



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Laura Slutsky
laura.slutsky@uli.org
215.845.8994

Columbia Borough Seeks to Spur Private Investment in Downtown by Building on Existing Assets

ULI Philadelphia's Technical Assistance Panel Report provides recommendations on strategic development strategies, parking, and urban connectivity

Columbia, PA – August 29, 2019 - Urban Land Institute (ULI) Philadelphia released its Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) Report today, summarizing recommendations to effectively spur private investment within Columbia Borough's central business district, provide adequate parking options to support commercial activity, and enhance urban connectivity through placemaking and public space enhancements. The report concludes a study comprised of a two-day convening of real estate professionals, urban planners and other experts, as well as interviews with key stakeholders.

The interdisciplinary panel of volunteer experts, at the request of Columbia Borough, along with community partners Columbia Economic Development Corporation, Lancaster County Redevelopment Authority, and the Economic Development Company of Lancaster County, explored how strategic consolidation and marketing of specific development sites could attract private investment within the central business district, and support a vibrant downtown. The report identifies recommendations across three main focus areas, that include:

- The consolidation and marketing of subject properties in the Borough; including exploring and identifying catalytic uses that would help spur private investment;
- Consideration of parking demand and recommendations to inform short and long term solutions that could meet the commercial needs of the Borough, attract development and generate revenue;
- Cohesive branding and enhancements to the public realm such as improving connections and wayfinding to the waterfront, and creating new gateways to the central business district.

Columbia Borough, population c.10,000, is located on the Susquehanna River, roughly halfway between the cities of York and Lancaster. With a rich history, urban form, and proximity to other cities, the Borough, recently celebrating the designation of the area as the Susquehanna National Heritage Area, is well positioned for growth and investment. Still, attention and resources must be provided to its struggling commercial district, under-performing schools, and low-income population if that growth is to be realized. The report concludes that with establishing strategic economic development strategies and embracing fresh perspectives, the Borough has tremendous potential to improve the vibrancy of downtown, generate public



revenue, and invest in stabilizing the school district and local community. **To view the full report, visit philadelphia.uli.org.**

Columbia Borough Manager Rebecca Denlinger, sharing her enthusiasm for the project and the ULI process noted “ULI bringing this level of expertise to Columbia was a blessing. We know that Columbia is a truly special community and the redevelopment of key properties will allow us to continue developing the Borough as a place more people want to live or grow their business in.”

Matthew Sternberg, Executive Director, Lancaster County Redevelopment Authority, added “the Redevelopment Authority was pleased to participate in this study. We are actively involved in the study area, so the perspectives opened up by ULI TAP will have an immediate affect as we issue a development RFP and secure funding. The effort could not have been more timely.”

ULI Expert Volunteer Panel:

- Rick Jackson, VP: Landscape Architecture, ELA Group, Inc., TAP Co-Chair
- Josh Maxwell, Mayor of Downingtown, Borough of Downingtown, TAP Co-Chair
- Dylan Bauer, President of Development, Royal Square Development
- Jonathan Bowser, Managing Partner, Integrated Development
- Brian Engle, Regional Vice President, RETTEW
- Mr. Engle is a Regional Vice President at RETTEW and has 25 years
- H. Stephen Evans, SVP & Managing Director, High Real Estate Group
- Michel Gibeault, AIA, Vice President, High Construction Co. & Greenfield Architects
- Rachael Griffith, Senior Trails and Open Space Planner, Chester County Planning Commission
- Harshil Kakadia, Architectural Designer, Le Blue Goose Studio
- Brian Simel, Former Director of Development, Cross Properties
- Ronald Street, Managing Director, NorthStar Owners Representation

Study Stakeholders:

- Justin Eby, Director, Housing and Community Development, Lancaster County Redevelopment Authority
- Columbia Economic Development Corporation, Janice Nikoloff Executive Director, Owner of properties under consideration in this TAP
- John Biemiller, Director, Business Retention & Expansion, Economic Development Company of Lancaster County
- Cle Berntheizel, Councilperson; Owner, Columbia Borough Council; Garth Gallery & Café
- Nate Bunty, Managing Partner, Heritage Insurance
- Hope Byers, Manager of Columbia Crossing River Trails Center, Susquehanna Heritage
- Althea Ramsay Carrigan, Vice President, BURLE Business Park



- Larry Cohen, Executive Director, Lancaster Parking Authority
- Phil Goropoulos, President, CHI St. Joseph Children's Health / Healthy Columbia
- Jeff Helm, Planning & Zoning Manager, Columbia Borough
- Bob Herr, Owner, Burning Bridge Antiques
- Bill Kloidt, Branch Manager, BB&T
- Leo Lutz, Mayor, Columbia Borough
- Brian McCowan, Board President, Susquehanna Valley Chamber of Commerce
- Kelsey Miller, Program Manager, CHI St. Joseph Children's Health / Healthy Columbia
- Don Murphy, President, CEO, Cimarron Investments, LLC
- Lauren and Dan Murphy, Owners, Apartment Building at H and 3rd (23 N. 3rd St)
- Daisy Pagan, Owner, Perfect Settings, 200 Locust St.
- Jonathan Pinkerton, Vice President, Susquehanna Heritage
- Laura Proctor, Senior Community Planner, Lancaster County Planning Commission
- Jocelyn Ritchey, Program Coordinator, Lancaster County Redevelopment Authority
- Ezra Rothman, Manager, Economic Development Strategies, Economic Development Company of Lancaster County
- Beverly Shank, Executive Director, Susquehanna Valley Chamber of Commerce
- Matthew Sternberg, Executive Director, Lancaster County Redevelopment Authority
- Thomas Strickler, Superintendent, Columbia Borough School District
- Mary Wickenheiser, Chair, Columbia Borough Planning Commission
- Jamie Widener, Executive Director, Columbia Life Network

About ULI Philadelphia

The Urban Land Institute is a nonprofit education and research institute whose mission is to provide responsible leadership in the use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide. Established in 1936, ULI today has more than 40,000 members around the globe, representing the entire spectrum of land use and development disciplines including developers, builders, property owners, investors, architects, public officials, planners, attorneys, engineers, academics and others engaged in the land use field. The Philadelphia District Council encompasses about 1,000 members throughout Eastern and Central Pennsylvania, the southern half of New Jersey and the State of Delaware. For more information visit philadelphia.uli.org.

###