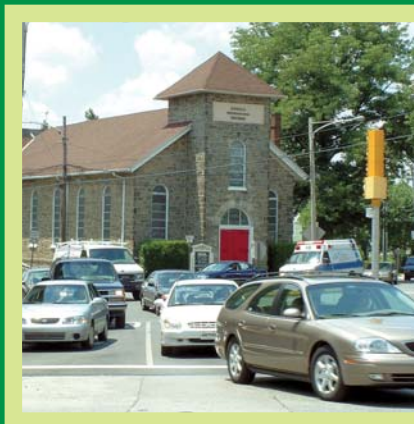


*Incorporating Community Values
and Quality of Life
in Transportation Project Development*

September 2005



Community



IMPACT

Assessment

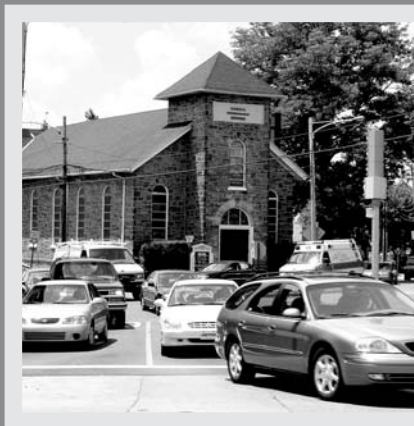
For the Intersection of Morton Avenue & PA Route 420 in Delaware County, PA



Delaware Valley
Regional Planning
Commission

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Delaware Valley
Regional Planning
Commission

Created in 1965, the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) is an interstate, intercounty and intercity agency that provides continuing, comprehensive and coordinated planning to shape a vision for the future growth of the Delaware Valley region. The region includes Bucks, Chester, Delaware, and Montgomery Counties, as well as the City of Philadelphia, in Pennsylvania; and Burlington, Camden, Gloucester and Mercer counties in New Jersey. DVRPC provides technical assistance and services; conducts high priority studies that respond to the requests and demands of member state and local governments; fosters cooperation among various constituents to forge a consensus on diverse regional issues; determined and meets the needs of the private sector; and practices public outreach efforts to promote two-way communication and public awareness of regional issues and the Commission.



Our logo is adapted from the official DVRPC seal, and is designed as a stylized image of the Delaware Valley. The outer ring symbolizes the region as a whole, while the diagonal bar signifies the Delaware River. The two adjoining crescents represent the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the State of New Jersey.

DVRPC is funded by a variety of sources including federal grants from the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the Pennsylvania and New Jersey departments of transportation, as well as by DVRPC's state and local member governments. The authors, however, are solely responsible for its findings and conclusions, which may not represent the official views or policies of the funding agencies.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With this study, the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) and the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT), introduce Pennsylvanians to *Community Impact Assessment*. Developed by the Federal Highway Administration, this process “**sets out to evaluate the effects of a transportation action on a community and its quality of life.**”

Community Impact Assessment, or CIA, is a method for planners and decision makers to ascertain the effects a proposed transportation action might have on people and their habitat. In the past, the consequences of transportation investments on communities have often been ignored or introduced near the end of a planning process, reducing them to reactive considerations at best. By introducing an assessment process that begins during the conceptual phase of project development, and that addresses concerns and potential negative impacts *before* ground is broken, CIA is able to reduce costly litigation, expedite project delivery, and ensure that transportation investments can exist harmoniously with the surrounding community.

The intersection of Morton Avenue and Route 420 in Morton Borough, Delaware County, was chosen as one of two pilot sites to evaluate the CIA process in Pennsylvania. This site marks the confluence of a heavily traversed North-South corridor, two neighborhood streets (Morton and Yale Avenues) that merge at an odd angle a few feet before they intersect the state route, and the SEPTA R3 Regional Rail line, which cuts off Route 420 when trains pass through twice every hour. Finally, the Morton-Rutledge train station and Morton’s downtown commercial area share this intersection, but there are no crosswalks or signals that allow for pedestrian safety. Because of these conditions, traffic congestion and safety are two widely held community concerns.

PennDOT asked DVRPC to undertake the first two steps of the six-step CIA process, *Defining the Study Area* and *Developing Baseline Conditions*, for the pilot project. DVRPC facilitated steering committee meetings and three public meetings to educate the residents living in the study area about CIA and to gather feedback about quality of life concerns. Throughout the process, residents were reminded that while no funding currently existed for improvements to the intersection, this study would represent documented evidence of proactive, multi-municipal cooperation to define and seek solutions to a shared transportation problem. While DVRPC has made no specific recommendations for the issues described, per the study scope, the communities’ recommendations and feedback have been included in their entirety. Possible funding sources for implementation activities have been included for municipal officials to explore further.

What is Community Impact Assessment?



chapter one

INTRODUCTION



Community Impact Assessment (CIA) is a process to evaluate the effects of a transportation action on a community and its quality of life. The assessment process is an integral part of project planning and development that shapes the outcome of a project. The information gathered in the process is used continuously to mold projects and provide documentation on the current and anticipated social environment affecting a geographic area with and without the proposed project action (FHWA, 1996).

Much like an Environmental Assessment, CIA has been adopted by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) as a formal policy that lays the foundation for developing quality transportation projects and solutions in the community that adequately address quality of life concerns. Whereas an environmental assessment attempts to identify the effects a project may have on the immediate and surrounding natural environment, CIA looks at potential effects on resident's existing "quality of life."

Transportation investments have major influences on society, with significant economic and social consequences. The Community Impact Assessment process alerts affected communities and residents, as well as transportation planners and decision makers, to the likely consequences of a project, and ensures that human values and concerns receive proper attention during project development.

While not a new initiative, this policy seeks to enhance and improve CIA activities and practices that PENNDOT is currently performing. CIA is consistent with PennDOT's "Plan for a New Pennsylvania", and strives to make the Department increasingly aware and respectful of community resources, needs, values, goals, and objectives.

The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) has been charged with the task of planning for the orderly growth and development of the Philadelphia metropolitan area. *Destination 2030*, the region's long-range plan, is intended to help DVRPC carry out this charge by articulating a vision for development and revitalization in the cities, towns and suburbs served.

The CIA Process: 6 Steps

- 1. Define community study area***
- 2. Develop baseline conditions***
- 3. Identify & analyze potential benefits & adverse impacts***
- 4. Determine significance of potential impacts***
- 5. Identify context-sensitive solutions***
- 6. Document findings***

Pilot Project Selection

In a letter dated December 10, 2003, PennDOT announced and elaborated upon its CIA policy directive, explaining the overall aims of the directive as well as the guidelines for completion of these activities. The letter also requested that the various planning agencies throughout the state propose possible pilot projects in their respective Unified

Planning Work Programs for which to apply steps one and two of the six-step CIA process. DVRPC, collaborating with the Delaware County Planning Department (DCPD), elected the intersection of Morton Avenue and Swarthmore Avenue in the Borough of Rutledge (a project on the Transportation Improvement Program, or “TIP”) to be elected as a potential pilot project in this region. PennDOT chose this intersection as one of two pilot projects to be undertaken in the state – the other chosen project is in Johnstown.

DCPD and DVRPC contacted representatives from Rutledge Borough and Ridley Township for the initial project-scoping meeting. While the local officials appreciated the opportunity to participate in the pilot project, they felt that perhaps their intersection was not the best choice. Both municipalities had committed significant time and funding towards moving this project along; they worried that the CIA process could potentially delay project delivery and add additional design fees.

CIA PRINCIPLES

In Pennsylvania, implementation of the following CIA principles shall be promoted during all phases of transportation project development:

- *Recognize and understand the importance of community resources, needs, values, goals, and objectives in achieving balanced and equitable transportation decisions.*
- *Proactively identify and analyze community impacts throughout all phases of the project development process.*
- *Recognize those attributes and characteristics that define a community’s “quality of life,” even if they are not easily measured or quantified.*
- *Recognize the transportation needs and concerns of all populations within communities during the transportation decision-making process, including those who have not traditionally participated in public involvement activities.*
- *Promote meaningful citizen participation and public involvement throughout all phases of the transportation project development process.*

Concurring with the local officials’ concerns, Delaware County and DVRPC elected a new study area for the pilot project. The intersection of PA Route 420 (Kedron Avenue) and Morton Avenue in the Borough of Morton and Springfield Township was chosen as an alternate site by DVRPC staff. At that time, the Route 420 corridor was undergoing a Congested Corridor Improvement Study, coordinated by PennDOT with the assistance of Edwards and Kelcey, a local transportation consultant. Since the intersection of Morton Avenue and PA Route 420 was found to be a particularly “troubled” intersection, the county planning department, DVRPC, and PennDOT found it to be ripe for further study.

How do we define our community boundaries?



chapter two

STUDY AREA



DEFINING THE STUDY AREA

Defining the study area through a synthesis of community boundaries is the first step in the basic CIA process. PennDOT guidelines state that the study area must reflect the physical and social boundaries that define the extent of the community. Because the CIA process considers social impacts in addition to physical impacts, the study area may extend well beyond any proposed physical improvements.

The chosen study area for the Community Impact Assessment in Delaware County necessarily encompasses several different jurisdictions in order to accommodate the area of impact. The study area includes sections of the boroughs of Morton and Rutledge as well as the townships of Ridley, Springfield, and Swarthmore.

MORTON AVENUE AT KEDRON AVENUE

As noted previously, the project intersection was shifted to Morton Avenue at Kedron Avenue (Pa. Route 420) in Morton Borough, shown on **Map 1: Location**. This intersection has various land use, transportation and community development issues. Opportunities exist for multi-municipal coordination, public and interest group involvement, and evaluation of the CIA approach. While there is not currently a TIP project at the intersection, it is included in a Congested Corridor Improvement Program (CCIP) study undertaken by the County along with the consulting firm of Edwards and Kelcey.

For the CIA project, a Study Advisory Committee (SAC) was formed with representatives from the boroughs and townships, local school districts, the local fire district, Delaware County, SEPTA, and DVRPC. The initial community study area included the geographic limits of the intersection, as well as portions of Morton Borough and Springfield Township. The SAC worked together to expand the initial study area and define the official boundaries. The defined study area was determined to encapsulate all of the intersection's issues. The boundaries were expanded to incorporate a synthesis of the following types of boundary determinants and characteristics: *physical, natural, administrative, social, and economic*.

PennDOT's policy on Community Impact Assessment projects states that the study area must reflect the physical and social boundaries that help to define the community. Further, because of the wide-ranging nature of a transportation project's community impacts, the study area extends across municipal boundaries and beyond the area of direct physical impact of any proposed intersection improvements. PennDOT provides the following guidelines for determining study area boundaries:

- ***Physical: boundaries attributable to man-made elements such as bridges, roadways, or buildings, or land use characteristics***
- ***Natural: boundaries attributable to natural features of the landscape, such as topography, watersheds and bodies of water, wildlife habitat, and vegetation***
- ***Administrative: political boundaries, and boundaries attributable to school districts or infrastructure authorities***
- ***Social: boundaries attributable to ethnic concentrations, influence and extent of social, civic, and religious backgrounds***
- ***Economic: boundaries attributable to areas and types of employment and commercial opportunities.***

Taking these criteria into account, the SAC defined the boundaries of the extended focus area as follows: *Swarthmore Avenue, beginning at Baltimore Pike, south to McDade Boulevard; McDade east to Amosland Road; Amosland north to Franklin Avenue; Franklin east to South Avenue; South Avenue north to Providence Road; Providence west to Leamy Avenue; Leamy northwest to Baltimore Pike; and Baltimore Pike west to Swarthmore.* The expanded study area is shown on **Map 2: Study Area**.

The SAC extended the boundaries carefully in order to encompass all areas of the community impacted by congestion at the Morton Avenue at Kedron Avenue intersection. The most influential boundary determinants were the *physical characteristics* – primarily, the structure of the road system and how it interacts with the SEPTA rail line – rather than administrative boundaries. The combination of one-way streets, configuration of the intersection, and rail crossings has shown to have a much broader impact than just the study intersection itself.

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

Map 3: Core Focus Area shows the configuration of the intersection. The intersection is complicated by a number of factors contributing to the traffic congestion that occurs during peak hours. The physical configuration of the intersection causes a number of problems. Primarily, Morton Avenue does not meet Kedron Avenue at a 90-degree angle. Yale Avenue also meets Morton Avenue at an angle, very close to the Morton-Kedron junction, adding more traffic and more turning movements to an already constricted intersection.



The SEPTA R-3 commuter rail line crosses Kedron Avenue next to the intersection. The Morton-Rutledge train station draws commuters and pedestrians, and the gates halt traffic flow when a train pulls into the station. Many of the surrounding streets are one-way, making alternate routes difficult. Finally, the intersection lacks pedestrian signals, crosswalks, and bike lanes, raising concerns for pedestrian and cyclist safety. Lack of sidewalks forces pedestrians to walk across train tracks.

Land use is another physical characteristic defining the study area. The intersection is at the heart of Morton's downtown commercial corridor. The surrounding residential area, with its narrow streets and on street parking, is ill suited to through-traffic. The expanded study area encompasses not only the commercial core, but also the

residential areas most impacted by congestion. Morton's oldest buildings are within the study area, including the rail station and the historic Kedron United Methodist Church. The buildings in the commercial district surrounding the intersection have shallow front setbacks that constrict any road-widening endeavors, as well as the presence of some public utilities located next to the rail line.

NATURAL CHARACTERISTICS

The study area has been built out for many years, and is relatively level; natural features such as vegetation and topography have little effect on the study area boundaries.

ADMINISTRATIVE CHARACTERISTICS

The study area affects a number of administrative jurisdictions, including municipalities, school districts, and infrastructure authorities. **Map 4: Community Services** shows the locations of schools and community services. The Borough of Morton is the municipality primarily affected, since the intersection is located at its heart. The nature of the intersection's challenges spreads its influence to include parts of Springfield, Ridley, Rutledge, and to a lesser degree, Swarthmore. Local school districts – including Springfield School District, Ridley School District, Wallingford-Swarthmore School District, and several parochial schools – bus students through the intersection. In addition, Delaware County Head Start has an early childhood education facility located in close proximity to the intersection.

Emergency response services are also affected by conditions in the study area. The Morton Borough Police Station is located in the study area and officers frequently travel through the intersection when responding to calls. Both the Morton Fire Company and Rutledge Fire Company are located close to the Morton-Kedron intersection and traverse it frequently. Ambulance services are also routed through the intersection. Concern has been expressed about difficulty getting emergency response vehicles through the intersection during peak times.

The Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) operates the Morton-Rutledge Station for its R3 Regional Rail service at the intersection. The rail station has a significant impact on the surrounding area. Traffic comes to a halt when a train is in the station, lowering gates at the Morton-Kedron intersection and Church Road. The station attracts a number of commuters from beyond the immediate area. Most commuters drive to the station, which increases congestion and adds to on-street and business lot parking. SEPTA's Rt.111 bus also crosses the intersection and the study

area. The Rt. 109 and the Rt. 113 busses run along the edges of the study area on Baltimore Pike and McDade Boulevard respectively.

SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

The commercial core is socially significant because it defines downtown Morton and houses much of its physical history. Other social determinants include religious uses like the Kedron United Methodist Church. There are six churches within the study area, including the one pictured below. New playing fields on Church Road are home to little league games in warm months and generate pedestrian and automobile traffic through the area, as well as parking issues.

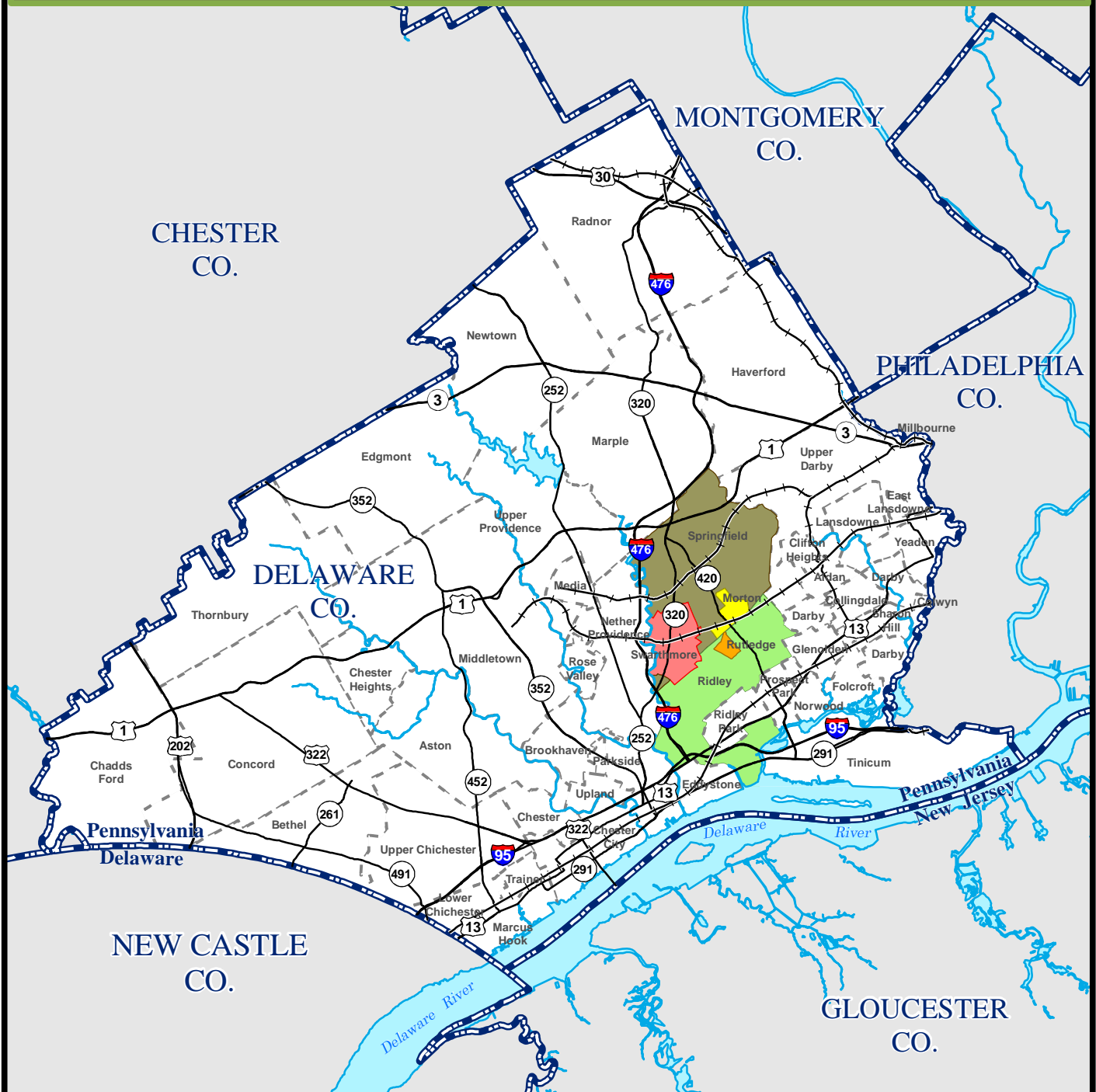


ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

The commercial core surrounding the intersection constitutes Morton Borough's historic downtown. Its economic significance is hampered by congestion at the intersection because vehicles are unable to get in or out of business parking lots. The parking lots are also often used to get around the intersection during peak hours. Regionally oriented businesses along Baltimore Pike generate further traffic, adding cars on weekends and holidays. Economic characteristics are addressed in more detail in the *baseline conditions* section that follows.

MAP 1: LOCATION

Community Impact Assessment



- Morton Boro
- Ridley Twp
- Rutledge Boro
- Springfield Twp
- Swarthmore Boro

0 2 4 6 Miles



County Boundary



Municipal Boundary



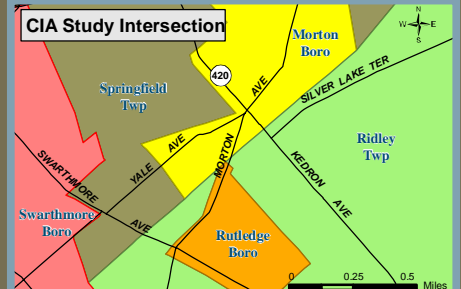
Commuter Railway



Major Arterial Road

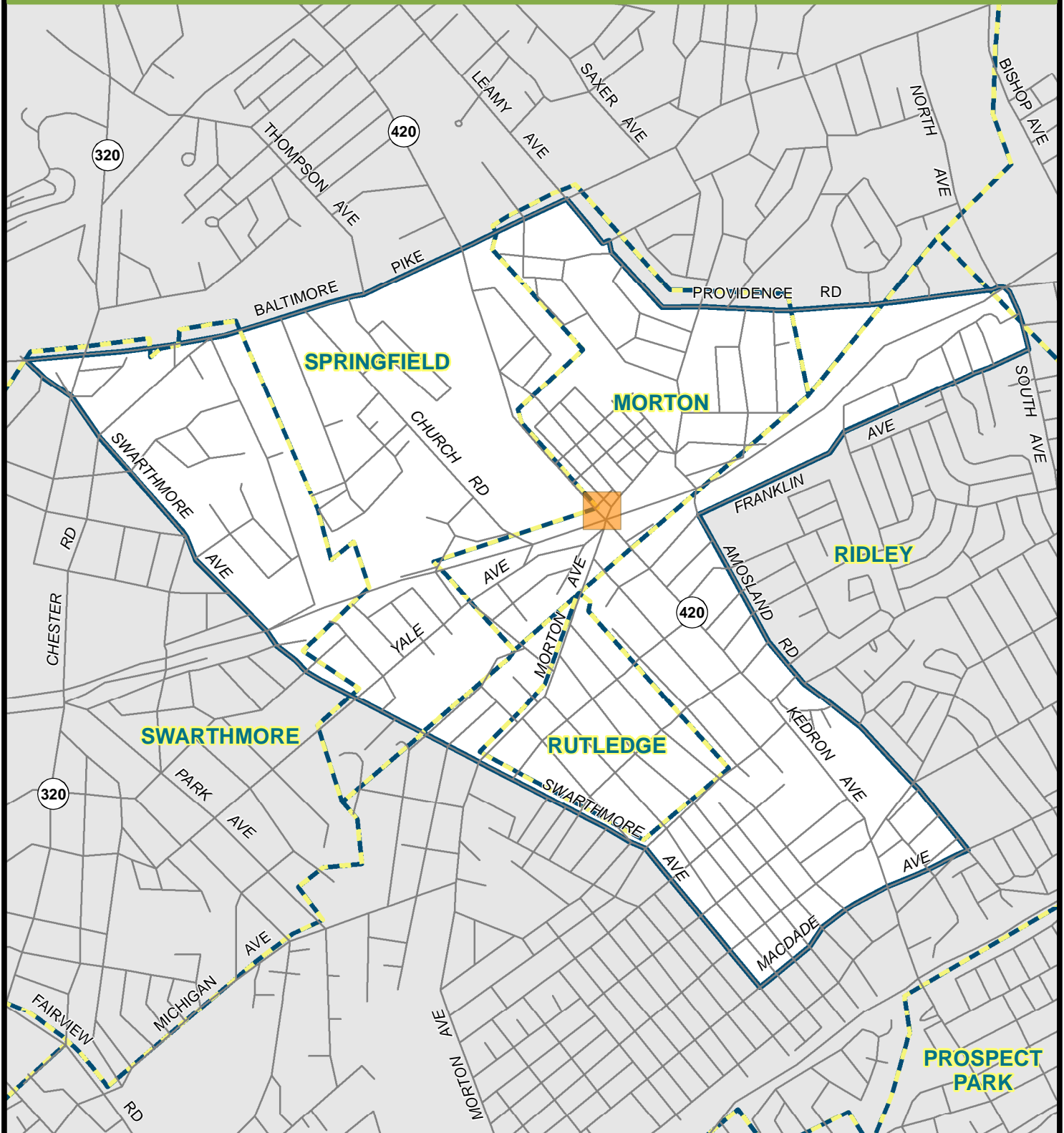





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
MAP 2: STUDY AREA

Community Impact Assessment



-  CIA Study Area
-  Study Intersection
-  Municipal Boundary

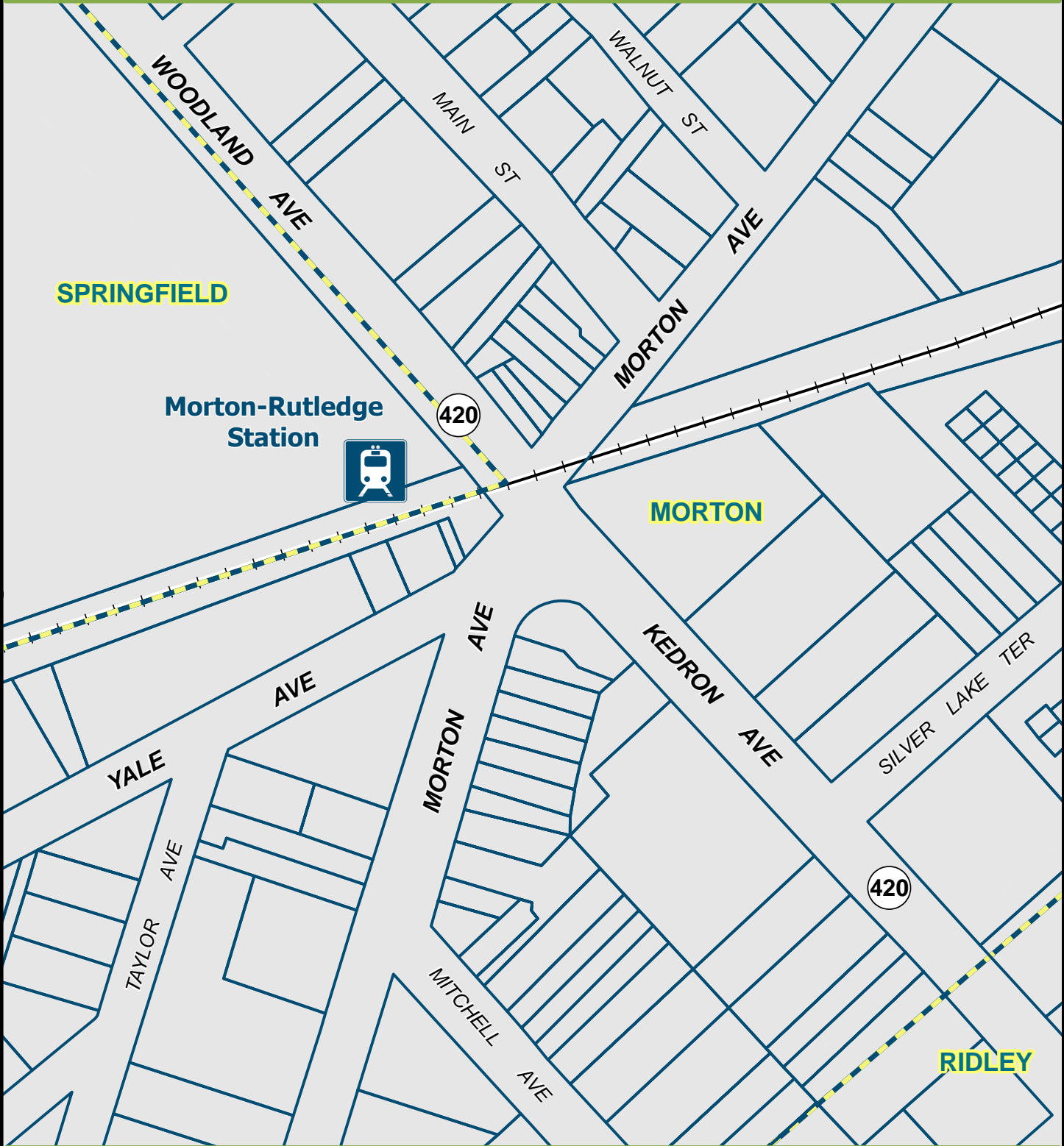


-  Major Arterial Road
-  Local Road

0 0.5 1 Miles

MAP 3: CORE FOCUS AREA

Community Impact Assessment



Delaware County Parcel



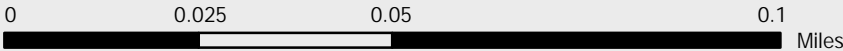
Municipal Boundary



Commuter Railway Station



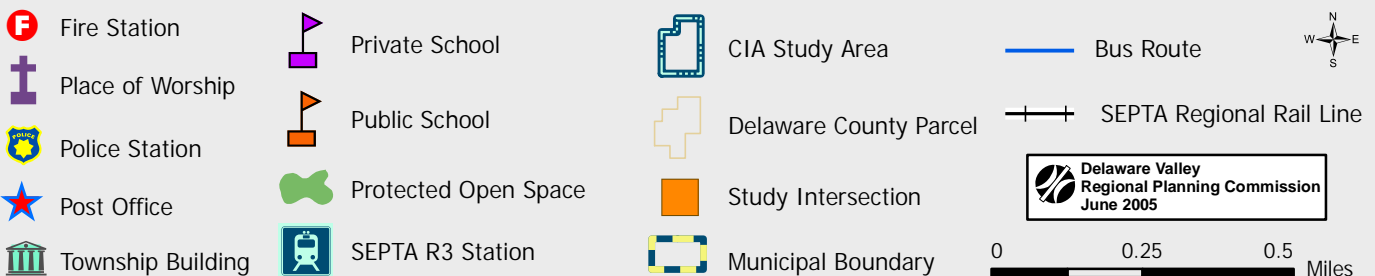
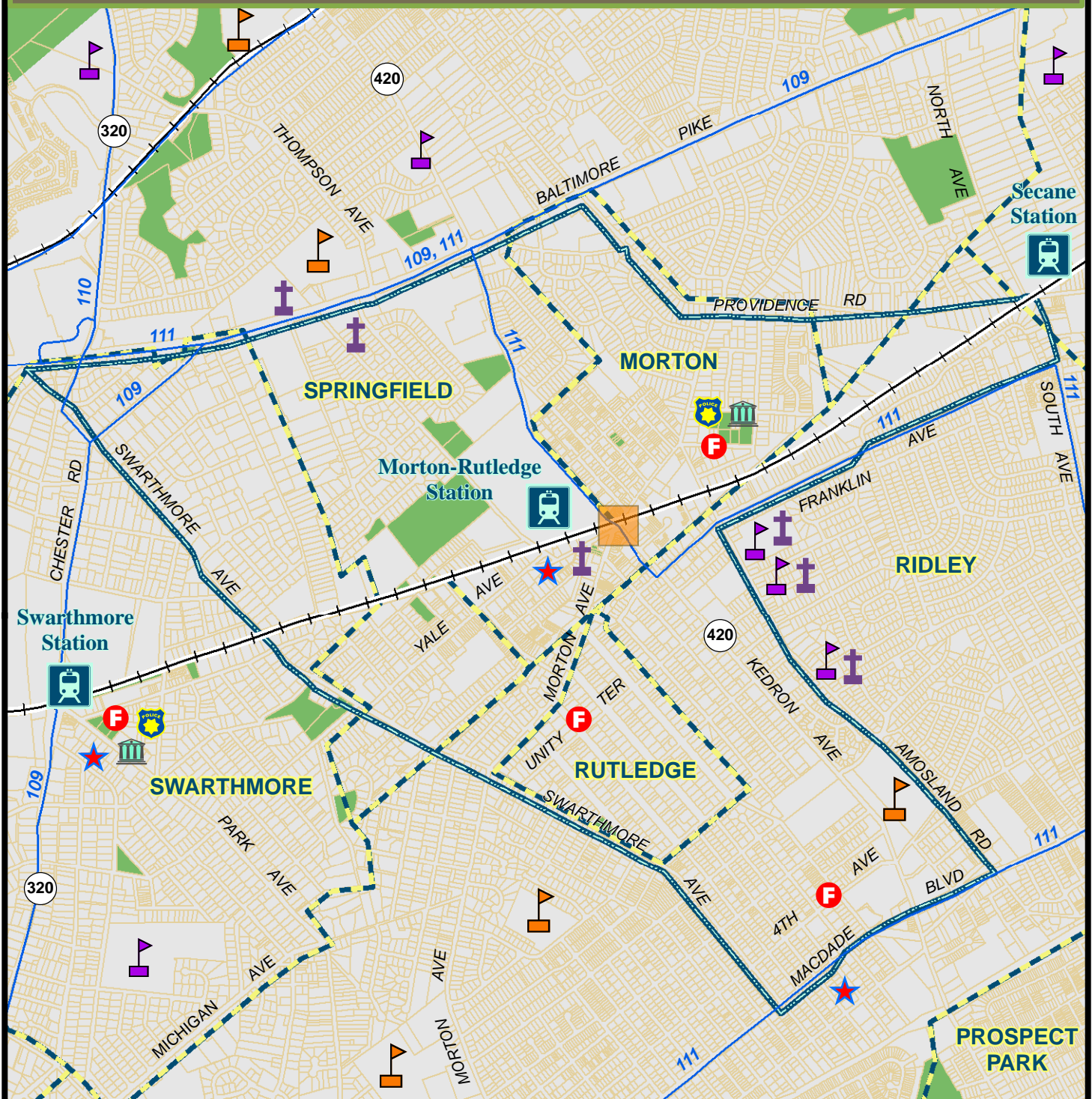
SEPTA Regional Rail Line



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MAP 4: COMMUNITY SERVICES

Community Impact Assessment





chapter three

BASELINE CONDITIONS

What are the community's Important characteristics?



Step 2 of the CIA process determines important characteristics of the study area, such as demographic information, economic data, social history and land use patterns. Combining quantitative analysis of demographic information with the “experiential expertise” of local residents, a comprehensive snapshot of the study area can be developed. Community considerations involve developing an understanding of the interactions of the human environment, the physical environment, and the natural environment that define a place and its quality of life characteristics.

- In the ***Human Environment*** category, quantitative and qualitative analysis will help describe the socio-economic profile, governance, community values and heritage of the study area.
- The ***Physical Environment*** category looks at the services and infrastructure of the study area, as well as aesthetic considerations.
- Finally, the ***Natural Environment*** category is focused on the ecological context and land use patterns of the area.

Following these guidelines, this section analyzes available quantitative data to develop a profile of the study area and surrounding communities. Also included is the qualitative expertise of local first responders, school district officials and elected representatives. This data is used to provide an overall snapshot of the area and will be helpful in identifying potential impacts of any proposed future transportation improvement. Identification of social characteristics also relates to environmental justice (EJ) consideration. EJ evaluations are intended to ensure that lower income and minority neighborhoods are not adversely impacted by proposed projects.

Community residents shared their thoughts and experiences in three public meetings held in the Morton Borough Municipal Building. People were invited to participate in discussions regarding the difficulties created by the study intersection, share their opinions of the community and its amenities, and voice other concerns.

During the second public meeting for the CIA process, a survey was distributed to community residents (see Appendix C). Residents were asked to comment on their views of the community in and around the study area based on the **Human Environment, Physical Environment, and**

Natural Environment community considerations. Since the fundamental purpose of CIA is to assess a community’s quality of life objectives, the comments gathered in this survey will be used to direct the reader to what the community deems as the most important points. These comments can be found in italics, preceding each applicable section.

During the planning process, SEPTA moved to demolish part of the historic Morton Train Station, resulting in organized opposition by local residents. This added a significant element to the CIA process because it showed not only the level of community cohesion, but also the value these neighbors place on their historic resources. Further discussion of the train station preservation efforts follows later in Chapter Three.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

The intersection of Kedron Ave. (PA Route 420) and Morton Ave. is located on the municipal boundary between the Borough of Morton and Springfield Township. As demonstrated in the Section I, the effect congestion has on the intersection spreads well beyond these two municipalities. For this reason, it is important to include Ridley Township and Rutledge Borough in the baseline conditions analysis in order to gain a more comprehensive perspective on the regional issues.

POPULATION, HOUSING, & EMPLOYMENT

Residents unanimously voted that their community was a good place to raise a family. Good schools, friendly neighbors and a small-town feel were frequently cited as attributes that made their community special.

Delaware County was the location for much of the early suburban development outside Philadelphia. The Study Area municipalities can be considered first ring suburban communities because they were developed concurrently with the budding Philadelphia region. Easy access to the City caused these areas to be built out quickly and densely, a remnant of 19th early 20th century land use patterns.

As seen in Table 1, the post-WWII suburban boom greatly increased the population of these communities. From 1940 to 1960, Springfield and Ridley Townships saw over 400% growth in their respective populations that continued to rise for another ten years. The much smaller boroughs, limited in land area, also saw well over 100% growth during this period. However, density, congestion, an improving transportation network, an aging housing stock, and the lure of new development began to push growth outward, slowing the population growth in this area.

Table 1: Population Trends

Municipality	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
Morton Borough	1,341	1,316	1,352	2,207	2,602	2,412	2,851	2,715
Ridley Township	8,326	8,641	17,212	35,738	39,085	33,771	31,169	30,791
Rutledge Borough	789	796	919	947	1,167	934	843	860
Springfield Township	4,589	5,488	10,917	26,733	29,006	25,326	24,160	23,677
Study Area Total	15,045	16,241	30,400	65,625	71,860	62,443	59,023	58,043
Delaware County	280,264	310,756	414,234	553,154	603,456	555,029	547,651	550,864

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census

COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT: BASELINE CONDITIONS

As part of the long-range planning process, DVRPC forecasts population change twenty-five years into the future. Based on these forecast figures, Morton Borough is the only participating municipality expected to see any population increase between now and the year 2030. Gradually increasing from 2005 to 2030, the population should increase in the small borough by five percent. This is due in part to Morton's easy accessibility to public transit with SEPTA's R3 Regional Rail line. While there is not much developable land left in the Borough, development pressure and rising fuel costs may lead to higher densities of communities with easy access to transit.

Table 2: Population Forecasts

	Delaware County	Morton Borough	Ridley Township	Rutledge Borough	Springfield Township	Study Area Totals
2000 Census	551,974	2,715	30,791	860	23,677	58,043
2005	551,530	2,780	30,670	870	23,600	57,920
2015	546,570	2,780	29,390	810	22,590	55,570
2025	547,784	2,830	27,610	760	22,340	53,540
2030	547,890	2,850	26,760	740	22,500	52,850
Projected Absolute Change 2000-2030	-4,084	135	-4,031	-120	-1,177	-5,193
Projected Percent Change 2000-2030	-0.7	5.0	-13.1	-14.0	-5.0	-9.0

Source: Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, 2002. Derived from 2000 Census data.

Ridley Township, the study area's largest municipality, is expected to face a significant decline in population. In the next 25 years, Ridley is predicted to lose the equivalent of over four times the population of Rutledge Borough. This is due in part to the aging of the large number of baby boomers currently living in Ridley. Springfield Township is expected to lose approximately five percent of its population as people move further out of the region. Table 3 provides a snapshot of the Year 2000 decennial Census population characteristics for the study area communities and for Delaware County.

Table 3: Population Characteristics

	Delaware County	Morton Borough	Ridley Township	Rutledge Borough	Springfield Township	Study Area Totals
Total Population	550,864	2,715	30,791	860	23,677	58,043
Total Households	206,320	1,145	12,121	297	8,618	22,181
Average Household Size	2.56	2.36	2.54	2.87	2.73	2.63
Race						
White	442,449	1,897	28,626	830	22,868	54,221
Black or African American	79,981	664	1,313	14	170	2,161
American Indian & Alaska Native alone	609	2	21	1	13	37
Asian	18,103	106	505	8	466	1,085
Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander	100	0	14	0	3	17
Some other race	3,066	9	66	0	29	104
Two or more races	6,556	37	246	7	128	418
Median Age	37.4	37.5	38.1	38.2	41.9	
Age 65 and Older	85,669	418	5,290	99	4,815	10,622
Percent Above Age 65	15.6	15.4	17.2	11.5	20.3	16.1

Source: Census 2000 Summary File 1 (SF1) and Summary File 3 (SF3)

Morton and Rutledge Boroughs are primarily residential communities made up of both new families looking to take advantage of good schools and a reasonable property tax rate, and older, more entrenched residents that have lived in the area their entire lives. Springfield Township is the commercial hub of the area, as well as a prominent residential area in Delaware County. Ridley Township posts the largest share of the population, with over 30,000 residents. Affordable housing and easy access to the R-3 Rail Line and I-95 make it an attractive place for commuters to purchase homes in proximity to Philadelphia's central business district.



The racial composition of the study area municipalities, as shown in Table 3, is difficult to generalize. The majority of population in these communities is white, but there are significant African-American and Asian populations. Ethnic enclaves exist throughout Delaware County; however, most other ethnic groups comprise less than 10 percent of the whole. Despite this fact, there are a number of small business owners of non-white ethnicities in the commercial core surrounding the study intersection.

One respondent spoke highly of the ethnic diversity of the business community surrounding the intersection. This resident found that this attribute was one of the most important factors in making the community special.

Housing & Households

Residents were ambivalent about whether more development would be a good thing in their neighborhoods.

Table 4 illustrates the current housing characteristics of the study area communities. Throughout the county, relatively low vacancy rates and low average household sizes are indicators that the number of new homes built will probably continue to increase. This is a trend being seen nationwide; typical family size is decreasing (single parent households, empty nesters) and population is increasing—smaller households require more housing units than larger ones. Plus, there is a common desire in the region to upgrade to newer residences every few years. Since vacancy rates are low, new housing would have to be built to accommodate added population.

Table 4: Housing Characteristics

	Delaware County	Morton Borough	Ridley Township	Rutledge Borough	Springfield Township	Study Area Totals
Total Housing Units	216,978	1,209	12,544	305	8,800	22,858
Total Households	206,320	1,145	12,121	297	8,618	22,181
Average Household Size	2.56	2.36	2.54	2.87	2.73	
Occupancy Status						
Occupied	206,320	1,145	12,121	297	8,618	22,181
Vacant	10,658	64	423	8	182	677
Tenure of Occupied Housing Units						
Owner -occupied	148,384	630	9200	252	7,956	18,038
Renter -occupied	57,936	515	2921	45	662	4,143
Median Year Structure Built	1954	1960	1955	Pre-1940	1954	
Median Gross Rent	\$662	\$602	\$616	\$631	\$771	
Median Value of Owner -occupied Housing Units	\$127,000	\$126,400	\$114,000	\$143,100	\$162,200	

Source: Census 2000 Summary File 1 (SF1) and Summary File 3 (SF3)

Detached single-family homes dominate the study area housing stock. Many of these homes are more than 50 years old, with the median year of construction ranging from pre-World War II in Rutledge Borough to 1960 in Morton Borough. Many residences could be considered historic. However, while these homes can be highly valued, an aging housing stock presents a number of challenges; although rehabilitation of historic properties creates a long list of benefits, current housing trends in suburban areas tend to favor new construction in outlying areas. As a result, many first ring suburbs have begun to suffer problem usually thought of as urban ills, such as stagnating or declining population and employment.

Income & Employment

According to DVRPC estimates found on Table 5, about 25,677 people were employed in Morton and Rutledge boroughs, and Springfield and Ridley townships in the year 2000. Over the course of the next 25 years, shifts in employment and further development will cause a net gain in employment for these four municipalities. However, these gains are not universal; many jobs in Springfield and Morton are forecasted to be lost during this period.

Table 5: Employment Forecasts

	Delaware County	Morton Borough	Ridley Township	Rutledge Borough	Springfield Township	Study Area Totals
2000	238,164	1,285	11,913	80	12,399	25,677
2005	242,213	1,252	11,845	87	12,220	25,404
2015	258,958	1,228	13,622	112	12,274	27,236
2025	269,370	1,166	14,829	168	11,739	27,902
2030	273,411	1,119	15,129	176	11,649	28,073
Projected Absolute Change 2000 -2030	35,247	-166	3,216	96	-750	2,396
Projected Percent Change 2000-2030	14.8	-12.9	27.0	119.5	-6.0	9.3

Source: Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, 2002. Derived from 2000 Census data.

Between 2000 and 2030, both pronounced growth and decline in employment in the study area municipalities is forecasted. For instance, Ridley Township is expected to add 3,216 jobs, an increase of 27 percent. Springfield, on the other hand, is expected to gradually lose roughly 750 jobs.

Table 6: Income Characteristics

	Delaware County	Morton Borough	Ridley Township	Rutledge Borough	Springfield Township	Study Area Totals
1999 Census Data						
Median Household Income	\$ 50,092	\$ 46,731	\$ 45,918	\$ 60,972	\$ 65,703	
At or Below Poverty Level	42,411	173	2,070	46	670	2,959
Above Poverty Level	488,700	2,535	28,666	814	22,862	54,877

Source: Census 2000 Summary File 1 (SF1)

Table 6 also shows a dichotomy between the different communities surrounding the study area. Median household incomes in Morton Borough and Ridley Township were both over \$4,000 below the Delaware County average in 1999, and percentages of population at or below the poverty level were above 6 percent. Meanwhile, Rutledge Borough and especially Springfield Township both had a higher median household income than the Delaware County average and a less significant percentage of population at or below the poverty level.

LOCAL IDENTITY AND HERITAGE

Morton History

Morton Borough is rich in history, as one of the oldest communities in Delaware County. Thought to be part of a 1636 Land Grant, the area was officially designated Ridley and Springfield Townships in 1776 (Lockhart, 1998). John Morton, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, was the original Land Surveyor of the area. Many members of the Morton family lived nearby throughout the community's early history.

In 1854, a train station was built in the area as part of the Philadelphia & West Chester Railroad. The station was then known as the Newton Railroad Station, named after the Honorable Isaac Newton, first Secretary of Agriculture, and the surrounding area was also called Newton Station. In 1860, the tiny town of Kedron was founded around the rail station, and the Kedron Methodist Church was built. At the time, the "town" consisted of four farms.



Judge Sketchley Morton, great-grandson of John Morton, moved his family from a farm in Ridley Township to a property near the train station in 1866 (Lockhart, 1998). By this time, there were 10 families in Kedron. Judge Morton invested heavily in the area, establishing a brickyard, sawmill, and general store under the "Morton and Son" name. Judge Morton used his political clout to get the job of Postmaster of the nearby Oakdale Post Office in 1867. The hamlet of Oakdale, located at Baltimore Pike and Sproul Road, had the only post office in Springfield Township. Judge Morton promptly moved the post office to Kedron, over the objections of Springfield residents forced to travel farther for mail. He proceeded to name it the Morton Post Office, after himself, and the "Kedron" place name quickly faded. The town became known as Morton, although Kedron Avenue and Kedron Methodist Church retain the earlier name.

Although the name had changed, adjoining Springfield and Ridley Townships continued to govern the area for three more decades. In 1898, Morton residents voted to become

an independent municipality. The newly formed Borough assumed a debt of over \$2,800 to Springfield Township, which took 12 years to pay off. The community continued to grow throughout the second half of the 19th century, and also grew popular as a summer resort area for the wealthy.



John Irwin, a local businessman, is attributed with much of the borough's present-day layout. Irwin bought 76 acres in 1871 and called the property "Faraday Park." He built a home, a machine shop, and an electrical plant and gasworks that served many local homes and establishments. The Faraday Block of Morton Avenue, pictured here, is the main historic business district. Irwin made several transportation advances for the community, laying out Franklin and Kedron

Avenues and building a boardwalk from the train station to the Church of Atonement on Amosland Road. He was also instrumental in the installation of Morton's first streetlights.

Morton's children were first educated at the public school on Baltimore Pike in Oakdale; in 1876, the Morton Public School was built (Lockhart, 1998). This school was later renamed the Phyllis Wheatley School and remained in use until the 1960s. The Sidney Smedley Public School was built as population grew, and served students in grades 1 through 8 until its closure in the 1970s. The site of the Wheatley School, near the intersection of School Street and Pennington Avenue, is now Jacob's Park. The Smedley School is now serving the Borough as its Municipal Building.

Notable milestones in the community's development include the establishment of local businesses and services such as Faraday Heat, Power & Light Company,



Keystone State Telephone and Telegraph Company, and Morton Poultry Yards. The Morton Chronicle, the first local newspaper, was established in 1879. The Morton Building and Loan Association, organized in 1885, was instrumental to the town's development. Members of the Building and Loan Association met monthly to pay their dues, which were used to fund construction of new buildings. The Building and Loan Association later became the Morton Savings and Loan Association. This long-standing business moved to its present location at 25 South Morton Avenue in the 1970s although it had long used the facility for its monthly meetings. It still serves the community today as Morton Savings Bank.

June 14, 1883 - The Morton Chronicles

A team of horses owned by John Miller, of Springfield, took fright and ran away on Morton Avenue, on Saturday afternoon last. Turning the corner opposite Miller's store, the animals started toward east Morton, but a long freight train which was just passing impeded their way at the railroad crossing, and the driver overtook them before any damage was done.

As the commercial core developed around the train station, providing services for local residents, the Borough came into its own by the turn of the 20th century. The Morton Fire Company was established in 1891, and the Morton Police Department was formed in 1898 when the Borough incorporated. By this time, Morton not only had the train station and post office, but also several churches and

a growing local business district. Morton, and adjacent communities such as Rutledge Borough, became a popular resort area for the wealthy, given their proximity to nearby spring-fed lakes. The railroad station was upgraded to the present complex to the benefit of these wealthy patrons, but also served to cement Morton's fate as a turn-of-the-century bedroom community as the rail system made suburbs more accessible (see further description on p. 34).

By the 1930 Census, Morton residents numbered over 1,300 and its position as an early railroad suburb was firmly established. Population remained fairly stable until the 1950s, when suburban growth began to boom across the nation. Morton was no exception: the Borough's population grew by 63 percent between 1950 and 1960, and added another 18 percent the following decade. By the end of the 1970s, the Borough had taken much of the shape that remains today, with the historic commercial core surrounded by residential streets. The train station today continues to serve many commuters.



The Historic Fabric Today

Much of the historic fabric surrounding the study intersection remains intact, including the train station complex and a number of buildings in the Central Morton business district. Industrial uses and parking lots interrupt this fabric somewhat – most notably to the northwest of the intersection in Springfield Township, and to the southeast with strip retail developments. The Morton Train Station Complex has been deemed eligible for the National Register in May 2005.



In addition to the business district, a number of historic resources can be found throughout the community. Many historic homes, ranging from Victorian to Post-War, a few barns and outbuildings, and several historic churches fill the residential areas surrounding the intersection. The small barn pictured, for example, is behind a large home in Morton Borough and serves as a reminder of the community's early heritage.

The *Comprehensive Plan for the Borough of Morton* was created by the Delaware County Planning Department in 2003. Morton's comprehensive plan identifies several historic neighborhoods in its historic preservation section. The "Central Morton" neighborhood surrounds the central business district and the Morton Train Station. Its boundaries are Woodland Avenue, Morton Avenue, Broad Street and Newell Street. This area contains mid-to-

late 19th century homes and is identified as an early commuter suburb district. Delaware County Planning Department believes that the Central Morton neighborhood is likely eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Two other neighborhoods, Northeast Morton and South Morton, have strong local significance. These neighborhoods may also be National Register eligible and individual structures within might also be eligible. At the local level, putting a conservation district ordinance in place could protect the historic character of all of Morton's historic neighborhoods.

As a nationally listed Historic District, Central Morton could open funding opportunities for the district as a whole, through participation in the Certified Local Government program, the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Main Street Program, and Pennsylvania's Elm Street Program.

Individual owners of income-producing properties anywhere in the borough that are eligible and will be listed on the National Register are eligible for historic tax credits. The borough as a whole could benefit from becoming a Certified Local Government – a State-administered program, but a federal designation and funding source. The State certifies eligible municipalities, and they may get historic grants. They must have a historic ordinance in place – either an Act 167 Local Historic District ordinance, or a historic zoning overlay ordinance, and have an official historic commission or HARB.

Locally managed historic or conservation districts, on the other hand, afford the community another layer of control to protect the integrity of their historic districts. Many times, national and local districts overlap, and both offer different benefits. Local districts allow the most control, can loosely protect or offer much restriction, whichever is desirable to the community. It can regulate things like demolition, new architecture in historic districts, additions, and alterations.

The Federal designation of being eligible or listed on the National Register could benefit the owners by offering status, as well as historic tax credits mentioned above. Publicly-owned buildings can also benefit from tax credits by selling them to for-profit entities.



The National Trust for Historic Preservation has identified a number of common misconceptions about preservation and National Register listing (National Trust, 2005). Municipalities trying to safeguard their community heritage must often battle these myths to secure property owner buy-in. One erroneous belief is that a building's owner

will lose all property rights to the government when the structure is listed on a National Register or local historic register or designated part of a National Register or local historic district or historic survey. This is false.

In actuality, local historic review boards may evaluate major projects affecting the façade or outside appearance of the structure. However, they rarely deal with the interior or parts of the structure not visible from public streets. The applicant is given the opportunity to present his or her case for making changes to the property, and the historic review board works with the applicant to arrive at a solution. Many owners in historic districts come to appreciate the positive affect districts have on their property values in the long term.

The Morton Train Station Complex

One of the most important parts of the study area's historic fabric is the train station located next to the intersection of Yale, Kedron, and Morton Avenues. The Morton Train Station complex is considered by many to be the heart of the community, and was identified as such at CIA public meetings. This cultural resource, shown on **Map 5: Morton Station Complex**, came under threat of partial demolition in early 2005, as discussed in the next section. A grassroots effort to protect and repair the facility was born as many citizens came together in recognition of the significance of the train station complex.



MAP 5: MORTON TRAIN STATION

Community Impact Assessment



The train stop was established 1854, when Morton was still a rural part of Springfield Township, and the town grew up around the station. While no modest 1850s structures remain, three important Victorian historic structures were later built and comprise the complex (Delaware County Planning Department, 2005). The wood-framed freight building was constructed in 1879. The following year, the Victorian-style brick passenger station was built on the site of a small, earlier station, in order to accommodate the growing suburban community. On the other side of the tracks, the westbound passenger shelter was added in 1892. The above photograph shows the passenger station from Yale Avenue, with the wooden freight station to its left and part of the westbound shelter to the rear right.

The Passenger Station

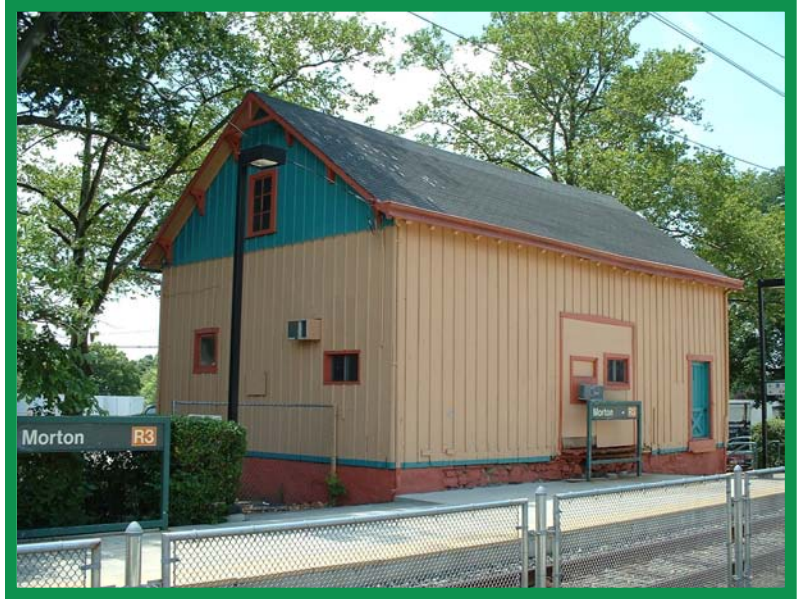
The passenger station, by far the largest structure in the complex, was built in the High Victorian Gothic style with elements of the Stick style. The building is of sturdy brick construction, resting on a local schist stone foundation. Decorative brickwork abounds, most notably polychromatic banding. Even the bulls eye window and chimney sport decorative brick treatments. The station's windows, often paired, are tall and narrow with pointed arches. The inset dormers sport king-post vergeboards while the steeply pitched mansard roof's overhanging eaves are decorated with carved brackets. The photograph below shows the passenger station as viewed from the tracks.



The passenger station is the most architecturally impressive of the three structures in the complex. According to the Morton Station Restoration Committee, the station is in the style of prominent Victorian architects such as Joseph Wilson, Frank Furness, or the Hewitt Brothers. Wilson Bros. & Co., renowned for their excellence in engineering, also designed the old Broad Street Station (demolished in 1952) and the Reading Terminal Train Shed in Center City Philadelphia, which is now the Pennsylvania Convention Center Ballroom. The Pennsylvania Historic Resource Survey Form recently completed for the train station complex also cites the possibility of prominent Philadelphia architect Frank Furness and the Hewitt Brothers firm as possible designers.

The Freight Building

The freight station, the oldest building in the complex, was constructed in 1879 next to the site of the present-day passenger station. Though much more modest in material than the brick passenger station, the bracketed gables and king-post cross braces at the gable apses are decorative Stick Victorian elements. The freight station is of the typical board-and-batten construction used for such buildings at the time, with a local schist stone foundation. Large sliding doors are a reminder that most goods once came in and out of Morton by train. The street-side doors are intact, but the trackside doors have been filled in with plywood and small windows installed. SEPTA maintenance crews now use the freight station for storage and a workshop area.



The Westbound Passenger Shelter

The westbound passenger shelter is the final piece of the complex, constructed in 1892 on the Springfield Township side of the tracks for the outbound train. At this time, the station complex was completed including landscaping and paving. The westbound shelter is also of wooden construction, echoing the passenger and freight stations with elements of the Stick Victorian style.



Decorative touches include carved brackets and king post cross braces inset with scrollwork carved in the shape of griffins. It is a three-sided structure, open on the trackside. According to the Morton Station Preservation Committee, this passenger shelter is the standard turn-of-the-century Pennsylvania Railroad design. Surviving examples are becoming increasingly rare, and the Morton Station westbound passenger shelter has fallen into disrepair.

Significance of the Station Complex

The Delaware County Planning Department identifies the Morton Train Station Complex as having national, regional, and local historical and architectural significance. The complex is important to the development of Morton, Rutledge, Ridley and Springfield as rail-line suburbs of Philadelphia. However, it is also historically significant on a much larger scale, as it is a rare, remarkably intact suburban railroad complex built in the Victorian style. All three buildings retain the majority of their original features and trim, and the complex is still used as a train station. As noted above, the passenger shelter is likely to be the work of a significant architect, adding another layer of importance to the complex.

The Morton Station Preservation Committee

Unfortunately, deferred maintenance has become an issue for the Morton Train Station. The intactness of the complex, owned and operated by SEPTA, has come under threat with the near-demolition of the westbound passenger shelter in early 2005. The Morton Station Preservation Committee formed in response to the demolition threat. Mario Cimino, President of the Morton Station Preservation Committee, raised the issue at the February 10, 2005 CIA public meeting. According to Cimino, SEPTA brought in equipment to demolish the westbound shelter in early February without notifying the surrounding community. Cimino said that the shelter, and the intactness of the station complex, would have disappeared overnight if the community had not intervened.

According to Morton Councilwoman Delores Giardina, SEPTA cited minor safety issues with the structural integrity of the passenger shelter as their reason for demolition. It was noted at the February 10th CIA meeting that SEPTA's funding struggles placed priority on continuing their rail and bus services, rather than capital improvements. However, SEPTA had recently erected a metal and Plexiglas shelter in the current



standard design next to the 1890s Victorian passenger shelter. The adjacent shelters can be seen in this photograph. The Victorian shelter is presently blocked from pedestrian access.

The Morton Station Preservation Committee (MSPC) has rallied to save the shelter, showing a grassroots commitment to the train station and the heart of the community. The Preservation Committee plans not only to


save the shelter from imminent demolition, but to work with SEPTA, all levels of government, and the community to see the entire station complex properly restored in the future. The Preservation Committee envisions the station complex as returning to its former glory as the centerpiece of the community. The Preservation Committee's mission is:

"The Morton Station Preservation Committee is dedicated to the preservation and future restoration of the Morton Station Complex. Immediately we seek to improve the Westbound Passenger Shelter Structure so that it may be used for future generations. Our long-term goal is to work with SEPTA to restore the entire complex. We will work diligently with the help of our members, general community support, local, state and federal governments and private organizations to reach all of our goals."

MSPC has already made a great deal of progress towards its immediate and long-term goals. Two crucial accomplishments were establishing a good working relationship with SEPTA and gaining support from local officials. The Preservation Committee has become a registered 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation and has received endorsement from the National Trust for Historic Preservation. MSPC has established subcommittees in the areas of planning, membership, publicity, fundraising, engineering and architecture, and historical research.

MSPC, with the help of local state representatives, congresspersons, and senators, has made great strides in their work with SEPTA. The transit authority agreed to halt demolition and give MSPC a window of time in which to present alternate solutions. MSPC presented SEPTA with a professional Structural Assessment Report and the two entities are discussing project phasing for stabilization and restoration of the westbound passenger shelter. The Westbound Passenger Shelter is currently in the design phase, and it is anticipated that construction will begin during the first half of 2006. Once MSPC has accomplished its goal of returning the westbound shelter to use, the group aspires to coordinate restoration of the entire complex to better reflect its important place in the community.

Please Join Us!
for the next meeting of the
**Morton Station
Preservation
Committee**
THURSDAY
FEBRUARY 24, 2005 7:30 PM
MORTON BOROUGH HALL
HIGHLAND AVE. & ALFA TERR.



Please join us in a grassroots effort to restore the historic Morton Train Station Complex. Our historic Westbound Passenger Shelter is in danger of demolition. We have a very limited window of opportunity to devise a plan to save the shelter and keep our very rare complex intact for the benefit of the community for generations to come. **Directions & info. on back.**

For further info, contact Mario Cimino at
info@mortonstation.org or (610) 328-9698
Visit our website at www.mortonstation.org for news

Our effort has been endorsed by the
National Trust for Historic Places!

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

LAND USE

This section provides an overview of how land is used within the study area and in each surrounding municipality.* In this report, land use figures are derived from estimates based on DVRPC's Year 2000 aerial photographs.

The intersection of Morton Avenue and PA Route 420 is centered in the Borough of Morton's historic downtown commercial area. One-story buildings line the street northbound on 420, leading to a two-story commercial structure on the southwest corner of the intersection. Most of Morton Borough is low to mid-density residential, with a mix of single family, multi-family and townhouse development. A relatively new townhouse development sits just behind the Kedron Avenue commercial area, close enough for residents to walk to the convenience store, bank and other stores, as well as the Regional Rail station. Sandwiched in between Morton and Yale Avenues is the historic Kedron Avenue Methodist Church. Adjacent to the church and across Yale Avenue is the historic Morton-Rutledge SEPTA train station. The R3 Regional Rail line that serves as the unofficial boundary between Morton Borough and Springfield Township severs Route 420 when trains pass through twice an hour, blocking north-south traffic.

On the opposite side of the tracks, a large, fenced in parking lot remains half-empty most of the time and has been designated as an eyesore by Morton residents. A large office/light industrial complex sits just beyond the parking lot, further north along Rte 420. North of the tracks and east of Yale Avenue is a large parking lot formerly available to commuters that is now leased for vehicle storage for a car dealer located on Baltimore Pike. Across the street from that lot are a few commercial businesses (Enterprise Rent-a-Car, a Check Cashing center), a few offices and a day care center. Continuing north, Route 420 is dominated by larger commercial uses like BJ's Wholesale Club and other big box retail.

The streetscape at the intersection is cluttered with signs, power lines, and directional signals. There are no demarcated crosswalks, nor pedestrian signs or signals, despite the proximity of the train station and shopping area. Pedestrians on the Morton side of the rail line must maneuver their way across the tracks, avoiding oncoming trains, gates, and the traffic on Route 420 to get to the "outbound" side. The same is true for those on the Springfield side attempting to get to the "Inbound to Philadelphia" side. This is a particularly egregious hazard that has led to multiple people being struck by cars over the years.

* While part of Swathmore Township is located in the study area, they declined participating in the process. Land under their jurisdiction found in the study area is still calculated in the land use total acreage.

Overall, the intersection and surrounding environs are in need aesthetic improvements. The community character and historic resources are not well represented by the aesthetic conditions of the rail line, the facades of some of the commercial buildings, the numerous curb cuts along the roadway and the expanse of neglected parking lot across from the train station. Any improvements to the intersection should be accompanied by efforts to improve and coordinate building facades, limit unnecessary signage and overhead wires, and make clear, designated areas for pedestrians.

Map 6: Study Area Land Use shows DVRPC's land use characteristics for the year 2000. From this vantage point, it is easy to identify the commercial center around the intersection, the commercial corridor along Baltimore Pike, and the commercial corridor along MacDade Boulevard. Baltimore Pike and MacDade Boulevard are dominated by highway-oriented commercial uses, which is part of the reason Route 420 experiences such heavy traffic flow. The Springfield Mall and other big box retail destinations draw residents north from Ridley, Rutledge, Morton, and Springfield. Similarly, MacDade Boulevard is a commercial draw to the south. These two major thoroughfares are also access points for Route 476, one of the largest transportation corridors in the region.

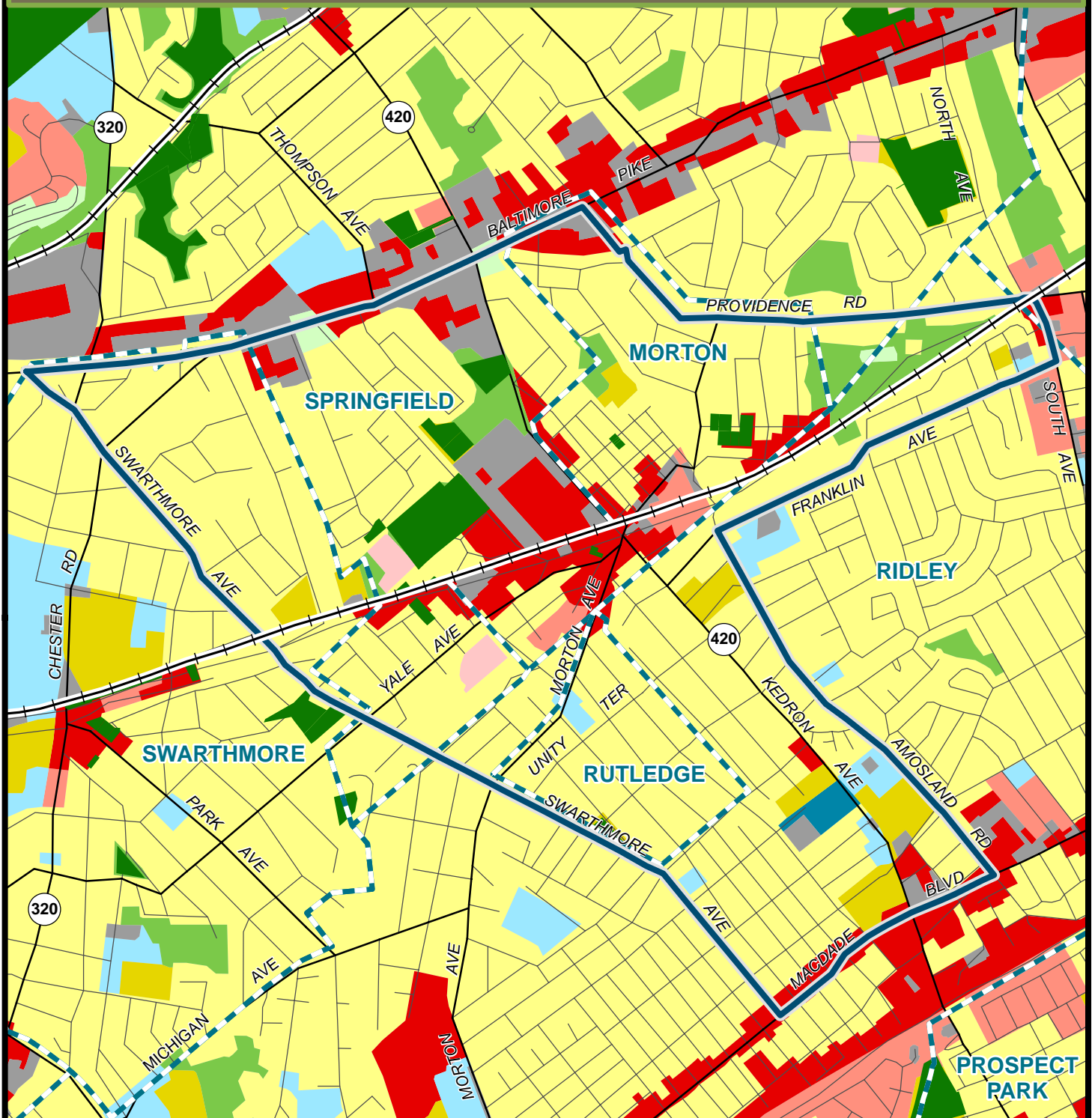
Table 7: Land Use in Acres

	Morton Borough	Ridley Township	Rutledge Borough	Springfield Township	Study Area Total*
Residential	153	259	85	186	683
Commercial	57	22	1	78	158
Community Services	0	13	3	0	16
Utility	0	0	0	9	9
Military	0	8	0	0	8
Recreation	3	31	2	4	40
Wooded	7	18	0	35	60
Vacant	0	1	0	5	6
Totals	220	352	90	316	978

Source: Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, 2005. *Study Area Total figures do not include acreage in Swathmore Township

The area surrounding the intersection and the commercial corridors is a mix of predominantly single-family residential neighborhoods with some interspersed commercial uses. Very little developable land exists in these older, built-out suburban communities, but the potential for redevelopment projects is ripe. Public water and sewer serve the entire study area.

MAP 6: Study Area Land Use Community Impact Assessment



- | | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------|--------|
| Commercial | Recreation | Vacant |
| Community Services | Single Family (Detached) | Wooded |
| Military | Transportation | |
| Multi Family | Utility | |



CIA Study Area



Municipal Boundary



0 0.25 0.5 Miles

Source: DVRPC Land Use 2000

Delaware Valley
Regional Planning Commission
June 2005

Developed land use categories include the following:

Residential – Single-Family Detached units include single-family dwellings that are not attached to another dwelling unit, and are the most common dwelling unit type in the study area.

Residential – Single-Family Attached units include duplexes and townhouses.

Residential – Multifamily units include apartments and group quarters.

Manufacturing includes the area devoted to fabrication and/or assembly of raw materials or components.

Transportation includes areas devoted to rail and highway transportation. Highways are included only when they are double lane divided roadways. To account for local roads, 25 percent of all residential land in the municipalities was subtracted from the residential total and added to the transportation category. Parking is also included in the transportation category, regardless of its attendant land use.

Communications and Utilities include power generation and substations, major transmission lines, radio, television, and microwave towers (when separate), water filtration and storage (except reservoirs), wastewater treatment, and landfills.

Commercial includes retail, wholesale, personal and professional services, hotels and motels.

Community Services includes hospitals and clinics, retirement centers, government buildings (except military), educational facilities, places of worship and cemeteries.

Military includes military bases, training facilities, storage and roads and parking lots associated with those structures.

Recreation includes parks, recreation sites (e.g. playgrounds) as interpreted, amusement parks, resorts and camps, public assembly sites, and golf courses. The portion of recreational or cultural areas that can be identified on an aerial photograph will most likely not conform to the site boundary. Such information is derived from other sources.

Undeveloped land use categories include the following:

Agriculture includes land devoted to crops, pastures, orchards, tree farms, or other agricultural areas. Farmsteads and associated buildings and single or double lot split-offs with houses are also included in this category.

Wooded (forested) areas are determined by continuous canopy or solid tree cover, and include woodlands, natural lands, marshes and swamps. Hedgerows (windrows) are not interpreted as wooded, nor are wooded areas associated with residences. Wooded areas that emerge from formerly agricultural fields are interpreted as wooded if, in the judgment of the interpreter, the wooded category dominates.

Vacant land is not clearly wooded, not agricultural, and not developed, or is clear or unused and not tied to other uses.

Source: DVRPC 2005

AESTHETIC CONSIDERATIONS

As expressed at CIA public meetings and in community surveys, residents were at once very proud of their historic resources and also very concerned about the aesthetic quality of their streets and neighborhoods. Unattractive signage, out-of-date facades, and other distracting features obscured many historic buildings. Also noted were the unsightliness of industrial uses surrounding the SEPTA train station.



There are numerous commercial structures directly surrounding the study intersection in Morton's downtown area. Many of the facades of these buildings have not been updated in decades and are beginning to show wear. Trash and other debris collect along the R3 tracks, and along the chain link fenced parking lot north of the tracks. Residents complain that the surface lot to the north of the tracks does not drain well and that water accumulates after rainstorms. They also mention the fact that large trucks park "willy-nilly" in the lot, making an already unattractive space even more cluttered. According to one municipal official, the intersection is jumbled with wires, poles, and abandoned SEPTA equipment.



Residential areas, on the other hand, are for the most part exemplary of traditional neighborhoods throughout the first ring suburbs. Many historic homes are interwoven with newer homes, blending together to form a quaint, small community feel. Other streets, such as the one pictured above, have rows of homes from the same era.

The Morton Train Station is a classic Victorian train station in fair condition. One of the oldest structures in the study area, the train station should be the centerpiece of the community. Instead, its architectural beauty is marred by unattractive surrounding structures, non-existent landscaping, SEPTA equipment, and obstructed views. While a major aesthetic overhaul of the area is needed, the station's architectural quality is an invaluable resource for creating a place in Morton that reflects its rich heritage.

The commercial corridor on Baltimore Pike extends along Route 420 into the study area. This area is dominated by big box, strip development. Littered with parking lots and large signs, this part of the study area does not conform the smaller-scale neighborhood retail and is considered an eyesore by many residents.

HEALTH, EDUCATION & EMERGENCY SERVICES

At the Study Advisory Committee meeting, members of the Ridley and Springfield School Districts, Springfield Fire Department and Ambulance service and other local

officials commented on the difficulties in navigating through the study area when the intersection backs up. Robert Woolson of Springfield Fire Department said that congestion at the intersection impacts public safety for Springfield and other communities because it is treacherous for emergency response vehicles. When gridlock occurs, emergency personnel have to be stationed at the intersection to clear traffic for emergency vehicles. He added that ambulances are also impacted. The sight line issues also complicate emergency response through the intersection.

Lynn Glancy of Springfield School District explained that several school districts transport students through the area by bus. Since each district is responsible for transporting its own students, it is common to have as many as three different districts' buses moving along one street at the same time. Glancy said that congestion at the intersection could affect as many as 10 bus routes this year. Most noted that most of the buses are through the intersection by 7:30am and are done by 3:30pm, so they avoid the worst of the rush hour – but some buses do have to cross the intersection at busy times. Glancy concluded that the school bus drivers have much to contend with when the train gates are down. Dee Giardina said that Morton Schools have made special efforts for children to avoid the intersection because it is unsafe. It was mentioned that some children from the Catholic school do walk to school along Amosland Road.

INFRASTRUCTURE & PUBLIC SERVICES

Infrastructure is a broad term; it encompasses the basic installations and facilities on which the continuance and growth of a community depends. The road network and transportation infrastructure generates the greatest impact on this intersection and on the surrounding community. Community survey respondents commented most favorably about the easy access the R3 Regional Rail line provided to and from Center City Philadelphia. At the same time, drivers bemoaned the train, blaming it for the traffic delays along Route 420.

Since most of the study area is built out, the only new growth that affects it is occurring in other areas—primarily to the north, along the Route 420 corridor. Development along Baltimore Pike and access to I-476 (the Blue Route) make Route 420 a busy thoroughway; this has had a measurable impact on the residents of Morton Borough's quality of life. In this section, a close examination of the existing transportation network will show how important infrastructure improvements are, particularly at the intersection of Morton Avenue and Route 420.

Much of this section has been taken from PennDOT's Congested Corridor Improvement Program: PA 420 Corridor in Delaware County - completed by the consultants at Edwards and Kelcey.

ROAD NETWORK AT THE INTERSECTION

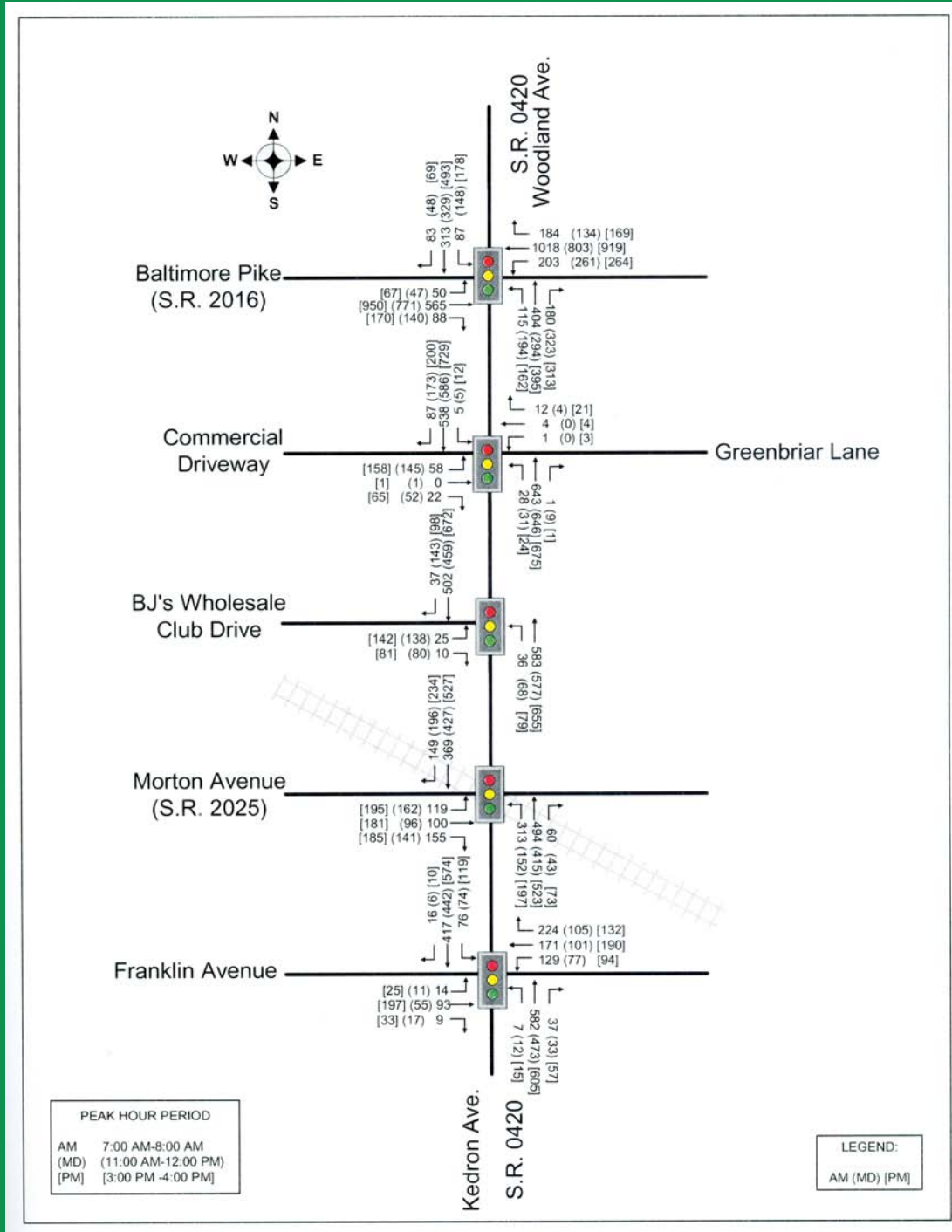
The intersection of Kedron Avenue and Morton Avenue is a five-leg intersection. The lane configuration of the northbound Kedron Avenue approach consists of an exclusive left turn lane and an exclusive through lane. The southbound Kedron Avenue approach consists of a shared left turn/through lane and an exclusive right turn lane. The eastbound Morton Avenue approach consists of a shared left turn/through lane and an exclusive right turn lane. Morton Avenue is one-way in the eastbound direction on the east side of Kedron Avenue. The Yale Avenue approach consists of a shared right turn/through/left turn lane. The Yale Avenue approach is stop sign controlled. **Map 3: Core Focus Area**, found on page 17, shows intersection configuration.

The existing traffic signal is on a 65-second background cycle length. The intersection operates under fixed-time control, with Train Pre-Emption Phasing and Equipment. This means that when a train is entering the intersection, the through lane is stopped, while the left-turn lane can continue to move through the intersection.

In addition to heavy traffic volumes along the Route 420 corridor, the intersection experiences delays from the heavy transit activity and multiple access points. The SEPTA R3 Regional Rail Line has an at-grade crossing along Morton Avenue that blocks northbound and southbound movements through the intersection for a period of 90 to 120 seconds at least four times an hour during the peak periods. The presence of multiple access points in the vicinity of the intersection highlight both service and safety concerns.

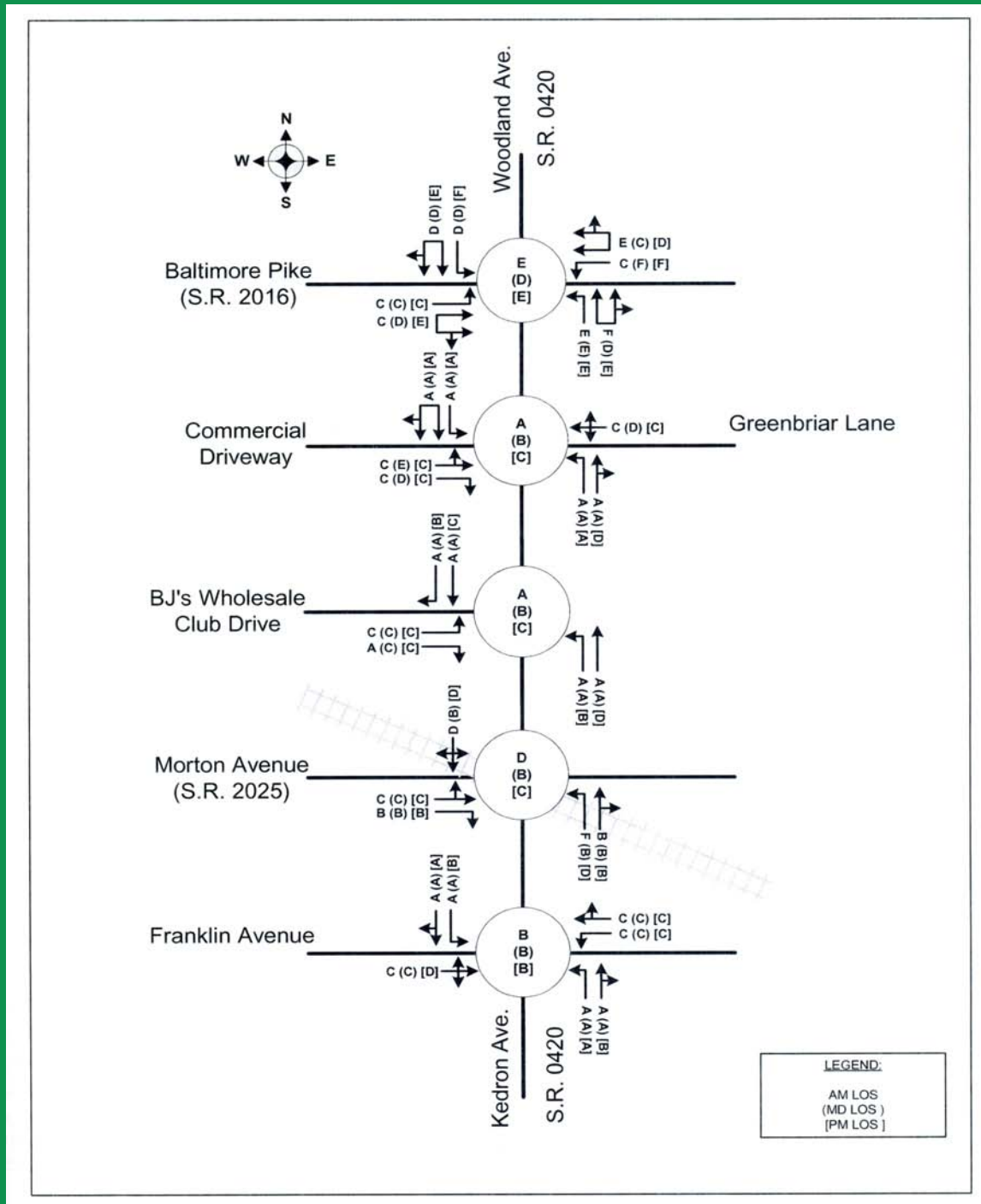
Furthermore, existing roadway geometry at this intersection is confusing due to the close proximity of Yale Avenue. In addition, the lack of access control and various movements throughout the intersection cause safety concerns for vehicles and pedestrians. The following two illustrations, produced by Edwards & Kelsey for the *Congested Corridor Improvement Program*, outline turning movements, signals, and level of service along the corridor.

FIGURE 1: COLLECTED PEAK HOUR TURNING MOVEMENT VOLUMES



Source: Congested Corridor Improvement Program, PA 420 Corridor in Delaware County, PENNDOT District 6-0. Prepared by Edwards and Kelcey Consultants, October 2004.

FIGURE 2: SIGNALIZED INTERSECTIONS LEVEL-OF SERVICE, 2004



Source: Congested Corridor Improvement Program, PA 420 Corridor in Delaware County, PENNDOT District 6-0. Prepared by Edwards and Kelcey Consultants, October 2004.

PARKING

Consideration should be given to expanded parking for commuters using the Morton-Rutledge Station and for the nearby business district along Morton Avenue. SEPTA maintains 80 spaces at the station, while a Morton Borough municipal lot off Morton Avenue has 36 spaces. Springfield Township has 150 spaces available in a municipal lot, but it is several blocks from the station. SEPTA is negotiating a short-term lease for an additional 50 spaces on the former Boeing property in Springfield Township. The underutilized private lot between Morton and Taylor Avenues is another potential location for expanded parking.

PEDESTRIAN & BICYCLE FACILITIES

While most of the other intersections in Delaware County along Route 420 have pedestrian signals and/or crosswalks, the intersection of Morton Avenue and Kedron Avenue does not. This is particularly egregious considering the following factors:

- Pedestrians must cross two lanes of traffic and two sets of train tracks to get between the “inbound” to the “outbound” platforms at Morton station (unless they cross the tracks at the opening in the inter-track fence);
- The intersection is Morton Borough’s commercial core;
- There are day care centers within 500 feet of the intersection and;
- The Kedron Avenue Methodist Church is generally not accessible without crossing the street.

These factors make the intersection incompatible with the Americans with Disabilities Act. In addition, it is extremely dangerous, and a serious liability for SEPTA should any accidents occur around the train station. At the second public meeting, one resident explained that she was struck by a car at the intersection, yet still nothing has been done to prevent future incidents.

One respondent claimed on the community survey that there were not enough sidewalks to adequately serve the commercial area. The respondent claimed that, “People who live in the apartments adjacent to the tracks walk down the (train) tracks instead of walking around the complex to the next block because they have no access on their side.”

There are no dedicated bicycle lanes along Route 420, but PennDOT and Delaware County Planning Department are working on “Bicyclist Baltimore Pike.” This project (currently “on hold” until 2006) will establish a route with signage from Nether

Providence to the City of Philadelphia. This path is slated to travel through the study area, but not through the study intersection.

TRANSIT SERVICES

The Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) provides the following transit services within the study area:

1. Bus

SEPTA's bus service is provided throughout the day along the Route 420 corridor. SEPTA bus Route 122 from 69th Street Terminal to Glenolden and Springfield Mall has several stops along the corridor, one of them being at the SEPTA Morton-Rutledge Station. This bus route operates with a 60-minute headway, from 6:30 AM to about 8:00 PM, with 30 minute headways eastbound from 6:00 to 8:30 AM and 30 minute headways westbound from 3:30 to 8:00 PM. Most, but not all, Route 122 trips serve the study area. During the morning peak period, the bus stops at the station at 7:12 AM and 9:12 in the westbound direction and 8:34 AM and 9:34 AM in the eastbound direction. During the afternoon peak hour, the bus stops at the station and 3:12 PM and 4:12 PM in the westbound direction, and at 3:34 PM and 4:34 PM in the eastbound direction.

2. Regional Rail

The SEPTA R3 (Media/Elwyn) Regional Rail Line operates from the Elwyn Station (Elwyn Road, near Middletown Road) to Central Philadelphia's Market East Station. Within the Route 420 corridor, the Morton-Rutledge Station is located just west of Route 420 at the intersection of Morton and Yale Avenues. The station has limited off-street parking and a ticket office.

During SEPTA's weekday AM peak hours from 5:45 AM to 9:00 AM, the eastbound R3 line stops at the Morton-Rutledge Station eleven times, which includes four stops in each of the hours from 7:00 AM to 9:00 AM. The westbound R3 line stops at the station four times during the weekday AM peak hours, which includes two stops from 7:00 AM to 8:00 AM.

During SEPTA's weekday PM peak hours from 4:30 PM to 7:00 PM, the westbound R3 line stops at the Morton-Rutledge Station eight times, which includes five stops from 5:00 PM to 6:00 PM. The eastbound R3 line stops at the station three times during the weekday PM peak hours, which includes two stops from 5:00 PM to 6:00 PM.

During all other weekday hours and weekend, the east and westbound R3 line stops at the Morton-Rutledge Station approximately once per hour.

3. Paratransit

SEPTA provides a complimentary Paratransit program for persons with disabilities. It is a door-to-door service that operates on a reservation system. The Paratransit program allows riders who are functionally unable to use regular public transportation. SEPTA provides access for these riders to travel to destinations of their choice within the five southeastern Pennsylvania counties.

4. Shared Ride

PennDOT administers the Shared Ride program for senior citizens in Delaware County. The Pennsylvania Lottery funds the program and Community Transit of Delaware County provides the service.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

ECOLOGICAL CONTEXT

Ecological resources exist within the study area are limited, since most of the land within the study area has been developed for some time. There is a dearth of open spaces and parks for residents in the immediate vicinity; however some recreational spaces can be found within close proximity to the study area. Stony Creek, located north and west of the intersection, is a significant tributary in the Darby Creek Watershed. Impact to the creek from road runoff has a significant impact on overall water quality when considered in the context of similar concerns throughout the watershed, as reflected in the “Darby Creek Watershed Management Plan.” Also, the open space/wooded areas between Church Road and Route 420, including Pennsdale Park and Greenbriar Park, are significant local habitat for birds and other local wildlife in an area which has little open space overall. Finally, mature trees, other vegetation, and structures in older residential areas within the study area also provide significant habitat for birds, bats, other small wildlife, and native plants.

COMMUNITY COMMENTS

A questionnaire was distributed to participants at the second public meeting of the CIA process (see Appendix C). Residents were asked to comment on their views of the community in and around the study area based on the **Human Environment**, **Physical Environment**, and **Natural Environment**. The following section details the community members' responses in each category, which were used to evaluate quality of life in the study area.

Human Environment: Citizen Comments

Overall, community members spoke very favorably of their home and their neighbors, stating that the history and identity of the area made it both charming and comfortable. Strong statements regarding community leadership are well worth noting. Residents responded with caustic comments about division among community leaders on certain issues. However, the majority of comments were positive.

Human Environment:

- ***Residents were ambivalent about the cohesion of their community. An equal number of respondents voted “agree,” “disagree,” and “neutral” when asked if there was good communication and cohesion among people and businesses in the area.***
- ***Numerous residents cited the impending demolition of part of the historic Morton Train Station as the most significant factor in increasing community cohesion and communication.***
- ***Many residents expressed concerns that there was too much infighting and division amongst council members and local officials.***
- ***Residents voted unanimously that their community was a good place to raise a family. Good schools, friendly neighbors and a “small town feel” were frequently cited as attributes that made their community special.***
- ***Access to transit and accessibility topped the list of reasons why the community was special. A few respondents mentioned, “Not needing a car to get to work or church” as well as “easy access to downtown Philly on the train.”***

Physical Environment: Traffic Congestion

Traffic congestion:

- ***Traffic signals are poorly timed – even traffic on Rt. 420 that doesn't need to cross the intersection gets congested.***
- ***Central Morton gets landlocked at rush hour because once a driver gets into the area, there are few exit options.***
- ***Local residents struggle to get out of their driveways during peak hours.***
- ***Drivers trying to avoid congestion often end up going in circles because of one-way streets and limited options.***
- ***Drivers trying to avoid congestion use the residential streets.***
- ***Drivers use businesses and even residential lots as jug handles to avoid congestion.***
- ***Rt. 420 can experience heavy traffic to its commercial plazas on weekends.***
- ***Ballparks on Church Road will increase traffic in warm weather.***
- ***The turn lane from Rt. 420 onto Morton Avenue is too short to allow flow of traffic when the rail gates are down.***
- ***Christmas shopping season traffic can be as bad as weekday rush hour traffic.***
- ***Signals and signage are not well coordinated; poor timing of lights on Rt. 420 and Morton Ave. contribute to congestion.***
- ***Coordination of traffic signals needs to include a large portion of the area, including Ridley Township.***

Physical Environment: Regional Rail & Parking

Regional Rail

- *Train signal arms lower on Rt. 420 and Church Road at the same time, backing up traffic on both roads and forcing drivers onto Yale Avenue. This creates congestion on Yale as well.*
- *People frequently go around the gates when the train is in the station, instead of waiting.*
- *Signal requirements for the railroad gates cause issues because the streets are so close together.*
- *Train gates go down sometimes even when there is no train.*
- *The SEPTA work lot is unsightly, and inappropriate considering its proximity to the residential areas.*
- *Pedestrian crossings at the rail line are unsafe.*

Parking

- *Businesses at intersection suffer because parking access is difficult.*
- *Commuters who don't want to pay for parking are parking on residential streets and in business lots, essentially "using the town as a parking lot."*
- *The parking area adjacent to the train station on the north side of the tracks is used for storage of commercial vehicles and trash, and should be considered for additional commuter parking.*
- *There are other sites in the area (lot adjacent to church road, used for auto dealer car storage, and lot between Morton and Taylor Avenues in the business district.*
- *Bike parking is needed at the train station as well as in front of downtown businesses.*

Physical Environment: Pedestrians & Safety

Pedestrians

- ***Pedestrian access is difficult for potential shoppers and people trying to get from their cars to the train station.***
- ***There is no pedestrian phase in the signal timing, making crossing on foot dangerous.***
- ***There are no crosswalks and not enough sidewalks.***
- ***People who live in the apartments adjacent to the tracks walk down the tracks instead of walking around the complex to the next block, because they have no access on one side.***

Safety

- ***Poor sight lines on Morton Avenue contribute to congestion and safety issues.***
- ***Congestion impacts public safety because the intersection is treacherous for emergency response vehicles.***
- ***People cut through the properties surrounding the intersection to avoid the congestion, and this creates unsafe conditions.***
- ***Several schools bus students through the intersection – they have a lot of difficulty when the train gates are down.***
- ***The Safe Routes to School program may be beneficial.***
- ***Street lighting and pedestrian lighting could be improved.***
- ***There is a lack of way finding and signage to direct people to their destinations.***
- ***The location of the post office causes safety problems.***

Physical Environment: Aesthetics & Cyclist Concerns

Design, Aesthetics, and Road Conditions

- *Width of the roadbed and location of many utilities constricts the intersection, and would make widening it difficult.*
- *Narrow streets, parking on both sides, and residential nature of streets means there would be little support for a connector road through a residential neighborhood.*
- *The intersection is jumbled with wires, poles, and abandoned SEPTA equipment, making the area unattractive.*
- *The road itself is not in good condition.*
- *The addition of a left-turn lane would reduce the space available for sidewalks.*
- *Benches, trash containers, and street trees need improvement.*

Cycling

- *“Share the Road” signs, space for bikes, and bicycle parking are all needed.*
- *A proposed bike path could further complicate the intersection.*
- *Questions were raised on whether the intersection can accommodate cyclists safely.*

Natural Environment: Citizen Concerns

Natural Environment:

- *Respondents were divided on whether there were adequate open spaces accessible to the public.*
- *Residents were ambivalent on whether more development would be a good thing in their neighborhoods.*
- *Most residents felt that their local officials cared about their environment.*
- *The changing nature of local industry results in a lot more people hitting the intersection on Morton Ave. at the same times of day, which were already busy times.*
- *There is not much growth management.*
- *Many problems in Morton are because of development happening in other jurisdictions.*
- *The new construction in the industrial complex on Yale Avenue is a mess, and not appropriate for its close proximity to residential areas.*
- *Because no planned path to improvement exists, the commercial and industrial uses have gotten in the way of having a safe and efficient corridor.*

What do community members recommend?





chapter four

RECOMMENDATIONS & CONCLUSIONS

As of mid-2005, there is no project for the Route 420 and Morton Avenue intersection on the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP), or on PennDOT's Twelve-Year Plan. Without funding, there is no further work that can be undertaken for the official CIA process. However, in order to leverage future funds and to show the ripeness of this intersection for a project in the future, this section will look at the following:

- **Community Suggestions** documents various community responses as to how the intersection could be revamped to operate more efficiently, and in a safer, more pedestrian friendly manner.
- **Priorities for Change** is a list of community-defined projects and improvements identified over the course of the study.
- **Funding Sources**, found in Appendix D, looks at potential regional, state and federal funding opportunities for implementing low to high capital improvements.

IMPROVEMENT SUGGESTIONS

Public meetings held in Morton Borough Hall gave residents a chance to voice their concerns about the study intersection. Residents' complaints varied, although they hovered around the topics of congestion, safety and aesthetics. Many participants provided insights about the study intersection not easily obtained through traditional quantitative methods; therefore this aspect of the CIA process was helpful and informative. The following is a collection of respondent recommendations organized by topic.

PEDESTRIAN ACCESS & SAFETY

- Numerous respondents felt the first priority should be the lower-cost solutions, most importantly crosswalks, signage and signal improvements.
- A participant noted that there is no pedestrian phase in the signal timing. Since there are no crosswalks or pedestrian signals, participants recommended that signal phasing be included as an engineering consideration for the eventual improvement.
- One participant was adamant that a pedestrian walk cycle should be a priority. She noted that 30 years ago a car struck her at that intersection. "This has been a problem for a long time," she continued. This woman felt that the pedestrian situation is the same today, except that drivers are even more aggressive.

- It was suggested that finding ways to reduce the number of buses that go through the intersection might be part of a solution. Currently, three different school districts' buses traverse the intersection, all adding to the congestion problems.
- A representative from the Kedron Methodist Church stated that they have been trying to get a permanent stop sign in front of the Church for quite some time. While the Borough supports the stop sign, they have to go through additional steps because it is a state road. There is currently a "temporary" stop sign in place. The Church has also tried to get a crosswalk, which PennDOT says is not its responsibility. Finally, the Church has tried to get the curb raised 5 inches to prevent people from driving on their sidewalk, but PennDOT has refused. Automobiles are encroaching on the sidewalk space. One harrowing account brought up in a meeting involved a delivery driver who was parked on the sidewalk in front of the church. When the pastor asked him to move, the delivery driver pulled out a gun!

INFRASTRUCTURE CONFIGURATION

- At the second public meeting, one community member said that the traffic signal at Route 420 and Morton Avenue (northbound) has a turn arrow that activates only when the train is there; there is no turn arrow in the light sequence on weekends or off-peak times. She felt that it would be helpful to have the arrow at all times, as it would alleviate congestion and save drivers from sitting through long lights needlessly during off-peak hours.
- It was asked if the train station could be moved back to the old PECO plant to clear the intersection. The Morton Borough Secretary said that moving the train station is not feasible. She added that the width of the roadbed and the location of many utilities constrict the intersection and would make widening it very difficult.
- A group member suggested closing off the end of Yale Avenue and making it one way to alleviate congestion, or creating a through-road in the municipal parking lot. She said it was worth exploring how Morton could circumvent the intersection through side properties.
- One respondent identified lower-cost engineering solutions such as adding a turn lane from southbound Route 420 onto Morton Avenue, extending the other left turn lane, and timing the traffic lights. He said that it did not make sense to him, from a long-term perspective, to pursue more extreme solutions such as grade

separation. He continued that the loss of the business district—a consequence of grade separation—prevents that option from being a solution.

- Councilwoman Dee Giardina stated, “Morton does not have the infrastructure to support large businesses.” Because of the way the streets are built, it is difficult for delivery drivers who have nowhere to park their trucks for unloading. Many times the drivers have to park on Mitchell Avenue and deliver by hand. This is the cause for the aforementioned confrontation at Kedron Methodist. In order for businesses to continue operation, there needs to be a place for delivery vehicles to park.
- A participant suggested that Morton Avenue be reopened to two-way traffic, now that improved signal timing technology is available. She added that this would alleviate a lot of the traffic burden in central Morton, including Amosland and Mitchell Roads. She felt that it would help tremendously to alleviate pressure on smaller residential streets as well. As a safety issue, emergency vehicles could improve response time. She noted that the present congestion and cut-through traffic is a serious headache for the smaller streets and neighborhoods.
- Many respondents thought that PennDOT would want to know “that Morton does not prefer a high-capital solution such as grade separation.”
- An active member of the community noted that the intersection has signage issues. “There is no sign telling drivers not to block the intersection, which makes it harder to enforce.” He referenced Philadelphia’s “Don’t Block the Box” signs. He said that drivers lined up on Morton Avenue do not notice that other drivers may be trying to turn.
- Another group member expressed concern over the impact of road widening and questioned whether there was an infringement on property rights.
- One participant mentioned that removing the old Mellace Shoes building would be a good way to clear up sightlines around the intersection, improve the view of the historic train station and improve the aesthetic quality of the downtown area. Clearance of this property would also provide additional right-of-way space for turning lanes on Morton Avenue and Rte. 420.

AESTHETIC CONSIDERATIONS

- A few group members expressed concern with the industrial site near the intersection, referring to it as a “blighted mess” and an “eyesore.” They said the property has been fenced off and filled with parked cars. It is rumored that an

automobile auction business is planned for the site, which would generate a great deal of additional traffic.

- In the community surveys and in the public meetings, members agreed that they would like to see improvements to the business district, such as a streetscape beautification program. One respondent felt that business owners would be supportive of streetscape improvements or beautification because adding appeal to the area should generate more business.
- Survey respondents noted that they would like to see more parks and recreation.
- One member offered his advice to the transportation agencies, “that they need to concentrate more on simple things such as signage, rather than big ticket items.”

PARKING

- Morton Borough Councilwoman Giardina asked if the final report could recommend that SEPTA provide more parking. Three or four people per week call the Borough to complain about commuters parking on residential streets. “As an older community, there is little room to expand – and once parking has been eliminated, it is nearly impossible to get it back.”
- It was suggested that Borough Council open up discussion with the property owners around the intersection to create a pay parking lot for commuters, particularly the blighted industrial site north of the station and additional potential lots cited previously in this report.
- It was noted that parking issues should be listed as a major concern in the report. Underutilized parking lots on the Springfield side could be opened to public parking, and “no one would begrudge the property owners from making money by instituting pay lots.”
- As an update, SEPTA is in the process of procuring approximately 50 additional ‘monthly permit’ commuter parking spaces across from the station.

MORTON TRAIN STATION

- Another Morton resident said the group should encourage SEPTA to keep the Morton Station as a “key” station because the commuters do bring dollars into the area and support some local businesses, such as the dry cleaners. She said that it is important to encourage SEPTA, but not to hound them. However, in fact, the term “key station” refers to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the fact that the station is wheelchair accessible (i.e., barrier free).

- The Morton Station Preservation Committee (MSPC) would like to see the train station promoted as the historic centerpiece of the borough. This would be accomplished through landscaping, “opening up” the views, and rehabbing the structure itself.

PRIORITIES FOR CHANGE

Participants identified numerous projects that they felt would improve conditions in and around the study intersection and ultimately improve their quality of life. The following list prioritizes their suggestions by the number of times something was mentioned, the cost of completing a particular project, and the urgency attached to the suggestion.

Many of the priority actions listed in **Table 8** above could be combined into a comprehensive streetscape or infrastructure program in order to more effectively compete for funding. Indeed, many of the individual actions listed in the table would not be eligible for programs such as HTS, SRS, TE, STP, NHS, and CMAQ, since PennDOT prefers projects to cost at least \$100,000 for administrative reasons. Capital programming at DVRPC involves the management and funding of transportation infrastructure improvement projects, and includes many of the programs listed above.

The *Transportation Improvement Program*, or TIP, is the regionally agreed-upon list of priority projects for near-term capital funding. TIP projects can include highway and public transit projects, as well as bicycle and pedestrian projects. The *Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program*, known as CMAQ, is targeted toward managing congestion through innovative programming. For less traditional projects, the *Transportation Enhancements Program* (TE) funds projects that enhance the transportation experience, mitigate the impacts of transportation facilities on their environments, and augment community character through transportation-related improvements.

Home Town Streets (HTS) and *Safe Routes to School* (SRS) are two programs intended to improve quality of life. HTS projects include streetscape improvements that are vital to reestablishing downtown commercial centers. HTS projects include elements intended to collectively enhance the physical environment and foster positive interaction, including but not limited to sidewalk improvements, benches, street lighting, and pedestrian crossings.

SRS, on the other hand, works with school districts as well as pedestrian and bicycle safety advocates promoting safe walking and biking passages to our schools. SRS improvements often include sidewalks, crosswalks, curb extensions, and traffic diversion improvements.

Table 8: Action Priorities

Action	Parties Involved	Cost	Potential Funding Available
Paint Crosswalks on Kedron, Morton and Yale Avenues	Morton Borough, PennDOT	Low	Hometown Streets & Safe Routes to School, TE, Morton, Springfield
Add pedestrian signalization to intersection light sequence	PennDOT, SEPTA	Low	Hometown Streets & Safe Routes to School, TE PennDOT Safety funds, Morton, Springfield
Remove trash & landscape around train station; integrate with Morton streetscape	Morton & Springfield, SEPTA, MSPC	Low	Hometown Streets & Safe Routes to School, Transit, TE
Add permanent Stop Sign at the Yale Ave / Morton Ave intersection	Morton Borough, PennDOT	Low	PennDOT Safety funds, Morton general fund
Open additional surface parking lots near the Morton Station and business district for use by commuters and business patrons	SEPTA, Morton, Springfield, Property owner	Low	Property owner, SEPTA, Springfield, Morton
Raise the curb in front of the Kedron Methodist Church five inches	PennDOT, Morton, Property owner	Low	PennDOT Safety funds, Morton general fund, Property owner
Add signage to help control the intersection & to warn drivers of cyclists and pedestrians	Morton, Springfield, PennDOT	Low	Hometown Streets & Safe Routes to School, TE funds, CMAQ, Morton, Springfield, PennDOT, NHS funds
Improve facades and streetscape in the Morton Downtown Area	Morton Borough	Medium	Main Street Program, Elm Street Program, Hometown Streets, TE
Restore and re-integrate Morton Train Station with downtown Morton to create town center area	MSPC, SEPTA, Morton & Springfield	Medium	TE, Hometown Streets, Morton
Coordinate signals on Route 420	Springfield, Morton, PennDOT, Ridley, SEPTA	Medium	CMAQ, STP and NHS funds
Reconfigure intersection to allow for better traffic flow and easier navigation.	Morton, Springfield, PennDOT, SEPTA	High	STP and NHS funds, CMAQ, PennDOT Safety funds
Bury utility lines and disguise unsightly infrastructure.	Utility providers	High	Could be combined with a streetscape program
Promptly address existing/future malfunctions of the railroad crossing signals.	SEPTA	Low	SEPTA maintenance funding, TE

Source: Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, 2005.

The *Transportation and Community Development Initiative* (TCDI), a program of DVRPC's Regional Planning Division, is another potential funding source for the region's core cities and first-generation suburbs. TCDI funding is used to support local planning projects that lead to retention or development of businesses and residents, or to reduced congestion and improved transportation system performance. TCDI funding is useful in assisting communities with planning that precedes physical improvements.

DVRPC also provides municipalities with project implementation assistance for certain federally funded transportation projects. PennDOT assisted projects can include restoration of historic transportation buildings, improvements to pedestrian facilities, and streetscape projects. These are generally projects that have been funded through TE or CMAQ.

Interested municipal officials should contact PennDOT District 6-0 or DVRPC for more information about funding improvements. In addition, **Appendix D** lists many other potential sources of funding beyond DVRPC's capital funding programming.

EVALUATION AND CONCLUSIONS

EVALUATION OF THE CIA PROCESS

The Community Impact Assessment pilot project showed a great deal of promise as a tool to help define a community's "quality of life." Members of the Study Advisory Committee and the public at-large found that the process gave them the unique opportunity to come together to discuss a shared transportation problem, and to brainstorm qualitative assessments on how these problems impact their quality of life. The community's positive response to the pilot project and enthusiasm for the process is evidence that the Community Impact Assessment was a success.



Pick potential project areas where the CIA process has the best chance to influence project design: While the initial intent of the pilot program was to select a

project already programmed for engineering, local officials viewed the pending CIA process as causing delays rather than facilitating implementation. The more flexible options available for the Morton Avenue/Route 420 intersection enabled the CIA process to better demonstrate its potential benefits to identify and shape the scope of a project. In carrying out this PennDOT pilot project, DVRPC staff gained considerable experience as to what it means to engage the public about their quality of life. For those that will undertake this process in the future, DVRPC would offer the following considerations to PennDOT and other planning groups.

Conduct deep background research into the study area: This is an essential starting point for anyone trying to initiate the CIA process. In order to address a community and understand their concerns, the planner or group undertaking the process must have as deep a familiarity as possible with the immediate location and its surroundings. Understanding these nuances helps to broaden the spectrum to include all the relevant stakeholders that may have been overlooked. DVRPC benefited greatly by following the Congested Corridor Improvement study, which was wrapping up at the same time the CIA project began.

Clearly explain what the Community Impact Assessment is, and what the community can expect to get out of it: The CIA process attempts to mine public opinion on quality of life issues, weigh costs and benefits of a project and ultimately streamline project delivery. In those simple terms, CIA seems somewhat optimistic and unrealistic. From a developer's and even from a municipality's standpoint it looks like you are adding more layers of review and regulation which always leads to delays and added costs.

For this pilot study, there was no project pending; therefore this group had the luxury of virtually unlimited time. While this situation made for a good "laboratory" to test CIA in this region, it was somewhat confusing. Local officials and residents alike wanted to know what exactly "Community Impact Assessment" was, and they wanted to know what they would, and would not, get out of it.

In this case, DVRPC staff had to explain that the final product of this study would not be a *plan* per se, but rather a document that details what citizens are concerned about and their suggestions for change. This study shows how the four participating municipalities and the public worked together to show how a transportation feature (the intersection) impacts their quality of life. Articulating this fact regularly was a good way to maintain transparency, meaning DVRPC was not promising anything like a guaranteed project upon completion of the process. Time and time again, the message "this report will show PennDOT evidence of a multi-municipal planning process in which you (residents) came together to address a common problem" was reiterated. The importance of being earnest was especially prescient when dealing with such a potentially contentious topic.

Be flexible during public meetings: Gathering the qualitative data for the Community Impact Assessment requires close listening by the facilitating group. During public meetings it is incredibly important to allow for some tangential discussion because it can

lead to important topics that may not have otherwise come up. For example, many of the suggestions made at the public meetings came out of informal discussion, rather than survey results or outright asking for ideas. Since “quality of life” is a multi-faceted abstraction, there is no hard and fast checklist for determining how to measure it. Therefore, it is important to build flexibility into the public meeting phase so that certain, previously unseen issues can reveal themselves.

Include participant feedback into the report findings: Holding public meetings and gathering participant feedback is only one aspect of the CIA process. In order for the process to be considered effective, quantitative data must be balanced by the qualitative information provided by the public.

Expect the unexpected to shape events and the study’s outcome: Aside from the initial shift in the study intersection location, the other surprises were the concurrent study by PennDOT of Route 420 (the Congested Corridor Improvement Study) and SEPTA’s proposal to tear down the outbound passenger shelter. The former provided the study team with additional information about proposed improvements to the intersection, while the latter energized local residents and encouraged their participation in the CIA public meetings.

CONCLUSIONS

Through steps 1 and 2 of the CIA process, involving DVRPC, PennDOT, Delaware County, local municipalities, and the public, the following was accomplished:

- Local conditions in the defined study area around the intersection of Morton Avenue and PA Route 420 were assessed
- Transportation and other needed improvements were identified
- Priorities for change (as reflected in Table 8, Action Priorities) were established

If the proactive and cooperative recommendations developed through this study are to be implemented, local officials need to continue to work together (possibly designating a task force or working group); maintain a dialogue with PennDOT District 6-0, SEPTA and county and stated elected officials; and seize opportunities to attract grants and other funding to accomplish needed change. As noted on page 4 of this report, there are four additional steps in the CIA process that were not part of this study. These steps are intended to be applied in shaping the final form of proposed highway or transit improvements to serve the study area. Local officials should work with Delaware County Planning Department staff to develop one or more capital projects to implement key study recommendations. As the CIA process becomes more institutionalized in PennDOT’s development of transportation improvements, there should be additional opportunities for public involvement and refinement of the scope and final design of any subsequent capital projects. The information contained in this report can give the study area communities a head start in the completion of the overall CIA process in the future.

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Ken Rummel

Kedron United Methodist Church

**MANY THANKS TO THE NUMEROUS CITIZENS WHO CONTRIBUTED
TIME AND EFFORT TO THE CIA PROCESS, INCLUDING:**

Keith Baker
Ellen Dearborn

Eric Zishkau
Linda Haentze

Appendix A: Community Context Audit



Community Context Audit

For Transportation Projects

Purpose: The Community Context Audit form is intended to be a guide to identify various community characteristics that make each transportation project location unique to its residents, its businesses and the public in general. This information will help to define the purpose and need of the proposed transportation improvements based upon community goals and local plans for future development. The audit is designed to take into account the community's history or heritage, present conditions and anticipated conditions. As you complete this audit, please consider the interaction of persons and groups within your community when considering factors such as mobility and access (*vehicular, non-vehicular and transit modes*), safety, local and regional economics, aesthetics and overall quality of life.

Municipality: Morton Borough, Delaware County

Project Location & Limits: Intersection of Morton Avenue and PA Route 420, and surrounding area

Attach a project location map to this form.

State Route #: 420

Road Name: Kedron Avenue

Township Route #: _____

Road Name: Morton Avenue

For MPO/LDD Use Only

MPMS#: _____

Project Estimate/Budget/Funding Sources: n/a

Project Type:

☐ Resurfacing

☐ New Roadway

☐ Intersection Improvements

☐ Widening

☐ Bridge Rehabilitation

☐ Enhancement Project

☐ Betterment Project

☐ Bridge Replacement

☒ Other _____

Project Description: Community Impact Assessment of the intersection and surrounding areas

Reason for Project: Study of potential corridor and community impacts from intersection improvements for PennDOT Community Impact Assessment Pilot Program

Contact Person: Kevin Denton, Regional Planner, DVRPC

Telephone #: 215-238-2898

Individual Completing Context Audit Form: Amanda DeCort, Regional

Date: July 2005

Planner, DVRPC

Section 1: Community Characteristics/Land Use

Please conduct a visual assessment in the field and attach a project location map. If appropriate, include a photo index for the project area. If appropriate gather public opinions and concerns about the proposed project. Consider community needs as the basis for this assessment. Assess the community characteristics and indicate the community's perception of importance for each characteristic.

	Yes	No	Importance High/Medium/Low
Is this place an established center?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	H__ M <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> L__
Is this place a multi-modal transportation center?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	H <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M__ L__
Is this place is a commercial center?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	H__ M <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> L__
Is this place is a residential center?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	H__ M <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> L__
Is this place is a mixed residential /commercial center?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	H__ M <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> L__

Community Context Audit

For Transportation Projects

Section 1: Community Characteristics/Land Use (continued)

	Yes	No	Importance High/Medium/Low
Is this place an industrial center?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	H__ M__ L <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Is this place a rural/agricultural area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	H__ M__ L <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Comments: Historic Downtown Morton is located within the study area, as is the SEPTA R3 Rail Station. Encompasses a commuter corridor as well as a neighborhood commercial area and surrounding homes.

Are there important cultural features or identifiers within the project area? ☒ ☐ H☒ M__ L__
 If yes, list: The Kedron Avenue United Methodist Church, as well as the Train Station complex, are both historic and cultural features.

Are there social/community features or identifiers within the project area? ☒ ☐ H☒ M__ L__
 If yes, list: The study area is home to numerous restaurants, banks, convenience stores and other uses that serve the residents of Morton and surrounding communities. The church and train station also contribute to the identity of the community.

Are there important architectural features within the project area? ☒ ☐ H☒ M__ L__
 If yes, list: In addition to the historic church and train station, there are a number of turn-of-the-20th century buildings surrounding the intersection. While they are vernacular in character, these buildings are an essential piece of Morton's history.

Are there important natural features within the project area? ☐ ☐ H__ M__ L☒
 If yes, list: _____

Is this place of historical significance to the community? ☒ ☐ H☒ M__ L__
 If yes, list: The train station, church, and historic buildings surrounding the intersection are all of some significance.

Overall assessment of community characteristics and setting: ☒ Urban ☐ Suburban ☐ Rural
 (Please note, this is not the identification of a functional classification. This is an assessment of the community based upon physical characteristics noted above.)

The area is densely developed along PA Route 420. Commercial uses along the highway are surrounded by residential neighborhoods. The study area could be described as "early suburban" because while the fabric of development is tightly sited, the reliance on automobiles reflects a suburban nature. This is mitigated somewhat by the Regional Rail service and station in the study area.

Community Context Audit

For Transportation Projects

Section 2: Infrastructure Assessment

Assess the project or study area for the presence and adequacy of the following infrastructure items. If present (*a yes response*) and in poor condition, please make notation and provide any other relevant comments in space provided for each item. If not present (*a no response*), indicate in the comment section if the item needs further evaluation. Indicate the level of importance each item may have to the community.

	Yes	No	Importance
			High/Medium/Low
Sidewalks	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	H <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M__ L__
Comments: <u>Sidewalks are present in some areas, but not all. High priority to upgrade sidewalks.</u>			
ADA Compliance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	H <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M__ L__
Comments: <u>Lacking crosswalks and signalization.</u>			
Bicycle Lanes/Paths/Facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	H <input type="checkbox"/> M__ L__
Comments: <u>Cyclists do use the intersection and have expressed interest in dedicated lanes.</u>			
On-street Parking	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	H <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M__ L__
Comments: <u>Residential areas have parking issues from influx of train station commuters.</u>			
Transit Connections	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	H <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M__ L__
Comments: <u>The Morton Train Station Complex is a major component of the intersection.</u>			
Transit Shelters	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	H <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M__ L__
Comments: <u>Historical building in Train Station Complex is in immediate danger of demolition.</u>			
Street Lighting	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	H__ M <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> L__
Comments: <u>Aesthetic issues with street lights and utility poles.</u>			
Pedestrian Lighting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	H <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M__ L__
Comments: <u>No pedestrian-scale lighting.</u>			
Pedestrian Crossings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	H <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M__ L__
Comments: <u>Unsafe and difficult to navigate on foot.</u>			
Signals (Traffic & Pedestrian)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	H <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M__ L__
Comments: <u>No pedestrian signals.</u>			
Crosswalks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	H <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M__ L__
Comments: <u>Lack of crosswalks increases danger to pedestrians. High priority/immediate concern.</u>			
Signage (traffic & directional)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	H <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M__ L__
Comments: <u>Signage should be coordinated with train gates.</u>			
Overall Comments: <u>Antiquated intersection with high foot and automobile traffic represents a serious hazard to pedestrians and cyclists, and an inconvenience to drivers.</u>			

Community Context Audit

For Transportation Projects

Section 3: Neighborhood Culture, Aesthetics and Street Amenities

Assess the study area for the following amenities and cultural, aesthetic and comfort factors. If present (*a yes response*) and items are in poor condition, please make notation and provide any other relevant comments in the space provided for each item. If not present (*a no response*), indicate in the comment section if the item requires further evaluation. Indicate the level of importance each item may have to the neighborhood.

	Yes	No	Importance High/Medium/Low
Public Space	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	H__ M <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> L__
Neighborhood Parks /Open Space /Civic Areas			
Comments: <u>Community stakeholders feel that more parks and open space are needed.</u>			
Benches	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	H__ M <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> L__
Comments: <u>Benches only near the train station.</u>			
Trash Containers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	H__ M <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> L__
Comments: <u>Few and far between.</u>			
Street Trees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	H <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M__ L__
Comments: <u>Intersection is in need of streetscape improvements.</u>			
Landscaping	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	H <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M__ L__
Comments: <u>Intersection is in need of streetscape improvements.</u>			
Wayfinding Signage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	H__ M <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> L__
Comments: <u>Inadequate.</u>			
Community Safety Issues	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	H <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M__ L__
Comments: <u>Serious pedestrian and transit user issues.</u>			
Traffic Safety	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	H <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M__ L__
Comments: <u>Safety issues stemming from congestion and train gates.</u>			

Please list any seasonal events affected by proposed improvements at this location. Little League games in the summer increase congestion. Shopping during the holidays and on weekends also increases congestion at off-peak hours.

Overall Comments: The intersection's numerous historical and neighborhood assets are underutilized due to the congestion and pedestrian safety issues. The aesthetic quality of the surrounding structures and streetscape suffers due to unsightly rail crossings and signage, utilities, deferred maintenance of building facades, and lack of pedestrian amenities and greenspace.

Community Context Audit

For Transportation Projects

Section 4: Economic Development

Assess the project or study area for the following community development indicators. Indicate the level of importance for each indicator.

	Yes	No	Importance High/Medium/Low
Has this area been identified for new development?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	H__ M__ L__
If yes, describe the proposed or planned development. _____			
Are visitors attracted to this area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	H__ M__ L__
If yes, indicate why? <u>The area primarily serves local residents and some train station users.</u>			
<u>Stakeholders feel improvements to the intersection could make it more appealing to visitors.</u>			
Is the local economy supported by historic, natural, cultural and entertainment resources?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	H__ M__ L__
Does the roadway serve as a commuter corridor or gateway?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	H <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M__ L__
Do stakeholders include business or other advocacy groups? (in addition to public agencies and residential associations)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	H <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M__ L__
Is limiting sprawl a regional concern applicable to this place?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	H__ M <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> L__
Is redevelopment underway or planned for this place?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	H__ M__ L__
If yes, how does the proposed transportation project impact redevelopment? _____			
Other comments regarding economic/community development: _____			

Section 5: Community Planning

Assess the proposed project in context to local planning initiatives. Please provide the following information and documentation related to the project or study area.

	Yes	No
Does the municipality have a comprehensive plan?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If yes, indicate the date of the plan. <u>2002</u>		
Is this project generally consistent with the municipality's comprehensive plan?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If yes, indicate how. <u>The comprehensive plan recommends intersection improvements, including those for pedestrians</u>		
Are there any special studies associated with this project?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If yes, please indicate the name of study or studies and attach copies. <u>PennDOT's Congested Corridor Improvement Program (CCIP) for the PA 420 Corridor in Delaware County, October 2004</u>		

Community Context Audit

For Transportation Projects

Section 5: Community Planning (continued)

	Yes	No
Has the municipality adopted a growth management plan or designated growth area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If yes, is this project located within the designated growth area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does this project have regional significance?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If so, explain. <u>The intersection is a major factor in Route 420 congestion due to heavy transit activity, confusing intersection geometry with multiple access points, and high traffic volumes.</u>		
Identify planning and project development partners for this project. <u>SEPTA, PennDOT, DVRPC, Delaware County Planning Department</u>		
Are there other scheduled or planned projects that may tie into this project or impact this project?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If yes, please indicate the project name(s) and type of project(s). <u>CCIP (see above)</u>		
<u></u>		
<u></u>		

Other Comments: The intersection of Morton Avenue and PA Route 420 serves many functions in the communities and is the most congested of the PA Route 420 corridor in Delaware County. Improvements are needed not only to ease congestion, but also to increase safety for pedestrians and cyclists. The intersection impacts numerous communities, businesses, school busses, local residents, and commuters.



Appendix B: Community Meeting Minutes



Community Impact Assessment Rt. 420 & Morton Avenue Intersection

Community Stakeholder Meeting 1
Meeting Minutes 12.02.04

Attendance:

There were 31 people in attendance, representing Ridley, Rutledge, Morton, Springfield, Delaware County, DVRPC, SEPTA, school districts, and bicycle groups.

Handouts:

- Agenda
- Community Context Audit Overview
- PowerPoint Presentation
- Community Stakeholder Survey Form
- Study Area Map

The following topics were discussed at the first Community Stakeholder meeting:

Introductions and Overview:

Rich Bickel began the meeting by welcoming the group and providing background information about DVRPC. He gave an overview of the CIA project and the selection of the intersection of Rt. 420 and Morton Avenue for the pilot project. Bickel told the group that their participation was important because the true study area and impact would emerge from their input. He turned the floor over to Kevin Denton.

Denton explained that the CIA process is about community's wishes and that DVRPC is serving as the facilitator to help the stakeholders get what they want. He implored the group to speak their minds. Denton led the group through the PowerPoint presentation, including the main objectives and steps of the CIA process, as well as how the study area is being defined.

Review of the Draft Final Study Area Map:

Denton displayed the map of the draft study area and asked participants for feedback. Participants had a copy of the map in their handouts for reference, and also a large version on the wall. None of the participants suggested alterations to the study area boundaries. Dominick Zuppo of the Delaware Valley Bicycle Club questioned a road on the map that appears to parallel the rail line. It was decided that the shadow road is probably a map error that can be corrected.

Feedback on Study Area Conditions

Dolores Giardina of Morton Borough started the discussion by saying that the congestion at the intersection locks up the entire center of Morton and prevents traffic from getting across town. Another participant pointed out that when the train gates go down, they block traffic all along the rail lines, affecting more than just the main intersection. It was noted that people frequently go around the gates instead of waiting.

It was asked if the train station could be moved back to the old PECO plant to clear the intersection up. Giardina said that moving the train station is probably not feasible but that something needs to be done. She noted that the width of the roadbed and the location of many utilities constrict the intersection and would make widening it very difficult.

Tony Bohara of SEPTA said that the signal requirements for the railroad gates cause issues in the area because the streets are so close together. Zuppo said that sometimes the gates go down even when there is no train.

Kevin Denton then brought up the Congested Corridor Improvements program and explained that the final report from Edwards and Kelsey still has yet to be released to the public. He noted that the intersection is included in their study, which recommends a number of potential improvements ranging from high capital to low capital. One of the recommendations is closed-loop signalization, which means that the signals along Rt. 420 would be coordinated.

Zuppo then asked if DVRPC has data comparing the traffic volume through the intersection to the physical characteristics of the road. Bickel said that the level of service at the intersection during peak hours is very poor, probably a D or an F. He added that there would probably be data in the upcoming Edwards and Kelsey report.

A participant asked how the project would delineate state roads versus local roads, and if work projects could cross those boundaries given that this is a PennDOT project. He asked if alternatives could be considered that alleviate congestion on the state roads by using local roads. Giardina said that while that is a good idea, conceptually, the way the local roads are arranged in Morton prevent that from being a viable solution. She pointed out that Morton has thought about that for a long time, and has not been able to come up with a workable solution involving local roads.

Someone else asked if Amosland Road, for example, could be expanded to handle more capacity. Another person mentioned that the local roads are almost entirely residential, with narrow streets and parking on both sides. Denton added that in addition to the narrow streets and parking, there would be little support for a major connector road through a residential neighborhood. Giardina also said that once the ballparks on Church Road start being used for Little League games in warm weather, increased traffic would prevent crossing through the residential streets anyway.

Denton steered the discussion towards the issues of congestion and safety by returning to the PowerPoint for a moment and listing potential problems such as cutting through residential neighborhoods, lack of pedestrian access, and parking.

Zuppo said that the intersection was originally going to be part of a signed bike route, but it may not happen. It was questioned whether or not there is room for cyclists in the intersection. A participant suggested that cyclist issues be added to the “Issues” slide in the PowerPoint presentation.

A participant noted that there is no pedestrian phase in the signal timing, which is something that needs engineering consideration. Pedestrians have to walk in the railroad track area and often cut across it. Denton pointed out that the intersection also lacks crosswalks and pedestrian throughways, another issue that needs to be addressed. Another person said that people who live in the apartments adjacent to the railroad tracks actually walk down the tracks instead of walking around the complex to the next block, because they have no access on one side.

The subject of school bussing was addressed next. It was suggested that finding ways to reduce the number of busses that go through the intersection might be part of a solution. The Safe Routes to School program, which advocates pedestrian safety for school kids, was mentioned as something the group should look into. Denton urged the municipalities in attendance to pursue the program in its next funding round.

Giardina brought up the topic of aesthetics and said that the intersection is jumbled with wires, poles, and abandoned Septa equipment. The physical road itself is not in good condition. Denton suggested that aesthetics be added to the “Issues” slide in the PowerPoint presentation.

A participant who owns property on Rt. 420 said that people try to cut through her property all the time, using it as a jug handle for the right turn. She said this happens regardless of time of day and it creates unsafe conditions. Another person mentioned that the municipal parking lot has the same problem, as does Walnut Street near the BJ’s wholesale store.

Another participant questioned what he believes is a “paper road” behind the Silver Lake Terrace apartments that goes to the shopping area. He thinks it was planned but never materialized, and suggested that the group look into it because it would provide more access.

Denton brought the group’s attention to the PowerPoint section dealing with baseline conditions. He explained that DVRPC would do the quantitative analysis, gathering up data and numbers; however, DVRPC needs the group to provide the qualitative information such as they have been doing at this meeting so far. Denton presented PennDOT’s Community Context Audit form and DVRPC’s summary of it.

Review of the Community Context Audit

Denton explained that the Community Context Audit is intended to identify a location's unique community characteristics in order to gauge how a transportation project will affect the residents, businesses and the general public. Denton said that the audit should help to prevent shortsighted solutions. He led the group through the handout listing questions that would be included in the Audit.

Discussion of community character and land use ensued. Denton suggested the church on Yale Avenue as a social/cultural identifier. Giardina agreed and added that the area around the intersection is Morton's historic district, and is the hub of the town. The church is the oldest building in town, dating possibly back to the 1860s; the train station was built in 1879; and many of the stores date roughly to the turn of the century. Therefore the intersection is historically and culturally significant.

Denton shifted the discussion to infrastructure assessment. Sidewalks, and lack of sidewalks, were mentioned as an issue. Zuppo speculated that the addition of a left-turn lane would reduce the sidewalk space even further, given the narrow roadbed.

On-street parking was noted as another issue. Participants noted that the gist of the problem is not the local residents, but commuters from other areas who park in residential areas when there is not parking available at the train station. Others don't want to pay for parking. A member of the group said that the commuters are using the town as a parking lot.

Participants felt that street lighting and pedestrian lights could be improved. Issues included the crosswalk and light issue, lack of way finding and signage, not enough street lighting, and the aesthetics of the intersection. The signals and signage are not well coordinated, nor are the timing of the lights on Route 420 and Morton Avenue. Other possible issues include benches, trash containers, and street trees.

Denton asked if there were any seasonal events in the community that affect the intersection. The little league games were mentioned. Another participant brought up the Christmas shopping season, and said that the traffic can be just as bad on the weekend as during weekday rush hours.

As for economic development and community planning, the municipalities involved do have comprehensive plans, and there are other studies going on in the area. However, there is not much growth management. A comment was made that many of the problems happening in Morton are because of economic development in other municipalities, and that outside growth affects the intersection. While there are no major redevelopment projects planned at the time, Morton has applied to join county's Renaissance Program.

Meeting Conclusion

Rich Bickel announced that because the first community stakeholder meeting had been so successful, DVRPC would add a third meeting to the process. The second meeting would be scheduled for February and the third for May. This would give DVRPC time to incorporate comments made at the first meeting into the work to be done on establishing the baseline conditions.

The group had several more questions for DVRPC staff before the meeting was adjourned. Giardina asked if copies of the actual Community Context Audit could be made for the next meeting, so that everyone could see them and fill out the actual form if they wanted. Another person asked if engineers could be present at the next meeting, to answer questions. A third person commented that the water company has valve stations near the railroad and they should probably also be included in the discussion.

Denton presented the feedback form to the group and asked for their input. Several people decided to fill the form out and return it later. The next meeting was tentatively set for February 10th at 7 p.m. in the same location, the Morton Borough Administration building. It was agreed that Morton would continue to host the public meetings and perhaps the smaller committee meetings could be held elsewhere. The meeting was adjourned.

Community Impact Assessment
Rt. 420 & Morton Avenue Intersection

Community Stakeholder Meeting 2
Meeting Minutes 2.10.05

Attendance:

There were 21 people in attendance, including local residents and representatives from Ridley, Morton, Springfield School District, Delaware County Planning Department, DVRPC, the Kedron United Methodist Church, and the Morton Station Preservation Committee.

Dolores Giardina – Morton Borough
Charles Lilicrap – Morton Borough
Jack Piasani – Morton Borough
Pat Schultz – Springfield School District
Carolyn V. Wright – Springfield School District
Joseph DiCostanzo – 9th Ward, Ridley
Eugene Briggs, Jr. – DCPD
Pat Cimino – Morton resident
Mario Cimino – Morton Station Preservation Committee
Ken Rummel – Kedron United Methodist Church
Keith Baker – Rutledge resident
Justin Dula – DCPD
Ellen Dearborn – Morton resident
John Madera – DVRPC
Eric Zishkau – Morton resident
Rich Bickel – DVRPC
Kevin Denton – DVRPC
Amanda DeCort - DVRPC

Handouts:

Agenda
PowerPoint Presentation
Community Stakeholder Comments
Study Area Map
Land Use Map
Edwards & Kelcey Conceptual Improvement Drawing
Baseline Conditions Survey

The following topics were discussed at the second Community Stakeholder meeting:

Introductions and Overview:

Rich Bickel began the meeting by welcoming the group and providing brief background information about DVRPC and the CIA project. Bickel told the group that their participation at the first Community Stakeholder meeting had been so successful that DVRPC had added an extra meeting to continue the discussion. He explained that this was the second of two public meetings, to be followed by another Study Advisory Committee meeting before release of the final report in May. He turned the floor over to Kevin Denton.

Denton explained that the CIA process is about community's wishes, because the communities are being impacted by the intersection every day; DVRPC is serving as a facilitator between the stakeholders and PennDOT. He implored the group to speak their minds. Denton led the group through the PowerPoint presentation, including the main objectives and steps of the CIA process, as well as how the study area is being defined. The PowerPoint presentation is included in the handout.

Review of the Final Study Area Map and Land Use Map:

Denton displayed the map of the final study area. Participants had a copy of the map in their handouts for reference, and also a large version on the wall. Denton explained that the boundaries of the study area were devised through discussions with the Study Advisory Committee and the first Community Stakeholder meeting. Denton also noted the large presentation map showing an aerial view of the intersection.

Baseline Conditions Analysis

Denton explained to the group that the Baseline Conditions Analysis of the study area is the second step in the CIA process, and the core focus of the meeting. He advised that while DVRPC could put together the quantitative analysis in-house, the study depends on the SAC and Community Stakeholders to provide information for the quality-of-life analysis. The quantitative and qualitative analyses would be combined to create a big picture for PennDOT decision-makers in Harrisburg.

Denton referred the group to the community stakeholder comments sheet included in the handout. He asked the group to review the comments so that the list could be further fleshed out and used in later quality of life analysis and suggestions. DVRPC compiled all of the comments and suggestions made thus far at the SAC and Community Stakeholder meetings, and grouped them into the following categories:

- Traffic congestion
- Regional rail
- Parking
- Cycling
- Pedestrians
- Safety
- Development
- Design & aesthetics
- road conditions

Denton then went on to explain PennDOT's differentiation between the human environment, physical environment, and natural environment for the purpose of establishing baseline conditions in the CIA process. Denton referred attendees to the questionnaire at the back of the packet. This Baseline Conditions Survey allowed group members to comment on the human, physical, and natural environments of the study area and note the attributes that make the community special. Denton then opened the floor for discussion about the baseline conditions and community attributes.

Discussion of Morton Train Station:

Mario Cimino of the Morton Station Preservation Committee opened the discussion by presenting a new issue to the group. According to Cimino, the Westbound Passenger Shelter of the Morton Station, owned and operated by SEPTA, is in grave danger of demolition. Cimino said that no one in the community was informed of SEPTA's decision to demolish the shelter, and it would have disappeared overnight if the community had not intervened.

The Morton Station Preservation Committee formed in response to the demolition threat, with Cimino acting as President. He provided the following information. The train station is a Pennsylvania Railroad standard design dating from 1892; as one of the few remaining examples of that style, the station complex is an endangered historic resource. The station complex is currently intact. The Preservation Committee would like to see intact complex restored in order to retain and enhance its function as a centerpiece of the community.

Dolores Giardina of Morton Borough explained that SEPTA cites minor safety issues with the structural integrity of the Westbound Passenger Shelter as reasons for demolition, but that SEPTA is unwilling to complete an engineering study at its expense. Cimino said the he feels safety may not be the real issue, as SEPTA is in a budget crisis. It was noted that SEPTA's current financial situation places priority on continuing rail and bus service, rather than capital improvements. Cimino stated that if the community wants to keep its historic resources, then it must demonstrate its support.

Cimino said that SEPTA has agreed to give the Preservation Committee 60 days to come up with a detailed plan for the restoration of the Westbound Passenger Shelter and to get fundraising underway. Another group member added that the town must watch the station very carefully because SEPTA will tear it down with no warning, even if they agree not to do so. Cimino asked the group to please keep an eye on the station and give their support. He distributed a petition supporting restoration over demolition, and also advised the group that the next Preservation Committee meeting would be held on February 24th, at 7:30 pm in the Morton Borough Hall. He urged interested persons to attend the meeting or to contact him or visit www.mortonstation.org for information.

Discussion of other Baseline Conditions and issues:

Ken Rummel of the Kedron United Methodist Church located at Yale Ave. and Morton Ave., expressed dissatisfaction with PennDOT procedures for making traffic improvements. He stated that they have been trying to get a stop sign in front of the Church for quite some time. While the Borough supports the stop sign, they have to go through additional steps because it is a state road. There is currently a “temporary” stop sign in place. The Church has also tried to get a crosswalk, which PennDOT says is not its responsibility. Finally, the Church has tried to get the curb raised 5 inches to prevent people from driving on their sidewalk, but PennDOT refused. Automobiles are encroaching on the sidewalk space. Rummel said he once confronted a delivery driver who was parked on the sidewalk, and the delivery driver pulled out a gun.

Giardina added that the community is primarily residential, not a business community. Morton does not have the infrastructure to support large businesses. Because of the way the streets are built, it is difficult for delivery drivers who have nowhere to park their trucks for unloading. Many times the drivers have to park on Mitchell Avenue and deliver by hand. Rummel noted that it has been 15 years since PennDOT promised to widen the road.

A group member suggested closing off the end of Yale Avenue and making it one way to alleviate congestion, or creating a through-road in the municipal parking lot. Giardina asked how Morton could circumvent the intersection through side properties. Bickel said that suggestions from the discussion could be incorporated into DVRPC’s final report. He reminded the Community Stakeholders that the finished product would not be a plan, but rather a compilation of recommendations. Cimino said that he wants DVRPC to impress upon PennDOT that state decision-makers should take the group’s suggestions rather than planning improvements in-house.

Another group member expressed concern with the industrial site near the intersection, calling it a “blighted mess.” He said the property has been fenced off and filled with parked cars. It is rumored that an automobile auction business is planned for the site, which would generate a great deal of additional traffic. Additionally, there is a loss of commuter parking now that the site is fenced. The site is actually located on the fringes of Springfield Township but affects the heart of Morton, and there is no plan in place to deal with the issues presented by the change in land use.

Cimino stated that the importance of the parking situation could not be overemphasized. Giardina added that the municipal parking lot is the only other off-street parking near the train station, and that street parking is a way of life for most residents so commuters parking on-street is a problem. Jack Piasani of Morton pointed out that there is dollar parking at the Spectrum, which is an alternate system. Rummel countered that he believes SEPTA is doing away with that system.

Giardina stressed that the point should not be to focus on SEPTA, but to focus on the community’s needs. While SEPTA cannot be discounted, the point should be that the

station is important to the community. The surrounding area has a lot of use at the station, and many people are impacted by it. The rail line is just as important an access point as any of the roads in the intersection, and has a very big impact on congestion and traffic flow. It was suggested that SEPTA's chief engineer be added to the CIA contact list.

Bickel advised that based on the Governor's latest plans, DVRPC would be asked to divert more money from road projects to shore up SEPTA until a better funding source could be established. He noted that DVRPC has diverted \$9.8 million dollars so far.

Giardina returned the discussion to parking, asking if the final report could recommend that SEPTA provide more parking. Piasani added that three or four people per week call the Borough to complain about commuters parking on residential streets. As an older community, there is little room to expand – and once parking has been eliminated, it is nearly impossible to get it back.

Another Morton resident, Pat Cimino, said the group should encourage SEPTA to keep the Morton Station as a “key” station because the commuters do bring dollars into the area and support some local businesses, such as the dry cleaners. She said that it is important to encourage SEPTA, but not to *hound* them.

Mario Cimino suggested that Borough Council open up discussion with the property owners around the intersection to create a pay parking lot for commuters. Cimino also noted that the intersection has signage issues. There is no sign telling drivers not to block the intersection, which makes it harder to enforce. He referenced Philadelphia's “Don't Block the Box” signs. Cimino said that drivers lined up on Morton Avenue do not notice that other drivers may be trying to turn. Denton added that all of these suggestions should be written in the comments section of the Baseline Conditions Survey.

Congested Corridor Improvement Study Report

Denton directed the group's attention to the last map in the handout, the *Conceptual Intersection Improvement Drawing for Kedron Avenue and Morton Avenue*. Edwards and Kelcey prepared the map for PennDOT District 6-0, as part of the Congested Corridor Improvement Study. The PennDOT study focused on recommendations for improving traffic congestion along Kedron Avenue/Route 420; the final report was recently issued. Denton circulated a copy of the final report, and asked the group to look at the Edwards and Kelcey schematic map as well. He also told the group that hard copies of the Community Context Audit were now available to those that requested them at the previous meeting.

Bickel stated that the community's feelings about the Congested Corridor Improvement Program results could be incorporated into the CIA final report as well. PennDOT would want to know that Morton does not prefer a high-capital solution such as grade separation. Another group member expressed concern over the impact of road widening and questioned whether there was an infringement on property rights. Denton

explained that the Edwards and Kelcey schematic had just reconfigured the lane widths to add lanes within the current roadbed, and did not represent an expansion of the right-of-way. Giardina asked if DVRPC knew the exact location of the Morton-Springfield boundary. It was requested that DVRPC specifically invite the Springfield Township board to the next meeting. Cimino said he thinks that transportation agencies need to concentrate more on simple things such as signage, rather than “big ticket” items.

Meeting Conclusion

The final Community Stakeholder meeting was tentatively set for *April 21, 2005* at 7:00 p.m. in the Morton Borough hall.

In the interim, DVRPC staff will complete the draft CIA Final Report and Community Context Audit. This will include drafting Assessment and Findings. Denton stated that DVRPC wants to make sure the community’s needs are met as a result of the meetings.

Community Impact Assessment – Rt. 420 & Morton Avenue Intersection

Community Stakeholder Meeting 3
Meeting Minutes 4.21.05

Attendance:

Charles Lilicrap – Morton Borough
Pat Schultz – Springfield School District
Mario Cimino – Morton Station Preservation Committee
Duane Denton – visitor
Scott Duncanson – Gannett Flemming
Justin Dula – DCPD
Rich Bickel – DVRPC
Kevin Denton – DVRPC
Amanda DeCort – DVRPC

Handouts:

Agenda
PowerPoint Presentation
Community Context Audit Highlights
Study Area Map
Land Use Map
Edwards & Kelcey Conceptual Improvement Drawing
Participant Evaluation Form

The following topics were discussed at the final Community Stakeholder meeting:

Introductions and Overview:

Rich Bickel began the meeting by welcoming the group and providing brief background information about DVRPC and the CIA project. He explained that this was the third public meeting, to be followed by another Study Advisory Committee meeting before release of the final report in the summer. He said that this study intended to examine the existing conditions in the study area, so that any transportation projects in the area would consider the community and be beneficial to quality of life. Bickel added that Kevin Denton and Amanda DeCort gathered a lot of information about the study area from the community, and are in the process completing PennDOT's Community Context Audit. He turned the floor over to Kevin Denton.

Recap of the CIA Process:

Denton led the group through the PowerPoint presentation, including the main objectives and steps of the CIA process. Because most of the meeting attendees were

familiar with the process, he offered a quick recap. Denton stated that what the group was really able to accomplish was to figure out the community's quality of life objectives. He elaborated that it became clear how much residents cared about their community during the previous two meetings, which brought out more issues than previously anticipated.

Denton said that the community, through their participation in this process, received a number of benefits. The group leveraged its concerns with documented proof of multi-community cooperation. He added that upon completion of the CIA project, the local community would have two studies show the problems related to the transportation network. Between the CIA study and the Congested Corridor Improvement study, PennDOT will have evidence of where the issues are.

Review of Baseline Conditions Survey Results:

Denton then went on to explain PennDOT's differentiation between the human environment, physical environment, and natural environment for the purpose of establishing baseline conditions in the CIA process. The Baseline Conditions Survey that was distributed at the second public meeting allowed group members to comment on the human, physical, and natural environments of the study area and note the attributes that make the community special. Denton pointed out the results of the survey on a PowerPoint slide, and added that the survey brought out a lot of aesthetic concerns in addition to safety and congestion issues. He added that many respondents would also like to see more parks and recreation.

Update of Morton Train Station Preservation Efforts:

Mario Cimino of the Morton Station Preservation Committee gave the group an update of his committee's recent efforts. He explained that MSPC was a grassroots organization working to ensure preservation of the entire train station complex that lies at the heart of the Morton community. He added that the train station should be a centerpiece for the community and is one of the last of its kind.

Cimino said that MSPC has submitted a progress report to SEPTA, who owns the facilities, and is waiting to meet with them. He noted that the complex is an important historic resource in the context of a functioning, modern transportation facility, and that MSPC is glad to work with DVRPC on this issue. He hopes that the efforts to preserve the train station will be part of an overall improvement program for the business district and the community. He closed by mentioning that the group has a petition available, and a benefit is planned at Rosario's in Morton.

Community Solutions to Traffic Problems:

Denton told the group that he hoped they came away from the CIA project feeling that it had been beneficial. Participants, he said, had been able to identify numerous potential solutions to issues generated by the intersection – from small things like adding

crosswalks to wish-list items such as road widening. He asked if there were any final suggestions for the report.

A participant suggested that Morton Avenue be reopened to two-way traffic, now that improved signal timing technology is available. She added that this would alleviate a lot of the traffic burden in central Morton, including Amosland and Mitchell Roads. She felt that it would help tremendously to alleviate pressure on smaller residential streets as well. As a safety issue, emergency vehicles could improve response time. She noted that the present congestion and cut-through traffic is a serious headache for the smaller streets and neighborhoods.

She then added that a pedestrian walk cycle and lights should be a priority. She noted that she was hit by a car at that intersection 30 years ago, so it has been a problem for a long time. She feels that the situation is the same today, except that drivers are even more aggressive.

Cimino said that he felt the first priority should be the lower-cost solutions, most importantly crosswalks. He identified other lower-cost engineering solutions such as adding a turn lane from southbound Route 420 onto Morton Avenue, extending the other left turn lane, and timing the traffic lights. He asked that it did not make sense to him, from a long-term perspective, to pursue more extreme solutions such as overpasses. He said that loss of the business district prevents grade separation from being a solution; instead, Cimino stated that emphasis should be placed on solutions that are lower-cost and executable within a shorter time frame.

Denton asked the group if there were any final thoughts regarding aesthetic issues. Cimino replied that he would like to see improvements to the business district, such as a streetscape program. He felt that business owners should be supportive of streetscape improvements or beautification because adding appeal to the area should generate more business.

It was noted that parking issues should also be a major theme in the report. Underutilized parking lots on the Springfield side could be opened to public parking, and no one would begrudge the property owners from making money by instituting pay lots.

Another group member added that the traffic signal at Route 420 and Morton Avenue northbound has a turn arrow that activates only when the train is there; there is no turn arrow in the light sequence on weekends or off-peak times. She felt that it would be helpful to have the arrow at other times, as it would alleviate congestion and save drivers from sitting through long lights needlessly at off-peak hours.

Conclusion:

Denton said that generating these ideas is the first step in getting the ball rolling. DVRPC will get the report written and meet with the Study Advisory Committee to review it before submitting it to PennDOT. As for the community, Denton added that he

applauds their grassroots effort to save their train station. He directed everyone's attention to the list of contacts in the handout, and added that everything would be included in the report. Funding sources would also be listed in the final report. Those who want a copy of the final report should contact him. Cimino stated that DVRPC should have a seminar for local elected officials on how to apply for funding and how to manage the process of seeking improvements.

Denton closed by urging the group to be patient with their efforts, but to keep their issues on the radar and keep working toward their goals. He added that the Community Impact Assessment project was a pilot program for PennDOT, so the report will be noticed. He said that this group's work, the Morton Station Preservation efforts, and the Congested Corridor Improvement study are all things that can build momentum and inspire PennDOT to action. He thanked the group again for their efforts.

The meeting was adjourned. The final meeting of the Study Advisory Committee will be scheduled in the near future.

Appendix C: Community Survey



Community Impact Assessment Pilot Project

PA Route 420 & Morton Ave Intersection, Delaware County

Project Evaluation Survey

Please take a few minutes to answer the following questions as they relate to your experience throughout the Community Impact Assessment planning process. Please check whether you “agree,” “disagree,” or feel “neutral” about the following statements.

Project Scope

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

The goals of the project were made clear at each meeting.

Community leaders are active and responsive to residents’ needs.

This area is a good place to raise a family.

Local businesses are an important part of the area’s economy.

Good jobs are easily accessible from this area.

This community knows about and is proud of its historic heritage.

There are places for children and adults to recreate in or around this area.

People of different religions can find places to worship in this area.

What attributes make your community special?

Physical Environment

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

I find my neighborhood to be well maintained and aesthetically pleasing.

The downtown area of my community is well kept and pleasant.

There are good public schools in the area.

There is an adequate bus service for students.

Roads and infrastructure are in good condition.

Municipal goods (signs, benches, trashcans) are where they should be and in good repair

I feel comfortable with emergency services in the area.

I have access to medical care in the vicinity.

Social services are available for those who need them.

Natural Environment

There are open spaces accessible to the public.

New development would be a good thing.

It would be good to reuse some of the buildings already built.

Community leaders are concerned about our local environment.

Comments:



Appendix D: Potential Funding Sources



DELAWARE VALLEY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

Funding Source: Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

Funding Program:

Source Type: Local

Description:	Tax increment financing is a locally controlled public financing mechanism through which the increased property tax value a project creates is captured over time (for up to 25 years) to pay for up-front public costs associated with the project.
Type of Financing:	Semi-annual tax rebate payments (must be financed up-front).
Eligible Applicants:	Municipalities and housing and redevelopment authorities can create TIF districts. For-profit or non-profit developers may be assigned rights to TIF revenue to reimburse eligible expenditures.
Amount of Financing:	Depends on captured value of project.
Restrictions:	There are many rules and restrictions associated with the use of tax increment financing. At a baseline, TIF funds may be used only for specified purposes, including land acquisition, site improvements, public and on-site utilities, demolition, relocation, and administration. A municipality must conclude that the project would not proceed and the increased market value on the site resulting from the project would not reasonably occur but for the use of tax increment financing. The maximum length and specific rules governing a TIF district depend on the type of district.
Application Cycle:	Contact the municipality in which your project is located.
Time Frame:	
Contact Information:	Contact the municipality in which your project is located.
Notes:	The value that TIF can bring to your project depends on the tax value your project brings to the site. Because TIF is a steady stream of payments that are typically financed to pay up front development costs, the amount of funding TIF can bring to a project also depends on the rate at which you are able to finance it. Financing an identical tax increment cashflow at 3%, as opposed to 7%, dramatically increases the present value of a project's tax increment cashflow.

Funding Source: US Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA)
Funding Program: Public Works Program, Local Technical Assistance Program
Source Type: Federal

Description:	EDA manages two grant programs relevant to commercial development in distressed communities. The Public Works and Economic Development Program provides funds for distressed communities to upgrade infrastructure to attract new industry. The Local Technical Assistance Program provides grants for feasibility studies.
Type of Financing:	Grants.
Eligible Applicants:	Units of governments, community development corporations, developers, etc.
Amount of Financing:	Average grants for the Public Works Program are \$1,000,000, and for the Local Technical Assistance Program are \$30,000.
Restrictions:	EDA usually funds 50% of project costs. Matching funds are required.
Application Cycle:	Applications are accepted on a rolling basis. A pre-application must be completed first; the EDA will invite applications for projects that meet preliminary requirements. Contact the regional office for more information.
Time Frame:	
Contact Information:	General information about Economic Development Administration funding programs: http://www.eda.gov/AboutEDA/Programs.xml Economic Development Administration Philadelphia Regional Office Telephone: Paul M. Raetsch, Regional Director, 215-597-4603 Email: praetsch@eda.doc.gov
Notes:	

DELAWARE VALLEY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

Funding Source: US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

Funding Program: Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program

Source Type: Federal

Description:	HUD makes annual distributions of CDBG funds to entitlement communities and states to ensure decent affordable housing for all, to provide services to the most vulnerable, and to create jobs and expand business activities. Entitlement communities and states distribute the funds in accordance with the program guidelines.
Type of Financing:	Grants.
Eligible Applicants:	Entitlement communities and states (to distribute funds to non-entitlement communities).
Amount of Financing:	Contact a local entitlement community or state affiliate for more information.
Restrictions:	CDBG funds must be used for activities that benefit low- and moderate-income persons. All activities must meet one of the following national objectives: provide benefits to low- and moderate-income persons, prevent or eliminate slums or blight, or address community development needs having a particular urgency because existing conditions pose a serious and immediate threat to the health or welfare of the community.
Application Cycle:	Contact a local entitlement community or state affiliate for more information.
Time Frame:	
Contact Information:	<p>General information about the CDBG Program: http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/communitydevelopment/programs/index.cfm</p> <p>New Jersey Contact information for entitlement communities: http://www.hud.gov/local/nj/community/cdbg/index.cfm New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, Division of Community Resources Telephone: Roger Hoeh, 609-633-6278 Email: rhoeh@dca.state.nj.us Website: http://www.nj.gov/dca/dcr/sccdbg/index.shtml</p> <p>Pennsylvania Contact information for entitlement communities: http://www.hud.gov/local/pa/community/cdbg/index.cfm Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development Customer Service Center Telephone: 866-466-3972 Website: http://www.newpa.com/programDetail.aspx?id=71</p>
Notes:	

Funding Source: PA Department of Community and Economic Development

Funding Program: Urban Development Program

Source Type: State - PA

Description:	The Urban Development Program provides grants for urban development and improvement projects. Urban development activities may include, but are not limited to, programs and projects designed to strengthen Pennsylvania's neighborhoods.
Type of Financing:	
Eligible Applicants:	Eligible applicants are municipalities and municipal authorities, redevelopment authorities, industrial development agencies, non-profit corporations, and community organizations.
Amount of Financing:	No minimum or maximum; grants range between \$5,000 and \$25,000.
Restrictions:	Eligible projects must meet one or more of the following criteria: promote and encourage the prosperous development of Pennsylvania business, industry and commerce; expand new markets; promote and develop new markets for Pennsylvania products; encourage the location and development of new business, industry and commerce within the Commonwealth; aid in restoring employment in communities affected by unemployment; aid in activities related to public safety, recreation, senior citizens, or other community services; organizations; improve existing and/or develop new civic, cultural, recreational, industrial and other facilities; assist in business retention, expansion, creation or attraction; promote the creation of jobs and employment opportunities; enhance the health, welfare, and quality of life of Pennsylvania citizens. Projects for the sole benefit of a for-profit entity are not eligible for program funding.
Application Cycle:	Applications are accepted at any time up to a submission deadline assigned annually. Check the guidelines for more details. Applicants are strongly urged not to submit more than one application per fiscal year. There are two rounds of funding each year; all applications not accepted in the first round will be automatically considered in the second round. If there are funds left after both rounds, DCED may award them up to the end of the fiscal year.
Time Frame:	
Contact Information:	<p>General information about the Urban Development Program: http://www.newpa.com/programDetail.aspx?id=81</p> <p>Program Guidelines for the Urban Development Program: http://www.newpa.com/files/urban_development_guidelines.pdf</p> <p>Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development Customer Service Center Telephone: 866-466-3972 Website: http://www.newpa.com/contact.aspx</p> <p>Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development Southeast Regional Office Telephone: Toni Crawford-Major, Regional Director, 215-560-2083 Email: acrawfordm@state.pa.us</p>
Notes:	

DELAWARE VALLEY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

Funding Source: PA Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED)

Funding Program: Infrastructure Development Program (IDP)

Source Type: State - PA

Description:	The Infrastructure Development Program makes grants and loans to eligible applicants for specific infrastructure improvements necessary to complement eligible capital investment by private companies and private developers.
Type of Financing:	Grants and loans.
Eligible Applicants:	Municipalities and municipal authorities, industrial development authorities and corporations, redevelopment authorities, and local development districts. Generally speaking, private companies and private developers may not apply directly for assistance under this program. All applications must be submitted by an eligible applicant and must be accompanied by a letter of intent from the private company or private developer. See the Program Guidelines for more information.
Amount of Financing:	Individual grants and loans may not exceed \$1.25 million.
Restrictions:	Matching funds are required in the ratio of \$2 of private investment for every \$1 of IDP funds. Projects that receive IDP funds must create a minimum of one new full-time job for every \$25,000 of assistance received or 10 new full-time jobs, whichever is greater, at the site of the facility affected by the infrastructure improvements within five years after the assistance is awarded.
Application Cycle:	Letters of intent and inquiries are accepted on a rolling basis. The letter of intent is required and is considered part of the application process.
Time Frame:	
Contact Information:	General information about the IDP: http://www.newpa.com/programDetail.aspx?id=26 Program Guidelines for the IDP: http://www.newpa.com/files/infrastructure_develop_guidelines.pdf Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development Center for Business Financing Telephone: 717-787-7120 Email: ra-dcededa@state.pa.us Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development Customer Service Center Telephone: 866-466-3972 Website: http://www.newpa.com/contact.aspx Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development Southeast Regional Office Telephone: Toni Crawford-Major, Regional Director, 215-560-2083 Email: acrawfordm@state.pa.us
Notes:	

Funding Source: PA Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED)

Funding Program: Main Street Program - Downtown Reinvestment Grant

Source Type: State - PA

Description:	State financial assistance is available to all Pennsylvania municipalities for a variety of development projects to help eliminate decline and act as a financial gap filler for projects proposed within the community's traditional downtown or neighborhood commercial district.
Type of Financing:	Grants.
Eligible Applicants:	Eligible applicants are any local governments or redevelopment authorities; certain non-profit Main Street organizations and business district authorities with at least two years of satisfactory operational experience as evidenced by satisfactory audits and evidence of municipal support through an executed cooperation agreement. Preference will be given to local governments and redevelopment authorities with designated Main Street Programs.
Amount of Financing:	Grants are given for up to 50% of the total development cost. The average grant is \$250,000. There is no minimum or maximum grant amount.
Restrictions:	DCED reviews each proposal on its own merit and determines whether it clearly serves the public purpose; has strong local financial commitments; is part of a cooperative partnership; and is "ready to go." An applicant does not have to be a designated Main Street Community in order to apply for Downtown Reinvestment Grants. Grants up to 50% of the total development costs are available for projects only if they are identified in and supported by an up-to-date, locally adopted five-year Downtown Strategy.
Application Cycle:	Applications are accepted on a rolling basis. It is suggested that a letter or concept paper be sent to the appropriate DCED regional office before applications are submitted. See the Program Guidelines for more information.
Time Frame:	
Contact Information:	<p>General information about the Main Street Program: http://www.newpa.com/programDetail.aspx?id=79</p> <p>Program Guidelines for the Main Street Program: http://newpa.com/files/newcommunitiesprogram_guidelines04.pdf</p> <p>Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development Customer Service Center Telephone: 866-466-3972 Website: http://www.newpa.com/contact.aspx</p> <p>Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development Southeast Regional Office Telephone: Toni Crawford-Major, Regional Director, 215-560-2083 Email: acrawfordm@state.pa.us</p>
Notes:	See also information about Anchor Building Grants under the Main Street Program section of the New Communities Program Guidelines: http://newpa.com/files/newcommunitiesprogram_guidelines04.pdf .

*For the Intersection of Morton Avenue & PA Route 420 in
Delaware County, PA*

Publication No.: 05028

Date Published: July 2005

Geographic Area Covered: Morton Borough, Springfield Township, Rutledge Borough and Ridley Township, Delaware County, Pennsylvania.

Key Words: Community Impact Assessment, land use, transportation, public involvement, pedestrian planning, transit, multi-municipal planning, funding sources, qualitative research, quality of life, land use and transportation linkages.

ABSTRACT:

PennDOT's pilot Community Impact Assessment program juxtaposes traditional planning techniques for ascertaining existing conditions with qualitative, anecdotal research; with the objective of creating a balanced assessment of what kinds of transportation investments would best serve the community. While this study did not coincide with a proposed transportation project, it dovetails with another PennDOT study that analyzes the congested Route 420 corridor.

As a pilot project to assess the CIA program, this study seeks to address the relationship between transportation features and the community's quality of life.

Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission

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