Sharpsburg Parking Study

Allegheny Together December 2019

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Sharpsburg Parking Study

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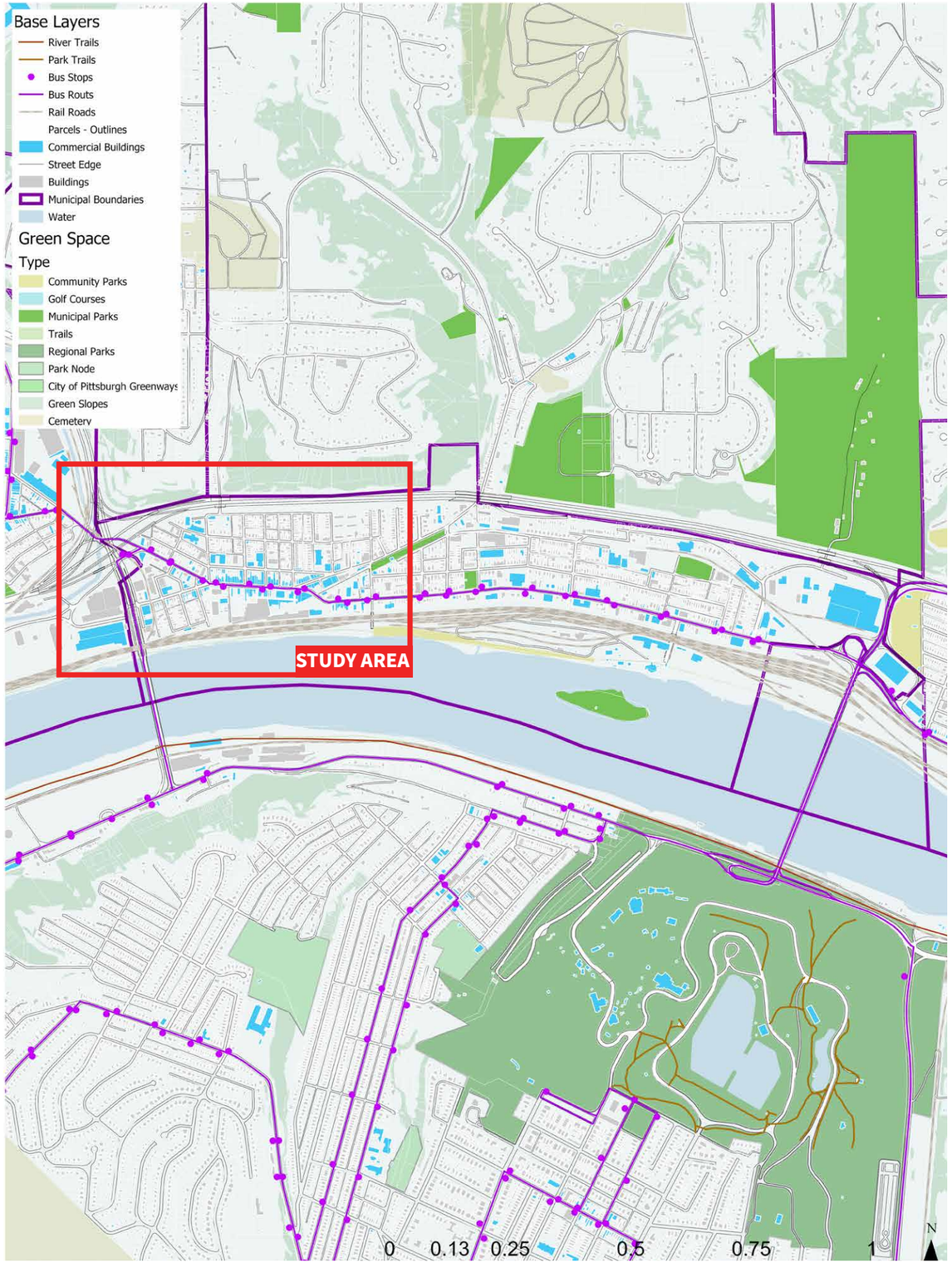
Sharpsburg Parking Study

Introduction

As small cities grow, the need and demand for available (and affordable) parking increases. In some places, parking issues emerge from too few space, congestion, and pricing. The parking needs of a business district must be convenient for customers without compromising pedestrian mobility, manageable and part of a larger accessibility and mobility strategy across the neighborhood. This parking study helps to assess the Sharpsburg business district's current parking capacity and demand and explore spatial, economical and sustainable solutions.



Ch.1 | Existing Conditions

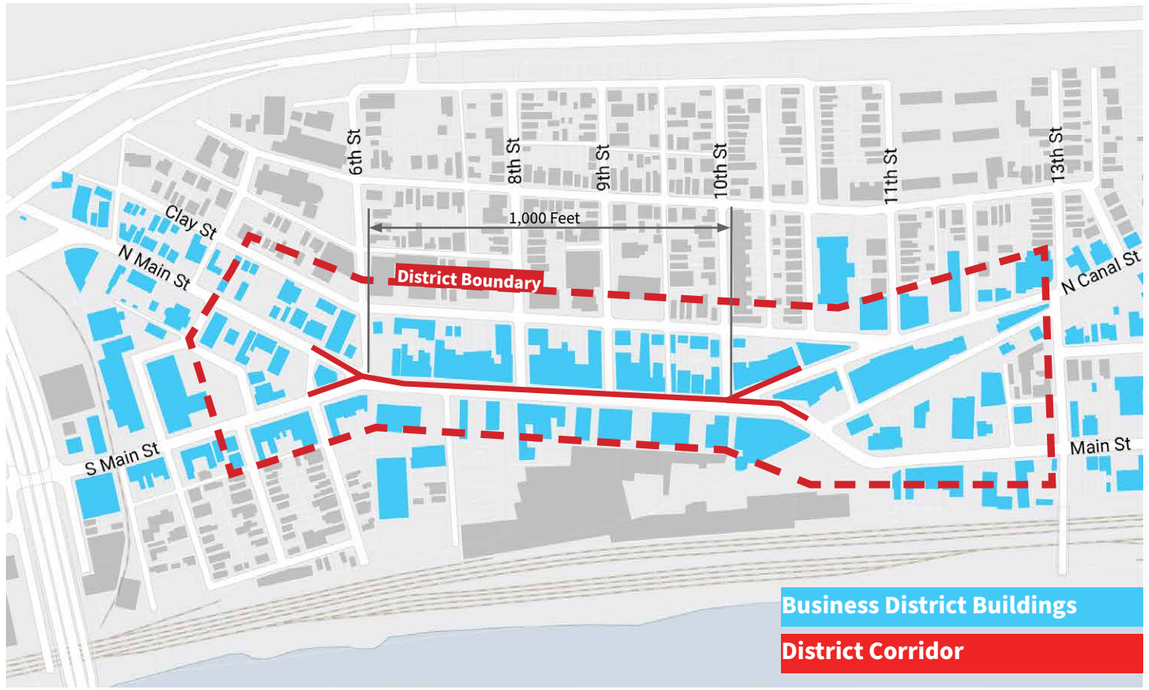
A - Area of Study

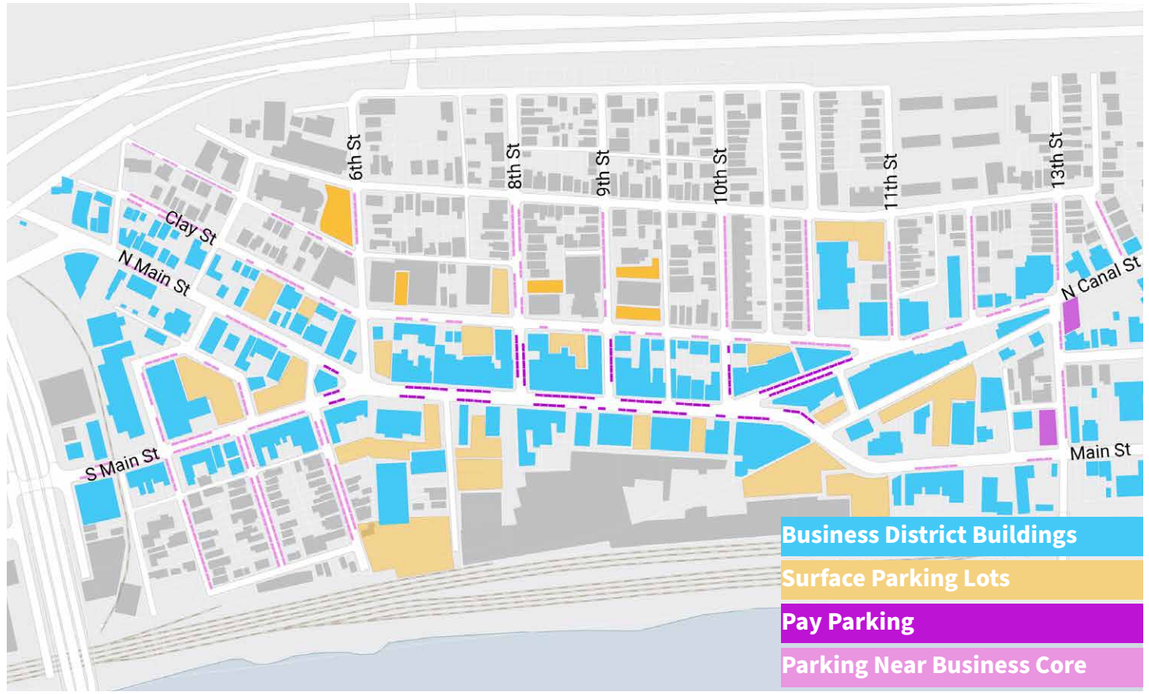
Intro

Sharpsburg's Central Business Zone has a corridor typology and is located along Main Street between 6th St and 13th Street The corridor is anchored on each end by large street triangles: to the West is the relatively neglected intersection of North and South Main, and the East has a recently improved public space at the intersection of N. Canal Street that hosts seating and the Guyasuta Statue. Traffic on Main Street is regularly heavy, operating as a commuter corridor and accommodating frequent bus service, and connecting the business districts of adjacent riverfront communities.

Around the central business corridor, Sharpsburg has dense, detached housing, making the district accessible by foot to most of Sharpsburg's residents. The residential neighborhoods around the business corridor are largely dependent on street parking. This puts pressure on residential parking in the vicinity of the business district during busy times when both residents and visitors are in Sharpsburg, particularly during events or social hours like Thursday and Friday night. As Sharpsburg works to grow its commercial occupancy, the Borough should further investigate district parking and access in order to draft strategies to help alleviate these pressures in support of growth.

Existing parking code





Context and Access

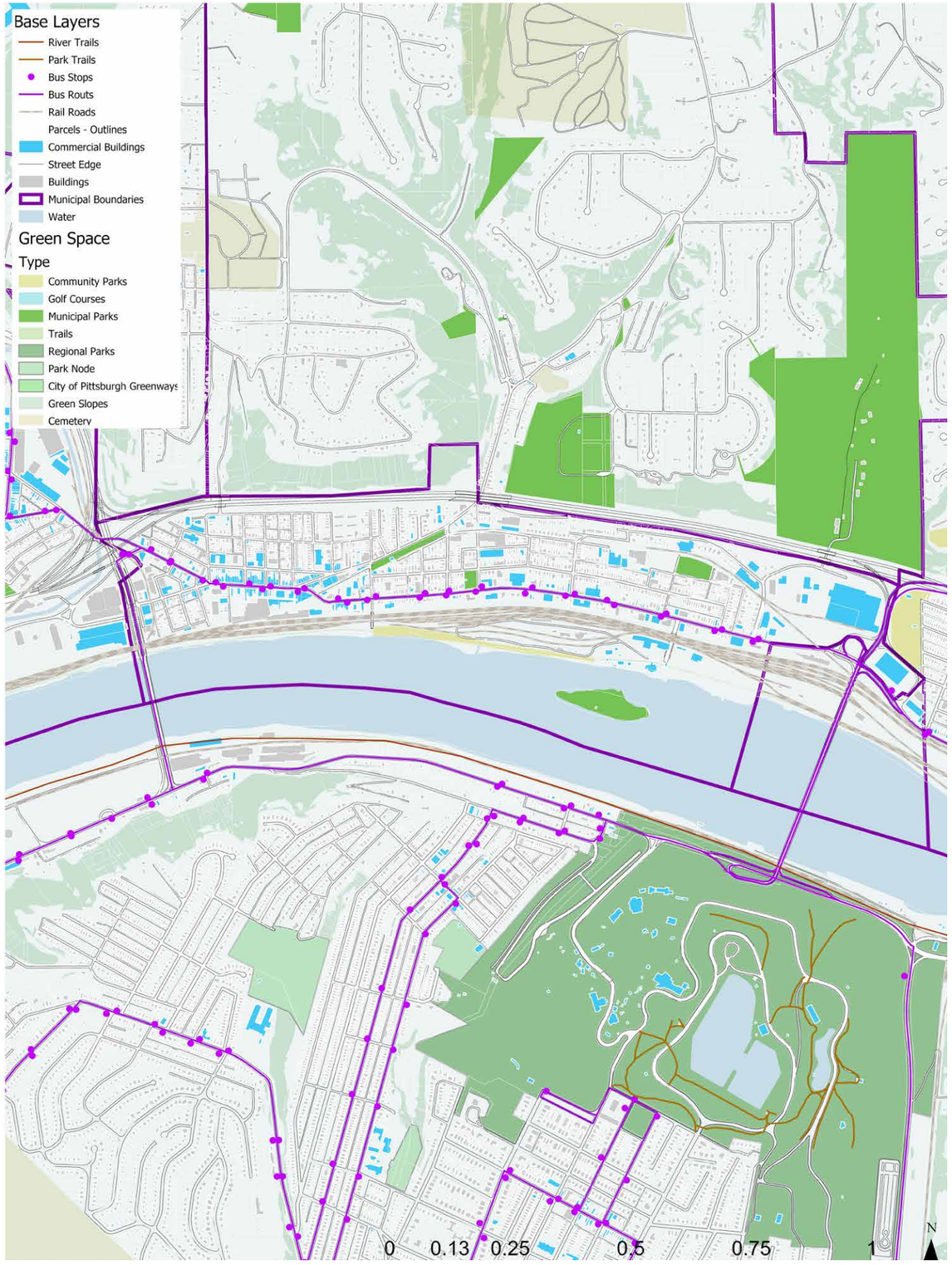
Sharpsburg's business district is currently easily accessible by foot for most of Sharpsburg's residents and residents of lower Etna.

By bike, residents of Etna and Sharpsburg have short trips to the Sharpsburg business district however the quality of the ride is not ideal due to poor trails or lack of bike infrastructure along the way, and at their final destination. It is difficult or unpleasant to bike to Aspinwall or the Waterworks Shopping Center due to the volume and speed of traffic and lack of riverfront trails.

Sharpsburg has regular bus service on with Routes 1 and 91 passing through Main Street. However, route 1 is a commuter and Waterworks destination line and 91 connects the Borough to limited destinations, predominantly Millvale, Lawrenceville, the Strip, and Downtown.

Car access is the most convenient mode of travel to the district by the largest demographic of residents in the region. Sharpsburg is well situated along PA Route 28 and directly adjacent to the Highland Park Bridge and the 62nd Street Bridge, making Sharpsburg's business district predominantly a vehicle oriented destination for most non-residents.

There is also high levels of access to taxis and easy ride hailing services due to Sharpsburg's proximity to the City of Pittsburgh. Establishing designated taxi or ride hailing pick up and drop off locations could make using these services easier and more attractive for visitors.



Existing parking code

The following are excerpts from the Borough of Sharpsburg's Municipal Code that pertain to parking and are included here for reference.

§ 27-502
Supplementary Regulations
14. Parking.

A. The minimum number of off-street parking spaces to be provided for every new or substantially reconstructed building shall be as follows:

(1) Residential uses. Two parking spaces per every dwelling unit.

(2) Nonresidential uses. One parking space per every 1,000 square feet.

B. The surfacing of parking areas shall only be of paved asphalt or concrete with no modular units.

§ 15-414
Violations and penalties.

The following fines shall be imposed for violations of this part:

1. As to metered parking, anyone who receives a ticket for a violation of metered parking, if paid within five business days of the date of the ticket, shall pay a total of $5 per violation. If not paid within five business days, but paid prior to the issuance of a citation, the amount shall be $15. Upon issuance of a citation, the fine shall be $20 plus court costs.
2. As to any other violation within this part, other than metered parking, any person who receives a ticket shall pay the sum of $15 if paid within five business days of the date of the ticket. If not paid within five business days, but prior to the issuance of a citation, the fine shall be $20. If a citation is issued, the fine shall be in the amount of $20, plus court costs.
3. Provided it shall be the duty of the police officers and of parking enforcement personnel of the Borough of Sharpsburg to report to the appropriate official all violations of any provision of this part, indicating, in each case, the section violated; the license number of the vehicle involved in the violation; the location where the violation took place; and any other facts that might be necessary in order to secure a clear understanding of the circumstances attending the violation. The police officer or other person making the report shall also attach to or place upon every such vehicle a notice stating that the vehicle was parked in violation of this part. A separate offense shall arise for each hour or portion thereof in which a violation of this part is found to exist or each section of this part found to have been violated. Said fine may be amended from time to time by Borough Council.

§ 15-410
Permit parking.

1. **Limited time parking.** Parking for vehicles not bearing a resident parking permit or official parking permit issued by the Borough shall be restricted to one-hour parking on all Borough streets where parking is otherwise permitted, except the restricted permit zones or other special zones as listed below:

Name of Street	Location
Cecil Street	From 17th Street to 18th Street
Fifteenth Street	
Fifth Street	From Pilgrim Way to Short Street
Fourteenth Street	From Middle Street to South Canal
Fourth Street	
Mary's Avenue	From the 1500 Block to the 1700 Block
Mary's Street	In the 200 Block
Middle Street	From Fifteenth Street to Eighteenth Street
North Canal Street	First three spaces of the 1200 Block
School Street	
Seventeenth Street	
Sixteenth Street	
South Canal Street	From westerly end to Eighteenth Street
Thirteenth Street	From Main Street to Middle Street
Twelfth Street	
Twenty-Third Street	

2. **Resident parking permit.** A resident of the Borough of Sharpsburg will, upon application to the Borough and proof of residency, be issued a resident parking permit by the Borough. No fee shall be charged for this permit. A vehicle displaying a valid resident parking permit issued by the Borough will not be subject to the one-hour restricted parking regulations.
3. **Restricted permit zones.** The following parking restrictions apply at the designated locations. No person without a valid permit shall park in those areas designated by the Borough as restricted permit zones, unless otherwise stated below:

Name of Street	Location
Cecil Street	From 17th Street to 18th Street
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Twelfth Street	
Twenty-Third Street	

Enforcement will be 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Sharpsburg's existing parking code is fairly simple and exists under two provisions. The first provision is for residential parking permits. The second provision pertains to zoning parking requirements.

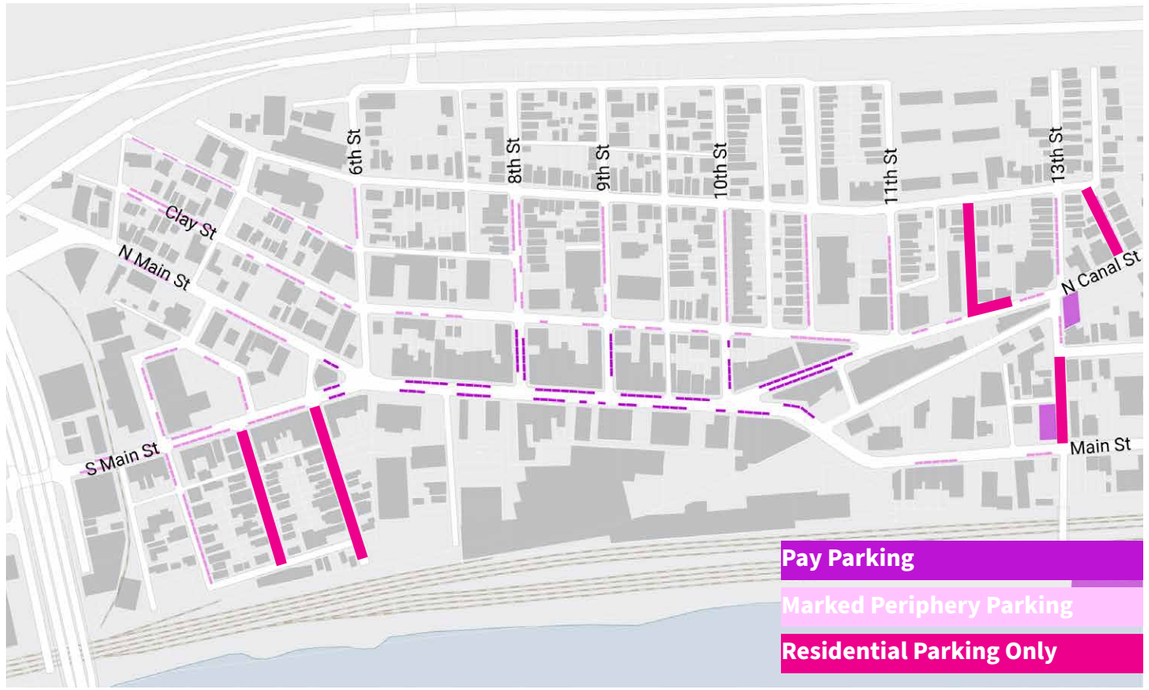
Residential Parking Permits
Sharpsburg has a residential parking permit system that limits visitors to one hour parking with the exception of several streets where no visitor parking is allowed. These rules only apply to visitors from 9:00AM to 9:00PM. Several of the resident only streets exist in close proximity to the commercial district and are mapped on the opposing page. These residential permits do not effect pay parking spaces that are concentrated around the business district and are metered 9am-4pm.

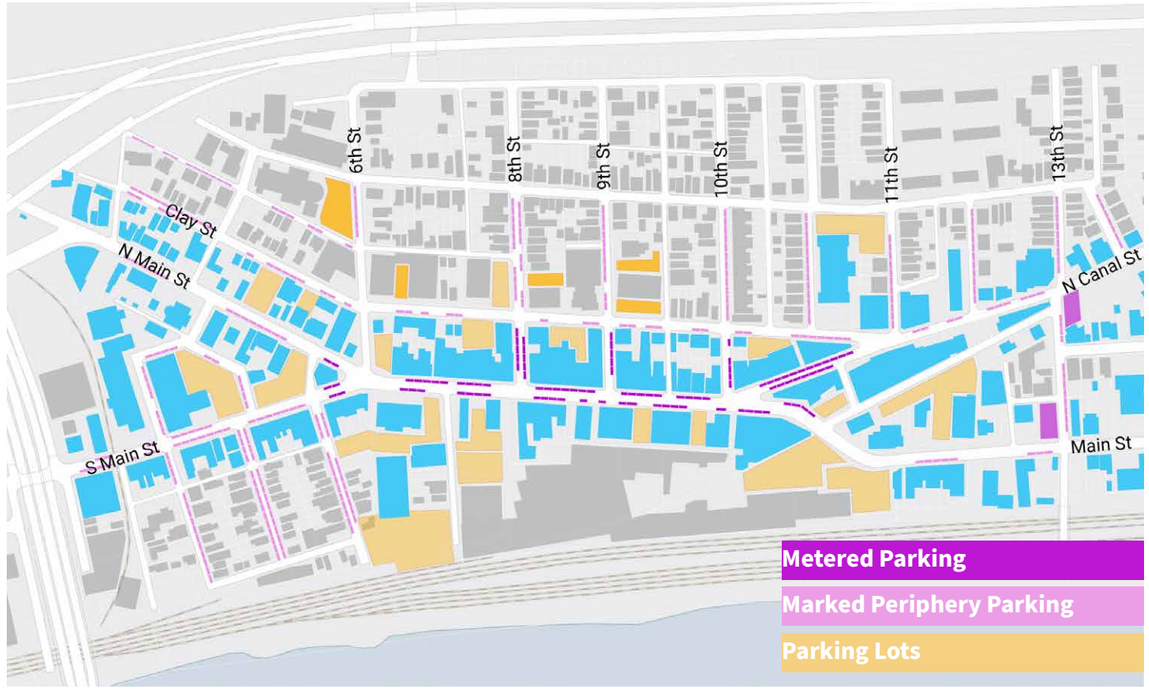
Zoning Code Parking Requirements
Sharpsburg has a very simple parking requirement for all non-residential uses that stipulates that for every 1,000 square feet of use, a property must include one on-site parking space. This is a lower requirement then the city of Pittsburgh which would require approximately 1.5 parking spots for every 1,000 feet.

The implications include:

- Business can have fewer parking spaces than they need, putting more pressure on street parking.
- Unexpected consequences of off street parking without curb cut limits is that there are extensive areas without street parking. Clay Street is less than 50% parkable.
- 4:30-8:30 overlap of residential to commercial parking demand
- No extended parking for anyone staying over an hour except at metered spaces. Meter time limit is unknown (meters are covered). Repaying meters is not convenient.
- Meter fines are inexpensive and much lower than pay parking rates in the city.

B - Assessment Inventory





Inventory Process

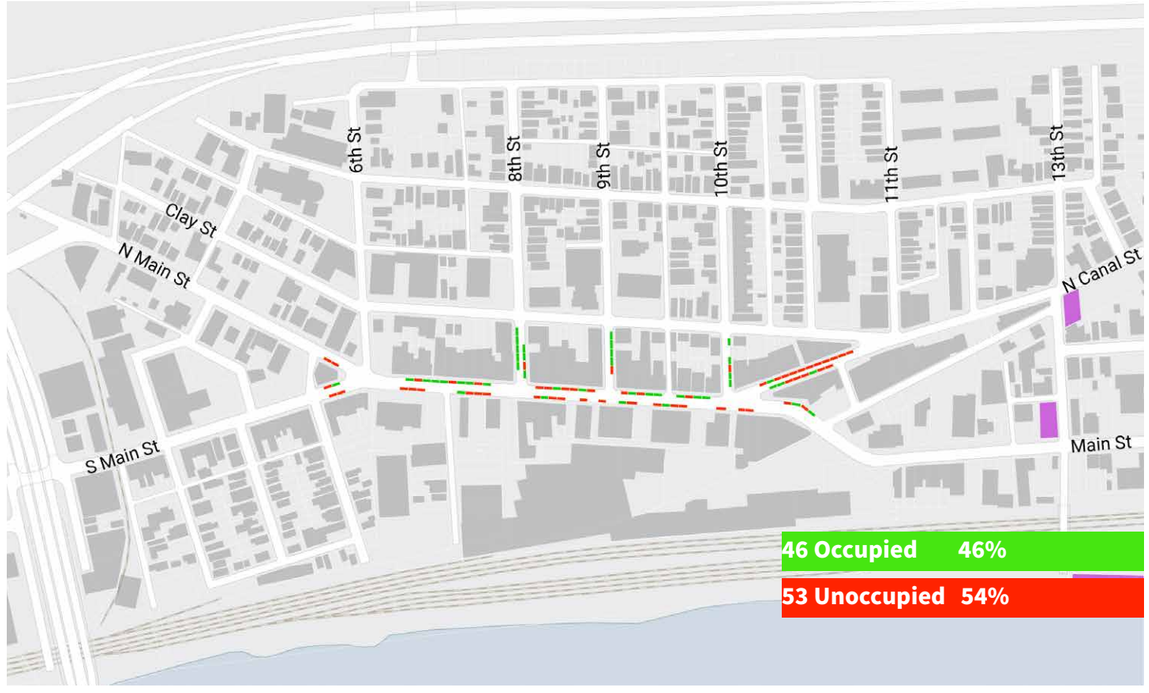
Desktop Analysis
To establish total parking spaces, a map that includes all business district marked parking spots and marked spots on adjacent streets. This map was created using remote mapping tools like Google Street View and Allegheny County GIS dataset, and field verified. **The district has 99 on street parking spots along Main Street, 29 parking spots in the metered lots on 13th street, and 324 parking spaces on adjacent streets.** The location of private lots were noted but individual parking spaces within them were not tallied.

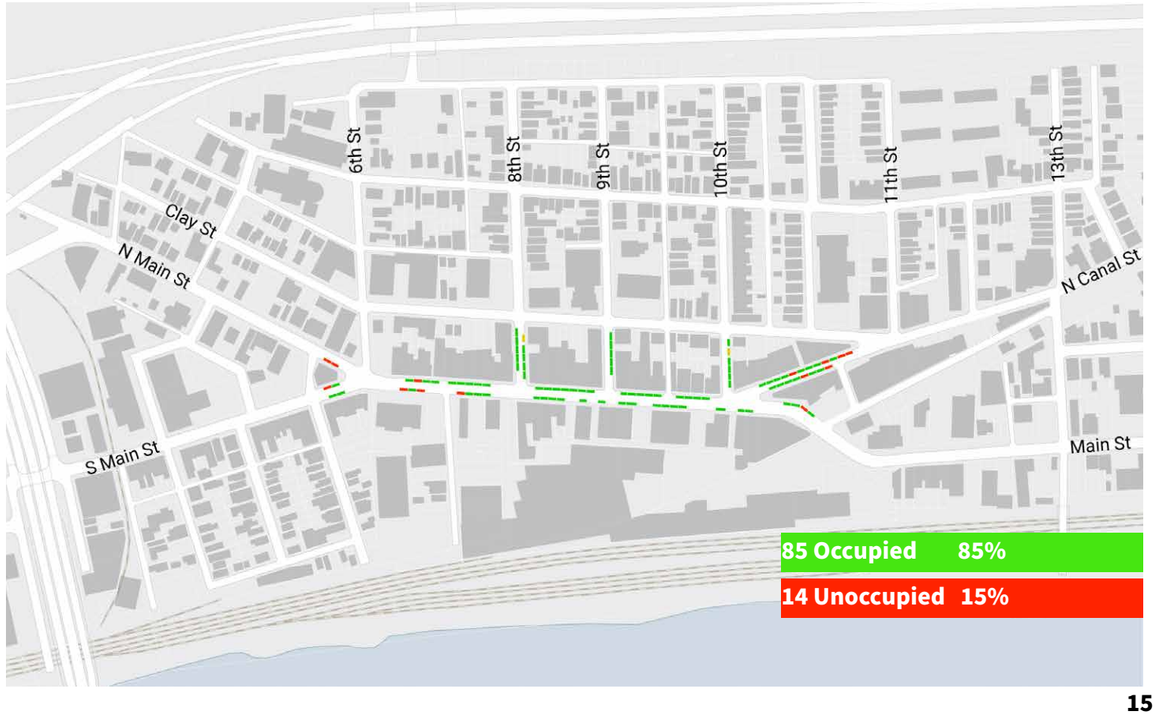
On Site Survey
In order to establish parking space occupancy, the business district was visited on two occasions during which each pay parking space along Main Street Between 6th and 13th had their occupancy recorded. Visit where conducted Thursday December 19, 2019 at midday and in the evening in order to compare work and leisure hour demand for parking.

Summary of inventory findings

Mid-day Parking Demand
For mid-day demand the Borough appears to have ample parking to accommodate demand. It was observed that 46 of the 99 pay parking spaces within the business district were occupied. The surveyors found that the north side of Main Street had a higher rate of occupancy than the south side and that the side streets of 8th, 9th, and 10th all had high occupancy. While parking spaces at the east, west, and south ends of the district had relatively light usage.

Evening Parking Demand
For parking demand in the evening, our survey found that 85 of the 99 pay parking spaces within the business district were occupied at 6:30pm. Many blocks had every parking space occupied. The western end of Main Street had less parking occupancy as well as spaces along North Canal Street. The parking spaces along the side streets of 8th, 9th, and 10th all had high occupancy, including cars occupying unmarked sections of the streets, suggesting higher demand then there are easy to identify spots, or that existing “do not park” signage is hard to see at night.





C - Demand Projection

Projections are based on an assumed relationship between storefronts and metered parking, implying that people who are using the metered parking are likely visiting the storefront. Thus, the demand projection is only for the Main Street businesses, recognizing that there are other businesses off Main Street that could affect the parking demand. The project assumes that no employees of large facilities adjacent to Main Street were parking in metered spaces.

District Storefront Occupancy
The business district has around 67 storefronts and is approximately 25% unoccupied at street level. Using this percentage we sets a baseline to 0.88 parking spaces per business in the day, and 1.63 parking spaces per business at night.

Current Parking Demand

52 occupied street level businesses (75% occupancy)
46 occupied parking spaces (46% occupancy) at Noon.
85 occupied parking spaces (86 % occupancy) at 6:30pm.

Projected Demand Parking Demand

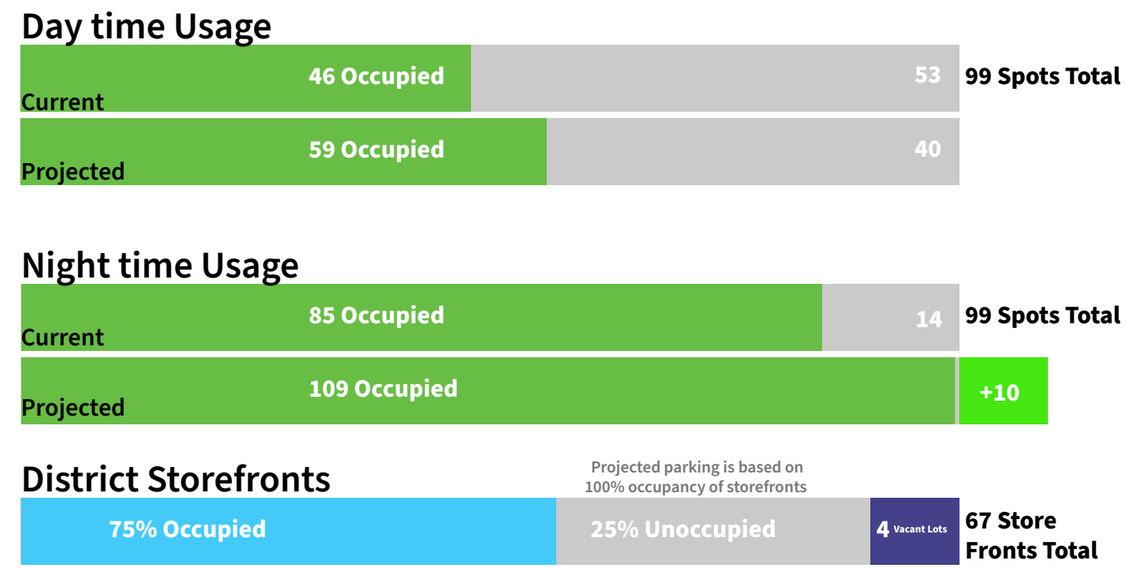
67 occupied street level businesses (100% occupancy)
59 occupied parking spaces (60% occupancy) at Noon.
109 occupied parking spaces (110% occupancy) at 6:30pm.

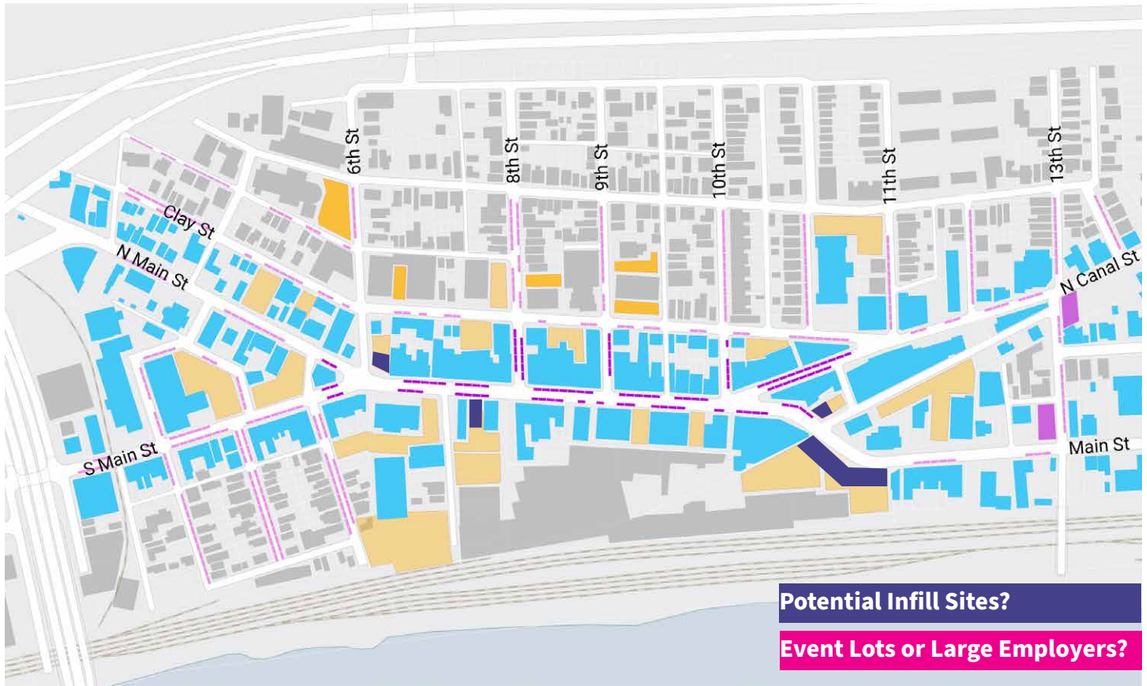
Occupancy Demand for Assembly:
During events or special occasions the parking demand can spike in the district. The district could establish a parking plan requirement for event permits, including event parking plans and temporary signage that directs people to specified periphery lots and parking for occasions of high parking pressure. See shared parking agreements on page 28 for further discussion on how to increase periphery parking through partnership with private land owners.

Some events and district destinations that could have disproportionate effects on parking demand at special times include:

- Church Demand
- Evening Demand
- River access and events.
- Adjacent Commercial and List industry Facilities that may overflow into public parking
- Special or promotional events ate local businesses like fund raisers, trivia night, food truck days or private parties or other crowed-drawing activity

Parking Demand Breakdown





Ch.2 | Strategic Planning

A - Parking Systems Overview

Access and Visits

People use business districts in different ways and the district has different user groups. How a district organizes access can influence the character of the district, the types of services it provides, and who it attracts.

Access Modes

There are five primary modes by which people traverse the city: walking; biking or scooting; transit like buses and trams; by personal vehicle; or in shared rides like taxis, ride hailing apps, or carpool. The more convenient each of these modes is for a commercial district, the more likely it will see higher volumes of activity.

User Groups

A business district can host a range of occupants, including persons who live or work there, persons who come for shopping and entertainment, and persons who come for events. Each of these activities has their own schedule and intensities throughout the day and has unequal infrastructure needs. Calibrating a district's design to each user group and how they use the district can help keep all these demographics satisfied and coming back.

Business Types

Business districts provide diverse services and business types, and each one has implications for the built environment. Service oriented business typically create little street activity and are well suited for second story commercial spaces. Shops and dining benefit from high visibility to pedestrians and generate sidewalk activity as people window shop or dinning spills into the public realm. Stores that provide staples or bulk goods like groceries and pharmacies often require large spaces and dedicated parking because people are less inclined to carry their grocers or bulk purchases home. In order to foster a vibrant main street, infrastructure suited for the businesses can help activate the street and encourage patrons to make longer visits to the area.

Parking Reduction Benefits

Right Sizing Parking

A traditional main street setting like that of Sharpsburg's business district has many reasons to reduce the parking demand within their district including convenience, pedestrian experience, and environmental health.

Easy to Visit

Having visitors perceive their trip to Sharpsburg's business district to be a convenient and easy will help draw them to Sharpsburg over other destinations. Easy to understand public transit and parking and pedestrian systems, creates a low-effort journey to Sharpsburg and encourages repeat visits to the thriving business district.

Stronger Sense of Place

When we prioritize people and not cars, we can create a stronger Main Street. High quality pedestrian experiences support businesses and attract new patrons by facilitating longer visitor stays, increasing business exposure, and enabling vibrant street activity. By reducing parking demand and parking spaces within a central business district, more space can be given over to traffic calming and pedestrian amenities that build a strong district identity.

Healthier People and Planet

Reducing vehicle usage in a business district also has environmental befits by decreasing noise pollution, visual pollution (line of sight to businesses), and air pollution. By supporting projects and programs the facilitate more diverse modes of travel like bikes, pedestrians and strong transit networks, Sharpsburg will become a healthier community.

B - Recommendations

Systems of Management

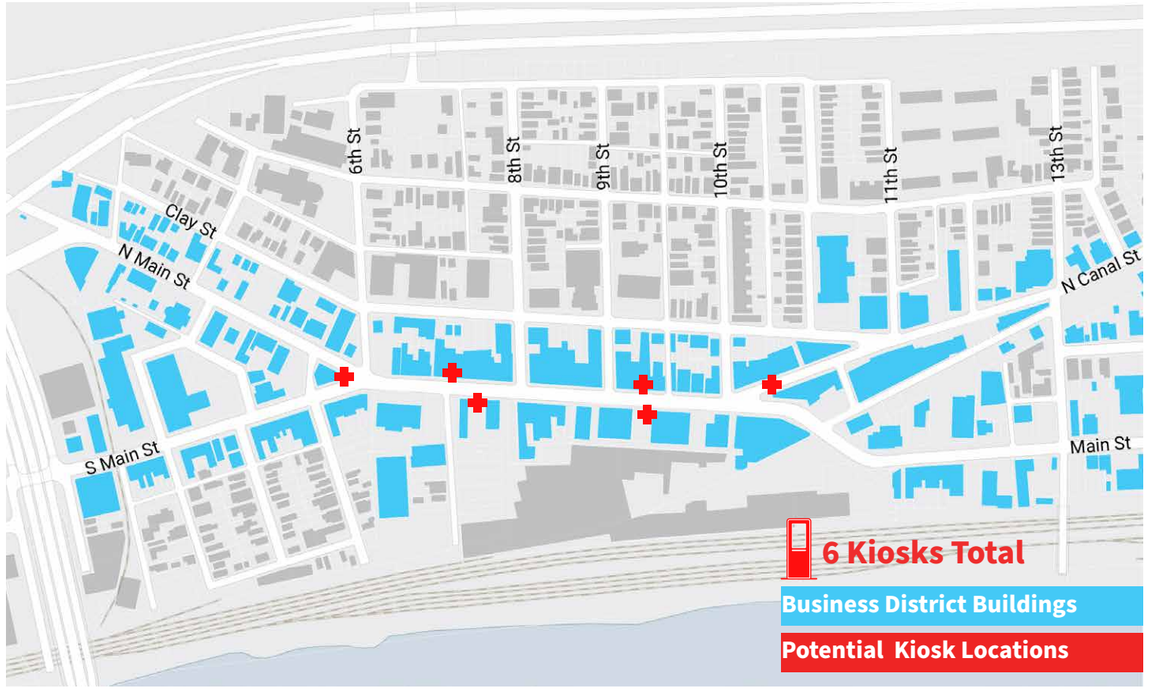
The high demand for parking during leisure hours pushes business district patrons to periphery streets, creating conflict with residential parking. Investing in the parking system management and communications can help to alleviate residential parking pressure and generate greater revenue for the borough.

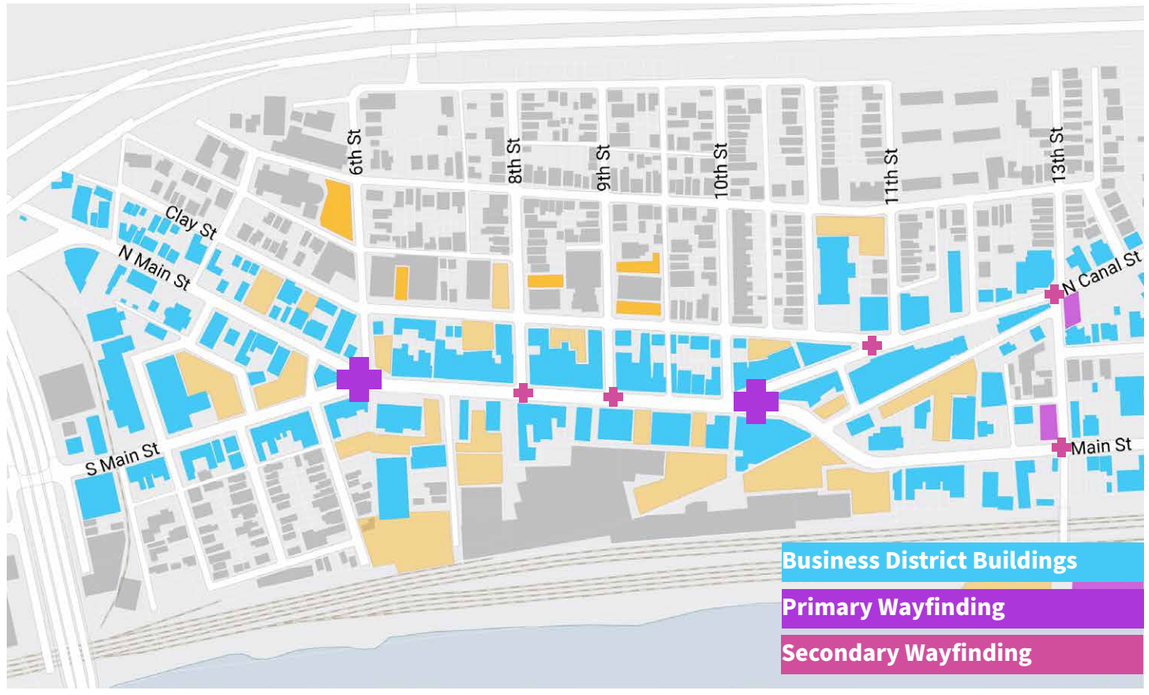
Streamline Pay Parking Technology
Sharpsburg currently uses quarter-based meters for business district pay parking. It is recommended that Sharpsburg Borough update its pay system to be consistent with the Pittsburgh Parking Authority's pay-by-plate kiosk system. The kiosk system can help the borough reduce fine's and increase revenue from parking (https://www.nlc.org/pittsburgh-pay-by-plate) as well as extend effective pay parking into the evening when there is the greatest conflict between residential and visitor parking demand. An additional benefit is that the kiosks can make it easy to increase the cost for parking to make driving less attractive to those who can use other modes of transit.

Each meter kiosk costs between $5,000 to $7,500 and can service a typical block of parking. The business district would need approximately 5-6 kiosks total. Management and maintenance of the kiosks could be coordinated with the Pittsburgh Parking Authority or other municipalities to reduce the borough's burden and to get better pricing. When investigation parking management options it is important to review how current operations are functioning in order to compare the current baseline against potential benefits. Some questions to answer include:

- Are meters in good shape?
- What is the distribution of meters?
- How much revenue is gained from current ticketing?
- Do current operations cover the cost of personnel?

Wayfinding and Parking Signage
Wayfinding and parking signage can help visitors find convenient parking and help unfamiliar visitors locate parking. The Borough should strategically install parking signage when Main Street undergoes renovation. These signage updates should include wayfinding to existing side street and surface lot parking locations as well. The goal of parking wayfinding is to ease the visitors experience and help to encourage patrons to use parking spots beyond the immediate vicinity of their destination, and to discourage use of residential parking spaces. This messaging should use the minimum signs necessary to direct traffic and use simplified and highly legible graphic language.

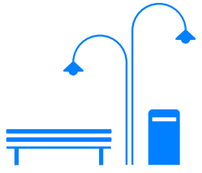




Connection Infrastructure

Make Walking Easier

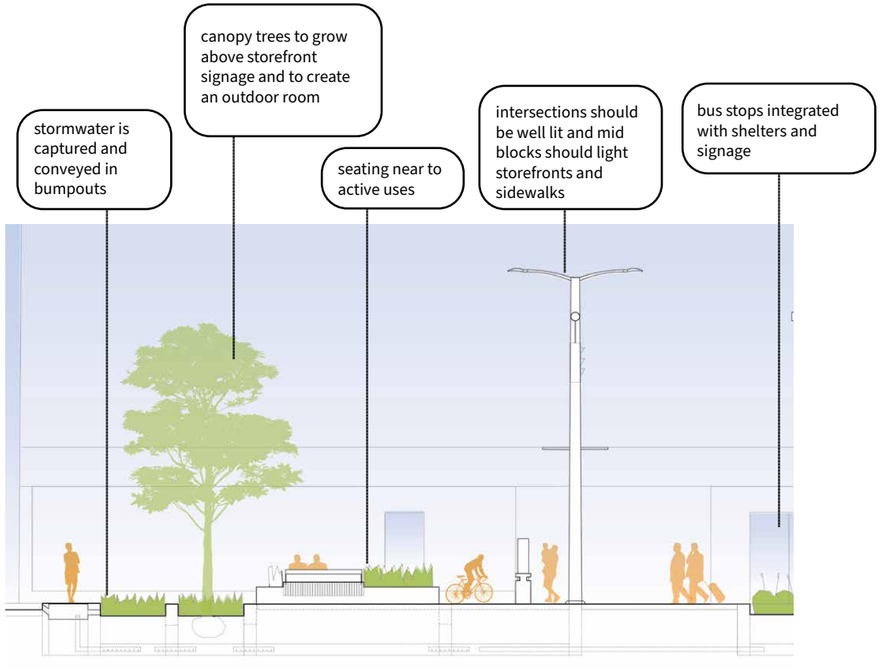
One of the best ways to reduce parking demand is to get more people to the district by foot. For Sharpsburg, this means making it desirable for residents to choose walking over driving for all their trips to Main Street. This can be done through a range of interventions including sidewalk improvements, curb control, traffic calming, streetscape improvements, and safety improvements.



Sidewalk improvements involve anything that makes the experience of walking down the street more enjoyable. This can be as simple as enforcing good maintenance like snow removal in the winter, or as involved creating a sidewalk standard and replacing poorly maintained or non-compliant sections.

Pedestrian upgrades to consider include:

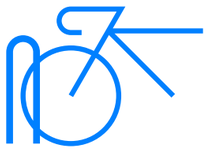
- Curb control can be an important aspect of making the sidewalk a comfortable and safe place for pedestrians. Making sure that parking lots have dedicated entrances that are no larger than 20 feet wide can help increase street side parking, and minimize pedestrians interaction with crossing vehicles.
- Improved intersections, and pedestrian amenities like benches and receptacles,



Expand Bike Infrastructure

A great way to reduce parking demand is to facilitate more space efficient modes of transit like biking and scooters. As many as 20 bikes can be parked in a typical street-side vehicle parking spot. When more people commute by bike, vehicle parking demands are reduced and more space can be dedicated to pedestrian amenities. The Sharpsburg business district could be an easy bike ride for local residents, as well as for residents of Etna and Aspinwall, if the appropriate infrastructure is in place to support them. Bike investments that could help increase ridership to the district include:

- Create a bike network that employs street improvements like “sharrows” and in some places dedicated lanes to make riders feel safer.
- Install Bike parking at key places along Main Street.
- Establish a bike share location near to regional trail networks and park amenities.
- Establish a bike lending site and/or a tool lending library.



Site Improvements

Transit Stops
Transit is a great way to get people to and from the district efficiently. Sharpsburg is served by the bus Routs 1 and 91, with Route 1 connecting river communities at half hour intervals, and 91 connecting to Aspinwall, Millvale, Lawrenceville, the Strip, and Downtown at 10 minute intervals. Improving local infrastructure for these routes can help to make their use more attractive to both residents and other communities along these bus lines. Investing in high quality transit stops can make people more comfortable waiting for less frequent service and make longer trips more attractive.

As a follow up study Sharpsburg can inventory existing bus stops and there context to create recommendations for stop improvements and location changes as necessary.

Park-and-Ride
Establishing a Park-and-Ride near the edges of the district can attract commuters to travel by bus and invite them to conduct shopping in the district at each end of their journey.

New Development: Fee-In-Lieu Spaces
New development has requirements for on site parking that may be difficult to achieve or may not be desirable. Property owners or developers could contribute to a municipal fund that builds or maintains shared parking.

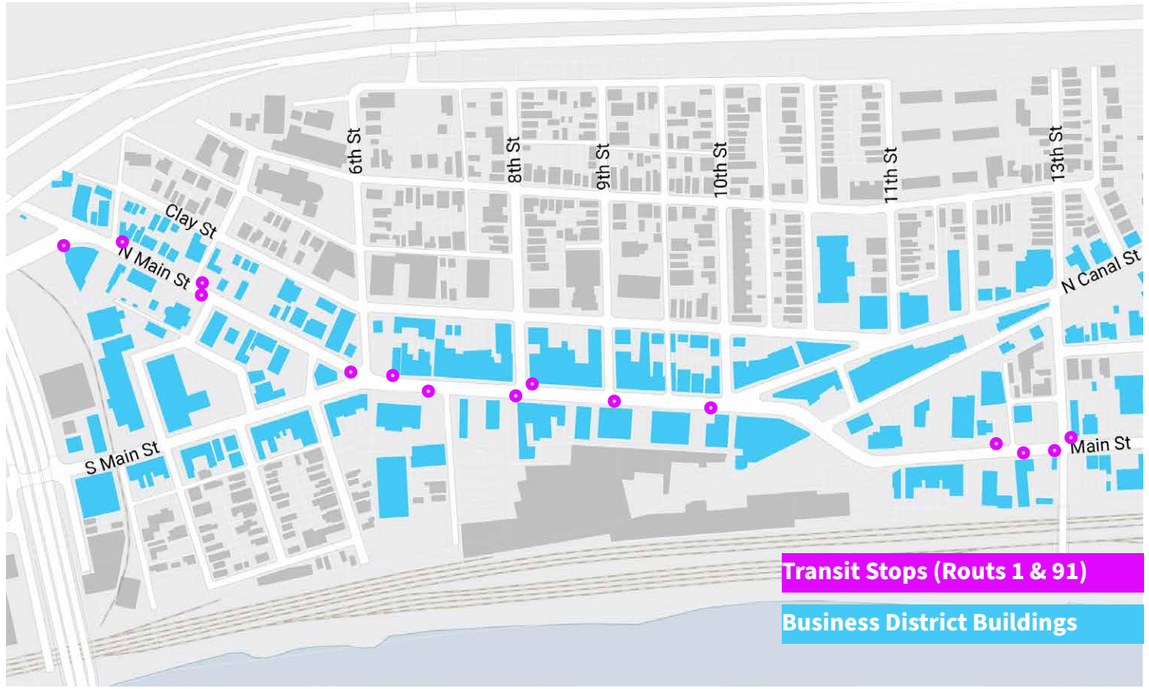
Dynamic and Zoned Pricing
Centralized parking kiosks allow for parking prices to be set by time of day and demand. For example, Carnegie Mellon and the City of Pittsburgh instituted dynamic pricing on street parking around the University, with higher prices for zones that had over 75% occupancy during regular business periods. The kiosks enabled them to make adjustments to pricing until an ideal balance of supply and demand was reached, and to make changes for times of less demand, like holidays, weekends, and evenings.

Lots at the edge of the district can have reduced pricing so that visitors who are coming in for longer stays can choose a longer walk for cheaper parking (this will also increase their exposure to other businesses within the district). Main Street parking spots should maintain less than 75% occupancy to keep spaces available for short term visitors that value quick access to their destination businesses.

The Psychology of Parking

Parking fines with a residential parking permits may discourage people from parking, especially if enforcement is known to be lax.

Lack of parking is a limit to growth on Main Street. Short term customers (grab-n-go, haircut,) want close proximity. Long-term customers (restaurant/brewery) may tolerate longer distances and prefer less expensive parking. Employees will likely walk the greatest distance for inexpensive parking because they are staying for extended periods.



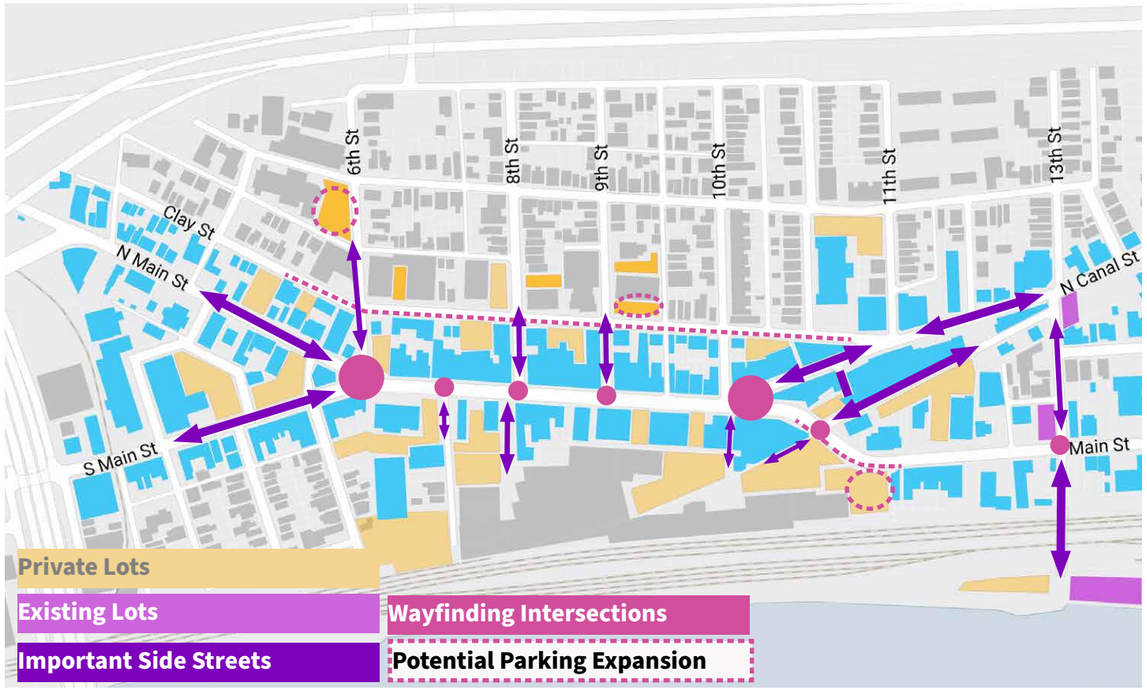
Distribute Parking at Reduced Prices
Another method to reduce demand is to have periphery parking lots with reduced pricing. If parking around the edges of the district can be easily accessed and utilized at a reduced rate, visitors who are coming in for longer stays in the district will choose to have a longer walk for cheaper parking, and this will also increase their exposure to other businesses within the district. This will keep Main Street parking spots free for short term visitors that value quick access to their destination business.

Shared Parking with Private Owners
The Sharpsburg business district currently has many private parking lots nearby Main Street that could be put into service of district visitors. Shared parking agreements with a business district organization or even the municipality could enable people to use these lots and could be a source of revenue for the land owner.

- Install lot signage and wayfinding signs to direct people to Main Street.
- Install signage at every intersection on Main Street to clearly identify additional parking areas.
- Work with lot owners to stripe the parking lots for daily use with a Sharpsburg blue striping, consistent in every lot.
- Consider branding the lots with their location “8th and Clay,” “South of Main,” or with a landmark building to make it easy to identify.

North of Main: Clay Street. Clay Street could be an early focus area for shared parking because it has many underused parking lots. Many of the lots are configured as pull-through parking for church or institutional use and could still serve their intermittent purpose but could also be better used on a daily basis. Clay Street is a logical focus area as it is very close to Main Street and is a natural overflow for drivers turning off Main Street to find parking. Clay also has few residences and business district activity would have less impact than in other more residential areas. Clay Street currently has little on street parking and could support more if property owners were encouraged or required to limit their length of curb cuts.

South of Main: Large Parcels. The large parcels south of the business district could be opportunities for additional parking areas. Property owners could organize their properties to include public parking areas that are accessed by streets or walkways. This could also open up additional opportunities for commercial spaces off Main Street. The municipality might want to consider acquisition of property in the future for a municipal lot.



Public-Private Parking Agreements

In cases where sizable parking lots at the periphery of the business district are not used at full capacity at all hours of the week, there is an opportunity to arrange a shared parking agreement between the borough and the property owner to allow for public parking during periods of under utilization. The goal for the agreement is to provide extended public parking options without interfering with existing use of private lots. This section details considerations for arranging public-private parking agreements and the opposing figures demonstrate possible configurations.

Schedules
The underlying expectation for the a parking agreement is that the privet lot's use schedule allows for flexibility during some key business hours for the neighborhood main street. It is possible for public parking access be set in a fixed schedule, or in a flexible schedule that can be updated on the fly as the private party has need. The details of schedule should be established in detail within the final agreement.

Quid Pro Quo
An important aspect in entering an agreement between the public and private party is to determine if the private party is to receive compensation or reimbursement for offering their infrastructure for public use. Sharpsburg Borough needs to determine what types of compensation they are willing to provide and at what interval. Examples of compensation can include but are not limited to: Providing ongoing maintenance to the lot in question; Provide cash payment in a one time or ongoing basis for a predetermined duration; In the case of metered parking, pay per use or direct transfer of parking fees.

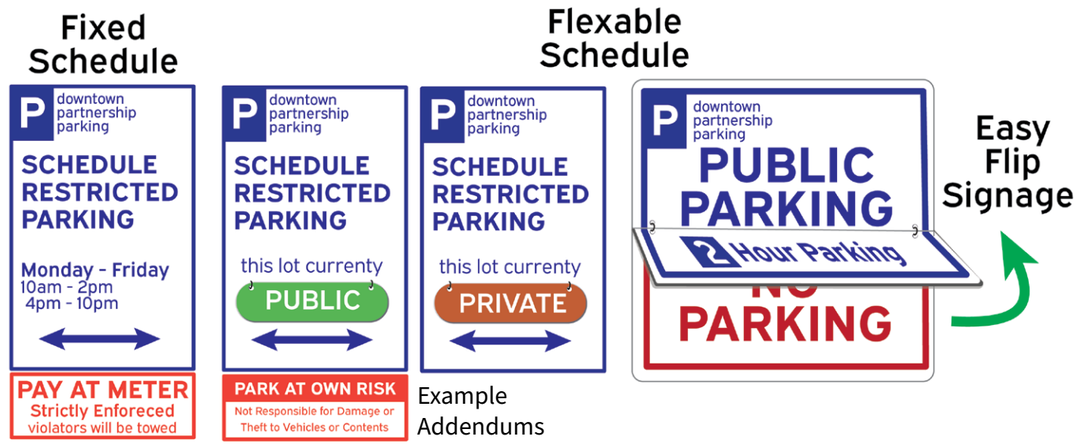
Lot Conversion
In order for public lots to transition to public use, they will require updates which may include re-painting spots and traffic lines, installing signs, or adding a parking meter. The details of these updates should be designed in a way to minimize impact on existing use patterns, while also maximizing the opportunity for public parking spots.

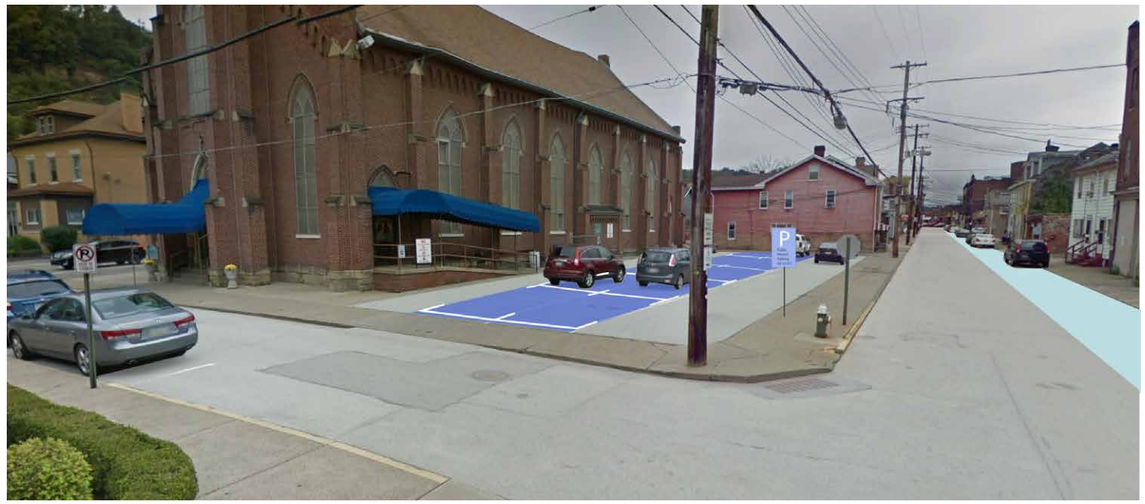
Liability
In order to shield the private party from additional liability as a result of public use parking taking place, the lots insurance should be reviewed as part of the agreement process. Specific signage may be required to address and clarify issues of liability.

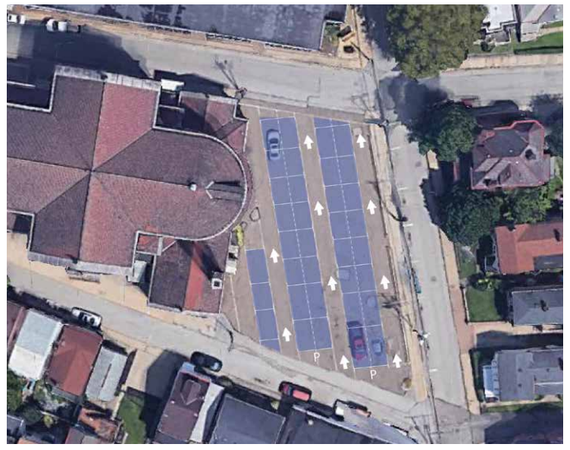
Basis for Partnership
Once details of a partnership have been established between both parties a Lawyer should be employed to draft a formal agreement or contract to insure that expectations for both parties are clearly delineated and upheld for the life of the agreement.

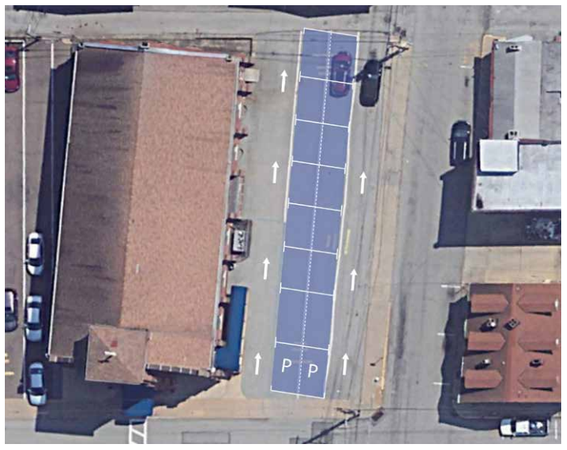
Shared Lot Branding

In order to make public partnership lots easy to identify and navigate a consistent band of signage, traffic paint, and agreements should be utilized. This will help to reduce confusion and potential conflicts between district visitors and private lot owners ongoing activity. It can be valuable to both clearly mark the parking lot on site, but also provide signage and way finding on adjacent blocks to facilitate visitors finding the lot on the district periphery









Curb Control

Sharpsburg has many opportunities for kerbside parking that are currently used as extensive driveway entrances. The borough should work with land owners and start the process of 'controlling the curb' by rebuilding curbs in areas where driveways exceed the necessary size for safe entry and exit.

When property owners have commercial parking and loading along the street, it is attractive to eliminate curbs and sidewalks to give drivers flexibility and to extend their usable space into the public realm. This flexibility can come at the cost of the pedestrian experience and viable street parking. Sharpsburg should conduct a review of driveways around its business district and identify locations that do not adhere to the 12 foot maximum driveway width and develop a project list for reinstating quality side walks and added street parking spaces where possible.

Currently areas along Main Street to the East and throughout Clay Street there is minimal street parking and many long sections of sidewalk that act as continuous driveway entrances. These areas should be prioritized for curb control due to their proximity to the business district.

Below is the existing code ordinance regulating driveways. This code should be enforced and possibly updated if the curb survey shows that the existing code is insufficient for insuring quality pedestrian sidewalks and maximizing street parking where possible.

Municipal Zoning Code
ARTICLE V - Performance Standards and Supplementary Regulation

§ 27-502
Supplementary Regulations

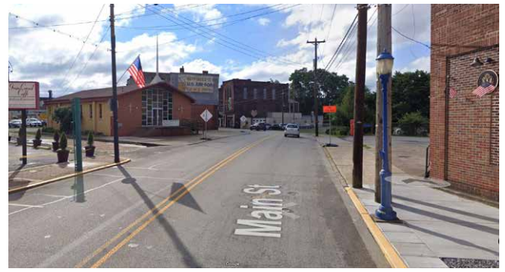
8. Driveways.

A. Driveway access is regulated by the street typologies prescribed in this chapter.

B. All private garages and all off-street parking enclosed within a primary building must be connected directly to a public street or public alley by a private driveway no wider than 12 feet. Where there are multiple off-street parking spaces in a private garage or enclosed within the principal building, the driveway may be widened to access said parking spaces.

C. The entire flare of any return radius on a driveway must fall within the right-of-way; surfacing shall only be of paved asphalt or concrete with no modular units.

Before



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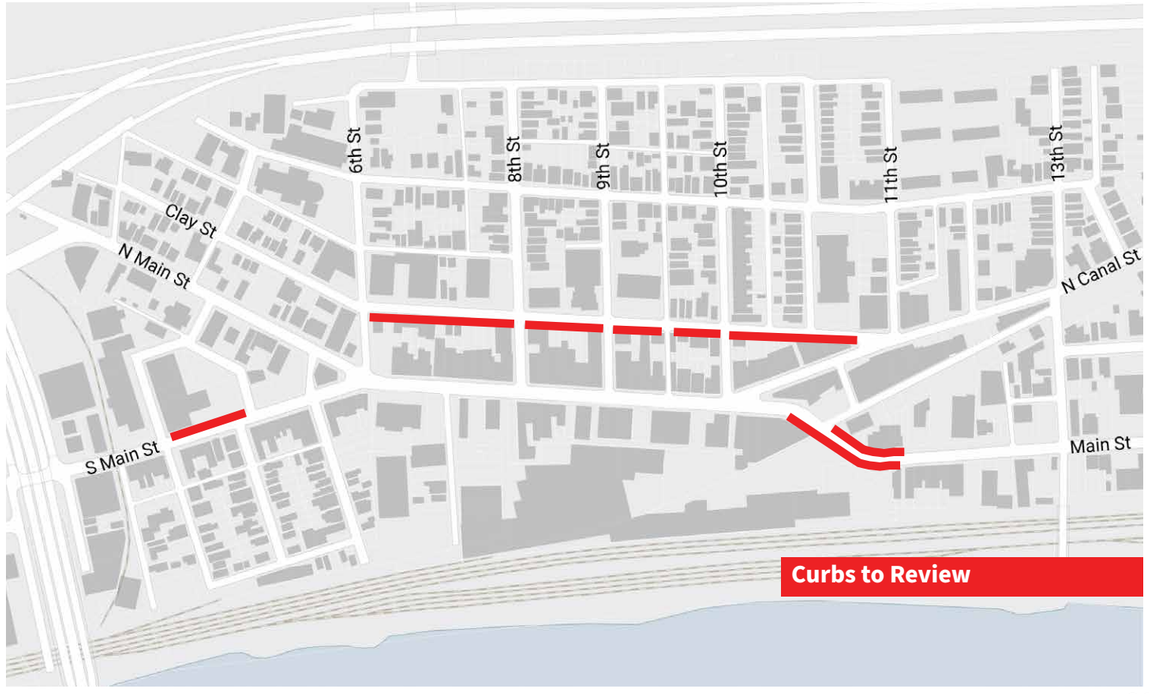

ALLEGHENY TOGETHER