the housing stock as good or excellent with some problem areas. Task Force representatives surveyed these problem areas to verify the group's general understanding of the housing issues (see Appendix A for detailed surveys). Most of the comments in the problem areas related to parking in front yards, structurally damaged houses, absentee landlords, and poorly renovated housing. As indicated in Task Force members' surveys, most of the problem areas occur in and around Uptown and typically relate to more affordable housing types. Within the vicinity of Uptown, a couple of blocks drew several comments in the field surveys conducted by Task Force members. These blocks were not wholly 'substandard' but did have some properties in disrepair (number of properties in parenthesis):

- 300 and 400 blocks of West Avenue. (4)
- 400 block of Leedom St. (4)
- 500 and 600 blocks of Greenwood Avenue. (4)
- 400 block of Cedar St. (3)
- 400 and 500 block of Division St. (7)

Street Trees

One neighborhood issue identified by Task Force members relates to all of the residential areas in Jenkintown: the need to maintain and replace street trees. The Shade Tree Committee intends to pass a Shade Tree Ordinance at some point in the future to ensure the maintenance and replacement of trees. In the meantime, the Shade Tree Committee will have a demonstration site along Walnut Street for tree planting.