

# ASTON TOWNSHIP

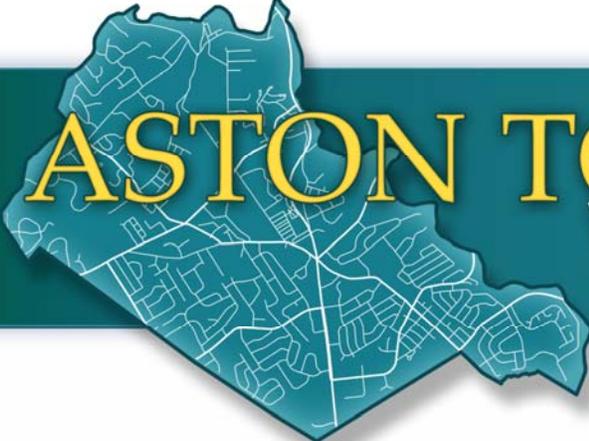
## Vision Plan

Delaware County, Pennsylvania

September 18, 2014







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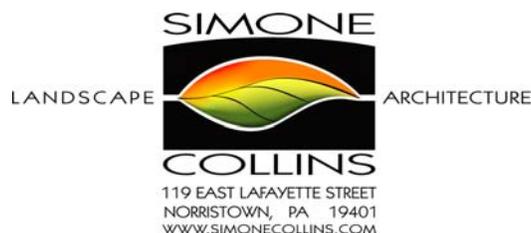
September, 2014

Prepared for:



Aston Township, Delaware County  
Pennsylvania

Prepared by:



**URBAN PARTNERS**



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Appendix (to be included in final draft)  
Meeting minutes





## Introduction

Aston Township has retained a multi-disciplinary professional planning team of Simone Collins Landscape Architecture and Urban Partners to prepare a Vision Plan for the Township. The Plan is intended to assist the community with identifying priority actions to enhance the economic sustainability and quality of life in the Township.

## Aston Today

**Strategic Location** - A community of about 16,000 people, Aston Township occupies a strategic location in Delaware County and the Philadelphia Region. Situated just a few miles north and minutes from the I-95 corridor, Aston is within easy reach of the Philadelphia International Airport, downtown Philadelphia and the regional highway network. The Route 1 corridor is located just 4 miles north of Aston. Just north of Aston are the boroughs of Media and Swarthmore thriving communities that have healthy local economies and increasingly affluent populations. The Granite Run Mall, located on Rt. 1 is about to be redeveloped with mixed use and the Franklin Mint property located in the adjacent township of Middleton will also be developed as a mixed use area over the next decade. Further to the west on Rt. 1 is the Brinton Lakes complex, with substantial retail, hotel, medical and residential areas. While all of these areas offer services and retail opportunities for Aston residents, they also compete with some of the larger retail businesses in Aston Township limiting new large-scale market opportunities in the Township in retail, service and other areas. This report's market analysis documents those conditions and points out the market opportunities that exist today in Aston.



Due in part to the presence of these regional destinations and high profile communities, Aston has been somewhat “under the radar” in terms of being a visible community, attractive to residents and businesses in the region. This has been both a positive and negative in several ways. Historically, Aston has been home to successive generations of families who prize the small town values, highly engaged residents and good housing stock that has remained stable even through the recent recession. Aston's percentage of owner-occupied housing is at 90%, compared to 70% for Delaware County as a whole. This is a very positive indicator of a stable community valued by residents. It is also a very attractive attribute for young families looking for a stable community with reasonably priced housing. Also, the Penn-Delco School District which serves the township is very well-regarded.

The “under-the-radar” status of the community is a challenge in that Aston is an aging community that needs an infusion of younger residents to remain vital and to provide the next generation of community and business leaders. Also, highly successful communities and retail areas that surround Aston have helped to create a retail environment in the township that is at best stagnant and appears to be declining. While there are many viable businesses in Aston, many retail businesses are of a declining quality. This is not a positive trend for any community.

There are three regionally known entities in or near Aston that are and will continue to contribute significantly to the community’s vitality: Neumann University; The Ice Works; and the Sun Center (located just south of the Township line in Chester Township). This Vision Plan explores the opportunities that all three of these institutions present which can help to contribute the vitality of Aston.

While the Township enjoys good proximity to both I-95 and Route 1, the major roads to and from those routes, Pennell Road and Concord Road have capacity limitations and traffic can become very congested on these roadways. Recently, PennDOT has installed integrated timing of the traffic lights along Pennell Road that has improved traffic flows. Many of the other roadways in Aston are historic and winding, recalling the historic mills that once populated the Chester Creek banks. The construction of significant new roadways in the Township is unlikely, as rights of ways are limited. Aston needs to focus on improvements to existing roadways and traffic calming methods to increase the efficiency of the existing roadway network and land use policies that create areas of multi-use that may tend to limit short automobile trips within the community.

However there are several roadway improvements currently being designed that will be built over the next several years that will improve traffic flows to and from the Township.

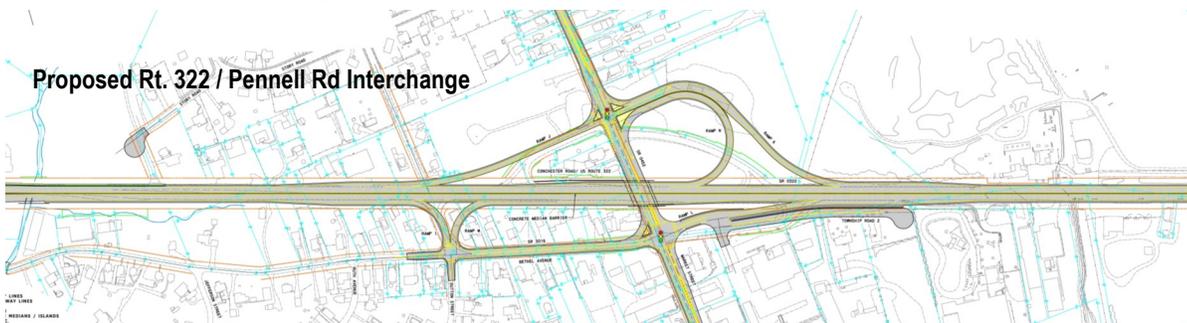
PennDOT is currently designing a new interchange at the I-95 / Rt. 322 junction. This new improvement will greatly ease traffic flows at this location. PennDOT is also designing a new interchange for the Rt. 322 / Pennell Road intersection. This will have similar benefits for traffic to and from Aston.

Another project is the proposed extension of Bridgewater Road from its current terminus in Upper Chichester Township through an undeveloped industrial area to Pennell Road opposite the intersection of Springbrooke Boulevard. Other alignments for this new road extension are also being considered but this one seems the most likely.

Aston never had train service, save the Chester Creek Branch Trolley Line, located along eastern border of the Township. However, there has been no service on this line for decades and the right-of-way is planned to be redeveloped into a multi-purpose trail, which will be a quality of life amenity for the Township. This planned regional trail system presents opportunities for the Township to create connecting pedestrian and bicycle routes that may further encourage residents to walk and or bike, increasing transportation opportunities in the community while creating some minimal (if negligible) reductions in the number of motor vehicle trips.

Aston’s community facilities are well used but aging. It has a good number of park facilities that are widely distributed across the community, including a very heavily used community center and library. The township building is past its’ efficient and useful lifespan; the public work facility is in poor condition and the township’s two fire companies are looking at consolidation to make the best and most efficient use of community resources.

The Aston Township Vision Plan is intended as an agenda-setting document that will create a baseline for additional planning, marketing, design and development planning that can occur over the next two decades in Aston. The Vision Plan has focused much of its detail on the market study that outlines the economic opportunities that exist in the community. The Plan is intended to be a catalyst to private sector action that will help solidify, enhance and support the economic underpinnings of the community and local government services and leadership.





One possible configuration for the I-95 / Rt. 322 Interchange.

## Demographics

Key demographic factors pertaining include population and housing data. For this analysis, we examined the data for Aston Township and Delaware County for comparison.

The U.S. Census indicates that between 2000 and 2010, Aston Township experienced an increase in population of 2.4% (see **Table 1**).

**Table 1. Population 2000-2010**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

| Area            | 2000    | 2010    | 2000-2010 Change | % Change |
|-----------------|---------|---------|------------------|----------|
| Aston Township  | 16,203  | 16,592  | 389              | 2.4%     |
| Delaware County | 550,864 | 558,979 | 8,115            | 1.5%     |

1). Delaware County also grew slightly in population, but by just 1.5% during the same period. There was also an increase in the total number of households in both the Township and County between 2000 and 2010, but at a slower rate than the rate of population increase. The number of households grew by almost 2% during this period, compared to the county's 1.2%, slightly increasing the persons-per-household ratio from 2.71 to 2.72 (see **Table 2**).

**Table 2. Households 2000-2010**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

| Area            | 2000    | 2010    | 2000-2010 Change | % Change |
|-----------------|---------|---------|------------------|----------|
| Aston Township  | 5,838   | 5,945   | 107              | 1.8%     |
| Delaware County | 206,320 | 208,700 | 2,380            | 1.2%     |

To get an estimate of future population growth in the Township, we examined population estimates for both Aston and Delaware County using forecasts from the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC). These forecasts reflect population growth in the Township from 2010 to 2040, estimated at 2.3% - about the same

rate of growth anticipated for the thirty-year period as experienced in the past (2000-2010) decade (see **Table 3**). Growth is therefore projected to moderate. By comparison, Delaware County is expected to have a slightly lower growth rate than the Township between 2010 and 2040, after a slower growth rate during the 2000s as well.

**Table 3. Population Forecast 2000-2010**

Source: DVRPC

| Area            | 2010 Census | 2020    | 2030    | 2040    | 2010-2040 Change | % Change |
|-----------------|-------------|---------|---------|---------|------------------|----------|
| Aston Township  | 16,592      | 16,663  | 16,910  | 16,980  | 388              | 2.3%     |
| Delaware County | 558,979     | 560,989 | 567,978 | 569,982 | 11,003           | 2.0%     |

During the 2000s, Aston Township experienced about a 2% growth in housing units compared to almost 3% in Delaware County (see **Table 4**). The Township gained new households at about the same rate as housing units, indicating a fairly sustainable growth pattern. On the other hand, more than twice as many housing units were created in Delaware County than households between 2000 and 2010.

**Table 4. Housing Units 2000-2010**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

| Area            | 2000    | 2010    | 2000-2010 Change | % Change |
|-----------------|---------|---------|------------------|----------|
| Aston Township  | 5,978   | 6,091   | 113              | 1.9%     |
| Delaware County | 216,978 | 222,902 | 5,924            | 2.7%     |

Despite the modestly positive changes in population and households between 2000 and 2010 in both the Township and the County, vacancy rates increased in both jurisdictions as well (see **Table 5**), however at much different rates. Vacant housing units increased by 4.3% from 2000 to 2010 in Aston. At the same time, Delaware County increased its vacant housing units by more than 33%, resulting in a much higher vacancy rate (6.4%) than the Township.

**Table 5. Vacant Housing Units 2000-2010**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

| Area            | 2000   | 2010   | 2000-2010 Change | % Change | Vacancy Rate 2010 |
|-----------------|--------|--------|------------------|----------|-------------------|
| Aston Township  | 140    | 146    | 6                | 4.3%     | 2.4%              |
| Delaware County | 10,658 | 14,202 | 3,544            | 33.3%    | 6.4%              |

As occupied housing increased, so did owner-occupancy in both Aston Township and Delaware County in the 2000s (see Tables 6 and 7). During that period, Aston's ownership rate increased by more than a percentage, while the County's rate dropped by a similar rate. By 2010, the rate of ownership in the Township reached an impressive 90%, almost 20% higher than the County's rate. Similarly, renters constituted just 10% of Aston's housing occupants in 2010 compared to the County's 30%.

**Table 6. Owner-Occupied Housing Units 2000-2010**

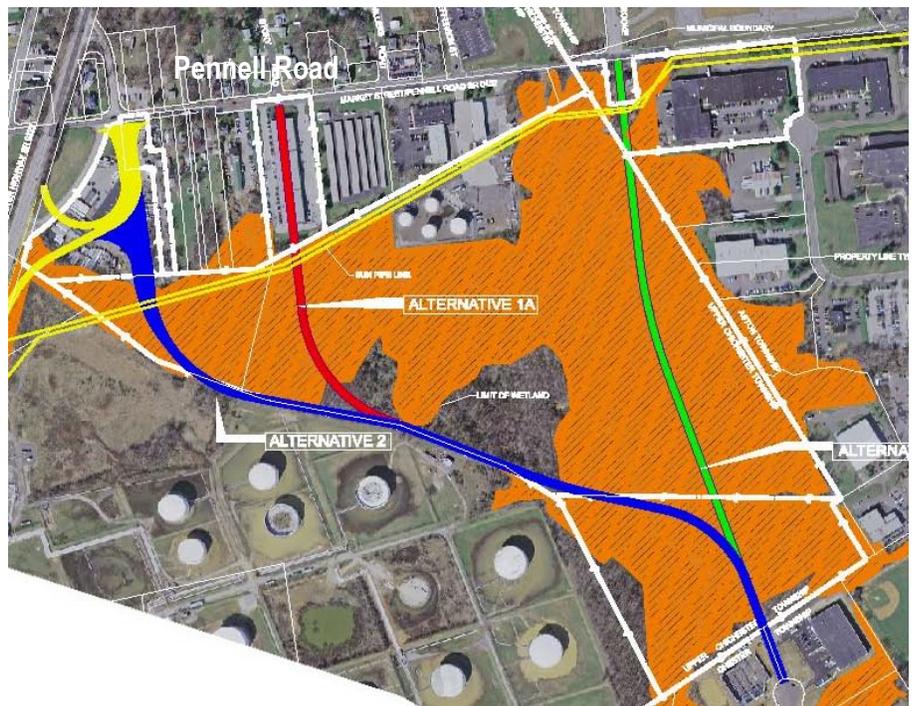
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

| Area            | 2000    | 2010    | Ownership Rate 2000 | Ownership Rate 2010 |
|-----------------|---------|---------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Aston Township  | 5,186   | 5,357   | 88.8%               | 90.1%               |
| Delaware County | 148,384 | 147,212 | 71.9%               | 70.5%               |

**Table 7. Renter-Occupied Housing Units 2000-2010**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

| Area            | 2000   | 2010   | Renter Rate 2000 | Renter Rate 2010 |
|-----------------|--------|--------|------------------|------------------|
| Aston Township  | 652    | 588    | 11.2%            | 9.9%             |
| Delaware County | 57,936 | 61,488 | 28.1%            | 29.5%            |



Proposed Bridgewater Road extension

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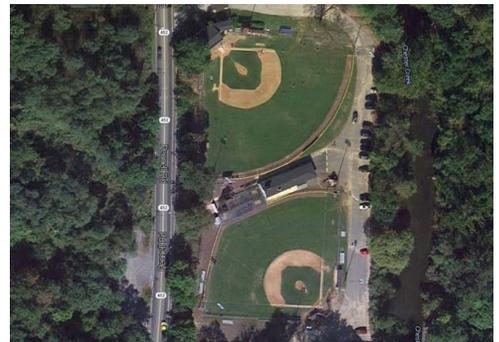
**Physical Conditions** – Aston Township exhibits a variety of physical conditions that, for the purpose of this brief analysis are divided into the categories of: Community Facilities; Streetscapes; Gateways; Private Sector facilities and businesses.

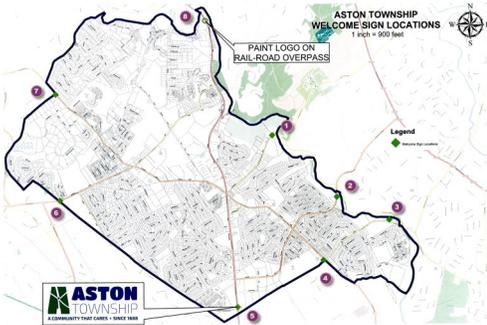
**Community facilities:** While very well maintained, community facilities in Aston are generally showing their age through heavy use and normal wear- and-tear.

**The Township Administration / Police Building and Public Works Facility**, which are approximately 50 years old, are both well past their useful lives. Inefficient to heat, light and cool, the township building is functionally obsolete. Township staff and police have outgrown the facility. It is a tribute to the dedicated police and township personal that they have been able to deliver excellent services to their constituents despite these inefficient and cramped buildings.

**The Aston Community Center and Public Library** is very heavily utilized by many segments of the community. The various rooms in the community center are almost constantly scheduled. The library is in need of an upgrade since over the last 20 years, the nature and use of libraries has changed dramatically. The site is owned by the Penn-Delco School District and there is a lot of room on the site for expansion of both facilities as well as a rethinking of the site's recreational facilities, perhaps to better dovetail with community center facilities and activities. The on-going partnership between the Township and School District is one that can be mutually beneficial for both organizations.

**Aston has 11 park sites** that are distributed widely across the Township. These parks are heavily utilized by the many organized





**Gateway Locations**



youth sports organizations that play at least some of their games in Aston. Similar to other community facilities, Aston’s parks are well maintained. It has been many years since a formal overview of Aston’s parks have been undertaken. This type of parks and recreational facilities overview usually takes the form of a Comprehensive Recreation Plan that also takes into account community use of School District facilities.

**Streetscapes.** A streetscape can be defined as the visual elements of a street, including the road, adjoining buildings, street furniture, trees and open spaces, etc., that combine to form the street’s character.

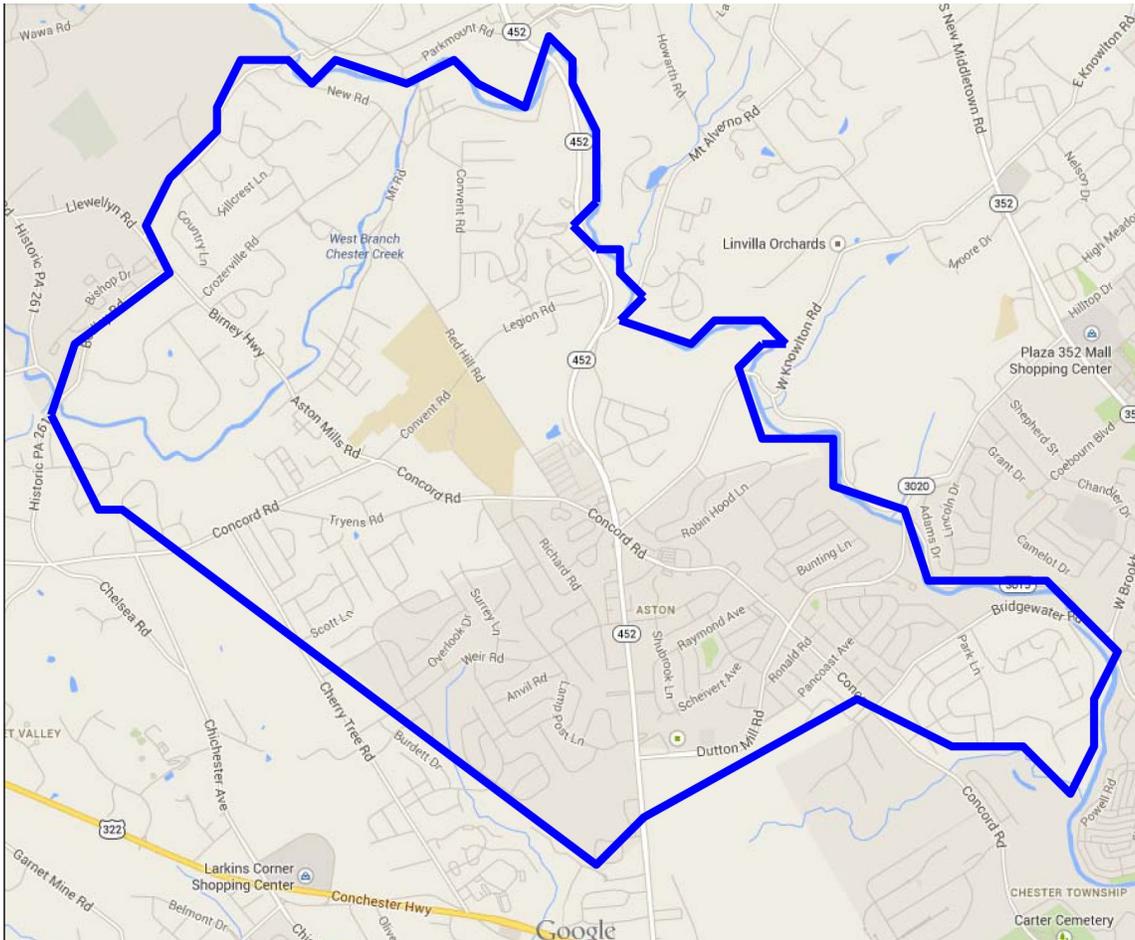
Aston exhibits a variety of streetscape types. As an older community initially defined by the many mills along the steep topography of the Chester Creek, many of Aston’s roadways are narrow, winding thoroughfares such as the northern stretches of Pennell Road. These old mill roads are quite attractive and many have limited development on them, since topography has limited the ability to build adjacent to the rights-of-way and many retain a heavily treed landscape.

The lower section of Pennell Road and much of Concord Road have developed over the last half century as the primary commercial corridors in Aston. While being highly functional roadways, most stretches of these thoroughfares were developed in a utilitarian manner with little thought to aesthetics or accommodation for the pedestrian. There are few trees along most of these roadways and there are gaps in the sidewalk system. There are occasional cobra-head light fixtures, primarily at intersections. There are few other ornamental or flowering plantings anywhere along major thoroughfares in Aston. The one exception may be the relatively new Veteran’s Memorial Plaza located at five point’s intersection where new, well-maintained plantings add greatly to the short strip of the street. Architecture along Aston’s commercial roadways exhibits a wide variety of styles, and there is little noteworthy commercial architecture in the community. There is almost no street furniture (benches, trash receptacles, bike racks, etc.) save the few designated bus stops in the Township. Aston’s commercial streets are unattractive and as countless studies have indicated, poor streetscape aesthetics do not positively contribute to the shopping, dining, driving or pedestrian experience.

**Gateways.** Many residents of Aston would be hard pressed to identify when they enter the Township limits as they drive into the community. For visitors who come to or drive through Aston, it would be nearly impossible for them to identify when they enter the township. This plan identifies seven primary gateways into Aston; 1. Pennell Road at the Chester Creek Branch RR Trail Trestle; 2 Dutton Mill Road at the Chester Creek; 3. Bridgewater Road at the Chester Creek; 4. Concord Road and Bridgewater Road; 5. The Southern end of Pennell Road; 6 The western end of Concord Road (just east

of Carriage Lane) ; 7 Birney Highway at Bodley Road. Each of these entry points into the Township should have a gateway sign and landscaping, each designed to fit each of these unique settings.

**Private Sector Facilities and Businesses.** While there are certainly a number of new and modern private sector businesses and shops (Giant, WAWA, Seasons Pizza, and others) the majority of private sector businesses in Aston are housed in aging architecture that is for the most part unremarkable and unmemorable. The character of these buildings or lack thereof has a direct effect on the character of the streetscape.



**Planning Process.** The Aston Vision Plan was completed over a seven month process that began in April 2014 and concluded in November. Planning included 4 public meetings, 5 committee meetings, Key Person / Organization interviews and progress meetings with the Township staff and other Township consultants. Please re-

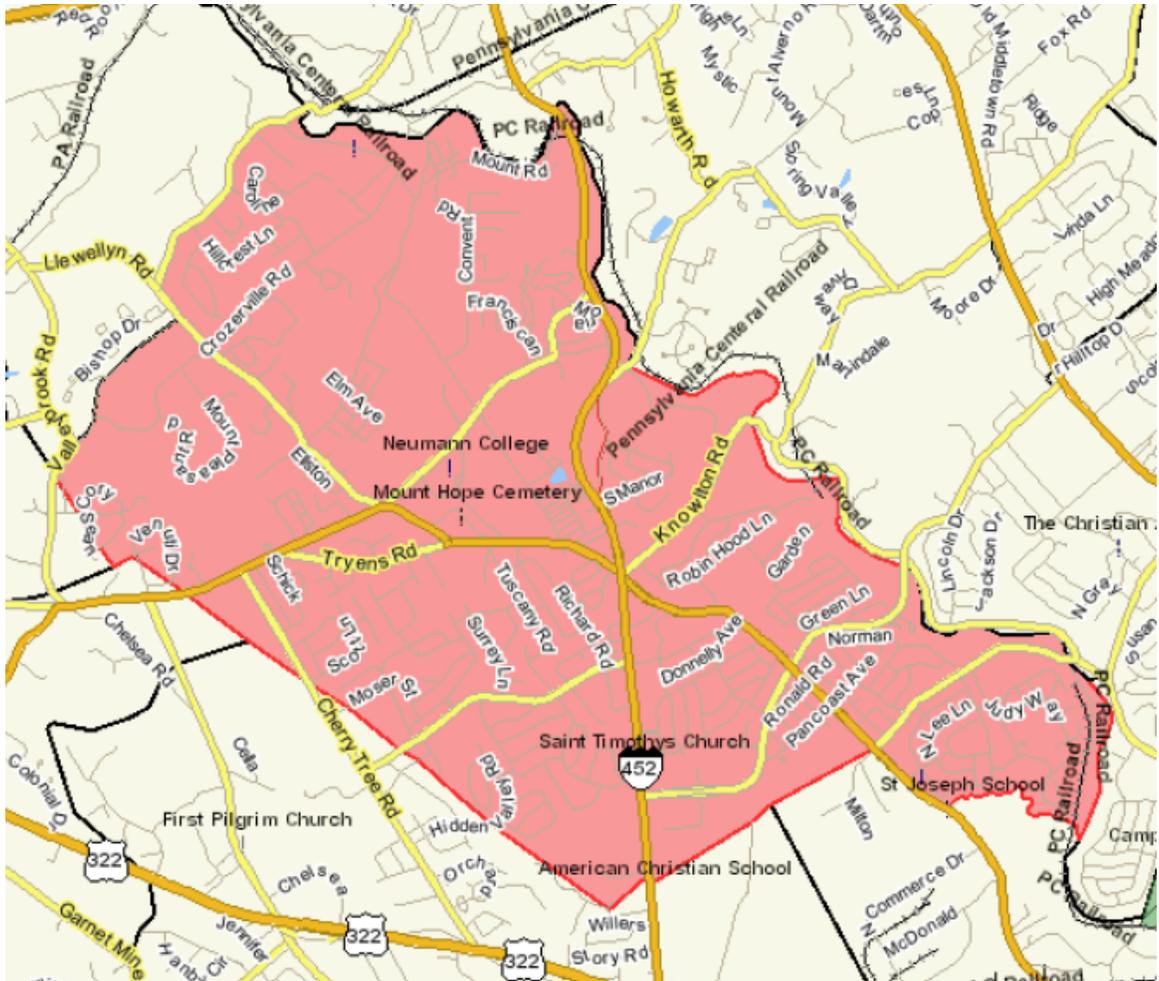
fer to the graphic schedule for graphic representation of the Vision Plan schedule.

## Market Analysis

As part of the Vision Plan, Urban Partners has conducted an assessment evaluating the retail, entertainment, office/commercial, industrial/flex, hospitality, and rental housing markets for Aston Township. This analysis serves as a baseline for existing economic and market conditions, and identifies the Township's potential for expanded market opportunities that can serve its residents, employees, and visitors alike. The geographic study area for this market assessment is the Township itself (see **Map 1**).

**Map 1. Aston Township**

Source: Google Maps



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# Retail Market

## Background and Retail Trade Area

Urban Partners conducted a retail market analysis to characterize the performance of existing retailers in Aston Township, as well as identify gaps and opportunities for the further development of retailing in the Township based on the capture of area retail purchases. For the purposes of this market analysis, we have defined the Retail Trade Area as being synonymous with the Township boundary (shown on **Map 2**). While we considered a larger trade area, the presence of substantial retail supply in surrounding communities would disguise any gap in retail supply within the Township itself. By limiting the Trade Area to the Township, but being mindful of offerings beyond the Township, we are better able to evaluate the retail opportunities most appropriate in type and scale for the community, particularly basic goods and services purchased most frequently.

## Map 2. Aston Township Retail Market Trade Area

Source: The Nielsen Company

For the retail market analysis, we are focused chiefly on retail stores engaged in selling merchandise for personal and/or household consumption and on establishments that render services incidental to the sale of these goods. Selected service establishments are also included, especially those businesses primarily providing personal services to individuals and households, such as hair and nail salons and laundry and dry cleaning establishments. All retail establishments in the area were classified by type of business according to the principal lines of merchandise sold and the usual trade designation. In general, this classification follows the numeric system established for both government and industry practice – the NAICS.

The term “retail store sales” in this analysis includes sales by establishments that are normally found in pedestrian-oriented retail shopping areas. This definition excludes the sales of automobile dealerships and repair facilities, service stations, fuel oil dealers, and non-store retailing. Banks and other financial establishments are also excluded from this assessment because banking activities – deposits, loans, etc. – cannot be added to sales volume data for other types of retail establishments. Unlike many secondary data sources, such as the Bureau of the Census, however and as noted above, this definition does include the sales of service establishments such as barber shops, hair and nail salons, and dry cleaners.

## Retail Supply

**Table 8. Retail Supply in the Aston Retail Trade Area** Source: Urban Partners

| Business Name                   | Address | Street           | Shopping Center              | Type of Business                     |
|---------------------------------|---------|------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 7 Eleven                        | 2370    | Dutton Mill Road |                              | Convenience Stores                   |
| Applebee's                      | 4301    | Pennell Road     |                              | Full-Service Restaurants             |
| Aston Beverage                  | 413     | Marianville Road | Facciolo Complex             | Beer, Wine and Liquor Stores         |
| Aston Pawn Shop                 | 4716    | Pennell Road     | Shoppes at Broadway Plaza    | Used Merchandise Stores              |
| Aston Pharmacy                  | 10      | Scheivert Avenue |                              | Pharmacies and Drug Stores           |
| Aston Pizza Co.                 | 600     | Convent Road     |                              | Limited-Service Restaurants          |
| B&N Piano Sales                 | 2460    | Dutton Mill Road |                              | Musical Instrument and Supply Stores |
| Barnaby's                       | 5501    | Pennell Road     |                              | Full-Service Restaurants             |
| Beach Tanz                      | 4804    | Pennell Road     | Valley View Shopping Center  | Hair Salons, Barbers, Nail Salons    |
| Beauty Nails & Spa              | 4740    | Pennell Road     | Shoppes at Broadway Plaza    | Hair Salons, Barbers, Nail Salons    |
| Big Lots                        | 3472    | Concord Road     | Village Green                | Other General Merchandise Stores     |
| Blair's Florist                 | 3001    | Concord Road     |                              | Florists                             |
| Bruster's Ice Cream             | 3630    | Concord Road     |                              | Limited-Service Restaurants          |
| Burger King                     | 5014    | Pennell Road     |                              | Limited-Service Restaurants          |
| C.R. Shenanigans Bar            | 4936    | Pennell Road     | Valley View Shopping Center  | Drinking Places                      |
| Capriotti's Sandwich Shop       | 4417    | Pennell Road     | Dutton Mill Shopping Village | Limited-Service Restaurants          |
| Capt 'n Chucky's Crabcakes      | 4908    | Pennell Road     | Valley View Shopping Center  | Limited-Service Restaurants          |
| Casa Prego                      | 3488    | Concord Road     | Village Green                | Full-Service Restaurants             |
| China Aston Inn                 | 415     | Marianville Road | Facciolo Complex             | Limited-Service Restaurants          |
| Cimino's Tailoring/Dry Cleaning | 4768    | Pennell Road     | Shoppes at Broadway Plaza    | Laundries/Dry Cleaning               |
| Clean Cuts Hair Shop            | 2960    | Concord Road     |                              | Hair Salons, Barbers, Nail Salons    |
| Cocco's Pizzeria Pub            | 2430    | Dutton Mill Road |                              | Full-Service Restaurants             |
| Concord Beer Distribution       | 3478    | Concord Road     | Village Green                | Beer, Wine and Liquor Stores         |
| Concord Pet Foods & Supplies    | 4940    | Pennell Road     | Valley View Shopping Center  | Pet Supply Stores                    |
| Craftech Computer Solutions     | 4748    | Pennell Road     | Shoppes at Broadway Plaza    | Computer and Software Stores         |
| Crown Flooring                  | 423     | Marianville Road | Facciolo Complex             | Other Building Materials Dealers     |
| CVS                             | 5020    | Pennell Road     |                              | Pharmacies and Drug Stores           |
| Dairy Queen                     | 5031    | Pennell Road     |                              | Limited-Service Restaurants          |
| David Joseph's Salon            | 4828    | Pennell Road     | Valley View Shopping Center  | Hair Salons, Barbers, Nail Salons    |
| Di Scala Deli                   | 4712    | Pennell Road     | Shoppes at Broadway Plaza    | Limited-Service Restaurants          |
| Dianne's Barber Shop            | 193     | Lenni Road       |                              | Hair Salons, Barbers, Nail Salons    |
| Dollar Tree                     | 5110    | Pennell Road     |                              | Other General Merchandise Stores     |
| Dunkin Donuts                   | 5101    | Pennell Road     |                              | Limited-Service Restaurants          |
| Dyer's Jewelers                 | 2745    | Weir Road        |                              | Jewelry Stores                       |
| E. Nails                        | 3484    | Concord Road     | Village Green                | Hair Salons, Barbers, Nail Salons    |
| Elliott's Restaurant            | 4501    | Pennell Road     |                              | Full-Service Restaurants             |
| Everything \$1.00               | 4744    | Pennell Road     | Shoppes at Broadway Plaza    | Other General Merchandise Stores     |
| Family Dollar                   | 3464    | Concord Road     | Village Green                | Other General Merchandise Stores     |
| Giant                           | 3400    | Concord Road     |                              | Supermarkets, Grocery Stores         |
| Giant Convenient Store          | 3481    | Concord Road     |                              | Convenience Stores                   |

| Business Name                | Address | Street           | Shopping Center              | Type of Business                  |
|------------------------------|---------|------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Goodale's Beverage           | 806     | Birney Highway   |                              | Beer, Wine and Liquor Stores      |
| Goodfella'z                  | 3061    | Concord Road     |                              | Hair Salons, Barbers, Nail Salons |
| Great Clips                  | 3466    | Concord Road     | Village Green                | Hair Salons, Barbers, Nail Salons |
| Hair Artistry by Valerie     | 4760    | Pennell Road     | Shoppes at Broadway Plaza    | Hair Salons, Barbers, Nail Salons |
| Hennessy's Tavern/Restaurant | 5201    | Pennell Road     |                              | Full-Service Restaurants          |
| His & Hers                   | 3       | Dutton Mill Road |                              | Hair Salons, Barbers, Nail Salons |
| Imagination Hair Salon       | 3217    | Concord Road     |                              | Hair Salons, Barbers, Nail Salons |
| John's Corner Deli           | 3231    | Concord Road     |                              | Limited-Service Restaurants       |
| Josephine's Pizza            | 811     | Aston Mills Road |                              | Limited-Service Restaurants       |
| Just Ice Cream               | 4736    | Pennell Road     | Shoppes at Broadway Plaza    | Limited-Service Restaurants       |
| Laspada's Steaks             | 4724    | Pennell Road     | Shoppes at Broadway Plaza    | Limited-Service Restaurants       |
| Lucky Wok                    | 4425    | Pennell Road     | Dutton Mill Shopping Village | Limited-Service Restaurants       |
| Majesty Marble & Granite     | 515     | Dutton Mill Road |                              | Building Materials, Lumberyards   |
| Marianne's Family Styles     | 1       | Rosalie Lane     |                              | Hair Salons, Barbers, Nail Salons |
| Michael's Barber Shop        | 5120    | Concord Road     |                              | Hair Salons, Barbers, Nail Salons |
| MVP Sporting Goods           | 4824    | Pennell Road     | Valley View Shopping Center  | Sporting Goods Stores             |
| Neumann University Bookstore | 1       | Neumann Drive    |                              | Book Stores                       |
| New Aston Palace             | 3476    | Concord Road     | Village Green                | Full-Service Restaurants          |
| Pa Nails                     | 4409    | Pennell Road     | Dutton Mill Shopping Village | Hair Salons, Barbers, Nail Salons |
| Peach Street Bridge          | 601A    | Convent Road     |                              | Gift, Novelty, Souvenir Stores    |
| Pepino's Pizza               | 2901    | Concord Road     |                              | Limited-Service Restaurants       |
| Pet Kraze                    | 4439    | Pennell Road     | Dutton Mill Shopping Village | Pet Supply Stores                 |
| Pizza Hut                    | 4443    | Pennell Road     | Dutton Mill Shopping Village | Full-Service Restaurants          |
| PJ's Sports Bar & Grill      | 815     | Aston Mills Road |                              | Drinking Places                   |
| Pretzel Boy's                | 4756    | Pennell Road     | Shoppes at Broadway Plaza    | Limited-Service Restaurants       |
| Primo Hoagies                | 3474    | Concord Road     | Village Green                | Limited-Service Restaurants       |
| Pyramid Materials            | 414     | Knowlton Road    |                              | Building Materials, Lumberyards   |
| Reilly's Hairstyling         | 4620    | Pennell Road     |                              | Hair Salons, Barbers, Nail Salons |
| Rent-a-Center                | 3490    | Concord Road     |                              | Furniture Stores                  |
| Rick's Outdoor Furniture     | 2760    | Concore Road     |                              | Miscellaneous Store Retailers     |
| Ristorante Gennaro           | 4600    | Pennell Road     |                              | Full-Service Restaurants          |
| Rita's Water Ice             | 5004    | Pennell Road     |                              | Limited-Service Restaurants       |
| Rite Aid                     | 4400    | Pennell Road     |                              | Pharmacies and Drug Stores        |
| Ryan's Deli                  | 417     | Marianville Road | Facciolo Complex             | Limited-Service Restaurants       |
| Salon Bella Amici            | 2920    | Concord Road     |                              | Hair Salons, Barbers, Nail Salons |
| Sciarrino's Pizzeria         | 4916    | Pennell Road     | Valley View Shopping Center  | Limited-Service Restaurants       |
| Scissors Tailor Shop         | 3411    | Concord Road     |                              | Hair Salons, Barbers, Nail Salons |

| Business Name              | Address | Street           | Shopping Center             | Type of Business                      |
|----------------------------|---------|------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Sharon & Co.               | 421     | Marianville Road | Facciolo Complex            | Hair Salons, Barbers, Nail Salons     |
| Sky Nails                  | 4900    | Pennell Road     | Valley View Shopping Center | Hair Salons, Barbers, Nail Salons     |
| Slowdown Grillpub          | 4700    | Pennell Road     | Shoppes at Broadway Plaza   | Full-Service Restaurants              |
| Snyder's Ace & Home Center | 5400    | Pennell Road     |                             | Hardware Stores                       |
| Sprint Store               | 4832    | Pennell Road     | Valley View Shopping Center | Radio, Television, Electronics Stores |
| Star Army/Navy             | 4800    | Pennell Road     | Valley View Shopping Center | Other Clothing Stores                 |
| Stella 3 Cleaners          | 5040    | Pennell Road     |                             | Laundries/Dry Cleaning                |
| Subway                     | 3474    | Concord Road     |                             | Limited-Service Restaurants           |
| Sundance Saloon            | 3531    | Concord Road     |                             | Drinking Places                       |
| Swift Laundry/Dry Cleaner  | 3511    | Concord Road     |                             | Laundries/Dry Cleaning                |
| Tanning Salon              | 4503    | Pennell Road     |                             | Hair Salons, Barbers, Nail Salons     |
| Taste Budz                 | 4820    | Pennell Road     | Valley View Shopping Center | Limited-Service Restaurants           |
| The Attic Thrift Shop      | 4728    | Pennell Road     | Shoppes at Broadway Plaza   | Used Merchandise Stores               |
| The Philly Sport Store     | 4752    | Pennell Road     | Shoppes at Broadway Plaza   | Sporting Goods Stores                 |
| The Word Christian Books   | 3250    | Concord Road     |                             | Book Stores                           |
| Tom's Pizza Place          | 3223    | Concord Road     |                             | Full-Service Restaurants              |
| Towne & Country Café       | 4401    | Concord Road     |                             | Full-Service Restaurants              |
| Ultimate Image Hair Studio | 3530    | Concord Road     |                             | Hair Salons, Barbers, Nail Salons     |
| Victory Cleaners           | 4914    | Pennell Road     | Valley View Shopping Center | Laundries/Dry Cleaning                |
| Viso's Italian Desserts    | 4928    | Pennell Road     | Valley View Shopping Center | Limited-Service Restaurants           |
| Walgreen's                 | 3620    | Concord Road     |                             | Pharmacies and Drug Stores            |
| Wawa                       | 5008    | Pennell Road     |                             | Convenience Stores                    |
| Wine & Spirits Store       | 3486    | Concord Road     | Village Green               | Beer, Wine and Liquor Stores          |
| Wise Original Florist      | 3541    | Concord Road     |                             | Florists                              |
| Wolfenden Floors           | 3470    | Concord Road     |                             | Other Building Materials Dealers      |
| Yarnell Pool Supply        | 3461    | Pennell Road     |                             | Miscellaneous Store Retailers         |

For the Aston Retail Trade Area, Urban Partners completed an inventory of all retail business establishments located within this geography identified above (see **Table 8**). As of June 2014, the Trade Area includes 104 operating retail businesses.

As the table shows, the majority of these establishments (67%) are community-serving stores, of which there are 70, meeting the every-day needs of nearby residents. Specifically, this community-serving store supply includes:

- One supermarket
- Three convenience stores
- Four beer and wine stores
- Four pharmacies
- Twenty-four limited-service restaurants
- Three bars/lounges
- Two florists
- Twenty-one hair/nail salons
- Four dry cleaners

In addition to community-serving retail goods and services, the Trade Area also includes several other main categories of retailers (see **Table 9**). This includes twelve full-service restaurants, constituting just under 12% of the Trade Area supply. In addition, there is just one apparel store, an Army/Navy store, as well as three home furnishing stores, including a furniture store and two flooring stores. Finally, there are ten 'other specialty goods' stores, including sporting goods, music, and pet supply stores, as well as seven 'other retail stores', which include retail lumber yards and auto parts stores.

**Table 9. Retail Categories of Stores in Aston**

| Retail Category                  | # of Stores |
|----------------------------------|-------------|
| Community-Serving Goods/Services | 70          |
| Full-Service Restaurants         | 12          |
| Apparel                          | 2           |
| Home Furnishings                 | 3           |
| Other Specialty Goods            | 10          |
| Other Retail Stores              | 7           |

Source: Urban Partners

## Retail Demand

Consumer shopping patterns vary depending on the types of goods being purchased. With regard to arts and entertainment-oriented retailing, shoppers typically patronize limited-service dining establishments close to their home or place of work. For larger-ticket,

rarely purchased items – such as automobiles, electronics and large appliances – shoppers may travel anywhere within the metropolitan area or beyond to obtain the right item at the right price. For apparel, household furnishings, and other shopping goods—including the typical arts-oriented dance, musical instruments, and art gallery/frame shop products—consumers generally establish shopping patterns between these two extremes, trading at a number of shopping areas within a 30 minute commute of their homes. In addition, expenditures made at full-service restaurants will occur chiefly within the primary trade area, but some restaurant expenditures made by the primary trade area population will be lost to established restaurants located outside the primary trade area. Similarly, some restaurant sales in the primary trade area will be attracted from residents who live elsewhere in the region.

In this section, we describe the current demand for retail goods and services by residents of the Retail Trade Area. The total population estimate for the Retail Trade Area from the 2012 Census applied to the inflation-adjusted per capita income from the 2012 American Community Survey estimates results in a 2014 aggregate income of \$558.99 million (see **Table 10**).

**Table 10. Population, Income for the Trade Area**

| Population/Income        | Trade Area    |
|--------------------------|---------------|
| Population (2012)        | 16,641        |
| Per Capita Income (2012) | \$32,426      |
| Aggregate Income (2012)  | \$539,601,066 |
| Aggregate Income (2014)  | \$558,987,564 |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Urban Partners

**Table 11. Trade Area Retail Demand Characteristics**

Source: The Nielsen Company, Urban Partners

|  | 2014 Demand Expenditures | 2014 Supply Sales  | Opportunity Gap/Surplus |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Total Retail Sales</b>                          | <b>220,995,310</b>       | <b>140,447,075</b> | <b>80,548,235</b>       |
| <b>Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers-441</b>         | <b>5,092,928</b>         | <b>1,810,689</b>   | <b>3,282,239</b>        |
| Automotive Parts/Accsrs, Tire Stores-4413          | 5,092,928                | 1,810,689          | 3,282,239               |
| <b>Furniture and Home Furnishings Stores-442</b>   | <b>6,967,716</b>         | <b>2,054,779</b>   | <b>4,912,937</b>        |
| Furniture Stores-4421                              | 3,749,029                | 0                  | 3,749,029               |
| Home Furnishing Stores-4422                        | 3,218,687                | 2,054,779          | 1,163,908               |
| <b>Electronics and Appliance Stores-443</b>        | <b>6,519,486</b>         | <b>3,080,244</b>   | <b>3,439,242</b>        |
| Appliances, TVs, Electronics Stores-44311          | 4,627,838                | 741,678            | 3,886,160               |
| Household Appliances Stores-443111                 | 836,252                  | 112,050            | 724,202                 |
| Radio, Television, Electronics Stores-443112       | 3,791,586                | 629,628            | 3,161,958               |
| Computer and Software Stores-44312                 | 1,666,073                | 121,389            | 1,544,684               |
| Camera and Photographic Equipment Stores-44313     | 225,575                  | 2,217,177          | (1,991,602)             |
| <b>Building Material, Garden Equip Stores -444</b> | <b>35,458,074</b>        | <b>29,424,242</b>  | <b>6,033,832</b>        |
| Building Material and Supply Dealers-4441          | 30,609,510               | 29,173,938         | 1,435,572               |
| Home Centers-44411                                 | 12,311,241               | 0                  | 12,311,241              |
| Paint and Wallpaper Stores-44412                   | 527,416                  | 0                  | 527,416                 |
| Hardware Stores-44413                              | 2,959,906                | 5,360,456          | (2,400,550)             |
| Other Building Materials Dealers-44419             | 14,810,947               | 23,813,482         | (9,002,535)             |
| Building Materials, Lumberyards-444191             | 5,528,404                | 8,911,830          | (3,383,426)             |
| Lawn, Garden Equipment, Supplies Stores-4442       | 4,848,564                | 250,304            | 4,598,260               |
| Outdoor Power Equipment Stores-44421               | 1,427,625                | 0                  | 1,427,625               |
| Nursery and Garden Centers-44422                   | 3,420,939                | 250,304            | 3,170,635               |
| <b>Food and Beverage Stores-445</b>                | <b>39,886,867</b>        | <b>37,634,238</b>  | <b>2,252,629</b>        |
| Grocery Stores-4451                                | 25,839,509               | 29,164,835         | (3,325,326)             |
| Supermarkets, Grocery (Ex Conv) Stores-44511       | 24,122,747               | 25,000,000         | (877,253)               |
| Convenience Stores-44512                           | 1,716,762                | 4,164,835          | (2,448,073)             |
| Specialty Food Stores-4452                         | 3,169,533                | 969,403            | 2,200,130               |
| Beer, Wine and Liquor Stores-4453                  | 10,877,825               | 7,500,000          | 3,377,825               |

|  | 2014 Demand<br>Expenditures | 2014 Supply<br>Sales | Opportunity<br>Gap/Surplus |
|--|-----------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Health and Personal Care Stores-446</b>           | <b>16,471,698</b>           | <b>16,980,288</b>    | <b>(508,590)</b>           |
| Pharmacies and Drug Stores-44611                     | 13,079,497                  | 16,365,345           | (3,285,848)                |
| Cosmetics, Beauty Supplies, Perfume Stores-44612     | 1,144,731                   | 0                    | 1,144,731                  |
| Optical Goods Stores-44613                           | 775,110                     | 0                    | 775,110                    |
| Other Health and Personal Care Stores-44619          | 1,472,360                   | 614,943              | 857,417                    |
| <b>Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores-448</b>  | <b>16,208,652</b>           | <b>1,027,757</b>     | <b>15,180,895</b>          |
| Clothing Stores-4481                                 | 8,523,868                   | 227,757              | 8,296,111                  |
| Men's Clothing Stores-44811                          | 471,183                     | 0                    | 471,183                    |
| Women's Clothing Stores-44812                        | 2,073,469                   | 0                    | 2,073,469                  |
| Children's, Infants Clothing Stores-44813            | 436,774                     | 0                    | 436,774                    |
| Family Clothing Stores-44814                         | 4,423,532                   | 0                    | 4,423,532                  |
| Clothing Accessories Stores-44815                    | 379,798                     | 0                    | 379,798                    |
| Other Clothing Stores-44819                          | 739,112                     | 227,757              | 511,355                    |
| Shoe Stores-4482                                     | 1,149,261                   | 0                    | 1,149,261                  |
| Jewelry, Luggage, Leather Goods Stores-4483          | 6,535,523                   | 800,000              | 5,735,523                  |
| Jewelry Stores-44831                                 | 5,900,796                   | 800,000              | 5,100,796                  |
| Luggage and Leather Goods Stores-44832               | 634,727                     | 0                    | 634,727                    |
| <b>Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book, Music Stores-451</b> | <b>6,812,597</b>            | <b>4,469,310</b>     | <b>2,343,287</b>           |
| Sporting Goods, Hobby, Musical Inst Stores-4511      | 5,586,587                   | 3,269,310            | 2,317,277                  |
| Sporting Goods Stores-45111                          | 3,050,162                   | 1,855,902            | 1,194,260                  |
| Hobby, Toys and Games Stores-45112                   | 1,479,637                   | 133,586              | 1,346,051                  |
| Sew/Needlework/Piece Goods Stores-45113              | 459,116                     | 0                    | 459,116                    |
| Musical Instrument and Supplies Stores-45114         | 597,672                     | 1,279,822            | (682,150)                  |
| Book, Periodical and Music Stores-4512               | 1,226,010                   | 1,200,000            | 26,010                     |
| Book Stores and News Dealers-45121                   | 1,093,266                   | 1,200,000            | (106,734)                  |
| Book Stores-451211                                   | 995,548                     | 1,200,000            | (204,452)                  |
| News Dealers and Newsstands-451212                   | 97,718                      | 0                    | 97,718                     |
| Prerecorded Tapes, CDs, Record Stores-45122          | 132,744                     | 0                    | 132,744                    |
| <b>General Merchandise Stores-452</b>                | <b>38,372,095</b>           | <b>9,448,895</b>     | <b>28,923,200</b>          |
| Department Stores Excl Leased Depts-4521             | 16,478,782                  | 0                    | 16,478,782                 |
| Other General Merchandise Stores-4529                | 21,893,313                  | 9,448,895            | 12,444,418                 |
| <b>Miscellaneous Store Retailers-453</b>             | <b>9,330,972</b>            | <b>2,476,043</b>     | <b>6,854,929</b>           |
| Florists-4531  | 354,181                     | 169,428              | 184,753                    |
| Office Supplies, Stationery, Gift Stores-4532        | 4,536,491                   | 1,343,258            | 3,193,233                  |
| Office Supplies and Stationery Stores-45321          | 2,247,527                   | 1,234,577            | 1,012,950                  |
| Gift, Novelty and Souvenir Stores-45322              | 2,288,964                   | 108,681              | 2,180,283                  |
| Used Merchandise Stores-4533                         | 756,889                     | 156,391              | 600,498                    |
| Other Miscellaneous Store Retailers-4539             | 3,683,411                   | 806,966              | 2,876,445                  |
| <b>Foodservice and Drinking Places-722</b>           | <b>36,279,769</b>           | <b>27,906,590</b>    | <b>8,373,179</b>           |
| Full-Service Restaurants-7221                        | 16,517,639                  | 11,586,155           | 4,931,484                  |
| Limited-Service Eating Places-7222                   | 14,375,330                  | 13,082,591           | 1,292,739                  |
| Special Foodservices-7223                            | 3,852,378                   | 1,853,786            | 1,998,592                  |
| Drinking Places -Alcoholic Beverages-7224            | 1,534,422                   | 1,384,058            | 150,364                    |
| <b>Personal Services</b>                             | <b>3,594,456</b>            | <b>4,134,000</b>     | <b>(539,544)</b>           |
| Hair Salons, Barbers, Nail Salons                    | 1,597,536                   | 3,144,000            | (1,546,464)                |
| Laundries/Dry Cleaners                               | 1,996,920                   | 990,000              | 1,006,920                  |

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Using information about the retail spending behavior of market study area residents as compiled by the Nielsen Company, we estimate that the Retail Trade Area's population spends approximately **\$221.00 million** on retail goods annually (see **Table 11**), including:

- \$39.9 million in Food and Beverage Stores,
- \$38.4 million in General Merchandise Stores,
- \$36.3 million in Eating and Drinking Establishments,
- \$35.5 million in Building Material and Garden Stores,
- \$16.2 million in Clothing and Accessories Stores,
- \$16.5 million in Health and Personal Care Stores,
- \$9.3 million in Miscellaneous Store Retailers,
- \$6.8 million in Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book, and Music Stores,
- \$7.0 million in Furniture and Home Furnishings Stores,
- \$5.1 million in Auto Parts Stores, and
- \$3.6 million in Personal Services.

Supply figures were adjusted for several retail categories due to errors in the data from the Nielsen Company. In one instance the data appears to have over-reported sales for a particular retailer - a jewelry store. Based on the store size and typical sales per square-foot figures, we lowered the 2014 supply sales figure.

In other cases, the Nielsen data appears to have under-reported sales for several retailers. This includes the supermarket, beer distributors/wine store, and book stores. Book store sales figures were not included at all in the supply data. For these retailers, as with the jewelry store, typical sales per square-foot figures were multiplied by the building size for each retailer to correct the sales data.

### **Retail Market Potential**

A comparison of retail supply and demand for the Retail Trade Area (shown in **Table 11** above) reveals the retail gap or potential for additional retail in Aston Township that's currently missing and being met elsewhere in the region. As the table shows, when comparing adjusted 2014 retail supply with 2014 demand, this data analysis suggests more than an **\$80 million excess of retail demand** over supply. In particular, there are several retail categories that exhibit a gap and show potential for expanding retailing opportunities where demand exceeds supply. While not all retail categories are appropriate for a community like Aston, several categories could be a good fit in terms of use and scale. Specifically, these opportunities include restaurants, specialty sporting goods stores, home improvement stores, and book/office supply stores.

### **Dining**

The Nielsen data suggests that \$4.9 million in full-service dining expenditures are "leaking" from the Retail Trade Area. This is sufficient to support 12,000 SF to 15,000 SF of additional full-service restaurants. There's an additional gap of \$1.3 million in limited-

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service restaurants, sufficient to support another 3,000 SF to 4,000 SF of space. Based on this significant supply gap, a primary market would be local Aston residents. This market could be filled by encouraging several smaller, community-serving dining establishments (full-service and more diverse limited-service) catering to the tastes and price point preferences of local residents. Another market for dining is capturing regional and out-of-town visitors to Ice Works and Sun Center Studios, as well as Neumann University students and visitors. This should involve supporting regional-draw restaurants to attract a broader, specialty customer base.

Marketing at Ice Works, Sun Center Studios, and the University would help draw customers from these institutions. Township event promotion would help draw customers to both long-term existing and new restaurants. Events could include holidays, back-to-school sales, evening music series, and events affiliated with Ice Works. Another recommendation for recruiting restaurants would be for the Township to provide assistance with re-tenanting vacant retail space. This could be done through waiving permit fees and providing signage grants and/or applying for façade improvement grants. Loans and rent rebates are other more costly tools the Township could consider.

### **Specialty Sporting Goods**

While the Township has two small stores selling sporting goods and sports memorabilia, the Trade Area could support more; the secondary data shows gaps in supply of specialty sporting goods totaling \$1.2 million in leakage, enough to support approximately 4,800 SF of store space. Stores providing products consistent with Ice Works activities and needed by its users would be a target market to pursue in this retail category. Recruitment of businesses of this type should be facilitated through direct contact with shopping center owners and leasing agents to inform and remind them of the unique sporting asset that Ice Works is to the community. An Aston market brochure that includes retail opportunity facts and features about the community could be added to the recruitment material already used by leasing agents.

### **Home Improvement Products**

The Township currently has a market strength in the home improvement products retail sector with its building material centers and hardware store. This asset could be further expanded to capture some of the \$6 million of spending leakage (enough to support approximately 21,000 SF of store space) by filling in more specialized gaps of this retail category - primarily paint and wallpaper, lawn equipment, and garden supply stores. Stores of this nature would serve both Aston residents as well as those of surrounding municipi-

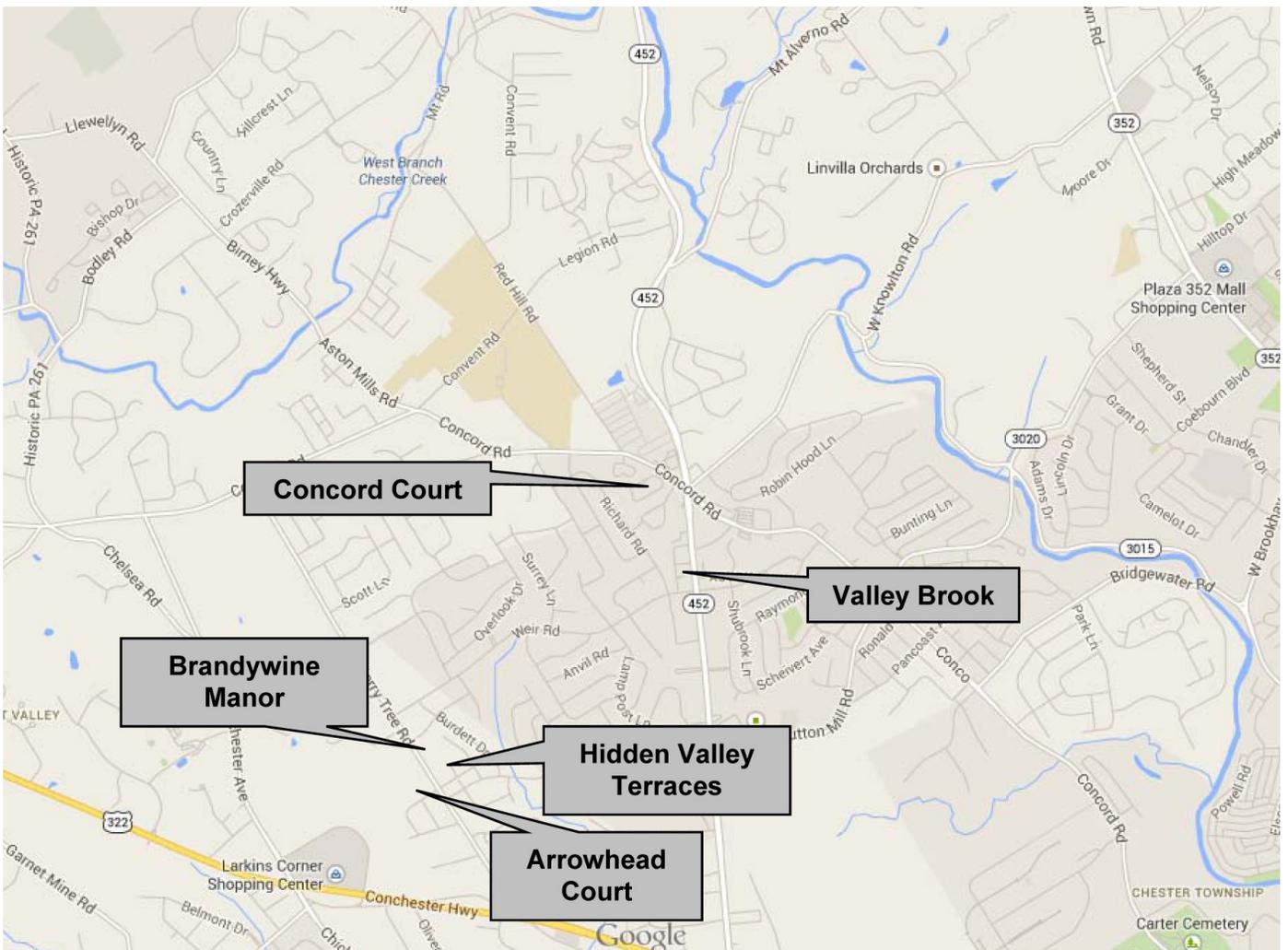
palties. The Township could assist prospective businesses with similar tools as potentially employed for attracting restaurants, namely help with tenanting space through various incentives.

### Office Supplies, Souvenirs, and Gifts

The secondary data from Nielsen indicates a significant opportunity in the retail category of Office Supply, Stationary, and Gift Stores amounting to over \$3 million, which could support approximately 12,000 SF of store space. The Neumann University campus book store currently provides a minimal amount of these products, but demand far exceeds this supply. The Township should coordinate with Neumann about the possibility of expanding opportunities in this category, potentially in the form of an additional or enlarged Neumann University retail outlet that sells more gifts and office supplies.



**Concord Court Apartments**





## Rental Housing Market

The rental housing market was also examined to determine the potential for new apartments as part of the Aston Township Vision Plan. As identified in the demographic section above, the Township has a very high homeownership rate - 90%, up from 88% in 2000 - however, there are several apartment complexes in the area. While some rental units exist in single-family homes and townhomes, the

majority are located in large older apartment buildings in or immediately adjacent to Aston Township (see **Map 3**).

| Complex   | Rent    | SF  | Rent/SF | BR  | BA  | Utilities                 | Amenities  | Availability                                  |
|---|---------|-----|---------|-----|-----|---------------------------|--|---|
| <b>Concord Court Apartments</b><br><br>3701 Concord Road      | \$950   | 650 | \$1.46  | 1   | 1   | Tenant pays all Utilities | Private entrances; washer/dryer in every unit; spacious closets; upgraded kitchens with garbage disposal and microwave; AC; on-site parking; pets allowed; public transit close by; shopping, banking, restaurants within walking distance.                      | None. Always a wait list for 2 BRs.           |
|   | \$1,065 | 850 | \$1.25  | 2   | 1   |                           |  |   |
| <b>Valley Brook Apartments</b><br><br>5001 Pennell Road       | \$825   | 732 | \$1.13  | 1   | 1   | Tenant pays Electric      | Online rent pay; AC units; wall-to-wall carpeting; dishwasher; electric range; on-site laundry facilities; large closets; public transit close by; shopping, banking, restaurants within walking distance.   | N/A   |
|   | \$950   | 764 | \$1.24  | 2   | 1   |                           |  |   |
| <b>Hidden Valley Terraces</b><br><br>777 Cherry Tree Road     | \$795   | 650 | \$1.22  | 1   | 1   | Tenant pays Electric      | Spacious floor plans; updated kitchens and baths; air conditioning; updated appliances; garbage disposal; patios and balconies; breakfast bars; large closets; wall-to-wall carpet; extra storage; beautifully landscaped; close to public transit and highways. | One 2 BR available July 1. No 1 BRs or 3 BRs. |
|   | \$925   | 700 | \$1.32  | 2   | 1   |                           |  |   |
|   | \$1,195 | 850 | \$1.41  | 3   | 1   |                           |  |   |
| <b>Brandywine Manor</b><br><br>785 Cherry Tree Road           | \$750   | 650 | \$1.15  | 1   | 1   | Tenant pays Electric      | Newly renovated kitchens; newly renovated laundry facilities in each building; renovated interiors; AC; wall-to-wall carpet; large closets; extra storage; on-site management; high-speed internet access; close to public transit.                              | One 1 BR available July 1. No 2 BRs.          |
|   | \$900   | 750 | \$1.20  | 2   | 1.5 |                           |  |   |
| <b>Arrowhead Court Apartments</b><br><br>700 Cherry Tree Road | \$790   | 600 | \$1.32  | 1   | 1   | Tenant pays Electric      | Online rent pay; AC units; wall-to-wall carpeting; dishwasher; electric range; on-site laundry facilities; large closets; Public transit close by.   | N/A   |
|   | \$840   | 768 | \$1.07  | 1.5 | 1   |                           |  |   |
|   | \$950   | 957 | \$0.99  | 2   | 1   |                           |  |   |

**Map 3. Apartment Complex Locations In and Immediately Adjacent to Aston Township**

| Complex   | Rent    | SF    | Rent/SF | BR | BA | Availability   | Utilities             | Amenities  |
|---|---------|-------|---------|----|----|----------------|-----------------------|--|
| <b>Coventry at Glen Mills</b><br><br>606 Coventry Lane          | \$1,275 | 813   | \$1.57  | 1  | 1  | 3(6/1), 2(8/1) | Tenant pays Utilities | Some units feature lofts; full-service newly-remodeled kitchens; wood-burning fireplaces; in-unit washer/dryer; central AC; wall-to-wall carpeting and tile; private entrances; private balcony or patio; some units have walk-in closets; extra storage available; 25 acres of landscaped property; club room with kitchen and lounge; swimming pool with sundeck; state-of-the-art fitness center; ample parking; pet-friendly; furnished units available. |
|   | \$1,572 | 1,140 | \$1.38  | 1  | 1  | 3(6/1), 2(7/1) |                       |  |
|   | \$1,659 | 1,050 | \$1.58  | 2  | 2  | 3(6/1), 2(8/1) |                       |  |
|   | \$1,671 | 1,215 | \$1.38  | 2  | 2  | 5(6/1)         |                       |  |
|   | \$2,163 | 1,486 | \$1.46  | 3  | 2  | 1(6/1), 1(7/1) |                       |  |
| <b>Windsor at Brandywine Valley</b><br><br>100 Conerstone Drive | \$1,460 | 886   | \$1.65  | 1  | 1  | 1(6/1), 2(8/1) | Tenant pays Utilities | Contemporary kitchens with dishwasher, energy-efficient appliances, garbage disposals, and microwaves; breakfast bars; fireplaces; bay windows; patios/balconies; in-unit washer/dryers; tall ceilings; additional storage available; outdoor pool; fitness center; barbecues; lighted tennis courts; complimentary tea and coffee bar; business center; community room; conference room; garages; furnished apartments available.                           |
|   | \$1,535 | 1,000 | \$1.54  | 1  | 1  | 1(6/1), 3(8/1) |                       |  |
|   | \$1,620 | 1,157 | \$1.40  | 2  | 2  | 1(7/1), 4(8/1) |                       |  |
|   | \$1,655 | 1,175 | \$1.41  | 2  | 2  | 4(7/1)         |                       |  |
|   | \$1,755 | 1,240 | \$1.42  | 2  | 2  | 2(6/1)         |                       |  |
|   | \$2,075 | 1,407 | \$1.47  | 3  | 2  | 2(8/1)         |                       |  |

Source: Google Maps

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**Table 12** On the next two pages, details the apartment complexes found on Map 3. As the table shows, one large complex in the Township is Concord Court Apartments, located at 3701 Concord Road near Five Corners. As of June 2014, the complex had no availability. Concord Court has just two unit types - 1 and 2 BR units - ranging from \$950 per month (\$1.46/SF) to \$1,065 (\$1.25/SF). Utilities are not included in this building, and amenities include in-unit washer/dryers, upgraded kitchens, air conditioning, and a central location in Aston near shopping and transit.



Valley Brook Apartments



Brandywine Manor is Hidden Valley



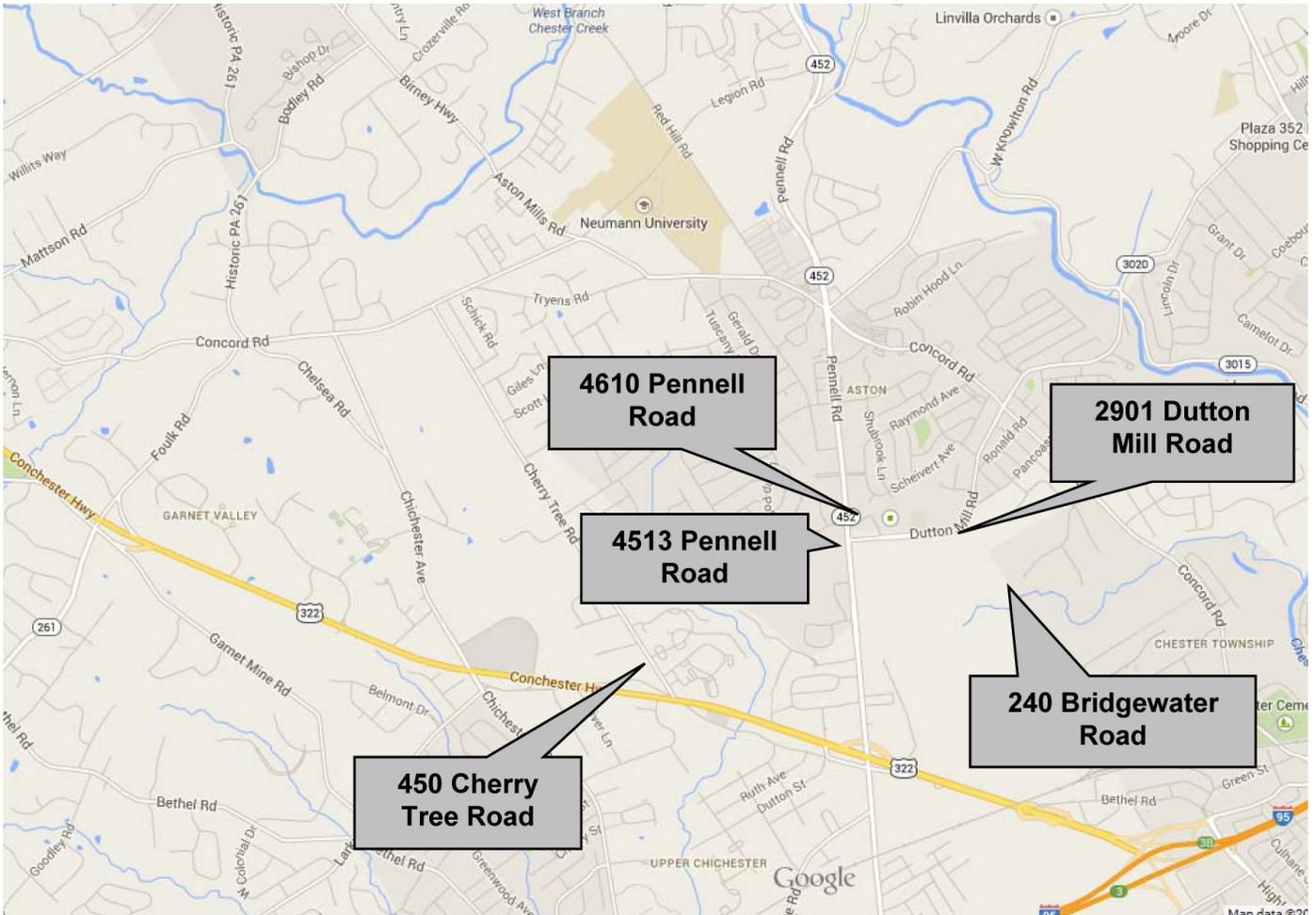
Coventry at Glen Mills

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**Table 12. Apartment Complexes In and Immediately Adjacent to Aston Township**

**Table 13. Luxury Apartment Complexes Near Aston Township**

**Map 4. Office Property Listings In and Adjacent to Aston Township**



Source: Google Maps

Nearby on Pennell Road in the Township is Valley Brook Apartments, located at 5001 Pennell Road. Unit availability could not be determined for this complex. Valley Brook also has just two unit types - 1 and 2 BR units - ranging from \$825 per month (\$1.13/SF) to \$950 (\$1.24/SF). Utilities are included in this building except for electric, and amenities include on-site laundry, wall-to-wall carpeting, air conditioning, and a central location in Aston near shopping and transit.

Just outside Aston in Upper Chichester Township is Brandywine

According to City Feet, a commercial real estate search engine, several properties in and around Aston had office space vacancies as of June 2014 (see **Table 14**). These include one Class A building and several Class B buildings. The Class A building - 2901 Dutton Mill Road - is a newer building with 6,000 SF of space available for an unlisted, or negotiable, rent with a modified gross lease. Since nearby Class B space caps at \$14 per SF, the rent for this space is likely at least that. The building, one of the highest quality office properties in the Township, offers state-of-the-art technology and ample parking. It is currently just 17% vacant.



**Table 14. Office Listings in Aston Township, 6/2014**  
Source: Cityfeet.com

| Address                 | Classes | Total Available SF | Min Div. SF | Max Contig. SF | Listed Rent | Lease Type     | % Building Occupied | Description   |
|-------------------------|---------|--------------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|---------------------|---|
| 2901 Dutton Mill Road   | A       | 6,000              | 2,000       | 6,000          | N/A         | Modified Gross | 82.8%               | Class A office space for sale or lease in newer facility with state-of-the-art technology. Features include public water and sewer, ample parking (5 cars per 1,000 SF), gas heat, and elevator. Rent is negotiable.  |
| 240 W. Bridgewater Road | B       | 8,000              | 8,000       | 4,000          | \$10.00     | Full Service   | 84.0%               | 50,000 square foot office & industrial building built in 2008. The 8,000 square office space on the second floor was built in 2011. This space can be divided into (2) 4,000 Square feet of office spaces. The office space today is Build to Suit shell condition with a minimum of a 5 year lease. This space comes with its own private parking area & rear entrance. Bathroom on second floor shared with other tenants in building.              |
| 4610 Pennell Road       | B       | 4,000              | 4,000       | 4,000          | \$13.00     | Modified Gross | 56.0%               | Totally renovated office space available on heavily traveled Pennell Rd. (Rt. 452) at a traffic light intersection with traffic counts of 24,000 ADT. Renovations include: new facade, new windows, ADA bathroom, Handicap ramp, paint & carpet, HVAC, paved parking lot and more. The office space is located above retail, but has first floor access from the rear parking lot which will accommodate 28 vehicles.                                 |
| 450 Cherry Tree Road    | B       | 2,000              | 1,000       | 2,000          | \$14.00     | NNN            | 67.0%               | Superbly located, mixed use 6,000 square foot commercial property. Solid construction and plenty of off street parking (32 spaces). The building has two floors but both have ground level access because of the property topography. 3,000 square feet of office on the upper floor and two large 2 bedroom apartments on the lower level.   |
| 4513 Pennell Road       | B       | 1,700              | 1,700       | 1,700          | \$14.00     | Modified Gross | 66.0%               | Highly visible office building located in front of the Dutton Mill Shopping Center. This property sits at a traffic light corner on 1.15 acres. Plenty of parking available. Remodeled interior. Lower level storage space available for discounted rate. Perfect for any medical use or general office user. The available office suite has several private office rooms, conference room, kitchen, ADA bathrooms, and receptionist area with lobby. |

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Manor, located at 785 Cherry Tree Road. Brandywine Manor also has just two unit types - 1 and 2 BR units - ranging from \$750 per month (\$1.15/SF) to \$900 (\$1.20/SF). Utilities are included in this building except for electric, and amenities include newly renovated kitchens, newly renovated on-site laundry rooms in each building, wall-to-wall carpeting, air conditioning, and an extra storage. Just one 1 BR unit was available in July, while no 2 BR units were available.

Adjacent to Brandywine Manor is Hidden Valley Terraces, located at 777 Cherry Valley Road. This complex has three unit types - 1, 2, and 3 BR units - with rents of \$795 per month (\$1.22/SF), \$925 per month (\$1.32/SF), and \$1,195 (\$1.41/SF) respectively. Utilities are included in this building except for electric, and amenities include updated kitchens and baths, updated appliances, patios and balconies, wall-to-wall carpeting, air conditioning, and an extra storage. Just one 2 BR unit was available in July, while no 1 or 3 BR units were available.

Just down the road are the Arrowhead Court Apartments, located at 700 Cherry Tree Road. This complex also has three unit types - 1 BR, 1 BR with den, and 2 BR units - with rents of \$790 per month (\$1.32/SF), \$840 per month (\$1.09/SF), and \$950 (\$0.99/SF) respectively. Utilities are included in this building except for electric, and amenities include on-site laundry, wall-to-wall carpeting, air conditioning, and large closets. Unit availability could not be determined for this complex.

In addition to the above older apartment complexes located in and adjacent to Aston Township, we examined newer luxury complexes in the area to understand the types of units, amenities, rents being commanded, and availability as an indication of what could be expected for such a complex should one be developed in Aston. We examined two complexes - Coventry at Glen Mills and Windsor at Brandywine Valley - both in nearby Glen Mills (see **Table 13** on the previous page).

Coventry at Glen Mills is a 244-unit luxury complex located off Route 1. Coventry has a multitude of unit sizes, and unit types of 1 to 3 BRs. Units range from \$1,275 per month for an 813 SF 1-bedroom unit (\$1.57/SF) to \$2,163 for a 1,486 SF 3-bedroom, 2-bath unit (\$1.46/SF). Amenities at Coventry include new kitchens, wood-burning fireplaces, in-unit washer and dryer, private balconies and patios, a pool, sundeck, club room, and fitness room. Tenants pay all utilities. There were a total of 15 units of varying sizes available in June, three in July, and four in August.

Located just off Route 202 also in Glen Mills is Windsor at Brandywine Valley. This a 280-unit luxury complex also has a multitude of unit sizes, and unit types of 1 to 3 BRs. Units range from \$1,460 per month for an 886 SF 1-bedroom unit (\$1.65/SF) to \$2,075 for a 1,407 SF 3-bedroom, 2-bath unit (\$1.47/SF). Amenities at Windsor include full contemporary kitchens, wood-burning fireplaces, in-unit washer and dryer, private balconies and patios, a pool, coffee bar, fitness center, and tennis court. Tenants pay all utilities. There



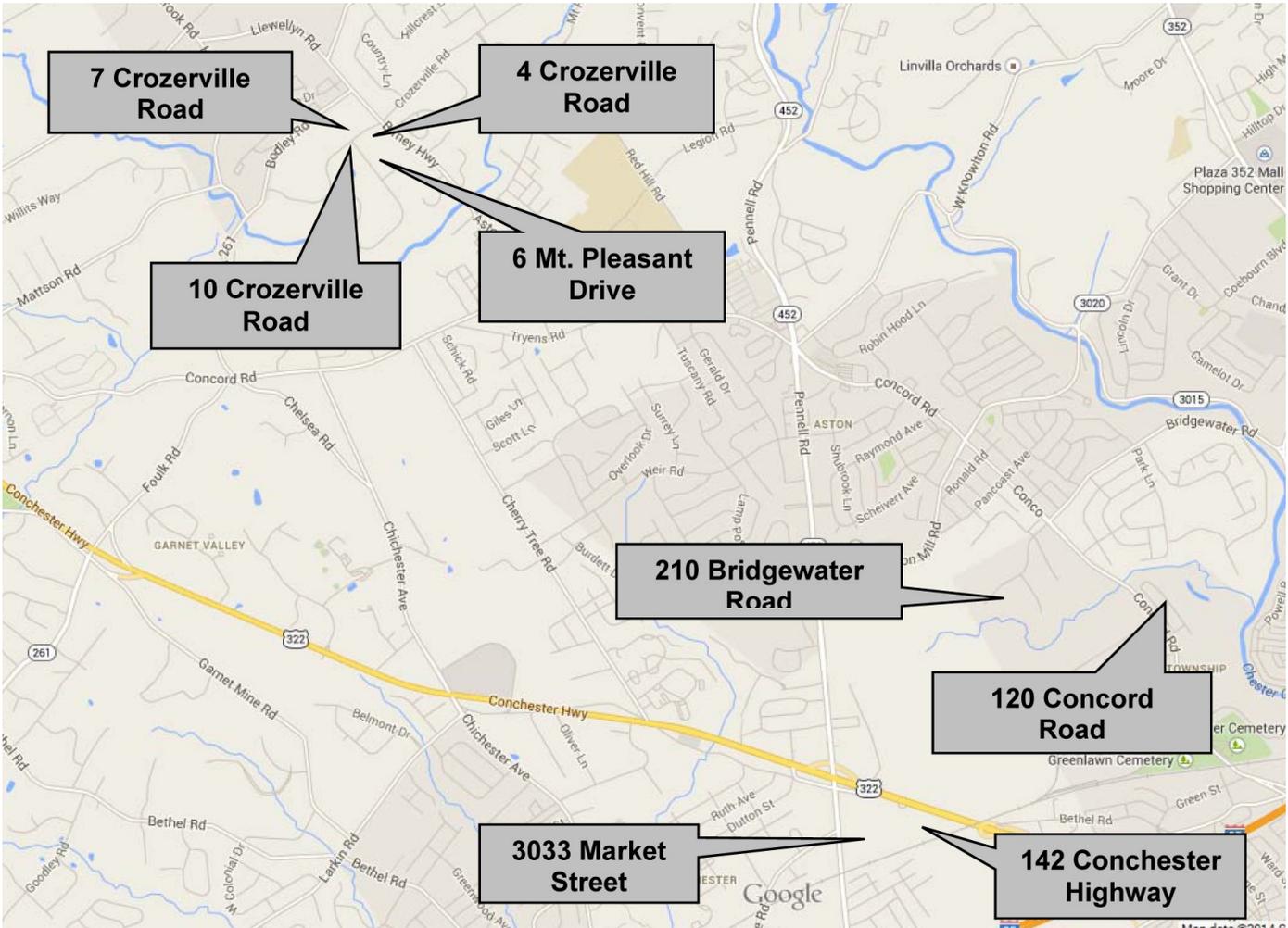
4513 Pennell Road

were a total of four units of varying sizes available in June, five in July, and 11 in August.

**Map 5. Industrial Property Listings In and Adjacent to Aston Township**  
Source: Google Maps

## Rental Market Potential

Our rental housing market research has revealed that the typical rental product in and around Aston is 1960s-era, no-frills, affordable



apartment complexes. These complexes are serving the community well as the occupancy rates are very high. There are currently no luxury complexes in the Township offering higher-end amenities. Various developments in nearby areas, such as Glen Mills, do offer such a lifestyle, and demand appears to be relatively high for this type of product. Rents found in these complexes in Glen Mills could likely be commanded for units with similar amenities in Aston.

With its unique sense of community and good access to roadway infrastructure, Aston could be a favorable location for such a higher-quality rental product. However, space for new residential development close to transportation and amenities is fairly limited in the Township. The existing aging complexes may offer the future po-

**Table 15. Industrial/Flex Listings in and around Aston Township, 5/2014**

Source: Cityfeet.com, Loopnet.com

| Address   | Total Available SF | Min Div. SF | Max Contig. SF | Listed Rent | Lease Type   | % Building Occupied | Description   |
|---|--------------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|--------------|---------------------|---|
| 3033 Market Street                                | 55,000             | 35,000      | 5,000          | \$5.00      | NNN          | 62.1%               | Warehouse space available in large industrial building with great access to 322, I-95, 476, 452, 202, Philadelphia International Airport, Wilmington, and NJ. 10 acres of parking space. 14 of the 17.5 acres are fenced in with card access gate.  |
| 142 Conchester Highway                            | 41,200             | 41,200      | 41,200         | \$4.75      | N/A          | 2.1%                | Up to 35' ceilings, 85' clear span bays, existing offices, 2500 amp 480-volt 3-phase power. Dry sprinklered, dock and drive-in loading, excess acreage and major expansion capability. Variety of potential uses including industrial, commercial, or sports complex.   |
| 210 Bridgewater Road                              | 12,685             | 12,685      | 12,685         | \$8.75      | NNN          | N/A                 | Flex space built in 2008. Office space approx 4,000 s.f. Currently setup as open showroom with 3 offices, conference room, and bathroom. Conference room and 3 offices supplied completely furnished. 8,685 SF warehouse space is completely open with one bathroom. 4 loading docks in rear. 20 parking spaces. Additional 1,150 SF mezzanine over the showroom.   |
| 120 Concord Road<br>Chester Creek Business Center | 19,500             | 4,800       | 19,500         | \$7.50      | NNN          | 66.2%               | New flex building built in 2009 with precast panels. This is the only remaining space in the park. The space has 8 large drive-in bays. Rental rate includes a \$15/SF tenant improvement allowance. Chester Creek Business Center has great access to all major routes and the airport.  |
| 10 Crozerville Road                               | 9,200              | 9,200       | 9,200          | \$5.50      | NNN          | N/A                 | Aggressively priced, existing offices, dock and drive-in loading, outside storage area, on-site landlord, move-in condition, immediate availability.  |
| 6 Mount Pleasant Drive                            | 5,000              | 5,000       | 5,000          | N/A         | N/A          | 73.7%               | 19,000 SF building. Available: 5,000 SF (1,000 SF office, 4,000 SF warehouse). Ceiling height: 13'4" 15'.0", pitched roof. Loading: one drive-in door. Located in Rolling Hills Industrial Park. Minutes from I-95, I-476, Routes 1, 202, and 322. Close proximity to Philadelphia, Wilmington and New Jersey.  |
| 7 Crozerville Road                                | 5,000              | 5,000       | 5,000          | \$8.57      | Mod. Net     | 52.0%               | Excellent building and property that has been well-maintained. Space includes 900 SF office that connects with warehouse that has 4,100 SF in two bays. Private office, reception area, large bathroom (ADA), 2 Drive-In Doors into warehouse area. Warehouse ceiling clearance of 14 Ft. Ideal for contractor, supplier, etc. Great access to Routes 1, 452, 322, 95, 476, 202. Parking available in lot for cars and trucks. Rate includes all taxes, insurance, snow removal, & landscaping. |
| 14 Crozerville Road                               | Pad:<br>2,000      | 2,000       | 2,000          | \$5.40      | Full Service | 98.0%               | Light manufacturing/warehouse/office/shop space. Fenced/secure. Great for contractors/vehicle repair. Plenty of parking and storage. Rare find in Rolling Hills Industrial Park. Close to I-95, Route 202, and Route 1.   |
|   | Shop:<br>2,400     | 2,400       | 2,400          | \$15.00     | Full Service |                     |   |



120 Concord Road



14 Crozerville Road

tential to be redeveloped for a higher-end product. As market conditions evolve, these aging complexes will be faced with significant improvements necessary to command optimal rents. If they fall into disrepair, tenants will be difficult to secure. A redevelopment approach would allow for the introduction of a new product into the area. A phased method could allow for development incrementally as the market permits. The Township could aid in this process by courting potential developers and offering them various incentives.

## Office Market

Aston Township has a variety of office buildings of various sizes, rents, and levels of quality, including the highest quality - Class A. To identify the potential for new office development in the Township, Urban Partners evaluated current property listings and assessed the market conditions for multi-tenant office space in the area (see **Map 4**).

Class B commercial buildings are more common in and around Aston. One such building with available space is 240 W. Bridgewater Road, located just outside Aston in Chester Township. This newer 50,000 SF building has 8,000 SF of build-to-suit space available at \$10.00 per SF (full service lease). The building is just 16% vacant.

Another building with available Class B space is also located just outside Aston at 450 Cherry Tree Road in Upper Chichester. This smaller 6,000 SF building has 2,000 SF of available space for \$14.00 per SF (NNN lease). The property offers 32 off-street parking spaces, and is 33% vacant.

Class B space exists within the Township as well. A building located at 4610 Pennell Road has 4,000 SF of space available for \$13.00 per SF (modified gross lease). This building offers a highly accessible location, new renovations, and 28 off-street parking spaces. The vacancy at this location is 44%. Also on Pennell Road in the Township is an office building at 4513 Pennell Road. Located in front of the Dutton Mill Shopping Center, this building has 1,700 SF of space available for \$14.00 per SF (modified gross lease). The property offers high visibility, a remodeled interior, conference room, kitchen, and off-street parking. This building is 34% vacant.

## Office Market Potential

Among the advertised office spaces for rent in and around Aston Township shown in Table 14, there is a total of almost 22,000 SF of vacant space available, the majority of which is Class B. The vacant Class A space constitutes about 28% of the total Class A and B vacant space identified in the area. The building in which it is located is the highest quality and has the highest occupancy rate among the



such an amenity in Aston. The Township should foster relationships with these institutions to facilitate this potential. Prospective tenants should be secured and committed to the project so the development can be financed by the user and scaled to its space requirements.

## Industrial/Flex Market

Aston Township also has a variety of industrial/flex buildings of various sizes, rents, and levels of quality. To identify the potential for new office development in the Township, Urban Partners evaluated current property listings and assessed the market conditions for multi-tenant industrial/flex space in the area (see **Map 5**).

According to City Feet and Loop Net, a commercial real estate search engine, several properties in and around Aston had industrial/flex space vacancies as of May 2014 (see **Table 15**). The listed industrial building with the largest amount of space available is 3033 Market Street in Upper Chichester, just south of Route 322. The building has 55,000 SF of warehouse space for rent offered at \$5.00 per SF (NNN lease); it is 38% vacant.

**Table 16. Quality Hotels Within 5 Miles of Aston Township**

Source: Google Maps

| Hotel Name                  | Address | Street             | City         |
|-----------------------------|---------|--------------------|--------------|
| Best Western Plus           | 675     | Conchester Highway | Concordville |
| Staybridge Suites           | 400     | Evergreen Drive    | Glen Mills   |
| Hampton Inn and Suites      | 40      | State Farm Drive   | Glen Mills   |
| Wyndham Garden              | 1110    | Baltimore Pike     | Glen Mills   |
| Crowne Plaza                | 630     | Naamans Road       | Claymont     |
| Best Western Plus           | 1450    | Providence Avenue  | Chester      |
| SpringHill Suites Airport   | 201     | Industrial Highway | Ridley Park  |
| Wyndham Garden Airport      | 45      | Industrial Highway | Essington    |
| Clarion Hotel Airport       | 76      | Industrial Highway | Essington    |
| Holiday Inn Express Airport | 101     | Taylor Avenue      | Essington    |

A flex building with a significant amount of available industrial space is located nearby at 142 Conchester Highway. This building has 41,200 SF available for rent at \$4.75 per SF, and is 98% vacant. Amenities include existing offices, 35-foot ceilings, loading docks, and expansion capability.



Hampton Inn and Suites in Glen Mills

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Several other buildings are listed with smaller industrial/flex spaces available. The newest, constructed in 2009, is located in Chester Township at 120 Concord Road in the Chester Creek Business Center. The available 19,500 SF is the only space left available in the building. Rent is \$7.50 per SF (NNN), which includes a tenant improvement allowance.

Also newer (constructed in 2008) and located in Chester Township is 210 Bridgewater Road. This building has 12,685 SF of flex space for rent at \$8.75 per SF (NNN lease). Of this, 4,000 SF is furnished office space. The building also has a conference room, mezzanine, and loading docks.

The remaining advertised industrial/flex buildings are located in Aston Township, all in the Rolling Hills Industrial Park. One property located at 10 Crozerville Road has 9,200 SF of flex space available for \$5.50 per SF (NNN lease). This space, described as move-in condition, includes existing offices, loading docks, and an on-site landlord.

Very close by at 14 Crozerville Road has two separate spaces listed - a warehouse space of 2,000 SF for \$5.40 per SF (full-service lease), as well as an office space of 2,400 SF for \$15.00 per SF (full-service lease). This building is described as great for contractors and a rare find in Rolling Hills, and is 98% occupied.

Across the street at 7 Crozerville Road is 5,000 SF of available flex space listed at \$8.57 per SF (modified net lease). This property, advertised as well-maintained, has a 900 SF office and two bays of warehouse space. The building is 48% vacant.

Also in Rolling Hills is a 19,000 SF building with 5,000 SF of available flex space at 6 Mt. Pleasant Drive. This space includes a 1,000 SF office and 4,000 SF of warehouse space with tall ceilings and loading. Rent is not advertised for this building, which is just 22% vacant.

## Industrial/Flex Market Potential

Among the advertised industrial/flex spaces for rent in and around Aston Township shown in Table 15, there is a total of more than 150,000 SF of vacant space available. However, much of this space is located in older, lower-amenity buildings. The newer industrial buildings appear to have lower vacancy rates. For example, 120 Concord Road has just an 8% vacancy rate.

Brokers for industrial properties indicate that Aston is a strong industrial/flex market due to its location, accessibility, and existing variety of industrial tenants, and therefore would be a favorable location for



Wayne Art Center

| Venue Name                                | Address | Street               | City          |
|---|---------|----------------------|---------------|
| Heron Crest                               | 739     | Mount Road           | Aston         |
| Community Arts Center                     | 414     | Plush Mill Road      | Wallingford   |
| Main Line Arts Center                     | 746     | Panmure Road         | Haverford     |
| Wayne Art Center                          | 413     | Maplewood Avenue     | Wayne         |
| Darlington Arts Center                    | 977     | Shavertown Road      | Garnet Valley |
| Creative Living Room                      | 15      | S. Chester Road      | Swarthmore    |
| Art Space Lansdowne                       | 25      | S. Lansdowne Avenue  | Lansdowne     |
| Center for the Creative Arts              | 410     | Upper Snuff Mill Row | Yorklyn, DE   |
| Creative Arts Center                      | 330     | Kennett Pike         | Chadds Ford   |
| Delaware Center for the Contemporary Arts | 200     | S. Madison Street    | Wilmington    |

**Table 16. Visual Arts Venues Within 15 Miles of Aston Township**

Source: Google Maps

the development of new industrial/flex space. However, existing land for such new development is limited in the Township. The existing industrial areas, such as the Rolling Hills Industrial Park, have very little open space available to build the scale of industrial/flex space currently in demand.

A key opportunity in Aston does exist, however, to accommodate new industrial/flex development. The Township is currently in the process of decommissioning its sewage treatment plant located between Bridgewater and Concord Roads, and plans to repurpose the parcel and surrounding parcels it owns as developable land for industrial/flex uses (see **Map 6**). Several grants and loans exist through the PA Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) that could assist the Township with decommissioning the sewer plant and redeveloping the site. The Township has begun examining these opportunities and should apply for DCED assistance where eligible.

**Map 6. Aston Township's Sewage Treatment Plant and Development Opportunity Location**

Catania Way currently provides access to the plant from Bridgewater Road. As part of the redevelopment program, the Township will upgrade the road and install infrastructure, keeping industrial traffic out of adjacent residential neighborhoods. These improvements could potentially be offset by assistance from DCED as well. As owners of the land, the Township would establish a land lease with prospective industrial tenants who would develop and maintain their respective new flex buildings.

## Hotel Market

To identify the potential for a new hotel in Aston, Urban Partners evaluated the supply of existing hotel properties within about a five-mile radius from the Township and of a quality that would be potential competitors (see **Table 16**).

As the table shows, there are numerous quality hotels within five miles of Aston. This includes two clusters of hotels - one is in Glen Mills near the intersection of Routes 1 and 202 that includes the Best Western Plus, Staybridge Suites, Hampton Inn and Suites, and Wyndham Garden. Another major cluster can be found surrounding Philadelphia International Airport. The closest grouping are south of the airport in Ridley Park and Essington, and include SpringHill Suites, Wyndham Garden, the Clarion, and Holiday Inn Express. There's also a Best Western Plus adjacent to Widener University in Chester.



**Heron Studios in Aston**

## Hotel Market Potential

Based solely on hotel supply in the area, it would appear that the Aston area market is rather saturated with quality hotels. However, Aston's major institutions, including Neumann University and Ice

| Venue Name                          | Address | Street              | City          | # of Seats |
|-------------------------------------|---------|---------------------|---------------|------------|
| Sun Center Studios                  | 63      | Concord Road        | Aston         | 1,500      |
| Fred Meager Theater (Neumann U)     | 1       | Neumann Drive       | Aston         | 300        |
| Hedgerow Theatre                    | 64      | Rose Valley Road    | Media         | 120        |
| Media Theatre                       | 104     | E. State Street     | Media         | 550        |
| Pearson-Hall Theatre (Swarthmore C) | 500     | College Avenue      | Swarthmore    | 762        |
| Players Club of Swarthmore          | 614     | Fairview Avenue     | Swarthmore    | 300        |
| Stage One @ the Summit School       | 101     | Plush Mill Road     | Wallingford   | 300        |
| New Candlelight Theatre             | 2208    | Millers Road        | Ardentown, DE | 150        |
| Colonial Playhouse                  | 522     | W. Magnolia Avenue  | Aldan         | N/A        |
| The Barnstormers Theater            | 402     | Tome Street         | Ridley Park   | N/A        |
| The Dudley Theatre (Cheyney U)      | 1837    | University Circle   | Cheyney       | 300        |
| Tower Theater                       | 19      | S. 69th Street      | Upper Darby   | 3,120      |
| Upper Darby Perorming Arts Center   | 601     | N. Lansdowne Avenue | Drexel Hill   | 1,650      |
| People's Light & Theatre            | 39      | Conestoga Road      | Malvern       | 340        |
| People's Light & Theatre            | 39      | Conestoga Road      | Malvern       | 160        |

Works, regularly use these hotels for their visitors as they are the



Fred Meager Theater at Neumann University

closest ones. In fact, Neumann University lists the hotels on their website as suggested lodging options. Both the University and Ice Works indicated an interest in a new hotel in Aston to serve their lodging needs.

Another factor potentially impacting the Aston hotel market is the plan for a new hotel as part of the Sun Center Studios' expansion. Sun Center is proposing to construct a 200-room hotel on its property in Chester Township by 2016. While this facility would serve visitors to its expanded attractions, the hotel could also serve Ice Works and Neumann University visitors and would likely capture any initial demand. Therefore, we do not recommend a new hotel in Aston in the near term, and suggest that the township evaluate demand for the Sun Center hotel once it is constructed. At that point, if occupancy rates are consistently high, then a new hotel would be warranted, particularly if the Ice Works expands and Neumann experiences any growth in enrollment.

## Cultural/Entertainment/Recreation Market

Urban Partners also examined the potential for the market in Aston Township to support additional cultural, entertainment, and recreation venues that could supplement such existing amenities as Ice Works, the Township's Community Center, and nearby Sun Center Studios. For this exercise, we researched venues in the area, including visual arts centers, performing arts venues, bowling centers, movie theaters, mini golf centers, and indoor sports/entertainment facilities, currently providing potential competition for new facilities in Aston.

## Visual Arts Center

A potential arts and cultural concept for Aston Township is a visual arts center. These facilities typically house gallery, studio, and classroom space for visual arts, which includes such genres as painting, sculpting, printing, ceramics, and woodworking. To evaluate the visual arts center market, we identified all such centers within a 15-mile radius of Aston, an area encompassing portions of Delaware County and nearby northern Delaware (see **Table 16**).

As the table indicates, there are numerous facilities in the vicinity of Aston, all in a variety of sizes offering a range of amenities. Each offers space for art classes and workshops, while others contain gallery space for exhibiting art work, studio space for ceramics,

| Bowling Center Name   | Address | Street              | City         | # of Lanes |
|-----------------------|---------|---------------------|--------------|------------|
| AMF Conchester Lanes  | 575     | Conchester Highway  | Boothwyn     | 32         |
| MacDade Bowl          | 2105    | MacDade Boulevard   | Holmes       | 35         |
| First State Lanes     | 21      | Kiwanis Drive       | Wilmington   | 28         |
| AMF Price Lanes       | 3215    | Kirkwood Highway    | Wilmington   | 52         |
| Pleasant Hill Lanes   | 1001    | W. Newport Pike     | Newport      | 24         |
| Bowlerama             | 3031    | New Castle Avenue   | New Castle   | 62         |
| Sproul Lanes          | 745     | S. Sproul Road      | Springfield  | 30         |
| Playhouse Lanes       | 3245    | Garrett Road        | Drexel Hill  | 16         |
| Palace Bowling        | 977     | E. Lancaster Avenue | Downingtown  | 30         |
| Playdrome Devon Lanes | 300     | E. Lancaster Avenue | Devon        | 24         |
| Frazer Lanes          | 554     | Lancaster Avenue    | Malvern      | 24         |
| Wynnewood Lanes       | 2228    | Haverford Avenue    | Ardmore      | 24         |
| Liberty Lanes         | 6505    | Market Street       | Millbourne   | 20         |
| Center Bowling Lanes  | 7550    | City Avenue         | Philadelphia | 24         |
| V&S Elmwood Lanes     | 7235    | Elmwood Avenue      | Philadelphia | 26         |

woodworking, and painting, and in some cases resident artists who lease individual studios. Many arts centers have spaces that can be rented for parties and other events. In most communities, the art centers are considered a valuable asset and contribute significantly to quality of life.

Aston has an enclave of artists situated in the Rockdale section of the Township. Heron Crest Studios, in a historic former industrial building on Mount Road, are a series of studios rented by individual artists. Downstairs in Heron Studios is additional studio space



**AMF Conchester Lanes**

where a collective of artists prepare their work and hold periodic gallery events.

**Visual Arts Center Potential**

The examination of the visual arts venue market in the Aston area has revealed a fairly significant number of venues, the closest large center being the Darlington Arts Center in Garnet Valley. The smallest venues tend to serve a fairly local population, while the larger facilities that offer more amenities can attract artists and art-seekers from further distances.

The arts community in Aston is reportedly growing and thriving. As a result, there appears to be an opportunity to build on this momentum. One Aston resident is seizing that opportunity and is planning to open a small art center in Rockdale - the Rockdale Art Center - to compliment this activity and the artists at Heron Studios. The Rockdale Art Center's mission will be to educate area residents in the arts and expand the cultural community of Aston. The Center will be a resource for any level of arts enthusiast, and offer a variety of classes and specialty art studios. It will also provide employment opportunities for local artists and residents, and will host art events for the community. The hope for the Center is that it will expand into the surrounding area and occupy some of Rockdale's historic build-

| Theater Name                    | Address | Street              | City           | # of Screens |
|---------------------------------|---------|---------------------|----------------|--------------|
| AMC Granite Run 8               | 1067    | W. Baltimore Pike   | Media          | 8            |
| AMC Painter's Crossing 9        | 112     | Old Wilmington Pike | West Chester   | 9            |
| Regal Brandywine Town Center 16 | 3300    | Brandywine Parkway  | Wilmington     | 16           |
| AMC Marple 10                   | 400     | S. State Road       | Springfield    | 10           |
| Regal Cinemas Edgmont Square    | 4447    | West Chester Pike   | Newtown Square | 10           |
| Penn Cinema Riverfront IMAX     | 401     | S. Madison Street   | Wilmington     | 1            |
| Regal Plymouth Meeting 10       | 1011    | W. Ridge Pike       | Conshohocken   | 10           |
| Theatre N at Nemours            | 1007    | N. Orange Street    | Wilmington     | 1            |

ings. Opportunities for partnering with local institutions, such as Neumann University, will be pursued as well. The university has an expansive cultural arts and events calendar which could benefit emerging arts organizations such as the Rockdale Art Center.

The Township supports the Rockdale Art Center and the expansion of visual arts in the area. It should continue working with the Center's founder to ensure that resources are available where possible and that any logistical barriers are minimized to facilitate its development. In addition, the Township could foster coordination between local artists and community institutions such as Neumann University.

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## Performance Venue

Performance venues were also examined in the area to identify any potential for a new facility in Aston as part of new arts and entertainment offerings. Similar to visual arts venues, we identified all such centers within a 15-mile radius of Aston (see **Table 17**).

**Table 17. Performing Arts Venues Within 15 Miles of Aston Township**

Source: Google Maps

As the table shows, there are at least 15 venues of varying sizes within 15 miles of Aston, including two in or adjacent to the Township. The Fred Meager Theater at Neumann University is a 300-seat theater that offers regular programming and seasonal calendar of events, and is the home to the Delaware County Symphony. Sun Center Studios, in Chester Township, recently began an outdoor summer concert series consisting of 10 acts over three months. The performances host up to 1,500 guests on the studio lawn. In addition to these very close venues, there are two in Media, two in Swarthmore, and two in Malvern. The largest are in Upper Darby - the Tower Theater with over 3,000 seats, and the Upper Darby Performing Arts Center with over 1,600 seats. Even the smallest theaters on the list have regular programming and are quite popular in their respective communities.



**AMC Granite Run 8**

## Performance Venue Potential

The examination of the performance venue market in the Aston area has revealed a significant number of facilities, including two in and adjacent to Aston, covering all ranges of sizes and event types. Furthermore, at least two of these venues - Sun Center Studios and the Tower Theater - host national acts. Operations of this magnitude tend to be the most profitable, however the national act market for Aston is captured by these venues. On the other hand, smaller community theaters tend to struggle operationally without significant subsidies. Because of these factors, we do not recommend a new performance venue for Aston. However, the opportunity exists for the Township/community to collaborate with the university for smaller, local performances and events.

## Bowling Center

As part of the cultural/entertainment market analysis, we also examined the potential for a bowling center in Aston Township. Within 15 miles of Aston Township there are 15 bowling centers containing a total of 451 lanes (see **Table 18**). Six of these can be found in Delaware County, including AMF Conchester Lanes, MacDade Bowl,

Sproul Lanes, Playhouse Lanes, Wynnewood Lanes, and Liberty Lanes. These six Delaware County centers have a total of 157 lanes.

**Table 18. Bowling Centers Located Within 15 miles of Aston Township**

| Venue Name                  | Address | Street                     | City            |
|-----------------------------|---------|----------------------------|-----------------|
| King's Island Mini Golf     | 1451    | Conchester Highway         | Garnet Valley   |
| Linvilla Indoor Mini Golf   | 137     | W. Knowlton Road           | Media           |
| Putt-Putt Golf & Games      | 510     | W. Baltimore Avenue        | Clifton Heights |
| Oasis Family Fun Center     | 35      | Lacruce Avenue             | Glen Mills      |
| Tee it Up Golf              | 21      | Hagerty Boulevard          | West Chester    |
| Delcastle Golf Course       | 801     | McKennans Church Road      | Wilmington      |
| First State Golf Center     | 1798    | W. Newport Pike            | Wilmington      |
| Tee's Golf Center           | 707     | Conshohocken Road          | Conshohocken    |
| Rossi Golf & Sport Center   | 96      | W. Devon Drive             | Exton           |
| Caln Mini Golf              | 4533    | W. Lincoln Highway         | Downingtown     |
| Bolder Falls Miniature Golf | 1426    | Marshallton Thorndale Road | Downingtown     |
| Boomers Family Fun Center   | 1056    | Gap Newport Pike           | Avondale        |
| The Golf Zone               | 1839    | Horseshoe Pike             | Honey Brook     |

Source: Google Maps

According to study conducted by Hansell & Associates, experts in the bowling industry, there were approximately 4,800 bowling centers with about 100,000 lanes operating in the United States in 2012. Based on U.S. population, this amounts to a standard of approximately 1 bowling lane per 3,150 people. According to the Census, Delaware County's 2010 population was 558,979. Under the bowling lane per capita standard, the County would provide sufficient demand to support 177 lanes, 20 more than the current supply of 157. However, within the 15-mile radius of Aston are 451 bowling lanes. AMF Conchester Lanes, located on Conchester Highway just outside the Township, has 32 lanes.



King's Island at Maplezone



**Bowling Center Potential**

**Sun Center Studios**

Based on this analysis, it appears that Delaware County could support another bowling center of 20 lanes. However, we do not recommend such a center for Aston due to the number of lanes within 15 miles and the close proximity of AMF Conchester Lanes to Aston.

**Movie Theater**

As part of the cultural/entertainment market analysis, we also examined the potential for a bowling movie theater in Aston Township. Within 15 miles of Aston Township there are eight movie theaters containing a total of 65 screens (see **Table 19**). Three of these can be found in Delaware County, including AMC Granite Run, AMC Marple 10, and Regal Cinemas Edgemont Square. These six Delaware County centers have a total of 28 lanes.

**Table 19. Movie Theaters Located Within 15 miles of Aston Township**

Source: Google Maps

**Table 22. Indoor Sports Facilities Located Within 15 miles of Aston Township**

| Venue Name          | Address | Street                     | City            |
|---------------------|---------|----------------------------|-----------------|
| Ice Works           | 3100    | Dutton Mill Road           | Aston           |
| Maplezone           | 1451    | Conchester Highway         | Garnet Valley   |
| Marple Sports Arena | 611     | South Park Way             | Broomall        |
| Delco Indoor Sports | 30      | Bunting Lane               | Upper Darby     |
| Aspiring Champions  | 970     | Pulaski Drive              | King of Prussia |
| United Sports       | 1426    | Marshallton Thorndale Road | Downingtown     |
| Young Sports        | 133     | Old Sugartown Road         | Wayne           |
| YSC Sports          | 224     | County Line Road           | Wayne           |
| Viper Sports Club   | 2520    | West Drive                 | Oaks            |

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Based on data from the National Association of Theatre Owners, there was one movie screen per 8,065 population on the United States in 2012. According to the Census, Delaware County's 2010 population was 558,979. Under the screen per capita standard, the County would provide sufficient demand to support 69 screens, four more than the current supply of 65. Within the entire 15-mile radius of Aston there are just 65 movie screens.

### **Movie Theater Potential**

Based on this analysis, it appears that Delaware County, and specifically Aston, is currently underserved by movie facilities and has the potential to capture some of the excess demand from nearby parts of the County that are also underserved. Therefore, we suggest that there could be an opportunity for a new movie theater in Aston - specifically a smaller, more modest cinema-supplement to other recreational activities taking place in the Township. Several concepts exist for this type of movie theater, including a "micro cinema", a movie tavern, and a non-profit community-based theater.

The first is a "micro cinema". This term refers to a small theater operating on a limited budget that shows independent art house-type films. An example is Cinema 16:9 that was located at the Lansdowne Theater in Lansdowne, PA. While the Lansdowne continues a long process of fundraising and rehabilitation to reopen as a live performance theater, Cinema 16:9 occupied a storefront portion of the Theater and operated three micro cinemas (10, 40, and 60 seats).

Another potential model for an alternative movie theater in Aston is a movie tavern. Movie Tavern is actually a brand of theater. It is an in-theater dining concept that combines "dinner and a movie". It offers wait service and allows guests to eat and drink before, after, or during a movie being viewed. Movie Tavern serves appetizers, dinner, dessert, drinks, and traditional in-cinema food such as pop-



Ice Works



ers (see Table 20).  
Five points intersection above—proposed traffic circle with possible surrounding development, below.



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## Recommendations

Based on the analysis of the consultant team and input from the Vision Plan Committee, Township staff, Township Council and the public, the Vision Plan has the following recommendations.

### 1. Business Development and Retention

Often, redevelopment or economic revitalization plans take existing businesses and business owners for granted. That is not the case in Aston. The planning process for the Vision Plan has emphasized working with existing business owners to strengthen their market position toward increasing their bottom line. There are a number of recommendations to accomplish that goal.

- 1.1 Organize monthly business owners' breakfasts for Aston business owners across the community. Divide these meetings geographically with the goal of introducing owners in the same areas to each other.** By connecting with other business owners the business owners in their own area can collaborate on similar challenges and opportunities.
- 1.2 Organize an annual Township-wide business owners' breakfast so that community entrepreneurs understand the larger picture of Aston businesses.** The larger business picture is also very important in developing a community-wide view of how the Township is marketing itself to regional consumers.
- 1.3 Seek, obtain and make available non-profit and govt. - Small Business Association (SBA) counselling expertise for existing business owners at low or no cost.** The SBA provides these services for no or nominal fees. This can be organized through the Township or the Aston Business Association (ABA).
- 1.4 Seek and obtain grant funding for a retail façade improvement program. Retain architectural services to assist owners with designing and implementing reasonably-priced façade improvements to aging structures.** While proposed ordinances will contain architectural guidelines for new structures, property and business owners will need assistance in updating facades of existing structures.
- 1.5 Identify and recruit one-of-a-kind businesses and entrepreneurs who respond to a market "gap" to locate in Aston.** This can be a joint effort of the Township and ABA.
- 1.6 Create financial incentives for the adaptive reuse of the decommissioned Township sewer plant site so that the property has a financial advantage over regional competitors.** This is a tremendous opportunity for the Township. The property presently generates no taxes since it is owned by the municipality. Delaying taxes through the designation of the site as a Keystone Opportunity Expansion Zone (KOEZ) or other similar designation will entice new light industrial users to the site that will

create jobs in Aston and create ratables after the initial KOEZ tax abatement expires.

## 2. Zoning

**Create overlay zoning districts along Pennell Road and Concord Road. Zoning overlays should be designed to:**

- 2.1 Allow more than 1 primary use per lot / per building (mixed use).** Presently, most of the zoning along these corridors allow only one primary use per lot.
- 2.2 Allow increased multi-family residential densities.** The Vision Plan Market Study has indicated that there is a gap in the rental housing market and that Aston can support a greater number of apartments and higher quality dwelling units. This can be accomplished without significantly lowering the Township's high percentage of owner occupied housing.
- 2.3 Allow increased building height were appropriate.** Increased building heights will be most applicable for multi-family residential units.
- 2.4 Create incentives for parcel assembly (to create larger lots).** These incentives may include increased lot coverage or density, reduction in the number of driveway openings on the street (and enhanced safety) and the ability to attract larger redevelopment projects.
- 2.5 Allow shared parking / reduction of parking where appropriate.** This is especially applicable where there are adjacent uses that have different peak use times.
- 2.6 Encourage shared access and cross-access easements between adjacent lots.** This can benefit small lots by creating more parking spaces and reduces the amount of traffic accessing the roadway.
- 2.7 Reduce the number of driveway openings on major arterials where feasible to increase safety.**
- 2.8 Consider the adoption of an Official Map to prioritize development of the following community facilities:**

- 2.8.1** Road and intersection improvements – If these improvements are on the Official Map the Township has more negotiating leverage with land development applicants in helping to pay for these improvements. It also helps with the ability to seek state and federal funding.
- 2.8.2** Sidewalks and trails - If these improvements are on the

ZONING

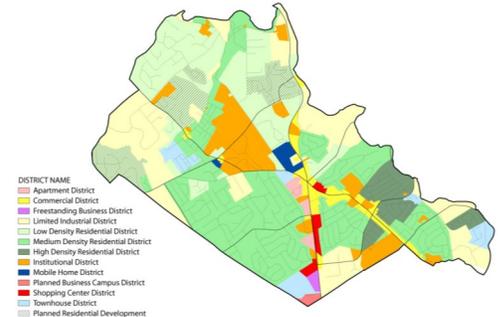
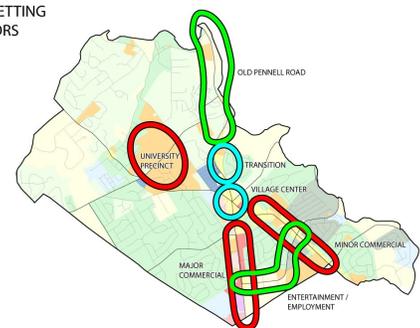
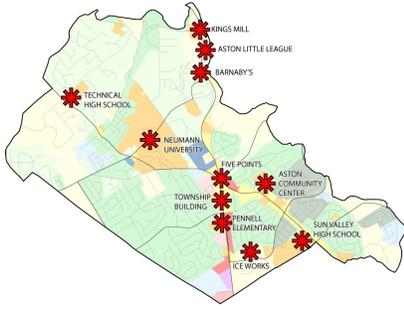


IMAGE-SETTING CORRIDORS



LANDMARKS



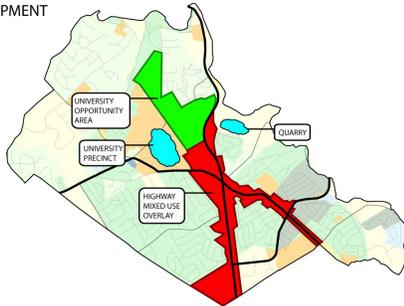
Official Map the Township has more negotiating leverage with land development applicants in helping to pay for these improvements.

**2.8.3** Open Space / Community Civic Space - If these improvements are on the Official Map the Township has more negotiating leverage with land development applicants in helping to pay for these improvements. This may follow the completion of a Comprehensive Park and Recreation Plan.

**2.8.4** Stormwater Management Facilities - If these improvements are on the Official Map the Township has more negotiating leverage with land development applicants in helping to pay for these improvements. This may also be a help to the Township in fulfilling the requirements of its MS-4 Plan.

**2.9 Examine zoning requirements for Limited Industrial (LI) District with the adaptive reuse of the decommissioned Township Sewer Plan in mind. Also examine zoning for recreational uses of the site.** Current zoning may or may not fit modern needs and potential redevelopers for this site.

POTENTIAL REDEVELOPMENT AREAS



**3. Subdivision and Land Development**

**3.1 Strengthen street tree requirements.** Communities that people like often have tree-lined streets. Trees are a sign of a community that cares about the environment and sustainability. Trees have been shown to have positive effects about how people think about their community. Trees help to absorb stormwater.

**3.2 Strengthen shade tree requirements for parking lots.** Parking lots become heat sinks and can add to air conditioning demands for nearby buildings. Cars can heat up to extreme temperatures without the benefit of shade.

**3.3 Institute architectural and streetscape design guidelines for commercial, retail, multi-family residential and mixed-use structures.** Participants in the Vision Plan process recognized the need for an improved aesthetic in Aston Township. Architectural and streetscape guidelines will encourage land development applicants to plan for better design and improved aesthetics.

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## 4. Transportation

**4.1 Conduct a study to evaluate the construction of a traffic circle at Five Points Intersection.** If, as the Vision Plan proposes, the construction of a traffic circle is feasible, PennDOT will need to see this justification for construction of this traffic improvement. This investment is the first step in reducing the congestion at Five Points and creates an identifiable “place” in Aston that may be a catalyst for new development around this intersection.

**4.2 Plan for Improvements to Bridgewater Road.** These improvements will provide better access for former sewer plant location that is seen as a potential redevelopment location.

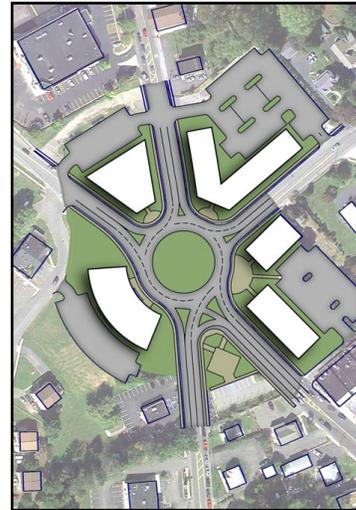
**4.3 Plan for on-road bike lanes and improved shoulders throughout Township – connect to Chester Creek Branch Rail Trail.** These bike accommodations will provide more transportation choices for residents and encourage a reduction in short motor vehicle trips to various destinations in the community.

**4.4 Advance the Chester Creek Branch Trail to construction in Aston Township.** Completion of this regional trail initiative will be both a recreational amenity and a transportation resource. Aston should aggressively seek funding from state and other sources to complete final design, engineering and construction.

**4.5 Identify and fill in missing sidewalk gaps throughout Township.** Pedestrian mobility through completion of the sidewalk system is an important compliment to other transportation initiatives.

**4.6 Institute traffic calming measures throughout Township.** Traffic calming techniques are many and varied. Many traffic calming techniques have multiple benefits. For example, street tree planting can often reduce perceived roadway volume and slow traffic. Pedestrian “bulb-outs can slow vehicular traffic while improving pedestrian safety.

**4.7 Improve bus stop locations and add bus shelters.**



## 5. Community Facilities

Existing community facilities in Aston are much loved and heavily used. As a result, many are either worn-out or they are victims of their own success and require expansion or refurbishment. As Aston reimagines itself, it must ask if its community facilities reflect positively on the values of the community and the people who live in the Township.

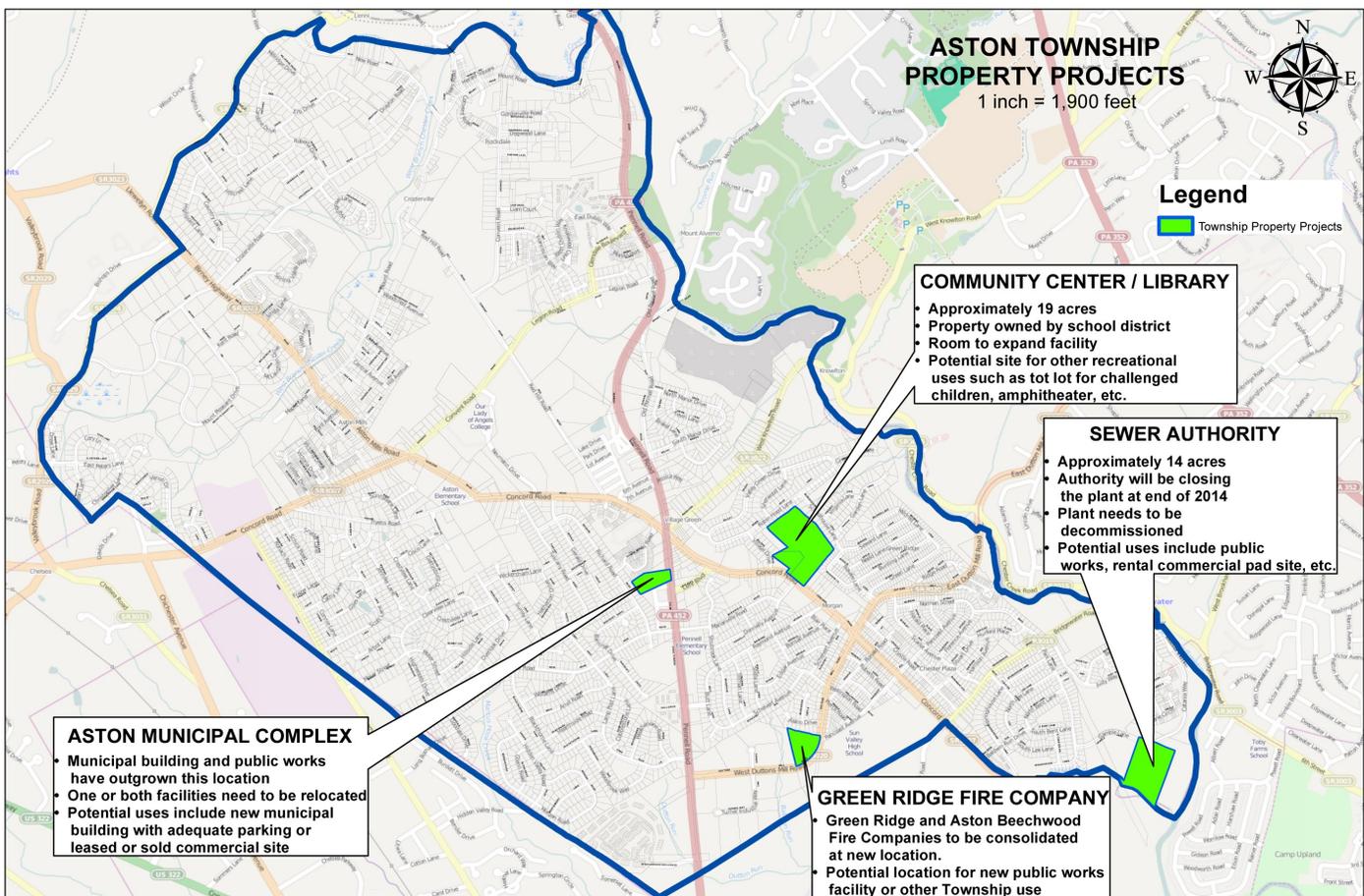
**5.1 Expand the Community Center.** The Aston Community Center is heavily used and cannot meet the demand for meeting and activity space. The Township should explore the feasibility of expanding

the center to better meet the programmatic needs of the facility and community. Explore the creation of additional outdoor recreational facilities at Community Center site. Work with the Penn-Delco School District that owns the site.

**5.2 Expand Library.** Similar to the Community Center, the library that shares the building with the Community Center is out of space. The Township should explore the feasibility of expanding the library as it looks as how the idea of a library has changed in the digital age.

**5.3 Plan and Build a new Township Administration Building.** This facility has exceeded its useful life. It is inefficient and difficult to heat, cool and maintain. Space in the building is cramped and it can no longer efficiently fulfill its role as the local center of government. Consider alternate sites for the new building and consider a land lease and commercial use for the current site as a means for generating continuing income for the Township.

**5.4 Plan and Build a new Public Works Facility.** The current facility has major structural issues and if it were to be maintained would require substantial investment. Additionally, the location of the Public Works Facility does not have to be tied to the Township Administration Building.



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**5.5 Fire Station Consolidation and new facility.** The Aston-Beechwood Fire Company and the Green Ridge Fire Company are considering consolidation of the two companies and the construction of a new Fire Station. The Township should consider the feasibility of a new fire station as a long term cost savings measure and as a means to achieve greater overall operational efficiency.

## **6. Town and Gown**

Neumann University in Aston Township is one of the most untapped community resources in the community. There are many opportunities for cooperation between the University and the Township that will result in benefits for both entities. As this relationship is enhanced and strengthened, additional opportunities for cooperation will emerge.

**6.1 Formalize student internships opportunities with Aston Businesses.** Neumann students are always in search of internship opportunities. Formalization of an intern program with township businesses will help students fulfill requirements while infusing area businesses with vitality and new energy.

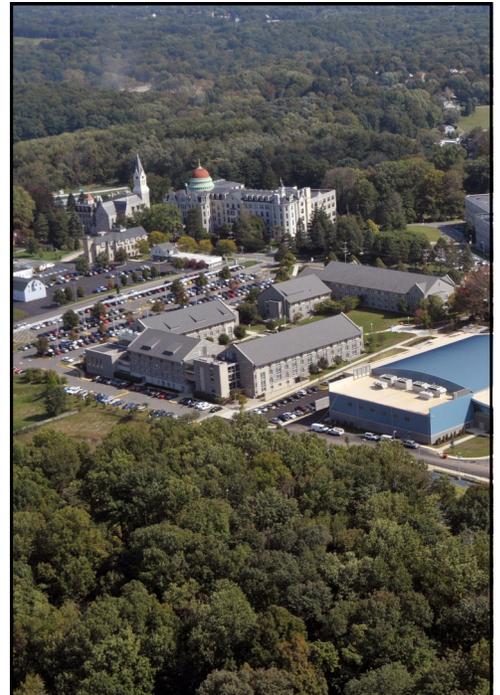
**6.2 Create a program of matching Neumann students with community projects to help satisfy student community service requirements. Designate a liaison for both the University and the Township.** As Aston implements recommendations from the Vision Plan and the planned completion of the Comprehensive Plan in 2015, there will be many small projects that could be undertaken by University students.

**6.3 Better Coordinate University and Township programs.** Create designated liaisons for the Township and University who will meet regularly to share information about respective events and initiative and discuss and plan ways for each organization to be better integrated into the other's activities and programs.

## **7. Housing**

**7.1 Create zoning overlays that allow greater density and height for apartments / multifamily housing to increase rental housing opportunities in the Township.** The Vision Plan Market Study has indicated that there is a gap in the rental housing market and that Aston can support a greater number of apartments and higher quality dwelling units. This can be accomplished without significantly lowering the Township's high percentage of owner occupied housing.

**7.2 Create a formal Township / Neumann University housing program to assist the university in finding safe, affordable and quality housing opportunities for students while maintaining**



**the integrity of existing residential neighborhoods.** Neumann cannot create enough on-campus housing to satisfy student demand. Creation of a housing placement program like this will help avoid negative issues normally associated with college towns.

**7.3 Create a capital improvement program to improve / replace aging infrastructure in the Township's older residential neighborhoods. This primarily includes sanitary sewer lateral connections but may include other infrastructure in need of repair or replacement.** The Township needs to create a plan for these replacements so that it can seek funding for these improvements.

## 8. Gateways & Aesthetics

As Aston has evolved from a mill community to a modern suburb, its' identity outside of the community has become somewhat lost in the sameness of suburbia. In order to tell others about the attributes of the township and in order to attract new businesses and younger residents to the community, Aston needs to identify its place in the region. Simple gateways and improved streetscapes and architectural design are one way to help separate Aston from its surrounding communities and create an identity of Aston as a special place.

**Install early implementation projects to signify that there are new redevelopment / improvement activities in Aston. These may include but are not limited to the following projects:**

**8.1 Gateway signage.** The Vision Plan identifies 8 locations. Work with property owners as these locations to install gateway signage and accompanying landscaping.

**8.2 Design and Install high impact, colorful, low-cost plantings of perennials at gateways and other locations that will have and pronounced visual and aesthetic effect.** Seek out business and property owners who will commit to help maintain these landscape improvements.

**8.3 Initiate a street tree planting program with a goal of 500 new street trees by 2020 (this will create the equivalent of new tree-lined street along both sides of 2.4 miles of roadway).** Seek out funding partners such as Tree-Vitalize, USDA Forest Service, area plant nurseries, Pennsylvania Horticultural Society and local business sponsors to help fund this tree planting initiative.

**8.4 Create and install Aston banners in select locations in the Township to celebrate neighborhoods, historic events, cultural and entertainment venues and other unique Aston attributes.**

**8.5 Create memorable civic spaces and streetscapes that identify Aston.** Identify places where these civic spaces might be created, based on available of left-over space, presumed development



Concord Rd. & Bridgewater Rd.



Concord Rd. at Carriage Lane



Pennell Road at Future Chester Branch Rail Trail Overpass

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trends or interested landowners. Add these locations to the Official Map as open space so that a land development application may create the opportunity to develop these identity creating places.

## **9. Culture and the Arts**

**9.1 Publicize and patronize existing Aston cultural institutions and events including the Delaware County Symphony at Neumann University. Create spin-off / complimentary events coordinated with Symphony performance dates.** Including in these spin-off events could be restaurant promotions, art shows, flea markets etc. Create a schedule of area events including those at the Ice Works and Sun Center.

**9.2 Patronize and publicize Heron Crest Studios in Rockdale.** Use Heron Crest as an example of the unique types of businesses that might take advantage of the unique setting in the Rockdale neighborhood. This could be a function of the Aston Business Association.

**9.3 Established a Rockdale Cultural Center. Seek area foundation support and local donors to move this effort forward.** Support the organization of interested residents to form a non-profit to set up the Cultural Center. Basic support might be provided by the Aston Business Association and the Township.

**9.4 Explore the establishment of a community public arts program.** Other communities have instituted fun art initiatives of painted horses, bears, etc. Develop a program unique to Aston that helps identify the history, culture or community values of the Township.

**9.5 Designate specific locations for permanent community works of art. Seek local Delaware County artists and commissions to fund, build and install these works.** The Township, ABA, and/or other community organizations should seek out willing property owners to locate these works.

## **10. Market Aston Township to Visitors, New Businesses & Residents**

**10.1 Translate “A Community That Cares” into an identifiable brand and logo .** As a part of the Vision Plan process, the Township has developed a new logo for Aston Township. Use this logo on all materials that promote the township.

### **10.2 Create a Consistent Media Strategy**

10.2.1 Aggressively utilize several platforms of social media

10.2.3 Produce well-timed press releases about Aston events, people and history

10.2.3 Work with partners to piggy-back Aston messaging off of their social media platforms

## **11. Enforce Property Maintenance Codes to Promote a Better Community Appearance**

# 1. Business Development and Retention

| Recommendation   | Time-frame     | Responsible Entity | Potential Funding Sources | Costs:<br>Low: <\$100K<br>Medium: <\$500K<br>High: >\$500K |
|--|----------------|--------------------|---------------------------|--|
| 1.1 Organize monthly business owners' breakfasts for Aston business owners across the community. Divide these meetings geographically with the goal of introducing owners in the same areas to each other.           | Ongoing        | Township / ABA     | Township / ABA            | Minimal  |
| 1.2 Organize an annual Township-wide business owners' breakfast so that community entrepreneurs understand the larger picture of Aston businesses.   | Ongoing        | Township / ABA     | Township / ABA            | Minimal  |
| 1.3 Seek, obtain and make available non-profit and govt. - Small Business Association (SBA) counselling expertise for existing business owners at low or no cost.  | Ongoing        | Township / ABA     | Township / ABA            | Minimal  |
| 1.4 Seek and obtain grant funding for a retail façade improvement program. Retain architectural services to assist owners with designing and implementing reasonably-priced façade improvements to aging structures. | Within 5 Years | Township           | PA DCED                   | Low  |
| 1.5 Identify and recruit one-of-a-kind businesses and entrepreneurs who respond to a market "gap" to locate in Aston.  | Ongoing        | Township           | Township / ABA            | Minimal  |
| 1.6 Create financial incentives for the adaptive reuse of the decommissioned Township sewer plant site so that the property has a financial advantage over regional competitors.                                     | Ongoing        | Township           | Township                  | Minimal  |

# 2. Zoning

| Recommendation   | Time-frame | Responsible Entity | Potential Funding Sources | Costs:<br>Low: <\$100K<br>Medium: <\$500K<br>High: >\$500K |
|--|------------|--------------------|---------------------------|--|
| <b>Create overlay zoning districts along Pennell Road and Concord Road. Zoning overlays should be designed to:</b>   |            |                    |                           |  |
| 2.1 Allow more than 1 primary use per lot / per building (mixed use)   | 1-2 years  | Township           | Township / DVRPC          | Low  |
| 2.2 Allow increased multi-family residential densities   | Ongoing    | Township           | Township / DVRPC          | Minimal  |
| 2.3 Allow increased building height where appropriate  | Ongoing    | Township           | Township / DVRPC          | Minimal  |
| 2.4 Create incentives for parcel assembly (to create larger lots)  | Ongoing    | Township           | Township / DVRPC          | Minimal  |
| 2.5 Allow shared parking / reduction of parking where appropriate  | Ongoing    | Township           | Township / DVRPC          | Minimal  |
| 2.6 Encourage shared access and cross-access easements between adjacent lots   | Ongoing    | Township           | Township / DVRPC          | Minimal  |
| 2.7 Reduce the number of driveway openings on major arterials where feasible to increase safety  | Ongoing    | Township           | Township / DVRPC          | Minimal  |
| 2.8 Examine zoning requirements for Limited Industrial (LI) District with the adaptive reuse of the decommissioned Township Sewer Plan in mind. Also examine recreational uses for the site. | 2-3 Years  | Township           | Township / DVRPC          | Low  |

## Consider the adoption of an Official Map to prioritize development of the following community facilities:

|   |           |          |          |         |
|---|-----------|----------|----------|---------|
| 2.9 Road and intersection improvements  | 2-3 Years | Township | Township | Minimal |
| 2.10 Sidewalks and trails               | 1-2 Years | Township | Township | Minimal |
| 2.11 Open Space / Community Civic Space | 1-2 Years | Township | Township | Minimal |
| 2.12 Stormwater Management Facilities   | 1-2 Years | Township | Township | Minimal |

**Review Institutional Zoning District to ensure that regulations are in keeping with goals of major Township Institutions.**

### 3. Subdivision and Land Development

| Recommendation |   | Time-frame | Responsible Entity | Potential Funding Sources | Costs:<br>Low: <\$100K<br>Medium:<\$500K<br>High:>\$500K |
|----------------|---|------------|--------------------|---------------------------|--|
| 3.1            | Strengthen street tree requirements   | 2-3 Years  | Township           | Township / DVRPC          | Minimal  |
| 3.2            | Strengthen shade tree requirements for parking lots   | 2-3 Years  | Township           | Township / DVRPC          | Minimal  |
| 3.3            | Institute architectural and streetscape design guidelines for commercial, retail, multi-family residential and mixed-use structures | 3-5 Years  | Township           | Township / DVRPC          | Minimal  |

### 4. Transportation

| Recommendation |   | Time-frame | Responsible Entity   | Potential Funding Sources       | Costs:<br>Low: <\$100K<br>Medium:<\$500K<br>High:>\$500K |
|----------------|---|------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| 4.1            | Conduct a study to evaluate the construction of a traffic circle at Five Points Intersection                                    | 2-3 Years  | Township             | Township / DVRPC                | Low  |
| 4.2            | Plan for and construct improvements to Bridgewater Road – (access for former sewer plant location)                              | 3-5 Years  | PennDOT              | Township / PennDOT              | High   |
| 4.3            | Plan for and construct on-road bike lanes / improved shoulders throughout Township – connect to Chester Creek Branch Rail Trail | Ongoing    | Township/<br>PennDOT | Township / Penn-<br>DOT / DVRPC | Medium   |
| 4.4            | Advance the Chester Creek Branch Trail to construction in Aston Township  | 5-7 Years  | Township             | DCNR / County/<br>DVRPC / CFA   | High   |
| 4.5            | Identify and fill in missing sidewalk gaps throughout Township  | Ongoing    | Township/<br>PennDOT | Township                        | Medium   |
| 4.6            | Institute traffic calming measures throughout Township  | Ongoing    | Township/<br>PennDOT | Township / PennDOT              | Medium   |
| 4.7            | Improve bus stop locations and add bus shelters   | Ongoing    | Township/SEPTA       | SEPTA / Township                | Medium   |

### 5. Community Facilities

| Recommendation |  | Time-frame | Responsible Entity         | Potential Funding Sources              | Costs:<br>Low: <\$100K<br>Medium:<\$500K<br>High:>\$500K |
|----------------|--|------------|----------------------------|--|--|
| 5.1            | Plan and construct addition to Community Center:                                   | 2-6 years  | Township / School District | Township / School District / DCED/ CFA | High   |
| 5.2            | Plan and construct Library expansion   | 2-6 years  | Township / School District | Township / School District / DCED/ CFA | High   |
| 5.3            | Plan and construct New Township Administration Building                            | 2-6 years  | Township                   | Township / DCED / CFA                  | High   |
| 5.4            | Plan and construct New Public Works Facility                                       | 2-6 years  | Township                   | Township / DCED/ CFA                   | High   |
| 5.5            | Fire company consolidation and plan and construct new fire station                 | 2-6 years  | Township / Fire Companies  | Township / DCED/ CFA                   | High   |
| 5.6            | Prepare a Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Plan / Evaluation all park facilities | 1-2years   | Township                   | Township / DCNR                        | Low  |

## 6. Town and Gown

| Recommendation |  | Time-frame | Responsible Entity          | Potential Funding Sources                | Costs:<br>Low: <\$100K<br>Medium:<\$500K<br>High:>\$500K |
|----------------|--|------------|-----------------------------|--|--|
| 6.1            | Formalize student internships opportunities with Aston Businesses  | On-going   | Township / University / ABA | Township / University / ABA / Businesses | Minimal  |
| 6.2            | Create a program of matching Neumann students with community projects to help satisfy student community service requirements | On-going   | Township / University / ABA | Township / University / ABA / Businesses | Minimal  |
| 6.3            | Active and on-going coordination of University / Township programs– create liaisons for both the University and Township     | On-going   | Township / University / ABA | Township / University / ABA / Businesses | Minimal  |

## 7. Housing

| Recommendation |  | Time-frame | Responsible Entity         | Potential Funding Sources        | Costs:<br>Low: <\$100K<br>Medium:<\$500K<br>High:>\$500K |
|----------------|--|------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| 7.1            | Create zoning overlays that allow greater density and height for apartments / multifamily housing to increase rental housing opportunities in the Township   | 1-2 years  | Township                   | Township / DVRPC                 | Minimal  |
| 7.2            | Create a formal Township / Neumann University housing program to assist the university in finding safe, affordable and quality housing opportunities for residents while maintaining the integrity of existing residential neighborhoods.                          | 1 year     | Township / University      | Township / University / Realtors | Minimal  |
| 7.3            | Create a capital improvement program to improve / replace aging infrastructure in the Township's older residential neighborhoods. This primarily includes sanitary sewer lateral connections but may include other infrastructure in need of repair or replacement | 2-4 years  | Township / Sewer Authority | Township / DCED / PennVest       | High   |

## 8. Gateways & Aesthetics

| Recommendation   |   | Time-frame | Responsible Entity | Potential Funding Sources        | Costs:<br>Low: <\$100K<br>Medium:<\$500K<br>High:>\$500K |
|--|---|------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| <b>Install early implementation projects to signify that there are new redevelopment / improvement activities in Aston. These may include but are not limited to the following projects:</b> |   |            |                    |                                  |  |
| 8.1  | Gateway signage   | Immediate  | Township           | Township                         | Low  |
| 8.2  | High impact, colorful, low-cost plantings of perennials at gateways and other locations that will have and pronounced visual and aesthetic effect.                                      | 1 year     | Township           | Township                         | Low  |
| 8.3  | Initiate a street tree planting program with a goal of 500 new street trees by 2020 (this will create the equivalent of new tree-lined street along both sides of 2.4 miles of roadway) | 1–5 years  | Township           | Township / Tree-Vitalize / PHS   | Medium   |
| 8.4  | Create and install Aston banners in select locations in the Township to celebrate neighborhoods, historic events, cultural and entertainment venues and other unique Aston attributes.  | 1–2 years  | Township           | Township / Tree-Vitalize / PHS   | Low  |
| 8.5  | Create memorable civic spaces and streetscapes that identify Aston  | 2-10 years | Township           | Township / Tree-Vitalize / PHS / | High   |

## 9. Culture and the Arts

| Recommendation |   | Time-frame | Responsible Entity                                    | Potential Funding Sources          | Costs:<br>Low: <\$100K<br>Medium:<\$500K<br>High:>\$500K |
|----------------|---|------------|---|------------------------------------|--|
| 9.1            | Publicize and patronize existing Aston cultural institutions and events including the Delaware County Symphony at Neumann University. Create spin-off / complimentary events coordinated with Symphony performance dates. | On-going   | Township / University / Ice Works / Sun Center / Oth- | Responsible Entities               | Low  |
| 9.2            | Patronize and publicize Heron Crest Studios in Rockdale   | On-going   | Township / ABA / Businesses                           | Township / ABA                     | Minimal  |
| 9.3            | Established a Rockdale Cultural Center. Seek area foundation support and local donors to move this effort forward.  | 2-3 years  | Township / ABA  | Township / DCED / CFA              | High   |
| 9.4            | Explore the establishment of a community public arts program.   | 2-3 years  | Township / ABA  | Township / DCED / CFA / Businesses | Low  |
| 9.5            | Designate specific locations for permanent community works of art. Seek local Delaware County artists and commissions to fund, build and install these works.   | 2-6 years  | Township / ABA / Businesses                           | Township / ABA / Businesses        | Low  |

## 10. Market Aston to visitors, new businesses & residents

| Recommendation |  | Time-frame | Responsible Entity | Potential Funding Sources | Costs:<br>Low: <\$100K<br>Medium:<\$500K<br>High:>\$500K |
|----------------|--|------------|--------------------|---------------------------|--|
| 10.1           | Translate "A Community That Cares" into an identifiable brand/ logo  | Immediate  | Township           | Township                  | Low  |
| 10.2           | Create a consistent media strategy<br>- Aggressively utilize several platforms of social media<br>- Produce well-timed press releases about Aston events, people and history<br>- Work with partners to piggy-back Aston messaging off of their social media platforms | 1- year    | Township / ABA     | Township / ABA            | Low  |

## 11. Enforce Property Maintenance Codes to Promote a Better Appearance

| Recommendation |   | Time-frame | Responsible Entity         | Potential Funding Sources | Costs:<br>Low: <\$100K<br>Medium:<\$500K<br>High:>\$500K |
|----------------|---|------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| 11.1           | Inspect and notify property owners. Work with property owners and businesses to correct deficiencies. Cite and fine property owners after 2nd notification. | On-going   | Township / Property owners | Township / Businesses     | Minimal  |

**Abbreviation Key:**

ABA = Aston Business Association  
 DCNR = PA Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources  
 CFA = Commonwealth Finance Agency  
 PennVEST = PA Infrastructure Investment Authority

DVRPC = Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission  
 DCED = PA Dept. of Community and Economic Development  
 PHA = Pennsylvania Horticultural Society  
 SEPTA = Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority