



# Recommendations

The recommendations are intended as a guide toward achieving the vision and goals of this plan. The recommendations are a direct result of ideas generated by the project committee and through the public participation process. These summary recommendations are expanded upon and prioritized as individual action items in Chapter 5.

It is recommended that the comprehensive plan committee meet twice a year to monitor the progress of the of the plan recommendations and continually reassess the plan's implementation priorities in light of changing conditions and emerging issues.

## 4.1 Transportation

- 4.1.1 Implement traffic safety, operational, and capacity improvements throughout the Township.
- 4.1.2 North Wales Road/Skipack Pike – Widen and provide left turn lanes on all four approaches with additional widening along the North Wales Road and restriping of Skipack Pike. Signal upgrades are also recommended.
- 4.1.3 Centre Square Development – Two new signals, one along Skipack Pike and one along DeKalb Pike with associated frontage and intersection improvements in addition to, or in conjunction with associated PennDOT projects.

## 4. Recommendations

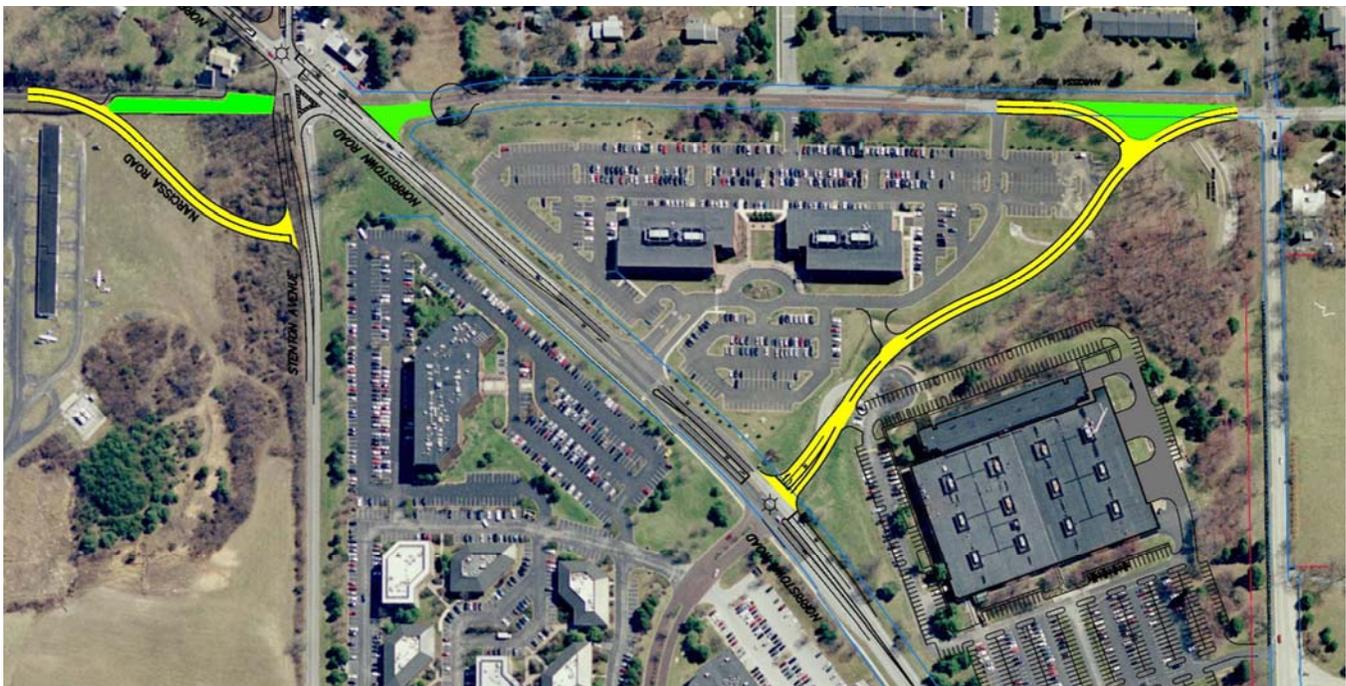
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- 4.1.4 Skippack Pike and Butler Pike—Provide separate right-turn lane on the southbound approach of Butler Pike and widening along the western side of Skippack Pike.
- 4.1.5 Township Line Road, west of Swedesford Road—Provide safety and drainage improvements.
- 4.1.6 Township Line Road and Union Meeting/Jolly Road – Township Line Road realignment, side by side left turn lanes on Township Line Road, extension of right turn lane on Jolly Road, and dual left turn lanes from Union Meeting.
- 4.1.7 Skippack Pike and Union Meeting Road/School Road – Widening Skippack Pike, lane configuration changes, and signal expansion to include School Road intersection.
- 4.1.8 Jolly Road and Arch Street Road – Construction of a left turn lane for westbound Jolly Road and construction of a right turn lane for northbound Arch Street Road. Possible intersection realignment at Mermaid Swim Club property.
- 4.1.9 5-Points: Township Line Road (South)/Walton Road/Norristown Road – Revise the alignment to remove the eastern leg of Township Line Road from the intersection, resulting in a conventional four-legged intersection. A new signal will then be installed at the new intersection between Norristown Road and realigned Township Line Road (Figure 4-0).
- 4.1.10 6-Points: Norristown Road/Stenton Avenue/Narcissa Road – Revise the alignment to create a four-legged intersection that will remain signalized or become a roundabout. T-intersections will then be created with the Narcissa Road approaches that will be realigned away from the main intersection. As part of this process, a new signal will be installed at the Norristown Road/Narcissa Road intersection that will intersect with Sentry Parkway West (Figure 4-1).

Figure 4-0: 5 Points Intersection Recommended Improvements



Figure 4-1: 6 Points Intersection Recommended Improvements



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- 4.1.11 Township Line Road South – Widen Township Line Road to provide a multi-lane cross-section between Union Meeting Road and 5-Points intersection at Walton Road for additional through and auxiliary lanes.
- 4.1.12 Walton Road/Stenton Avenue – Realignment of the western leg of Walton Avenue should be investigated along with the potential installation of a traffic control signal. The eastern leg of Stenton Avenue should be reevaluated as part of the 6-Points project.
- 4.1.13 Skippack Pike from Centre Square Shopping Centre to School Road/Union Meeting Road – Continuation of a three to four lane cross-section from the shopping center where the US 202 improvements are to terminate, easterly through the Wentz Road/Parkwood Road intersection realignment, easterly to tie into the Skippack Pike and Union Meeting Road/School Road improvements.
- 4.1.14 Union Meeting and Jolly Roads – Extension of right turn lane for westbound Jolly Road turning on to northbound Union Meeting Road.
- 4.1.15 Morris Road/Lewis Lane/Mt. Pleasant Avenue – Potential realignment of the intersection to improve area traffic flow including installation of a traffic control signal and dedicated left turn lanes along Morris Road.
- 4.1.16 Morris Road and Plymouth Road/School Road – Provide separate left-turn lanes along the Morris Road approaches.
- 4.1.17 Meadowlands Area – Roadway and drainage improvements to Plymouth Road intersections with Boehms Church Road and Penllyn Blue Bell Pike.
- 4.1.18 Montgomery County Community College – Proposed signal at the Morris Road access.

4.1.19 West Ambler Revitalization Project—Extension of Tennis Avenue from Railroad Avenue to Maple Avenue, widening of Ambler Alley, and removal of the northern section of Ambler Avenue with Maple Avenue. Restrict Railroad Avenue between Mt. Pleasant Avenue and Oak Street to one-way east-bound due to sight distance concerns at the intersection of Railroad Avenue and Mt. Pleasant Avenue.

4.1.20 Pulaski Drive Bridge (over central branch of Stony Creek) improvements.

4.1.21 Yost Road Bridge (over central branch of Stony Creek) replacement.

4.1.22 Jolly Road Bridge (over Mermaid Run) improvements.

The locations of all the above traffic improvement projects are shown on Figure 4-2.

4.1.23 Enhance pedestrian and bicycle mobility and connectivity throughout the Township.

Whitpain Township should continue to update its trail plan to examine opportunities for on-road bicycle routes, sidewalk improvements, and additional connections to areas in the Township that are not being served by the current trail plan. Examples of important connections and improvements within the Township that should be further examined include:

- Connections from Broad Axe Village to West Ambler, the Ambler rail station, Wings Trail, Prophecy Creek Park, and Blue Bell village.
- Connections from Centre Square Village to MCCC, Whitpain Township building, Wentz Run Park, Centre Square Park, and Beach Comber Swim Club.
- Connections to Camp Woods Preserve.

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- Connections to residential neighborhoods.
- Additional connections to adjacent municipalities.
- Important on-road commuter and recreational bicycle routes.
- Lighted trails for commuters.
- Development of a wayfinding system to safely and efficiently direct trail users and pedestrians throughout the Township.
- Identification of important trail details such alignment locations, user types, anticipated user volume, trail surface types, trail widths, access points, trailheads, trail amenities, and implementation priorities and strategies.
- Identification of possible improvements to enhance ADA accessibility throughout the Township to the greatest extent possible.

The Township should also examine its ordinances to ensure that all new development and redevelopment include sidewalks to enhance the overall pedestrian network in the Township.

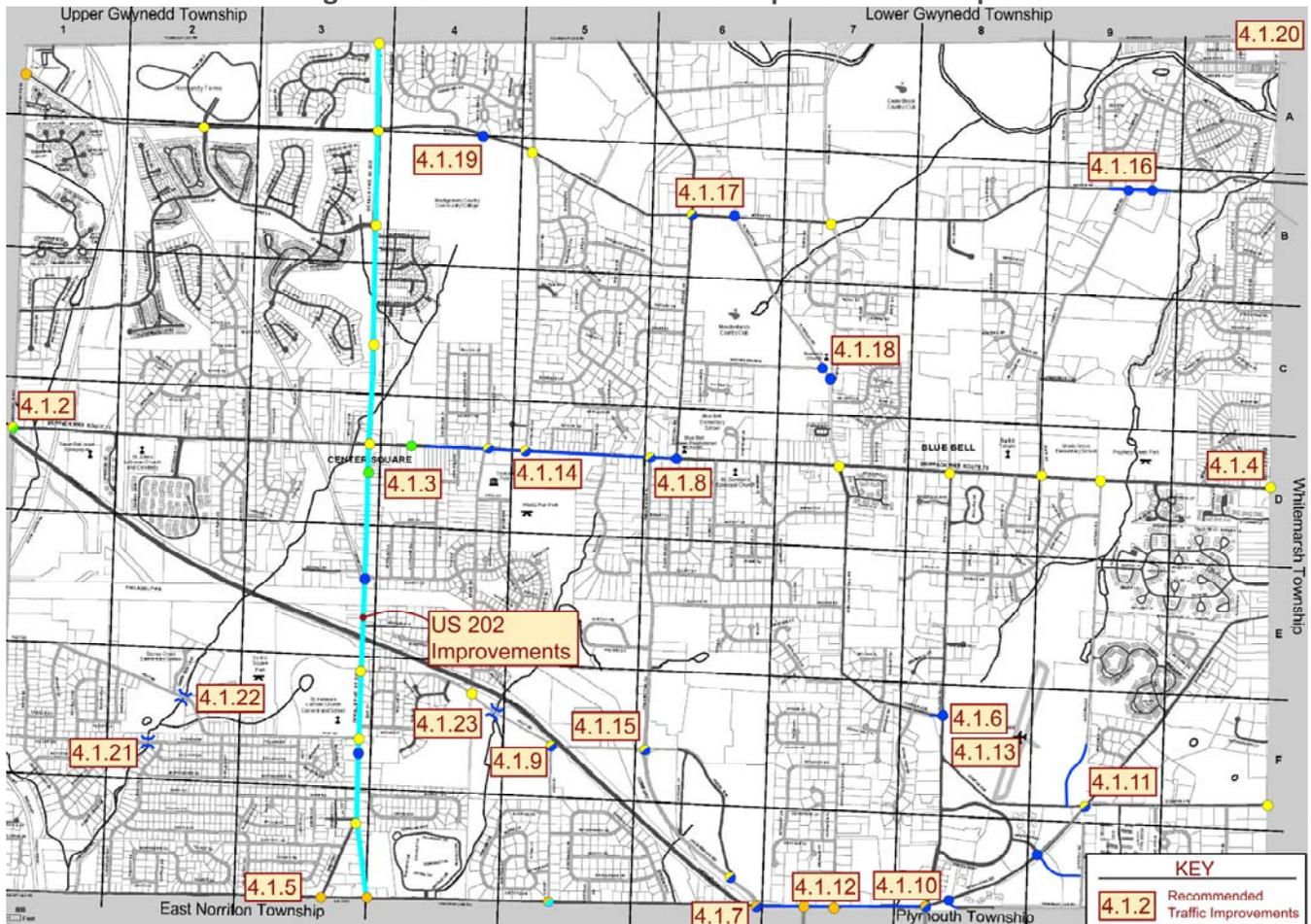
4.1.24 Encourage the use of alternative means of transportation.

4.1.25 Improve access to and use of public transportation.

Whitpain officials should initiate discussions with SEPTA to explore a bus route along Skippack Pike. This route would accommodate an underserved area in the center of the Township and would also help link Centre Square, Blue Bell, and Broad Axe Villages. The route would also benefit Montgomery County Community College. Beyond Whitpain Township, this route could connect to two popular business districts nearby: Bethlehem Pike in Flourtown (Springfield Township) and Germantown Avenue in the Chestnut Hill (City of Philadelphia).

4.1.26 Minimize vehicular access points on major roadways.

Figure 4-2: Recommended Traffic Improvements Map



**Legend**

- ✙ Churches
- 🎓 Schools
- ✈ Airports
- 🏡 Country Clubs
- ⚡ Parks
- 🏛 Municipal Building
- Whitpain Township Signals (27)
- Signals Maintained by Others (9)
- ▬ TIP Projects
- "Other" Current Projects
- Planned Future Projects (includes 3 local bridges)



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4.1.27 Pursue private, municipal, state, and federal funding opportunities to implement required transportation improvement projects.

4.1.28 Continue to coordinate regional improvements with PennDOT, DVRPC, Montgomery County, and surrounding municipalities and update residents to the status of these projects.

## 4.2 Land Use

Because Whitpain Township is almost completely built out, future development focused on the redevelopment of underutilized properties. Much of this redevelopment will be focused around the Township's four villages where underutilized and older properties or older developments have been identified, old office locations will also likely see redevelopment. The Township has identified these areas as having a potential to be redeveloped to include mixed uses such as medium to high density residential and retail to promote more walkable, neighborhood type villages. To achieve this, the Township should develop Master Plans for the Broad Axe, Blue Bell, and Centre Square villages in order to set specific design and redevelopment goals such as mixed uses. It will also be important for the Township to develop design guidelines for the villages to help shape the appearance and style of future development and notify potential developers and stakeholders of the Township's intentions in these areas.

Reexamination of the Township's zoning ordinances will also be needed for these areas and make any revisions necessary to allow developments that are consistent with village redevelopment the goals. Strategies to achieve these goals could be to include various building incentives or implementation of more restrictive zoning measures in these areas such as requirements for pedestrian facilities common use areas adjacent to roadways and allowance of mixed uses such as medium to high density residential along with

retail in the village centers. In reevaluating applicable ordinances, the Township should consider development strategies that reduce driveway curb cuts within commercial areas to reduce traffic conflicts and congestion. Additionally, the Township could consider shared parking placed in the rear of the building to enhance appearances from the street and maximize land use efficiency.

The Township has already begun to implement the recommendations of the West Ambler Revitalization and Action Plan. These recommendations should continue to be implemented and should be reevaluated frequently to keep track of progress and set new evolving objectives in the neighborhood.

Specific land use recommendations of this plan are:

- 4.2.1 Promote and enhance the Township's four village areas through a program of thoughtful redevelopment that includes performance and design standards.
- 4.2.2 Review zoning ordinances to ensure they accommodate development scenarios desired in Village areas.
- 4.2.3 Coordinate and plan with adjacent municipalities and regional planning agencies.
- 4.2.4 Create guidelines / design plan for future development in village areas and other potential redevelopment areas.
- 4.2.5 Redevelop vacant or underutilized properties near the villages and in older office locations.
- 4.2.6 Permit and promote efficient and environmentally friendly mixed use redevelopment in the village areas and throughout the Township.
- 4.2.7 Consider development strategies that reduce driveway curb cuts in commercial areas and maximize land use efficiency through shared parking.

### 4.3 Parks and Open Space

Approximately 25% Whitpain's land is temporary or protected park and open space. This percentage has slightly decreased since the completion of the Township's 2006 Open Space Plan. Several parcels formerly identified as temporarily preserved are currently in the process of being developed. The Township will need to continue to monitor its temporarily protected open space and identify strategies for acquisition or permanent protection should these parcels become available. The Township has a good core park system but should look for opportunities for expansion in order to preserve its valuable open space and meet the recreational demands of the community.

- 4.3.1 Protect and enhance Whitpain's natural resources.
- 4.3.2 Continue to expand / enhance the Township park and open space system to meet the recreational needs of residents.
- 4.3.3 Continue to monitor the status of at-risk open space parcels and develop strategies for acquisition and/or preservation.
- 4.3.4 Promote park, open space and trail facilities to inform residents of recreational opportunities in the Township.
- 4.3.5 The Township should also encourage the development of small civic spaces in villages and throughout the Township where residents are not being served by neighborhood parks. The area south of Route 73 and east Route 202 is somewhat lacking in local park space as is the area of the Township north of Route 73 and west of School Road.
- 4.3.6 Whitpain should enhance public outreach to inform and educate the community about the importance of open space and recreation. This outreach should also include a partnership with the three elementary schools in the Township to educate students about the importance of open space, parks,

and recreation through. This could involve the use the Township parks and open space for field trips or after school programs, or outdoor classrooms. This public outreach should also include the development of a map that designates existing and proposed Township open space, parks, and trails available to residents and visitors.

### **4.4 Energy and Resource Conservation / Sustainability**

Whitpain Township has recently been very proactive in sustainability and energy conservation initiative. The Township should continue this leadership by further enhancing the means by which sustainability is achieved in the Township.

The Township should first develop a formal sustainability initiative or sustainability plan that defines its energy conservation goals and provides an action plan to a achieve these goals. A sustainability plan would help the township set a framework for sustainability measures such as:

- Maximizing energy efficiency
- Reduction of vehicular travel and emissions
- Waste reduction
- Improved environmental and ecological stewardship
- Sustainable development
- Water conservation and management
- Healthy living and communities
- Economic benefits

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- Community outreach and engagement

The Sustainability Plan should clearly identify the Township's goals and develop a specific action plan to achieve these goals.

The plan will help the develop specific methods to enhance its public outreach to inform residents of the benefits of energy conservation as well as strategies for implementation. Montgomery County Community College (MCC) has also been recognized as a leader in sustainability initiatives as they have received several sustainability awards and begun to implement energy saving measures throughout the campus. This presents an opportunity for the Township and the College to work as partners to develop strategies for sustainability that provide benefits for both entities.

The plan should further analyze strategies for improved sustainability through development including the implementation of energy conservation and sustainable design incentives in the Township zoning and land development ordinances. Incentives could include specific development bonuses for height or residential density in exchange for inclusion of green building measures such as those required by LEED standards. As the Township takes steps towards redeveloping its villages, incorporating environmentally friendly development will be critical to the long term success of these neighborhoods.

The Township has recently taken an important step towards improving its sustainability by appointing a Township sustainability coordinator to help oversee energy conservation initiatives in the Township and to keep the Board of Supervisors attuned to the various strategies being implemented. The Township could further consider the addition of a sustainability committee to assist in public outreach dealing with energy conservation measures in the community. Sustainability recommendations include:

4.4.1 Develop a Township-wide sustainability master plan with

specific benchmarks for township-wide sustainability enhancements.

- 4.4.2 Promote and implement alternative means of transportation and other Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies where possible.
- 4.4.3 Promote utilization of energy conservation strategies and sustainable practices.
- 4.4.4 Promote water conservation strategies and best management practices
- 4.4.5 Continue Township infrastructure upgrades that conserve energy and valuable Township resources.
- 4.4.6 Educate residents about sustainability and energy saving opportunities and strategies.
- 4.4.7 Work with MCCC to develop joint sustainability initiatives.
- 4.4.8 Examine opportunities to promote shared parking with associated stormwater management facilities and other environmentally friendly infrastructure.
- 4.4.9 Develop a riparian buffer ordinance and tree protection / replacement ordinance to help protect Township watersheds.

## 4.5 Economic Development

As a basis for understanding the economic forces at work in the Township's 4 villages, an economic analysis was undertaken of the village areas. Three villages (Centre Square, Broad Axe and Blue Bell) were examined in 2015 as a part of the Comprehensive Plan Study. West Ambler Village as analyzed in 2012 as a part of the

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**Table 4-1. Overall Market Recommendations for Centre Square, Broad Axe, and Blue Bell Villages**

Market	Demand?	# of Stores	Store Space (SF)
<b>Retail - Locally-Serving</b>	Yes		
Hardware Store	Yes	1	4,000
Specialty Food Store	Yes	5/6	24,000
Beer/Wine/Liquor Store	Yes	2/3	10,000
Cosmetics/BeautySupply Store	Yes	1	2,000
Optical Goods Store	Yes	1	1,300
Gift/Novelty/Souvenir Store	Yes	2/3	6,000
Laundromats	Yes	2	4,000
Dry Cleaners	Yes	3	6,000
<b>Retail - Regionally-Serving</b>	Yes		
Furniture Stores	Yes	1/2	8,000
Home Furnishing Stores	Yes	4/5	15,000
Garden Center	Yes	1	10,000
Jewelry Stores	Yes	2	4,000
Specialty Sporting Goods Stores	Yes	3/4	10,000
Hobby Store	Yes	3/4	10,000
Sewing Stores	Yes	1	2,000
Musical Instrument Stores	Yes	1/2	4,000
Full-Service Restaurants	Yes	4/5	30,000
Drinking Places serving Food	Yes	2/3	14,000
<b>Office</b>	No		
<b>Entertainment</b>	Yes		
Visual Arts Center (with Studios)	Yes		
Performance Venue	No		
Bowling Alley (Small)	Yes		
Dance Studio	No		
Yoga Studio	Yes		

West Ambler Revitalization and Action Plan. Major recommendations of that plan are included in the appendix of this report. The entire West Ambler Revitalization and Action Plan was previously adopted as a part of the Whitpain Comprehensive Plan. Those economic development recommendations focus on redevelopment and new development of residential units.

Whitpain's economy has benefited from its prominent location just northwest of Philadelphia and with its' close proximity major area highways. The Route 202 corridor and Route 73 corridor serve as the Township's main commercial areas. Because of Whitpain's location, healthy commercial corridors, and array of community facilities, the median housing value in Whitpain has risen to \$426,000 which is \$130,500 higher than the County median and higher than all of its neighboring municipalities except Lower Gwynedd Township. These high housing costs can make home ownership in Whitpain difficult to achieve for some lower income families. In order to serve these families, Whitpain could consider the addition of higher density rental units in or near its four villages. The best opportunities for new housing in the villages exists in West Ambler Village. Its largely residential character and its proximity to downtown Ambler make it a strong residential redevelopment area.

In Broad Axe, Blue Bell, and Centre Square Villages, the addition of retail facilities that fill gaps in both the local and regional markets as identified by the Market Assessment for these three villages should be explored by the Township. Retail uses identified by the study that would fill gaps in the local market in Whitpain include:

- Small hardware store
- Specialty food store
- Beer, wine, and liquor store
- Cosmetics and beauty store
- Optical goods store

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- Gift, novelty, and souvenir store, and
- Laundromat

Retail uses identified by the study that would fill gaps in the regional market include:

- Furniture stores
- Computer and software store
- Garden center
- Specialty sporting goods store
- Hobby stores
- Musical instrument store
- Sewing store
- Full-service restaurants
- Drinking places serving food

The Township should promote the development of these types of businesses types to fill the gaps in the markets to expand on the variety of retail services offered to the community. The summary table for Centre Square, Blue Bell, and Broad Axe Villages can be found in Table 4-1. The complete Market Assessment for these three villages can be found in the appendix of this report. Summary recommendations for West Ambler Village are also found in the Appendix of this report.

The Township should also consider developing a marketing plan for the villages. The marketing plan could encourage area residents to “shop and dine locally” at the walkable locations. For West Ambler Village, marketing efforts should focus on single family and multi-family residential developers. The West Ambler effort should be a multi-municipal effort with Ambler Borough and perhaps Upper Dublin, which cover a small part of the redevelopment area. Additionally, both Broad Axe Village and West Ambler Village serve as “gateways” to Whitpain. This should be considered when evaluating

potential signage, landscaping, and streetscape improvements.

- 4.5.1 Maintain a high quality of life in the Township to attract visitors and retain employees and residents.
- 4.5.2 Continue to enhance and maintain the Township's four village areas.
- 4.5.3 Seek to diversify the Township's economy to provide to provide a wide range of businesses, retail, and entertainment opportunities for residents and visitors.
- 4.5.4 Promote and encourage development of retail and entertainment uses that capture local and regional market gaps.
- 4.5.5 Develop a marketing plan for the Township's four villages.
- 4.5.6 Create gateway improvements at Broad Axe Village and West Ambler Village.

## 4.6 Community Facilities and Services

- 4.6.1 Continue to expand and enhance the mix of services and facilities to meet the current and future needs of residents.

Community services are an important for maintaining residents and attracting visitors. These facilities should remain consistent with the needs of the community as it changes over time. The Township should evaluate its community services to respond to the current and future needs of the Township.

- 4.6.2 Continue to monitor and upgrade infrastructure systems to ensure they do not negatively impact the community.

As Whitpain's utility infrastructure continues to age and reach the end of its expected life span, the Township will need to allocate funds to account for replacement of these facilities. Township offi-

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cials should continue to monitor the effectiveness of these facilities and budget as appropriate for future repairs.

4.6.3 Provide a wide variety recreational opportunities and facilities to residents.

Recreational trends are constantly evolving. The Township should continuously evaluate its recreational facility supply and community demand to determine where gaps exist in both quantity and types of facilities. Over time some facilities may become less desirable and others will become more desirable. The Township should attempt to stay ahead of these trends. The Township should look at locations of recreational facilities to ensure that all neighborhoods in the Township have safe access to local recreational areas.

4.6.4 Offer high quality public safety and emergency services to meet and exceed the demand of the community.

The ability of the Township's emergency services to respond efficiently and effectively to emergencies is critical to the well being of those in the community. The Township will need to allocate funding for equipment upgrades and replacement as these existing resources become less effective.

4.6.5 Increase public safety as needed to account for increased pedestrian activity in areas of new development.

As redevelopment occurs, the Township will need to evaluate its public safety to meet the changing demand. Areas such as Centre Square Village are expected to see considerable redevelopment that will increase activity and ultimately create a need for increased police monitoring.

4.6.6 Enhance public outreach of the Township's emergency services to further strengthen their relationship with the community.

Public outreach by the Township's emergency services is extremely

important is it can help educate residents on how these services operate and how residents can help them run more efficiently and effectively and maximize safety within the Township. Public outreach is already an important part of these services. A focus should be to enhance the outreach where possible including additional sponsored events, school programs, informational booths, educational seminars, and partnerships with other Township organizations and employers.

4.6.7 Examine the opportunities to reduce the number of trash haulers in the Township to improve efficiency and help reduce pollution and noise in residential neighborhoods.

### 4.7 Historic Preservation

The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission identifies 87 historically significant resources in Whitpain. The Township should seek to maintain and enhance these resources where possible through necessary renovation or adaptive reuse. Any design guidelines developed for the four village areas should be sensitive to historic resources in those areas.

The Township should also consider interpretive signage where feasible to educate the community about the Township's history and its remaining historic resources. The Township should continue to collaborate with the Wissahickon Valley Historical Society and other community groups to organize tours of Whitpain's historically significant resources and events that celebrate the Township's history. The Township should also partner with local schools to educate students about the important history of their community. This partnership could include school projects or research assignments that mutually benefit the schools, students, and the Township.

4.7.1 Embrace the future of the Township while cherishing its heritage.

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- 4.7.2 Preserve historic character of Whitpain's village areas.
- 4.7.3 Protect and preserve important historic structures and facilities throughout the Township.
- 4.7.4 Promote redevelopment that is compatible with Whitpain's historic and cultural resources.
- 4.7.5 Develop an on-site and web based interpretive signage system highlighting the Township's historic resources and sites.
- 4.7.6 Partner with local schools to educate students about Whitpain's rich local history.
- 4.7.7 Examine standards to preserve existing neighborhood character to enhance their desirability.

## 4.8 Compatibility with Adjacent Municipalities

- 4.8.1 Work closely with adjacent municipalities to consistently plan transportation improvements including both roadways infrastructure and pedestrian / bicycle trails.
- 4.8.2 Work with adjacent municipalities to ensure any development in adjacent communities does not negatively impact Whitpain.
- 4.8.3 Work closely with adjacent municipalities to promote and enhance Whitpain's villages, specifically the West Ambler and Broad Axe Villages that lie in multiple municipalities.
- 4.8.4 Coordinate the Township's efforts with the Montgomery County Comprehensive Plan—Montco 2040: A Shared Vision.

### **MONTCO 2040: A SHARED VISION, The Comprehensive Plan for Montgomery County**

The new Montgomery County Comprehensive Plan outlines a multitude of goals to be achieved over the next 25 years. Many of these goals that are consistent with the goals of Whippain Township include:

- Opportunities of for healthy lifestyles
- Diverse housing choices
- Strong downtowns and destinations
- Enhanced Community Character
- Focused Development
- Connected Trails and Greenways
- Conserved Natural Resources
- Improved Transportation Choices
- Modernized Infrastructure Network
- Improved Transportation Access
- Improved Stormwater Management
- Marketing of Assets

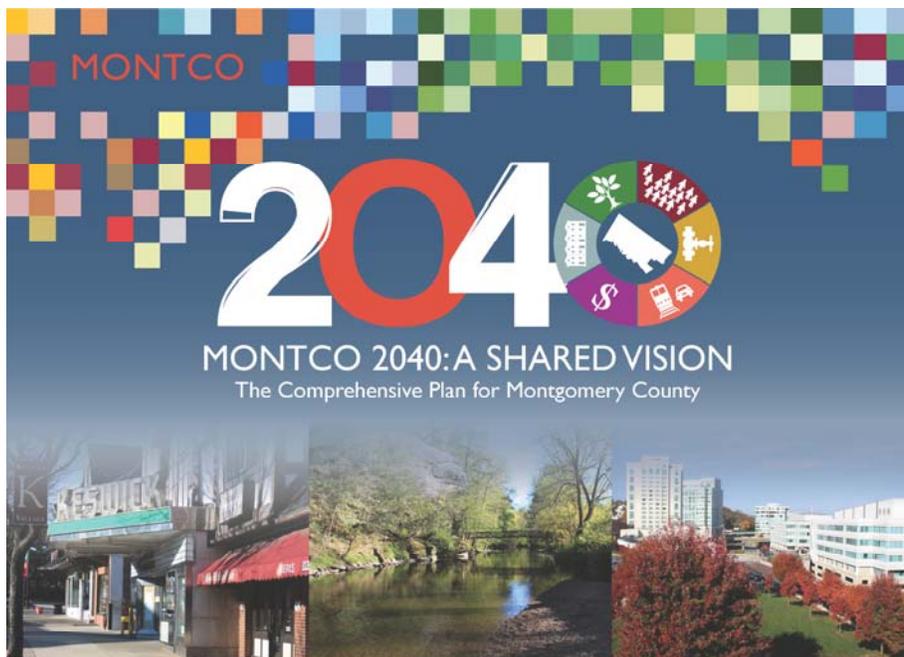
As part of the plan's overall vision, several specific improvement projects in and around Whippain are identified. These projects include the Route 202 widening project, the 476 and Route 202 interchange, and improvements to the Gwynedd Valley rail station consisting of an expanded parking area, signage, lights, landscaping, and stormwater controls. The plan identifies just 9% of the county as future growth area that is currently undeveloped. 51% of the land in the county is identified as future growth area that is already developed. Much of Whippain's land falls into the second category of developed land with potential for future redevelopment.

Major coordination items with the municipalities adjacent to Whippain

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include transportation improvements and improvements at Broad Axe and West Ambler Village. The Township should work with its adjacent municipalities to ensure consistent transportation improvements and to ensure that any development in adjacent municipalities does not negatively impact Whitpain. Additionally, Whitpain should partner with its neighbors to develop a multi-municipal trail network and discuss other pedestrian improvements needed to better link the municipalities.



Montgomery County, Pennsylvania 2015

