

5. The Image Development Report/Developing a Brand for Downtown

Developing a Brand for Downtown can help steer the action plan for ongoing economic revitalization. Town branding is an ongoing process about branding the place. Everyone in your town knows what the brand is. It is why they live there. It is what they do on the weekend, it is where they take people who visit. It is how they relax, what they miss when they are away, and why they want to raise their kids there or retire there¹. Be prepared to evolve your branding strategy to reflect changing needs and capitalize on new opportunities. To effectively position the Perkasie community experience, the brand messaging needs to focus outwardly on the place as a destination, rather than focus on the organization doing the branding. Identifying the strengths of what makes Perkasie unique is a great start to the branding exercise. Highlighting the assets already existing, such as the Circuit trails and Breweries that were identified as part of the marketing assessment, is an opportunity to tell the story of what makes Perkasie a great place to live. The community survey and public engagement have identified several recurring themes to identify the brand for Perkasie:

- Charming place to live/ quaint housing
- Access to trails/walkable community
- Dining/Restaurants/shops
- Historic buildings/community events



Discover holiday magic and small-town charm in Perkasie

¹ Downtown and Business District Market Analysis, Bill Ryan, March 2022 “[Marketing, Image, and Branding](#)”.

These themes identify *Perkasie as a blend of small-town charm, historical preservation and a strong sense of community*. The responses during the public meeting, identified events, walkability and local businesses as strong assets of the Borough. The participants also ranked parks and green spaces as economic strengths. These are the unique brand identity for Perkasie Borough.

Other distinguishing features that make Perkasie special include:

- 1937 Roebling Style Pedestrian Footbridge – Lenape Park
- Christmas Tree Lighting
- Covered Bridges
- Perkasie Park- Victorian-era camp meeting life
- Perkasie Carousel-Menlo Park
- Rick history in craftsmanship and manufacturing



Perkasie Park - Annual Founder's Day /Genuine Small-Town Charm /Perkasie Clock / 1937 Roebling Style Foot Twin Bridges - Lenape Park

Historical assets give the commercial core a competitive edge over the surrounding competing commercial districts. The Perkasie Historical Reconnaissance Survey (2019) listed the following as eligible for national registry:²

² <https://preservingperkasie.com/2019/03/10/tour-town-centers-historic-buildings/>

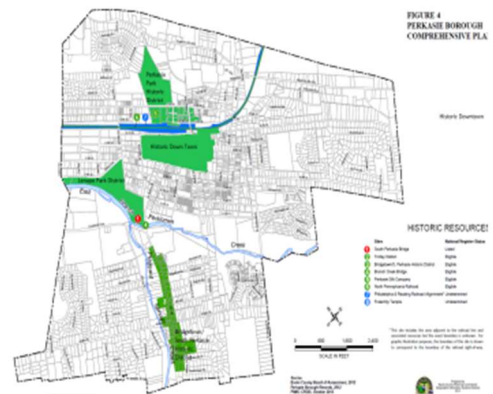
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Listed

- Delbar Products
- South Perkasie Covered Bridge
- Lehigh Valley Transit Station
- Perkasie Park Camp -Meeting Grounds

Eligible

- Perkasie Borough Central District
- Bridgetown – South Perkasie District
- Lake Lenape Park
- North Pennsylvania Railroad
- Perkasie Silk Company



According to Preserving Perkasie “Perkasie Park offers a blend of historical charm and natural beauty, making it a unique destination for those interested in leisurely walks, architectural appreciation, and a glimpse into the past.”

Visit Bucks County identifies the borough “for its picturesque downtown, quaint shops, and cozy restaurants.”³ These unique assets become the selling points to attract residents, businesses, and visitors developing a compelling downtown brand. The Borough has developed an “events-based” strategy to attract people to the Borough. Expanding this strategy by telling the story of what people can expect from the downtown experience can include not only the history, and character, but aspirations as well.

“Experiences” offered in the downtown like car shows and farmers market also set it apart from other competing areas.



Image taken from Visit Bucks County⁴ Fall Festival Farm life to Town Center

³ <https://www.visitbuckscounty.com/blog/stories/post/spend-a-day-in-perkasie/>

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The Community survey identified a desire for a mix of businesses, support for businesses and a desire to expand Cultural, Arts and Events as things to continue to offer and expand in downtown Perkasie.

These aspirations, identified in the Community Survey can be translated to the following strategic goals:

1. Create a stronger business climate /strengthening the commercial core /recruit merchants that fit the brand/support current businesses by offering group advertising.

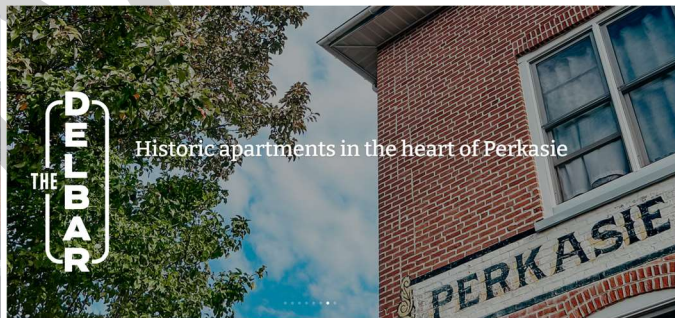


Haasis Gluten Free Bakery – 316 W. Walnut Street



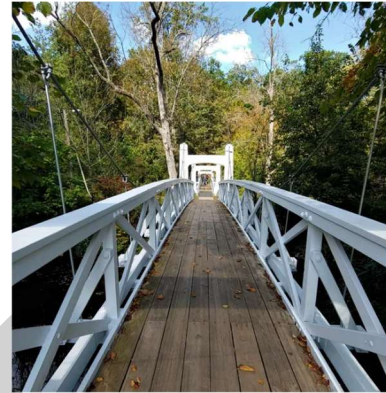
Mystic Ways Brewing – A “magical” experience

2. Expand population growth – Perkasie is a great place to live, set in a historic setting with charming neighborhoods.



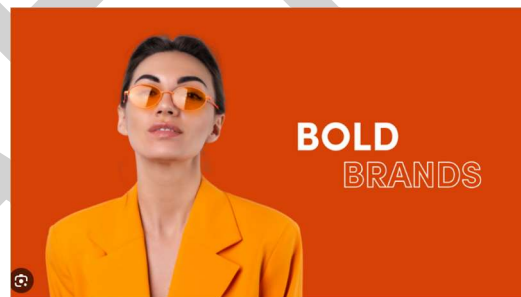
The Delbar – “Historic apartments”- 601 W Spruce St Building (Photo Credit: Thedelbar.com)

3. Increase tourism – continue the events strategy by providing things to do while promoting the trails and recreational activities.
 - Offer more art and music opportunities



Music in the Park -Perkasie's Amphitheater Park in Lenape Park Pedestrian Foot bridge-Lenape Park

The “voice” Perkasio's brand should depict is to be welcoming and warm while portraying a community spirit. The tone is to be positive, genuine, friendly and could even provoke a feeling of safety. The voice should be consistent across all communications.



a. Profile of the Current Customer Group

The current customer group personality and voice were identified by looking at the community survey. Most of the response were residents and visitors between the age of 46-65, who came (to the borough) to attend events/farmers market and for dining and beverage. They walk, jog or hike the trails when utilizing the existing recreation facilities and are generally family oriented with a desire to see more festivals, movie nights, and holiday events. This age group generally may have vision changes that are common, middle adulthood (or midlife) is often a time of increased career satisfaction, and reevaluation of life, with a focus on inner contentment. Challenges facing midlife adults⁵ include developmental tasks such as:

- Losing parents and experiencing associated grief.
- Adjusting to home life without children (often referred to as the empty nest).

⁵ <https://open.maricopa.edu/devpsych/chapter/chapter-10-adulthood/>

- Dealing with adult children who return to live at home (known as boomerang children in the United States).
- Becoming grandparents.
- Preparing for late adulthood.
- Acting as caregivers for aging parents or spouses.
- The Borough has a significant upward trend in household income with this age group as the highest earning group in the U.S.
- Individuals in this age group have entrepreneurial spirit, disposable incomes, are coming into inheritance and want to achieve financial independence.
- Consumers with higher discretionary income tend to be less price sensitive.
- 50+ consumers occupy a unique space as they bordered the line between when the internet and digital communication became commonplace and the postwar economic and population boom that defined their upbringing. They like the online and offline marketing services.

The traits and personalities of this age group (46-65) include an interest in brisk walking for thirty minutes but not necessary running a marathon. Generally, “use it or lose it” is a good mantra for this stage of development. They want facts and authenticity and don’t appreciate disingenuous messages. It’s important to communicate quickly, directly, and authentically to middle adulthood consumers, who have been on the receiving end of multichannel marketing efforts for longer than their younger counterparts have been alive. Nostalgia and other emotional appeals can be invaluable to fostering engagement among middle adulthood consumers.⁶ They tend to research brands, read reviews and are loyal to a service provider.⁷ These traits help identify the targeted market position statement for Perkasie.

b. Market Position Statement

The market position statement for the downtown area outlines how the downtown aims to be perceived by its target audience, highlighting unique strengths and competitive advantages. It answers the question “What is the unique value proposition of this commercial core and how does it stand out from other areas? This concise statement will guide marketing and development efforts. A market position statement should include the following:

⁶ <https://comingofage.com/blog/ten-behavioral-distinctions-of-older-customers/>

⁷ <https://comingofage.com/blog/position-your-product-as-a-gateway-to-meaningful-experiences/>

- Identify who the downtown is trying to attract (e.g., young professionals, families, tourists, residents)
 - Consider their needs, preferences, and what they are looking for in a downtown experience.
- Highlight what makes the downtown experience special and different from other areas.
- Focus on key differentiators like unique shops and restaurants, cultural attractions, walkability, historical significance, a vibrant nightlife or affordable housing.
- Explain how the downtown stands out from competing areas (e.g. other downtowns, suburban shopping centers, or online retail.)
 - Emphasize the specific benefits that the downtown offers over these alternatives.

Desired perception identified through community engagement include:

The downtown area wants to be perceived by the target audience for:

1. A vibrant hub for arts and culture:



Your Private Collection Art Gallery – Granbury Texas Photo credit Tripadvisor



SEPTA Freight car at the corner of N. 8th Street and W. Market Street. "Newest mural a focal point for community pride and tourism". Photo credit: Perkasie Borough

2. Charming place to live with family friendly activities and attainable housing



Fall Festival Farm life to Town Center



Perry Mill Townhomes – N. 8th street and W. Market Street.

3. A walkable community with access to trails/fitness



Pedestrian Foot bridge-Lenape Park



Activated Streetscapes in Salt Lake Photo Credit: Isaac Riddle

The development of a market position statement should include primary goods and service offered and the primary consumer segments served.

- The primary goods offered include:
 - A unique small-town historic charm experience with a blend of independent shops and diverse dining options (brews), scenic beauty and access to trails.
- The primary consumer identified are:
 - Residents, and visitors with a target towards prime adults or “mid-lifers” between the age of 46-65 and their families.

The identified market position statement is:

For people looking for healthy living, small-town charm, Perkasie offers unique shops and exciting dining options with vibrant community events in an engaging downtown. This historic borough blends scenic beauty with walkable neighborhoods and quaint housing that differentiates it from competing commercial areas.

This market position statement is an internal document that can guide marketing and sales.

c. Conceptual Market Analysis

A market analysis for a downtown area accesses the economic landscape to understand the current and potential market for businesses and development. It's a data driven exercise that helps identify opportunities, understand consumer behavior, and guides strategies for revitalization and growth. Analysis of the trade area, customer segments, competition and overall market trends are already affecting the Main Street experience. While the market is primarily local/regional in nature, it is also influenced by shifts in national or global trends.

Through the following exercise we uncovered opportunities and looked at how the district functions, which assets are connected, including placement of parking lots, and areas of infill needed. If for example, the market strategy is to “*infill vacant properties with a diverse mix of business types that fit within the brand*” then it's important to understand how consumers interact spatially with different business uses, and other activities.⁸ Connectivity can make all the difference in the outcome of new market strategies. Even if the data suggests there is an opportunity, it may not be realized if the connectivity isn't in place.

⁸ <https://mainstreet.org/the-latest/news/main-spotlight-the-art-of-market-analysis>

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Assets

Data has demonstrated that there are market opportunities for restaurant and retail trade, but it might not show where there are assets to drive those opportunities. Data has suggested that Perkasie can support additional restaurants. However, this strategy may shift if restaurants were relying on a population of families who are now attending activities outside of the community.



The Perk -501 E Walnut Street



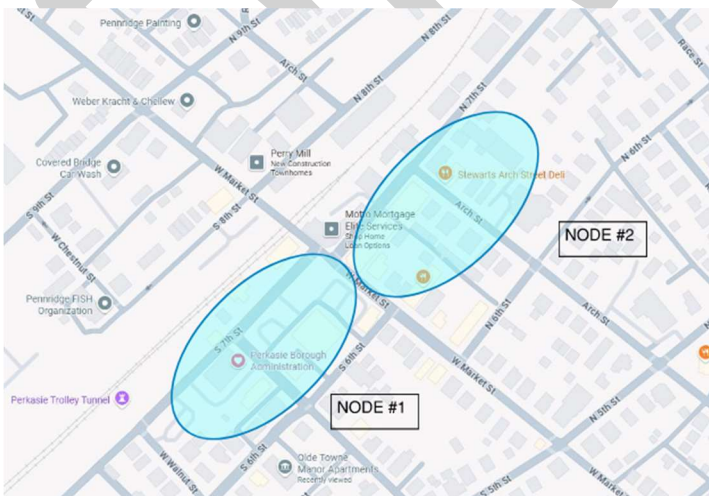
Free Will Brewing – 410 E. Walnut Street



Mystic Brewing Company

Nodal Development - How assets in the borough are connected/ or disconnected.

Barriers can prevent people from moving through the commercial core. Connectivity can make all the difference in the outcome of new market strategies. ⁹Node areas have been added to the maps below to identify cluster of economic activity. In the commercial core of West Market Street, the parking lot (S. 7th and W. Chestnut St.) was identified as a break or disconnect in pedestrian movement that currently exists.



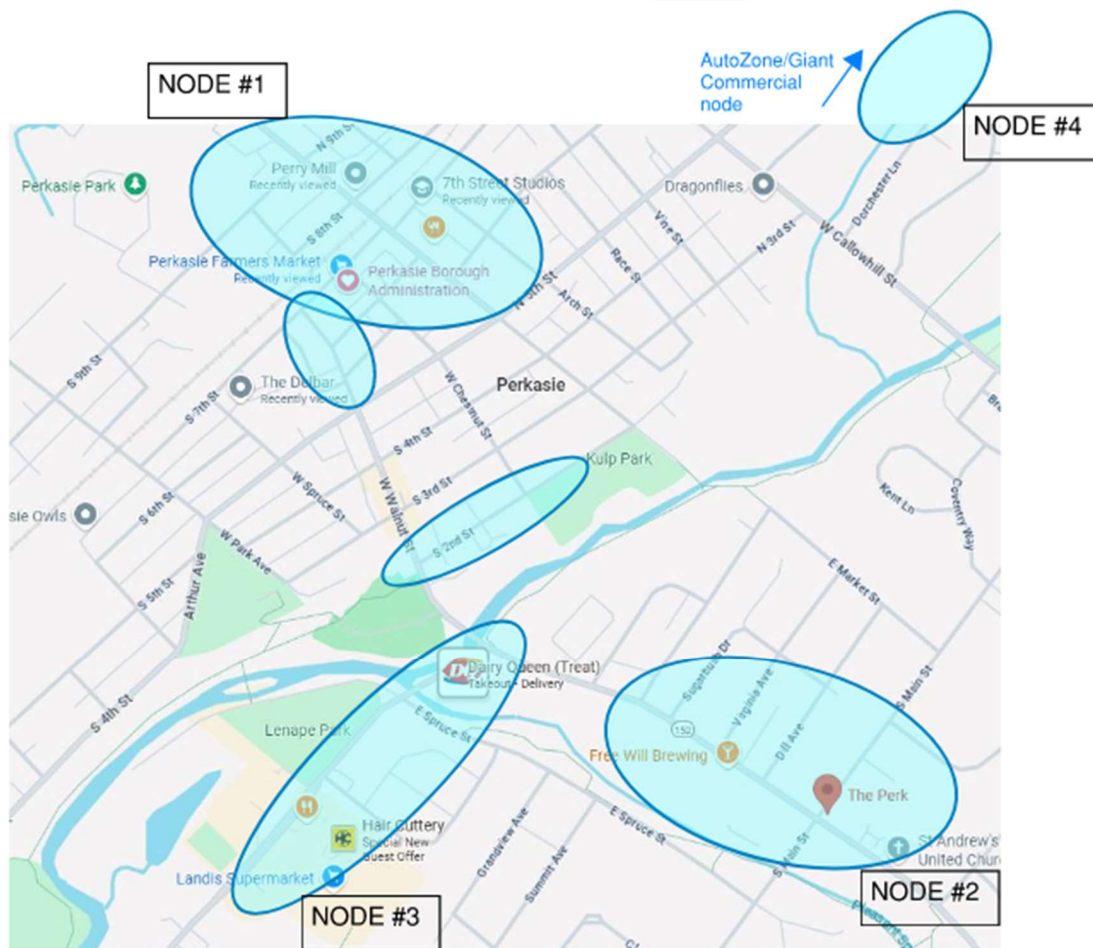
⁹ <https://mainstreet.org/the-latest/news/main-spotlight-the-art-of-market-analysis>

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Map 1 – Commercial Core-West Market Street

There are clusters of businesses that are disconnected from the trails/parks or from other clusters of businesses or restaurants. Some other physical disconnects that currently exist include:

- Walnut Street cluster of businesses
- AutoZone/Giant – Commercial node outside of downtown
- 2nd street area basketball, baseball and recreation assets detached from downtown
- Dairy Queen Commercial Corridor disconnect from downtown (pedestrian connection through park.)



Map 2-South Perkasie

Areas primed for redevelopment identified in the Market Analysis (1999) included:

Redevelopment of Shelly's parking lot. One of the responses in the Community Survey suggested "turn Shelly's into a theater/event space with movies and live performances".



Photo credit: Visit Philadelphia

Overall, Perkasie’s unique historic assets offer opportunities to create vibrant, resilient and appealing spaces for residents, businesses and visitors. The conceptual market analysis indicates a desire to “*support local entrepreneurs and attract new businesses that fit within the community small-town charm of Perkasie*”. This “experience” and “sense of place” that is unique to Perkasie sets it apart from its surrounding competitors. The targeted customer group enjoy the trails and are generally family oriented with a desire to see more festivals, movie nights, and holiday events. They prefer fact driven messaging communicated directly, and authentically. The desired perceptions identified in the community engagement identifies the brand as: Healthy living, a vibrant hub for cultural and arts, a charming place to live with family friendly activities, quaint housing, and a walkable community with access to trails.