

**The Clarion Borough Blueprint: An Economic and Community Revitalization Plan
(DRAFT – March 10, 2014)**

Mission: To revitalize the commercial district and enhance the quality of life in the Borough of Clarion.

Goal I: Encourage and sustain the creation and exhibition of public art in all mediums throughout the commercial district and adjacent neighborhoods.

Outcome 1: Create an attraction to and make the commercial district more inviting to tourists and customers.

Outcome 2: Public art will serve as a catalyst for additional cultural events and marketing opportunities in the Borough, with a specific emphasis on outdoor art and music.

Outcome 3: Create positive and productive opportunities for local youth.

Objective 1: Creation and exhibition of public art, specifically street art by local students and established artists.

Year 1: Continuation of the Mural Projects and Exploration of the Empowerment Walk

--Partners: Clarion Borough, Clarion School District Art History Club, Arts Council, Chamber, and Property Owners

--Cost: \$500

--Funding Source: Clarion Borough and Volunteer Time

--Capital Impact: Cultural, Built, and Social

--Evaluation: Survey, administered by student intern (\$250)

Year 2: Mural Projects, Maintenance of Empowerment Walk, and Create a Poetry Walk. Plan and execute at least two guerilla art shows to coincide with other community activities.

--Partners: Clarion Borough, Clarion School District Art History Club, Arts Council, Chamber, and Property Owners

--Cost: \$750

--Funding Source: Service Clubs, Intern Hours, Volunteer Time

--Capital Impact: Cultural, Built, and Social

--Evaluation: Survey, administered by student intern (\$250)

Year 3: Mural Projects, Maintenance of Empowerment & Poetry Walk, and plan for In-town/On-campus Neighborhood Art's Trail utilizing inside and outside public space. Continue the guerilla art shows

--Partners: Clarion Borough, Clarion School District Art History Club, Arts Council, Established Local & Regional Artists, Chamber, and Property Owners

--Cost: \$1,000

--Funding Source: Donations

--Capital Impact: Cultural, Built, Social

--Evaluation: Survey, administered by student intern (\$250)

Year 4: Mural Projects, Maintenance of Empowerment & Poetry Walk, and plan for In-town/On-campus Neighborhood Art's Trail utilizing inside and outside public space. Continue guerilla art shows, and inaugurate a Community-Created Arts Project

--Partners: Clarion Borough, The Clarion School District Art History Club, Arts Council, Established Local & Regional Artists, Chamber, and Property Owners

--Cost: \$1,500

--Funding Source

--Capital Impact

--Evaluation: Survey, administered by student intern (\$250)

Year 5: Mural Projects, Maintenance of Empowerment & Poetry Walk, and plan for In-town/On-campus Neighborhood Art's Trail utilizing inside and outside public space. Continue guerilla art shows, and continue the Community-Created Arts Project, plan for an execute a Main Street Folk-Art Show to coincide with the Bluegrass Festival

--Partners Borough, Chamber, Art History Club, Arts Council, United Way, Property Owners

--Cost: \$2,000

--Funding Source

--Capital Impact

--Evaluation: Survey, administered by student intern (\$250)

Objective 2: Create performance based arts events and attractions in the Borough of Clarion to increase tourist visits to the commercial district, make the community more inviting to visitors and residents.

Year 1: Plan, coordinate, and market a subscription based Community Concert Series for Summer (outside) and Winter (inside). Sell subscriptions and coordinate musicians for the coming year.

--Partners: Chamber

--Cost: \$5,000

--Funding Source: Donations/Subscriptions

--Capital Impact: Social, Cultural

--Evaluation: Satisfaction Surveys

Year 2: Implement the Community Concert Series featuring Summer Jazz Concerts (UMC Parking Lot on Seventh & Church Rd) and a Winter Variety Music Concert Series--held at High School, American Legion, or Marwick-Boyd. Ideally merchants and restaurants would have concert-night specials and events to coordinate with the CCS.

--Partners: Chamber, American Legion, School District, CUP, Borough

- Cost: \$4,500
- Funding Source
- Capital Impact
- Evaluation

Year 3: Continue the Community Concert Series (CCS) and plan, coordinate, and market an Autumn Battle of the Bands (ABoB). Ideally Battle of the Bands would not at the same time as ALF but would be at a time when there would be students and alumni back in Clarion. The concept is to highlight local and regional bands in all genres of music, who would play Street Festival Style on 6th Ave on a Friday night, Saturday afternoon & evening. Prizes awarded for best band by audience vote or community/university judging panel. This would be a good way to get a younger crowd on Main St during the weekend and it would be a way of keeping students on campus/in-town for the weekend. Main St. businesses could coordinate hours and plan marketing events.

- Partners: Borough, CUP, Chamber, Corporate/Business Sponsor
- Cost: \$4,000
- Funding Source
- Capital Impact
- Evaluation

Year 4: Continue the CCS and the ABoB. Explore the creation of a Personal Enrichment Arts & Folk Art Series. Conceptually, this would be a 4-6week course held at a Main St location--during winter or spring, the topic would vary (watercolor, felting, paper arts, etc)--it is an exercise in community education and creativity, the students would be of all ages and abilities and it would promote a sense of community togetherness, the resulting work could be displayed in an open art show or at Main St. business. Additionally, having the class in-town it is likely there would be some residual business for local merchants.

- Partners
- Cost: \$3,500
- Funding Source
- Capital Impact
- Evaluation

Year 5: Continue the CCS and the ABoB. Implement the Personal Enrichment Folk Art Series. Explore the creation of a community/campus World Culture Day Event (May 21) that would highlight culture and diversity in the Borough.

- Partners
- Cost: \$3,000
- Funding Source
- Capital Impact
- Evaluation

Goal II: Increase tourism opportunities through marketing and promotion; develop strategies for attracting, welcoming, and orientating visitors.

Outcome 1: Design and install promotional and directional signage outside of the Borough and wayfaring signage within the Borough.

Outcome 2: Develop a Tier 1 marketing plan that focuses on the casual tourist/visitor, those traveling on I-80, US-322, and PA-66; and those visitors to Clarion University, the Medical Center, and other specific points of interest. Develop a Tier 2 marketing plan that focuses on day-trippers, planned visits, and tourist from outside of the area; specifically targeting nature tourists from Pittsburgh, Eastern Ohio, Cleveland, and Buffalo metro areas.

Outcome 3: Create an aesthetically pleasing commercial district through façade improvement.

Objective 1: Improve in-town wayfaring signage to direct people to the Chamber Office/Visitor's Center, Municipal Parking Areas, the Toby Boat Launch, North Country Trail access (2), and historical/points of interest signs in commercial and residential areas.

Year 1: Improve directional signage to municipal parking areas, the visitor's center, and the Toby boat launch. Develop 5th Avenue into a Cook Forest Gateway, including welcoming and directional signage.

- Partners
- Cost: \$20,000
- Funding Source
- Capital Impact
- Evaluation

Year 2: Points of interest signage for North Country Trail access, the Water Trail, and Bike-PA. Explore Bike Friendly City Designation. Develop and install sidewalk signage identifying buildings (present and past) of historic significance. Signs for historic homes and wayfaring signage for in-town Arts Trail.

- Partners
- Cost: \$20,000
- Funding Source
- Capital Impact
- Evaluation

Year 3: Create a focus group for the development of a Tier 1 Marketing Plan RFP, issue RFP for Planning Consultants.

- Partners

--Cost: \$15,000
--Funding Source
--Capital Impact
--Evaluation

Year 4: Implement Tier 1 Plan and Create a focus group for the development of a Tier 2 Marketing Plan RFP, issue RFP for Planning Consultants

--Partners
--Cost: \$15,000
--Funding Source
--Capital Impact
--Evaluation

Year 5: Implement Tier 2 Plan

--Partners
--Cost: \$10,000
--Funding Source
--Capital Impact
--Evaluation

Objective 2: Create new and improve existing directional signage on I-80, at the intersection of US-322 & PA-66, at the "Mall Area", North County Access Trail Points (River Hill and Toby Hill), Borough Entrance Signage (4), and

Year 1: Re-vamp and refurbish the "Mall Area" sign to point mall customers and hotel guests to Clarion.

--Partners
--Cost: \$3,500
--Funding Source
--Capital Impact
--Evaluation

Year 2: Design and install welcome & "pride of place" signage at all Borough entry points (5th Ave, Toby Hill, E&W Main St.)

--Partners
--Cost: \$14,000
--Funding Source
--Capital Impact
--Evaluation

Year 3: Work to change the I-80 signage to reflect Exit 68 as the Gateway to Cook Forest.

- Partners
- Cost: \$7,500
- Funding Source
- Capital Impact
- Evaluation

Year 4: Install signage at the intersection of 66N & 322, directing tourist to America's Main St., Install signs at the North Country Trail access points directing hikers to the Borough, and signage at strategic points in Cook Forest directing visitors back to Clarion for supplies and amenities.

- Partners
- Cost: \$14,000
- Funding Source
- Capital Impact
- Evaluation

Year 5: Explore the creation of a promotional video and out-of-the area promotional signage.

- Partners
- Cost: \$20,000
- Funding Source
- Capital Impact
- Evaluation

Objective 3: Implement a façade improvement program for Main St. businesses.

Year 1: Define the façade improvement program requirements and parameters, establish timeline and geographic zones. Explore the establishment of a HARB for the Commercial District. Apply for façade improvement grant program funds.

- Partners
- Cost: \$1,000
- Funding Source
- Capital Impact
- Evaluation

Year 2: Implement the facade program in Zone 1.

- Partners

--Cost: \$25,000
--Funding Source
--Capital Impact
--Evaluation

Year 3: Implement the facade program in Zone 2.

--Partners
--Cost: \$25,000
--Funding Source
--Capital Impact
--Evaluation

Year 4: Implement the facade program in Zone 3.

--Partners
--Cost: \$25,000
--Funding Source
--Capital Impact
--Evaluation

Year 5: Implement the facade program in Zone 4.

--Partners
--Cost: \$25,000
--Funding Source
--Capital Impact
--Evaluation

Goal III: Develop natural resource based attractions and accessibility; explore the development of university-owned property along the Clarion River.

Outcome 1: Expanded and more aesthetically pleasing Toby Hill Boat Launch.

Outcome 2: Link Clarion to existing Trail Systems (Redbank/Sligo, North County, Baker and Rail 66) and develop a plan for a Historic Town Trail joining Franklin, Clarion, and Brookville.

Outcome 3: Study and support the development of university-owned property along the Clarion River and parallel to Liberty St. for the purpose of an Events/Entertainment/Hotel Complex in support of an Entertainment Management Degree at Clarion University.

Objective 1: Expand the number of boat launches by one and create parking for 15 cars, 20 trucks & boat trailers. Landscape the area, install picnic areas, and public restrooms; Explore the creation of a concession stand/fueling station.

Year 1: Commission a site survey and space utilization study, develop a master plan for the property and adjoining parcels.

- Partners
- Cost: \$25,000
- Funding Source
- Capital Impact
- Evaluation

Year 2: Work with adjoining property owners to acquire property through purchase or lease and begin application process with Brookfield Power for the installation of a second boat launch.

- Partners
- Cost: \$250,000
- Funding Source
- Capital Impact
- Evaluation

Year 3: Install the second boat launch and additional parking areas.

- Partners
- Cost: \$75,000
- Funding Source
- Capital Impact
- Evaluation

Year 4: Develop picnic areas and public restrooms.

- Partners
- Cost: \$75,000
- Funding Source
- Capital Impact
- Evaluation

Year 5: Landscape grounds and solicit bids for a third party operator for development of a concession stand and/or fueling station.

- Partners
- Cost: \$5,000
- Funding Source
- Capital Impact
- Evaluation

Objective 2: Create a Clarion Trail Hub connecting the Borough to existing trail networks in the county, and explore the creation of a Tri-County Historic Town Trail.

Year 1: Map the route to join Clarion Borough to the North Country Trail at two access points (River Hill and Toby Hill) and to the Rail 66 Trail. Begin preliminary discussions with property owners to gain right-of-way.

- Partners
- Cost \$5,000
- Funding Source
- Capital Impact
- Evaluation

Year 2: Establish the "Clarion Connection" route to/from the North Country Trail and Rail 66 Trail.

- Partners
- Cost \$50,000
- Funding Source
- Capital Impact
- Evaluation

Year 3: Begin planning a connection to the Redbank Valley Trail System, through the Sligo Spur Trail.

- Partners

--Cost: \$5,000
--Funding Source
--Capital Impact
--Evaluation

Year 4: Plan a connection, along US-322 to the Baker Trail.

--Partners
--Cost: \$5,000
--Funding Source
--Capital Impact
--Evaluation

Year 5: Begin implementation of the connection to Redbank Valley Trail System by extending the trail along RT-62 from Clarion Borough to I-80. Explore the creation of a Tri-County Historic Towns Trail, connecting Brookville, Clarion, and Franklin.

--Partners
--Cost: \$250,000
--Funding Source
--Capital Impact
--Evaluation

Objective 3: Support and encourage development of the University's property along Clarion River and parallel to Liberty St.

Year 1: Commission a site survey and a feasibility study to determine the viability of an Entertainment/Hotel/Teaching complex on the site.

--Partners
--Cost: \$35,000
--Funding Source
--Capital Impact
--Evaluation

Year 2: Support the findings of the feasibility study and if the conclusion is positive solicit an economic impact study of the project to have a means of building public support.

--Partners
--Cost: \$1,000
--Funding Source

- Capital Impact
- Evaluation

Year 3:

- Partners
- Cost
- Funding Source
- Capital Impact
- Evaluation

Year 4:

- Partners
- Cost
- Funding Source
- Capital Impact
- Evaluation

Year 5:

- Partners
- Cost
- Funding Source
- Capital Impact
- Evaluation

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Goal IV: Establish a Main St. Mercantile Incubator

Outcome 1: Establish a support and growth mechanism for home-based businesses.

Outcome 2: Support cooperation among micro businesses.

Outcome 3: Prepare micro and home-based businesses to grow into Main St Enterprises

Objective 1: Identify and foster home based businesses as the core of a shared-spaced Main St. Mercantile Incubator.

Year 1: Outreach to entrepreneurs to gauge interest in belonging to a Main St. Mercantile. Create operating procedures and agreement of participation. Identify commercial space and negotiate lease. Sign-up tenants/members.

- Partners
- Cost: \$24,000
- Funding Source
- Capital Impact
- Evaluation

Year 2: Market space and assist members/tenants with business promotion. Develop partnerships with Chamber of Commerce, Clarion-SBDC, and other business promotion & support entities. Continue to recruit members.

- Partners
- Cost: \$3,500
- Funding Source
- Capital Impact
- Evaluation

Year 3:

- Partners
- Cost
- Funding Source
- Capital Impact
- Evaluation

Year 4:

- Partners
- Cost

- Funding Source
- Capital Impact
- Evaluation

Year 5:

- Partners
- Cost
- Funding Source
- Capital Impact
- Evaluation

Objective 2: Offer tenants assistance with business planning, financing application, and other technical concerns; encourage cooperation between micro-businesses.

Year 1: Arrange for training and technical assistance from the Clarion-SDBC.

- Partners
- Cost: \$5,000 (value of training)
- Funding Source
- Capital Impact
- Evaluation

Year 2: Work with Chamber of Commerce to include incubator tenants as Chamber Members at a reduced rate.

- Partners
- Cost: \$1200 (value of membership dues)
- Funding Source
- Capital Impact
- Evaluation

Year 3:

- Partners
- Cost
- Funding Source
- Capital Impact
- Evaluation

Year 4:

- Partners
- Cost
- Funding Source
- Capital Impact
- Evaluation

Year 5:

- Partners
- Cost
- Funding Source
- Capital Impact
- Evaluation

Objective 3: Assist incubator tenants in the transition to Main St Enterprises.

Year 1: Assist with finding and leasing appropriate retail/business space. Offer support and expertise with business operations.

- Partners
- Cost: \$5,000 (value of training/consulting)
- Funding Source
- Capital Impact
- Evaluation

Year 2: Explore the creation of a Clarion Chapter of SCORE to help support and mentor micro-businesses.

- Partners
- Cost: \$5,000 (value of volunteer time)
- Funding Source
- Capital Impact
- Evaluation

Year 3:

- Partners
- Cost
- Funding Source
- Capital Impact
- Evaluation

Year 4:

- Partners
- Cost
- Funding Source
- Capital Impact
- Evaluation

Year 5:

- Partners
- Cost
- Funding Source
- Capital Impact
- Evaluation

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Goal V: Establish affordable housing corridors, neighborhood revitalization districts, and facilitate second-story rehabilitation projects along Main St.

Outcome 1: Revitalize neighborhoods by encouraging the refurbishment of tenements into single family homes (Wood St, South St, and Liberty St. 5th Ave, and 6th Ave); and the formation of more public green space through the demolition of blighted properties.

Outcome 2: Establish areas within neighborhoods for affordable housing development/redevelopment.

Outcome 3: Encourage the redevelopment of 2nd Story Space over Main St Business from student housing into housing/loft space for young professionals and single adults.

Objective 1: In an effort to arrest potential blight & neighborhood denigration, establish incentives to remodel current student tenements into single family dwellings to be sold or rented.

Year 1: Map the neighborhoods and Main St. identifying tenements and structures with potential 2nd story rehabilitation potential. Complete a rental market analysis study for Clarion Borough.

--Partners Clarion University GIS & Economics Departments

--Cost: \$10,000 (value of donated mapping and study)

--Funding Source

--Capital Impact

--Evaluation

Year 2: Outreach to property owners to share the results of the rental market analysis and educate them on the funding available to rehab structures in order to change their use from student rentals to single family homes.

--Partners

--Cost: \$1,500 (value of advice/training)

--Funding Source

--Capital Impact

--Evaluation

Year 3: Create and present neighborhood building and home-owner readiness workshops for the public.

--Partners

--Cost \$1,500 (value of outreach training)

--Funding Source

--Capital Impact

--Evaluation

Year 4: Promote neighborhood renewal projects/organizations and work to create neighborhood parklets and green spaces.

- Partners
- Cost: \$2,500
- Funding Source
- Capital Impact
- Evaluation

Year 5: Work to strengthen existing zoning and land-use ordinances to limit the further creation of multi-family tenements and rigorously enforce building codes and other safety regulations.

- Partners
- Cost: \$10,000
- Funding Source
- Capital Impact
- Evaluation

Objective 2: Within neighborhoods, identify properties and opportunities for affordable housing development and redevelopment.

Year 1: Identify specific properties and/or lots within neighborhoods for affordable housing redevelopment.

- Partners
- Cost: n/a
- Funding Source
- Capital Impact
- Evaluation

Year 2: Work with property owners to highlight the potential of affordable housing development and education them on financing as well as community benefits.

- Partners
- Cost \$2,000 (training costs)
- Funding Source
- Capital Impact
- Evaluation

Year 3:

- Partners
- Cost
- Funding Source

- Capital Impact
- Evaluation

Year 4:

- Partners
- Cost
- Funding Source
- Capital Impact
- Evaluation

Year 5:

- Partners
- Cost
- Funding Source
- Capital Impact
- Evaluation

Objective 3: Encourage the refurbishment of second-story space in the commercial district to make it attractive to young professionals and single adults.

Year 1: Identify and work cooperatively with property owners to educate them on the value and incentives available for 2nd Floor Rehabilitation Projects.

- Partners
- Cost \$2,500 (training costs)
- Funding Source
- Capital Impact
- Evaluation

Year 2: Assist in the creation of a marketing and promotion plan for refurbished 2nd Floor Space in the Commercial District.

- Partners
- Cost: \$10,000
- Funding Source
- Capital Impact
- Evaluation

Year 3:

- Partners
- Cost
- Funding Source
- Capital Impact
- Evaluation

Year 4:

- Partners
- Cost
- Funding Source
- Capital Impact
- Evaluation

Year 5:

- Partners
- Cost
- Funding Source
- Capital Impact
- Evaluation

Plan Evaluation: