

Neighborhood Plan, 2021-31



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Section 1. Cover Page (Form NP-1)

Neighborhood: NJ Legislative
Census Block Group 3712.2 District: 24

Eligible Municipality: Sussex Borough Mayor: Edward Meyer

Name of Applicant Organization: Norwescap

Name of CEO/Executive Director: Mark Valli

Address: 350 Marshall St.

City: Phillipsburg State: NJ Zip Code: 08865

NJ Charities Registration Number: CH0084300

Contact Person for this Application: Chris Kirk

Phone: 908-454-7000 ext 1115 E-Mail: kirkc@norwescap.org

Cellphone (optional): _____

What is the time period for this Neighborhood Plan? 10
(may not exceed Ten (10) years) Years

Did you partner with another organization to develop the Neighborhood Plan? YES YES (if YES, complete NP-1 Page 2)

Certification: To the best of my knowledge and belief, the data in this application are true and correct. The governing body of the applicant has duly authorized the document.

James Buehler Board Chair
Name Title

Signature of Board Chairperson Date

Partnering Organization Information

Name of Partnering Organization: Lakeland Bank

Contact Person (including title): Linda Smith

Contact Person’s Address: 64 Crescent Avenue

City: Waldwick State: NJ Zip Code: 07463

Phone: 201-425-9198 Cellphone (optional): _____

E-Mail: lsmith@lakelandbank.com

Briefly describe the role of the partnering organization in developing the Neighborhood Plan:

Linda participated in the Steering Committee. Lakeland Bank has been a partner in previous NRTC projects with Norwescap in the past.

Name of Partnering Organization: Sussex Borough

Contact Person (including title): Edward Meyer, Mayor

Contact Person’s Address: 2 Main Street

City: Sussex Borough State: NJ Zip Code: 07416

Phone: (973) 875-4831 Cellphone (optional): _____

E-Mail: _____

Briefly describe the role of the partnering organization in developing the Neighborhood Plan:

The Mayor and multiple town council members participated in the Steering Committee and ongoing dialogues regarding the priorities and direction of the plan development.

Name of Partnering Organization: New Jersey Department of Community Affairs – Local Planning Services

Contact Person (including title): Geoffrey Gray-Cornelius

Contact Person's Address: 101 South Broad Street, PO Box 800

City: Trenton State: NJ Zip Code: 08625

Phone: 609-292-3000 Cellphone (optional):

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E-Mail: Geoffrey.Gray-Cornelius@dca.nj.gov

Briefly describe the role of the partnering organization in developing the Neighborhood Plan:

Geoffrey participated in the Steering Committee and ongoing dialogues regarding the priorities and direction of the plan development. Geoffrey also led the Working Group efforts to develop an Economic Development Master Plan.

Section 2. Executive Summary

In the next ten years, the neighborhood in Sussex Borough will build on its wealth of assets and overcome its specific challenges to become an “inclusive and prosperous community with pride in its past and its future growth.” This vision was developed with input and involvement from a diverse mix of neighborhood stakeholders including residents, business owners, non-profit leaders, and elected officials. Through the guidance of a representative Steering Committee with input from the public, the Borough Council and the Mayor’s office, three goals were identified:

- 1. Cultivate an Inclusive, Safe, and Proud Neighborhood**
- 2. Create Prosperity for All**
- 3. Establish a Safe, Stable, and Affordable Place to Call Home**

These broad goals help organize a set of strategies that include establishing new parks and paths, enhancing the Main Street business district, bringing more visitors to the neighborhood for events and amenities, creating increased community engagement, and increasing home ownership and property maintenance. The plan that follows describes key characteristics of the neighborhood, outlines in detail the strategies and activities aligned with the identified goals, and delineates the process by which community members were engaged in the formation of this document.

Norwescap is pleased to play the role of lead partner in this effort and is grateful for the dynamic partnerships that have already been established with local government, businesses, and non-profits with an interest in the neighborhood. The organization’s Community Development Department has been successfully executing a Neighborhood Plan in the Parnassus neighborhood in Phillipsburg and is eager to bring that expertise north to Sussex Borough. With the support of the Department of Community Affairs and the anticipated investments of the funders, this plan will propel the neighborhood toward that proud and prosperous future envisioned by its residents.

Section 3. Organization Information

3a. Organizational Profile (Form NP-2)

A. AGENCY INFORMATION

What was the organization's date of incorporation?

1965

What was the original purpose for which the organization was formed?

Norwescap is a private, non-profit corporation originally established in 1965 to serve the low-income population of Hunterdon, Sussex and Warren Counties. Norwescap is designated as a 'Community Action Program' or CAP agency which provides access to Federal programs and resources created under "Johnson's Great Society". In fact, First Lady, 'Lady Bird' Johnson herself, visited Norwescap's first Head Start Center in Lambertville.

What is the organization's current mission statement?

Norwescap's mission is to strengthen communities by creating opportunities that improve the lives of low-income individuals and families. Our vision is to help build a community that transforms poverty into opportunity.

Is the organization in "Good Standing" with the NJ Department of State?

YES

YES

NO

When did the organization file its current N.J. Charitable Registration and Investigation Act Report (CRI-300R)?

Date: Fiscal Year End- 8/31/18 - Renewal Date 8/31/19

B. BOARD OF DIRECTORS INFORMATION

Board Chairperson:

James Buehler

Date Elected:

May 20, 2020

Term Expiration Date:

July 21, 2022

Number of Authorized Board Members:

15

Number of Current Board Members:

14

How frequently does the Board meet?

Monthly

Is the Board involved with fundraising activities?

YES

x

NO

If YES, when was the last activity conducted, for what purpose, and how much was raised?

Year-end fundraising (direct mail and online) to raise general operating funds. Total raised: \$24,150

List of current members of the Board of Directors, as of January 1 of this year:

Richard Conley
 James Buehler
 Elycia Lerman
 Sandra Harrachi
 Nancy Seus
 Deanna Dahl Rodriguez
 Aileen Arsenault
 Michael Kerwin
 Nitosha Young
 Scott Paul
 Michael Busche
 Christine Nesbitt
 Charles Boddy
 Robert Anselmo

C. PERSONNEL – TOTAL AGENCY

What is the current agency staffing level?

Full Time:	199
Part Time:	63
Volunteers:	2,800

Provide the following information regarding full-time staff employed by the organization in the past 5 years:

Year	Annual Employee Turnover Percentage	Leadership / Senior Staff Included?	
		YES	NO
2014	14%-18%	Yes	
2015	14%-18%	Yes	
2016	14%-18%		No
2017	14%-18%		No
2018	14%-18%	Yes	

For any year in which employee turnover percentage exceeded 20%, provide an explanation:

NA

When was the Executive Director hired? 3/12/2018

D. FINANCIAL INFORMATION

What is the organization’s fiscal year?

Start Date: 09/01

End Date: 08/31

When was the organization’s current year total budget approved by its Board of Directors?

8/19/2020

Did the organization incur a deficit at the end of its most recent fiscal year?

YES NO

If YES, what is the amount, and how will the agency reduce/address the deficit?

When was Form 990 most recently completed and submitted to the IRS?

03/30/2021

When was the organization’s most recent annual audit report (audited financial statement) completed?

1/31/2021

What was the time period covered in the audit report:

09/01/2019-8/31/2020

Were there any internal control or compliance findings from the organization’s most recent annual audit report?

YES NO

Required attachments for organization are located in Section 9.

3a. Organizational Profile (Form NP-2) Cornerstone Playhouse

TO BE ADDED

3a. Organizational Profile (Form NP-2) Harvest House

TO BE ADDED

3b. Financial Resources

Norwescap has an annual budget of more than \$17 million deriving from a portfolio of public and private sources. Top funders include federal (Department of Energy, Department of Health & Human Services, Department of Agriculture, Department of Housing & Urban Development, Department of Justice, Corporation for National & Community Services), state (housing, nutrition, early childhood, employment & training, family development), and local government sources, alongside private foundation grants and personal fundraising activities. Table 1 displays the funding that Norwescap has received from DCA across the past 5 years.

Table 1. Funding Received by Norwescap from the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs

RFP Fiscal Year	Award Amount	Grant Status	Program Name
2016	779,581	Grant Closed	Community Service Block Grant
2016	20,000	Grant Closed	Special Initiative Food Program
2016	228,424	Grant Closed	2016 LIHEAP Assistance -Hunterdon, Somerset, Sussex & Warren
2016	123,363	Grant Closed	2016 Universal Service Fund
2017	772,653	Grant Closed	Community Service Block Grant
2017	272,315	Grant Closed	DOE Weatherization 2017
2017	251,142	Grant Closed	Heating System Improvement Program 2017
2017	233,971	Grant Closed	2017 LIHEAP Assistance -Hunterdon, Somerset, Sussex & Warren
2017	136,092	Grant Closed	2017 Homelessness Prevention Program - Morris,Somerset,Sussex
2017	127,299	Grant Closed	2017 Universal Service Fund
2018	779,600	Grant Closed	Community Service Block Grant
2018	50,000	Grant Closed	Implicit Bias Training
2018	184,381	Grant Closed	DOE Weatherization 2018
2018	322,551	Grant Closed	Heating System Improvement Program 2018
2018	228,938	Grant Executed	2018 LIHEAP Assistance -Hunterdon, Somerset, Sussex & Warren
2018	100,638	Grant Amendment Executed	2017 Homelessness Prevention Program - Somerset County
2018	129,187	Grant Executed	2018 Universal Service Fund
2019	787,497	Grant Closed	Community Service Block Grant
2019	197,462	Grant Closed	DOE Weatherization 2019
2019	225,000	Grant Revision Executed	Heating System Improvement Program 2019
2019	694,887	Grant Amendment Executed	Homelessness Prevention & Rapid Re-Housing 2019 (Somerset)
2019	235,891	Grant Revision Executed	2019 LIHEAP Assistance -Hunterdon, Somerset, Sussex & Warren

2019	150,000	Grant Revision Executed	LIHEAP Weatherization 2019
2019	218,694	Grant Amendment Executed	2019 Homelessness Prevention Program - Morris County
2019	177,276	Grant Amendment Executed	2019 Homelessness Prevention Program - Somerset County
2019	161,484	Grant Amendment Executed	2019 Universal Service Fund
2020	380,131	Grant Executed	Norwescap Cares
2020	815,768	Grant Amendment Executed	Community Service Block Grant
2020	425,676	Grant Revision Executed	DOE Weatherization 2019
2020	258,904	Grant Revision Executed	2020 LIHEAP Assistance -Hunterdon, Somerset, Sussex & Warren
2020	38,836	Grant Executed	LIHEAP Assistance Covid 19
2020	50,000	Grant Executed	Sussex Borough Revitalization
2020	50,000	Grant Executed	Phillipsburg NRTC Planning Grant
2020	345,000	Grant Executed	Parnassus NRTC 2020
2020	430,300	Grant Closed	NPP Covid Relief - Phillipsburg South Main Street
2020	98,000	Grant Amendment Executed	NRTC Covid Relief - NRTC Neighborhood
2020	86,445	Grant Executed	2019/2020 Universal Service Fund
2021	804,138	Grant Amendment Review Required	Community Service Block Grant
2021	284,313	Grant Amendment Executed	20/21 LIHEAP - Hunterdon, Somerset, Sussex & Warren
2021	126,037	Grant Executed	2020/2021 Universal Service Fund

3c. Community Involvement

Norwescap has been an active presence in the neighborhood since 1995, providing affordable housing, social services, and early childhood education on Main Street in the heart of the neighborhood during that 26-year period. Norwescap prides itself on maintaining strong community involvement across its programs and the communities it serves. At the Board of Trustees level, the agency has one designated position in each county that must be filled by a current or former program participant. This structure ensures that the voice of the community is included in discussions and empowered to guide the organizational direction at the highest level. This example is followed throughout the organization with many formal advisory boards and informal opportunities for resident feedback embedded into operations.

Norwescap accomplishes its community building initiatives via partnerships with other organizations. More than 500 organizations work with Norwescap across the region on mission-aligned activities including the organization of community events, the dissemination

of resources, and the coordination of services across domains. The agency believes strongly in collaboration as a means to maximize use of resources and leverage the collective expertise and trust of the broader set of stakeholders. In addition to those utilized in the formation of this plan, the organization facilitates several community coalitions and steering groups that represent a cross-section of resident and organizational representatives.

The agency completes a formal Community Needs Assessment every three years to inform and guide its strategies. The most recent such assessment was completed in 2019. Norwescap has a strong and growing presence on social media, maintains a website with resources and program information, and sends regular newsletters and other communications to the community.

Section 4. Organizational Capacity and Experience

4a. Organizational Capacity

Norwescap is a 54-year-old community action program serving 30,000 individuals annually throughout five New Jersey counties (Hunterdon, Morris, Somerset, Sussex, and Warren) with an annual budget of over \$17 million. The organization possesses strong capacity to implement neighborhood revitalization and community-development activities as evidenced by a track record of extensive and diverse community development activity in the distressed Warren County community of Phillipsburg. In 2009, Norwescap developed a plan for the Parnassus neighborhood in the town and in 2013, effectively implemented an NRTC Project totaling \$860,000 in community investment. That project included activities like: 1) Commercial Business Improvement including physical improvements to neighborhood businesses (facades and interior), repairing or remodeling a grand total of 24 commercial properties, 2) Housing Rehabilitation, 3) Street Scape Improvement including the installation of new pedestrian walkways, crosswalks, landscaping, signage, and lighting, 4) Open Space Improvement to improve vehicle access and a parking site at an underutilized Riverfront Park, 5) Youth Programs & Community Outreach , 6) Budget & Financial Counseling to promote homeownership workshops, and 7) Crime Prevention. In 2019, Norwescap was approved for a new NRTC project within the same footprint to build upon the groundwork laid through the FY 2013 NRTC grant. The \$345,000 plan allows Norwescap to purchase an abandoned property from the Town of Phillipsburg to rehabilitate for resale to a low to moderate income applicant. Funds are also being utilized for renovations and improvements, including weatherization and critical home repairs to owner-occupied single family homes; financial support through small business grants for façade improvements to commercial and mix-used buildings; start-up costs supporting micro-enterprises; financial and housing counseling; organization and funding for community engagement events; and community policing and community based crime reduction strategies

Norwescap's capacity to build community involvement and advance the Neighborhood Plan has been even more impressive and extensive outside the context of NRTC-funded activities. Norwescap received \$500,000 from the US Department of Justice for the Community-Based Crime Reduction (CBCR) grant in 2016 to identify high crime areas and develop strategies to reduce crime while spurring neighborhood revitalization. These strategies build upon the community-policing patrols, crime watch meetings and a weekly reading room for kids hosted by the police department. Through CBCR, Norwescap enhanced community-police relations through annual National Night Out events and was able to secure funding for police officers in two counties, Warren and Morris, to complete implicit bias training. In addition, CBCR funding supported the installation of surveillance cameras in 3 identified "hot spot" crime areas to assist police with investigations and reduce crime in those areas. Out of this initiative Norwescap created and chairs a monthly Community

Development meeting comprised of the chief of police, other public officials, private and non-profits service providers, school personnel, youth groups, faith-based leaders, businesses, civic organizations, law enforcement, a downtown merchant's association, chamber of commerce members and residents to support, organize and at times host neighborhood wide events that include seasonal celebrations and festivals. As a result of Norwescap's community development experience Norwescap has gained the confidence and respect of the Town of Phillipsburg, Warren County, and entered into a shared services agreement to administer the municipality's Neighborhood Preservation Program (NPP) over 5 years marshalling another \$525,000 in investment. NPP funding has been used to purchase banners, benches, planters, and to develop a downtown branding strategy for the purpose of attracting new businesses and tourism. This largely has been developed through community engagement team meetings that have fostered resident/business leadership roles to drive a community led strategic plan. In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, Norwescap was awarded \$525,000 through DCA's NPP and NRTC programs to provide relief to 25 businesses through direct to business relief grants for reimbursement of mortgage/rent and utilities, website development and the purchase of PPE. District wide projects were also supported through this funding building a new outdoor dining/gathering space.

Other forms of community engagement and programming that lends to the strength of Norwescap's capacity to carry out a proposed NRTC plan for Sussex Borough can be found in its Pathway 2 Prosperity (P2) program located in the Sussex County. P2 utilizes education, mentoring, skill building, and networking to help participants, called Path Leaders, design their own pathway to sustainable self-reliance and resiliency. Pathways include securing living wage employment, building savings, obtaining reliable transportation, and/or developing a long-term solution to insufficient resources. The program provides more than 50 events and programs each year, serving approximately 250 individuals.

Since 1995, Norwescap has owned a building on Main Street in Sussex Borough in which P2 provides services including educational and recreational programming for youth, adults and seniors, individual case management, access to technology, networking opportunities, small business workshops, and access to community resources. The facility contains 11 units of affordable housing for seniors and three street-level rooms that previously housed Head Start classrooms. After years vacancy, the units have recently been refurbished and are prepared for use in service to the community. The organization is preparing transform the location into a Cultural and Community Center over the coming months.

In addition to the senior housing, Norwescap administers an array of housing programs that promote equity and mitigate displacement by promoting the rehabilitation of existing owner-occupied housing. The organization's Housing and Energy Services program has completed over \$33,000 in energy-efficiency repairs and upgrades to neighborhood homes since 2016. The program is led by a Project Manager with over 30 years of experience managing residential new construction, rehabilitation, and weatherization projects. Across the region, the program manages and completes approximately 170 residential contracting projects each year. Norwescap will use this in-house construction management capacity in pursuing home rehabs and repairs in this NRTC project.

Additionally, Norwescap has a strong and well-developed Financial Empowerment program that helps people move ahead in life by building financial management skills, providing resources to help individuals save money, and distributing small loans to increase assets and build net worth. The program provides credit and pre-homeownership counseling and runs a matched savings account program that helps families save for financial goals like the purchase of a home. This capacity will be utilized to increase the rate of homeownership in the neighborhood.

Norwescap has a strong fiscal and administrative infrastructure. Chief Executive Officer, Mark Valli, possesses nearly 30 years of experience in New Jersey State Government and non-profit managerial roles. Early in his career, he cut his teeth at the community-development powerhouse New Jersey Community Development Corporation in Paterson. Chief Program Officer Chris Kirk holds a PhD in Community Psychology and has tremendous practical experience leading community-driven work in the health and social spheres. P2 Program Director Dianna Morrison is a certified social worker, a financial social worker, and a certified educator in personal finance. She has a proven history of quickly moving community engagement initiatives from the seed stage to fully functioning projects with extensive social impact. Community Development Manager Mary Jo Harris has a Master of Social Work (MSW) and over a decade of experience leading community and coalition-based work and coordinates the Neighborhood Preservation Program grant for the Town of Phillipsburg, Warren County. Project Manager Mark Hammerstone has over 30 years of experience managing residential new construction, rehabilitation, and weatherization projects.

3b. Current Activities

Norwescap provides services to individuals across several domains. These include 1) Education, 2) Health and Nutrition, 3) Financial Empowerment, 4) Employment, 5) Volunteerism, and 6) Housing and Community Development. Programs include the operation of a 30,000 square foot Food Bank delivering over 2.5 million pounds of food annually to support over 100 food pantries, soup kitchens and camps. Norwescap operates the Early Head Start (ages 0-3) and Head Start (ages 3-5) programs in three counties providing comprehensive early childhood education, health, nutrition, mental health and social

services to low income children and their families. Norwescap’s Child and Family Resource Services (CFRS) is the designated Child Care Resource and Referral Agency for Hunterdon, Sussex and Warren Counties by the NJ Department of Human Services, Division of Family Development. The department provides information on early care and education, training for parents and providers, referrals to available providers, and childcare subsidies.

Funding through the Division of Family and Community Partnership (DFCP) funds Norwescap’s Traditions Family Success Center “one-stop” shop that provide wrap-around resources and supports for families before they find themselves in crisis. Services include Access to information on child, maternal and family health services, life skills training, parent education, home visitation, transportation, parent-child activities, advocacy training, and family success planning.

Norwescap Career & Life Transitions Center (CLTC) provides quality services that assist individuals, or “Displaced Homemakers”, in gaining personal and economic self-sufficiency to reach their full potential through education, training, job readiness, community referrals, and supportive services. All services provided by the CLTC are FREE to qualifying clients.

The WIC (Women Infants and Children) Program provides supplemental nutritious foods to pregnant, breastfeeding and postpartum women, infants and children up to the age of five. Fathers may also bring their children to apply for WIC services. Additional services include health screenings, nutrition education, breastfeeding support, including lactation consultant services, and referrals to health and social services.

The Cancer Education and Early Detection (CEED) Program through Norwescap, provides breast, cervical, prostate and colorectal cancer outreach, education and screening services to eligible people who are of low income, uninsured or underinsured. The program also offers screenings without regard to immigration status.

Norwescap Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) is a program that helps families receiving Housing Choice Vouchers or residing in certain public housing to achieve economic self-sufficiency. Services include Case Management, Financial Assistance, Counseling, Advocacy, Employment/Career Counseling, and Education & Training.

Norwescap’s Financial Empowerment services help individuals reach financial stability by providing training focused on financial management skills that teach people how to save money. Participants receive financial and employment coaching and connection to services like family loan, matched savings, tax preparation, and job skills training. Norwescap’s AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP team serves as a volunteer center to connect adults 55 and older to volunteer opportunities across the region.

Norwescap’s Homelessness Prevention Program provides temporary financial assistance, counseling, and other services to prevent families and individuals from losing

their homes or becoming homeless due to lack of funds and reasons beyond their control. Temporary aid offers clients assistance when needed most. Clients, who qualify for aid, are counseled in effective budgeting and guided in documenting and reporting their housing expenses after assistance concludes. The agency's Housing and Energy Services department assists low-income individuals and families with their heating and cooling costs to alleviate the burden and stressors associated with high energy and utility costs. The programs offered through Norwescap Housing and Energy Services include LIHEAP (Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program), Weatherization Assistance Program, USF (Universal Service Fund) and Safe & Affordable Housing.

Norwescap's Community Development Department works to build vibrant communities where everyone has the opportunity to thrive. Based on the Community Development Corporation (CDC) model, the program focuses on revitalizing neighborhoods in Norwescap's service area with an emphasis on low-income, underserved neighborhoods that have experienced significant disinvestment in partnership with community residents and other stakeholders. Services include acquiring vacant or abandoned properties for the purpose of rehabilitation and resale to qualified low-to-moderate income home buyers, assisting low-to-moderate income home buyers with closing costs and down-payment assistance, and providing homeowners with grants to be used for critical home repairs. Services also focus on economic development through direct to business improvement grants, supporting new micro-enterprises and providing one-on-one business development through a SCORE mentoring program.

3c. Development and service delivery capacity

Norwescap has a proven track record of successfully carrying out activities of similar type and scope as outlined in the proposed Neighborhood Plan. In the past, Norwescap has completed the projects that cultivated an inclusive, safe and proud neighborhood, created prosperity for all and established a safe, stable, affordable place to call home through the following activities:

- Installed a paved walking/biking path and playground in a park providing access to and increasing passive recreational space for area residents.
- Installed a new dog park, cleared walkable space through the abandoned railway bed, cleared embankment of overgrowth and installed dusk to dawn lighting to the entrance of a park to create a clean line of sight to areas of recreation that created a safe space for park visitors.
- Improved the aesthetics and safety of a park by removing overgrown shrubs that obstructed a clean line of sight into and from the center of the park and replaced with low growing shrubbery to open viewing from and into the park creating a place for residents and visitors to gather;

- Acquired funding to provide increased police foot patrols, partnering with local police department;
- Enhanced the common gathering space in the park by installing up-lighting for safety and use during times of celebrations and events;
- Installed an outdoor dining/gathering space to create a venue for events, concerts, celebrations, weddings for public and private use.
- Successfully engaged community members to participate in annual Community Day of Action to clean-up downtown business district.
- Convened a monthly Community Advisory meeting comprised of community members of varied ages, ethnicities and perspectives to come together around a public concern in a space that fosters constructive, respectful conversation.
- Participated and supported neighborhood-wide celebrations and events such as Sussex Borough Day, Open Market Days, seasonal events, ribbon cuttings and ice cream socials.
- Sponsored pop-ups produce markets and restaurant meal distribution.
- Provided credit and pre-homeownership counseling, ran a matched savings account program, and provided down-payment and closing cost assistance to individuals enrolled in the Financial Empowerment program.
- Provided resources, training and support for individuals and families seeking medical care, child-care, job search assistance, and work readiness skills.
- Remodeled three storefronts in the Sussex Senior Housing located in the heart of Main Street in the Neighborhood, that will become the Sussex Community and Cultural Center.
- Acquired an abandoned city-owned single-family dwelling to rehabilitate and sell to a qualified low-to-moderate income homebuyer.
- Provided grants to homeowners for critical home repairs that include weatherization and energy-efficient upgrades.
- Provide direct-to-business improvement grants for façade improvements, interior renovations and signage.

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, Norwescap successfully pivoted and realigned operations in a short period of time to continue offering all direct services to individuals and families by recruiting partnerships that still exist today. Activities included:

- Phone-based call centers for access to services;
- A “Get Help Now” form on the Norwescap website to quickly identify and assist the needs of individuals and families from the safety of their homes.
- A newly formed “Engagement Partner” response team to holistically address participant needs and provide direct assistance and referrals for child-care, food deliveries, unemployment filing, and housing assistance.

- A “Norwescap 411” YouTube channel to provide up-to-date information on available services both in English and Spanish.
- A Norwescap Resiliency Fund to respond to growing needs in housing, transportation and emergency assistance.
- On-line workshops, classes, counseling and coaching sessions to maintain continuity of services and connection to individuals and families in need.

These investments have resulted in reaching and attracting a wider audience than pre-pandemic levels and in some cases tripling the number of participants. Enrollment in digital learning, employment coaching, and wellness seminars exceeded the previous maximum capacity as a direct result of these offerings. Requests for additional digital learning led to the development of new services and increased the frequency of use across all domains. During the period from March 2020 through March 2021 alone, Norwescap

- partnered with the Sussex County Hunger Coalition, are schools, private businesses and county stakeholders to deliver 10,000 meals to seniors, students, and families;
- assisted more than 7,000 individuals with utility bills;
- provided more than \$200,000 in support services to individuals who did not qualify for existing initiatives
- gave over \$525,000 to 25 businesses Covid Relief direct to business grants to assist struggling business with funding to cover rent/mortgage and utility cost, purchase PPE, and create e-commerce websites; built an outdoor dining/gathering space in the downtown business district to expand food services and pop-up markets to accommodate social distancing mandates;
- connected businesses to local and state loan/grant opportunities scheduling one-on-one counseling sessions with the NJ Business Action Center, the NJ Northwest Small Business Development Center and the NJ Economic Development Authority;
- provided webinars and digital workshops to assist businesses with navigating grant and loan programs offered through the CARES Act;

In 2020, Norwescap’s capacity to provide services to its five main counties and respond immediately to the pandemic kept thousands from falling in crisis, business from closing and helped to build resiliency. As a result:

- 2.1 million meals were provided to food-insecure households through the Norwescap Food Bank, distribution network, and community based programs;
- 11,543 children and their parents/caregivers were served through in-person and virtual learning, childcare licensing, referrals and subsidies, and nutritional and breastfeeding support;
- 1,298 adults received case management, career coaching, financial empowerment, and banking, and tax assistance;

- \$268,000 was distributed to nearly 300 at-risk families for mortgage & rental assistance, car payments, and emergency support;
- 535 families with children received toys and gifts for the holidays through the Partners in Joy Program;
- 827 volunteers packed and distributed food, reached out to seniors and other vulnerable neighbors, and offered virtual workshops for our participants;
- 414 seniors received support to reduce isolation, safely get groceries, manage stress, and maintain their health;

3d. Capacity of partner(s)

Through Sussex Borough’s recommended Economic Development Master Plan, Mayor Edward Meyer and the Borough Town Council have proven to be committed to the revitalization of the Borough. The mayor and members of council have participated in every planning meeting and have provided Norwescap with the Borough’s recommendations via the Sussex Borough Economic Development Master Plan Element. Completing a robust assessment, recommendations from this plan were derived from household and business surveys that highlighted areas of revitalization including establishment of new parks and paths, increasing neighborhood walkability, leveraging community spaces, and engaging community residents. An Economic Development Committee has been formed comprised of elected officials, business owners, residents, and county agencies and services providers to continue developing an action plan for revitalization. The Borough has committed to the rehabilitation of foreclosure properties, to hosting clean-up projects of the downtown area, to building a children’s playground in Boggs Field, and to attracting new businesses to the downtown. The Borough has identified development opportunities as major destination locations that will attract visitors.

The Crescent Theatre is one of the most significant attractions of Main Street and is included in the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places. The Borough will continue to rent the theater to the Cornerstone Playhouse. The former St. Clare’s Hospital facility is vacant and is being considered for possible adult housing. The Borough will bring this up for discussion and include the Planning Board to determine if this is an area in need of redevelopment and consider condemnation powers.

The Borough has benefited greatly from Norwescap’s services that are in alignment with the Borough’s redevelopment plan and will continue to support these services through promotion of the Sussex Community and Cultural Center. The Borough will work with Norwescap staff work through the processes of site management, land-use approvals, delivering public communications and providing opportunities for community building.

The non-profit Cornerstone Playhouse, located in the Crescent Theatre currently runs several annual year-long shows including Cornerstone Christmas and Cabarets. The

Playhouse is well positioned to expand their offerings by developing a dinner theater and providing a more diverse schedule including music and children's programming. In doing so, the Playhouse will continue to work with the businesses and restaurants along Main Street to promote and encourage theater attendees interested in shopping and dining before and after shows. Celebrations and recognition of historical significance will also be showcased during community events that can be held at the theater.

Harvest House has been providing 50-60 meals daily to the underserved population of Sussex Borough for the past twenty years. Harvest House will continue to work with Norwescap to improve and enhance the capacity in which these services can continue in the Sussex Community and Cultural Center located in the downtown area.

Norwescap's capacity to supervise and monitor the activities being carried out by partner entities has been evidenced by the successes under the Phillipsburg area CBCR, NRTC and NPP plans. Norwescap and the mayor meet monthly to track progress and outcomes as agreed upon in a shared services agreement. Elected officials and contracted service providers attend monthly Community Development meetings to provide information on shared projects. Oversight of policies, procedures and guidelines for the procurement of goods and services are done through the town's Business Administrator and Norwescap's Chief Financial Officer. Norwescap attends all Town Council meetings and Land Use Meetings (for neighborhood relevant agenda items) and participates on the Sussex Borough Economic Development Committee. Through Norwescap's Housing and Energy Services Program, Project Manager Mark Hammerstone has more than 30 years of experience managing residential new construction, rehabilitation and weatherization projects. Norwescap will utilize this in-house construction management capacity in pursuing home rehabs and repairs.

Section 5. Neighborhood Description and Statement of Need

Neighborhood Description

Sussex Borough was originally settled in 1742 by Peter Decker. The town was incorporated in 1891 as “Deckertown” before changing its name to the current form in 1902. Sussex Borough was a bustling community in the late 1800’s and early 1900’s when it served as the epicenter of Sussex County. The town provided a vast array of businesses such as meat markets, department stores, bakeries, shoemakers, jewelers, a bowling alley, dental parlors, an academy, lumber and coal yards, factories, creameries, restaurants, and a theater. On weekends, the streets were crowded with families with live music during the summer. Two railroad stations made the area an important commercial center, “a boom town” with new families moving in weekly.



Figure 1 Sussex Borough Main Street, Circa 1905 (Sussex-Wantage Historical Society)



Figure 2 Picture of Clove Lake, circa 1950 (Sussex-Wantage Historical Society)

In 1926, the Clove Brook was dammed, and Clove Lake was created. It served as a residential and recreational community attracting seasonal tourists offering swimming, boating, and fishing. In 1939, the town offered 13 tourist homes, 5 hotels and 8 restaurants. In the 1950’s, the railroad stopped running, and the town began a long, slow decline. In 1980, the police department was disbanded due to corruption, and Clove Lake was closed due to the high cost of maintenance. Sussex Borough experienced an influx of low-income individuals who -- due to the lack of public transportation, limited employment opportunities, lack of public transportation and few services -- became entrenched in the local community. The local

economy suffered, homeownership declined, businesses closed, and the once robust sense of community was fragmented over time. Today, Sussex Borough is home to these memories a vibrant past, an awareness of the many current challenges, and a hope in the potential for the thriving community it can become in the future.

The outer boundaries of Sussex Borough form an octagon that is completely surrounded by Wantage Township from which the Borough’s territory was originally cut out. The Borough boundaries roughly coincide with those of Census Tract 3712 which contains two block groups. This Neighborhood Plan is focused on the second of those block groups (3712.2) consisting of all land to the east and south of Newton Avenue (in the Southern portion of the municipality) and Unionville Avenue (Route 284) on the northern end. This block group will henceforth be described as the “neighborhood”. The neighborhood includes Main Street, and idyllic, walkable thoroughfare with scattered shops and restaurants.

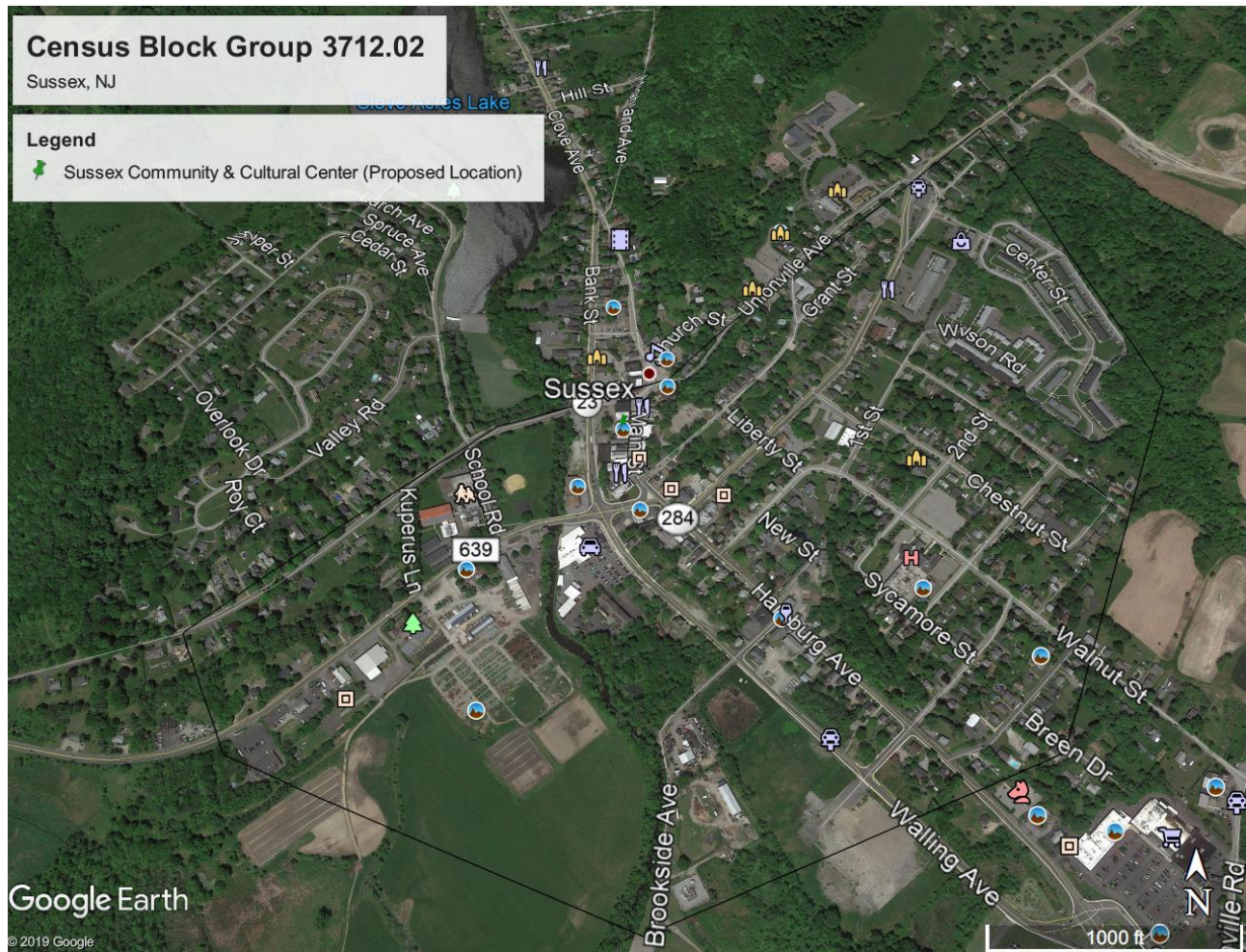


Figure 3 Map of Census Block Group 3712.02



Figure 4 Map of Main Street Area

The heart of the neighborhood is the idyllic Main Street. As shown in Figure 1 above, this area has long been a hub of activity. In recent years, Main Street has been the subject to disinvestment, leaving several vacant storefronts amid a few restaurants, shops, and galleries. Norwescap’s facility is at 37 Main, providing housing for seniors and recently renovated space for the Sussex Community & Cultural Center. Main Street is ripe for revitalization resulting in more economic activity and more visitors in the coming years.



Figure 5 Photo of Main Street from the West

Neighborhood Conditions

The neighborhood is currently home to 1,279 individuals residing in 527 households. This population has declined by 13.1% since 2013. The residents of the neighborhood are significantly younger than the County overall with a median age of 36.6 compared to a County average of 44.7. Approximately 16% of the population are under the age of 18 and 12% are aged 65 and older. One in four residents fall between the ages of 20 and 29. Household composition varies across the neighborhood where 12.5% of adults live alone, 39.2% live with a spouse, and 4.2% live with an unmarried partner. Forty-five percent of Neighborhood residents are married, comprising 51% of all households. Single female householders comprised 26.4% of the population compared to only 2% of single males. Across the Borough, 6.7% of households are headed by single females with children under the age of 18.¹

As shown in Table 2, 83.8% of the population in the neighborhood is non-Hispanic white, 8.2% are Hispanic/Latinx, 3.7% are non-Hispanic Black or African American, and 2.6% are non-Hispanic Asian. The percentages of Hispanic/Latinx and Black residents have increased since 2013 from 7.5%, and 2.2% respectively, while the percent of non-Hispanic Asian residents has declined from 6.3% during the same period. The Hispanic/Latinx population in the Borough is largely from Central and South American Origins, while the non-Hispanic Asian population are mostly of Korean and Vietnamese descent. Less than two percent of the population (1.7%) are multi-racial. In the neighborhood, 7.4% of population aged 5 and older speak a language other than English. Of those, 73% speak Spanish and 21.3% speak an Asian or Pacific Islander language. Among Borough residents, 4.9% were foreign-born and 76.3% were born in New Jersey¹.

Table 2. Percent of population by race/ethnicity

	Non-Hispanic White	Non-Hispanic Black	Hispanic/Latinx	Non-Hispanic Asian	Two or More Races
The Neighborhood	83.8%	3.7%	8.2%	2.6%	1.7%
Sussex County	86.3%	2.1%	8.2%	2.0%	1.3%
New Jersey	55.4%	12.7%	20.2%	9.4%	1.8%

Note: The Neighborhood = Census Block Group 3712.2

Many of the residents of the neighborhood face significant economic challenges. The median household income is \$52,212, approximately half of the same measure in the County

¹ American Community Survey, 5-year estimates, 2019

as a whole (\$94,520). The rate of poverty in the Borough is estimated at 14.9%, significantly higher than the average for both the County (4.9%) and the State (10%). More than sixty percent of residents have incomes below 50% of the area median income and 80.71% have incomes below 80% of that threshold. Poverty disproportionately affects children in the neighborhood with 35.0% of those under the age of 5 and 19.4% of those aged 5 to 17 living below the poverty line within the preceding twelve months. Estimates show the 11.6% of households in the Borough received SNAP nutrition assistance, including 55.6% of households with children under 18, yet only 45.6% of those below the poverty level accessed the benefits for which they would be eligible².

Lack of employment opportunities and lower levels of educational attainment drive the economic conditions of neighborhood residents. According to the American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, 60.5% of Sussex residents aged 16 and over were employed and 7.8% were unemployed. The unemployment rate in the Borough during the 2019 estimate was 11.5% prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Among those living in poverty, almost one-third were employed at the most recent estimate (31.9%) with 18.3% working full-time year-round and 19.8% working part-time. Among those with employment, 25.7% worked in the service industry, including 14.5% who worked in food preparation and service. Other key occupation groups were management (15.7%), construction (10.5%) and production 6.5%. Three out of four (76.7%) Borough residents drive alone to work, with 24.5% traveling out the County and 6.1% outside the State. The mean travel time to work is 32.9 minutes, with approximately half of workers (48.1%) traveling more than 30 minutes to work and 16.9% traveling 60 minutes or more².

Individuals living in poverty in the Borough have lower levels of educational attainment with only 6.2% of those with income below the poverty level having any post-secondary education. In the Neighborhood itself, 20.1% of residents are high school dropouts, four times the rate for the County as a whole (5.1%) and 42.5% have only a high school diploma or equivalent (County rate is 30.6%).

Table 3. Educational Attainment of Neighborhood Residents Compared to County and State

	No Degree	HS or Equivalent	Some College	Bachelors or Higher
The Neighborhood	20.1% (8%)	42.5% (6.7%)	26.6% (8.1%)	10.8% (3.7%)
Sussex County	5.1% (0.5%)	30.6% (0.9%)	28.2% (0.9%)	36.1% (0.9%)
New Jersey	9.6% (2.2%)	26.9% (1.3%)	22.2% (1.3%)	41.2% (0.9%)

The Sussex-Wantage Regional School District has 1,036 students from pre-kindergarten through eighth grades with 27.5% considered economically disadvantaged as indicated by eligibility for the federal Free and Reduced Lunch Program. According to state test scores, only 44% of these students are proficient in math and 54% in reading³. With limited affordable youth activities,

² American Community Survey, 5-year estimates, 2019

³ New Jersey Department of Education

children of all ages can be found playing unsupervised on Main Street after school, during the evening, and on weekends.

The neighborhood is home to 681 housing units of which 77% are occupied giving a non-seasonal vacancy rate of 23%. Approximately three-fourths of homes are renter-occupied (73%) with other 27% occupied by homeowners. The median value of owner-occupied units is \$173,400, significantly lower than the rate for Sussex County (\$267,500). The plurality of housing units in the Borough are 1-unit detached (37.2%), with 26.4% of units containing ten or more living spaces. Seventy-two percent of the structures are multi-unit facilities. Large historic homes have been sectioned into multiple apartments with out-of-state landlords creating a large influx of temporary low-income residents. The Borough's largest multi-unit rental facility was closed in 2019 due to its dilapidated condition.



Figure 6 Multi-Unit Housing Facility in Sussex Borough

In the Borough, housing stock is generally older with 37.1% of units build before 1939 and 73.6% before 1970. Fifteen percent of the homeowners owned their homes before 1990, and 60.0% have moved in since 2010, with more than one-third (34.8%) having moved in since 2015. Among the homes in the town, 1.9% lack complete plumbing and 4.0% have incomplete kitchen facilities. One in five (21.2%) of owners have mortgage payment the equates to more than 30% of their household income. Renters also struggle to survive in the Borough. The median rent is \$1,216 with 52.8% of units falling between \$1,000 to \$1,499. Two-thirds (64.8%) of renters pay more than 30 percent of their income for rent. The economic environment in the neighborhood is also lacking. Vacant storefronts dot Main Street contributing to Sussex County's high business vacancy rate of 11.7 (compared to New Jersey rate of 6.4). The local hospital in the Borough was closed in 2012 resulting in lost jobs and an abandoned facility for which a new use has not been determined. The dwindling tax base has



Figure 7 Closed Business in the Neighborhood

limited the municipal government's ability to make investments to move the Borough forward.

Municipal Plans

In late 2020 through early 2021, Sussex Borough partnered with the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs Office of Local Planning Services on an Economic Development Master Plan Element. Working committee members included residents, elected officials, business owners, and non-profit leaders. In April 2021, the results were presented to the Working Group for feedback with the full plan to be adopted by Borough leadership sometime in the Summer of 2021. The research and recommendations of that plan were heavily incorporated into this neighborhood plan.

Letter of Support from Borough

Norwescap has been working closely with the Borough of Sussex on the development of this plan. A letter of support from the Mayor can be found in Section 9.

Section 9. Neighborhood Assets & Involvement

6a. Neighborhood Assets

The neighborhood has tremendous potential for revitalization. Route 23 intersects the neighborhood providing access to shopping and proximity to a new ShopRite grocery store. The centerpiece of the neighborhood is the borough's picturesque Main Street, poised for new investment to revitalize the town's cultural and economic hub. Located on one end of that street, the Crescent Theatre is listed on both the New Jersey and National Registries Historic Places.

The Borough has incredible potential as a walkable community. The scenic Clove Lake, a short walk from Main Street, provides all-season recreational activities such as boating, kayaking and ice fishing. Main Street itself is home to multiple restaurants, such as Sussex Inn, attracting diners for both lunch and dinner. Tables 4 and 5 contain a list of community and regional assets located within the footprint of the Neighborhood.

Municipal Revitalization Priorities

In late 2020 through early 2021, Sussex Borough partnered with the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs Office of Local Planning Services on an Economic Development Master Plan Element. Working committee members included residents, elected officials, business owners, and non-profit leaders. In April 2021, the results were presented to the Working Group for feedback with the full plan to be adopted by Borough leadership sometime in the Summer of 2021. The research and recommendations of that plan were heavily incorporated into this neighborhood plan.

Recent Investment

In the last couple of years, new businesses like Manipura Soul Yoga have decided to locate in the heart of the neighborhood. These investments are attracting new consumers from across the region interested in cultural and wellness activities. In partnership with Habitat for Humanity, Norwescap remodeled an abandoned street front portion of the facility at 37 Main Street in anticipation of creating the Sussex Community and Cultural Center.

6b. Neighborhood Involvement

Community organization effectiveness

Norwescap has been active in Sussex Borough since 1995, providing subsidized housing for seniors and a variety of social services including Head Start. In 2019, Norwescap launched a renovation of an owned property at 37 Main Street. The facility housed apartments for older adults and had three vacant street-front units that had previously been

Table 4. Community Assets

Facility Type	Name	Address/Intersection
Educational	Sussex Middle School	10 Loomis Avenue
	Sussex-Wantage Preschool	37 Loomis Avenue
Fire/Police Stations	Sussex Fire House	25 Loomis Avenue
	Sussex Police Dept.	46 Harrison Street
Retail/Commercial Corridor	Get Juiced Health Bar & Café	4 Hamburg Avenue
	Sasha's Famous Empanadas	50 Main Street
	Taco of the Town	54 Main Street
	Early American Tavern	9 Main Street
	Sussex Saloon	15-17 Main Street
	Baker's Pharmacy	38 Main Street
	Main Street Barbers	51 Main Street
	Shear Intensity	69 Main Street
	Life Size Paws	71 Main Street
	Sussex Inn	9 Main Street
	Puff City Sussex	7 Mill Street
	Annabel Pizza	70 E. Main Street
	Grand Eastern Chinese Restaurant	7027 E. Main Street
	Napa Auto Parts	84 E. Main Street
Parks/Recreation	Brookside Park	End of Brookside Avenue
Community	Harvest House	37 Main Street
Celebrations/Events	Sussex Borough Day & Halloween Parade	--
	Easter Egg Hunt	--
	Tree Lighting	--
	Fireman's Parade	--
	Car Show	--
	Open Air Market	Deckertown Commons

Table 5. Regional Assets

Facility Type	Name	Address/Intersection
Art Gallery	Respectrum Arts	22 Main Street
Performance Space/Theater	Crescent Theater	74 Fountain Street
Lake	Clove Acres Lake	Route 23

classrooms for the organization’s Head Start program. In partnership with Habitat for Humanity, Norwescap remodeled those rooms in a first step of creating the Sussex Community & Cultural Center. This base is designed to be a location for community events, senior services, access to technology, and other enhancements. Despite the limitations of the COVID-19 pandemic, Norwescap has worked closely with its partners over the past twelve months to engage neighborhood residents in community development and community improvement events. A list of these activities can be found in Table 6.

Table 6. Community support and engagement events, past 12 months

Meeting or Event	Date(s)
Dialogue to Change Meetings	March 25, April 1, 8, 15, 22, 29
Steering Committee Meetings	March 11, April 8, May 13
Sussex Royals Pageant	August 5
Ice Cream Social	July 3, September 18
Moth Night	July 31
Ribbon Cutting for Sasha’s Famous Empanadas	March 13
Spring Celebration and Easter Egg hunt	March 20
Sussex Borough Saturdays Open Air Market	May 15
Economic Master Plan Working Committee	June 26, August 24, November 2, March 29, April 14

Section 7. Proposed Vision, Strategies, Activities & Outcomes

7a. Vision Statement

The vision for the neighborhood in the next ten years is an inclusive and **prosperous community** with **pride** in its past and its future growth. The community engagement process identified three key words that guided the creation of this neighborhood plan: **Community, Pride, and Prosperous**. Participants envisioned a community that was diverse in people, culture, and business. They described how all elements of the community could come together in shared events and collaborative ownership of public spaces.

The participants described having **pride** in their community as it is and watching that grow over time. They identified the unique architecture of the town and its “small town feel” as assets on which the residents could build. The participants identified this pride in many of the neighborhood’s business owners, but also cited a “bad feeling” of negativity surrounding the community. They believed that this negativity is starting to turn around, and the embers of this pride could be stoked with the right strategies and investment.

Finally, the participants identified the word **prosperous** as part of the vision for the neighborhood, embracing the concept that everyone should have the opportunity thrive. This would be evidenced by strong schools, aesthetically pleasing streetscapes, a thriving business community with frequent visitors from out of town, and increased employment opportunities within the Borough. This prosperity has begun to accelerate with an increase in home sales and renovations in the preceding year providing evidence of what is possible.

7b. Strategies

Based on the shared vision, three broad goals were established for the neighborhood over the next ten years:

- I. Cultivate an Inclusive, Safe, and Proud Neighborhood
- II. Create Prosperity for All
- III. Establish a safe, stable, and affordable place to call home

The following section provides a description of strategies used to foster preservation and revitalization in the neighborhood as related to the vision statement and the goals above. While Norwescap will take the lead on many aspects of these strategies, each will be conducted with relevant partnerships, weaving together the diversity of expertise and resources to maximize the outcomes associated with each initiative. Table 7 and 8 display a detailed list of projected strategies, activities, outcomes, budget, and timeline.

Goal 1: Cultivate an Inclusive, Safe, and Proud Neighborhood

Over the next ten years, the neighborhood will become more inclusive, safe, and proud. Community events and interactions will highlight the diversity of community

residents, weaving together a fabric of inclusivity. Improvements to streetscapes and pedestrian infrastructure will make the neighborhood a safe place to venture out. Build on the strong history of the community, these improvements will maximize the pride of the residents, business owners, and other stakeholders in the neighborhood, propelling it toward a vibrant future. Four core strategies will be employed to accomplish this goal.

Strategy 1: Establish New Parks and Paths. The presence and vibrancy of public spaces are essential to creating healthy communities. This strategy will increase the number of parks and paths and enhance existing spaces. This will include creating a new walking and biking path along Clove Brook, a stream that bisects the neighborhood after originating at Clove Lake. A new park will be established and enhanced at the “Boggs Field” on the border of the neighborhood. The vacant parcel will be established as an official park and have amenities added including playground equipment, walking paths, park benches, and lighting. Finally, feasibility studies will be completed for the including of a dog park at Brookside Park on the southeastern edge of the Borough.

Strategy 2: Increase Neighborhood Walkability. The neighborhood already has above average walkability, but some significant barriers can enhance this feature. Sidewalk gaps will be filled and repairs made to ensure continuous sidewalk access for neighborhood residents and visitors. Pedestrian-activated control devices will be installed at key intersections to enhance safety. Traffic will be slowed on Main Street by adding raised crosswalks and redirecting traffic around the historic foundation.

Strategy 3: Leverage Community Spaces. The neighborhood is rich with potential with several community spaces that could be enhanced to increase community interaction and access to resources. The Crescent Theater (74 Main Street) originally opened in 1917 with the showing a silent film and since has hosted thousands of shows and community events, in addition to serving as a temporary town hall and community center. The Center is currently leased by Cornerstone Playhouse.¹ This plan will enhance this great asset by conducting critical building repairs, marketing events, and enhancing events and offerings to draw more visitors to the Borough and enhance the quality of life for neighborhood residents. By increasing the use of this facility, jobs will be created, and volunteerism increased in the neighborhood.

Norwescap has operated a building in the heart of Main Street for more than 25 years. While part of the building is subsidized housing for seniors, three storefront units were recently remodeled with the intention of transforming them into the Sussex Community and Cultural Center. This location will serve as a senior center for the neighborhood’s aging residents, host community events, provide access to social services, and connect residents to technology via a computer lab.

Deckertown Commons is a green parklet outside the Crescent Theater off Main Street. This project will create an amphitheater within the Commons as a performance space. During summer months, the open space market takes place in this location with live music and theater activities. The new amphitheater will create a positive venue for residents and visitors to spend day in the heart of the neighborhood.

Strategy 4: Engagement Community Residents. The plan creation process has started to build momentum in engaging residents of all backgrounds in creating the future of the borough. To maintain this, activities will be employed to enhance communication and increase positive interaction among residents. Regular community roundtables will be held and a monthly newsletter will be created to disseminate information across the Borough. Unstructured activities, like kick-ball games or dance nights, will be hosted to bring residents together. A community garden will be established in Deckertown Commons to increase access to healthy foods and build a sense of community among neighborhood residents.

Goal 2: Create Prosperity for All

The neighborhood will become a place where more people have the opportunity to thrive. This includes building the economic environment of the neighborhood to support small businesses and create more jobs. Two key strategies will be deployed to achieve this goal.

Strategy 1: Bring More Visitors to the Borough. Sussex Borough is uniquely poised to be a destination for weekend visitors from across the region. By enhancing its activities and business environment, more people will come from outside the neighborhood, bringing their money and energy. Community events will be enhanced, most notably the Sussex Borough Day. A historic walking tour will be promoted and enhanced to connect visitors to the unique history of the neighborhood. Pop-up markets will be held to highlight local artisans, businesses, and farmers.

Strategy 2: Enhance Main Street Access. The heart of the neighborhood – and the economic heartbeat of the town is on its idyllic Main Street. This strategy will create more signage to direct people to the business district and enhance the availability and accessibility of parking. Pedestrian-scale lighting will be extended on Main Street and new signage will be added to direct visitors into the Main Street district. The signage will assist with wayfinding and advertise the businesses available in the district. Parking will be enhanced by opening more spaces and reducing permit parking to make way for visitor and resident access.

Goal 3: Establish a Safe, Stable, Affordable Place to Call Home

At the core of a thriving neighborhood is the ability of residents to own property, maintain their homes, and afford their payments. While the current housing market in the Borough presents some affordability challenges, three key strategies will be utilized to enhance the housing environment for neighborhood residents.

Strategy 1: Maintain Safe and Affordable Rental Properties. Renters make up a large proportion of neighborhood residents, but they face difficult challenges. The cost of rent is high and many properties are poorly-maintained, often due to absentee landlords that live outside the area. This strategy will establish code enforcement practices and policies that will ensure the maintenance of these rental units. The former Sussex hospital sits vacant with no current plans for re-development. This strategy will seek to put that property to use by creation of a mixed-use facility that could include housing, business, and/or medical facilities like assisted living. Finally, this strategy will seek to make enhancements to the subsidized senior housing building on Main Street, maintaining housing for those residents in the heart of the community.

Strategy 2: Promote Homeownership. With pride in their community, many residents of the neighborhood want to purchase property and establishing a long-term home. While the skyrocketing prices in the current market make this difficult, this strategy will provide home ownership education to help residents get on the path to purchasing a home. It will also provide assistance in down payments and closing costs, often a major barrier to a low- to moderate-income family moving from a renter to a homeowner.

Strategy 3: Maintain Home Values. For those that are homeowners – many who have spent decades in the neighborhood, the cost of maintaining property can be a challenge that threatens to reduce their wealth and force them to leave the community. This strategy will provide funding for critical home repairs by neighborhood home owners, allowing these residents to fix up vital parts of their homes, enhance neighborhood quality, and maintain high levels of home ownership in the neighborhood.

7c. Investments of Measurable Change

Investments from the NRTC program in the strategies listed above will spur measurable change and help maximize opportunity in the neighborhood. The multi-faceted approach will enhance the housing and business environments, while building the core fabric of community that makes such changes sustainable. As community pride grows and new investments add to those that are existing, the trajectory of the neighborhood will accelerate toward to the inclusive, proud, and prosperous community envisioned by its residents.

Norwescap has the capacity to facilitate this change within the neighborhood. With more than 25 years of investment on Main Street, Norwescap has been part of the fabric of this neighborhood through good and challenging times. The organization's tremendous success in Phillipsburg over the past few years will be translated to Sussex, brining a wealth of lessons learned in community engagement and neighborhood revitalizations to this new community.

Norwescap will build upon the solid set of assets already in the neighborhood. A growing body of residents are engaged as evidence by the participation in this plan creation,

Table 7: Form NP-3, Projected Strategies, Activities, and Outcomes

Strategies	Activities	Projected Outcomes	Evaluation	Data Source
Goal #1: Cultivate an Inclusive, Safe, and Proud Neighborhood				
Establish New Parks and Paths	Create a walking/biking path along Clove Brook	1 new path will be completed; 100 residents will use per month	Documentation of Utilization, Awareness, and Perception	Direct Observation, Surveys & Community Meetings
	Establish park in vacant parcel, called Boggs Field, on northwest side of Newton Avenue	1 new park will be completed; 500 residents will use per month	Documentation of Utilization, Awareness, and Perception	Direct Observation, Surveys & Community Meetings
	Explore creation of dog park in Brookside Park	1 new plan completed	Documentation of resident feedback	Surveys & Community Meetings
	Add public art installations and decorative lighting	5 structures added	Observation	Direct Observation
Increase Walkability and Pedestrian Safety in Community	Fill in sidewalk gaps and make sidewalk repairs	1,000 feet of sidewalk will be added or repaired	Documentation on pedestrian injuries and walking by residents	Pedestrian Safety Data, Direct Observation, Surveys & Community Meetings
	Install pedestrian-activated traffic control devices	2 new devices will be installed; Walking will increase by 10% in target areas	Documentation on pedestrian injuries and walking by residents	Pedestrian Safety Data, Direct Observation, Surveys & Community Meetings
	Use creative placemaking to formalize row connecting Main Street and Mill Street	Utilization of the pathways will increase by 10%	Documentation of pathway utilization	Direct Observation
	Adjust traffic pattern around historical fountain to slow traffic	Pedestrian perception of safety will increase by 5%	Documentation on pedestrian injuries and walking by residents	Pedestrian Safety Data, Direct Observation, Surveys & Community Meetings
Leverage Community Spaces	Maximize use of Community Theater	Attendance at theater events will increase by 50%	Documentation of ticket sales and attendance list	Attendance records

	Establish Sussex Community & Cultural Center	1,000 individuals will participate in the center	Documentation of attendance and participation	Attendance records
	Create and Amphitheater in Deckertown Commons	1,000 residents and visitors will attend an event at the amphitheater	Documentation of attendance and participation	Attendance records
Engage Community Residents	Host regular community roundtables	250 residents will attend a roundtable	Documentation of attendance	Attendance lists
	Establish monthly community newsletter	Newsletter will be disseminated to 400 households	Documentation of newsletter distribution	Distribution list
	Host regular, unstructured activities in the community	100 residents will attend an unstructured event	Documentation of signups and attendance	Attendance lists
	Establish the Deckertown Community Garden	25 residents will participant in community garden	Documentation of plot signups	Sign-up lists
Goal 2: Create Prosperity for All				
Bring more visitors to the Borough	Grow Sussex Borough Day into a larger event	Increase attendance at Sussex Borough Day event by 15%	Documentation of attendance	Direct observation and ticket sales
	Establish historic walking tour	250 people will complete the historic walking tour	Documentation of sign-ups, downloads of map, and access to digital site	Internet records
	Establish Pop-Up Markets highlighting local artisans/businesses /farmers	750 residents and visitors will attend pop-up markets	Documentation of attendance	Direct observation
Enhance Main Street Access	Extend pedestrian scale lighting on Main Street to the gateway	Visitors to Main Street will increase by 10%	Documentation of traffic	Direct observation & traffic study
	Consolidate NJDOT directional signage and add signage for wayfinding	Visitors to Main Street will increase by 10%	Documentation of traffic	Direct observation & traffic study
	Install new signage in the median to advertise Main Street Businesses	Visitors to Main Street will increase by 10%	Documentation of traffic	Direct observation & traffic study

	Increase parking availability and accessibility	Increase the number of parking spots by 10%	Documentation of parking spots	Borough records & direct observation
	Enhance intersection of Main Street and Newton Avenue	Visitors to Main Street will increase by 10%	Documentation of traffic	Direct observation & traffic study
Goal 3: Establish a Safe, Stable, Affordable Place to Call Home				
Maintain safe and affordable rental properties	Establish code enforcement practices to ensure property maintenance	Code enforcement actions will increase by 10%	Documentation of code enforcement activities	Borough records
	Re-develop vacant Sussex hospital into mixed-use facility	Establish tenants within vacant property	Documentation of lease or ownership	Borough records
	Maintain subsidized housing for seniors on main street	10 seniors will have subsidized housing	Documentation of leases	Agency records
Promote homeownership	Provide home ownership education for prospective buyers	50 residents will complete homeownership education courses	Documentation of course attendance	Attendance records
	Give down payment and close cost assistance to lower-income home buyers	10 residents will receive assistance in purchasing their home	Documentation of payment records	Payment requests
Maintain property values	Provide funding for critical home repairs to neighborhood residents	10 residents will receive funding for critical home repairs	Documentation of payment records	Payment requests

and the Borough Council and Mayor are key partners in this effort. The core architecture, infrastructure, and relationships are already in place with this plan providing direction and resources to build upon the strengths that exist and create a more prosperous future for all.

Table 8: Form NP-4, Projected Activities Budget & Timetable

Proposed Activity	Estimated Cost	Sources of Funding	Uses of Funding	Role of Lead Organization and Partners	Timetable Short (1-2 years) Medium (3-5 years) Long (5+ years)
Create a walking/biking path along Clove Brook	\$100,000	NRTC Borough Budget	Path clearing and paving	Lead: Program Development and Oversight Partners: Volunteer Labor, Landscape Design	Medium
Establish park in vacant parcel, called Boggs Field, on northwest side of Newton Avenue	\$250,000	NRTC Borough Budget	Establishment of walking path Purchase of benches and tables Addition of playground equipment and recreational facilities	Lead: Program Development and Oversight Partners: Volunteer Labor, Landscape Design	Medium
Explore creation of	\$10,000	NRTC	Community Engagement	Lead: Facilitation	Short

dog park in Brookside Park			Research	Partners: Plan creation; Community engagement activities	
Add public art installations and decorative lighting projects	\$30,000	NRTC	Purchase and installation of amenities	Lead: Program Development and Oversight	
Fill in sidewalk gaps and make sidewalk repairs	\$75,000	NRTC Department of Transportation Borough budget	Leveling and paving	Lead: Program Development and Oversight Partners: Design & Labor	Medium
Install pedestrian-activated traffic control devices	\$20,000	NRTC Borough budget	Purchase and installation	Lead: Program Development and Oversight Partners: Installation	Short
Use creative placemaking to formalize row connecting Main Street and Mill Street	\$50,000	NRTC	Design Repairs and painting	Lead: Program Development and Oversight Partners: Design, Artwork	Medium
Adjust traffic pattern around historical fountain to slow traffic	\$10,000	NRTC Borough Budget	Traffic Design Signage	Lead: Program Development and Oversight	Short

				Partners: Design, Installation	
Maximize use of Community Theater	\$50,000	NRTC	???		
Establish Sussex Community & Cultural Center	\$125,000	NRTC	Building remodel, Technology access, Signage	Lead: Program Development and Oversight	Short
Create and Amphitheater in Deckertown Commons	\$90,000	NRTC	Construction, Signage	Lead: Program Development and Oversight Partners: Design, Construction	Medium
Host regular community roundtables	\$10,000	NRTC Borough budget	Facilitation, Meals, Facility costs	Lead: Program Development and Oversight Partners: Recruitment, Co-facilitation	Short
Establish monthly community newsletter	\$10,000	NRTC Borough budget	Software, Templates	Lead: Program Development and Oversight Partners: Content contribution, Design	Short
Host regular, unstructured activities in	\$20,000	NRTC	Supplies, Promotional Materials, Prizes	Lead: Program Development and Oversight	Short

the community				Partners: Promotion, Co-facilitation	
Establish the Deckertown Community Garden	\$20,000	NRTC	Supplies, Plants, Fencing	Lead: Program Development and Oversight Partners: Design, Construction, Maintenance	Short
Grow Sussex Borough Day into a larger event	\$75,000	NRTC Borough budget	Entertainment , Signage, Promotional materials, Marketing	Lead: Facilitation Partners: Planning, Organization	Medium
Establish historic walking tour	\$10,000	NRTC Borough Budget	Printing of maps, Signage, Development of website	Lead: Program Development and Oversight Partners: Web and graphic design; Promotion	Short
Establish Pop-Up Markets highlighting local artisans/businesses/farmers	\$15,000	NRTC	Marketing, Signage, Tables, Tents	Lead: Program Development and Oversight Partners: Promotion, Organization	Short
Extend pedestrian scale lighting on Main Street to the gateway	\$130,000	NRTC Borough budget	Lighting purchase, Installation	Lead: Program Development and Oversight Partners: Installation	Medium

Consolidate NJDOT directional signage and add signage for wayfinding	\$60,000	NRTC Borough budget	Signage purchase, Installation	Lead: Program Development and Oversight Partners: Installation	Short
Install new signage in the median to advertise Main Street Businesses	\$10,000	NRTC Borough budget	Signage purchase, Installation	Lead: Program Development and Oversight Partners: Installation	Short
Increase parking availability and accessibility	\$20,000	NRTC Borough budget	Signage, Painting	Lead: Program Development and Oversight Partners: Installation, Painting	Short
Enhance intersection of Main Street and Newton Avenue	\$45,000	NRTC Borough budget	Signage, Painting	Lead: Program Development and Oversight Partners: Installation, Painting	Medium
Establish code enforcement practices to ensure property maintenance	\$5,000	NRTC	Consultant on best practices	Lead: Program Development and Oversight Partners: Implementation and Maintenance	Short
Re-develop vacant Sussex hospital into	\$450,000	NRTC Private investors	Purchase and remodeling of facility	Lead: Program Development and Oversight	Long

mixed-use facility				Partners: Construction, Marketing	
Maintain subsidized housing for seniors on main street	\$100,000	NRTC	Construction and remodeling costs	Lead: Program Development and Oversight	Medium
Provide home ownership education for prospective buyers	\$20,000	NRTC	Course instructor and materials	Lead: Program Development and Oversight Partners: Teach course	Short
Give down payment and close cost assistance to lower-income home buyers	\$100,000	NRTC	Direct payments	Lead: Program Development and Oversight	Medium
Provide funding for critical home repairs to neighborhood residents	\$250,000	NRTC	Direct payments	Lead: Program Development and Oversight Partners: Construction support	Medium

Section 8. Participatory Planning Requirement

The Sussex Borough Neighborhood Revitalization Plan was developed in collaboration with a broad array of constituents representing various stakeholder groups within the Borough including residents, property owners, businesspersons, non-profit organizations, and the municipal government.

Steering Committee

A Steering Committee was formed for the project with representation from various stakeholder groups. A total of 10 people participated in 5 meetings to shape the planning process and guide the selection of results. The group continues to meet weekly to ensure implementation of revitalization strategic steps. The Steering Committee members were:

- Linda Smith, Senior Vice President, Lakeland Bank
- Ed Meyers, Mayor
- Mario Poggi, Town Council Member
- Frank Dykstra, Town Council Member
- Anita Riley, Small business owner
- Stephen Denman, Sussex Borough small business owner
- Geoffrey Cornelius Gray, Local Planning Services, New Jersey Department of Community Affairs
- Dianna Morrison, Norwescap
- Mary Jo Harris, Norwescap
- Demaria Liras, Sussex Borough Resident

Minutes and attendance sheets from the Steering Committee meetings are included in Section 9 evidence of community input.

Community Input

To engage a broad cross-section of the community, a variety of outreach efforts were conducted. Information about Dialogue to Change was posted on the municipality website and email invitations were sent to Borough residents and to Norwescap participants. To effectively collect input from the community, Norwescap utilized multiple methodologies. First, a survey was created to identify community priorities. The survey link was placed on the Borough website and sent via email to stakeholders. A total of 61 households (representing 153 people) and 8 small businesses responded to the instrument, and the results were utilized to inform future data collection. A copy of the survey results is included Section 9.

Next, a modification of the Dialogue to Change curriculum created by Everyday Democracy was utilized to engage neighborhood stakeholders in the planning process. This methodology is used to engage diverse groups in conversation around issues of interest in

their communities, moving through a process of group formation, asset and need identification, and action item selection. Two facilitators led the sessions over a course of six weeks utilizing Zoom due to pandemic safety restrictions. In total, 15 people participated representing community residents (11), municipal government (4), businesspersons (2), non-profit organizations (3), and other stakeholders (1). Meeting notes and attendance lists are attached in Section 9.

Municipal Partnership

Norwescap worked closely with the Borough of Sussex government throughout this entire project. Prior to engaging in the planning grant, a presentation was made to the Borough Council about the project. Elected representatives have been involved in all stages of the process including the Steering Committee and Dialogues to Change. On March 4, 2021, formal written notice was supplied to the municipal government to indicate the intent to create a neighborhood plan (see Section 9 for letter). The draft plan was submitted to the Borough Council on May 18th and final plan submitted on May 28th. A public meeting was held on May 13th to review the plan and solicit feedback.

Section 9. Attachments

- a. Signed certification on Form NP-1 (Applicant Organization only)
 - b. "Certificate of Good Standing" from State of NJ
 - c. Copy of current NJ Charitable Registration and Investigation Act (CRI – 300R) form
 - d. List of current members of the Board of Directors, as January 1, 2019
 - e. Resume for Executive Director
 - f. Organizational Chart
 - g. Organization's total budget for the current year, with funding sources listed (Applicant Organization only)
 - h. Copy of the minutes of the Board of Directors meeting at which the organization's current year total budget was approved (Applicant Organization only)
 - i. Copy of the three (3) most recent annual audit reports for the organization (Applicant Organization only)
 - j. Copy of the corrective action plan related to internal control or compliance findings from the organization's most recent annual audit report, if applicable (Applicant Organization only)
 - k. Incorporation Documents
 - l. Neighborhood maps (At least one of the maps must be "plain," showing streets and street names.) (Applicant Organization only)
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