

THE CROSSROADS: DEVELOPING A UNIQUE TOWN CENTER IDENTITY



About the Urban Land Institute

The Urban Land Institute (ULI) was established in 1936 as a nonprofit educational and research institute. It is supported by more than 45,000 members in 82 countries representing all aspects of land use and development disciplines. ULI's mission is to provide leadership in the responsible use of land to create and sustain thriving communities worldwide. ULI Philadelphia has more than 900 members in the Philadelphia District Council, which includes the Philadelphia metropolitan area, Central Pennsylvania, Delaware, the Lehigh Valley, and Southern New Jersey.

ULI provides guidance to nonprofits and municipalities seeking solutions to land use challenges. Its Technical Assistance Panels objectively evaluate specific needs and make recommendations on implementation in an atmosphere free of politics and preconceptions. ULI member and non-member professionals provide their expertise in a voluntary capacity and each has signed an agreement to prevent current and potential conflicts of interest.

Technical Assistance Project Staff

Laura Slutsky
Executive Director

Kevin Moran
Senior Manager

Kelly Cary
Senior Associate

Stewart Scott
Intern

Rosemarie Fabien, PhD
Technical Writer

Acknowledgments

On behalf of ULI Philadelphia, the panel would like to thank the sponsor organization, West Whiteland Township, for this effort.

Special appreciation goes to the West Whiteland Township staff, in particular, Justin Smiley, Township Planner and John R. Weller, Director Planning & Zoning / Zoning Officer, for their work in preparation, support, and coordination leading up to and during the virtual panel. In addition, the panel would like to recognize the following staff members for their contribution to this effort:

The panel would also like to thank the community leaders, planning staff, and representatives from across who shared their perspectives, experiences, and insights with the panel.

© 2020 URBAN LAND INSTITUTE

An Urban Land Institute
Technical Assistance Panel
October 21 – 23, 2020
Sponsored by West Whiteland Township

ON THE COVER: Panelists tour Main Street at Exton (*ULI Philadelphia*)

ULI Advisory Services: National and Global Programs

Since 1947, the ULI Advisory Services program has assembled well over 700 ULI-member teams to help sponsors find creative, practical solutions for complex land use challenges. A wide variety of public, private, and nonprofit organizations have contracted for ULI's advisory services. National and international panelists are specifically recruited to form a panel of independent and objective volunteer ULI member experts with the skills needed to address the identified land use challenge. The program is designed to help break through obstacles, jump-start conversations, and solve tough challenges that need an outside, independent perspective. Three- and five-day engagements are offered to ensure thorough consideration of relevant topics.

An additional national offering is the project analysis session (PAS) offered at ULI's Fall and Spring Meetings, through which specific land use challenges are evaluated by a panel of volunteer experts selected from ULI's membership. This is a conversational format that lends itself to an open exchange of ideas among diverse industry practitioners with distinct points of view. From the streamlined two-hour session to the "deeper dive" eight-hour session, this intimate conversational format encourages creative thinking and problem solving.

Learn more at americas.uli.org/programs/advisory-services/.

Distinct from Advisory Services panels, TAPs leverage local expertise through a half-day to two-day process.

ULI Advisory Services: District Council Programs

The goal of the ULI Advisory Services program is to bring the finest expertise in the real estate field to bear on complex land use planning and development projects, programs, and policies. The ULI Philadelphia technical assistance panel (TAP) program has assembled over 187 ULI-member teams in service of ULI's mission to provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide. Drawing from its local membership base, ULI Philadelphia conducts TAPs offering objective and responsible advice to local decision-makers on a wide variety of land use and real estate issues ranging from site-specific projects to public policy questions. The TAP program is intentionally flexible to provide a customized approach to specific land use and real estate issues. In fulfillment of ULI's mission, this TAP report is intended to provide objective advice that will promote the responsible use of land to enhance the environment.

An additional local offering is the project analysis forum, which offers a shorter format for district councils to employ local member expertise to address regional land use challenges. Panelists are land use professionals uniquely positioned to address the specific challenges at hand, and provide in-depth, project-specific, and pragmatic recommendations. The intimate, conversational format encourages creative thinking and problem solving between the panel and the sponsor.

Learn more at www.philadelphia.uli.org

Panelists hear from sponsor during socially distance briefing.



CONTENTS

Introduction	6
Overview	7
Scope	10
Assessment	11
Recommendations	13
Summary	20
ULI Panelists	21
Stakeholder Participants	23

INTRODUCTION

West Whiteland Township in Chester County, Pennsylvania engaged ULI Philadelphia to convene a Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) and identify strategies for managing growth and creating a sense of community at Exton Crossroads, an historic intersection that has expanded into an auto-oriented retail hub.

- The Township seeks to leverage its existing assets to “promote a dynamic, coherent and distinctly suburban town center...with a sense of place that is more than the sum of its parts.”
- On October 21-23, 2020, the TAP, comprised of planners, developers, lenders, architects and related professionals, toured the study area with Township officials and interviewed a broad range of stakeholders in online group meetings. On the final day, the TAP presented its findings and recommendations to a virtual audience of these stakeholders and other interested parties.
- The recommendations of the panel focus on engaging and connecting the historic, retail, transit and recreational resources of the Township. The panel found that the study area was naturally divided into four neighborhoods whose unique characteristics could be leveraged to benefit the overall community. Bridging these quadrants with pedestrian and bicycle-friendly paths could be a way to unify the Town Center and improve the experience for residents and visitors alike. Organized under the general categories of Place, Identity & Wayfinding, and Governance, the TAP recommendations range from installing signage and planting trees to revising transit and housing policies. By focusing on the rich historical assets found throughout the Crossroads and embracing new interest in diverse housing types and retail experiences, the Township can develop a character all its own.



OVERVIEW

Chester County, Pennsylvania was founded by immigrants from England, Ireland and Wales in the late 17th century. Farming and milling were its first industries, due to the County's abundant waterpower, but iron works grew to dominate this region thirty miles west of Philadelphia.

When the Reading, Chester Valley and Pennsylvania Railroads were formed in the 1800s, Chester County's iron industry forged the rails that connected the Commonwealth, carrying livestock, grain, dairy and produce to ready markets in Philadelphia and elsewhere.

Historic structures from this important early era remain, many located on the main road in Exton. In the early 20th century, this road became the Lincoln Highway, the first paved, transcontinental motorway in the nation. In Exton, Lincoln Highway intersects with Pottstown

Pike, a main north-south route. For nearly 350 years, this intersection known as the "Crossroads" has been a nexus of transportation and commerce for the Commonwealth.

Today, personal vehicles are the primary means of travel in the area, and Lincoln Highway and Pottstown Pike, also known as US Route 30 and PA Route 100, are six-lane thoroughfares. Rt 100 alone accommodates 28,000 cars each way, daily. Less than a mile south of the intersection is the busy Exton Bypass of Rt 30. Still, alternative modes of transportation are available to residents and visitors. The Exton Station is a stop on SEPTA's Paoli/Thorndale line, and Amtrak provides one-seat service to Center City, Harrisburg, and Manhattan. Exton is also served by SEPTA's 92 and 204 bus routes and the Krapf Transit Route A bus service.



ULI PHILADELPHIA

Wayfinding at Exton Square Mall.

Access to Chester Valley Trail near Main Street at Exton.



ULI PHILADELPHIA



BOTH PHOTOS: ULI PHILADELPHIA



New apartment units offer diverse housing options and new density that could support commercial activity.

The Chester Valley Railroad bed is now a 15-mile paved Trail that passes through the Crossroads area, providing a recreational resource for pedestrians and cyclists. The popular Trail, soon to be expanded, serves as the backbone of West Whiteland Township's Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan (2019).

Since the 1950s, the area surrounding the Crossroads has evolved into a realm of retail. Seven shopping centers offer discount, mid-level, high-end stores and abundant parking, drawing visitors from central and eastern parts of the Commonwealth. While shoppers typically drive; the bus is frequently used by the retail destination's workforce.

Even before the Covid-19 pandemic, some of the shops struggled, perhaps due to changing consumer habits, retail trends, and competition. King of Prussia, now the largest shopping mall in the US, is just 14 miles away. Many stores in the Exton Square Mall are shuttered, despite steady growth in the local population. Recently completed residential projects and others under construction will add 1,300 townhouse and apartment dwellings to the Crossroads area by 2021. The new multifamily residences Keva Flats, Ashbridge at Main

Street and Hanover Exton Square are all within walking distance of the Crossroads. As consumer preferences evolve, these new residential units can support new retail concepts and experiences.

In the past few years, the Township has developed a series of initiatives to direct the rapid growth of the area. The Lincoln Highway and Whitford Road Corridors Plan (2015) addresses the development of residential communities along Rt 30. The Exton Station Area Concept Plan (2018) is a program of phased improvements to increase access to the train station. The Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan identifies projects to improve the network of paths throughout the Township and particularly around the Crossroads.

These Township studies promote a planning philosophy that officials describe as Development by Design, that is, well-managed, increased density will create economic stability and support a multi-modal transportation system, open space for recreation, the preservation or adaptive reuse of historic resources, and thriving commerce.



SCOPE

The sponsor of the TAP is West Whiteland Township, a 13-square-mile community in Chester County. Its roughly 19,000 residents are predominantly educated professionals with a median household income of \$110,000. Outside of the Town Center District, more than 70% of residents own their homes, and half are two-car households. Within the Town Center District, new apartment buildings and condominiums fill quickly.

The Town Center District is home to thirty significant historic sites, some dating back to the 18th century. In some cases, the Township has been able to adaptively reuse these landmark structures for commercial purposes or move them to accommodate retail expansion. The Town Center District is also home to several parks and green spaces that serve as buffers between the busy commercial area and nearby residential neighborhoods, and the Chester Valley Trail is a stone's throw from the Crossroads.

Community concern for the future of this area led Township officials to engage the TAP. They asked the panel to consider the following:

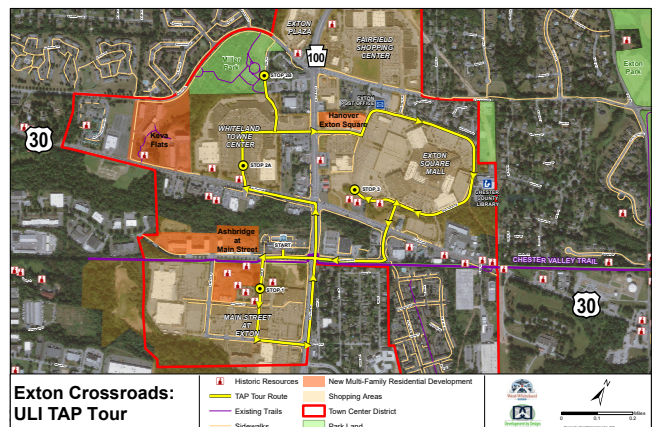
- The Crossroads is already a growing, thriving area with multiple assets, as highlighted in the Township logo: retail activity, transit options, recreation, and history. How do we leverage these assets to make a coherent, defined community with a sense of place that is more than the sum of its parts? What actions can the Township take to manage growth and promote the character of the Crossroads without overwhelming or destroying it?
- Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic and the coincident surge in equity activism, we realized that evolving trends in lifestyle, work habits, retail, and transportation would affect the Town Center. How will these new factors affect our community? How do we leverage all of these trends to advance the qualities that are important to the community?

On the morning of October 21, 2020, the eleven-member TAP met at the outdoor portico of the Township building. After a brief introduction, sponsors led the panel on a walking and driving tour of the Town Center District that included commercial centers, historic buildings, several parks, apartments and civic buildings. The panel spent the remainder of the day

at the Township building, discussing what they had observed.

The panel noted that the map of the Town Center District shows that it is divided into four distinct neighborhoods by the intersection of Rts 30 and 100 at the Crossroads. These quadrants have underused features that the panel felt could benefit the larger community. Additionally, the in-line could open up to the community at its periphery to have a more sustainable client base.

The following day, the panel held virtual interviews with twenty-eight stakeholders representing various perspectives impacting the Township's growth, public and private. On the morning of October 23rd, the panel presented its recommendations to a virtual audience of sponsors, stakeholders and ULI members.



ASSESSMENT

The panel noted the many assets in West Whiteland Township, including its elevated standard of living, great public schools and enviable open space. Places to shop are plentiful and include some mid- to high-end stores like Benari Jewelers, Whole Foods, Banana Republic and Macy's. These shops and the World of Beer pub, Movie Tavern Theatre and clocktower plaza in the Main Street development are destinations for residents and many visitors from outside the region.

While single-family homes are located outside of the study area, developers have recently constructed several upscale multifamily residences within the Town Center District, including Keva Flats, Ashbridge at Main Street, and Hanover Exton Square. These new apartments and condominiums are within walking distance to the Crossroads. Keva Flats is not far from the 20-acre Albert C. Miller Park that has a playground, tennis and basketball courts, and a charming gazebo. Ashbridge abuts the Chester Valley Trail, another recreational resource close to the Crossroads that is popular with West Whiteland's growing population and people from outside the region. While the residential population of Exton has not historically been an ethnically diverse community, major companies like West Pharmaceuticals in Exton and Teva and Vanguard in Malvern, are attracting a valuable and more diverse workforce shifting the area's demographics.

The Township is willing to consider zoning flexibility, which is advantageous in a growth market and allows for good discussions with property owners, developers and those seeking to expand businesses in the area. The panel agreed that flexibility will be important as the Township seeks to influence the development of

the Exton Square Mall, a square-shaped shopping center anchored by Boscov's, Macy's and Round One Entertainment center. The Mall has seen an increase in vacancy in recent years, resulting in a loss of tax revenue, cheerless interior spaces and empty parking lots. To stakeholders, the Mall is the "white elephant in the room"; they hope that Mall owners will collaborate with the Township to determine its future.

The Mall and the other three main shopping areas have more parking spaces than needed, little greenspace, and similar stores – a Michael's in one center and a Hobby Lobby in another, for example. According to stakeholders, residents typically drive to one shopping center then return home. For visitors, navigating between shopping centers can be confusing and time-consuming.

If residents choose to walk, they may be discouraged. Despite a newly-opened path from the Chester Valley Trail to Exton Train Station, stakeholders noted there are no sidewalks on the south side of Swedesford Road for the length of the Mall, from Keva Flats to the Whiteland Town Center, to the train station, or to the Chester County Library. Vehicles tend to speed on Rts 30 and 100, making pedestrian and bike crossing dangerous.

Exton is currently an auto-dominated community, but there is strong interest in creating walkable and cyclable connections throughout the study area. Stakeholders enjoy the acclaim of the Crossroads as a retail hub but are eager to link and leverage the additional resources that contribute to Exton's quality of life. It is the panel's belief that through the recommendations below, and well-managed growth, the Crossroads can develop a unique sense of place, with desirable amenities, characterized by its historical assets and open space.

ROSEMARIE FABIEN



Panelists consider parking relative to activity.

ULI PHILADELPHIA



Community space at Miller Park.

BOTH: ULI PHILADELPHIA



Both: While The Crossroads already features attractive retail offerings, improved coordination could enhance the retail mix further.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The focus of the TAP recommendations is to engage and connect the historic, retail, transit and recreational resources to support a unique suburban identity.

The panel observed that the intersection of Rts. 30 and 100 naturally divides the study area into four neighborhoods and recommends that these quadrants be considered as standalone features with special elements that when the four nodes are considered together make something truly unique. The panel labelled those quadrants with their prominent features.

The northwest quadrant contains the Whiteland Towne Center, Miller Park and retail along Rt 100. The northeast contains Exton Square, the Chester

County Library and Fairfield Place. The southeast quadrant is identified by the Chester Valley Trail and has residences, parks and retail. The southwest contains Main Street and the Township Building. Each quadrant has its own character that the panel felt could be developed and leveraged through a mixed-use neighborhood lens, connecting commercial, residential and public space assets. Furthermore, while each neighborhood may have a unique set of uses to celebrate, the Township should prioritize how they are connected via multimodal paths and trails.

The recommendations fall into three categories, Place, Identity & Wayfinding, and Governance.



Place

Use and manage density strategically. While some constituents expressed concern during the stakeholder interviews that the area has become too congested, the panel feels strongly that managed density is an asset. Planned and intentional density can result in an integrated live-work-play environment, in which the workplace, shopping, doctor’s office and the playground are within walking distance. The new multifamily residences under construction and in planning stages should be accompanied by enhanced and expanded outdoor amenity spaces that link to the Township’s Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. While Crossroads traffic is heavy, the local road network is well-developed to bypass the intersection. Working from home due to Covid-19 has already shifted and reduced peak traffic volumes and anticipated bike/pedestrian route usage will further mitigate congestion.

Rethink height restrictions. A tall building, ideally

of mixed-use, can add density and be a community landmark in an area of one and two-story structures, the panel believes. A six-story building, for example, is well-suited as the backdrop for community events if it is fronted by a plaza and greenspace.

Create opportunities to engage with nature and open space. Exton has a number of lovely parks and plazas that would benefit from visibility, connectivity, engagement and activation. These spaces can serve as a buffer to the lower density residential neighborhoods. Each quadrant has an open space area that can be leveraged.

Miller Park in the northwest quadrant is widely considered a popular asset but is only accessible to the residential community, as it is blocked by the back of Whiteland Towne Center. Consider creating a route from the shopping center to the park and opening the wall of stores to allow easy flow from the neighborhood into the retail center with added outdoor seating and amenities.



Signage illustrates the area’s commercial history.

ADD PHOTO CREDIT IN ALL CAPS IQUI OMMOD ET LANDE LAM QUODIA DIS QUAE

The Chester County Library in the northeast quadrant has great programming that could extend into an outdoor public space. The library is surrounded by Meadowbrook Manor Park to the north, Valley Creek to the south and a residential neighborhood to the east, yet there is no walkable connection or engagement with these resources and indeed, a fence divides the Library from the single family homes. Several historic buildings are on the periphery of the Exton Mall and the Mall's multilevel parking garage sits to the west across the street from the Library entrance. The panel suggests that removal of the parking structure and engagement with the park, neighborhood, historic buildings and creek would expand opportunities for engagement with the Library. A simple foot path along the creek could be an area of repose as well as a natural classroom.

The southeast quadrant is largely residential but contains the civic amenities of the train station and the Exton Elementary School. The Chester Valley Trail continues through it. The panel recommends that the Trail and train station be connected to the residential areas through pedestrian-safe routes.

Main Street in the southwest quadrant has great resources in its 100 acres, including the open spaces adjacent to the Walmart property, dog park, the clocktower plaza, and connection to the Chester Valley Trail. These resources may be currently underutilized but could be leveraged as sources of identity and placemaking and as transition points to attract pedestrians from the residential neighborhood near the elementary school. The new Ashbridge residences are complementary to Main Street's retail in an ideal mixed-use configuration that will add density to the shopping area and populate it even in the evening.

These open spaces can become active sources of identity and placemaking. As transition points, they can serve the dual role as buffers to the lower density residential neighborhoods and as attractors to bring

people into the more vibrant Town Center.

Create form through greening and landscape. The panel feels strongly that landscape should be used to soften and create bordered settings for Exton's many significant historic sites. Highlighted with appropriate landscaping and interpretive panels, these landmark buildings will underscore Exton's place in American history to residents and visitors, providing an additional level of engagement, interest and respect.

An aggressive program of native tree planting that is consistent with current stormwater management strategies should be undertaken along Rts 30 and 100 and within parking lots. With more parking than is needed, islands can be expanded with plantings and pocket parks that will improve the aesthetics of the shopping center and the experience of users. A limited access footpath along Valley Creek could run through multiple neighborhoods. Varied types of green spaces can serve as anchors in all four quadrants to enhance and reflect the character of the neighborhoods.

Orient retail environment to pedestrians. Older shopping centers were built at higher parking ratios than needed today and the panel recognizes the complexity of multiple parking lot ownership. Nevertheless, the panel feels strongly that the Township should reduce lot sizes and prioritize the total user experience, which may include pocket parks with benches, outdoor cafes, playgrounds and bike shares. Green streetscapes integrated into the retail experience will encourage shoppers to linger, as well as supporting stormwater management.

Recruit the businesses and industries that you want. Stakeholders suggested that the area doesn't have enough restaurants, fitness centers, and accommodations. The panel feels strongly that the Township should pursue the businesses that it wants, identifying gaps and setting a vision for each quadrant. Perhaps with the help of an Economic Development Director or Main Street Manager, the Township could

coordinate NGOs and developers for assistance in recruiting and advocating for what constituents want. Consider using controlled zoning or transect zoning, as discussed further in the Governance section below.

Emphasize the unique characteristics of each quadrant. The Township is considering the adaptive reuse of its Public Works Facility in the northwest quadrant. The panel suggests that it be made into a park instead of an additional commercial pad. In the southeast quadrant, Iron Lake, an open space parcel that may be privately owned, would be an ideal park. A 25-acre environmentally-sensitive parcel in the southwest would be better served, the panel felt, by boardwalks and walking trails than by additional commercial. The special aspects of the quadrants can be accentuated by wayfinding and signage, unique lighting and paving, public art, thematic programming in public spaces and so forth. Placemaking professionals can direct the process of identifying these characteristics. Parks encourage people to stay longer and enjoy a space, rather than running a brief errand before getting into a car and leaving.

Identity & Wayfinding

Create signage at gateways. It is possible to create a clear Township identity by installing a gateway landmark at each of the neighborhood entrances. The panel suggested the following intersections with Rts 30 or 100: to the north at Shoen Road, to the south at the train station, to the east at Ship Road, and to the west at Whitford Road. Elegant gateway signage like that in Southlake, Texas; Pitt Meadows, British Columbia; and Grandview, Washington set the tone for the community one is about to enter.

The Crossroads intersection should have distinctive markers, like those on Broad Street in Philadelphia or in King of Prussia, so that when visitors come from north, south, east or west, they know that they have arrived.



<https://www.worthington.org/DocumentCenter/View/2552/Wayfinding-Presentation-11-18-15?bidId=>



People like to feel that they are in the center of things. Streetlight banners to celebrate events would contribute to festivity. The panel concurred that the name “Exton Crossroads” could be rebranded to something more memorable, but feels that the historical connection is important to retain.

Design a streetscape brand that emphasizes bike/ped crossings. There are many competing brands and identities on Rts 30 and 100, including local directional signs and those from PennDOT, shopping center pylon signs, store front fascia, and the materials, colors and textures on the roads and sidewalks. The panel recommends that to create a sense of order, consistency and unity of place, the Township needs a streetscape package that addresses everything one sees on Rts 30 and 100.

Pedestrians currently spend little time there. If a streetscape plan can increase the safety, or even perception of safety, in crossing these busy roads, more neighborhood residents might leave their cars at home and walk or bike instead. Branded images also provide visitors with the security of knowing someone has mapped the way for them.

Important features to include are clearly marked crosswalks, landscaped medians as areas of refuge, and traffic lights with pedestrian countdowns. Sidewalks that have bus shelters, benches, human-scaled lighting, trees and grass will increase usage and make it more pleasant to migrate between quadrants. If

people do not feel safe, they will not use the amenities.

Wayfinding: Orienting the brand. Wayfinding is a canvas for consistent branding and information. The panel believes that directional signage can weave together the Township’s assets and increase the comfort of residents and visitors. It can direct motorists to the Chester Valley Trail, and direct Trail users to nearby retail. Technology can play a big part in this effort. Through digital wayfinding and QR codes on signs, visitors can use their phones for experience mapping, learning about historical sites, navigating shopping areas, accessing the Trail, joining in public events, and receiving messages from Township leaders.

Circulation: Connecting the brand. Particularly at new apartment complexes, the panel suggests, reinforce the bike trail connections with historic, retail, transit and recreational amenities. The planned extension of Septa’s R5 to Coatesville could make the Regional Rail more useful for the workforce of the shopping centers. This would relieve some of the burden on buses, whose stops are not the safest for commuters. Consider revisiting the local bus loop “The Whirl.” The Whitford train station may be less congested than the Exton train station, and therefore a better Whirl terminus. The traffic along Rts 30 and 100 is an asset because it brings people into the area, but speed limits must be enforced.

Circulation

Connecting the brand

- Reinforce bike trails to amenities and create more complete streets
- Reconsider circulator
- Emphasize new residential
- Incorporate Train Station
- “Work Force” connection to Coatesville
- Connect to Wayfinding / QR Code



Governance

Transit goals: Accessibility and safety. The panel recommends that the Township develop a safety and transit plan, connecting modes of transit to encourage bike, train, bus, and sidewalk use, with appropriate parking for those who need cars to get to Exton's trails, trains and buses. Wide streets are not comfortable to cross and must be made traversable if not narrower. Stakeholders reported that buses bringing workers to the shopping centers must enter the shopping area because main road bus stops are inadequate or unsafe. To keep bus lines efficient, safe drop off on roads must be implemented. The panel suggests that the Township consider a Zoning Overlay for Rts 30 and 100. Media, Pennsylvania, for example, has an overlay for Baltimore Avenue, requiring sidewalks, greenery, streetlights, pylon signs, and bus shelters

Zoning control: Transect zoning. The Township has broad and flexible zoning regulations, but the panel feels that it may be time to consider character-based or transect zoning. Transect zoning allows a gradual transition in height requirements from commercial to residential uses, moving from dense to less dense or vice versa. It would enable the Township to assign different requirements to different zones, and thereby guide the growth of a quadrant based on the character of the neighborhood. It would also allow developers some prescriptive knowledge of what they have the ability to put on a given property.

Organize disparate groups: Get people to talk. The panel recognizes that the pandemic has increased anxiety among commercial property owners but believes that it is crucial to maintain rapport with each other and with the Township. The panel heard a similar question from many stakeholders, "How do we get people to stay and walk around?" That is the focus of the placemaking recommendations. There are numerous business owners and others who have a shared interest in increased foot traffic, pedestrian connectivity and avoiding retail redundancy in the

Crossroads. The panel recommends that a retail association be convened to share ideas and goals. It could perhaps be coordinated by a Main Street Manager, who would promote open communication and advocate for the Township's interests. A member of the panel reported that IKEA moved to the town of Oak Creek, Wisconsin because, through its manager, constituents identified that as the store they would most like to see in town.

The panel also recommended an iterative, open discussion about the future of the Exton Mall, perhaps between the Township planner and PREIT initially, in a manner in which both parties feel comfortable being candid.

Ultimately, a vision document might be developed where the quadrants of the Crossroads represent unique, non-competing uses. For example, one quadrant might contain flexible workplaces, medical offices and a healthcare clinic; another might contain grocery and retail; another restaurants, movie theatre, and ice-skating rink. If they were connected by bike trails or a new Whirl, then car use may be reduced. Underused parking lots could become green spaces or public plazas.

Funding Sources: Public and private. The Township has had success in lobbying state and federal government for support, as well as a number of individuals who contributed to making development projects happen. The panel suggests a bond issuance or grants would be more lucrative than the creation of a Business Improvement District (BID) generated by tax revenue from the individual property owners. The panel calculates that roughly \$200,000 could be generated annually if a BID were established. Annual contributions from all businesses would be used for the welfare of the area. The proposed BID for North Broad Street in Philadelphia, for example, developed a vision document that identified specific blocks as the residential / technology area, the entertainment area,

and the university area, based on buildings already in place.

The group leveraged its assets and prevented duplication. Using the quadrants that the TAP has identified, West Whiteland might consider similar selectivity for each quadrant.

The panel strongly recommends that the Township increase development / traffic impact fees. The fees could be substantial, given the volume of traffic that moves through the Township. It is not overreaching to tap every source of revenue possible. A Traffic Demand Management ordinance with "fee in lieu of" is another option that can be pursued to generate income.

Housing Options: Variety is the spice of life. The panel feels that it is important to address affordable housing for the areas retail and service-oriented workforce. Businesses need access to a ready workforce. Standard multi-family, stacked townhome, and senior housing are becoming increasingly important. Currently most shopping center employees commute in, but would be invested in the community if they lived relatively close to where they work. The Township should come forward with a vision of what it wants to see in mixed housing stock and pursue that vision strategically.



THE GOLDENBERG GROUP

At a retail center in Philadelphia, The Goldenberg Group re-imagines its parking lot for an enhanced customer experience.

SUMMARY

The TAP concluded that West Whiteland Township, the center of an historic Pennsylvania crossroads, has the potential to become a coherent, unified suburban community with desirable, interwoven places to live, work and play. While the abundance of retail encourages a comparison with King of Prussia, the Township, for better or worse, does not have direct access to the highway and its pipeline of shoppers. Coupled with strategies for thoughtful growth, West Whiteland Township has the opportunity to develop its own unique identity, distinct from its suburban counterparts.

The panel recommends the creation of the position of Main Street Manager, whose job it is to organize retail property owners to commit to a shared vision, curtail the retail redundancy that contributed to store closings, and advocate for the kind of businesses that would complement the current retail mix in the Township. That position and other Township-wide improvements could be funded by a BID, increased fees, other financing mechanisms, or a combination thereof.

Identifying gateways to the area with signage and consistent streetscape materials will reinforce a sense

of place. Connecting the quadrants of the study area by rehabilitating Rts 30 and 100 to be hospitable to pedestrians and cyclists will encourage people to access more than one shopping center. Pocket parks and green spaces within shopping centers will encourage people to stay and explore, investing time and money. Planting native trees along roadways and within underused parking lots will improve the character of the shopping areas, help to control stormwater runoff, and improve the perception that streets are safe to cross.

Linking sidewalks and bike lanes with parks, the Library, historic structures and shopping will encourage wider use of all of these amenities. The Chester Valley Trail, the Library and the historic buildings are unique features of the area that should be better leveraged and celebrated overall.

The four quadrants have unique characteristics that can be developed to create an appealing sense of place for residents and visitors. If the routes between quadrants are well-marked, clear, tree-lined and uncongested, people just may leave their cars at home and seek out a new corner of their hometown.



PANELISTS

Liz Gabor

TAP Co-Chair,

Vice President, The Goldenberg Group

Liz joined The Goldenberg Group in spring 2019 and is focusing on a number of redevelopment projects in partnership with municipal agencies. She has 20 years of experience in real estate, including economic development, large land use planning and development, government relations and public financing. Prior to joining The Goldenberg Group, Liz was with IKEA Property Inc. for 5 years and the Philadelphia Industrial Development Authority for 7 years. Liz is a Philadelphia native, a mom, and a dedicated soccer player/fan; she has a BA in economics from Fordham University, and master's degree in Public Administration and Economic Development from the Fels School at the University of Pennsylvania.

Nando Micale

TAP Co-Chair

Principal, LRK Architects | Designers | Planners

As one of the principals that opened LRK's Philadelphia studio in 2016, Nando brings over 25 years of architecture and urban design experience for communities across the country and abroad. His understanding of the interconnectedness of urban planning and architectural design as central to sustainability has been recognized by industry awards at the scale of buildings, neighborhoods, and cities. He is actively involved with ULI at both the national and local levels. Nando is a graduate of Temple and Harvard Universities. He teaches urbanism at the University of Pennsylvania and resides in Collingswood, New Jersey.

Kim Avant-Babb

Partner, Babb Properties

Kim is a residential real estate developer and property manager headquartered in New Jersey. Through her consulting firm, Legacy Real Estate Consulting, she provides workshops and mentoring to neighborhood developers seeking to provide quality affordable housing and built stable communities in Camden and Philadelphia. She recently retired as Chief Strategy Officer for the NJ Redevelopment Authority where she led the

Redevelopment Training Institute, teaching project finance, tax abatement, planning laws, etc. Kim is the founder of Ameenah Designs, a company that manufactures unique garments for women, and Pass the Torch, a nonprofit program that brings adults and children together to learn sewing skills, fashion history, wealth building and entrepreneurship.

John Farrell

Chairman Emeritus, The Norwood Company

Jack's career includes a mix of senior level development and construction executive positions for Rouse, Gilbane and most recently, Norwood. Under his leadership, Norwood developed specializations in healthcare, suburban office and life science facilities and now serves as a strategic facility advisor to numerous healthcare systems throughout Eastern Pennsylvania and Southern New Jersey. In addition to his involvement with ULI National and the Philadelphia chapter, Jack has served on the boards of the Central Phila Development Corp, Boys and Girls Clubs of Phila, Center City Special Services District, People's Light and Theatre Company and the Eastern PA Chapter of Associated Builders & Contractors.

Albert Federico

Principal, Albert Federico Consulting, LLC

Al has over 20 years of experience supporting a diverse array of clients in their efforts to improve the public infrastructure and built environment. This includes supporting new and redevelop-ment efforts on behalf of both public and private sector clients, the design and construction management of public works projects, as well as participating in numerous planning efforts. A significant element of his practice focuses on transportation, working to inte-grate the physical infrastructure and adjacent uses in a manner that provides utility and minimizes undesirable impacts.

Ernest Freeman

Owner, The Freeman Group

Ernie has more than 40 years of experience working with

public sector agencies to make sustained improvements to commercial corridors. He has advised small townships and major urban areas, emphasizing strong public / private partnerships and the importance of inclusion in making land use decisions. Notable achievements include establishing an endowment with the United Way to support youth programs, strengthening grant programs to address housing availability, managing the relocation of a medical center to an underserved population and initiating a partnership between two universities to improve redevelopment planning in surrounding neighborhoods.

Alexis Hilinski

Senior Development Manager Brandywine Realty Trust

Alexis manages acquisitions and development for new construction, rehab and capital improvement projects for commercial office and retail, life science, multifamily and industrial clients. Before joining Brandywine, she was a senior development manager at AthenianRazak, where she provided administrative management for a number of conversions and restorations of historic Philadelphia landmarks. Noteworthy projects include the restoration of the 1754 Christ Church steeple, adaptive reuse of the Ruby Match Factory, and redevelopment of Suburban Station's 16th Street retail concourse. She has a BA from the University of Pennsylvania and an MBA from Drexel.

John W. Lister

Principal, JL Architects

John founded his award-winning, West Chester-based firm in 1988. Dedicated to sustainability and green building design, the firm focuses on hospitality, retail, multifamily and commercial projects. John worked on the Universal Studios Amphitheater and the Getty Oil World Headquarters when he was at Skidmore Owings and Merrill and was lead project architect for Robinson-Willis' estate homes in Mexico and Maryland before founding his own firm. He serves on the Green Building Initiative's National Board of Directors, leading the Government Engagement Committee, and chairs the West Chester Area Council of Governments' Building Code Variance Board. John is a graduate of the University of Southern California.

Nichole Mendinsky

Practice Area Leader, Herbert Rowland & Grubic

Nichole is a skilled land development planner with a nationally ranked, Harrisburg, civil engineering firm. Her experience includes campus and community wide planning as well as detailed commercial and civic site design and permitting. She is particularly adept at identifying and balancing user needs with financial feasibility and other constraints in order to create projects that are visionary yet achievable. Nicole is a registered landscape architect, an AICP-certified planner, a certified Park & Recreation Professional, and LEED-accredited. She holds a degree in Landscape Architecture from Penn State.

Peter M. Simone

Landscape Architect and Planner, Simone Collins Landscape Architecture

Pete established Simone Collins Landscape Architecture in 1990 and he has practiced in the Philadelphia region for over 40 years. Pete and Simone Collins consult to numerous local and county governments, conservancies, non-profits and other NGOs on issues including zoning, planning and landscape architecture. Pete has been involved with hundreds of projects spanning the range of the profession, including new zoning and SALDO ordinances, Official Maps, vision plans, land use / transportation plans, revitalization plans and master plans for communities, campuses, parks and multi-modal transportation systems. Pete is a graduate of Rutgers University.

Phil Voutsakis

Principal, AR Spruce

Phil Voutsakis is a principal and co-founder of AR Spruce LLC, a Philadelphia-based real estate services and development company that plans, creates, and manages real estate. He focusses on acquisitions for residential development for the company, overseeing client residential properties, and working to constantly improve management systems. Phil plays a central role in the management and re-development of SEPTA's retail areas in the transit authority's main commuter hub, Suburban Station, which the company master-leases from SEPTA. Phil holds a BS in Finance from Villanova University and is a licensed broker in PA and a salesperson in New Jersey.

STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPANTS

Bike Chester County

Chester County 2020

Chester County Department of Community
Development

Chester County Economic Development
Council

Chester County Libraries

Chester County Planning Commission

Delaware Valley Regional Planning
Commission

Exton Region Chamber of Commerce

Friends of the Chester Valley Trail

Gorman & Co. Real Estate Development &
Consulting

Hankin Group

Hanover

Krapf Transportation

Maggie Moos

PREIT

Raj Real Estate

SEPTA

Stolen Sun Craft Brewing & Roasting
Company

Transportation Management Association of
Chester County

Tripoint Property Inc.

West Whiteland Historical Commission

West Whiteland Planning Commission

West Whiteland Public Services Commission

West Whiteland Township

Wolfson Group



Philadelphia

ULI Philadelphia
1818 Market Street
Suite 3300
Philadelphia, PA 19103

1-800-321-5011
philadelphia@uli.org