

# Establish Pine Grove Mills as a Gateway Community

## Background

Two rural state highways intersect in Pine Grove Mills, making it a vehicular gateway to the State College Area for traffic coming from the south and west. The area is also a vehicular gateway to Rothrock State Park for traffic coming from the north, east, and west. A key consideration identified during the planning process is to strengthen the notion of Pine Grove Mills as a gateway to Rothrock and other areas in the State College Area. The gateway concept included establishing stronger non-vehicular access to Rothrock from portions of Pine Grove Mills and potentially using that access to leverage opportunities for businesses in the Village area. The gateway concept was also discussed at the local level because residents felt neighborhoods in Pine Grove Mills were disconnected from each other and the Village due to gaps in sidewalks, lack of bicycle facilities, and unsafe conditions on SR 45 and SR 26 that make it difficult and uncomfortable to walk or bike. Residents also expressed the need to address issues related to the ownership (public or private), condition, and maintenance of alleys.

## Issues

- Pine Grove Mills is a cross road, and not a destination for locals and visitors to stop for lunch, dinner, other events.
- There are no obvious trail connections to Rothrock State Park and no real reason for hikers or bikers to stop in the Village area.
- Bike trails, paths or lanes are needed to provide non-vehicular access to the State College area.
- Speeding and truck traffic on State Routes 45 and 26 is a threat to safe pedestrian and bicyclist mobility.
- Gaps in the sidewalk system throughout Pine Grove Mills result in disconnected neighborhoods and no sidewalk connections are provided from neighborhoods to the Village area.
- Dedicated bicycle lanes or multi-use trails not available in most parts of Pine Grove Mills. The lack of on-street and off-street parking in the Village area creates difficulty for those travelling to do business locally and constrains the viability of new non-residential use in the Village area.
- The alleys in Pine Grove Mills are problematic because they are poorly maintained, and ownership is not clear.

## Goal

Establish a signage and branding program for Pine Grove Mills.

There are a few entrance signs to Pine Grove Mills, but other than identifying the boundaries of the community, they do not tell any passerby anything about the community. The signage and branding program should tell people the focus of Pine Grove Mills. For example, if it Pine Grove Mills is a gateway to Rothrock, that should be clearly developed and communicated in a signage and branding program.

## Objectives

- To demonstrate community support for reinvestment in the Village area
- To create an attractive destination for locals and visitors
- Encourage unique shops, restaurants and other local businesses to locate to the Village area
- Increase the viability of existing and new businesses
- Allow for the growth of community events that are open to the public
- To broadcast the feeling of small town, friendly community beyond the radius of Pine Grove Mills

## Actions

- Obtain funding or grants to prepare a branding strategy for the Pine Grove Mills.

## Goal

Improve pedestrian and bicyclist safety, mobility, and connectivity throughout, and beyond Pine Grove Mills.

Provide a transportation environment that enables safe movement for pedestrians and bicyclists from neighborhoods to Ferguson Township Elementary School, existing and proposed parks, the Village, and other priority destinations. Include access into Rothrock State Park and routes into the State College Area and integration with any CATA bus stops and school bus stops.

## Objectives

- Provide safe mobility from neighborhoods to destinations throughout Pine Grove Mills.
- Maintain the character of the Village area by crafting regulations that respect historic resources, scale, and form of the existing Village.
- Support a mix of uses in the Village area including businesses, community facilities, and residential uses within walking distance to many homes.
- Support the business community along State Route 26 in the Village area to maintain and enhance the parking.
- Require new developments to install or support facilities that improve bicycle and pedestrian facilities

## Actions

- Implement the Pine Grove Mills Pedestrian and Bicyclist Mobility Map (to be prepared with this Small Area Plan).

The items identified in the Pedestrian and Bicyclist Mobility Map will need to be implemented through a variety of methods. Ferguson Township will need to provide a role thorough the Planning Commission (or other committee) along with staff and the Board of Supervisors. Funding and grant funding for implementation could be sought from a variety of sources through the Township, the Centre Region Planning Agency, or Commonwealth entities.

## **Goal**

Assess the need for additional parking on street and off-street parking in the Village Area.

The Village area has very little off-street and on street parking. Parking is always a critical issue for any business that relies on drive-by traffic to support themselves. More parking needs to be provided in the Village area to prompt and sustain growth in the businesses that may want to locate there. Additional parking needs to be planned in a manner that respects the character and heritage of the Village area while not infringing on existing neighborhoods.

## **Objectives**

- Plan for viable parking opportunities in the Village area.
- Maintain the character, scale, and heritage of the Village area.
- Support changes to the zoning ordinance that would facilitate non-traditional parking options in the Village area.
- Provide parking in a location that facilitates safe pedestrian movement to the business area.

## **Actions**

- **Complete a parking inventory and comprehensive study in the Village area.**  
A comprehensive assessment of existing parking inventory, need, and potential improvement will quantify the deficiencies and recommend effective means to address the deficiencies. This study should be done so that it complements the branding strategy for the Village area. Changes to regulations in the Township should also be addressed.

Generally, grant funding is not available for this type of project, which will probably need to be funded by the Township. The work should be completed by a transportation engineering and planning consultant. Township staff, the Planning Commission or Board of Supervisors should provide oversight.