



# **BOROUGH OF DONORA**

## **WASHINGTON COUNTY**

### **EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM**

### **SPECIAL CONDITIONS REPORT COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND BLIGHT STRATEGY**

**PREPARED BY:  
GRASS ROOT SOLUTIONS**

**JULY 2019**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY -KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION ..... 2  
    FACTORS IN DONORA THAT SUPPORT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ..... 2  
    FACTORS IN DONORA THAT ARE BARRIERS TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ..... 3  
    PRIORITY STRATEGIES FOR CONSIDERATION ..... 4  
COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FACTORS ..... 7  
    INTRODUCTION ..... 7  
    LOCATION ..... 8  
    PUBLIC SERVICES ..... 9  
EMPLOYMENT AND WORKFORCE ..... 14  
THE MARKET ..... 17  
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT..... 19  
    INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES ..... 19  
CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT ..... 23  
    CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT STRATEGIES ..... 23  
THE RESIDENTIAL MARKET AND NEIGHBORHOODS ..... 28  
    RESIDENTIAL AND NEIGHBORHOOD STRATEGIES ..... 34  
APPENDIX A – DONORA INDUSTRIAL PARK ..... 45

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY -KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

### FACTORS IN DONORA THAT SUPPORT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Donora's location is a strong factor for economic development because of links to major transportation systems, employment centers, river, rail, and air transportation providing access to employment center.
- The current market has the potential to capture both retail and dining activity –there are \$225million being spent by consumers in the Market Area (10 minute drive time) that are not being captured in Donora.
- Limited and full-service restaurants are opportunities for the Borough because this segment is currently severely underserved in the Donora area.
- Industry segments that are strong, projected to increase in the future, and should be maximized are health, professional, and personal service industries.
- There is a robust industrial park in Donora along the Monongahela River with good highway, river barge, and truck access and there are thirty (30) acres still available in the 256-acre park.
- Reported crime statistics in Donora are low and have been decreasing over the past five (5) years.
- Housing vacancy is higher than the regional vacancy rate. Persons who are interested in affordable housing could be potential new residents because housing stock is available at a reasonable cost. A purchaser can buy a home in Donora for the average cost of \$45,000.
- Palmer Park provides excellent recreation facilities and amenities that are attractive to residents and businesses.
- Both baby boomers and "millennials" (the largest population segments) are looking for housing that matches their lifestyles which includes: walkability, proximity to Borough amenities, and transportation to employment, entertainment, medical facilities, education facilities, and sporting events – all of which are characteristics of the Donora community.
- The overall housing market is robust in the Pittsburgh Metro area and Donora could take advantage of the healthy market because of its location and its one-hour commute by automobile travel to employment centers in Pittsburgh, Washington, North Huntingdon, and the South Hills communities in Allegheny County.

---

## FACTORS IN DONORA THAT ARE BARRIERS TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

---

- The lack of population growth and household growth create a challenge for a robust development environment. However, small increases in population, households, and employment growth are projected for future years.
- The quality and mediocre performance of the Ringgold School District and surrounding districts is not attractive to families with school age children. The Borough may need to focus on attracting younger (20-30 years of age) and older populations (50 years of age and over) who are not affected by the school district.
- There is a perception in the Borough of being “unsafe” and “in decline.” This perception keeps residents and businesses from moving into the Borough when they have other options that are nearby.
- The intra-municipal road system within the Borough is excellent – but there is no long-term pavement management program for addressing improvements in the commercial district and in the neighborhoods.
- Land use regulations are outdated. There should be a comprehensive plan, zoning ordinance and subdivision and land development update that support modern development. The Borough should also adopt the latest version of the International Property Maintenance Code (IPMC) for residential and commercial inspections.
- Although the Borough offers full services, there is limited capacity in the Borough Office to oversee a robust community development process and to implement important initiatives. Economic development requires constant attention and support from staff and officials and integration with county and regional assets and resources.
- The code enforcement position is currently vacant and has been in transition for several years. As a result, there is no proactive code enforcement - housing stock and business structures are at risk for deterioration and decline.
- There are blighted and vacant properties in both the commercial and residential districts that must be addressed through a strategic and focused blight and vacant property plan. Blight reduces the value of properties and discourages private investment.
- The relatively low consumer spending and low median incomes in the primary market area is a disincentive for private developers to invest in new commercial development. Quality housing stock attracts people with higher incomes which drives consumer spending.
- The Borough is lacking some of the recreational and lifestyle amenities that potential property owners seek when making a decision about purchasing commercial and residential properties.

## PRIORITY STRATEGIES FOR CONSIDERATION

Although all of the strategies identified in this report deserve attention and consideration by Borough staff and officials, the following six (6) high priority strategies should be implemented as soon as possible to "jump start" the Borough's economic development efforts.

One

### **TAKE STEPS TO REMOVE THE PERCEPTION THAT DONORA IS UNSAFE AND IN DECLINE**

Although the crime statistics for Donora indicate that crime is decreasing, there is a perception that residents are "unsafe" and concerned about visiting the central business district especially in the evenings. The perception of crime can be just as big a challenge as actual high crime in a community.

#### **Install Community Policing Practices**

One strategy that urban communities have adopted that has been relatively successful in addressing the perception of high crime rates is to implement proactive, community focused policing. Community policing emphasizes proactive enforcement that proposes that street crime can be reduced through greater community involvement and integration between citizens and police. Community policing departments and officers must commit time to develop a "partnership" with the community to: 1) prevent and counter crime; 2) maintain order; and 3) reduce the fear of crime. Typically, the police organization is organized so that every police officer has a neighborhood to patrol with agreed upon goals and objectives to meet. Police officers should regularly interface with the majority of the citizens of the community where they patrol, and perceive themselves as sharing similar values and beliefs so they are confident in their decision making ability. Each police officer should get out of their cars (not just drive by and grin and wave) to visit with citizens and businesses to learn the residents' concerns and show they're a friend and protector-in contrast to "strict law enforcement" or "reactive policing" which doesn't view the citizens as customers. Proactive policing attempts to solve the problem through a change in the perception of the police officers and residents rather than an increase in manpower or resources.

#### **Crime Prevention Through Design**

Communities can also use principles from Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTD) when creating and installing improvements in the business district. Several studies have demonstrated that architectural design can be used effectively to influence crime rates in neighborhoods. These studies show that by combining security hardware, psychology, and site design, a physical environment can be developed that would, by its very nature, discourage crime. CPTED is a relatively new concept. It is a blend of physical and psychological aspects and features that will discourage crime. It makes possible designs that offer protection without resorting to the "prison camp" approach for security. It employs physical design features that discourage crime.

Two

### **CONSIDER THE CREATION OF A DOWNTOWN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

The Borough should consider encouraging the creation of a Community Development Corporation by persons who have a substantial interest in revitalizing and redeveloping the Central Business District (CBD) along McKean

Avenue and Meldon Avenue. Once incorporated as a non-profit, the CDC should be charged with focusing on issues around the central business district and the adjacent neighborhoods. These issues should include but not be limited to:

- A primary corridor plan for gateways to the business district
- A blight strategy plan for the central business district and surrounding neighborhoods
- A recruitment and retainment plan for new and existing businesses
- A marketing and community events plan
- Design guidelines for place-making and urban trails

### Three

#### **PURSUE DEDICATED FUNDS TO SUPPORT THE CDC THROUGH THE NEIGHBORHOOD PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM**

The CDC should identify corporate sponsors in order to make an application for the DCED NAP/NPP program. This application is due most years by June 30. The NPP/NAP program is established and funded by the PA Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) to encourage long-term collaborations (five years or more) of business, government and community leaders to produce a comprehensive, asset-based and relationship-driven approach to community development. Tax credits can be approved for corporate sponsors up to \$500,000 per year for up to six (6) years to support programs and projects in financially challenged communities. The CDC must do the following in order to apply for these funds:

- Identify a corporate sponsor/partner (financial institution, medical facility, corporation)
- Identify programs and projects that the Borough would like to undertake (blight removal, housing rehabilitation, job training, beautification)
- Identify service provider partners (i.e. the local Library, Rebuild Pittsburgh, Habitat for Humanity, the Heritage Center, the Salvation Army)
- Make application by the deadline which is announced every year by the DCED.
- Make application by the deadline which is announced every year by the DCED.

### Four

#### **DEVELOP A COMMUNITY-WIDE BLIGHT STRATEGY- REQUEST GRANT FUNDS THROUGH DCED**

Blight may be the number one threat to public safety, reinvestment, and the quality of life in older urban communities. Blight is bad for business and bad for people and neighborhoods. The cost of blight is high – not only are there direct costs for police, fire, public works, and code enforcement services but the cost of maintenance and demolitions is in the tens of thousands of dollars. Blight also reduces the value of surrounding properties resulting in tens of thousands of dollars of loss to individual property owners. With dozens of blighted and vacant properties in Donora, the Borough officials recognize that the status quo is not acceptable and that something must be done to address this problem.

For this reason, blight remediation is and should be the Borough's top priority for facilitating and promoting redevelopment. Redevelopment is important for increasing and expanding the tax base and the expectation is that once the Borough has a more

systematic blight management process and begins to see additional successes, the focus will shift from blight remediation to redevelopment efforts.

## Five

### **PRIORITIZE DEMOLITIONS**

A strategic approach to using demolition funds to eliminate blighted properties is important because of the scarcity of these funds for demolition purposes. The Borough should work with its building code services contractor, MCS, to establish an efficient process for condemning blighted properties and preparing them for demolition using a thorough and legalistic approach. As part of this process, the Borough should set up a Blight and Vacant Property Committee to review properties for demolition, rehabilitation, or potential sale to adjacent property owners or to interested private investors.<sup>1</sup>

Demolition is the backbone of the Borough's blight strategy and adequate financial resources should be made available annually to allow for consistent elimination of the properties most detrimental to the Borough's image and property values. A formal strategic approach to demolition should be pursued by the Borough in order to ensure that priority areas are addressed and economic development is enhanced. A comprehensive approach is included in this report.



## Six

### **INSTALL AND MAINTAIN THE PROPER TECHNOLOGY**

Land Management and Code Enforcement should be data driven – not complaint driven. High quality data collection allows code enforcement officials and contracted services to target their limited resources toward the most effective use. The goal should be to create a property history for every parcel in the Borough that provides a view of everything that is happening or has ever happened for every property. There are two important technology applications that the Borough should routinely update and secure: 1) software user interface and 2) GIS mapping and asset management. These are two distinct and separate types of technology that can and should be installed and interfaced.

---

<sup>1</sup> If a community development corporation (CDC) is created as recommended in Priority 2, many of the activities related to the demolition, clearance, acquisition and sale of blighted property can be accomplished through the CDC.

## COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FACTORS

### INTRODUCTION

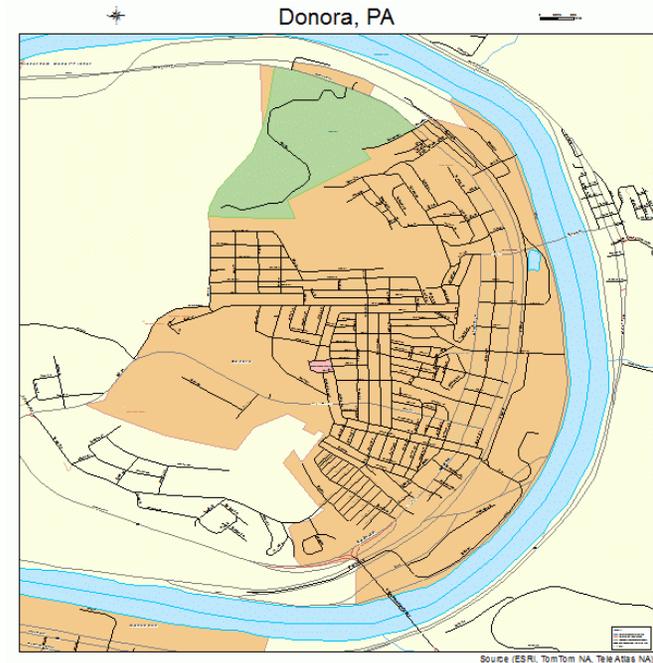
This study will focus on strategies and action items that achieve the elimination of blight and support and advance community and economic development in the Borough.

**Economic development** is defined as the sustained, concerted actions of policy makers and communities that promote the standard of living and economic health of a community. Community and economic development encourages the use of local resources in a way that enhances economic opportunities while improving social conditions in a sustainable way. In general, the goal should be to improve the standard of living through the creation of jobs, the support of innovation and new ideas, the creation of wealth, and the enhancement of the quality of life.

Many times these objectives include building or improving infrastructure such as roads, bridges, and improving the education system through new schools; enhancements to public safety through fire and police services; or incentivizing new businesses to open a location in a community.

Economic development often is categorized into the following three major areas:

- Governments working on big economic objectives such as creating jobs or growing an economy. These initiatives can be accomplished through written laws, industries' regulations, and tax incentives or collections.
- Programs that provide infrastructure and services such as better highways, community parks, new school programs and facilities, public libraries or swimming pools, new hospitals, and crime prevention initiatives.
- Job creation and business retention through workforce development programs to help people get the needed skills and education they need. This also includes small business development programs that are geared to help entrepreneurs get financing or network with other small businesses. <sup>2</sup>



<sup>2</sup> Michigan State University, Study Guide, <https://study.com/academy/lesson/what-is-economic-development-definition-examples.html>

Economic development occurs most often in communities where certain factors are present. These include:

1. Location and transportation access.
2. Public services including good permitting processes, public safety, streets, and utility connections.
3. Market conditions that identify specific opportunities and a demand for specific services.
4. Land use regulations that facilitate and support sound land use and development practices.

As part of this community and economic development study, each of these factors was examined in order to develop specific recommendations for more effective economic development and redevelopment strategies. Extensive data, key findings, recommendations, and action strategies are provided in the following sections of this report for consideration by Council and management.

**LOCATION**

In real estate development, location is everything and Donora has some location advantages. Donora, located on the banks of the Monongahela River, has a total land area of 2.05 square miles and is 52 miles or 1 hour southeast of the City of Pittsburgh, a major employment center. Located along State Route 837 and within minutes of Interstate 70 and the PA turnpike, the Borough is easily accessible by automobile travel to employment centers in Pittsburgh, Washington, North Huntingdon, and the South Hills communities in Allegheny County. There is a natural connection for residents and businesses between Donora and Charleroi, Belle Vernon, and Monongahela. The Borough is completely surrounded by Carroll Township. In fact, most residents use cars, trucks or vans as their primary travel and report only a 25-minute commute to employment locations. **Table 1** provides information about the means of transportation that Donora residents use to travel to work.

TABLE 1 – DONORA RESIDENTS MEANS OF TRAVEL TO WORK

<b>MEANS OF TRAVEL TO WORK</b>	
Car, Truck, or Van	90.2%
Public Transportation	5.3%
Walked	1.7%
Bicycled	0.0%
Taxicab, Motorcycle, or Other	.4%
Worked at Home	2.4%

SOURCE: US CENSUS BUREAU, AMERICAN FACT FINDER, 2013-2017 ACS

Active rail service and river barges to industrial establishments located along the Monongahela River provide opportunities for manufacturing in the Industrial Park and industrial establishments along the river. The Borough is 60 miles or 1 hour from the Pittsburgh International Airport and 45 minutes (25 miles) from the Allegheny County airport.

## PUBLIC SERVICES

### MANAGEMENT

The Borough provides full services including paid police and volunteer fire departments. The Borough Building serves as the primary location for economic development information and applications for permits and licenses. The Borough Manager is the primary contact for development and construction activities in the Borough. The Manager responds to residents, customers, and development inquiries. Although the Borough has a website, the information is limited and it does not provide easy interaction for inquiries and information. This is a serious problem for attracting potential private investors to the community. Without a lively, dynamic website with easy access to information, the Borough is missing an opportunity for private interest and investment in the community.

### PUBLIC SAFETY

#### Police Department

The Borough operates its own police department with 6 full-time (including the Chief) sworn officers and 10 part-time officers. According to the American Society for Public Administration, PA Times, "the safety of the public and their neighborhoods is the most important job of government. All the efforts to build infrastructure, develop great schools, recruit high-wage jobs, and provide great public services and recreational amenities all pale in comparison to the importance of crime prevention strategies. Without safe streets, residents move, businesses relocate, schools collapse and neighborhoods that thrive become shells of their existence. Many strategies exist to address crime—most of these involve modern law enforcement. However, many public administrators forget how economic development strategies can help address neighborhood crime."

The good news is that the Borough crime statistics reveal a low crime rate and the numbers have been going down over the past three years. **Table 2** provides a history of the known offenses in Donora that have been reported to the PA Uniform Crime Reporting System over the past five (5) years.



TABLE 2 - BOROUGH OF DONORA OFFENSES KNOWN TO LAW ENFORCEMENT 2014 - 2018

	OFFENSES	OFFENSES	OFFENSES	OFFENSES	OFFENSES
	KNOWN	KNOWN	KNOWN	KNOWN	KNOWN
CLASSIFICATION OF OFFENSES	2018 YTD	2017 YTD	2016 YTD	2015 YTD	2014 YTD
02A-Rape	0	1	0	0	0
04E-Other Assaults - Not Aggravated	0	0	3	0	2
05A-Burglary Forcible Entry	0	0	0	0	4
05B-Burglary Unlawful Entry - No Force	0	1	0	1	0
060-Larceny-Theft	3	4	1	4	8
110-Fraud	2	4	0	0	0
130-Stolen Prop., Rec., Posses., Buying	0	0	0	0	1
140-Vandalism	0	2	2	2	2
150-Weapons, Carrying, Posses, Etc.	0	0	0	0	1
160-Prostitution and Commercialized Vice	0	1	0	0	0
170-Sex Offenses (Except 02 and 160)	0	1	0	0	0
18A-Drug Sale/Mfg - Opium - Cocaine	1	0	0	1	0
18B-Drug Sale/Mfg - Marijuana	0	0	0	1	1
18C-Drug Sale/Mfg - Synthetic	2	0	0	0	0
18D-Drug Sale/Mfg - Other	0	1	0	0	0
18E-Drug Possession - Opium - Cocaine	0	0	0	1	1
200-Offenses Against Family & Children	0	1	1	0	0
210-Driving Under the Influence	0	0	0	8	0
220-Liquor Law	0	0	0	0	1
230-Drunkenness	0	0	1	1	0
240-Disorderly Conduct	0	4	5	6	4
260-All Other Offenses (Except Traffic)	0	1	1	5	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>29</b>

SOURCE: PA UNIFORM CRIME REPORTING SYSTEM, PA STATE POLICE, COMMONWEALTH OF PA  
[HTTP://WWW.PAUCRS.PA.GOV/UCR/COMMAIN.ASP](http://www.paucrs.pa.gov/UCR/COMMAIN.ASP)

The bad news is that the Borough does not present itself as a safe and clean community with low crime statistics because of the presence of blighted structures and low activity in the business district. The perception of being “unsafe” is a barrier to the essential long term economic health and sustainability of the Borough.



### **Fire Department**

The Donora Volunteer Fire Department was incorporated on November 3, 1903. The Donora Fire Company has come a long way since 1901; the website states that “equipment is new and improved and also classified as ‘state of the art,’ especially our vehicles.” The company is very active and hosts several fund raising events to support the department. The following equipment is listed on the website: 2017 Ford F-550 Truck; 2007 American LaFrance Ladder Truck; 2010 Mustang Trailer for hauling equipment; 1999 American LaFrance Eagle Pumper; 1978 American LaFrance Pumper; 2014 Swift Water Rescue Raft; 1993 River Rescue Boat; and 1999 Ford Squad Truck with rescue equipment.

### **PROPERTY MAINTENANCE CODE ENFORCEMENT**

The code enforcement and community development operation are housed in the Borough Building under the Borough Manager. The Borough has adopted the 2012 International Property Maintenance Code (IPMC). The code enforcement officer position is currently vacant – for this reason, there is no proactive code enforcement being undertaken at this time. Most of the activity in the department is complaint and permit driven. Complaints and action taken are documented on a spreadsheet and on paper in the Borough Office. There is a monthly report of activity prepared and submitted to the Borough Council. A land management module from Freedom Systems is available but not currently installed or used by the Borough.

### **BUILDING INSPECTION**

The Borough uses contracted services through Municipal Consulting Services (MCS) to enforce the Uniform Construction Code (UCC). The Borough has opted into the PA Uniform Construction Code (UCC) and the building inspection is overseen under a contract with MCS. MCS performs all commercial inspection services, plan reviews, and any other blueprint or architectural review required. Since there is not much new construction in the Borough, the contracted services are a good option for UCC compliance.

### **RECREATION ASSETS**

Donora has an extensive and rich supply of regional and local recreational assets. This is an important economic development driver. The Borough owns and maintains three parks and a large memorial within the Borough. Palmer Park, at 122 acres, is the most important community asset with picnic pavilions, soccer fields for adult and youth games, youth baseball fields, rest rooms, water fountains, benches, playground equipment for children, tennis courts, Deck Hockey, a launch and landing area for model plane enthusiasts, paved walking trail. All of the Borough parks require a high level of mowing and “weed eating” as well as



significant attention to condition assessments such as playground structures, paved walking surfaces, fencing deficiencies, tree maintenance and general attention to detail for the grounds intended use - like field and sport court condition.

**ROADS**

The highway system that leads to and is directly adjacent to Donora (State Routes 837 and 906) is very good and the roadway system within the Borough is fully developed. The Borough crews maintain 22.7 miles of paved, brick, and concrete constructed roadways. They receive an allocation of approximately \$160,000 from Liquid Fuels. Meldon Avenue and McKean Avenue are the primary arterial streets. There is no pavement management plan and no dedicated funding for street paving.

**STORM AND SANITARY UTILITIES**

**Storm Sewer System**

The Borough has a Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) and has a long term plan to separate the system that is coordinated by the Mon Valley Sewer Authority. Beginning in 2018, the Borough was mandated as an MS4 permitted community. Since CSO's are not included in the calculation for MS4 purposes, the Borough has a smaller footprint for its program. The storm system consists of hundreds of basins, pipes of various material and sizes, along with above ground pipes and swales. There is currently no coordinated plan to maintain and upgrade this system.

**Sanitary Sewer System**

The Mon Valley Sewer Authority owns the sanitary sewer treatment facility and manages the administrative and regulatory issues for its member communities including collection system issues. There is a long term control plan





(LTCP) that was completed by Gannett Fleming to separate the system that was completed for the Mon Valley Sewer Authority in 2007. The Mon Valley Sewer Authority Act 537 Plan was updated in 2013 and provided updates to the collection system updates for the member communities. There are extensive financial obligations assigned to the Borough in LTCP, PRP and Act 537 plans related to the collection system separation, collection system facility development, and sewer treatment plant capacity. The Borough has adopted a sewer surcharge to support these improvements.

### **RINGGOLD SCHOOL DISTRICT**

The Ringgold School District provides k-12 education for the municipalities of Donora, Monongahela, Carroll Township, Nottingham Township, New Eagle, Finleyville, and Union Township. Located in Washington County in southwestern Pennsylvania, Ringgold School District serves 2800 children in four schools: one high school, one middle school, and two elementary schools. One of the smaller school districts in western Pennsylvania, the Ringgold School District is not a highly rated school district, ranking 406 out

of 603 school districts in Pennsylvania based on the 2018 performance scores. The surrounding school districts provide competition with Ringgold in that they vary greatly from Peters Township at number 1, to Canon-McMillan at 102, to Charleroi at 357 out of 603 school districts. The Ringgold School District's performance improved from 2017 (Ringgold was ranked higher than only 29% of other PA School Districts) to 2018 (Ringgold ranked higher than 37% of other PA School Districts). But the school district is ranked one of the lowest in the region. This is a challenge for attracting new residents with school age children to the Borough.

### **THE DONORA LIBRARY**

The Donora Public Library was founded in 1930. It serves as a community center for Donora residents. In 2018, the Library was awarded a \$250,000 Local Share Account grant dedicated to the construction of a new building addition. The expansion will provide greater accessibility for patrons, increased community gathering spaces and will allow for larger exhibits and events. Additional meeting space, new technology and new programming have been made possible through a generous grant from the Washington County Community Foundation and gifts from private individuals. The Donora Public Library is located at 510 Meldon Avenue and is open Mondays through Saturdays.



EMPLOYMENT AND WORKFORCE

According to the American Community Survey, 2013-2017, there are 1,790 persons who work in Donora in various industry segments regardless of where they live at any given time. **Table 3** provides information about the various industry segments where employees are employed.

TABLE 3 – EMPLOYEES WORKING IN INDUSTRY SEGMENTS

INDUSTRY SEGMENT	NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	24
Construction	89
Manufacturing	258
Wholesale Trade	45
Retail Trade	215
Transportation and Warehousing	108
Information	0
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	115
Professional, Scientific, Management	124
Educational Services	522
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	131
Public Administration	74
Other Services	85
<b>Total</b>	<b>1790</b>

SOURCE: US CENSUS, ACS 2013-2017, BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

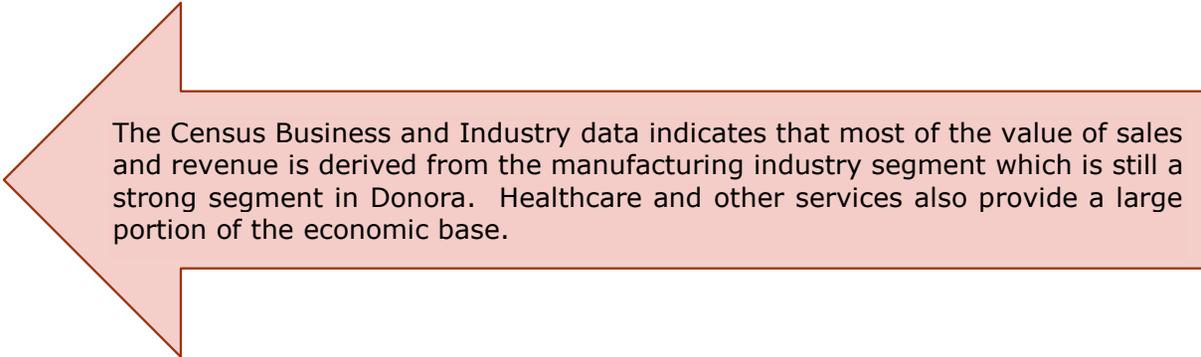
According to ACS Census data, there were 522 employees working in Educational Services. Manufacturing and Retail Trade were the next highest industry segments



TABLE 4 - ALL DONORA FIRMS AND OWNERSHIP STRUCTURE IN 2012

INDUSTRY SEGMENT	NUMBER OF ESTABLISHMENTS	VALUE OF SALES	PAYROLL
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	0		
Construction	0		
Manufacturing	13	\$ 265,351,000	\$ 23,035,000
Wholesale Trade	4	Not Available	Not Available
Retail Trade	9	\$ 8,342,000	\$ 1,019,000
Transportation and Warehousing	1	Not Available	Not Available
Information	2	Not Available	Not Available
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	7	Not Available	Not Available
Professional, Scientific, Management	10	\$ 2,124,000	\$ 464,000
Healthcare and Social Assistance	36	\$ 18,462,000	\$ 6,358,000
Educational Services	0		
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	2	Not Available	Not Available
Accommodation and Food Services	6	\$ 2,349,000	\$ 304,000
Public Administration	0		
Other Services	22	\$ 13,371,000	\$ 3,493,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>\$ 309,999,000</b>	<b>\$ 34,673,000</b>

SOURCE: US CENSUS, QUICK FACTS, BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY



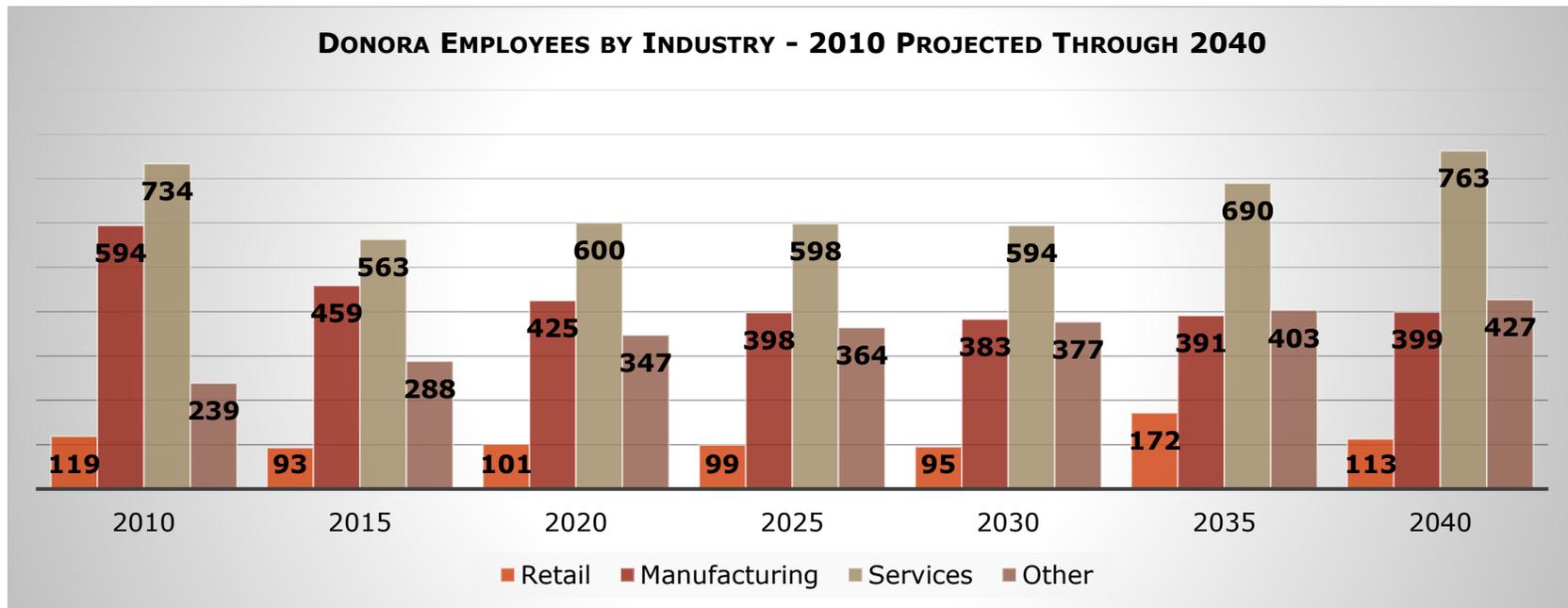
The Census Business and Industry data indicates that most of the value of sales and revenue is derived from the manufacturing industry segment which is still a strong segment in Donora. Healthcare and other services also provide a large portion of the economic base.

It is apparent from the 2010 Census and American Community Survey data that the economic base in Donora is moving from a primarily manufacturing and wholesaling base to a service industry based economy. The projections from the Southwest Pennsylvania Commission at the [www.spc.region](http://www.spc.region) data library confirm this trend with actual data for 2010 and 2015 and projections through 2040 as shown in **Table 5** below.

TABLE 5 - DONORA EMPLOYEES BY INDUSTRY SEGMENT 2010 PROJECTED THROUGH 2040

INDUSTRY SEGMENTS	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
Retail	119	93	101	99	95	172	113
Manufacturing	594	459	425	398	383	391	399
Services	734	563	600	598	594	690	763
Other	239	288	347	364	377	403	427
<b>Total</b>	<b>1686</b>	<b>1403</b>	<b>1473</b>	<b>1459</b>	<b>1449</b>	<b>1656</b>	<b>1702</b>

SOURCE: SOUTHWEST PA COMMISSION, [WWW.SPCREGION.ORG](http://WWW.SPCREGION.ORG), CENSUS 2010 AND PROJECTIONS



## THE MARKET

The “market” data in any given area includes current building uses, business mix, market area size and consumer data. Market data information provides a foundation that is necessary to identify potential opportunities in different business sectors. Drive times are considered to be the preferred measurement for market area activity and is considered an industry standard for market analysis.

In order to identify the dollars being spent by consumers in the Donora Borough area, a 10-minute drive time was assumed as the most obvious “primary market area” for goods and services accessed by residents. The primary market area based on a 10-minute drive time includes not only Donora but also Monongahela, Monessen, North Charleroi and Charleroi. The Borough could draw consumers from all of these communities if the proper conditions and amenities are in place.

The estimate of annual consumer spending in the primary market area is over \$1.250 billion. About \$225 million of this spending is related to food and beverages and entertainment. Donora has an excellent opportunity to capture some of these dining and entertainment dollars.

Understanding the spending patterns and the spending potential of the targeted customer base and market is important when planning an effective development strategy. It is important to determine how much retail spending is occurring and how much of that spending can be captured in the primary market area of Donora.



BOROUGH OF DONORA AREA TOTAL ANNUAL CONSUMER SPENDING (2018 ESTIMATES)	
	DOLLARS SPENT (IN MILLIONS)
SEGMENT	10 MINUTE DRIVE TIME
Apparel	\$43
Contributions	\$52
Education	\$44
Entertainment	\$70
Food and Beverages	\$185
Furnishings and Equipment	\$42
Gifts	\$30
Health Care	\$103
Household Operations	\$34
Miscellaneous Expenses	\$19
Personal Care	\$16
Personal Insurance	\$9
Reading	\$3
Shelter	\$259
Tobacco	\$8
Transportation	\$238
Utilities	\$95
<b>Total Household Expenditures (in billions)</b>	<b>\$1,250</b>
<b>Retail Spending</b>	\$602
<b>Non-Retail Spending</b>	\$648
<b>Total Household Expenditures (in billions)</b>	<b>\$1,250</b>

SOURCE: APPLIED GEOGRAPHIC SOLUTIONS, OCTOBER 2018

Dollars spent by consumers in the primary market area are largely for:

**Shelter \$259million**  
**Transportation . . . \$238million**  
**Food and Beverages \$185million**  
**Health Care \$103million**

Retail spending, at \$602 million, is about half of the \$1.250 billion spent annually.

Non-Retail spending is primarily for services and, at \$648 million, makes up about half of all consumer spending.

The Borough can capture consumer dollars by creating the conditions that would attract consumers to the primary market area.

## INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

The Donora Industrial Park is a 256-acre site that overlooks the Monongahela River, adjacent to the Donora Central Business District in the Borough of Donora, Washington County. With rail service via Norfolk Southern and river frontage via the Monongahela River, Donora Industrial Park is ideally located. In addition, a new limited access road provides immediate entry to Interstate 70 and other major highways that serve the Mid Mon Valley region and surrounding areas. The park boasts many advantages including close proximity to major interstates, the rail system, the riverfront, low utilities and the quality labor force throughout the Mon Valley region. Designated as an Enterprise Zone, Donora Industrial Park offers full five-year tax abatement on new construction from Washington County, Donora Borough, and the Ringgold School District taxing bodies. The Middle Monongahela Industrial Development Association manages the park.<sup>3</sup>

There are currently thirty (30) companies located in the Donora Industrial Park including:

- Apex North America
- Bergen Power Pipe Supports
- Eastern Alloy
- Elizabeth Milling Company
- Power & Industrial Supply
- Regal Industries

Approximately thirty (30) acres remain available for industrial development at about \$50,000 per acre. The Industrial Site is marketed by the Redevelopment Authority of the County of Washington (RACW), the Mon-Valley Initiative, and through the Economic & Tourism Development, Washington County Chamber of Commerce at 375 Southpointe Boulevard, Suite 240 in Canonsburg, PA 15317



## INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

Thirty acres are available for development within the KOZ at the Donora Industrial Park. The RACW has several programs including tax abatements, a revolving loan program and the gaming local share program for economic development.

---

<sup>3</sup> Washington County Chamber of Commerce, <http://www.washcochamber.com/business-assistance/site-location/donora-industrial-park>

**STRATEGY NO. 1 – IDENTIFY AND PURSUE GRANT FUNDS AND TAX CREDITS THAT SUPPORT INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT**

Funds should continue to be secured through economic development programs that encourage businesses to locate in Donora in return for incentives and tax credits. In addition to the RACW incentive programs, the following state incentives are also available:

- **Industrial Sites Reuse Program** - Grant and low-interest loan financing to perform environmental site assessment and remediation work at former industrial sites. Uses can include Phase I, II and III environmental assessments; Remediation of hazardous substances
- **Business in Our Sites Program** - Grants and low-interest loans to empower communities to attract growing and expanding businesses by helping them build an inventory of ready sites. These funds can be used for all site development activities that are required to make a site shovel-ready. This program is for speculative projects only. Funds cannot be used for projects that are primarily residential or recreational.
- **Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program**. The Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP) is a Commonwealth grant program administered by the Office of the Budget for the acquisition and construction of regional economic, cultural, civic, recreational, and historical improvement projects.
- **Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance (LERTA)** – structured real estate tax abatement for local, county, and school district taxes for a ten-year period.

**STRATEGY NO. 2 – FOCUS ON BROWNFIELD REMEDIATION**

A brownfield is “real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant.”<sup>4</sup> Brownfields are traditionally seen as the consequences of past manufacturing and heavy industrial operations.

But brownfields may also be any urban site for potential building development that had previous development on it. It is important to identify those sites which may be classified as brownfields that are not related to industrial but may be commercial sites that can be and should be rehabilitated.

Examples of brownfields include:

- Chemical plants
- Oil refineries
- Closed steel mills



<sup>4</sup> Definition by the U.S. Department of Environmental Protection

- Gas stations
- Slag dumps
- Mine dumps
- Bottling plants
- Storage facilities
- Mine-scarred lands
- Abandoned mine lands

The Borough should identify, remediate, market and reuse abandoned commercial properties that have become detriments to the community. This will lead to the elimination of blight, create jobs, increase the Borough's tax base, and improve the vitality of businesses, neighborhoods and culture.

The RACW was awarded two Environmental Assessment Grants to conduct Phase I and Phase II environmental assessments on selected brownfield sites. Also, RACW is working to partner private investment and public resources to make these sites attractive and productive. RACW can assist developers by linking them with available sites and financial resources and facilitating municipal and community efforts.

With proper planning, resource gathering, and strategizing, communities like Donora that have suffered economic decline in the past can effectively redevelop brownfields to create vibrant, successful, and productive communities.

### **STRATEGY NO. 3 – ENHANCE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE BOROUGH, THE RACW, THE MIDDLE MONONGAHELA INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION AND REGIONAL AND STATE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GROUPS**

The Middle Mon-Valley IDA (IDA) manages 256 acres of industrial land in the Donora Industrial Park. The IDA's ability to market land to prospective tenants or purchasers is critical for attracting new businesses to the Borough. The Borough officials and staff should maintain a positive relationship with the IDA and ensure that the agency is employing its marketing and business-attraction resources effectively. Some action items include:

- Arrange regular meetings with RACW and IDA staff to discuss and highlight available sites
- Request reports from RACW and IDA on inquiries regarding the Donora Industrial Park to remain aware of any interest expressed for specific properties
- While it's critical for the RACW and the IDA to effectively advertise its commercial/industrial sites to attract tenants and employment, Donora should also take the initiative to market itself independently to ensure that all possible resources are used to promote business opportunities.

- Enhance the Borough’s website to include a section on commercial/industrial properties available at the Industrial Park, the numerous financial incentives for businesses available through the RACW, and the numerous DCED (newpa.com) funding programs available to businesses
- Meet regularly with local and state representatives to promote the Borough and its available commercial/industrial site opportunities
- Attend local/state/national workshops/conferences/events to represent Donora and market opportunities, advantages, and incentives

#### **STRATEGY No 4 – SUPPORT EXISTING INDUSTRIAL BUSINESSES**

The Borough officials and staff should facilitate and incentivize the expansion of existing businesses. Concurrent with the effort to attract new businesses, the Borough should recognize the importance of retaining existing businesses, many of which have been in the region for decades. The Borough should address the needs of existing businesses when possible so they can remain viable, whether it's financial, promotional, or procedural assistance. In a similar fashion, the Borough should encourage and support businesses that express interest in expanding their operation. Some action items are:

- Create database of all existing businesses
- Contact owners by email, phone, mail, or in-person
- Provide owners with marketing material outlining all financial incentives available to them
- Remain in contact with owners to promote and encourage the use of incentives
- Work with owners to facilitate any Borough regulatory processes (code, building permits, zoning variances, etc.) necessary for business expansion



#### **STRATEGY No. 5 – REACH OUT TO POTENTIAL INDUSTRIES OUTSIDE OF THE DONORA AREA**

The Borough officials and staff should investigate and reach out to prospective start-ups and growing businesses potentially seeking to locate in the Industrial Park. This means identifying business opportunities by being proactive through research and outreach to companies the Borough desires to attract and pursuing the opportunities through ongoing face-to-face communication. There should be meetings scheduled to promote the incentives to prospective businesses. Action items include:

- Research and contact industrial companies appropriate for industrial/flex space including oil and gas companies, data centers, call centers, additive manufacturing companies, waste services, and recycling companies
- Research and contact service businesses appropriate for office space including management, financial, health care services, and high-tech businesses
- Establish relationships with and meet with company representatives to market Donora
- Seek out and consult with entrepreneurial/business development organizations to help recruit businesses
- Use area universities such as Penn State – Allegheny and California University as resources for technical expertise, research, and promotion

## CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

McKean Avenue and Meldon Avenue in Donora were once vital “main streets” in the Borough. These commercial corridors are where residents and businesses could obtain goods and services to satisfy daily needs. Today the Borough suffers from vacancy, marginal land uses, and disinvestment even though much of the building stock remains intact. The Borough still retains an urban center that has old structures, walkable streets, and brick and asphalt roads. The Borough needs to find a way to continue to retain the viable buildings, walkability, and history and to enhance it through physical projects, programs, and events. The Smog Museum and other historical elements in Donora can play a key role in these efforts along with local and regional organizations.

## CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT STRATEGIES

### **STRATEGY NO. 1 – CONSIDER THE CREATION OF A DOWNTOWN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

The Borough should consider encouraging the creation of a Community Development Corporation by persons who have a substantial interest in revitalizing and redeveloping the Central Business District (CBD) along McKean Avenue and Meldon Avenue. Once incorporated as a non-profit, the CDC should be charged with submitting focusing on issues around the central business district and the adjacent neighborhoods. These issues should include but not be limited to:

- A primary corridor plan for gateways to the business district
- A blight strategy plan for the central business district and surrounding neighborhoods
- A recruitment and retainment plan for new and existing businesses
- A continuing marketing and event plan
- Design guidelines for place-making and urban trails



### **STRATEGY NO. 2 – PURSUE DEDICATED FUNDS TO SUPPORT THE CDC THROUGH THE NEIGHBORHOOD PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM**

The CDC should identify corporate sponsors in order to make an application for the DCED NAP/NPP program. This application is due most years by June 30. The NPP/NAP program is established and funded by the PA Department of Community and Economic Development to encourage long-term collaborations (five years or more) of business, government and community leaders to produce a comprehensive, asset-based and relationship-driven approach to community development. Tax credits can be approved for corporate sponsors up to \$500,000 per year for up to six years to support programs and projects in financially challenged communities. The CDC must do the following in order to apply for these funds:

- Identify a corporate sponsor/partner (financial institution, medical facility, corporation)

- Identify programs and projects that the Borough would like to undertake (blight removal, housing rehabilitation, job training, beautification)
- Identify service provider partners (i.e. the local Library, Rebuild Pittsburgh, Habitat for Humanity, the Heritage Center, the Salvation Army)
- Make application by the deadline which is announced every year by the DCED.

### **CASE STUDY: BOROUGH OF ALIQUIPPA**

*In 2017, the Borough of Aliquippa created and received non-profit status for the Aliquippa Economic Development Corporation (AEDC). The newly formed AEDC used Act 47 funds that year to engage a community development specialist and the Beaver County Corporation for Economic Development (BCCED) to work with the AEDC Board to prepare a Neighborhood Partnership Program grant application based on a Redevelopment Plan that had been completed in 2012-2013. A corporate sponsor, Mellon BNY, was identified and agreed to provide \$500,000 per year for six (6) years to the AEDC for certain programs and projects outlined in the NPP application in exchange for state tax credits. The PA DCED approved the NPP grant application for 2018 which provided: administrative fees to contract with BCCED as the Executive Director of the AEDC, demolition projects, housing rehabilitation, a market housing study, job training, a digital lab for the library, food program through the Salvation Army, and support for youth programming. The Borough also applied for Keystone Community funds to undertake demolition in the central business district and site preparation for a specific redevelopment site that was designated in a 2012-2013 redevelopment plan and were awarded \$365,000 for this purpose. These projects were immediately contracted and undertaken in 2018. It is expected that the activity in the central business district and in the neighborhoods will "jump start" additional residential and commercial development over the next five years.*



### **STRATEGY NO. 3 – COMMISSION AN ARCHITECTURAL FIRM TO BRAND AND DESIGN GATEWAY ENTRANCE MONUMENTS AND "WAYFINDING" SIGNAGE FOR GATEWAYS AND BUSINESS CORRIDORS.**

The boundaries of Donora are not easily discernable on the major roads entering and leaving the Borough. "Gateways" to a community are important because they create an identity for the community and provide an opportunity to make a positive first impression. Residents often take pride in their community when they identify with a theme, branding, or a specific identity. The Borough should:

- Develop attractive signage, "wayfinding", and landscaping at the entrances to Donora from McKean Avenue and Meldon Avenue. Hire an architect to design a coherent and consistent theme that residents can embrace and leaders can point to for inspiration and pride. This may be funded through a gaming local share funding request through the RACW.

- Include signage, landscaping, wayfinding and other elements in the streetscape design that can be partially funded by county and state funds.
- Install public art, historic sculpture, and decorative lighting at highly visible intersections or in Borough rights-of-ways that clearly define the Borough's image and theme.
- Install public murals and public art where appropriate.

#### **STRATEGY NO. 4 – USE GRANT FUNDS FROM WASHINGTON LOCAL SHARE STRATEGICALLY**

Funds are available annually through the Washington County Local Share fund for projects that support economic development. The Borough should develop projects on a regular basis to submit for the annual October grant application deadline. Projects fund requests are not limited and the Borough can use their local share as a local match for larger projects. Decisions about whether a project is funded are made based on:

- Economic impact
- Economic conditions of the region where the project is located
- Level of private sector investment leveraged
- Contribution of the project to the reuse of Brownfields, previously used, or underutilized sites
- Local financial support
- Project readiness
- Strategic importance
- Financial need

Projects should be identified by the Borough staff and officials and should be submitted based on these criteria.

#### **STRATEGY NO. 5 - SUPPORT AN INFORMED AND COHESIVE COMMUNITY THROUGH THE CREATION OF "REAL PLACES."**

In today's world, there are more ways than ever to obtain information and thousands of bits of information are available. Yet people are more likely than ever to be un-informed about their local government operations and services. This is due to competing demands for attention from many different sources and an infinite number of distractions. It is important, therefore, to create social opportunities for residents where there is a central meeting place with a theme related to the local culture.

- Consider identifying locations in the business district corridors for the installation of public plazas with lighting, seating, water features, landscaping, and local art. Feature entertainment, festivals, and local activities on a regular basis. By creating gathering places for residents, people are more likely to come together for social interaction and leave with a better understanding of their neighbors and the community as a social construct. "Real" places include a social experience.

- Consider scheduling Borough “news updates” at a local coffee shop or diner or at least creating the “coffeehouse” experience. Most people are more interested in buying a coffee and sitting around with friends for conversation than coming to a public meeting or event.
- Use a service like “Swiftreach,” NIXEL, or “Reverse 911” to communicate with residents about possible emergencies or interruption of services that may affect specific areas of the Borough. These services can also be used to make announcements about upcoming events or other specific information that may be useful to residents.
- Consider the use of an electronic newsletter that can be sent out via an email blast to residents. Continue to make improvements to the Borough’s website that invite interaction and allow for conducting business on-line. Whether it’s paying taxes, applying for a permit, reading the latest news, or registering a request for service, residents want to do it on their own time at their convenience.

### **STRATEGY NO 6 – UPDATE THE BOROUGH WEBSITE TO INCLUDE MATERIAL REGARDING BUSINESSES, DEVELOPMENT SITES, AND ON-LINE APPLICATION SUBMISSION.**



The website should include all development ordinances, planning studies, marketing information, and permitting information. The following should be included and updated on the Borough’s website for residents, businesses, and developers: development ordinances; up to date Zoning Map; code ordinances, the IPMC and adopting ordinance; signage ordinances; name and contact for permitting and development activity; building inspection; land development process; link to PennDOT contact information; updated Fee Resolution; utility contact names and information; businesses to frequent within the Borough, and available commercial and industrial property. Potential residents, developers and private investors expect to find most of the information that they need on the website.

The Borough should develop a checklist of items for developers of what is required for zoning permits, special exceptions, subdivision and land development applications and associated fees. Residents, business owners, and potential developers view this favorably and appreciate the ease in understanding expectations. Much of the routine information and permit applications should be submitted through the Borough’s website so that seekers can save time and resources by completing applications on-line in advance of an inspection or permit request.

### **STRATEGY NO. 7- PURSUE ADDITIONAL FUNDS TO CARRY OUT IMPORTANT PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS**

Once the CDC is formed, there is an opportunity to pursue additional grant funds to sustain projects and programs.

Early Intervention Program – Implementation grants to assist with the implementation of recommendations from this EIP process.

Growing Greener II Grant Program - This program provides redevelopment grants to municipalities and nonprofits to help a community's redevelopment effort, focusing on the improvement of downtown sites and buildings. The eligible projects may include approaches that assist in business development and/or public improvements in core communities.

Keystone Communities Program (KCP) - This program assists Pennsylvania's communities in achieving revitalization of older commercial areas and those neighborhoods immediately adjacent to the commercial districts. The program designates and funds communities that are implementing Main Street, Elm Street, or Enterprise Zone efforts or other community development efforts by supporting physical improvements to communities that are undertaking revitalization activities.

Municipal Assistance Program (MAP) - Funding assistance for the development of additional planning tools could be available through the Municipal Assistance Program (MAP). [www.newpa.com](http://www.newpa.com)

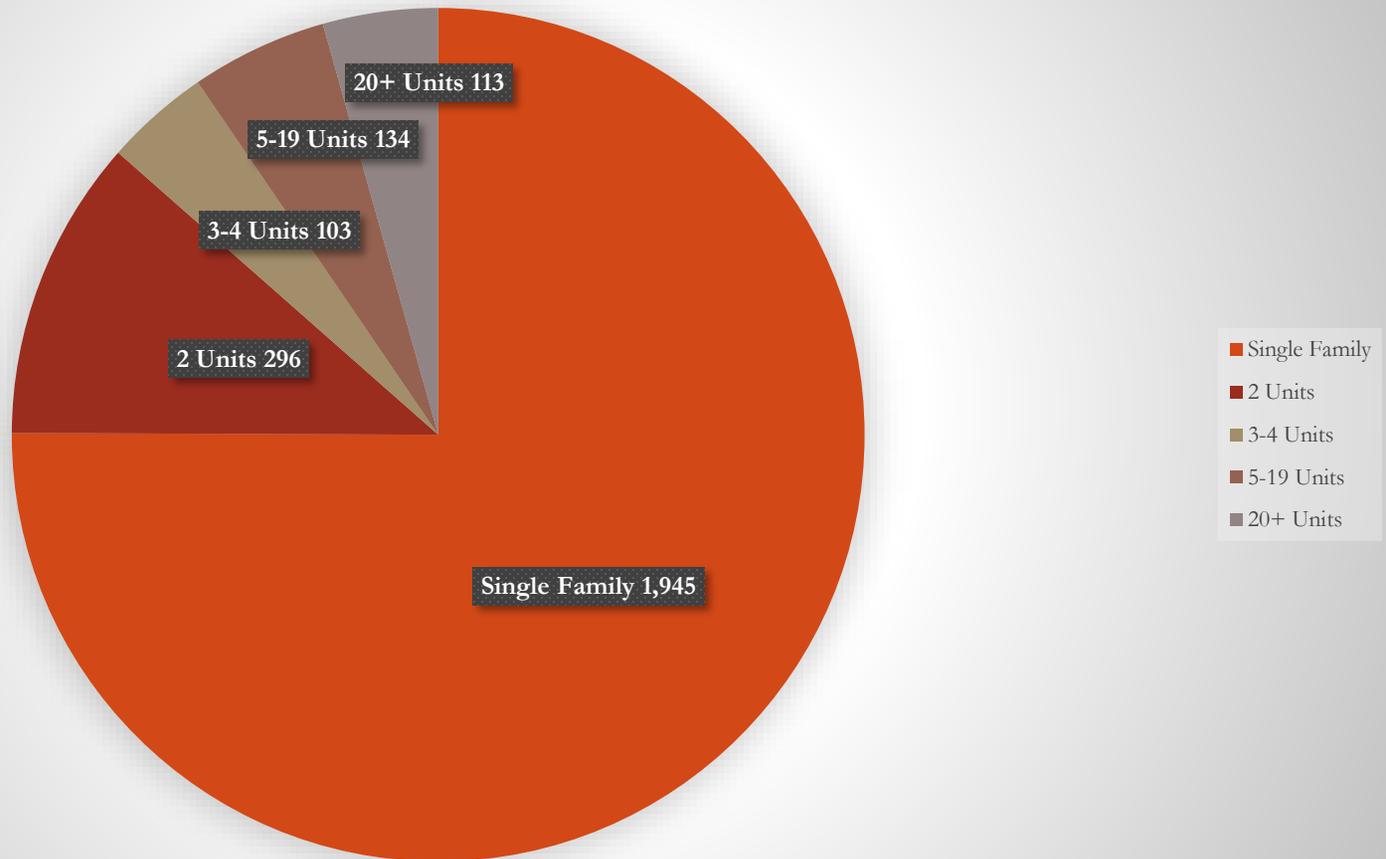
Multi-Modal Transportation Fund - Funding assistance available annually through PENNDOT and DCED for projects related to roadways and pedestrian connections that promote multi-modal elements such as bike paths, sidewalks and trails, transit stops and amenities and streetscapes.

THE RESIDENTIAL MARKET AND NEIGHBORHOODS

**HOUSING PROFILE**

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the Borough has 2,591 housing units, 75% of which are single family homes, 11% are duplexes, and 14% are multi-unit structures. **Figure 1** provides a breakdown of the types of residential units in the Borough.

**FIGURE 1 - HOUSING UNITS IN STRUCTURE**



SOURCE: US CENSUS, AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY 2013-2017, FIVE YEAR ESTIMATES, RELEASED DECEMBER 2018

About 23% of the Borough’s 2,710 housing units are vacant as compared to the national average which is 10.9%. **Figure 2** provides a profile of housing vacancy rates in the Borough according to the most recent American Community Survey (ACS). Some of the vacant units are not permanently vacant but are for sale or for rent. However, the high percentage of vacant properties is challenging and should be the subject of additional research to identify the factors that have led to this condition. High vacancy rates tend to drive down market prices.

**Table 6** provides a breakdown of when homeowners moved into their current housing unit and how long they have lived in the unit. The largest group of homeowners (about 65%) moved into their housing units in the Borough between 2000 and 2019. About 35% moved in before 2000. This indicates a considerable amount of transition over the past twenty years.

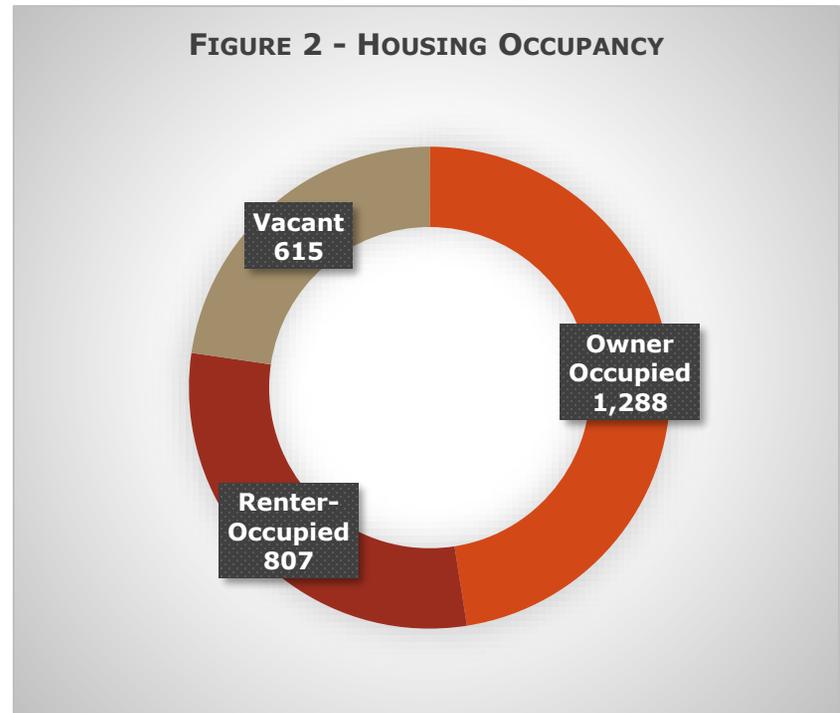


TABLE 6 - TENURE OF RESIDENCY

Moved In:	# OF UNITS	% OF UNITS
Moved in 2015 or Later	190	10.1%
Moved in 2010 to 2014	557	29.5%
Moved in 2000 to 2009	472	25.0%
Moved in 1990 to 1999	267	14.1%
Moved in 1980 to 1989	68	3.6%
Moved in 1979 or Earlier	336	17.8%

ACCORDING TO THE SOUTHWEST PA COMMISSION, FROM 1990 THROUGH 2009, THERE WERE 29 NEW SINGLE-FAMILY HOUSING STARTS IN DONORA FOR A VALUE OF \$1.7 MILLION.

SINCE 2009, THERE HAVE BEEN ONLY 3 NEW SINGLE FAMILY HOUSING UNITS BUILT FOR A VALUE OF \$502,515.

SOURCE: US CENSUS, AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY 2013-2017, FIVE YEAR ESTIMATES, RELEASED DECEMBER 2018



TABLE 7 - NEW HOUSING STARTS

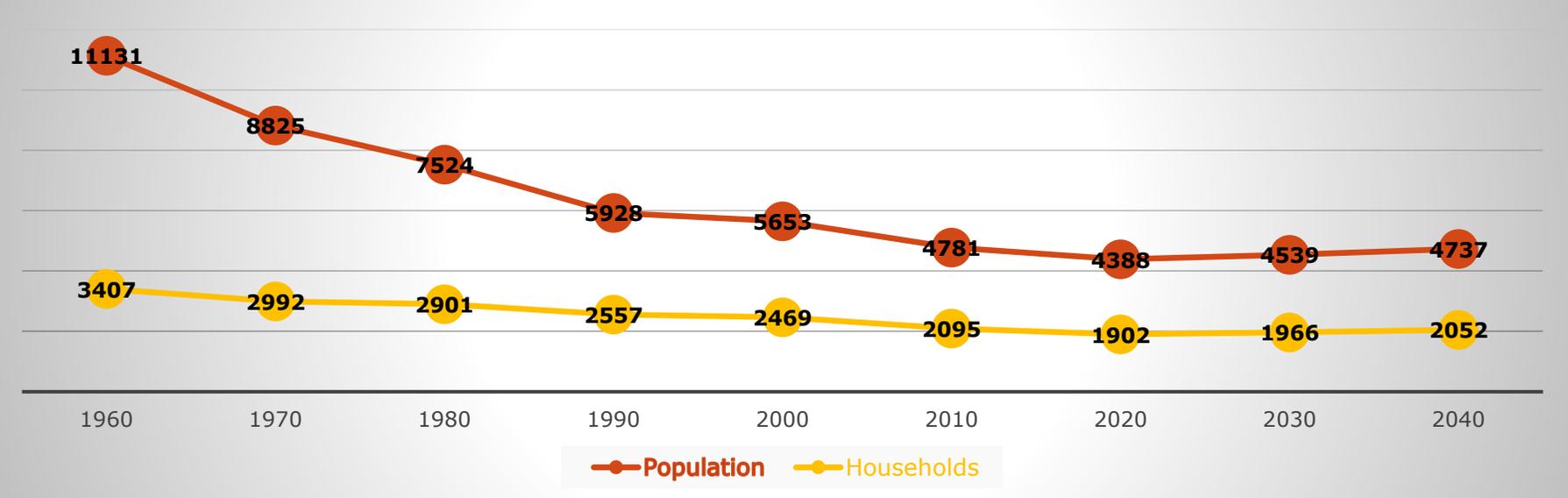
YEARS	# UNITS	VALUE OF UNITS	AVERAGE VALUE OF UNIT
1990-2009	29	\$1,722,781	\$59,406
2010-2019	3	\$502,515	\$167,505

SOURCE: SPC REGION BASED ON BUILDING PERMITS, WASHINGTON COUNTY

The total number of Households and Population have decreased every decade since 1960 as shown in **Figure 3**. According to the latest projections from SPC, the households and population of the Borough are projected to increase slightly in the next three decades through 2040. By 2040, the number of households are projected to reach 2052. This is a positive trend since it provides additional residents and consumers for participating in the Borough’s economic activity.

However, it is almost half of the 1960 Population and Households. The Borough officials should plan for a smaller more compact community.

FIGURE 3 - HOUSEHOLDS AND POPULATION - FROM 1960 PROJECTED THROUGH 2040



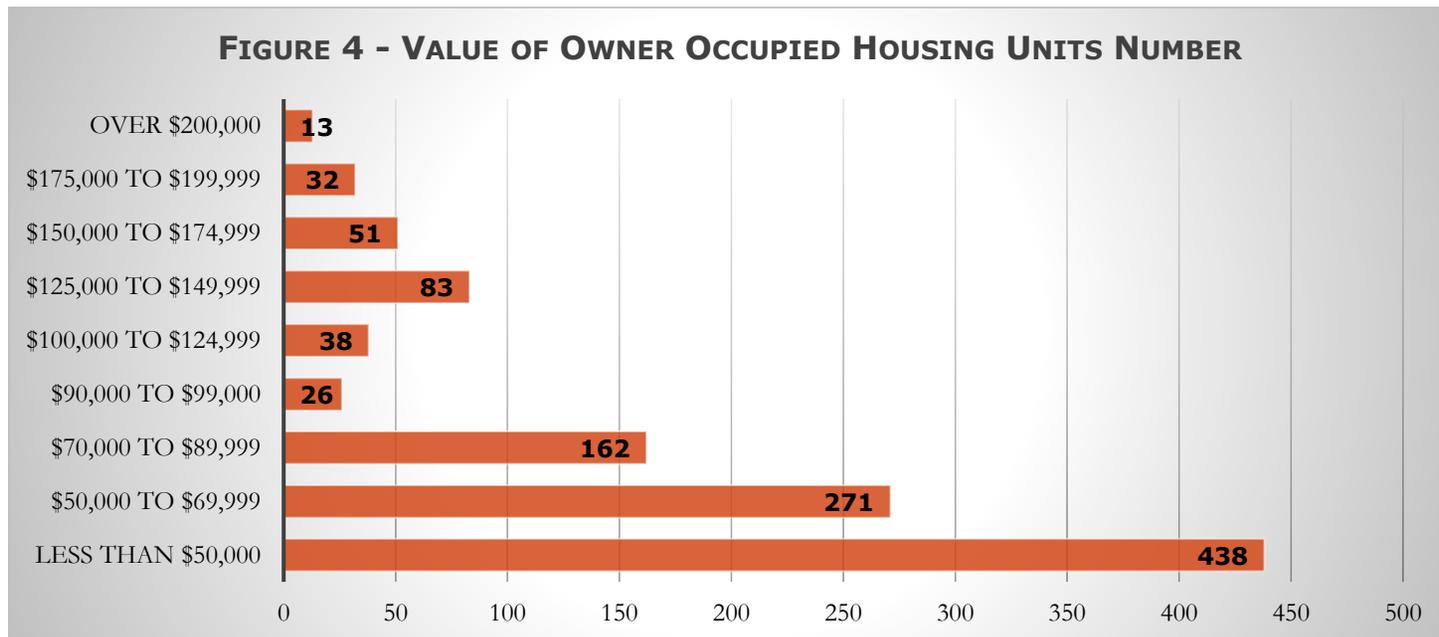
SOURCE: US CENSUS, AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY 2013-2017, FIVE YEAR ESTIMATES, RELEASED DECEMBER 2018

**HOUSING VALUES**

Donora is part of the Pittsburgh Metropolitan housing market for purposes of national reporting. This includes Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, and parts of Westmoreland and Washington counties. The forecast for home values in the Pittsburgh Metro area is very good – the average value in January 2018 was estimated to be \$142,800 and expected to increase at a rate of 2.1% annually. This is about the same as the national average rate of increase of 2.2%.

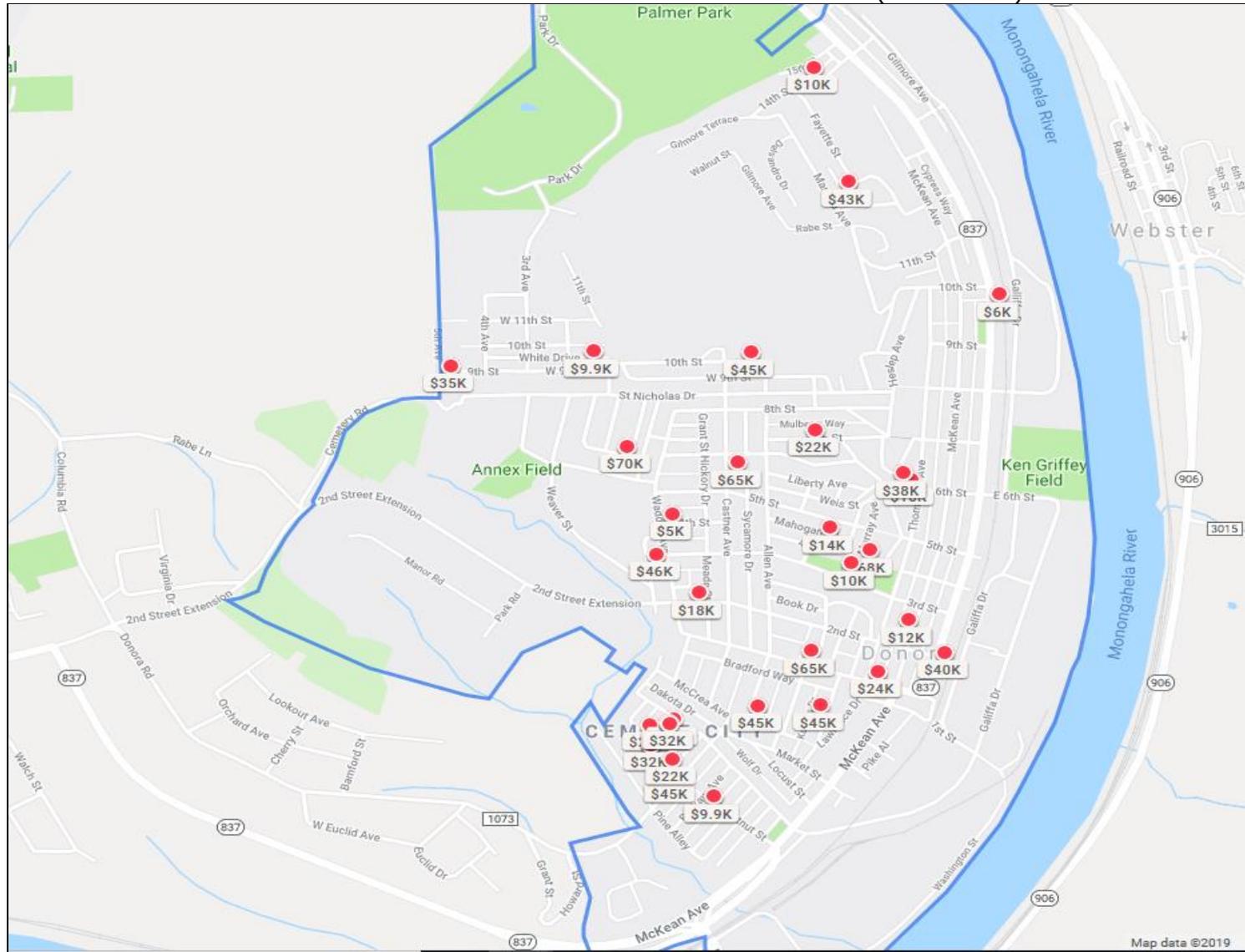
The median value of a single family detached home in Washington County is \$158,600 and the median price of homes currently listed is \$190,300 while the median price of homes that have sold in the current year is \$133,200. In contrast, the average list price for a residential home in Donora is currently \$45,000. Washington County home values have gone up only 1.9% over the past year and Zillow predicts that they may drop slightly next year. Donora home values have not increased over the past five (5) years. **Figure 4** provides an overview of the value of owner-occupied housing units in the Borough. About 64% of owner-occupied housing units in Donora are valued at less than \$70,000; over 80% are valued at less than \$100,000.

The median residential rent price in Washington County is \$1,100 per month, which is lower than the Pittsburgh Metro median of \$1,250. The median gross rent in Donora in 2019 is \$591 per month for a residential unit.



SOURCE: US CENSUS, AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY 2013-2017, FIVE YEAR ESTIMATES, RELEASED DECEMBER 2018

MAP - CURRENT HOUSING SALE LISTINGS IN DONORA (JULY 2019)



SOURCE: ZILLOW WEBSITE: [WWW.ZILLOW.COM](http://WWW.ZILLOW.COM), JULY 8, 2019

## RESIDENTIAL MARKET TRENDS

The SPC ten-county cycle 10a regional forecast is projecting continued decline in Donora's population through 2025 with modest growth beginning in the 2030-2035 time period. Based on population projections and the possible build out scenarios, there is little anticipated impact on municipal services or infrastructure within the next decade. Much of the infrastructure in Donora was built to support much larger populations and more robust non-residential activity—from industrial activities to retail and commercial operations. Because of the nature of the scattered blight and vacancy, the Borough will not likely be able to reduce its infrastructure like eliminating roads or sealing off sewers or underground pipes. Instead the Borough will need to focus on upgrading and rehabilitating existing infrastructure throughout the Borough through a carefully planned Capital Improvement Plan.

Consequently, the amount of infrastructure will likely remain the same (miles of roads, etc.) but the number of people supporting the maintenance of that infrastructure through tax revenues will likely continue to decline. Other services such as trash collection must be scaled based on the current residential population and commercial needs.

The housing market in the Pittsburgh Metro area including Allegheny and Washington counties is strong and will provide a significant opportunity for the Borough in the next few years because of its location. Furthermore, the market values in and around the Borough in adjacent communities is strong and steadily increasing. There are parcels of vacant land that could be assembled by a private developer with full utilities and infrastructure. But the perception of crime, blight, and the mediocre performance of the Ringgold School District presents a challenge for residential development. Some factors are beyond the control of the elected Borough officials. But continuing to improve public safety, eliminating blight and working with the school district towards improvements should continue to be a high priority for Borough officials.

## 2019 PITTSBURGH HOUSING MARKET

*Here are some expected real estate trends that homeowners and investors can look forward to in 2019.*

*According to Trulia, Pittsburgh market trends have had a 6% (\$10,000) increase in median home sales over the past year. The Pittsburgh real estate market is predicted to rise by 9.5% in 2019. Four bedroom homes are seeing the most increase on year over year prices, which has grown 10.4% (currently \$292,500 median price) from 2018 to present. Two bedroom homes saw a low year over year increase of 4.3% whereas one bedroom homes increased a whopping 9.0% and 3 bedroom homes increased by 5.2%.*

*Overall, homeowners are betting on another good year in the Pittsburgh real estate market with this upward trending curve.*

*Rental properties are on the rise as well as the cost associated with rent. As of February 2019, the median rent in Pittsburgh is \$1,300. Just 4 months prior (October 2018), the median rent was \$100 cheaper at \$1,200.*

*Buyers should know that Pittsburgh is one of the least competitive markets in the United States. Making an exception for more modern neighborhoods being bid on by well-paid tech workers, most of Pittsburgh homes should be an easy grab for anyone with great credit who is ready to pay.*

*Western PA Real Estate Investors Association*  
<http://pittsburghreia.com/2019-expected-real-estate-trends-for-pittsburgh/>

## RESIDENTIAL AND NEIGHBORHOOD STRATEGIES

To attract residential development to Donora and to be competitive with adjacent markets officials and staff will need to create positive conditions for residential development to occur. These include: favorable land use regulations; commercial district amenities; pedestrian and bike-friendly linkages to parks, entertainment, employment opportunities and services; website information for access to community development information; and a streamlined permitting process. There are many potential markets that could be captured in Donora. Municipalities can capture markets that are trending by understanding what those markets are and creating conditions within the municipality that support the emerging market. Once the proper conditions are in place, it is a matter of marketing the Borough to developers and realtors as a prime area for residential development.

### **STRATEGY NO. 1 – TAKE STEPS TO REMOVE THE PERCEPTION THAT DONORA IS UNSAFE AND IN DECLINE**

Although the crime statistics for Donora indicate that crime is decreasing, there is a perception that residents are “unsafe” and concerned about the central business district especially in the evenings. The perception of crime can be just as big a challenge as actual high crime in a community.

#### **Install Community Policing Practices**

One strategy that urban communities have adopted that has been relatively successful in addressing the perception of high crime rates is to implement proactive, community focused policing. Community policing emphasizes proactive enforcement that proposes that street crime can be reduced through greater community involvement and integration between citizens and police. Community policing departments and officers must commit time to develop a "partnership" with the community to: 1) prevent and counter crime; 2) maintain order; and 3) reduce the fear of crime. Typically, the police organization is organized so that every police officer and detective has a neighborhood to patrol with agreed upon goals and objectives to meet. Police officers should regularly interface with the majority of the citizens of the community where they patrol, and perceive themselves as sharing similar values and beliefs so they are confident in their decision making ability. Each police officer should get out of their cars (not just drive by and grin and wave) to visit with citizens and businesses to learn the residents' concerns and show they're a friend and protector-in contrast to "strict law enforcement" or "reactive policing" which doesn't view the citizens as customers.

Proactive policing attempts to solve the problem through a change in the perception of the police officers and residents rather than an increase in manpower or resources.

#### **Crime Prevention Through Design**

Communities also use principles from Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTD) when creating and installing improvements in the business district. Several studies have demonstrated that architectural design can be used effectively to influence crime rates in neighborhoods. These studies show that by combining security hardware, psychology, and site design, a physical environment can be developed that would, by its very nature, discourage crime. CPTED is a relatively new concept. It is a blend of physical and psychological aspects and features that will discourage crime. It makes possible designs that offer protection without resorting to the “prison camp” approach for security. It employs physical design features that discourage crime. Some of the concepts are:

**DEFENSIBLE SPACE:** Space is divided into public zones, semi-private zones, and private zones each with its own set of security and boundaries.

**TERRITORIALITY:** When people identify with the architectural environment, they feel a sense of pride and ownership and want to defend the space. This includes gateways, signage, and public art that create character and a sense of place.

**SURVEILLANCE:** *Informal surveillance* occurs as a result of architectural design that minimizes visual obstacles and eliminates places of concealment; *formal surveillance* uses cameras, guard posts, etc.

**LIGHTING:** A constant level of light providing reasonably good visibility should be maintained 24 hours a day. A bright, cheerful environment is much more pleasing than one that appears dark and lifeless.

**LANDSCAPING:** Landscaping can mark the transition between zones. Features such as decorative fencing, flower beds, ground cover, and varied patterns can show separation between zones. An attractive environment generates a sense of pride and ownership.

**PHYSICAL SECURITY:** The goal is to make penetration difficult and time-consuming. Degree of difficulty and length of delay are key factors in reducing crime.

## STRATEGY NO. 2 CLEARLY IDENTIFY DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR LAND USE MANAGEMENT

Enforcement of the zoning ordinance, SALDO, and property maintenance code promotes good development practices and should be a priority for the Borough. In recent years, there has been significant transition in the Borough management and code enforcement operation. As a result, the department is complaint driven and no proactive code enforcement activities are undertaken. The Borough has adopted the 2012 International Property Maintenance Code for the purpose of conducting inspections. The Borough currently has no formal plan for inspections of residential rental and commercial properties in the Borough except at point of sale or change of use.



Code enforcement, planning, and community development duties should be clearly identified and documented:

- The **Planning Commission's** primary responsibilities include:
  - Prepare and recommend Zoning Ordinance amendments
  - Prepare and recommend updates to the Comprehensive Plan
  - Review and recommend conditional use applications
  - Review land development applications and refer zoning items to the Zoning Hearing Board
  - Obtain public outreach and input regarding land use, land development, and planning
  - Training for Planning Commission members is available through the LGA and PATH.

- The **Zoning Officer's** primary responsibilities include:
  - Administer the zoning ordinance.
  - Enforce the zoning ordinance.
  - Zoning Officer determination may be appealed to the Zoning Hearing Board (ZHB).
  - Manage the ZHB applications
  - Represent the Borough (or designee) at hearings in front of the ZHB
  - Review land development applications and ensure completeness
  - Represent the Borough for reviews of land development applications with the Planning Commission
  - No certification is required for the Zoning Officer – however certification can be obtained through the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP)
- **Zoning Hearing Board** members must meet certain criteria:
  - May not hold elected office in the municipality.
  - Must have zoning knowledge and first-hand experience applying zoning regulations.
  - Appointed by Borough Council for designated terms
  - Should have access to independent legal counsel
- The **Zoning Hearing Board's** powers and duties are limited as follows:
  - No discretionary power.
  - Can only grant variances based on five (5) established criteria
  - Must administer an ordinance literally.
  - May issue notices of violation.
- The **Code Enforcement Officer's** responsibilities include:
  - Inspection of properties and structures to identify noncompliance with property codes.
  - Enforcement of the 2012 International Property Maintenance Code (IPMC). This Code applies to existing structures.
  - No certification is necessary to enforce the IPMC but certification may be obtained.
- The **Building Code Official's** responsibilities include:
  - Local administration of the statewide Uniform Construction Code (UCC). This applies primarily to new construction.

Clarifying the roles of the various positions and set of responsibilities does not necessarily mean that multiple responsibilities cannot be assigned to a single employee or an existing employee. With the proper training, guidance, resources, and technology, even smaller municipalities can achieve a successful and fully integrated land management process.

### **STRATEGY NO. 3 – UPDATE THE BOROUGH'S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, ZONING ORDINANCE, AND SUBDIVISION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE (SALDO)**

The Borough has not updated its land use plans and regulations in decades. Adoption of an updated Zoning Ordinance and SALDO should be a priority for the Borough. Key to this new ordinance will be the provisions that govern the subdivision and land development process in the Borough. The Borough's new SALDO should clearly define the applicant review and approval process, including the application requirements, submittal deadlines, and explanations of all parties involved in the process. The Borough

has flexibility in defining the process and careful consideration should be given to how each type of application is managed. The Borough’s solicitor and a qualified consultant should be engaged to draft the SALDO ordinance for consideration by Council.

Tracking of the zoning permits and land development applications helps ensure that required deadlines are not missed and the applicant ordinance requirements are met. Concurrent with adoption of a Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance by the Borough, land development and zoning applications and tracking forms must be developed and implemented in a manner that mirrors and documents the newly-required approval processes in the Borough ordinances. These forms must comply with the requirements of the Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) and should be reviewed by the Borough Solicitor.

**STRATEGY 4 – DEVELOP A COMMUNITY-WIDE BLIGHT STRATEGY- REQUEST GRANT FUNDS THROUGH DCED**

Blight may be the number one threat to public safety, reinvestment, and the quality of life in older urban communities. Blight is bad for business and bad for people and neighborhoods. The cost of blight is high – not only are there direct costs for police, fire,

public works, and code enforcement services but the cost of maintenance and demolitions is in the tens of thousands of dollars. Blight also reduces the value of surrounding properties resulting in tens of thousands of dollars of loss to individual property owners. With dozens of blighted and vacant properties in Donora, the Borough officials recognize that the status quo is not acceptable and that something must be done to address this problem.



For this reason, blight remediation is and should be the Borough’s top priority for facilitating and promoting redevelopment. Redevelopment is important for increasing and expanding the tax base and the expectation is that once the Borough has a more systematic blight management process and begins to see additional successes, the focus will shift from blight remediation to redevelopment efforts.

Blight remediation should really be divided into two distinct categories:

**Tools and Strategies that Prevent Blight** - In order to prevent blight, it is important for the Borough to have

the personnel, tools, and resources to identify problem properties early and to address issues as they arise. The following information is provided to support the Borough blight prevention strategies.

- Property Conditions Assessment - The Western PA Regional Data Center collects comprehensive data about the properties in communities in Allegheny County. Most of this data is collected from the County Assessment Office and the County Tax Office. One of the data profiles that is collected and made publicly available is the condition assessment of each property in every community in Allegheny County. Each property is rated as: excellent, very good, good, average, fair, poor, very poor, and unsound. Although the accuracy of this data can be questioned due to its timeliness and completeness, it is a beginning point for identifying problem properties and at-risk properties that may become problems in the future. The County data provides a starting point for the Borough Development Committee to begin to review and compile a list of properties that can be addressed through one of several techniques.
- Legal Framework - The Borough should adopt the most current International Property Maintenance Code as its primary enforcement regulation. This Code addresses existing properties relative to exterior conditions. It is comprehensive in nature addressing the most common violations including: garbage and trash, sidewalks, weeds, rodents, junk cars, graffiti, and other exterior property conditions. Another effective code enforcement strategy has been to impose fines for missing windows and doors. This strategy is for vacant properties that are missing operable doors and windows. Typically, these fines are levied at \$300 a day until functional doors and windows are installed. Fines mount quickly so most property owners respond in a timely manner.
- Vigorous Code Enforcement - Properties that are in poor or very poor condition should be referred to the Borough Office for follow up and issuance of violation notices providing deadlines and penalties for non-conformance. The Borough should use the IPMC for routine code violations. Unresolved and unaddressed violations should be pursued to the district magistrate level and, if necessary, to Common Pleas Court.
- Rehabilitation - Loans, grants, and tax abatements can be made to assist homeowners and small landlords with the resources that they need to bring their homes and residential rental properties up to code. These programs are typically funded through CDBG grants, HOME grants, and local foundations. Other partners that may be willing to partner with the Borough include *Habitat for Humanity* and *Rebuilding Pittsburgh*. Owners will be required to qualify as low to moderate income residents.
- Conservatorship - Conservatorship allows the court to appoint a third-party to enter an owner's property and make repairs to bring it up to code. Some properties may require large scale rehabilitation to bring it back to habitable use. The Borough could consider petitioning the court to obtain site control or "conservatorship" of a property for the purposes of making extensive repairs to bring the property up to code. The Borough may contract with a private developer for this purpose. The owner must reimburse the Borough for the costs associated with the repairs or the Borough may sell the property to recoup losses.

**Tools and Strategies that Address Existing Blight-** When all attempts to remediate or eradicate a blight situation fail, the Borough may condemn a property that is unsafe and unfit for habitation and proceed to identify it for demolition. Some tools that are helpful for achieving this process in a methodical and systematic way are identified as follows.

- Mapping Tools -Data driven code enforcement allows municipalities to coordinate data and information so that they can measure blight and reduce it. Once a municipality compiles a body of data, it can use the database to:
  - Identify owners of more than one problem property
  - Identify the most common violations in each area
  - Evaluate the number and types of violations in each area
  - Enforce registration and permit laws
  - Establish the best areas to target proactive enforcement efforts
  - Determine more efficient enforcement scenarios based on workload and area covered
  - Make a strong case before a judge as to why action is needed to bring a property up to code

The PA DCED provides grant funds through their Early Intervention Program that provides technical assistance and support through the PA Housing Alliance to work with communities to develop a community-wide blight strategy. The Alliance appoints a consultant to work directly with a Blight Task Force to customize the Fast Track approach for attacking the blight problems. Donora should make application for this assistance to work with the local appointed Committee.

#### **STRATEGY NO. 4 - PRIORITIZE DEMOLITIONS**

A strategic approach to using demolition funds to eliminate blighted properties is important because of the scarcity of these funds for demolition purposes. The Borough should work with its building code services contractor, MCS, to establish an efficient process for condemning blighted properties and preparing them for demolition in a thorough and legalistic approach. As part of this process, the Borough should set up a Blighted and Vacant Property Committee to review properties for demolition, rehabilitation, or potential sale to adjacent property owners or to interested private investors.<sup>5</sup>

Demolition is the backbone of the Borough's blight strategy and adequate financial resources should be made available annually to allow for consistent elimination of the properties most detrimental to the Borough's image and property values. A formal strategic approach to demolition should be pursued by the Borough in order to ensure that priority areas are addressed and economic development is enhanced. The following is a recommended procedure for making decisions about priority demolitions in future years.

1. A comprehensive "blighted properties spreadsheet" should be developed by staff in cooperation with the Blight and Vacant Property Committee identifying all blighted property in the Borough
2. The spreadsheet should identify those properties that are unsound, unsafe, and present a danger to the public
3. The spreadsheet should also highlight those blighted properties with the highest value for marketing and resale

---

<sup>5</sup> If a community development corporation (CDC) is created as recommended in the central business district section of this report, many of the activities related to the demolition, clearance, acquisition and sale of blighted property can be accomplished through the CDC.

4. Blighted properties from the comprehensive “blighted properties spreadsheet” should be identified annually by the Vacant Property Committee and recommended to Borough Council for demolition funding each year during the budget process.
5. The Committee’s recommendation should be a point-based evaluation process. Each of the factors listed below should be assigned a point value for each property on the list. Point values assigned are on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being the least relevant and 5 being the most relevant.
  - Imminent threat to public health, safety and welfare.
  - Located along a primary corridor or gateway to the Borough
  - Located in a strong neighborhood – the removal would immediately increase the value of adjacent properties
  - High resale value if demolition is undertaken
  - Existence of additional blighted properties within close proximity.
  - Immediate redevelopment potential.
6. The Committee and Borough staff use the matrix to evaluate each property for consideration of properties to be demolished.
7. Individual scores are aggregated and a recommendation made to the Borough Council based on the aggregated scores that are calculated by using the matrix system for scoring.

**Table 8** is the recommended matrix for ranking the blighted properties identified by the Committee.



TABLE 8 – BLIGHTED PROPERTIES RANKING MATRIX  
**ANNUAL BLIGHTED PROPERTIES RANKING - YEAR**

**CONCURRENT WITH THE BOROUGH'S ANNUAL BUDGETING PROCESS, EACH PROPERTY FROM THE BLIGHTED PROPERTY DATABASE IS EVALUATED, BASED ON INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO THE BOROUGH, AND RANKED IN ORDER OF IMPORTANCE FOR DEMOLITION. THE TOP PRIORITY PROPERTIES WILL BE DEMOLISHED THE FOLLOWING YEAR USING THE BOROUGH FUNDS THAT ARE AVAILABLE FOR BLIGHTED PROPERTY DEMOLITIONS.**

Rank	Property Address	Current Assessed Value	Imminent Threat to Public Safety	Impact on Street/Block	Number of Nearby Blighted Properties	Located on Arterial Roadway	Located on McKean Avenue or Meldon Avenue	High Market Resale Value	Redevelopment Potential
1		\$							
2		\$							
3		\$							
4		\$							
5		\$							

Fighting blight is a proven method to increase tax revenues to government, increase the wealth that residents’ possess in their homes, reduce crime, and improve the health of residents.<sup>6</sup> Code enforcement based on a data driven, progressive discipline enforcement is the key to preventing new blight and addressing existing blight in the Borough. Code enforcement officials have vast responsibility for nearly every aspect of a municipal approach to tracking, responding, and addressing vacant and blighted properties. Data driven code enforcement is pro-active rather than complaint driven. Good data collection and analysis would allow the Borough to coordinate data and information so that the Borough can measure the success of the strategies that are implemented.

<sup>6</sup> From Blight to Bright, PA Housing Alliance, July 2014, Page 7

**STRATEGY NO. 5 – MAINTAIN THE PROPER TECHNOLOGY – BOTH HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE – TO SUPPORT A COMPREHENSIVE LAND MANAGEMENT AND CODE ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM.**

Land Management and Code Enforcement should be data driven – not complaint driven. High quality data collection allows code enforcement officials and contracted services to target their limited resources toward the most effective use. The goal is to create a property history for every parcel in the Borough that provides a view of everything that is happening or has ever happened for every property.

There are two important technology applications that the Borough should routinely update and secure: 1) software user interface and 2) GIS mapping and asset management. These are two distinct and separate types of technology that can and should be installed and interfaced.

- Software Interface – The software interface is a user-friendly, end user application that allows the users to record and manage each complaint, inspection, violation, registration, communication and action taken. It should be parcel based and should be able to track rental inspections, permits, licenses, zoning permits, and land development applications. The program should be searchable and should be able to generate a variety of on-demand reports that can be generated by staff in the administrative offices or in the field via a mobile device. There are several programs at various price points currently used by municipalities for this purpose that are very good. These programs can be integrated with the Borough’s GIS system or can use publicly available data through Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) or Google. Many of the software interface applications include a public interface that allows residents to make applications on-line and monitor the progress of their application. Most have applications for iPads that allow for accessing and inputting information from the field. In some instances, warnings or violation notices can be printed in the field and left for the homeowner.

The Borough currently does not have a software interface. However, the Borough’s financial management software Freedom Systems offers a land use management module called ***Borough Share Land Management Suite*** that should be installed for this purpose. It is a complete and fully integrated land use, property control, and planning solution for local governments. The suite enables the management of code enforcement, permit applications, permits, and violation documents. This product can be fully integrated with GIS mapping systems or it can use the free Google Map/Earth interface.

- GIS Mapping – Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping is a separate but related technology that in smaller communities is typically hosted by the Borough Engineer. In Donora, there is no formal hosting or ownership of GIS information although some base layers are available through the Washington County GIS Department. GIS provides parcel-based and geographically referenced mapping that includes mapped assets such as: road rights-of-way, property lines, property ownership, structures, utilities (including sanitary and storm sewers) and a variety of other possible layers. GIS mapping can track capital assets of a municipality through development of layers of information for many municipal purposes such as: street trees; traffic signs and signals; water and sewer lines; handicap parking permits; street lights; and parking meters. The possibilities are limitless.

- Integration - Ideally, the software user interface and the GIS mapping would be integrated to the extent that all information from the software database could be mapped through the GIS mapping function and, conversely, all mapped data in the GIS system could be visible through the software. However, both systems can operate independently until funding is available for creating the connection between the two systems. Many of the software interface applications that have been identified can easily integrate the software interface with GIS mapping or can use ESRI or Google Earth for ease of mapping the data that is contained in the software database.
- Conclusion - Increased functionality can be obtained by maintaining land use management of assets and the Borough's GIS mapping to the cloud. ESRI provides this service and the Borough Engineer can assist with migration of the database to the cloud. Maintaining the Borough's GIS in a cloud-based system will make the data more accessible and updatable in real-time and through mobile applications.

The Borough management staff and officials should carefully review the options and pricing for the land management and GIS asset management technology and determine which solutions best address the Borough's needs. Ultimately, the Borough would be best served by installing and maintaining a fully integrated system that will support a variety of functions and needs. The Borough needs a robust permitting process that supports economic development including updating a number of zoning and code enforcement activities. The Borough also has substantial GIS related needs such as MS4 permitting, street, sidewalk, and pavement management, street lights, traffic signal and sign maintenance, street trees, and sanitary sewer infrastructure. This type and level of activity requires a good permitting software interface and a robust and dynamic GIS system.

### **STRATEGY NO 6 – USE THE WASHINGTON COUNTY LAND BANK**

On March 3, 2016, Washington County created a public entity known as the Washington County Land Bank, pursuant to the Pennsylvania Land Bank Act. The Washington County Land Bank uses available resources to facilitate the return of blighted, vacant, abandoned and tax-delinquent properties to productive use, thereby combating community deterioration, creating economic growth and stabilizing the housing and job market. The Mission of the Land Bank, as stated on their website "is to deter blight and to return vacant property to productive status using a unified, predictable, and transparent process, thereby revitalizing neighborhoods and strengthening the County's tax base."

Land banks can do a number of things more efficiently than a municipality. They can clear titles, undertake conservatorship, implement a side yard program, and have first rights of purchase at Sheriff sales. The Borough should take advantage of the benefits offered by the land bank for property that is marketable but complicated to clear for sale or requires significant rehabilitation costs in order to return it to the market.

APPENDIX A – MUNICIPAL PROFILE

APPENDIX A – DONORA INDUSTRIAL PARK

See following page.