

U.S. Route 30 Master Plan

Unity Township, Pennsylvania



Client

Smart Growth Partnership
Renaissance Planning Group, *Lead Consultant*

Dates

November 2007

Program

300 Acres
Mixed-Use Multi-Lane Boulevard
700 Units
250,000 SF Retail
Environmental Greenways

Relevance

Sustainability
New Urbanism
Transportation Planning

Services

Environmental Design
Urban Design
Town Planning
Project Graphics

Team

MASTER PLANNER
Renaissance Planning Group
John Moynahan UDP
Pashek Associates
Olszak Management

Project Challenge

Unity Township is located 30 miles southwest of Pittsburgh in Westmoreland County in what once was small but active “coal patch” towns and rural agricultural land. A vital intersection on Rt 30 was chosen as a prototype for future development along the route. Typical to congested single-use corridors, Rt 30 suffers the frustrations of “Burger Alley” syndrome as well as the vacant placelessness of such roadways. As a gateway to the Laurel Highlands, City of Latrobe, and with a growing nearby regional airport, the project team endeavored to turn around destructive development trends with a thirty-year vision for the site.

Project Description

Approximately 300 acres surrounding the intersection of Rt 30 and Rt 981 contains uses such as big-box stores, auto dealership, an airport, stream corridors and views of distant ridges, and generally a poor pedestrian environment. Working with State Highway, Smart Growth Partnership, University of Pittsburgh, developers, and residents, a five-day charrette was employed to build consensus on a development plan. The desire for a pedestrian realm at an intersection that seems to grow wider with vehicle demand, as well as varied open space types, protected views and stream valleys, and housing choices near to employment, were some of the guiding factors in the vision plan.

Turning around the auto-dominated Rt 30 into a place where pedestrians can safely walk and live requires a paradigm shift in the highway administration’s thinking of roads like this. Extra care has been given to the corridor as well as internal driveways that in the short-term will become residential and commercial streets where users and residents will live and work. The overall plan takes in a vast area in order to properly demonstrate the benefit of land aggregation and long-term planning.

Value Added

By studying the area’s existing urban patterns, building stock, and history, several alternative concept plans were generated which, when applied to other parts of the corridor serve as prototype planning and process models. Residents, retailers, and users see value in taking the longer view.

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Rt 30 Main Intersection Gateway



U.S. Rt. 30 Master Plan
Rt 30 Multi-Lane Boulevard Conversion



Homes and shops fronting one the area's greenways.

Illustrations by John Moynahan Urban Design & Planning