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Introducing – The Elm Street Approach

With the long-established Main Street program as a model, the Elm Street Approach is structured around simultaneous actions in five focus areas, integrated through a community-based strategic planning process. The elements of the so-called Five Point Approach include:

- **Safe, Clean and Green** deals with the stewardship of a neighborhood. Without question, the most important factor in a neighborhood's health is how safe and pleasant people believe it to be. Dealing with the crime, cleaning up the neighborhood, and completing small community enhancement projects are the first steps in changing a community for the better.
- **Neighbors and Economy** relates to the economic relationship between residents and businesses with their neighborhood. Underlying economic factors, such as employment rates and homeownership levels, heavily influence neighborhood health. Depending on the level of distress, a neighborhood may require interventions to stabilize aspects of its economy.
- **Design** handles the physical elements within the neighborhood. Elm Street neighborhoods are pedestrian oriented and often have an architecturally significant housing stock. It is important that neighborhoods understand, develop, and cultivate these physical assets.
- **Image & Identity** looks at and seeks to improve the neighborhood's perception from both inside (image) and outside (identity) the neighborhood. Creating and maintaining a positive perception builds community pride and fosters private investment.
- **Sustainable Organization** involves getting everyone working towards common goals. The common-sense formula of a volunteer-driven program and an organizational structure of boards and committees assisting professional management can ease the difficult work of building consensus and cooperation among the residents and varied groups with a vested interest in the neighborhood.

Elm Street is intended to be a holistic approach to long-term neighborhood sustainability. It operates in cooperation with existing downtown or commercial corridor revitalization programs, including the Pennsylvania Main Street program, to reweave the physical and emotional fabric that connects healthier neighborhoods to robust business districts.

Pennsylvania Downtown Center (PDC) serves as the official State Coordinating Program for Main Street, by providing technical assistance, board and committee support and education to designated programs while the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) provides access to funding opportunities and oversight of designated Elm and Main Street Programs in Pennsylvania.

Helping *you* make *your* town a better place.