the Wilkinsburg Train Station
Community, History, Opportunity
Revitalization Research Report

A joint partnership between the Borough of Wilkinsburg
and the H. John Heinz III School of Public Policy & Management
Submitted: April 2004
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Community Perception Survey
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The following H. John Heinz III Graduate School of Public Policy and Management students:

Sean Roberts, Project Manager
Luisa Blanchfield
Libby Boss
Jessica Exelbert
Kathryn Heidelmann
Angela Ku
Alissa Kumley
George Mongell
Maureen Ryan
Allison Sanders
Matthew Sidorick
Nicole Sparks
Abhay Sudhindra
Cara Weiser

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For their support and contributions throughout this project.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

The Borough of Wilkinsburg and the Heinz School at Carnegie Mellon University have formed a partnership to assess the feasibility of rehabilitating the Wilkinsburg Train Station. The partnership consists of fifteen graduate students, a faculty advisor, Mayor Wilbert Young of Wilkinsburg and an independent research firm.

Located at the corner of Ross and Hay streets, the train station anchors the business corridor of Wilkinsburg and could serve as a catalyst of revitalization in the downtown area.

Built in 1916 but vacant since the 1970’s, the Station was designated a local historic landmark in 1984. Over the past several decades the building has deteriorated and requires substantial renovations before any prospective tenants can occupy the structure. Previous attempts to rehabilitate the building have failed. Estimates of the total cost of rehabilitation and reconstruction exceed $2 million.

Wilkinsburg represents a distressed community, suffering a deteriorating economy. Suburbanization and the severe loss of population in the region have left the Borough in a state of need. Unlike neighborhoods within the city of Pittsburgh that benefit from the support of the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh, Wilkinsburg does not have the same access to funding or talented staff. This project seeks to fill the gaps in resources, funding and expertise that have prevented the train station from resuming its role as a cultural and economic anchor in the Wilkinsburg community.

To better understand the potential uses of the structure and the extent to which the Wilkinsburg and broader community would support alternative uses, primary marketing research was conducted with 737 individuals using three tools: 1) A community perception pass-out and web-based survey where 701 individuals responded, 2) Two Wilkinsburg community focus groups (16 participants) and 3) interviews with 20 community, arts and economic development leaders.
Primary Insights

Overall, the Wilkinsburg community is challenged by mixed perceptions. While those who live within the community view it more positively, those from outside the area do not typically view it as a safe or economically viable area. The following chart compares attitudes about Wilkinsburg for residents and non-residents found in the community perception survey:

The initial perceptions one holds of Wilkinsburg tends to influence that person’s opinions of the various potential uses of the train station. In general, Wilkinsburg residents are more open to and would be likely to support many of the development alternatives for the site.

Residents from outside the community—while sympathetic to Wilkinsburg’s challenges and encouraged by the fact that the community is trying to save the train station—are less likely to support any development options. While they encourage continued development and community improvements, they do not readily see themselves as active supports or participants in using the new facility. The following chart, based on the community perception survey results, illustrates these differences:
Wilkinsburg does not significantly serve the shopping and dining needs for residents of the Borough or surrounding region.

Arts leaders do not believe the train station could become a viable destination for any currently unmet attraction or arts-specific need. Instead, they suggested that the structure be used for community, business, entertainment or other local purposes.

These findings suggest two possible broad strategies for revitalizing the train station:

- **Build something that is so unique that people will come from anywhere to experience it.** Examples individual respondents provided include:
  - A museum focused on industry, steel, the radio, trains, jazz or African-Americans.
  - A brew-house similar to the Church Brew Works in Bloomfield.
  - A seafood wholesale place like Wholey’s in Pittsburgh’s Strip District.

- **Build something that Wilkinsburg residents will support and expect only occasional participation from residents living outside of the Township.** Examples provided by individual respondents include: A family restaurant, daycare center, coffee stand or café for PAT bus riders or a library.
Audience-Specific Findings and Conclusions

1. Community Perception Survey

- Less than 50% of the respondents agreed with any of the attribute statements about Wilkinsburg.
  - Wilkinsburg is a good place to worship (46%).
  - Wilkinsburg should stay a “dry” community (not allow alcohol sales within the Borough) (43%).
  - Wilkinsburg has improved in recent years (38%).
  - Wilkinsburg is a good place to live (39%).
  - I have a positive image of Wilkinsburg (31%).
  - Wilkinsburg is a good place to raise children (20%).
  - Wilkinsburg is safe (23%).
  - Wilkinsburg is a good place to shop (18%).
  - Wilkinsburg is a good place to eat out (18%).
  - (If you don’t live in Wilkinsburg:) Wilkinsburg is just as safe as where I live now (Base: 350) (15%).

- Respondents were asked to describe Wilkinsburg in one word. Overall, one-third (33%) listed a positive term, while 47% said a negative, 9% a neutral term and 12% did not say. More Wilkinsburg residents (40%) listed a positive term than non-residents (26%).

- Most (83%) have seen media coverage about Wilkinsburg during the past 12 months. Of those who have (n=579), many remembered crime/police reports (71%), while fewer mentioned Borough/government news (55%), community events/activities (50%), school-related news (45%) or local residents/business news (33%).

- Respondents provided a number of specific uses for the structure. Themes included retail and restaurant venues, arts or theaters, community center, museums and other public facilities and other suggestions.

- Respondents were asked how successful they thought a number of specific facility uses might be. About one-third or less believed that any of these uses would be “very” successful. However, a majority thought that these uses would be “very” or “somewhat” successful:
  - Family-style restaurant or café (74%).
  - Community center (69%).
  - Old-fashioned ice cream parlor (67%).
  - Jazz museum that would include a record store of rare jazz albums and CDs (61%).
  - Retail space for specialty stores (58%).
  - Art gallery (55%).
  - Office space (51%).
• When asked which uses they would visit and support, about half or more of those surveyed said the following:

  o Family-style restaurant or café (52% of all respondents, or 61% of Wilkinsburg residents and 44% of non-residents)
  o Old-fashioned ice cream parlor (52% of all respondents, or 61% of Wilkinsburg residents and 44% of non-residents)
  o Art gallery (50% of all respondents, or 55% of Wilkinsburg residents and 46% of non-residents)
  o Jazz museum that would include a record store of rare jazz albums and CDs (48% of all respondents, or 46% of Wilkinsburg residents and 49% of non-residents)
  o Retail space for specialty stores (48% of all respondents, or 54% of Wilkinsburg residents and 41% of non-residents)

• About half of the respondents (48%) and three-fourths of the Wilkinsburg residents (74%) have visited Wilkinsburg to shop, eat or patronize a business during the past month. In addition

2. Focus Groups

Focus Group I: This session consisted of ten people and three moderators. Participants were primarily Wilkinsburg community members and economic development leaders. The session lasted for approximately one hour.

Conclusion and Observations: Overall, participants agreed that the train station renovation was important to Wilkinsburg’s continued economic development. There were points of contention as to how Wilkinsburg should encourage growth, mostly between the residents and economic development leaders. Wilkinsburg’s status as a “dry” community was addressed only in passing, with one participant stating, “If alcohol is the only way we can revitalize the community, then we’re in trouble.” Someone suggested that Wilkinsburg needed a specialty—like Squirrel Hill and its cafes, Bloomfield as Pittsburgh’s ‘Little Italy,’ and Shadyside and its shops.

Focus Group II: This session consisted of six people and two moderators. Participants were primarily Wilkinsburg community members and economic development leaders. The session lasted for approximately one hour.

Conclusion and Observations: The participants all believe that the train station is an important component of the community that should be redeveloped. Although this redevelopment is considered a priority, the group expressed that convincing outsiders to visit Wilkinsburg will be difficult. Additionally, the entire group questioned the Borough’s ability and or willingness to redevelop the train station. The group believes that someone else outside of the Borough must step forward and take the risk and initiative associated with redeveloping the train station.
3. Arts and Economic Development Opinion Leader Interviews

This qualitative, one-on-one approach provided insights from key members of the greater Pittsburgh community. Under strict confidentiality, participants were able to speak freely about Wilkinsburg.

- **Community involvement is essential to rehabilitating the train station:** A number of participants believe that the community must be involved in the rehabilitation of the Train Station—or any project in Wilkinsburg—from the very beginning. Community members must have “buy-in” and input into the planning process so that they are invested in its success and committed to the change. Funding is available in the Pittsburgh area for a nonprofit organization that is tied in with community and economic redevelopment, but the most essential stipulation to receiving this money is having community support.

  Relevant Quotes regarding this theme include:

  - “The planning must include the community input. If the community is not involved they are not going to support it.”

  - “If the community is not behind it, it will not have a good chance of surviving.”

  - “Revitalizing a community comes one place at a time but there has to be the energy to sustain it.”

- **Taking initiative within the community could help Wilkinsburg garner internal support:** Another theme from the interviews is that cleaning up Wilkinsburg would give residents a reason to care about the community. This would entail the removal of trash, dead plants, graffiti, and abandoned buildings while also constructing better sidewalks, streets and gardens. This follows the “broken window theory” that has been successful in re-developing neighborhoods in Manhattan. The theory states that if a municipality makes the effort to clean up a community, then community members will, in turn, respect their surroundings. This would also help alleviate the overall “perception problem” of Wilkinsburg that exists among neighboring communities. For example, the actual crime rate is not as bad as it is perceived to be by non-residents, so heightening the borough’s reputation is essential to the success of this project.

  Relevant Quotes regarding this theme include:

  - “A flea market gives a new way to think of Wilkinsburg. Instead of associating Wilkinsburg with dilapidation and crime, they can associate it with a great place to buy/sell/trade art, food, antiques and other goods.”

  - “I hope somebody does something with the train station before it falls down.”

  - “Since my childhood, Wilkinsburg has not become any more/less dilapidated—only the perception of it has.”
• **Several barriers exist to converting the Train Station into an Arts Organization:** Of those interviewed, not a single arts leader thought that turning the train station into a new arts organization is an optimal use of the space. There were several factors given for this conclusion. Studies indicate that Wilkinsburg residents are not active arts patrons, therefore an arts organization is unlikely to be economically sustained from within the community. In addition, for a relatively isolated location to be sustained from outside the community, the venue would have to be unique and in high demand to attract patrons. However, new performance or exhibition-driven arts organizations are not recommended because of the over-saturation of the arts market in the East End. An exception to these challenges does exist; it could be feasible for an established organization to use the station as a satellite venue or relocation.

Relevant quotes regarding this theme include:

- “The last thing Wilkinsburg needs is art! It does not get people jobs, put food on the table or make the area safe."
- “People in Pittsburgh stick to their region."
- “Communities in Pittsburgh are isolated.”

• **Challenges of a Rehabilitation Project in Wilkinsburg:** The following represent a summary of the challenges that Wilkinsburg faces in undertaking a rehabilitation project.

- Making the project a priority or compelling problem for the community.
- Devoting enough time to ensure its success.
- Locating initial and ongoing funding.
- Identifying a loyal audience base.
- Drawing nonresidents to Wilkinsburg.
- Liquor Laws limit and deter new businesses.
Opportunities and Strengths of a Rehabilitation Project in Wilkinsburg: Wilkinsburg can capitalize on several opportunities and strengths to ensure the success of a rehabilitation project.

- Location provides an opportunity to attract traffic flow going to the bus way and become a transition point for travelers.
- Traditions and heritage are embedded in Wilkinsburg adding rich history and pride within the community.
- Real-estate is attractive to new business.
- Potential growth and expansion exists in Wilkinsburg.
- Local foundations and economic development agencies show interest in supporting a project tied to economic development.
METHODS

A total of 737 individuals participated in one of three portions of this study:

1. **Community Perception Survey (N=701):** A total of 701 individuals completed and returned a survey. Two survey distribution methods were used in this portion of the study.

   - A web-based survey was created and posted on a specific site. Using a variety of techniques, including push emails and other techniques, a total of 424 individuals responded.

   - A printed survey was also distributed to residents of Wilkinsburg through several channels, including the Pennysaver and intercept interviews at local organizations. Respondents could return a completed survey at one of three drop box locations (which were placed throughout Wilkinsburg) or by mailing their form to a Post Office box. To boost participation, respondents were offered the chance to win part of $400 in prizes and gift certificates. A total of 277 surveys were returned using this approach.

   - The respondent demographic profiles include:
     - Half are residents (50%) and half were non-residents (50%) of Wilkinsburg.
     - The average tenure of Wilkinsburg residence is 16.8 years.
     - About one-in-ten (14%) work in Wilkinsburg.
     - 64% were between the ages of 25 and 54.
     - About as many were married (44%) as single (40%).
     - Less than one-third (27%) have children under 18 living in their households. There is no difference between Wilkinsburg residents (27%) and non-residents (28%) on this issue.
     - About one-third (31%) of all respondents are African-American, with 45% of those living in Wilkinsburg being African-American.
     - Over half (51%) earned less than $50,000 total household income in 2003.

   Based on a review of the demographic profiles, it appears that a larger than typical number of respondents were graduate students. Therefore, the educational level skews slightly higher. Also, according to the 2000 Census for Wilkinsburg, 67% of the community is African-American, while only 45% of the Wilkinsburg residents who completed this survey were African-American. Therefore, the sample is also slightly skewed on race/ethnicity.
2. **Focus Groups (N=16):** Focus Group I consisted of ten people and three moderators. Focus Group II consisted of six people and three moderators. All of the participants that were chosen either completed the train station survey or had participated in another Wilkinsburg group session in the past (Weed and Seed, etc.). Participants were primarily Wilkinsburg community members and economic development leaders. During the meeting, the participants were guided through a series of questions related to specific themes chosen for the discussion. Overall, participants were asked to speak freely, and the moderators only interjected to guide the discussion back towards the selected themes. The session was conducted at the Wilkinsburg Council Chambers and lasted approximately one hour.

3. **Arts and Economic Development Opinion Leader Interviews (N=20):** A total of 20 community (church, school and community advocates), economic (foundation officers, consultants and directors of social enterprises) and arts leaders (development officers, arts advocates and community outreach specialists) provided perspectives regarding the feasibility and challenges of rehabilitating the Wilkinsburg Train Station. The individuals who participated in this survey include:

- Aradhna Dhanda, Program Officer, Pittsburgh Foundation
- Bill Flanagan, Chief Communications Officer, Allegheny County Conference on Community Development
- Frank Robinson, Former President of RDIC Pittsburgh, RDIC Pittsburgh
- Dr. Jerry Paytas, Interim Director, Center for Economic Development
- Joseph Khanh Bui, Project Director, The Forbes Funds
- Lisa Olszak, President & Founder, Olszak Management Consulting, Inc.
- Diane Hunt, Program Officer, The Allegheny Regional Asset District
- Rebecca Flora, Executive Director, Green Building Alliance
- Mulu Birru, Executive Director, Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh
- Ron Gaydos, Redevelopment Authority of Allegheny County, Allegheny County Department of Economic Development
- Joel Minnigh, Head Librarian/Historian, Wilkinsburg Library
- Reverend Mitchell, Wilkinsburg Baptist Church
- Eileen Amato, Principal, Kelly Elementary School
- Brian Rogers, Deputy Executive Director, Pennsylvania Council on the Arts
- Cari Maslow, Assistant Director of Corporate and Foundation Development, Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh
- Janis Burley-Wilson, VP of Education and Outreach, The Pittsburgh Cultural Trust
- Jerry Coltin, Executive Director, Center for Arts Management and Technology, Carnegie Mellon University
- Marilyn Coleman, Executive Director, Pro Arts
- Mary Ellen Miller, Director of Development, Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre
- Tim Richart, Annual Fund Manager, Pittsburgh Opera
# RESULTS

## 1. Community Perception Survey

A total of 701 individuals returned a completed survey by mail (277) or email (424).

### 1. How much do you agree with the following statements about Wilkinsburg? (MARK ONE FOR EACH STATEMENT.)

Base: 701

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (1)</th>
<th>Agree (2)</th>
<th>Neither Agree Nor Disagree (3)</th>
<th>Disagree (4)</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (5)</th>
<th>Not Sure/DK/NR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wilkinsburg is a good place to worship</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilkinsburg should stay a “dry” community (not allow alcohol sales within the Borough)</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilkinsburg has improved in recent years</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilkinsburg is a good place to live</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a positive image of Wilkinsburg</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilkinsburg is a good place to raise children</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilkinsburg is safe</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilkinsburg is a good place to shop</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilkinsburg is a good place to eat out</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(If you don’t live in Wilkinsburg:) Wilkinsburg is just as safe as where I live now (Base: 350)</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. **In one word, how would you describe Wilkinsburg?**

Respondents listed specific words which were reclassified into one of four categories:

- **33% Positive**
- **47% Negative**
- **9% Neutral**
- **1% Other**
- **11% DK/NR**

Most Frequently Mentioned Words:

**Positive**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Okay</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nice</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convenient</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Negative**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Depressed</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Struggling</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghetto</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsafe</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sad</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diverse</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rundown</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dangerous</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Troubled</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deteriorating</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dirty</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dilapidated</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underdeveloped</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rudderless</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenged</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boring</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. **In the past 12 months, have you heard, seen or read anything about Wilkinsburg?**

(MARK ONE.)

Base: 701

- **83% Yes**
- **12% No**
- **6% DK/NR**

(If Yes:) **What did you see hear or read?** (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.)

Base: 579

- **71% Crime/police reports**
- **55% Borough/government news**
- **50% Community events/activities**
- **45% School-related news**
- **33% Local residents/businesses news**
- **12% Other**
4. The Wilkinsburg Train Station was built in 1916 and is located at the corner of Ross and Hay streets near the PAT bus way entrance. Because it has been vacant since the 1970s, it needs considerable work. It was designated a historic landmark in 1984. What do you think should do with the Wilkinsburg Train Station? (PLEASE EXPLAIN.)

Retail and Restaurant Venues

Selected Comments:

• Maybe a community facility or retail entity. Utilize the facility in a way that will make a positive contribution to the production of the community.

• Rehabilitate and use for retail space.

• Coffee shop/bar/jazz venue.

• I think it should be occupied by some commercial (for-profit, non-government) entertainment venture targeted at younger people <= 30. Wilkinsburg has the potential to be a good location for younger people, but not much to attract them.

• Exclusive retail center for artisans and custom interiors, but it would need a locked parking lot and great security. This could be a wonderful area for people to shop and eat—and truly play up the fabulous history of Wilkinsburg.

• It may be necessary to have a combination of several projects, but it seems worthwhile to emphasize the assets of the location. Since it is on the bus way, it would be a great place for families to frequent. However, turning it into a rough night club may continue the unsafe image that keeps many people away. The historic recognition seems to demand a respectful tenant; a tattoo parlor might not give the right image. There are not enough other vital attractions nearby to provide lots of related business like what might be found in Shadyside or South Side. This is a great idea; you have my support and my business!

• I don't know what the internal floor plan is, but it might be nice if several different types of businesses were located within the structure. Also a morning coffee shop and newsstand might be nice for commuters.

• Anything so that it is used and protected. It's a treasure! I would love an innovative restaurant and/or art gallery and/or performance space. Some place that makes a splash and draws people in—some place that provides a service and is in itself a destination.

• Recreation/cultural center for adults and youth. Enliven our "downtown" well into the evening. This would stimulate more businesses, especially restaurants.

• Shops and restaurants.
Arts, Theater and Other Destinations

Selected Comments

• It might be a nice venue for small theater productions. It could also be a great site for a restaurant or nightclub. However, serious measures would have to be taken for security, no matter what it is.

• My wife and I have considered the possibility of buying and rehabilitating the site a number of times over the past 10 years. I think it should be a movie theater/eatery. I have a rather detailed idea and considerable experience in real estate but found the mixture of the community, the bus line, lack of parking, and the considerable amount of neglect too daunting. But with the right amount of support from a foundation and the community, I am sure that the property could be a jewel of the city.

• Everyday office space would have a flow of traffic, while a Negro League Baseball Museum would compliment the shining baseball achievements of the olden days and the Wilkinsburg City League champs Little League baseball teams. The art gallery displaying local talent as well as masters both performing.

• Maybe the Chamber of Commerce or other nonprofit businesses could be housed there with a coffee shop near the entrance.

• I would like to see it refurbished and made into a restaurant with gift shop attached or a small movie theater with a space for Wilkinsburg history to be displayed and portrayed. (I loved when it was set up like a haunted house in October 1975 and 1976.) Something that would help the teens also as to education or religious activities.

• I envision a renaissance of the Wilkinsburg Train station sponsored by a partnership of private and public into a combination transportation museum venue. (Computer generated interactive displays) celebrating the Pennsylvania R.R., Pittsburgh Parkways (street cars and buses) and Port Authority bus way. This enterprise could be complemented with a cinema featuring classic movies and art display gallery. Also, add a nice eatery with musical entertainment.

• The structure is unbelievably beautiful. It must be preserved at any cost. The idea is similar to Station Square’s fancy restaurants, café, boutique stores, nightclubs, dancing place for singles and couples. I am sure it would be very popular.

• I would say if you have the room to make some small specialized stores (i.e., craft and gift shop, coffee and pastry shop, hair salon). Maybe a historical Wilkinsburg shop and small museum. Something along those lines since it would bring people there that would not duplicate shops already in existence.

• Maybe this is the flagship that Wilkinsburg needs. It would be nice to see this landmark developed into something like a restaurant that could attract people who don't already live and/or work in Wilkinsburg (e.g., Greensburg train station).
• I like the idea of a jazz club and restaurant. It would be nice to have a place where all age groups could come to eat and dance. Following the lead of the Rhythm House in Bridgeville, various age groups could be accommodated by having different rooms housing different bands, under one roof. One oriented to a younger crowd, one oriented to an older crowd, and another with varying music style (country, rock, ethnic, etc.). Also, PLEASE make sure that there is good public transportation to this spot from the universities and the city on weekends.

• Turn it into a bar.

• It might be a nice venue for small theater productions. It could also be a great site for a restaurant or nightclub. However, serious measures would have to be taken for security, no matter what it is.

• Cinema movie theater.

• Mini theater that is open to the arts, dance, jazz entertainment, local movies, etc. and a daycare center near EBA with local “car” service available to its patrons (the movie theater should be inexpensive, but popular shows with senior citizen discounts and matinees on Sunday with jitneys. Food court or Arby’s inside. This is a great source of advertisement to bring revenue to Wilkinsburg.
Community Center

Selected Comments

• A community center with activities designed to keep kids off of drugs, give Wilkinsburg seniors a place to socialize and participate in activities, job training and crafts classes, and so forth.

• Being that it is a historic landmark, the Train Station should be renovated to keep it a part of the community and possibly create a souvenir shop or something community oriented.

• A 24-hour childcare facility for working parents. Parents can drop off their children and catch public transportation on the PAT Bus Way.

Museums and Other Public Facilities

Selected Comments

• Museum showing more of Pittsburgh’s history. (How trains work etc. - would be good for elementary school kids), Specialty stores selling Pittsburgh souvenirs.

• Art museum.

• It should be made into a museum about Wilkinsburg and the history of the train industry in the area.

• If you can get the funding create a museum. If not look at developing the site into a small business incubator in conjunction with the Pittsburgh Regional Alliance.

• Museum—much like the train station in Cincinnati that boast several wonderful museums.

• Train exhibit, with fun activities (learning activities) for kids of all ages. African American history museum.... bring some cultural venue to the community which can act as a host for future events.

• Small museum. Affiliate with Clayton. Emphasize middle class or working class history just as Clayton does the rich. Note some artists/celebrities to emerge from the East End.

• Restored to its once famous beauty, condition and used to anchor and transition community towards a fresh, new reality using its historical reference and restored beauty to house memorable and museum artifacts and to echo harmonious, mellow sounds indigenous to Pittsburgh area... Pittsburgh's rich music history. From Earl "Fatha" Hines to Lena Horne.
• Since it has been designated a historic landmark, it should be remodeled or restored with the history of Wilkinsburg to be used as a museum also it's near the bus way.

• A space available to the public to present cultural events.

• Something that raises the bar and challenges other businesses that surrounds it. I don't think it should be anything expected (i.e., a community center, rental center, library, or anything that particularly has to immediately benefit the actual neighborhood). I believe the space should aspire to something greater that would bring people from outside Wilkinsburg to Wilkinsburg. Art gallery, concert hall, etc. Something grand befitting the space. A center for the community is better than a "community center." I think there is a distinction.

• It’s a beautiful building and I’ve often thought something should be there. The best idea I have is a CCAC (Community College of Allegheny County) Branch. It would be an impressive landmark and well used by the community. It would visually show that the community values education and would be an asset. I think it would be a better choice architecturally than the current CCAC campus in Homewood. It would be convenient for travel for community members and others from out of the community as it is close to the bus way. I don't know if this building would be big enough by itself, but I know there are plenty of other buildings nearby which could serve as an Eastern Campus, if done properly.

• I think it should be renovated as "The Wilkinsburg Train Station Museum," to show History of Wilkinsburg and to generate revenue to our community.

• Center for the arts—possibly modeled after the Manchester Guild. The people of Wilkinsburg need and deserve a place to showcase their dynamic interaction with the world through the expression of art. The community does not need a nightclub, and what a waste of such a beautiful building. The people of Wilkinsburg are talented. They need a place to say it for themselves, so that they will be encouraged to share with the rest of Pittsburgh and the world. In addition, an open food court that caters to art patrons and transitory window shoppers on their way to the bus way.
• I believe that an indoor flea or farmer's market would be ideal. The location is not too far from the existing outdoor farmer's market. The farmer's market is a great draw but the downside to the existing one is that it is only open from June to November and is not terribly convenient to the bus way. If a combination flea/farmer's market were placed there, it would increase the economic future of the community by giving people who cannot rent out retail space the opportunity to become entrepreneurs. I'm not sure of what the inside looks like but the space for the farmer's market is fairly small as it is right now. Additionally, the emphasis can swing to more non-perishable items when produce is not in season, hence the flea market idea. With the proximity to the bus way, students would be able to come down and shop in this area. It could almost serve as a gateway to Wilkinsburg by drawing students and others who frequent the bus way to the area.

• It could be refurbished to its original splendor and utilized as a community market. This would give the local community the opportunity to gain some financial independence. The corrupt, inefficient, and directionless Wilkinsburg government has done nothing to change the downward spiral of the community. While the journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step I see development such as this somewhat like putting the cart before the horse. It has been proven that Wilkinsburg is unable to manage its own government and school district with any level of respectability and should seek outside assistance to turn the situation around.

• Wilkinsburg has no food stores such as Save-a-Lot or Giant Eagle. The smaller grocery stores that are available are over priced, and not a good source for monthly or weekly shopping. The train station would be excellent for a market place with fresh vegetables and seafood, meat market and small restaurant and food court, some specialty stores. Most businesses complain that Wilkinsburg is too high on taxes. Maybe some incentives need to be offered to new businesses.

• Turn it into a library. Put in a coffee shop and computers with Internet access. Make it a place for children and adults, a place where community events can take place. Get the community involved, but reach outside the immediate area for support. Have school and social functions, as well as self-help classes.

• I think the space should be used to build Wilkinsburg a new library. Our current library only has a small part of the second floor at the municipal building and the space is pathetic. It would be so nice to have a building such as the old train station converted into a library. Community events could still be scheduled there, outreach programs for schools and the surrounding neighborhoods could still happen there. I believe, too, that since the location is so near the Park and Ride Wilkinsburg station, the library would get a lot of use from people using public transit. I think there would still be enough room for a part of the ground floor to have a small coffee shop spot that could still encourage people to stop meet. Even when the library is closed, the coffee shop could still be open for business.
• I think that the borough should allow a private developer to purchase the train station for use as office space. The borough does not have the resources to run the space if it should get the funding to rehabilitate it. The parking is very limited for use as a community building. I think there are better alternative buildings.

• It could be used for offices and limited retail to get it back on the tax records. Possibly as site for the Museum of Broadcasting. Not for use solely as tax exempt property, but with full or partial tax going to borough.

• This is a wonderful structure. The Station should be restored and used as place for the community to enjoy and benefit from. The space can easily be converted to office space on upper levels. The office space would be best suited for organizations that are community supporting.

Additional Suggestions

Selected Comments:

• The station provides a unique opportunity to create a landmark for the future of Wilkinsburg rather than its past—something that's a draw for all those who think Wilkinsburg has become just another crime-ridden place to stay away from. Make it a magnet for people to see that Wilkinsburg is safe, a good place to come.

• The station should be demolished, unless profits from its rehabilitation go back to the community.

• Adaptive reuse! I love to see old buildings with historic value renovated to have new life/new purpose in a community. It makes me feel like the community cares about itself. These buildings send the message that the community values the past—and has plans for its future. Really, historical or not, places that have creatively reinvented themselves are a real destination for me (Quiet Storm coffee shop is a good example).

• The train station should be restored so that its historic landmark status is honored, but it should be restored in such a way as to attract the public to the community and to counteract the negative publicity often associated with the borough.

• This could be a very positive way to bring vitality back to some of those depressed areas.

• It should be part of a comprehensive vision based urban design revitalization strategy that takes into account the complex series of forces and systems that surround and are inextricably intertwined in their fate. They should merge with the City of Pittsburgh.

• The Wilkinsburg Train Station itself was—and could be—a fantastic architectural landmark. However, because it’s located within Wilkinsburg, any effort or investment in the building would be throwing money out the window. You might as well have a
bonfire with the cash. The Wilkinsburg municipality leaders simply don’t know how to financially run a municipality... they tax the paying-taxpayers, simply because they cannot find the non-paying-taxpayer property owners... the schools are the absolute worst in western PA... and they (Wilkinsburg municipality leaders) have the audacity to charge the paying-taxpayers the highest tax in Pennsylvania.

- When I drive through Wilkinsburg, I get tears in my eyes when I see the run-down housing. Get rid of the absentee landlords and eliminate the Section 8 Housing. Offer incentives to people who buy, fix-up and live in these homes. Maybe Wilkinsburg could be another Mexican War Street neighborhood.

5. **These are just a few of the ideas that have already been suggested.**
   - **How successful do you think each one would be in Wilkinsburg?**
   - **Would you visit and support this attraction if it was built?** (MARK ONE FOR EACH.)

Base: 701

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<th>Attraction</th>
<th>How successful would this be in Wilkinsburg?</th>
<th>Would you visit and support it?</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community center</td>
<td>36%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family-style restaurant or café</td>
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<tr>
<td>Old-fashioned ice cream parlor</td>
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<td>42%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jazz museum that would include a record store of rare jazz albums and CDs</td>
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<td>37%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Retail space for specialty stores</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Hands-on craft and wood working center open to the public</td>
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<tr>
<td>Office space</td>
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<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fancy restaurant or café</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>35%</td>
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</table>
6. What else could we create that was so unique it would want to make you visit the Wilkinsburg Train Station? (PLEASE EXPLAIN.)

General Comments

Selected Comments

• I think a revitalization of the whole community needs to happen. You can't rely on just a single thing to seed a change. It has to be a simultaneous, holistic process.

• I ride through Wilkinsburg daily on the bus to and from work; when I drive through instead, I don't really feel comfortable. Seems to be a bad area.

• I'd clean the streets and renovate other building fronts (more curb appeal) in a radius of at least 8-10 blocks. Cement walls of the Bus way could display colorful, tasteful artwork by local artists.

Museums and Art-related Venues

Selected Comments

• Something that seems related to trains seems like an idea.

• A train museum or an industrial museum

• Since Wilkinsburg is known as a black community, a black history center or museum would make the space very interesting.

• Pittsburgh history museum.

• A train museum... Pittsburgh forged into industry in the 1800’s because of our river ways and rail systems. Why not push this to our advantage?

• Historic museum highlighting the importance of Wilkinsburg to the Underground Railroad in the 1800’s; recognizing those members of the community who helped with the Railroad, etc.

• African American museum—local and regional demographics support it. Excellent public transportation to it, with available parking at nearby Park and Ride.

• Black history museum/community in change museum (show the change in population and why that change occurred). It could become a study site for folks around the world interested in why a community changes and how to help make it a truly mixed community again (the change to a mix would occur as a result of the center).
• I think people need a place that can stimulate the mind and also allow them to congregate in a social manner. A museum/gallery would provide cultural, educational, and even some civic opportunities and help boost Wilkinsburg’s image, which right now is quite frankly pretty bleak. A café adjoining the museum/gallery would add a local business and give people a safe, attractive place for people to come and hang out in downtown Wilkinsburg

• Specialty museum (radio, Westinghouse, steel industry).

• An exhibit area that reflects the important historical contribution that Wilkinsburg played in the development of Pittsburgh and Western PA. I think services that would meet the needs of commuters on the bus way (a café, coffee shop and small meal/snack service) would also be popular. Local small culturally reflective performances would also draw me to the station and the building could be host to other programs (lectures, art shows, etc.) and could be presentation/class/activity sites for groups like CMU’s Academy of Lifelong Learning, Elderhostel of Pittsburgh, etc. A multi-purpose hall that could be rented out at a reasonable fee for such events could bring in additional on-going funds. I think it important that whatever construction methods are used, beyond those necessary to meet landmark requirements, be the latest in energy efficiency and sustainable living. Doing so might make the site a special place to visit for that reason only. We certainly have the cutting-edge technology in this area to incorporate this.

Restaurants

Selected Comments

• It has to be something unique that it would draw people who are from other areas and make them willing to plunk down some serious cash. Maybe it should be a nice restaurant with a micro-brew, the jazz museum idea sounds unique and interesting, too.

• Restaurant and ice cream parlor are great ideas as well as shopping and galleries.

• A drive through Starbucks and other stores and office space and things for children to do—arcade, game room.

• Maybe an old style family restaurant that is also a museum of historic Wilkinsburg. The workers would be dressed in old-fashioned clothing, and ethnic food would be served. The walls would be decorated with old pictures and newspaper clipping. A model train can be set up to circle the dining area over the people’s heads.

• An evening club, not a nightclub, for middle-aged people who don’t like to go out late, but do like to go out earlier. Includes some type of community center, where people can go to discuss current events, book discussions or just hobnob with others.
• Something like Cracker Barrel restaurant with a gift shop with special items. Good food at reasonable prices using the train as a theme.

• A fresh baked pretzel shop!

• Gourmet coffee house; bakery.

• A seafood wholesale place like Wholey’s.

• Bar or nightclub with different rooms could be stations for different places such as Manteo Bay, Jamaica, London, Tokyo, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Egypt Creating an international feel and expanding Wilkinsburg’s horizon. Or, have three floors with a different use (i.e., hip hop/R&B on one floor; Reggae/Soca on another mix on next floor).

• A soul food restaurant with food as delicious as Jean’s and E&J Soul Food Restaurants

Retail

Selected Comments

• There’s plenty of space in town for retailing. I would want to see this really cool building dedicated to something other than consumerism.

• Retail space for a specialty store that opens 6 a.m., sells coffee (different kinds), candy, newspaper, lottery, change for the bus way, doughnuts and sandwiches. It should close at 8 p.m. to cut back on crime. Make it a truly historic train depot.

Community Center

Selected Comments

• An indoor creative play area for children multiple age groups from 1-17 years of age.

• Community center that offer classes to public from crafts to self improvement, employment and related issues.

• Perhaps use it as a place for local youth to learn new trades or skills. Or make it a safe haven for learning/activities, like a community center, but with restrictions that ensure productive use of the space and not a hang-out.

• Daycare—many children need support.

• Regular community events where the entire family could visits (such as fairs, etc).
• Expensive shops should not be in the plan if this is for the Wilkinsburg community. I am not implying that it be geared to "poor" people, but a place where all members of the community could come together regardless of income or means.

• Hands on education center focused on children and youth around changing technology. Perhaps some tie to the radio industry (since it was launched near there). It would have to be something that was ever changing to redraw the same crowd.

• Activity that id good for the entire family such as bowling, skating, laser tag, rock climbing wall, gym, and work out for aerobics.

• Lesbian and gay community center.

• I really love the idea of an artist's collective... like the glass center in East Liberty/Garfield... I think that when a creative, artistic community comes into a neighborhood, good, positive things follow... I'm thinking of what's happening in the Penn Ave. corridor of Garfield with Quiet Storm and the Glass Center and the metal working place and a new design studio... Wilkinsburg has so much beautiful, affordable housing, but there has to be a draw, a reason for people to want to invest their time, energy and money.

Theater and the Arts

Selected Comments

• Small theatre for concerts; train museum

• A smoke free club that could host comedy, theatre, dance and music acts (local and out of town talent) the youth and family community need positive and affordable outlets.

• A small live music venue. Music venues in more economically developed areas are dropping like flies. A building this size would fill a growing void.

• A performing arts theater. Something along the lines of the Public Theater which started out small, in a "routher" area of town and became successful for years. Maybe have an affiliation with CMU performances, start up theater groups. Give the space away at Forest, let the organization grow. There are other models that have worked (Sweet Water Arts center for one) use those as your benchmark. A fancy restaurant would work, but it would that be "reaching" enough? It would be important to have programming in place as well as rehabbing the building.

• A good, small experimental theatre.
Grocery

Selected Comments

- Grocery store or hardware store with parking.
- We need food store or supermarket very bad.
- A true super market convenient to the Wilkinsburg Train Station where an individual could purchase the fundamental necessities of life at a fair and competitive price.

Book Store and Library

- One idea might be to move the public library into this space and adapt the facility to accommodate community building, as an event venue or gathering place: meeting rooms, small auditorium or performance space and amenities such as a coffee bar.
- Book store.

7. **How long has it been since you have shopped, eaten out or patronized any businesses or organizations in Wilkinsburg?** (MARK ONE.)

Base: 701

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<td>5% (7-11 months)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Past week</td>
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<td>8% (1-2 years)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Past month</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>3% (3-4 years)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2-3 months</td>
<td>6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>4-6 months</td>
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<td>2% DK/NR</td>
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8. **Do you live in Wilkinsburg?** (MARK ONE.)

Base: 701

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<th>Response</th>
<th>DK/NR</th>
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<td>1%</td>
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<td>No</td>
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(IF YES:) **For how long? _____ years**

Mean: 16.8 years

Base: 347

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<td>21%</td>
<td>8% 15-19 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>5-9 years</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>31% 20 or more years</td>
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<tr>
<td>10-14 years</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>18% DK/NR</td>
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</table>
(IF NO:) What is your Zip Code?

Base: 351

39% Near Wilkinsburg 3% Out of state
47% Broader area 10% DK/NR

9. Do you work in Wilkinsburg?

Base: 701

14% Yes 3% DK/NR
84% No

10. What is your age?

Base: 701

1% Under 18 21% 45-54
9% 18-24 15% 55-64
26% 25-34 9% 65+
17% 35-44 1% DK/NR

11. Are you…?

Base: 701

44% Married 2% Separated
40% Single 1% Other
8% Divorced 1% DK/NR
5% Widowed

12. Do you have children 18 or younger living in your household?

Base: 701

27% Yes 2% DK/NR
71% No

13. Highest educational level completed? (MARK ONE.)

Base: 701

3% Some High School 28% College Grad
12% High School Grad 37% Post Grad
17% Some College 3% DK/NR
14. **Race/ethnicity?**

Base: 701

- 59% Caucasian
- 31% African-American
- 2% Asian-American
- 1% Hispanic
- 5% Other
- 2% DK/NR

15. **Total household income in 2003?** (MARK ONE.)

Base: 701

- 20% <$20,000
- 15% $20–$34,999
- 16% $35-$49,999
- 16% $50-$74,999
- 10% $75–$99,999
- 13% $100,000+
- 9% DK/NR
2. **Focus Groups**

**Focus Group I**

**Themes:** Several recurring themes were discussed as the meeting progressed. They are as follows:

- **Wilkinsburg has potential:** The participants care about the Wilkinsburg has the potential to become a prosperous community. One person described it as “a diamond in the rough.” Three reasons were cited as Wilkinsburg’s main advantages:
  
  - **Location:** Almost all the participants believe that Wilkinsburg’s proximity to the PAT bus way, as well as Penn Avenue (which leads right into Pittsburgh), gives it an advantage over other communities. Unfortunately, the thousands of people who pass through Wilkinsburg every day do not utilize it. The train station is an important development project given its downtown location and proximity to Penn Ave. and the bus way. The train station should be renovated into an entity that will bring people into Wilkinsburg not just to pass through, but to stay and return.
  
  - **Cultural diversity:** Participants felt that Wilkinsburg’s diversity was one of its main selling points. Though it is predominantly African American, Wilkinsburg also has a significant Caucasian community. Most recently, a small gay and lesbian population has moved in to the area. In addition, Wilkinsburg also has a large religious community and spiritual base.
  
  - **Value for the dollar:** Many participants noted that home buyers looking for an investment would be attracted to many of the old homes in Wilkinsburg. They can be purchased cheaply and then renovated for a profit or for family living.

- **“Perception vs. reality:” Wilkinsburg has potential, but it also has problems:** All participants agreed that Wilkinsburg has many inherent problems that need to be addressed. They are as follows:
  
  - **Safety and security:** Many parts of Wilkinsburg have a crime problem. One participant acknowledged that this problem might be over-represented (especially in the press) but admitted that Wilkinsburg still needs to do something to alleviate the abnormal levels of crime. Other participants recommended that in order to appear “more safe,” the borough should try to utilize vacant buildings and pick up the litter—all of which to contribute to the perception that Wilkinsburg is a “dangerous” community.
  
  - **“Nothing to do;”** Many participants believe that Wilkinsburg should have more for young people to do. There is no place to go and relax between running errands, or to stop and get a quick cup of coffee.
o **Apathy:** Though not spoken explicitly, participants indicated through various comments that many people who live in Wilkinsburg simply do not care or are so disillusioned that they believe the community cannot be helped.

- **The train station should be renovated into a unique entity:** All the participants agreed the train station conversion must involve an organization and/or business that is unique to Wilkinsburg in order to bring people into the community. Specific suggestions were as follows:
  - Jazz club, museum
  - “High-class” restaurant
  - Deli/news store
  - Dinner theater
  - Artist’s studio

Some suggested that the train station should take advantage of both evening and daytime crowds (i.e. a bookstore during the day and jazz café at night). Given the amount of people that come through Wilkinsburg in the morning, many suggested that at the very least the station should have an area/booth that offers coffee. Some participants realized that it was important for the train station to generate money, while others thought it was more important for the station to be unique (i.e. a museum), even if it did not generate money.

**Focus Group II**

**Themes:** Several recurring themes were discussed as the meeting progressed. They are as follows:

- **Wilkinsburg has potential:** The participants’ input was consistent with the feedback obtained from the first focus group. In particular, the participants emphasized the following points:
  - **Location:** Wilkinsburg is in a unique geographical location; serving as a major route traveled by numerous daily commuters. Many of the commuters are likely to frequent a business constructed within the train station.
  - **Diversity:** Wilkinsburg has great diversity which cannot be found in other communities.
  - **Value for the dollar:** A few participants discussed the benefits of living in a borough with minimal taxes. In general, Wilkinsburg is a cheap place to live and work.
• “Perception vs. reality:” Wilkinsburg has potential, but it also has problems: All participants agreed that Wilkinsburg has many inherent problems that need to be addressed. They are as follows:

  o Safety and security: The participants indicated that the perception of crime has a factual basis, and is not due to overzealous media reporting. The long time residents of Wilkinsburg recalled the crime problems that erupted during the 80’s and how the gangs made the community unsafe. Overall, people have the perception that they should stay away from Wilkinsburg.

  o Apathy: Although Wilkinsburg has a large number of small organizations committed to improving the community, the organizations fail to collaborate with one another. The group also expressed that the Mayor and the Borough Council are not doing enough to improve the condition of Wilkinsburg. The entire group expressed skepticism about the Borough’s ability to redevelop the train station.

• The train station should be renovated into a unique entity: The participants agreed that the train station should be converted into a business that is unique to Wilkinsburg. The major suggestions for redevelopment were as follows:

  o Specialty boutique
  o Restaurant
  o Center with numerous small stores
  o Jazz museum/Cafe

A few of the participants suggested that the train station should be part of a larger plan for redevelopment. Examples such as the Waterfront demonstrate that large-scale redevelopment projects are often necessary to energize a depressed community. Additionally, this type of development requires major funding. If the train station is developed first, it should serve as the nucleus for an eventual large-scale development.
3. Arts and Economic Development Opinion Leader Interviews

Experts in three major categories were interviewed:

1. Wilkinsburg Community Leaders – church leaders, school leaders, and community advocates

2. Economic Development Leaders – foundation officers, consultants, and leaders of development organizations

3. Arts Leaders – development officers, arts advocates, and community outreach specialists

![Breakdown of Interviewees By Discipline](image)

*Total number of interviewees: 20*

Each leader indicated their recommended uses for the train station. A common theme among the suggestions was to make the train station a multi-faceted facility (i.e. combining flea market, antique mall, private offices and a café). The most notable suggestions include:

1. Community Center/Arts Center - a nonprofit entity for use by the general public to take classes in arts & crafts, sports and dance. It could also offer mentoring, child care, job training, computer training and life skills.

2. Restaurant – a themed restaurant or ‘destination attraction’ would draw not only residents of Wilkinsburg but also people from neighboring communities.

Results indicate that an arts organization would not prove a sustainable project due to their low earning potential and reliance on continuous fundraising efforts. In addition, an African American center would not be a viable option because funding for such a venture is already being routed to the new African American Cultural Center in Downtown Pittsburgh.
Recommended Uses of Wilkinsburg Train Station

- Community/Arts center (classes)
- Museum
- Theater
- Offices
- Flea market/antique mall
- Restaurant
- Club (Jazz, Comedy, Dance)
- Dinner Theater
- Specialty Shop
- Early learning/day care center
- Adult education center
- Convenient Store
- PAT and bus station
- Specialty Grocery Store

Total number of recommendations: 40*

Relevant Quotes:

- "The outcome must be neat and unique."
- "Wilkinsburg is not sustainable as a separate municipality. It either has to cut down on its services, or the community will continue to struggle."
- "The planning must include the community input. If the community is not involved they are not going to support it."
- "Community pride is important and may provide needed momentum."
- "[Wilkinsburg] is struggling more than most communities, but there seem to be a core group of people interested in making something happen there."
- "It would be extremely important to add art programs to the community because the arts programs are being cut in the schools."
- "Something tells me that the people of Wilkinsburg would rather do something in their own community than go into Pittsburgh."
- "People invest in their community."
- "I hope somebody does something with the train station before it falls down."
- "The poor are being manipulated as if it’s a righteousness issue."
- "There are a lot of artistic people in Wilkinsburg but that is one segment that has not been tapped into."
- "If the community is not behind it, it will not have a good chance of surviving."
- "People in Pittsburgh stick to their region."
- "A flea market gives a new way to think of Wilkinsburg. Instead of associating Wilkinsburg with dilapidation and crime, they can associate it with a great place to buy/sell/trade art, food, antiques and other goods."
- "The last thing Wilkinsburg needs is art! It does not get people jobs, put food on the table or make the area safe."
- "Revitalizing a community comes one place at a time but there has to be the energy to sustain it."
- "Since my childhood, Wilkinsburg has not become any more/less dilapidated – only the perception of it has."
- "Communities in Pittsburgh are isolated."

Wilkinsburg Train Station Revitalization Research
APPENDIX
Please Tell Us What You Think Should Be Done With the Wilkinsburg Train Station

Dear Friend,

The Wilkinsburg Train Station has sat vacant for too long. This survey will help show what type of business can succeed in the station. We value your input and want to see this building once again become a source of pride for our community. Please take a few moments and give us your advice by completing and returning this survey by March 12, 2004. You can return your survey to one of our drop off locations or mail it to the address on the back. Thank you for your time and for helping us save this beautiful structure.

Sincerely,

Wilbert Young
Mayor of Wilkinsburg

P.S. Please see the back page for your chance to win a share of $400 in grocery, video and other gift certificates.
1. How much do you agree with the following statements about Wilkinsburg? (MARK ONE FOR EACH STATEMENT.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree Nor Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wilkinsburg is a good place to...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live ........................................................................</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raise children............................................................................</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worship.................................................................................</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shop ..................................................................................</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eat out ..............................................................................</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilkinsburg...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is safe .............................................................................</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(If you don’t live in Wilkinsburg:) Is just as safe as where I live now</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has improved in recent years ................................................................</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a positive image of Wilkinsburg..........</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilkinsburg should stay a “dry” community (not allow alcohol sales within the Borough)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. In one word, how would you describe Wilkinsburg? __________________________

3. In the past 12 months, have you heard, seen or read anything about Wilkinsburg? (MARK ONE.)

☐ Yes □ No

(If Yes:) What did you see hear or read? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.)
☐ Borough/government news ☐ Crime/police reports ☐ Local residents/businesses news
☐ School-related news ☐ Community events/activities ☐ Other: _______________________

4. The Wilkinsburg Train Station was built in 1916 and is located at the corner of Ross and Hay streets near the PAT bus way entrance. Because it has been vacant since the 1970s, it needs considerable work. It was designated a historic landmark in 1984. What do you think should do with the Wilkinsburg Train Station? (PLEASE EXPLAIN.)
5. These are just a few of the ideas that have already been suggested.
   • How successful do you think each one would be in Wilkinsburg?
   • Would you visit and support this attraction if it was built? (MARK ONE FOR EACH.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Idea</th>
<th>Very</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Not at All</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fancy restaurant or café</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Family-style restaurant or café</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bar or night club</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Jazz museum that would include a record store of rare jazz albums and CDs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Old-fashioned ice cream parlor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hands-on craft and wood working center open to the public</td>
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<tr>
<td>Office space</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Art gallery</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Retail space for specialty stores</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Community center</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. What else could we create that was so unique it would want to make you visit the Wilkinsburg Train Station? (PLEASE EXPLAIN.)

7. How long has it been since you have shopped, eaten out or patronized any businesses or organizations in Wilkinsburg? (MARK ONE.)
   - Never
   - Past month
   - 4-6 months
   - 1-2 years
   - 5 years or longer
   - Past week
   - 2-3 months
   - 7-11 months
   - 3-4 years

8. Do you live in Wilkinsburg? (MARK ONE.)
   - Yes
   - No

9. Do you work in Wilkinsburg?  
   - Yes
   - No

10. What is your age?  
    - Under 18
    - 18-24
    - 25-34
    - 35-44
    - 45-54
    - 55-64
    - 65+

11. Are you…?  
    - Single
    - Married
    - Separated
    - Divorced
    - Widowed

12. Do you have children 18 or younger living in your household?  
    - Yes
    - No

13. Highest educational level completed? (MARK ONE.)
    - Some High School
    - High School Grad
    - Some College
    - College Grad
    - Post Grad

14. Race/ethnicity?  
    - African-American
    - Asian-American
    - Caucasian
    - Hispanic
    - Other

15. Total household income in 2003? (MARK ONE.)
    - <$20,000
    - $20–$34,999
    - $35–$49,999
    - $50–$74,999
    - $75–$99,999
    - $100,000+
For your chance to win a share of $400 in grocery, video and other gift certificates, please fill out this section:

Name: ________________________________________________
Address: _______________________________________________
City: ________________  State: _____  Zip Code: _____________
Phone: ________________________________________________

Please drop off your survey to one of these locations:

- Wilkinsburg Borough Building, 605 Ross Avenue, 412-244-2920
- Standard Bank, 730 Penn Avenue, 412-243-1400
- Dunkin’ Donuts, 410 Penn Avenue, 412-243-2620

Return Address:
________________________
________________________
________________________

CorCom, Inc.
P.O. Box 4133
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15202