

Reimagining the Village of West Fairview



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An Urban Land Institute
Technical Assistance Panel
March 22 – 23, 2018

On behalf of
Cumberland Area Economic
Development Corporation
and East Pennsboro Township

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The panelists enjoyed the intimate scale of the village and its walkability.

About ULI

The Urban Land Institute (ULI) was established in 1936 as a nonprofit educational and research institute and is supported by more than 40,000 members in 82 countries and representing all aspects of land use and development disciplines. ULI's mission is to provide leadership in the responsible use of land in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide.

ULI provides guidance to nonprofits and municipalities seeking solutions to land use challenges. At the regional level, ULI Philadelphia offers Technical Assistance Panels (TAPs) that bring together objective planners, developers, lenders, architects, and related professionals to 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 avoid current or potential conflicts of interest.



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Introduction and Background

Located in East Pennsboro Township, Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, the village of West Fairview comprises a peninsula at the confluence of the Susquehanna River and the Conodoguinet Creek. Formerly a borough, West Fairview was reincorporated with East Pennsboro Township in 1998. The peninsula and the village are bisected by US Route 11/15 and by tracks for freight rail; a large rail yard is at the north side of the village. With highway and rail tracks to the west, the Susquehanna River to the east and the confluence at the southern tip, the village of West Fairview is isolated and may be easily overlooked. The village center, with a focus on economic revitalization, is the study area for the Technical Assistance Panel.



The study area for the TAP includes the intersection of Market and 2nd Streets. An initiative in 2009 included limited streetscape improvements.

West Fairview History

West Fairview is the oldest village in East Pennsboro Township. The layout for the village was drawn in 1816 and by 1879, it had more than 300 homes, three churches and four schools serving a large local factory worker population. At that time the nation's largest nail factory, the Harrisburg Nail Works, was located in West Fairview; at its peak the factory employed over 400 workers. A ferry transported mill workers from Harrisburg's east shore. Production at the mill ended in 1890 when the factory's cut nail product was supplanted by wire nails.

In the early 20th century the village was a railroad town and its Enola Yard, once the world's largest freight yard, is now operated by Norfolk Southern Railway. Frequent train

activity is still part of the background in West Fairview and watching the activity in the rail yard is popular with railroad enthusiasts.

West Fairview is a very different place today than the busy village of the 19th and early 20th centuries. Former community amenities such as mom and pop grocery stores, an ice cream shop, doctors' offices and a shoe store have disappeared. Two of the three original churches still serve congregations but their greatly diminished membership struggle to maintain their buildings. Home ownership in the village is at 53 percent versus a national average of 64 percent. Many of the homes that are not owner-occupied have been divided into apartments. The increase in multi-family dwellings and infrequent bus service has led to parking issues in the compact village. The population of West Fairview is 1,380 with a median age of 29.3 years. Unemployment is relatively low at 5.2 percent; 9.9 percent of the population lives below the poverty line.

In 1998, the village was reabsorbed into East Pennsboro Township in order to better provide municipal services to its residents. Still, West Fairview faces organizational challenges around code compliance, parking availability, and poorly maintained and blighted structures. However, West Fairview has a lot of potential and desirable urban qualities. The village is extremely walkable and is well located with direct river frontage providing views and access to water. Proximity to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania's capitol, is excellent; the skyline of Harrisburg and its capitol dome are visible from West Fairview's shoreline. A boat launch and small park at the point of the peninsula are popular with kayakers, fishermen and birders. A larger park, West Fairview Park, is located on the former Nail Factory Site to the west of US 11/15 and features a baseball diamond, pavilion and basketball court.

While the high rental population contributes to a transient quality, many of the villagers are long-time residents with deep roots in the community. Residents and West Fairview leadership, share a willingness to revitalize West Fairview by creating a mixed-use village center and capitalizing on the village's walkability and tourism opportunities. East Pennsboro Township has also just embarked on a Comprehensive Plan update process, which provides a timely opportunity to build on the efforts of the TAP.

Scope of The TAP

The Cumberland Area Economic Development Corporation and East Pennsboro Township, co-sponsors of the TAP, asked that the panelists evaluate the village based on the following issues:

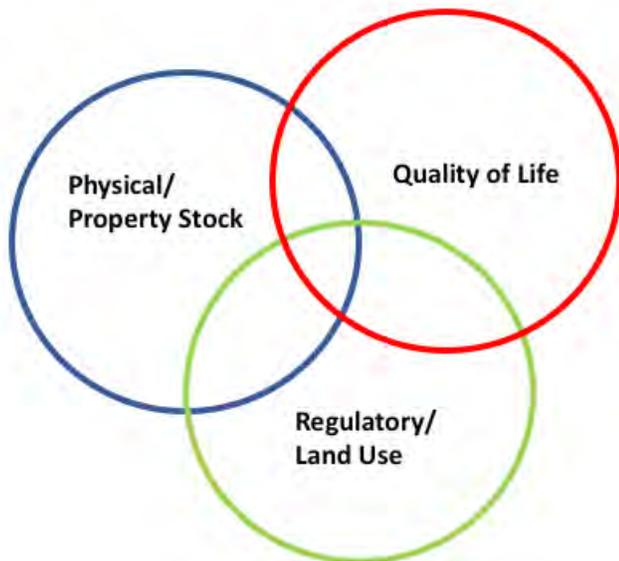
- Recommendations for the removal of blight.
- Ideas on maximizing mixed use commercial, tourism and restaurant uses.
- Feasibility for redevelopment with clear abatable goals.

Based on this scope, ULI Philadelphia assembled nine members with a range of relevant expertise for the Technical Assistance Panel, which was held on March 22nd and 23rd. The East Pennsboro officials provided an overview and walking tour of the village. The panelists interviewed a range of stakeholders from within the community. Stakeholders and interested parties were presented with the TAP’s recommendations at the end of the panel’s deliberations on the afternoon of March 23rd.

Initial Assessment

As the panel assessed the study area in the context of the Sponsors’ application, they categorized their findings in one of three areas: physical attributes, regulatory and land use issues, and quality of life. Just as many urban issues overlap, panelists’ assessments and findings may straddle several categories throughout this report.

Assets



Physical

West Fairview has an **excellent riverfront location**. Although many small towns in the Harrisburg area are in the process of trying to reinvigorate their downtown centers, West Fairview’s extended riverfront gives the village a unique advantage. The Susquehanna River is a five-minute walk from the village core and its shoreline offers wonderful views of Harrisburg to the east and the river islands that dot the Susquehanna. A boat launch at the southern tip of the village is popular with boaters and fishermen.

The **scale and walkability** of West Fairview east of US 11/15, the study area for the TAP, is appealing and the village is easy to navigate. Buildings and streets are properly scaled and contribute to the village character. The **infrastructure was upgraded** several years ago by the Norfolk Southern Railway; gas lines were brought into the village, sewer lines were upgraded and capacity was increased—all assets in an older village. For residents, rental prices are low and there are several major employers nearby.

Regulatory/Land Use

There is **local and regional support for change**. As recently as 2015 the East Pennsboro Township Comprehensive Plan Update identified West Fairview as an opportunity and stated the goal to “Revitalize West Fairview to leverage its location at the confluence of the Susquehanna River and Conodoguient Creek and visibility from and access to US 11/15.” In a Township meeting of the West Fairview Revitalization & Redevelopment Committee, ideas included “rezoning the village to make it more enticing for Revitalization Redevelopment,” and the “need for a master plan.”



The Susquehanna River is just a five-minute walk from the village center.

Quality of Life

Although there are few job opportunities in the village itself, there are **several major employers** in the area including the state government, Rite Aid Corporation, Highmark Health Services and Amazon. An average

commute time is just 22 minutes. **Unemployment is listed at 5.2 percent.** Just 10 percent of the population is below the poverty level compared to a national average of 14.7 percent. Public schools are in the **East Pennsboro Area School District** and are well-regarded. The **village has an interesting history.** In particular, Enola Yard, which still operates, is an opportunity to attract rail enthusiasts and generate tourism.

Considerations

Physical

Much of the shoreline of the peninsula is a **flood plain**, so new development must adhere to building code and federal, state and local flood guidelines. Suggestions for the riverfront include building a walkway and extending the park north from the Point; however, most riverfront **property is privately owned.** In general, the village has an **aging housing stock.** Some homes appear to be constructed of poor quality materials and need significant repair while others appear to be beyond repair. On the east side of Front Street many flood-damaged homes have yet to be demolished.

West Fairview **does not have a clear gateway.** The 2nd Street entrance to the village from US 11/15 (Enola Road)- a four-lane highway with a posted speed limit of 35 miles per hour- is abrupt and poorly marked. The existing sign marker for the village prominently features the township name rather than the village itself. Just as there is no clear gateway into the village, there is **no clear village center.** The streetscape has been improved at 2nd Street and Market but the intersection doesn't currently have the necessary retail or pedestrian traffic to support it as a true village center. Moving north from the low-lying village point, the topography starts to rise along the water edge, cutting off views of the river from the majority of the village. However, this rising ridgeline also creates spectacular views toward



This recently constructed home has been designed and built to adhere to local floodplain guidelines. Demolition may be the only solution for many of the neighboring homes.

the river for the select homes along this edge.

Upon entering West Fairview, the **street grid can be confusing.** 3rd Street and Biddle Street, roughly parallel at one point, converge at Market and Enola Road. There are many one-way streets but many "streets" are, in practice, alleys. For example, Biddle Street is really an alley that serves the back of the homes located on 3rd Street; it is populated with multiple cars, garages, trash cans and sheds. Additionally, there is just **one entrance and egress in and out of the village** – problematic for routine policing. From a safety standpoint, the narrow streets and parked cars on the street can impede fire and rescue equipment.

Lack of parking was named as a primary concern by most stakeholders. Simple math illustrates the problem: there are many multi-family homes in the village today and each household has an average of two cars. With for-profit parking prohibited by the Township, options for visitors are limited as well.

The village itself does not have enough public green space, particularly for its children; 14 percent of the population is 10 years or younger. Although West Fairview Park has significant acreage and facilities, it is difficult to reach from the village. Residents also report that it is often a hub of drug activity and vandalism. The Point, the park at the tip of the peninsula that includes the boat launch, is small and primarily used by boaters and fisherman. A dirt footpath that connects the Point to West Fairview Park underneath the Enola Road overpass is overgrown and poorly maintained.

Regulatory/Land Use

Within the **village, zoning is constrained.**

When the village was reincorporated into East Pennsboro Township in 1998 there was an opportunity to update zoning classifications, but officials assigned zoning based on uses at that time and in 20 years there has been little new development. In addition, the village has no design guidelines



West Fairview Park, across US 11/15, has abundant green space but is not easily reached from the village.

that would help mitigate the flood conditions of the village’s riverfront location in a systematic and holistic way. This has resulted in a range of responses including abandoned ground floor spaces, elevated structures and extensive retaining walls, all of which can negatively impact the quality of the pedestrian environment. **Lack of code and ordinance enforcement** is a major issue. Fundamental ordinances—such as putting out trash only on trash day or limiting the number of unrelated occupants in a rental unit—are not well enforced. Some buildings have visible structural issues that appear to be in violation of code. **Blighted properties are rarely condemned.** These blighted properties have indirect costs such as decreased property values and direct costs such as loss of tax revenue and depressed redevelopment efforts—costs that will continue to impact the village’s economic health unless addressed.

Many low-income residents do not have the financial means to maintain properties in need of extensive repairs. Public financial resources for redevelopment, streetscape improvements and home repairs to correct code deficiencies are available for some of the population (i.e. veterans or seniors) but have **not been well-communicated to property owners.**

Quality of Life

There are **few businesses in the village.** Residents must leave the village for basic needs like groceries or services such as a commercial laundry. With few opportunities to interact, there is **little community engagement.** Without a strong local community group to coalesce around, renters in particular are disengaged and the chasm between owners and renters is significant.



Code enforcement within the village is lax and there are numerous blighted properties. Appropriate condemnation and demolition could create significantly sized parcels that would be attractive to developers.

Public transit options are poor. Currently, buses pick up and discharge riders on US 11/15; there is no service in the village itself. With few options, residents opt to have a car.

Overall, the **perception of West Fairview is poor.** There is a lack of a sense of place and without retail or commercial destinations, underutilized recreational facilities and limited parking, there is not currently a strong tourist market. Although the population and area are small, according to the 2016 Annual Police Report, West Fairview is responsible for 7.3% of the law enforcement activities of the East Pennsboro Township Police Department.

Key Issues

Zoning misalignment. There are six zoning classifications for West Fairview, too many for the compact village. Side yard setbacks are extreme and should be realigned. An overlay allows for some mixed-use, but it has yet to be utilized. Appropriate zoning would make the village more attractive to development as parcels become available.

Need to stabilize and direct change. “Demolition by neglect” is not a plan for success. Condemnation should be an option where conditions have deteriorated beyond repair. Significant buildings—such as churches—should be assessed for condition, stabilized and repaired if needed. They can become key sites and cornerstones for targeted redevelopment. The upcoming comprehensive planning process is the ideal opportunity to discuss and strategize for the physical changes the community would like to see.

Assets can be leveraged. Time and again West Fairview’s riverfront location and its opportunities for recreation were mentioned as key assets within the village; however, the river’s shallow depth at West Fairview limits all but flat-bottomed boats. Yet the village’s compact size, walkability and scale can make it an attractive destination. The availability of affordable rental housing can also be an asset but must be managed from the standpoint of occupancy, condition and available parking.

Deeper engagement is needed. West Fairview has little data on its residents, why they’ve chosen the community or what residents want or need. In particular, there is little communication with the rental community, although rental properties currently make up about half of the housing stock. Engagement with residents—homeowners and renters alike—would help leadership identify strengths and weaknesses.

Perception of place, marketing and branding. Negative perceptions of West Fairview have prohibited opportunities for branding and growth. The village can take steps to begin to

improve its general appearance and its recreational offerings. Establishing and maintaining connections with area tourism bureaus will also go a long way to making sure West Fairview isn't overlooked as a destination.

Planning Concepts for West Fairview

With West Fairview's assets and challenges in mind, the panel sketched how the village might look—and function—with some disciplined planning and execution. It must be noted that this exercise in planning was undertaken to brainstorm and demonstrate possibilities with respect to identifying corridors, sites of opportunity and parcels to focus on for reuse. The panel recommends that West Fairview and surrounding entities engage in a community planning process to advance actual redevelopment recommendations. The panelists' illustration is intended to inspire, provoke thought and lend planning expertise to the process.

Redevelopment Action

1. Gateway: the lack of a gateway was a major concern. The current turn onto Market from US 11/15 is at the right location, but better signage (directional as well as branding) is needed. The panel also suggested closing 3rd Street between Enola Road and North Street. This would create space for a larger, more dramatic "arrival"

and simplify the turn into the village. Once the turn is made onto Market visitors have a clear view down Market Street to the Susquehanna—a unique vantage point that identifies the village as riverfront.

2. Core Site: the area of 2nd Street and Market already features streetscape improvements such as brick crosswalks and vintage streetlights. The existing Grotto restaurant, gas station, pizzeria and St. Marks Evangelical



Further up the corridor a handsome Victorian home at 2nd Street and 2nd Avenue marks the end of the existing streetscape improvements; it could serve as the beacon for an improved core district.

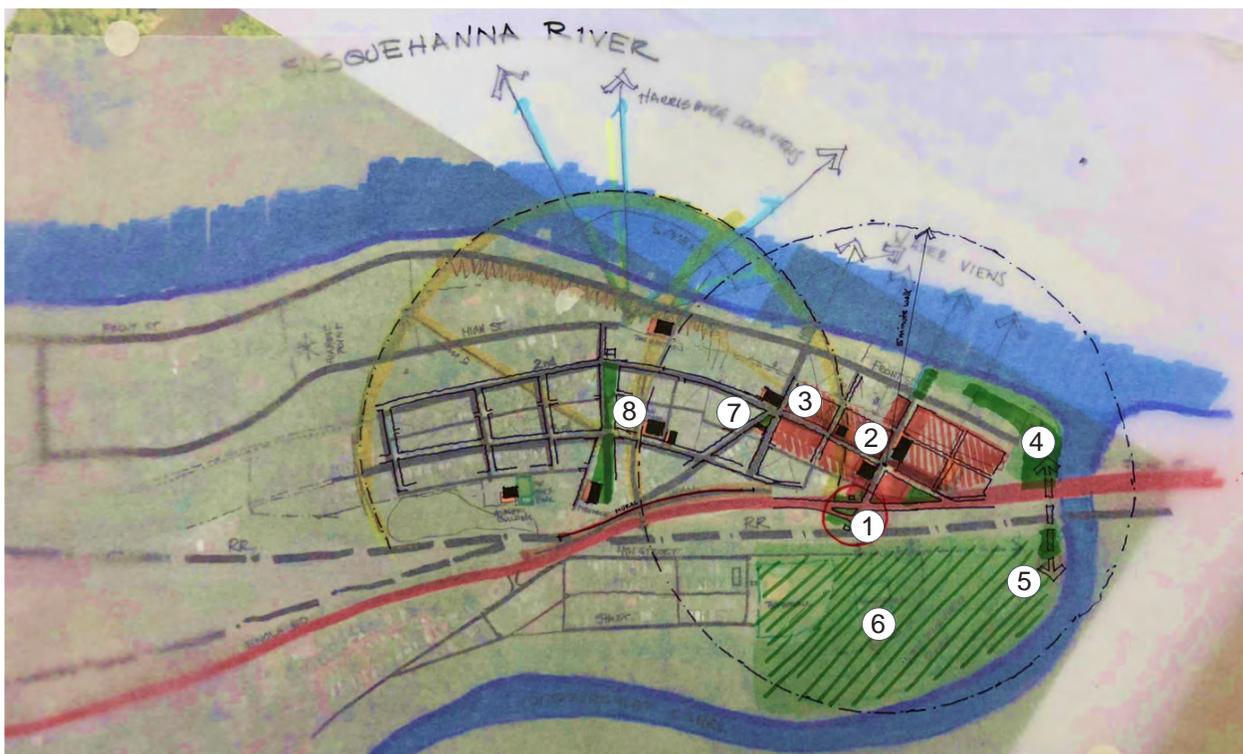


Photo from West Fairview ULI TAP Presentation.

Lutheran Church are good building blocks for a village center. However, the area needs more concentrated activity and better definition. One option would be to “seed” existing uses; for example, the Train Yard Gym & Fitness Center would benefit from some complimentary retail such as a health food option or a bike shop.

3. Transformative Intervention: a contiguous row of homes on 2nd Street would be prime site for redevelopment. The homes all exhibit structural defects and require extensive repair. The site would form a significant parcel if the homes were demolished; as a whole they would offer an appealing lot size to a developer for residential or mixed-use new construction that could have a significant impact. This kind of investment and positive market signal could help build confidence and optimism toward further actions.
4. The “Point”/Riverfront: with a small boat launch, minimal parking and difficult access to adjacent green space, the tip of the peninsula is currently underutilized but can be a focal point for celebrations and activity. Portions of this area are publicly owned and can be leveraged. Acquiring adjacent riverfront properties and extending the Point would provide more green space for recreation. The walkway that wraps around the Point and under the highway would be an excellent connector if properly graded and maintained.



The Point is a popular destination for birders and fishermen, even on a wintry day.

Connections

5. “Point” to Park: West Fairview Park is much larger than the Point but is not easily accessible. The existing walkway from the Point to the Park connects the two areas but is not a designated trail so it’s not maintained by the township. It’s currently a dangerous way to cross between both recreational areas. If a proper connection with a well-lit path and railing were added, the walkway could promote increased and better use of both recreational areas.



There is a walking path that connects the Point to West Fairview Park, but it is unsafe and poorly maintained.

6. New Parking and Recreation: with a safe, well-marked and well-lighted walkway connecting the Point and the Park, the two areas could work hand-in-hand. The Point, with its excellent river views could be the place to go for watching fireworks, a destination for cyclists or kayaks, or enjoying food truck festivals. Visitors could be directed to designated parking at West Fairview Park and could then walk to the Point for activities.
7. North & 2nd Street Node: anchored by West Fairview United Methodist Church, North and 2nd Streets presents another opportunity for a node of activity. West of 2nd Street, North Street is partially closed for parking and could present an interesting opportunity for a pedestrian plaza, pocket park or streetscape upgrades that would stretch the corridor northward. Like Market, North Street, looking to the east, offers a clear view of the river that gives a visitor a sense of place.
8. Green Bookend: Abolition Street, named for the large number of residents who fought in the Civil War, is a unique opportunity. The village’s longest cross street to the river seems like a natural “boundary” for the village proper and could provide residents with some much-needed public green space. The panel envisioned Abolition becoming a greenway, stretching from State Street to 2nd Street. Properly designed it would provide storm water mitigation and may offer some additional parking.

Recommendations

West Fairview is at a tipping point. Revitalizing the housing stock, reinvigorating a commercial district and maximizing historic and natural assets will challenge leadership and residents. The will and desire to change is evident but developing a workable comprehensive plan and executing the necessary actions will require communication, creative financing, and a strong coalition of township leadership and residents.

Property

Codes and ordinances must be uniformly and consistently enforced. From a seemingly simple regulation about trash being placed outside in advance of pick up to more complicated code enforcement for structural and safety issues, informing property owners of regulations and citing them for failure to comply must be a priority. Landlords must also be responsible for clearly communicating regulations to tenants and the rental population must be meaningfully engaged. Quickly and consistently citing violators will let the community know that violations will not be tolerated by the township. The Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania’s **Blight to Bright** toolkit can be a resource.

Establish a cleanup day. Distributing trash bags and arranging an extra trash pick-up might improve neighbors’ participation and cooperation. Organizing a cleanup day would also be an opportunity to communicate with residents about regulations and to inform them of West Fairview’s “zero tolerance” policy on clearly identified and articulated issues.

Commission a mural. A mural along the long retaining wall parallel to State Street would be a unique element for West Fairview. A design that incorporates river activities or historical elements would be an opportunity to graphically brand the village and engage residents.

Conduct a property survey. Assessing properties in the village—for historic interest and condition—should be an early step in the comprehensive planning process. By identifying properties that aren’t feasible to repair as well as those that could anchor a block, West Fairview can begin to envision what redevelopment might look like and where it should be centered. A fundamental question will be: is adaptive reuse a possibility or is a clean slate the answer?

Educate property owners on funding resources. Funding is available to help property owners maintain their homes and correct code deficiencies. For example, Cumberland County offers a Housing Rehabilitation Program as well as an Emergency Repair Loans program. Financial

assistance might be the impetus a homeowner needs to make repairs before an issue becomes a code violation.

Regulatory/Land Use

Develop a vision for the village and align zoning with the vision. The status quo has led to pockets of blight throughout the village and has stifled interest in redevelopment. Failure to move forward without goals or a vision for West Fairview’s future will lead to more blight and disinvestment.

Identify a champion. Choose a leader from the community who will advocate for desired changes, develop public-private partnerships, champion select projects and keep stakeholders—residents and businesses—involved and informed. It was also suggested that a Business Improvement District would be an asset for businesses and a resource for incoming business ventures.

Identify a village core, incorporate fewer zoning districts, zone for mixed use. As compact as the village is, it is not well organized. Identifying the village core would lead to other considerations such as the character of the main street and where to place parking. Fewer zoning designations will also organize and simplify the village layout. Zoning for mixed use will signal to developers that the village is serious about creating a more dynamic environment.

Identify a gateway and catalytic sites. The gateway to West Fairview will draw visitors in and set the tone for the village experience. Branded signage and wayfinding, well-kept landscaping and the view of the Susquehanna at the end of Market Street would welcome visitors to this riverfront village. Selecting two or three key intersections or sites as catalysts to focus investment and public / private partnerships will fuel and organize successful growth. Development and improvement efforts will grow outward from the catalytic sites, creating a halo effect and inspiring additional redevelopment. Support and “seed” existing businesses; for example, a good neighbor for Train Yard Gym & Fitness might be a small café or bicycle repair shop if needed by residents.

Develop incentives to attract development. Creating zoning incentives to allow greater density and increased height, for example, may make redevelopment projects more feasible. 2nd Street was identified as a likely corridor for redevelopment. Consider a tax abatement for newly constructed homes.

Create more green space and optimize recreation.

Although West Fairview Park is large it is not easily accessible from the village side. Carving out more green space would be welcome by residents. Abolition Street was suggested as an opportunity for a greenway. Since the riverfront is a floodplain with restrictions on development, there may be opportunities for the township to acquire private property for public use. An interpretive walkway along the riverfront would be an attraction. The Point can also be made more welcoming for recreation with minimal initial investment. Better signage, bike racks and picnic tables along with pop-up activities, such as a regularly-scheduled food truck event, would activate the space, leading to increased activity and a change in perception.

Get parking off main streets. Parking in areas of the village seems scattered and creates a negative impression. A comprehensive parking strategy is needed. The panel suggests establishing parking areas off the main streets to create a more pedestrian-friendly experience. Most homes have deep properties that back onto alleys for residential parking. The township should create more municipal parking and/or allow for-profit parking areas in the village.

Establish architectural guidelines. The existing village character and scale is an asset for West Fairview, especially in the village core. Redevelopment, while desirable, must also be curated and guided so that it is compatible with and contributes to the existing fabric of the village. Architectural guidelines and a review body could proactively communicate the intent and provide oversight. The floodplain areas require specific attention to properly address the unique conditions. The design guidelines in these areas should balance long term durability, storm water management, desired views, access, and pedestrian environment, while complying with all state and federal regulations. In general, follow best practices for streetscapes, public open space and pedestrian areas.

Enhance rental ordinances. The current percentage of rented properties versus owned homes, approximately 52 percent and 48 percent, respectively, was a focal point for many stakeholders. Many homes that were formerly single family have been converted to multi-family rentals and many properties are owned by absentee landlords. The panel suggested that the village consider a property inventory and assess the need for new types of rental units. Also worth considering is limiting the number of unrelated occupants in a rental unit.

Push for a range and variety in housing. In working with developers and landlords encourage a range of quality



An inventory of properties in the village could help leadership identify opportunities for development.

rental options that include workforce housing and widen the spectrum of residents and household income. Engagement with the rental population is needed to fully understand the needs of this community.

Quality of Life

Gather information. Review demographic information on residents. Conduct a market study. Determine what sort of retail residents would like to see in the community by engaging all types of residents. Find deficiencies in the region and evaluate whether West Fairview can fill that void. Collect information with two goals in mind: determining the needs and wants of residents and providing potential developers and businesses with relevant information on household size, income and lifestyle.

Develop a public transit strategy. Work with area transit providers to achieve better service for West Fairview residents. Consider regional micro-transit that would have scheduled stops in the village. Public-private partnerships between area employers and regional transit entities, such as Capitol Area Transit (CAT), are connecting residents to jobs in the region and increasing ridership. These transit partnerships should continue to be leveraged with additional companies, employers and transit authorities.

Engage the community. The upcoming comprehensive plan makes this the ideal time to get the community talking. Invite residents to attend sessions at the Disney Building; explain the goals and the process; arrange break-out sessions to gather residents' input. Enable residents to engage in the community longer-term by creating a block captain program, civic association or community organization.

At the same time develop and implement communication strategies. Make communicating with residents an ongoing and consistent effort. Mix cautions

about issues like trash pick-up and violations with good news about community improvements, no matter how small. Let residents know that they can come to the Township with issues and suggestions. A local civic organization could also serve as a disseminator of municipal information, connect residents to resources and provide neighborhood-level leadership opportunities for community members

The Disney Building is also a convenient venue for community interaction. Classes, information sessions and simple social events could provide the framework for a resident-driven community organization.

Get serious about cleaning up. Make “spring cleaning” of the village a tradition. Communicate the cleanup day multiple times. Support residential efforts by distributing trash bags and schedule an extra trash pick-up at the end of the cleanup day.

Rebrand and market the village. Slowly begin to rebrand the village as a walkable, pleasant area for recreation. Manage expectations. Be sure to deliver on any rebranding promise. Introduce marketing efforts gradually



The Delaware River Waterfront Corporation has successfully programmed riverfront activities that West Fairview could emulate.

and key them to events. Craft a marketing message that is do-able. Be consistent with signage and messaging. Be selective in recruiting retail and try to align incoming businesses with the vision for the village.

Develop relationships with Cumberland County and East Pennsboro Township tourism. Make sure West Fairview is included in materials and on Web sites that promote area tourism and activity.

Program events at the Point. Get residents and visitors accustomed to coming to the Point for activities. Schedule special events such as an official opening of the boating/kayaking season, a morning of bird watching at the Point, or fireworks viewing on July 4th. Program pop-ups and temporary uses for the Point such as food trucks or a farmers’ market. Continue the tradition of the Easter egg hunt and Memorial Day parade. Develop family-oriented and nature-oriented events that will introduce newcomers to the village and begin to build pride of place among residents. Schedule regular weekly events such as “Fishing with Friends,” or “Yoga at the Point.”



- Create a positive context for change – start marketing and celebrating the positives
- Add West Fairview assets, such as water recreation, to Cumberland County tourism and recreation marketing materials
- Work with tourism officials at Cumberland County and the township to plan and cross-promote events
- Enforce ordinances and regulations
- Organize a community-wide cleanup day
- Communicate township regulations to community
- Develop and distribute a survey for residents in preparation for planning process
- Host a community meeting to discuss the comprehensive planning process
- Conduct a property assessment
- Explore mural-arts programs for State Street wall
- Plan and communicate pop-up events at the Point
- Identify a champion for the village

Short-Term Actions

Summary

The Sponsors asked the TAP to address three broad questions: how to alleviate blight, how to introduce and maximize mixed-use in the village and how to feasibly redevelop with clear goals and actionable steps. The panel agrees that those issues are key to a promising future for West Fairview. Progress will be incremental, but the panel believes there are strong assets in the Village that can and should be leveraged as part of a stabilization and growth strategy.

First and foremost, the township should address the blight in the village with **strict and consistent enforcement of codes and regulations** – tools already at hand. **Regular communications** should remind residents of the proper disposal of trash and bulk items and the associated regulations. Both should be short-term goals. A deeper dive will be identifying properties that are failing and holding those landlords accountable. **Condemnation and demolition** are extreme actions but numerous properties in the village are at the tipping point. And the village character can only be preserved if the unique conditions in the floodplain areas are addressed, with **architectural and design guidelines** that are implemented and enforced. By demonstrating the will to enforce change the township will send a strong message to owners and potential developers.

Incorporating mixed-use and simplifying zoning will go far to enliven the village but that is just one part of a **necessary rezoning**. The village's current zoning features

too many zoning designations, is misaligned and the overlay hasn't achieved its intended goal. Leadership should **identify buildings of interest** and assess their condition. The former firehouse on Mulberry, West Fairview United Methodist and St. Marks Church for example, can serve as anchors for **areas that are targeted for redevelopment**. The intersection of 2nd Street and Market should be better defined as the village core; continuing redevelopment up 2nd Street with some mixed-use would create an active, walkable corridor. Zoning should support the vision for how the village could function, with more public green spaces and recreational options as integral components.

Township leadership is aligned and will need to persist in their determination to drive change. If condemnation and demolition of properties is appropriate, that action should be part of the discussion; targeted demolition may be the only path to **aggregating properties** into a larger parcel that would be attractive to a developer. **Incentivizing redevelopment** should also be an option, via new uses within the village and the zoning itself. Creating public-private partnerships will also make redevelopment more feasible. Use existing businesses to **"seed" other uses**; work with landlords and recruit businesses that support the village's vision. West Fairview will benefit by **identifying a strong advocate** for the village and for the changes leadership envisions.

The upcoming comprehensive planning process makes now the ideal time to engage with the community and create a vision for the future of West Fairview.



Panel recommendations include a village overlay that simplifies zoning, defines the village core and incorporates more green spaces.

Panelists

Joseph W. Healy, AIA LEED AP; TAP Co-Chair Managing Principal, WRT

With a commitment to sustainable design throughout his 30-year career, Mr. Healy has deeply influenced WRT's approach to design. WRT is a national collaborative practice of city and regional planners, urban designers, landscape architects, and architects headquartered in Philadelphia. Established in 1963, the firm's origins are rooted in the principles of sustainability and urbanism, dedicated to improving the quality of the natural and built environments in the planning and design of buildings, landscapes, cities, and regions. He is currently serving on the board for the Central Philadelphia Development Corporation and the ACE Mentor Program of Eastern Pennsylvania. From 2010-2012, he served as chairman of the board of the Delaware Valley Green Building Council, the local chapter of the United States Green Building Council. He was the chair of the Host Committee for the 2013 National Greenbuild Conference held in Philadelphia.

Karen Thompson, AICP; TAP Co-Chair Director of Planning, Delaware River Waterfront Corporation

Ms. Thompson is director of Planning for the Delaware River Waterfront Corporation where she focuses on planning, design, and policy as part of the implementation of the Master Plan for the Central Delaware. Her projects include the Penn's Landing and Festival Pier redevelopment projects, the Columbia Avenue and Spring Garden Connector Streets, the Central Delaware zoning overlay, and the West Shipyard Archaeology study. In addition to her work at DRWC, Ms. Thompson is a lecturer for the Planning Workshop course at the University of Pennsylvania School of Design. She also serves on the board of the Southeast Pennsylvania chapter of the American Planning Association, is a Planning Committee co-chair for the Passyunk Square Civic Association and was a member of the inaugural flight of Philadelphia's ULI NEXT Council. She holds a B.A. in History from the University of Texas at Austin, a master's degree in City Planning with a certificate in Urban Design from the University of Pennsylvania and is a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners.

Charlene Drake Project Manager, Langan Engineering

Charlene Drake is an associate in the Center City Philadelphia office of Langan Engineering and Environmental Services specializing in brownfields redevelopment and public relations/community management. Since graduating with a degree in environmental science from Allegheny College in 1991, Ms. Drake has been a practicing environmental consultant in New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware. She is a New Jersey Licensed Site Remediation Professional (LSRP) who has contributed on the Interstate Technology and Regulatory Council guidance on institutional controls as well as various New Jersey guidance documents relevant to brownfields redevelopment. Ms. Drake has conducted training on storage tank management and procedures for disposal and reuse of contaminated soil as well as ASTM Due Diligence assessments for property transactions. Her experience covers the development process from start to finish.

Gonzalo Echeverria Halley-Harris Principal, LRK

Since joining LRK in 2005, Mr. Echeverria Halley-Harris' focus has been on placemaking through urban design and urban/regional planning. His experience includes projects in Canada, Latin America and Europe, as well as 38 states across the United States. A believer in team collaboration, he is committed to excellence within a sound business practice. His areas of expertise include master planning, development of pattern books and design guidelines, visual preference studies, and public participation process. Mr. Echeverria Halley-Harris earned his degree (BArch) in architecture and graduate degree in urban economics from Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile. He also holds a master's degree in architecture and urban design from the University of Miami, Coral Gables.

Brian Engle Vice President, RETTEW Associates, Inc.

Mr. Engle is a vice president at RETTEW and has 25 years of experience serving as project manager and principal-in-charge for private and municipal clients. He has extensive experience in municipal engineering, master site planning, zoning, land development, storm water management, E&S control, utility design, and construction management. In his role as vice president, he is instrumental

in furthering RETTEW's mission through collaboration and relationship-building with clients and business partners. His site planning and development experience includes storm water management, erosion and sedimentation control, utility design and coordination, municipal coordination, and construction management. A registered professional engineer in Pennsylvania and Maryland, Mr. Engle earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in agricultural engineering from Penn State University.

Nick Fox

Attorney, Saul Ewing Arnstein & Lehr LLP

Mr. Fox, an associate in the Commercial Litigation Practice, focuses his practice on the commercial construction industry. In addition to drafting construction contracts, he works to resolve claims and disputes arising on commercial projects. Prior to joining Saul Ewing, Mr. Fox was a project manager for a construction company working on projects that spanned a variety of industries, including health care, the arts, commercial office, high-rise residential and work for the federal government. He has first-hand experience with unionized and right-to-work projects for both public and private owners and is knowledgeable in sustainable design, project scheduling, contractor selection, bid disputes, project participation metrics, prompt payment statutes, and prevailing wage requirements. He has achieved several construction industry certifications, and he also has OSHA experience. Mr. Fox is a graduate of the Dickinson School of Law at The Pennsylvania State University, where he earned a Certificate in Advocacy & Dispute Resolution.

Susanne Hanson

Director of Business Development, JDavis Architects

Ms. Hanson is director of Business Development at JDAVIS, a multi-disciplinary practice of architecture, landscape architecture, planning, interior design and procurement management serving the Mid-Atlantic and Southeast regions. She has over 25 years of experience in formulating business growth and marketing strategies. For the first ten years of her career, Ms. Hanson managed a financial services department at PNC Bank. She switched directions and earned her Bachelor of Science in Landscape Architecture with honors from Temple University in 2003. She has worked for all respective disciplines of the AEC industry since then. She is co-chair of the Women's Leadership Initiative (WLI), an Advisory Board member and a committee member of the Lehigh Valley Council of the ULI Philadelphia District Council. She is an active member in CREW (Commercial Real Estate Women) and a past-president of SMPS (Society Marketing Professional Services) Philadelphia. Ms. Hanson has her Pennsylvania real estate license and continues to take real estate courses.

Richard E. Jordan III

President and CEO, Smith Land & Improvement Corporation

Mr. Jordan is the third generation of family leadership for Smith Land & Improvement Corporation. He joined the company in 1994 and began his career in L.B. Smith's heavy equipment division in Florida. Promoted to vice president in 2003, he moved back to the Harrisburg area to work directly with real estate investment partners and manage the entire leasing portfolio for retail, office, and manufacturing clients. In 2015, Mr. Jordan was promoted to chief operating officer and in 2018 president and chief executive officer. He serves on the Salvation Army Harrisburg Capital City Region Advisory Board, is a director for Franklin Financial Services Corporation and F&M Trust and was recognized by the Central Penn Business Journal as a Forty Under 40 winner.

Stacey Mosley

CEO and Founder, FixList

Prior to launching FixList in 2015, Ms. Mosley worked for the City of Philadelphia for five years practicing data science and operations engineering for the city's Vacant Property Strategy and Open Data initiative. She is a graduate of Northwestern University where she studied manufacturing and design engineering. Ms. Mosley is an active member of the Urban Land Institute, sitting on the Technology & Competitiveness Council, Young Leaders Council, and NEXT cohort, and is honored to be recognized as one of Billy Penn's Who's Next in Entrepreneurship, Rad Girls' Innovator of the Year, and by the Philadelphia Business Journal as an emerging Woman in Technology.

Stakeholder Participants

[Jonathan Bowser](#), Director, Cumberland Area Economic Development Corporation

[Valerie Copenhaver](#), Senior Director of Marketing and Tourism, Cumberland Area Economic Development Corporation

[Jeff Walters](#), President, Jeff Walters Appraisals

[Larry Hatter](#), Greater Harrisburg Board of Realtors

[Joe Calla](#), Owner, Grotto Restaurant

[Todd Bashore](#), East Pennsboro Township Chief of Police

[John K. Murphy, P.E., P.L.S.](#), President, Alpha Consulting Engineers

[George Book](#), President & CEO, West Shore Chamber of Commerce

[Kirk Stoner](#), Director of Planning, Cumberland County

[Tim Whelan](#), Executive Director, Cumberland County Housing and Redevelopment Authority

[Kristy Magaro](#), East Pennsboro Township Commissioner

[Erik Owen](#), East Pennsboro Township Fire Chief

[Jeremy Smith, PE PLS](#)

[Tom Crognale](#)

[Dennis Bretz](#)

[Bertie Stewart](#)

[Jim Hertzler](#), Vice Chair, Cumberland County Commissioners

[Linda Plesic](#), Regional Business Development Manager, Century Engineering

[Dearan Quigley](#), Community Development Director, East Pennsboro Township

[Chris Knarr](#), Professional Planner, McNeese Wallace & Nurick LLC

[George Tyson](#), President, East Pennsboro Township Commissioners

[John Owen](#), Assistant Township Manager, East Pennsboro Township

[John Kuntzelman](#), President, East Pennsboro Township Commissioners

[Keith Komon](#), Area General Manager, High Hotels Ltd.

[John Pietropaoli](#), Manager, East Pennsboro Township

[Maggie Wonsick](#), Owner, Train Yard Gym & Fitness

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[Abby Rambo](#), Manager

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