Dormont Comprehensive Plan

Public Meeting #3

6:45 - 7:00	Refreshments and gathering
7:00 - 7:15	Presentation
7:15 - 8:05	Small-group discussions
8:05 - 8:30	Report-out and Q&A
8:30	Early departure! *

Project Schedule

Pre-Hearing Presentation
Early February 2025

Review & Analysis
May through July

Formal Public Engagement
July through November

Public Engagement throughout

1

2

3

Plan Formation
October through December

Adoption
Early March 2025

45-day Review Period
Starts January 14th

We Are Here

Small Group Discussion Topics

1. Potomac Avenue
2. Parks and Recreation
3. Biltmore Avenue Mixed-Use Development Project
4. Traffic Calming (other than West Liberty)
5. Road and Sidewalk Programs

Potomac Avenue

Background:

Many residents have mentioned the condition of the pavers and have expressed opinions ranging from repairing the pavers to repaving the street with asphalt.

The pavers were installed in 2016 as part of a larger project for Potomac Avenue. The pavers were selected as part of a stormwater management solution and for their historic visual character.

The borough is considering the costs and benefits of repairing the pavers, whether/how to phase the work, or whether to repave the street entirely. If pavers are replaced with asphalt, it is recommended that stormwater management techniques ensure an equivalency to what the pavers provide.

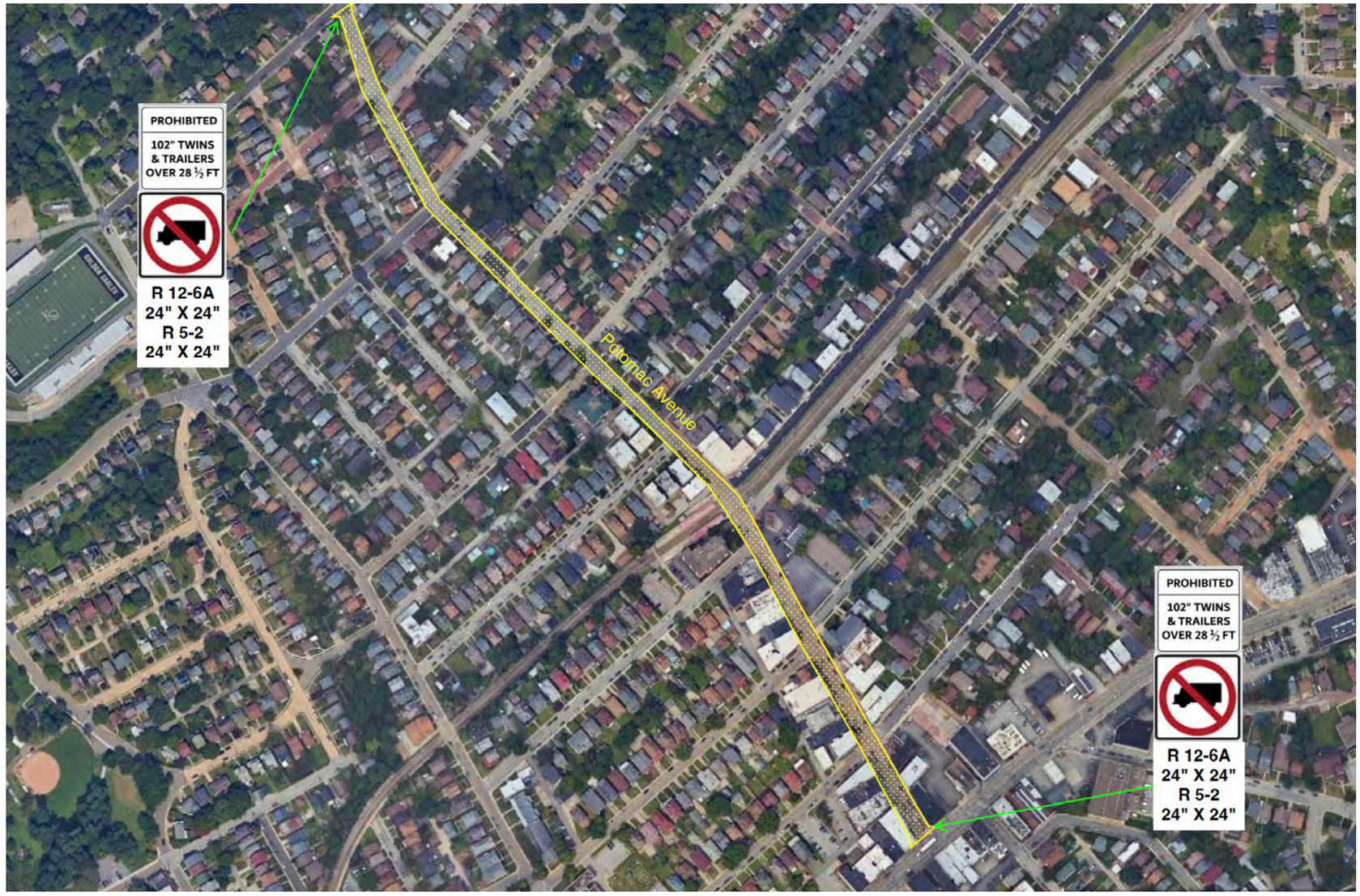
Potomac Avenue

Background:

The borough is also considering restrictions on truck traffic along a portion of Potomac.

Large trucks are the primary contributor to the pavers' declined condition.

Through-traffic would be limited by length of truck. Local deliveries would be allowed.



Potomac Avenue

Questions:

- Do you prefer to keep the pavers, or would you prefer to repave the street with asphalt?
- Discuss the costs and benefits (at a conceptual level) for both options. Discuss the practical implications of maintenance versus the visual implications. Potomac acts as a town square for annual events: does this influence your thoughts? Is it more important to have a smoother driving experience?
- In your opinion, how much do the stone pavers contribute to Dormont's identity or sense of place? Can that sense of identity be achieved successfully in other ways?
- Replacing the pavers with smoother asphalt might lead to an increase in vehicle speeds. Would you prefer that speed reduction measures are installed as part of a potential repaving project, or does it not matter to you?

Parks and Recreation

Background:

It has been suggested that an **outdoor amphitheater** be constructed in Hillsdale Park, which could be programmed and maintained by a combination of non-profit organizations and the borough.

Parks and Recreation

Background:

Many residents have expressed interest in an **indoor recreation center** with a mix of spaces and programs. A feasibility study was conducted as part of the recent Master Parks Plan, with 5 location options in the vicinity of Dormont Pool.

The conclusion was that improving the existing rec center is the only feasible option, unless Dormont teams with regional partners to build a new facility.

There is a renewed interest in exploring regional partnerships for a project like this. We've also heard suggestions to combine the facility with other programs, like a new Library, in order to secure additional funding.

Parks and Recreation

Background:

The 2013 Comprehensive Plan suggested to "activate **Beggs Snyder Park**." Suggestions included a skate park, permanent chess tables, ping pong, public art, and a dog park. Beggs Snyder Park is located within Mt. Lebanon but is owned by Dormont Borough.

The Master Parks Plan listed several options for Beggs Snyder:

- Native Plant Gardens and Meadows
- Flex Event Space
- Stage or Amphitheater
- Large Slide
- Dog Park

NATIVE PLANT GARDENS & MEADOWS *

Gardens and meadows can replace lawn in many areas of Dormont's parks. Typical lawn areas are notorious for being biological "dead zones". In contrast, gardens and meadows planted with a diverse array of native flowers, plants and trees will attract insects, birds, and other animals. There are many areas within the parks that are grassy slopes which at times become very steep. These slopes are not suitable for most types of recreation and pose a challenge and risk for the maintenance team. Instead, these areas would be better utilized as native garden areas which will provide much needed habitat in the urban environment that will also provide spaces for residents to experience wildlife up close. These areas could be paired with slides and additional sloped walking paths to further activate these areas.

Dormont Park

Dormont Park has many extensive steep, grassy hillsides perfectly suited for introducing native gardens or meadows. Some grassy, open areas should be left open for people who want to picnic, read or recreate, but a large percentage could be converted to native habitat. Signage along the walking paths through these meadows and gardens could further engage and educate the public.

Beggs Snyder

Beggs Snyder Park has steep hillsides on either side of its flat sports fields. While these hillsides may be occassionally lounged upon in the Summertime, they would be much better utilized as biodiverse native habitat. Some small secluded grassy areas with benches could be set aside on these hillsides for those seeking solitude amongst the new native meadows.

Hillsdale

A native plant garden at Hillsdale Park would be best located on the slope between the park fence and West Liberty Avenue or along the fence on the inside of the park. This way the garden could also serve as an asthetically pleasing barrier between the park and the busy street.

* Recommendations from the Master Parks Plan

FLEX EVENT SPACE *

An outdoor flex space is a designated open space which can host any number of events and activities. A flex space can be used one day for a farmers' market and the next for group exercise like yoga. When not in use for a specific event, the flex space is open to anyone to use like any other open space. These areas could be nothing but open grassy areas or they could have some amenities like chairs and tables. There are many areas in Dormont's parks which could serve this function, depending on which types of uses and activities are envisioned. Once an area is chosen as the outdoor flex space, an investment would have to be made to make it accessible to those who would be participating in the activities. The flat lawn between Pop Murray baseball field and Castle Playground in Dormont Park is a great example of an area which can support multiple rotating activities like group exercises and farmers markets.

Dormont Park

The flat space between Castle Playground and Pop Murray baseball Field would be a good location for a flex space in Dormont Park. Other areas in the park are less suitable due to the park's hilly topography.

Beggs Snyder

The large, grassy area currently used as soccer fields would be a perfect flex space. This area is large enough to host some large activities. Soccer games could still take place here, but there would have to be a schedule of some sort to keep track of events.

Hillsdale

The entire area of Hillsdale Park could generally be used as a flex space for smaller events. However, the park is slightly sloped, and noise from the adjacent roads may prove to compete with event happenings.

* Recommendations from the Master Parks Plan

STAGE / AMPHITHEATER *

Adding a stage, amphitheater, or venue to a park's portfolio greatly increases the variety of events that can occur there. A stage could be nothing but a small, raised platform, or it could be a large amphitheater with tiered seating. The stage design could be simple or built to reflect elements in the surrounding landscape or culture. Imagine pop-up musicians playing to passersby on a summer evening or organized shows, speeches, or demonstrations. There are many spots throughout Dormont's park system which could support this depending on the envisioned scale and available budget. Other things to consider include location next to busy or noisy roads or other recreation spaces such as the pool or a dog park. While it may be perceived as good to have the stage next to busier, well-trafficked areas, in order for performers or events to get noticed, conflicts between users may arise due to noise or lack of space.

Dormont Park

One or two smaller pop-up stages may be appropriate for Dormont Park as it has many visitors throughout the day, some of whom are passing through while others come just to hang out or exercise. The hilly nature of the park may also limit stage location and size. A larger stage could be placed in the flat area near Dormont Avenue, however, proximity to the road and adjacent residential areas as well as conflicts with a potential flex space in this location should all be considered.

Beggs Snyder

One area mentioned during community outreach efforts was the baseball field at Beggs Snyder Park. This field could be converted into an amphitheater-style event space. An amphitheater or stage could be logical in this location as opposed to a flex space, as it is a more isolated area and people could enjoy performances or organized events away from other busier portions of the park.

Hillsdale

Hillsdale Park could host small stages in various different locations. Its location near the center of Dormont near popular businesses means that people are always nearby. However, its location also poses some challenges as West Liberty Avenue is a busy street. The Park's small size continues to shape available space for an audiences and/or attractions.

* Recommendations from the Master Parks Plan

SLIDES *

The parks in Dormont have many steep hillsides perfect for the addition of large slides. These large slides can be a fun and popular use of steep slopes. “Slide Hill” on Governors Island in New York City is one such example. Children (and adults) can use these slides to move between park “levels”. If these slides were combined with native perennial gardens or meadows, an entire grassy hillside could be transformed into a diverse and activated space. Special care should be taken so that any popular sledding hills are not converted and all safety standards are met.

Dormont Park

The hills of Dormont Park once again present an opportunity: this time for multiple large slides. Slides here can start near the top of hills or along walkways and descend through meadows or gardens towards other walkways or points of interest. This provides another fun, alternative way of getting around the park.

Beggs Snyder

There are a few hills in Beggs Snyder that could be suitable for large slides. For instance, a slide could take kids directly from the parking lot on McNeilly Road to the playground areas. On the other side, a series of slides could take one from the basketball court to the soccer fields.

Hillsdale

Hillsdale Park has no suitable hills for large slides.

* Recommendations from the Master Parks Plan

DOG PARK *

There is considerable interest in creating a new dog park in Dormont Park. Dog parks can be cherished areas in any community and serve as a hub and social activity for residents and their dogs. In addition, dog parks do not necessarily need entirely flat terrain and so the location of one can be flexible. Grassy surfaces are common, but dog parks can also be surfaced with artificial turf, wood chips, sawdust, or pea gravel.

Dormont Park

Currently, the only dog park in Dormont is a fenced area on old tennis courts in the corner of Dormont Park. Currently, some overgrown vegetation limits sight lines. If another location were found, these courts could be resurfaced or reused for other activities such as new pickleball courts. A new dog park in a more centrally located area of the park could be a daily destination for many residents with dogs.

Beggs Snyder

Based on survey responses and community feedback, the basketball court and baseball field at Beggs Snyder Park could be considered for repurposing. Either of these spaces could be converted into a dog park, if it is determined that a dog park would be a supported amenity.

Hillsdale

As Hillsdale Park has limited space, it is not recommended that a dog park be located here.

* Recommendations from the Master Parks Plan

Parks and Recreation

Questions:

- Do you think the community would benefit from an **outdoor amphitheater**? Is Hillsdale Park a good place for a structure like this? Besides musical performances, what other programs could it host?
- How strong is the need for a new **recreation center**? How often would someone in your household use it?
- What functions and spaces would you want to see in a recreation center? Where is the best place for it? How important is it to be located within Dormont?
- Would you accept an increase in taxes, or would you expect membership fees to pay for the construction and operation?
- Do you have ideas about how **Beggs Snyder Park** could be improved? Should the current arrangement remain in place, but simply improved? How could access to the park be enhanced?

Biltmore Ave Development

Background:

Dormont Borough owns the parking lot at Biltmore and West Liberty, across the street from the Cochran Nissan dealership.

The borough could enter into a long-term ground lease with a private developer. This would allow the borough to collect a higher income than the current parking lot produces.

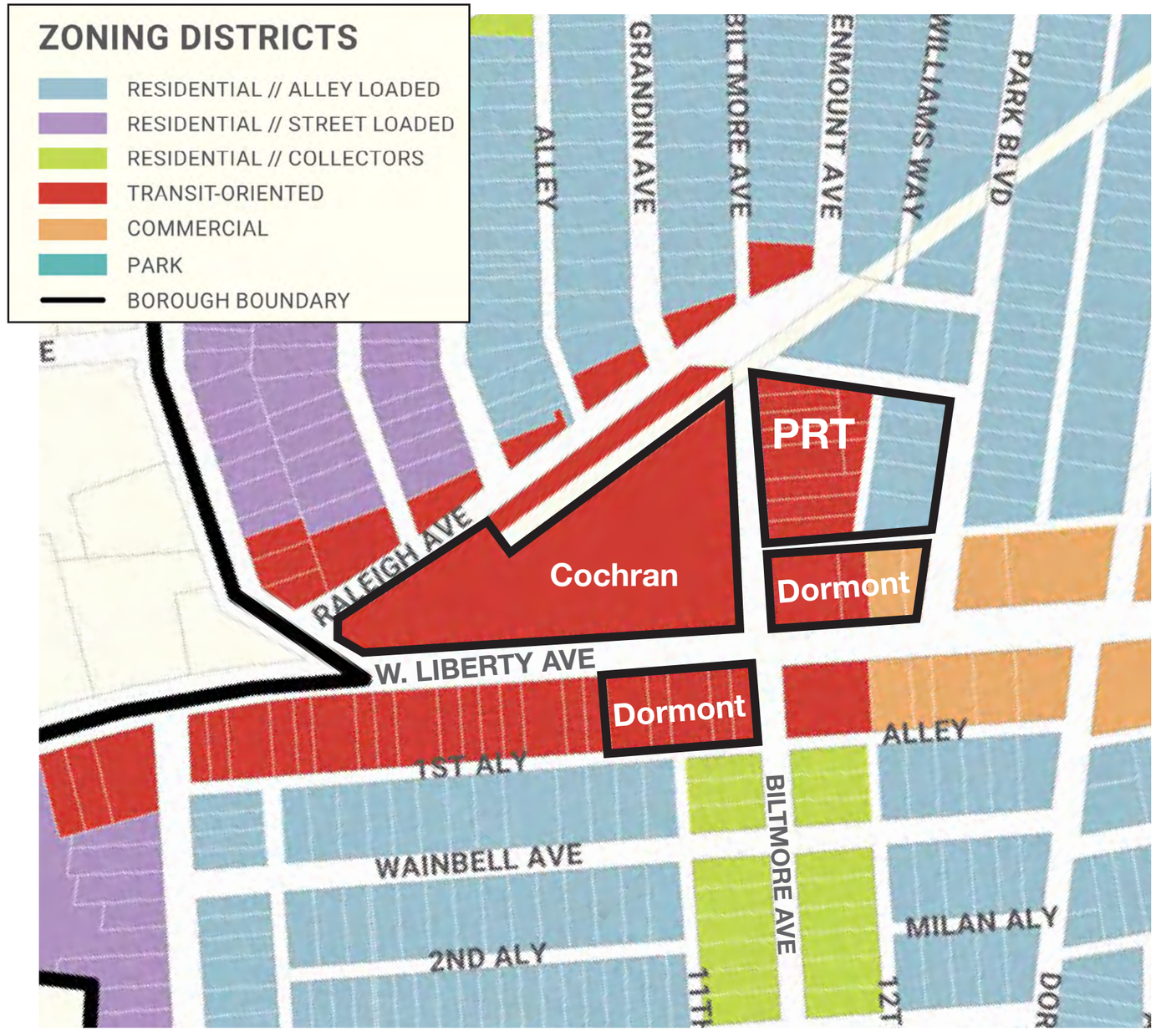
Favorable terms in the ground lease could improve the financial feasibility of a development, even in challenging market conditions.

Biltmore Ave Development

Background:

The public parking lot at the corner of Biltmore Avenue and West Liberty is located within a Transit Oriented Development (TOD) zoning district, and is owned by the borough of Dormont.

A new development would permit up to an 8-story building with commercial or residential use, or a mix of uses. Parking garage use is allowed, but not required.



Biltmore Ave Development

Background:

A development at the site could:

- Provide an opportunity for the borough to have a voice in what happens at the ground floor, adding variety and vibrancy to the W. Liberty business district.
- Follow through on the T.O.D. principles codified in the zoning ordinace.
- Add to the borough's multifamily housing stock, much of which is aging.
- Put indirect pressure on the surrounding large parcels (on the other side of West Liberty) to emulate this type of development.

Biltmore Ave Development

Questions:

- If a development were to go forward, what kinds of uses would you be in favor of?
- What kinds of uses would you want to see at the ground floor?
- Would affordable / attainable housing be something the borough should encourage or require?
- Even though the zoning ordinance allows for a maximum of 8 floors, what do you think is an appropriate height for that particular location?
- What other aspects would you like to see incorporated into the development? Examples might include a widened sidewalk and/or street trees.

Mixed-use building with library at ground floor, New York

Mixed-use building with cafe at ground floor, Pittsburgh

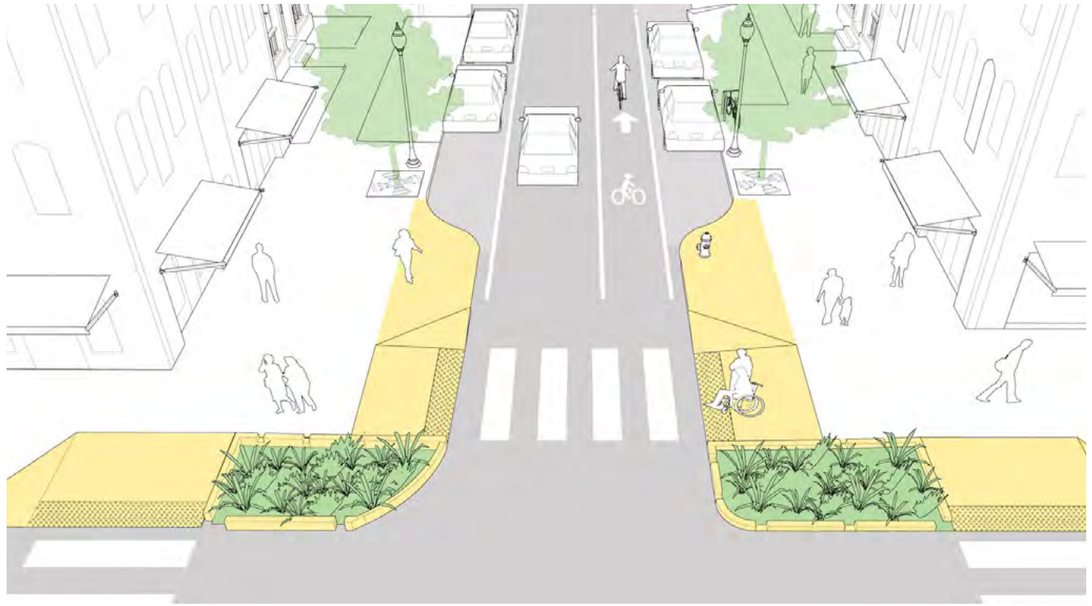
Traffic Calming (other than W. Liberty)

Background:

Improving pedestrian and vehicular safety throughout Dormont has been a top priority of residents and business owners. While most of those comments have been directed at West Liberty, which is controlled by PennDOT, there are other problem areas that Dormont can improve by itself.

Dormont established Complete Streets legislation last year, which directs the borough to ensure that its streets are safe for all modes of travel and for all people.

The Safe Mobility Commission was also recently established. One of its initial tasks has been to assess the borough's intersections, establish a process of prioritizing which ones to improve first, and make suggestions for improved safety.



Traffic Calming (other than W. Liberty)

Background:

There are 2 basic methods for ensuring proper road safety in urban areas:

- **Design:** speed humps, narrow lanes, chicanes, improved visibility
- **Enforcement:** police officer presence, fines, camera monitoring

Each method has costs – infrastructure vs. salaries, etc. The most effective approach is usually to combine both strategies in some way.

Traffic Calming (other than W. Liberty)

Background:

Initial list of intersections to receive safety improvements (currently under review by the Borough)

Location	Name	Issue	Potential Solution
1	Potomac/ Voelkel	intersection, pedestrian generators and destinations, no marked crosswalks on Potomac	mark/ enhance existing marked crosswalks, introduce signage, reduce crossing distances, channelization
2	Dormont/ Pinehurst to WLA	segment, no marked crosswalks	mark unmarked crosswalks at 300' intervals, introduce signage, reduce crossing distances, channelization
3	WLA/ Dormont	intersection, double threat, issues with left turns into pedestrians (headed inbound WLA)	Remove double threat and reduce crossing distance, move stop bar back
4	Dormont/ Dwight to Annapolis/ Crosswalk to park	segment, few marked crosswalks	mark unmarked crosswalks at intersections at minimum 300' intervals, introduce signage, reduce crossing distances, channelization
5	Dwight/ Dormont McFarland to Kelton	segment, few marked crosswalks	mark unmarked crosswalks at intersections at minimum 300' intervals, introduce signage, reduce crossing distances, channelization
6	Dell/ Hillsdale/ Espy	intersection, visibility, wrong way driving, not all crosswalks marked	mark unmarked crosswalk, introduce signage, reduce crossing distances, channelization
7	Broadway/ Potomac	intersection	enhance existing marked crosswalks, introduce signage, reduce crossing distances, channelization
9	Potomac/ Espy	intersection, wrong way driving, double threat	introduce signage, reduce crossing distances, channelization
10	Miles/ Edgehill to LaSalle	segment, due for paving	mark unmarked crosswalk, introduce signage, reduce crossing distances, channelization
11	Potomac/ Glenmore	crosswalk, double threat, toddler struck, encroachment	enhance existing marked crosswalks, introduce signage, reduce crossing distances, channelization

Traffic Calming (other than W. Liberty)

Questions:

- Can you name a few intersections you think are especially unsafe for pedestrians, or even unsafe for vehicles?
- Are there locations that you think are missing crosswalks, or cases where the crosswalk lines have faded and are not very visible? Are there areas where you've noticed missing accessibility ramps?
- What are your thoughts about using Design versus Enforcement (or a mixed approach) to control speeding and other traffic violations?
- What are your thoughts about stop sign cameras or traffic signal cameras for monitoring violations? Would you be in support of a 12-month pilot program (with no fines issued during that time) to collect data? This data could be used to make a decision about how to proceed with violations and fines.
- An ideal location for a camera-monitoring trial could be near Keystone Oaks. Do you think your community would accept this? Are there privacy issues or other concerns?

Road and Sidewalk Programs

Background:

The borough has expressed interest in a **Sidewalk Program** similar to Brentwood's.

Brentwood adds or repairs sidewalks on streets where it is completing roadway resurfacing projects or road opening projects.

It also has a sidewalk improvement program that provides financial assistance to property owners.

The cost of repairing sidewalks is the responsibility of the adjacent property owner, which can be a financial burden for some owners. Piecemeal repairs can lead to poor accessibility and sidewalk quality.

Road and Sidewalk Programs

Background:

Similarly, when the borough is replacing a sidewalk during a road opening, it could provide street trees where feasble.

Sometimes planting a shade tree in a sidewalk may not be possible due to lack of space or overhead wires.

Trees planted "**back of the sidewalk**" generally have more favorable growing conditions and have less stress than typical sidewalk-planted trees.

Dormont could help residents plant trees on their side of the sidewalk.

Road and Sidewalk Programs

Background:

There have been many comments from residents about the unsatisfactory condition of streets and sidewalks in the borough.

Part of Dormont's 2025 Road Program is a digital mapping of road conditions by Michelin Better Roads, formerly known as Roadbotics. There is a considerable amount of upcoming utility work planned, so this is part of that process.

The borough can also use the automated mapping to create a prioritized list of resurfacing projects, which could be shared online with the public.

Road and Sidewalk Programs

Questions:

- Would you be interested in a cost-sharing program, in which the borough helps to pay for a portion of the cost to repair sidewalks?
- Do you know of cases where the permitting process hinders the process or time to repair sidewalks? Do you have suggestions on how to streamline this?
- Do you feel that the borough provides adequate updates to road-openings? Is it easy to find those announcements on the borough's website?
- Do you support the idea of a tree protection ordinance for private land? Currently, the borough code protects trees on publicly-owned land, but not on private land.