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APPENDIX

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APPENDIX

A. PUBLIC MEETING SUMMARIES

JUNE 11, 2009

COMMUNITY WORKSHOP SUMMARY

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT EXERCISE SUMMARY

Upper Dublin Township held a Community Visioning Workshop on June 11, 2009 to introduce its comprehensive planning initiative and to gain initial feedback from the community on a variety of issues that will be considered in the Comprehensive Plan. An interactive community assessment exercise presented ideas and asked questions on issues ranging from neighborhood quality of life to key development concerns.

Subsequent to the Visioning Workshop, the Township posted a survey on its website with questions based on those asked during the community assessment exercises. The survey will be on the website for the entire month of July and results will be formally tallied then. Summary results from the first two weeks are attached. In general, responses to the survey have been pretty similar to those received at the Workshop. This summary only includes online survey results only for questions added after the community assessment exercise.

The following summarizes the feedback received in the community assessment exercise. The findings in no way represent a statistically significant sampling of community issues; rather it “takes the pulse” of about 160 residents who chose to participate in a community workshop on a fine June evening. The Assessment was not designed to get meaningful research data but rather to probe at some “hot button” issues to hopefully gain an understanding of how to address them in the comprehensive planning process. The information summarized below will be used help understand how to educate people as to the implications of what they said they want to deciding where and how the plan may pursue important, yet controversial, issues.

RESPONDENT PROFILE

There were 158 participants in the community assessment exercise. They tended to be older – 62 percent reported being at least 51 years old – and had long term roots in the Township, with 51 percent of participants reporting that they had lived or worked in Upper Dublin for 21 or more years.

What is your age group?	Responses	
Less than 18 years	1	0.63%
18-30 years	5	3.16%
31-40 years	16	10.13%
41-50 years	38	24.05%
51-65 years	54	34.18%
More than 65 years	44	27.85%
Totals	158	100%

How long have you lived or worked in Upper Dublin?	Responses	
0-5 years	17	10.76%
6-10 years	26	16.46%
11-20 years	34	21.52%
21-40 years	52	32.91%
41+ years	29	18.35%
Totals	158	100%

Together Fort Washington and Maple Glen residents made up nearly half of the audience. Nearly 20 percent of attendees were from Dresher. Many of the 18 percent who identified as being from an “other” neighborhood indicated that they were from Ambler. No other neighborhood made up more than 10 percent of the audience

Where do you live or work?	Responses	
Abington	1	0.63%
Ardsley	1	0.63%
Dresher	31	19.62%
Fort Washington	36	22.78%
Jarrettown	2	1.27%
Maple Glen	38	24.05%
North Hills	5	3.16%
Oreland	11	6.96%
Willow Grove	4	2.53%
Other	29	18.35%
Totals	158	100%

RESPONSES TO GENERAL COMMUNITY ISSUES

When asked, the top three reasons stated for choosing to live in Upper Dublin were high quality schools, community character and that the Township is located close to their place of work.

Why do you choose to live or work in Upper Dublin?	Responses (n=158)	
Born/raised here	24	15.19%
Good schools	93	58.86%
Town character	66	41.77%
Friends/family	58	36.71%
Low taxes	14	8.86%
Close to work	66	41.77%

The issues most commonly cited as a potential reason to leave the Township were housing that no longer meets needs and taxes, both of which received a response greater than 50 percent

What would cause you to leave?	Responses (n=158)	
Overdevelopment	70	44.30%
Reduced school quality	51	32.28%
Housing no longer meets my needs	97	61.39%
Job change	45	28.48%
Taxes	94	59.49%
Reduction in community services	62	39.24%

When asked specifically about what is good in their neighborhoods, participants responded positively to nearly every issue raised. Most potential neighborhood amenities were identified as a neighborhood asset by at least 50 percent of respondents, except that only about a third thought that access to shopping and dining was an asset offered by their neighborhood.

What's great about your neighborhood?	Responses (n=158)	
Housing stock	81	51.27%
Neighbors	88	55.70%
Access to parks & recreation	78	49.37%
Access to shopping & eating	59	37.34%
Privacy	97	61.39%
Aesthetics	100	63.29%

Top neighborhood concerns were traffic speeds and volumes. Few selected crime as a concern.

<u>What concerns you about your neighborhood?</u>	Responses (n=158)	
Traffic speeds	95	60.13%
Traffic volume	80	50.63%
Lack of sidewalks	58	36.71%
Crime	24	15.19%
Noise	52	32.91%
Commercial development is too close	46	29.11%

On Township-wide transportation issues, two-thirds of respondents cited traffic congestion as their top concern. Limited public transit, road maintenance and lack of sidewalks were also frequently identified as concerns.

<u>What are your top 3 transportation concerns?</u>	Responses (n=158)	
Traffic congestion	105	66.46%
Lack of bike lanes	40	25.32%
Lack of trails	27	17.09%
Limited public transit	57	36.08%
Lack of sidewalks	55	34.81%
Parking problems	20	12.66%
Road maintenance	57	36.08%
None of the above	10	6.33%

Preservation and protection of natural resources was cited as a top concern for more than half of respondents. Nearly 50 percent cited additional open space as a top priority. The importance of open space and natural resource protection was emphasized later in the meeting as participants commented that open space should be considered as the best end use for the Township’s limited remaining vacant land. In other recreation needs, local parks and playgrounds and walking and biking trails were also identified as priorities by more than 40 percent of the audience.

<u>What are your top 3 open space and recreation priorities</u>	Responses (n=158)	
Local parks & playgrounds	69	43.67%
Varied recreation programs	31	19.62%
Walking & biking trails	70	44.30%
Bike trails & lanes	30	18.99%
Preservation/protection of natural resources	94	59.49%
Playing fields	15	9.49%
Additional open space	75	47.47%
None of the above	13	8.23%

Participants were asked to identify their top development concerns moving forward. Open space preservation, the future of the Fort Washington Office Park and shopping centers and preserving neighborhood character were selected by at least two-thirds of participants. Vacant land development and increased diversity in housing were cited by fewer than half of participants.

Prioritize your development concerns	Responses	
Fort Washington Office Park	116	73.42%
Shopping centers	107	67.72%
Vacant land development	73	46.20%
Preserving neighborhood character	107	67.72%
Increased diversity in housing	67	42.41%
Open space preservation	122	77.22%

HOUSING

Slightly fewer than half of respondents felt that the current housing stock meets current needs. Mixed-use neighborhoods were identified as a need by nearly 40 percent of the audience. More affordable housing options were named by about 30 percent.

Is there a need for more diverse housing stock?	Responses	
	(n=158)	
No, homes suit the needs of families	72	45.57%
Yes, need more condos options	41	25.95%
Yes, need more townhome options	39	24.68%
Yes, need more rental options	23	14.56%
Yes, need mixed-use neighborhoods	62	39.24%
Yes, need more affordable options	49	31.01%

In terms of infill development, it appears that respondents felt that it was more important to match the scale and design of infill to existing development than the specific housing type. Less than 50 percent supported the concept of infill that matched existing development in type, but is of a different scale. Roughly the same number of respondents indicated that it was okay to match new development to scale but not type as said that new homes should match in both type and scale. Given that infill development in an established neighborhood tends to be controversial, this is a response that should be tested further.

When new homes are built in an existing neighborhood they should match in type and scale	Responses	
Yes	104	67.53%
No	50	32.47%
Totals	154	100%

When new homes are built in an existing neighborhood they should match in type, but not necessarily scale		Responses	
Yes	63	42.28%	
No	86	57.72%	
Totals	149	100%	

When new homes are built in an existing neighborhood they should match in scale, but not necessarily type		Responses	
Yes	98	64.90%	
No	53	35.10%	
Totals	151	100%	

COMMERCIAL SERVICES AND DEVELOPMENT

Only about 20 percent of respondents indicated that Upper Dublin's existing shopping centers provide all needed goods and services. A similar amount said that existing facilities met their needs, but that they would like more choice; however, fewer than 10 percent said that they couldn't get what they need in the Township and that it was inconvenient to travel to another location.

Do Upper Dublin's shopping centers provide the goods & services you need?		Responses	
Yes	30	19.35%	
Yes, but I'd like more choice	33	21.29%	
No, but I can get what I need nearby	79	50.97%	
No, it is inconvenient to travel.	13	8.39%	
Totals	155	100%	

The top choice for additional services was dining at nearly 50 percent. Based on audience response, a post office would have been a strong competitor for the number one position, had it been on the list. Entertainment and groceries were other common responses. Based on participant response, “post office” was added as a response to the online survey. To date, about 27 percent have selected it as an option.

Would you like to see more of the following available in UDT?	Responses	
Grocery	35	22.15%
Pharmacy	8	5.06%
Clothing	19	12.03%
Gifts & specialty shops	16	10.13%
Furniture/appliances/household goods	9	5.70%
Dining	78	49.37%
Entertainment	51	32.28%

When asked about the future use of the Township’s existing shopping centers, about three-quarters of participants felt that the current single-story retail development was appropriate for each of the four centers. Reactions to mixed-use proposals at each site varied. About half of respondents were open to the idea of a mix of retail and office uses at the Upper Dublin Shopping Center and Dreshertown Plaza. Participants were less open to mixed-use scenarios that involved residential development. While nearly 42 percent thought this was an appropriate use for Dreshertown Plaza, nearly 54 percent felt it was not an appropriate use at any of the current shopping center locations. The potentially most intense mix of development – including retail, office and housing scored the lowest, with nearly two-thirds of respondents indicated that it was not a good use for any of the proposed locations.

Which of the following uses is appropriate for these existing shopping centers									(n=158)	
	Upper Dublin		Maple Glen		Fairway		Dreshertown		Not good for any of these locations	
Single story retail	119	75.32%	124	78.48%	117	74.05%	118	74.68%	17	10.76%
Mix of retail/housing	53	33.54%	48	30.38%	51	32.28%	66	41.77%	83	53.53%
Mix of retail/office	76	48.10%	69	43.67%	69	43.67%	80	50.63%	65	41.14%
Mix of retail/office/housing	44	27.85%	40	25.32%	42	26.58%	53	33.54%	102	64.56%

Despite the results of the prior question more than half of participants thought it would be okay to develop multiple stories at the Upper Dublin and Fairway Shopping Centers to achieve mixed-use development. This number fell to 47 percent for the Dreshertown Plaza and about 40 percent for the Maple Glen Shopping Center. The somewhat mixed results between these questions point out a potential area for future study.

Would you consider increased

density to achieve a mix of uses	Upper Dublin		Maple Glen		Fairway		Dreshertown	
No, limit development to one story	75	47.47%	89	59.33%	71	47.65%	82	53.25%
Up to three stories would be okay	60	37.97%	48	32.00%	59	39.60%	49	21.82%
Up to four stories would be okay	23	14.56%	13	8.67%	19	12.75%	23	14.94%

VACANT LAND DEVELOPMENT

A set of questions asked participants to indicate their preferences for the future development of two important vacant parcels in the Township, the undeveloped portion of the Prudential Office Park site and the Dresher Triangle area across Limekiln Pike from Dreshertown Plaza. The table below lists respondents answers, it should be noted that there was considerable concern among meeting participants that “open space” was not offered as an option for the ultimate development of these sites. Verbally, many indicated the desire to choose this option for each site, reinforcing the emphasis the community places on preservation of open space.

Based on this feedback, “open space” was added as an option in the online survey. It was most selected response for both sites at 57 percent for Dresher Triangle and 61 percent for the Prudential site. The second most popular choice for Prudential was “office campus” at 51 percent. “Mixed-use” and “shopping center” tied for second in the Dresher Triangle area with 38 percent of responses each.

What types of development would be appropriate at these locations	Prudential		Dresher Triangle		Not good for either location		(n=158)
Office campus	84	53.16%	25	15.82%	62	39.24%	
Shopping Center	36	22.78%	36	22.78%	100	63.29%	
Mixed-use	78	49.37%	57	36.08%	70	44.30%	
Residential with limited retail	74	46.84%	57	36.08%	57	36.08%	
Traditional neighborhood development	53	33.54%	51	32.28%	82	51.90%	
Age-restricted housing	48	30.38%	38	24.05%	82	51.90%	
Assisted living	39	24.68%	40	25.32%	89	56.33%	
Townhouses or garden apartments	44	27.85%	46	29.11%	93	58.86%	
Single family subdivisions	43	27.22%	34	21.52%	104	65.82%	

DECEMBER 3, 2009

COMMUNITY WORKSHOP SUMMARY

This memo attempts to summarize the feedback received at the December 3, 2009 Comprehensive Plan Community Workshop. To assist in your review, I have attached a copy of the display boards with a tally of the results and any comments received. (I know, I said that we would not count the individual responses, but it is the easiest way for you all to see the level of response (i.e. interest and understanding level) for each question. Typically, more people will respond to questions about issues that they feel strongly about and/or feel that they fully understand. Not surprisingly, the questions on commercial centers and the Fort Washington Office Park received the highest level of response.

WISE USE OF LAND

TOP OPEN SPACE CONCERNS

- Trails
- Preservation of open land
- Some concern about historic resource protection “park gaps”
- “Protection of stream corridors” added as a comment

USE OF DRESHER TRIANGLE AND PRUDENTIAL

Responses to this display were relatively low. This could indicate a lack of willingness to consider these for development. The only option that received responses in the double digits was the suggestion of residential/office/retail mix at Dresher Triangle.

OPEN SPACE ACQUISITION

- Nearly all participants want to see the remaining funds in the Open Space Bond go to acquisition of properties on the open space priority list in the UDT Open Space Plan.
- No other undeveloped parcels were identified as more important than those already on the UDT Open Space Plan priority list
- When asked what would make a parcel more important than one already identified in the Open Space Plan, “its is importance to the overall ecosystem” was the only suggestion with significant response

ADDITIONAL FUNDING NEEDS

- Only five people indicated that they would be willing to pass another bond measure to purchase remaining land on the open space priority list (above and beyond what the existing bond measure will be able to purchase).
- No one people indicated that they would be willing to pass another bond measure to purchase “all remaining vacant land.”

HOUSING

NEEDS OF AN AGING POPULATION

When asked where they would like to live when they get older, the most common response was “in my current home,” the next most popular was “outside of the Township because my needs are not being met.”

ACCESSORY APARTMENTS

Very few participants indicated that they would oppose accessory apartments under any conditions, and few supported them without restrictions. Most felt that one of the dwelling units should be owner occupied.

PRESERVATION OF HISTORIC RESOURCES

- When asked whether they would consider using open space bond funds to help preserve historic homes, very few participants said “no.” The most popular assistance options were:
 - Provision of low-interest loans
 - Design assistance for preservation
- Nearly all would support limited professional office space in historic homes to make needed investments financially feasible.

HOMES ON BUSY STREETS

- Most participants felt that homes on busy streets were less desirable due to traffic conflicts.
- When asked about relaxing home occupation standards for homes on busy streets, most supported relaxing the limitations on size and on daily visitors

COMMERCIAL CENTERS

MIXED USE TRADE-OFFS

- The most appealing elements of mixed use for participants were the opportunity to improve the appearance of our commercial centers and the ability to strengthen the tax base with minimal new investment in services.
- The largest concern was increased traffic.
- When asked about the trade-offs between new tax revenues and potential negative impacts of increased development intensities:
 - Most felt that the new revenues outweigh the negative impacts.
 - Some felt that the additional tax revenues should be used to fix the negative impacts.

- No one said that the negative impacts outweigh the additional tax revenues no matter what.
- When asked which commercial centers might be appropriate for mixed use development, Dresher Triangle was the most frequent response, though Upper Dublin Shopping Center and “all of them” were also well-represented. No one said “none of them.”
- When asked if there were other areas in the Township that might be more suitable for mixed use development, the Fort Washington Office park was the most frequent response.
- When asked about the potential for mixed use development to serve a wider range of residents – particularly singles and couples without children – all who responded indicated that they liked this aspect of mixed use development.
- When asked whether they would consider condominiums or apartments in a mixed use development for themselves or an elderly relative, nearly all who responded said yes. One comment was received that senior services would need to be provided in the complex to sustain seniors through health issues.

LOCAL COMMERCIAL SERVICES

- Most felt that it was very important for UDT to have its own retail, restaurant and entertainment options. Only one person felt that it was not at all important.
- When asked why it was important the top three responses were:
 - Tax base contribution reduces pressure on homeowners
 - It provides convenient access to goods and services
 - Commercial centers are an important part of community identity
- Participants are generally concerned about UDT’s shopping centers today. For each issue raised, the most frequent response was “concerned” or “very concerned,” for issues including:
 - Appearance
 - The range of goods and services offered
 - Vacancy
 - Tenant mix
 - Traffic

FORT WASHINGTON OFFICE PARK

MOVING DEVELOPMENT OUT OF THE FLOODPLAIN

- When asked about development prohibitions in the most flood-prone areas of the Office Park, most supported prohibitions of new development and expansions of existing development.
- The most significant concern about increased development intensity in the Office Park is the need to buffer adjacent neighborhoods.

- While some concern was expressed over height, it appears that participants are open to considerably taller buildings in the Office Park than exist today if:
 - The viewshed from residential neighborhoods is protected
 - The neighborhoods are adequately buffered from the taller development
- Most participants would consider varied building heights – up to seven stories.
- Participants were open to permitting more intense development to encourage environmental and open space protections including, more comprehensive stormwater management, green building design and open space connections.

RETAIL USES

- When asked about appropriate retail development in the Office Park, participants generally were positive about retail with office above, retail with residential above and full service restaurants.
- When asked what role retail should play in the Office Park, most participants felt that retail should meet the needs of the Park and surrounding residents. This question also received a considerable response to the “other” category, with comments about enhanced walkability, bike access, “mix of all questions” and a casino.

RESIDENTIAL USES

- Responses to residential development in the Office Park were somewhat mixed. When asked what types of residential development would be appropriate, none of the options presented got much response. When asked about the role, location and integration with other uses in the Office Park, however, many responded with ideas for how it could fit in:
 - Role: Most felt that it should serve households without children seeking to be close to work, with some interest in housing that serves temporary users. Only a few said that housing should not be in the Office Park
 - Integration with other uses: Most who responded said that housing should be located on the upper floors of retail buildings.

MARCH 24, 2010 COMMUNITY WORKSHOP SUMMARY

This memo attempts to summarize the feedback received at the March 24, 2010 Comprehensive Plan Community Workshop. To assist in your review, I have attached a copy of the display boards with a tally of the results and any comments received.

OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION

SHOULD WE LIMIT FUTURE OPEN SPACE ACQUISITION TO EXISTING RESOURCES OR BOND FOR MORE MONEY?

Responses to this display were relatively one-sided. The consensus was to use existing funds (rather than enact new taxes) and slightly more people wanted to focus on the priority list instead of looking to undeveloped land elsewhere.

RECOMMENDATIONS DEEMED VERY IMPORTANT:

- Maximize the Open Space Bond Fund by focusing on priority properties.
- Expand the trail network.

RECOMMENDATIONS WITH MIXED REACTION OR NO OPINION:

- Working with Temple University to maintain open space on the campus got a mixed reaction, with slightly more people saying it is an important recommendation.

SUMMARY

Overall strong support to focus on the existing bond fund and leaning towards using that money on priority properties as listed in the Open Space Master Plan.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

HOW WILLING ARE YOU TO CONSIDER NEW DEVELOPMENT IN COMMERCIAL AREAS TO HELP BUILD THE TAX BASE?

Overwhelming support for this recommendation with almost all saying that it is a very good idea.

RECOMMENDATIONS DEEMED VERY IMPORTANT:

- Reduce flooding and flood damage in the FWOP.
- Create new land development codes that encourage new and higher value development in the FWOP. Some comments included keep industrial park as

commercial/corporate center only; add entertainment options - add amusement tax to generate income/revenue; and change code to direct portion of commercial/retail rehab permit fees to open space fund.

- Preserve the Prudential Office Campus for commercial development.
- Permit mixed use development for the Dresher Triangle Area.
- Encourage reinvestment – including consideration of mixed-use – in the Township’s shopping areas.

SUMMARY

Almost unanimous support for all the recommendations in this section.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER & HISTORIC RESOURCES

How important is it to you that the appearance of Upper Dublin’s neighborhoods and commercial areas project a specific community identity and sense of place?

Some people thought this was important but more seemed to be not concerned with this issue.

RECOMMENDATIONS DEEMED VERY IMPORTANT:

- Create commercial development standards
- Use a portion of the Open Space Bond Fund to facilitate investment in historic properties.

RECOMMENDATIONS WITH MIXED REACTION OR NO OPINION:

- Enhance tools to protect historic structure from demolition. Many people were neutral about this issue.
- Allow adaptive reuse of historic homes. Split between those that said this was very important and those that were neutral or thought it wasn’t important.

SUMMARY

A mixed reaction, though there was at least some support for all the recommendations in this section.

HOUSING

What do you feel is the most important housing issue for the Township to address over the next decade?

The top selections were to meet the needs of senior residents and to expand housing choices to attract new residents. The next choice was to encourage investment in older homes.

RECOMMENDATIONS DEEMED VERY IMPORTANT:

- Encourage the development of additional senior housing options such as apartments.

RECOMMENDATIONS WITH MIXED REACTION OR NO OPINION:

- Permitting accessory apartments in residential neighborhoods.
- Ensure that residential infill and redevelopment fits within existing neighborhoods.
- More relaxed regulation of home based businesses got a mostly neutral response.

RECOMMENDATIONS THAT WERE NOT IDENTIFIED AS IMPORTANT:

- More than half thought simplifying the permit process by amending the zoning regulations was either not important or were neutral.

SUMMARY

The overall question and supporting questions about the recommendations seem to point towards supporting more housing choices, with an emphasis on the senior residents. Accessory apartments and general infill did not seem very important.

TRANSPORTATION: ROADWAYS

What are your top priorities for roadway improvements in the next decade?

There was three way tie between complete the turnpike slip ramp, provide better sidewalk connections, and to solve the traffic problem caused by the rail bridge on Susquehanna. Addressing congestion was also identified as a priority for some.

RECOMMENDATIONS DEEMED VERY IMPORTANT:

- An eastbound Turnpike slip ramp.
- Work to eliminate the traffic pinch point at the intersection of Limekiln Pike and Susquehanna.

RECOMMENDATIONS WITH MIXED REACTION OR NO OPINION:

- Increase road capacity without widening streets. This received some support as being very important, but more people indicated that they were neutral on the issue.

SUMMARY

The roadway issues seem to focus on specific areas and/or problems, such as the slip ramp and the rail bridge. More general recommendations to address congestion did not seem as important to those at the meeting.

TRANSPORTATION: EXPANDING OPTIONS

Overall, how concerned are you about the lack of transportation options in Upper Dublin Township?

The feedback was mixed, but about twice as many people were concerned about this than those that weren't.

RECOMMENDATIONS DEEMED VERY IMPORTANT:

- New development standards should incorporate incentives or requirements to improve the multi-modal transportation access.
- Continue to pursue County or other funding to expand the pedestrian and bike trail network.
- Advocate for improved transit services.
- Work with transportation agencies to provide service that help residents.

SUMMARY

Even though the initial question was mixed over how concerned everyone was about transportation options, there was unanimous support for all the recommendations in this section.

RECREATION, COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES

What do you think is the best way to pay for these services?

Most people thought that a combination of new development and tax rate increases should pay for it. A few believe that taxes alone or new development alone should pay for these increases.

RECOMMENDATIONS DEEMED VERY IMPORTANT:

- Expand the main library branch.
- Expand the trail network.
- Partner with School District and County Housing Authority to expand computing facilities and hours at the North Hills Library.

RECOMMENDATIONS WITH MIXED REACTION OR NO OPINION:

- Expand facilities coordination between library, Township recreation programs and schools.
- Continue to pursue park development. This was a mixed reaction with an equal number of responses for not important and very important.

SUMMARY

Most recommendations seemed to be important to people, though some had mixed reactions.

ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

Many of the potential next steps in protecting Upper Dublin's natural resources involve regulation of development. How willing are you to consider restrictions or prohibitions on development to protect natural resources?

All the responses indicated that participants were somewhat supportive or very supportive.

RECOMMENDATIONS DEEMED VERY IMPORTANT:

- Strengthen Township regulations on stormwater management.
- Pursue a regional approach to stormwater management.
- Encourage/require new development to preserve and enhance the riparian corridors.
- Encourage/require floodplain preservation and restoration in new development and redevelopment.
- Encourage green design in new development and redevelopment.

RECOMMENDATIONS WITH MIXED REACTION OR NO OPINION:

- Prepare a greenhouse gas action plan had a slightly positive reaction, but mostly had no opinion.

SUMMARY

Almost unanimous support for all the recommendations in this section with the exception of the greenhouse gas action plan.

CIVIC CHARACTER AND PRIDE

How concerned are you about the lack of a civic core or character for Upper Dublin Township?

There was a mixed response to this, with most leaning towards being concerned about it.

RECOMMENDATIONS DEEMED VERY IMPORTANT:

- Address the aging population through a variety of initiatives.

RECOMMENDATIONS WITH MIXED REACTION OR NO OPINION:

- Continue to pursue the development of a "civic campus"
- Work with civic and religious organizations to create places and events where civic and social interaction can occur.

SUMMARY

There was mixed response for most of the recommendations in this section, seemingly making this entire issue not as high of a priority as some other issues, such as economic development or open space preservation.

B. FISCAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

New residential and commercial development will increase the tax base of Upper Dublin Township, generating additional revenue for the Township and the Upper Dublin School District. As new residents and workers use public services, some of these new public revenues generated will be offset by incremental public costs. As a part of the comprehensive planning process, Real Estate Strategies, Inc. (RES) created a fiscal impact model to estimate the impact of the various development scenarios on the Township and School District budgets. The model is based on the Per Capita Method of fiscal impact analysis developed at the Rutgers University Center for Urban Policy Research (CUPR). Rutgers is one of the nation's leading research centers in the field of fiscal impact analysis.

The Per Capital Method requires as inputs estimates of growth in population, employment and the number of public school children associated with a given development scenario. These growth estimates are used to calculate new tax revenues and also to proportionally estimate the additional cost of municipal and school district services. The expected revenues and costs are then compared to produce an estimated net fiscal impact attributed to the development scenario.

To determine the growth in population, employment and public school children generated by a given development scenario, RES used multipliers developed by Rutgers in 2006. The residential population and public school children multipliers (based on the type and size of residential unit) are specific to Pennsylvania and were developed based on 2000 Census data. The employment multipliers (number of employees by 1,000 square feet of space) were developed based on a comprehensive review of planning literature, space utilization analyses, case studies and industry literature and are generalized for the United States as a whole.

RES also assembled data on Township and School District taxes and fees, including rates, assessment ratios, and information about how various taxes and fees are applied. They also collected the budget, demographic and employment information used to estimate increased Township and School District costs associated with potential projects.

TREND BUILD-OUT ANALYSIS

RES used the model to calculate the fiscal impacts associated with the trend build-out of available parcels under current zoning. The total build-out estimated under the analysis includes:

- 1,563,588 square feet of commercial space. This space was assumed to be multi-story office, except for 20,470 square feet of fast food restaurant space.
- 394 new residential units, including: 192 one- and two-bedroom age-restricted condominiums, 133 single-family attached units (112 townhouses and 21 “twin” units) and 69 single-family detached homes.

For the purpose of this analysis, RES assumed that half of the townhouse units will have two bedrooms and half will have three bedrooms. They assumed that the twin units will each have three bedrooms and that the single-family detached units will be divided between three- and four-bedroom residences.

The **Table A.1** presents the detail of the trend build out analysis:

TABLE A.1 TREND BUILD-OUT SCENARIO DETAIL

	ID	Short Name	Buildout (SF)	Residential Buildout (Units)	
Vacant Parcels not in the Development Process	1	Virginia Southside	25,000		
	2	Virginia/Slip Ramp West	25,000		
	3	Virginia Northside	100,958		
	4	Turnpike/Railroad Lot	25,000		
	5	Turnpike/Railroad Lot	25,000		
			<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>200,958</i>	
Vacant Sites with Proposed or Approved Plans	6	Dublin Terrace		192	
	7	Dublin Reserve		41	
	8	Piszek Tract		32	
	9	Dresher Court		17	
	10	Maple Glen Court		6	
	11	1634 Butler Pike		1	
	12	510 Kane		1	
	13	Armstrong		1	
	14	DiFeo Tract		6	
	15	Cutler, Maple Glen		71	
	16	Golfview III		19	
	17	Griswold Tract		5	
	18	Lombardo Tract		2	
	19	Camphill/Virginia	31,800		
	20	Virginia Slip Ramp East	9,000		
	21	375 Commerce	147,660		
	22	Prudential Site	1,086,000		
	23	Susquehanna and Virginia	11,470		
	24	420 Delaware	76,700		
			<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>1,362,630</i>	<i>394</i>
	Total Trend Buildout			1,563,588	394

Sources: Upper Dublin Township, URS

GROWTH ASSOCIATED WITH THE TREND BUILD-OUT

Table A.2 presents the estimates of population, public school student and employment growth associated with the trend build-out scenario. The residential and commercial development program summarized above is expected to result in:

- 787 additional residents in the Township
- 56 additional students in the School District
- 5,926 additional persons employed in Upper Dublin

TABLE A.2 GROWTH ESTIMATES: TREND BUILD-OUT SCENARIO

	Number (units or square feet)	Multipliers (Per unit or 1,000 square feet)			Estimated Growth		
		Public School			Public School		
		Residents	Students	Employees	Residents	Students	Employees
Residential							
Single Family Detached							
3-Bedroom	35	2.82	0.41	N/A	99	14	N/A
4-Bedroom	34	3.58	0.75	N/A	122	26	N/A
Single Family Attached							
2-Bedroom	67	1.76	0.05	N/A	118	3	N/A
3-Bedroom	66	2.22	0.19	N/A	147	13	N/A
Condominiums (Age-Restricted)							
1-Bedroom	96	1.63	N/A	N/A	156	N/A	N/A
2-Bedroom	96	1.52	N/A	N/A	146	N/A	N/A
Total Residential (residents and public school children)					787	56	
Non-Residential							
Office	1,543,118	N/A	N/A	3	N/A	N/A	4,629
Fast Food Restaurant	20,470	N/A	N/A	10	N/A	N/A	205
Total Non-Residential (employees)							4,834

Sources: URS; Upper Dublin Township Engineer; Rutgers CUPR; RES

INCREMENTAL PUBLIC COST CALCULATIONS

New residential and commercial development in Upper Dublin will generate additional tax revenue, but will also result in incremental public sector costs as demand for services such as police and fire protection, road maintenance, libraries and parks increase. To determine the incremental public costs associated with the proposed development, RES used the Rutgers Per Capita Method. This approach requires the consultant to allocate municipal general fund expenditures proportionately between residential and non-residential uses, based on the average of two ratios – the percentage of Township tax parcels that are residential and the percentage of the Township’s total assessed valuation attributable to residential parcels. The average of these two rates is applied to the total general fund budget to estimate the portion of the budget that is attributable to residential uses. The remainder of the general fund budget is assumed to be attributable to non-residential uses.

The residential portion of the budget is then divided by the total population of the jurisdiction to arrive at an average expenditure per resident. The non-residential portion of the budget is divided by the total number of persons working in the jurisdiction to arrive at an average expenditure per worker. These average expenditure figures can then be applied to estimates of new residents and workers associated with the proposed development to project the potential incremental public costs associated with that development.

To estimate the incremental costs to the School District, the 2007-8 School District budget average per pupil expenditure (\$14,627) was multiplied by the number of new public school children expected to be generated by the development scenario.

Table A.3 provides a calculation of the estimated incremental costs to the Township and the School District associated with the trend build-out scenario.

TABLE A.3 PUBLIC COST ESTIMATES: TREND BUILD OUT SCENARIO

Upper Dublin Township General Fund Budget (FY2009)	\$	15,654,042
a. % Residential Parcels	97.6%	
b. % Residential Assessment	82.0%	
Residential Weighting ((a+b)/2)		89.8%
General Fund Budget--Residential Portion	\$	14,057,330
Township Residents (before new development)		25,811
Per Capita General Fund Expenditures	\$	545
General Fund Budget--Non-Residential Portion	\$	1,596,712
Persons Employed in Upper Dublin Township		13,399
Per Worker General Fund Expenditures	\$	119
New Residents Generated by Development Scenario		787
General Fund Costs Attributable to Net New Residents	\$	428,620
New Employees Generated by Development Scenario		4,834
New General Fund Costs Attributable to these Employees	\$	576,051
Total Increase in Annual Upper Dublin General Fund Expenditures	\$	1,004,671
New Public School Students Generated by Development Scenario		56
Upper Dublin School District Expenditure per Student (2007-8)	\$	14,627
Total Increase in Annual Upper Dublin School District Expenditures	\$	819,112

Sources: Upper Dublin Township 2009 Budget; Upper Dublin School District
PA Department of Labor; ESRI 2009 population estimates;
Rutgers University Center for Urban Policy Research

INCREMENTAL REVENUE CALCULATIONS

In order to calculate the potential real estate related tax revenues associated with the trend build-out, RES first developed an estimate of both the market value and assessed valuation of the individual land use components. **Table A.4** illustrates the calculation of both market and assessed value of the proposed development program elements.

In 2009, when this analysis was prepared, the assessment ratio for Montgomery County was 54 percent of market value. Residential sale prices were developed based on a review of new construction pricing in Upper Dublin and surrounding communities. The assessed value assumptions for non-residential uses were developed from a review of comparable properties using the Montgomery County Board of Assessment property records system. Market values were derived from the assessed value assumptions

TABLE A.4 MARKET AND ASSESSED VALUE CALCULATION

	Number (units or square feet)	Market Value	Assessed Value (per unit)(a)	Total Assessed Value
Residential (b)				
Single Family Detached				
3-Bedroom	35	\$ 850,000	\$ 459,000	\$ 16,065,000
4-Bedroom	34	\$ 850,000	\$ 459,000	\$ 15,606,000
Single Family Attached (c)				
2-Bedroom	67	\$ 400,000	\$ 216,000	\$ 14,472,000
3-Bedroom	66	\$ 400,000	\$ 216,000	\$ 14,256,000
Condominiums (Age-Restricted)				
1-Bedroom	96	\$ 300,000	\$ 162,000	\$ 15,552,000
2-Bedroom	96	\$ 300,000	\$ 162,000	\$ 15,552,000
New Residential Assessed Value				\$ 91,503,000
New Residential Market Value				\$ 169,450,000
Non-Residential				
Office	1,543,118	\$ 148	\$ 80	\$ 123,449,440
Fast Food Restaurant	20,470	\$ 296	\$ 160	\$ 3,275,200
New Non-Residential Assessed Value				\$ 126,724,640
New Non-Residential Market Value				\$ 234,675,259
Total New Real Estate Assessed Value				\$ 218,227,640
Total Market Value Associated with Development				\$ 404,125,259

Sources: Montgomery County Board of Assessment; Hanley Wood Market Intelligence; RES

(a) Based on assessment ratio of 54 percent of market value

(b) Residential market values are average of all unit types

(c) Twins and townhouses

ONE-TIME REVENUES ASSOCIATED WITH THE TREND BUILD-OUT SCENARIO

REAL ESTATE TRANSFER TAX

Real property transfers occurring in Upper Dublin are subject to a real estate transfer tax of one percent, with one-half percent going to the Township and one-half percent to the School District. **Table A.5** presents the estimated real estate transfer tax receipts that would be generated by sale of the proposed residential units. Transfer tax receipts are considered a one-time impact for the purposes of this model.

TABLE A.5 REAL ESTATE TRANSFER TAX CALCULATION

	<u>Township</u>	<u>School District</u>
Sales of New Residential Units	\$169,450,000	
* Real Estate Transfer Tax Rate	0.50%	0.50%
Total Real Estate Transfer Tax	<u>\$847,250</u>	<u>\$847,250</u>

BUILDING PERMITS

Building permit revenue was calculated based on a per unit/per square foot basis according based on a review of the schedule of permit fees posted on the Upper Dublin web site.

TABLE A.6 BUILDING PERMIT REVENUE CALCULATION

	<u>Township</u>
<u>Single Family Residential</u>	
Single Family Units	202
Building permit fees per single family unit (a)	\$750
Total Single Family Building Permit Fees	\$151,500
<u>Multi-Family Residential</u>	
Multi-family units	192
Building permit fee per multifamily unit	\$200
Total Multi-Family Building Permit Fees	\$38,400
<u>Commercial</u>	
Commercial square feet	1,563,588
Building permit fees per 1,000 square feet (a)	\$325
Total Commercial Building Permit Fees	\$508,166
Total Building Permit Revenue	\$698,066

RECURRING REVENUES ASSOCIATED WITH THE TREND BUILD-OUT SCENARIO

REAL ESTATE TAX

Real estate taxes were calculated by applying the State Tax Equalization Board's common level ratio currently in effect for Montgomery County (54 percent) to total development costs in order to estimate assessed value. The current Township real estate tax rate of 4.532 mills and School District tax rate of 22.2277 mills were applied to the estimated increase in assessed value associated with the scenario.

TABLE A.7 REAL ESTATE TAX CALCULATION

	Township	School District
Total New Real Estate Assessment	\$218,227,640	
*Real Estate Tax Rate	0.452%	2.2277%
Total Real Estate Tax	\$987,044	\$4,861,457

EARNED INCOME TAX

Upper Dublin Township levies a one-percent earned income tax (EIT) on residents. Non-residents employed in the Township are also subject to the tax. Residents who pay EIT in other municipalities, as well as employees who are subject to the Philadelphia wage tax, may take a credit against the Upper Dublin EIT. Because of the variability of these credits, the estimated revenues were calculated based on the current average EIT revenue per resident of working age plus persons employed in the Township. **Table A.8** below presents the calculation.

TABLE A.8 EARNED INCOME TAX CALCULATION

	Township
Earned Income Tax Receipts (FY 2009 Budget)	\$5,900,000
Total Residents (ages 20-64) + Employees	28,237
Average EIT Remittance	\$208.95
New Residents + New Employees (assumes 50% of new residents are working age adults)	5,228
Total Earned Income Tax	\$1,092,368

LOCAL SERVICES TAX

For each person employed in Upper Dublin who earns more than \$12,000 annually, the Township collects an annual local services tax of \$52.

TABLE A.9 LOCAL SERVICES TAX CALCULATION

	<u>Township</u>
Number of New Employees	4,834
*Local Services Tax Rate	\$52
Adjustment	50% Assumes 50% are PT and earn < \$12K
Total Local Services Tax	<u>\$251.368</u>

MISCELLANEOUS REVENUE

The 2009 Township budget included a number of miscellaneous revenue categories including fines and forfeits and departmental earnings, and interest earnings. Incremental miscellaneous revenue was based on a per capita increase (based on the number of new residents) for fines and forfeits and departmental earnings and on the projected increase in the Township's assessment base for the interest earnings category.

TABLE A.10 MISCELLANEOUS REVENUE CALCULATION

	<u>Township</u>
<u>Fines & Forfeits</u>	
Percent Population Growth	3.0%
* Total Fines & Forfeits	\$108,000
Incremental Fines & Forfeits	<hr/> \$3,240
<u>Department Earnings</u>	
Percent Population Growth	3.0%
* Total Department Earnings	\$534,000
Incremental Department Earnings	<hr/> \$16,020
<u>Interest Earnings</u>	
Percent Growth in Total Assessed Value	9.7%
* Interest Earnings	\$175,000
Incremental Interest Earnings	\$17,001
Total Miscellaneous Revenue	<hr/> \$36,261 <hr/>

SUMMARY OF NET FISCAL IMPACTS

Table A.11 contains a summary of fiscal impacts for the trend build-out scenario including both the one-time revenues associated with construction and sale individual properties as well as the recurring annual fiscal impacts. All dollar figures are 2009 dollars.

The analysis indicated that both the Township and the School District would realize a positive fiscal impact from implementation of the trend build-out scenario. Because the development proposals considered in the 2009 analysis were weighted toward commercial and age-restricted residential development, the School District would realize substantial net positive revenues.

TABLE A.11 SUMMARY OF FISCAL IMPACTS: TREND BUILD-OUT SCENARIO

	<u>Township</u>	<u>School District</u>	<u>Total Net Local Fiscal Impact</u>
Real Estate Transfer Tax Revenue	847,250	847,250	\$1,694,500
Building Permit Income	698,066	-	\$698,066
Total One Time Tax Revenue (2009 \$)	\$ 1,545,316	\$ 847,250	\$ 2,392,566
Real Estate Tax	\$987,044	\$4,861,457	\$ 5,848,501
Earned Income Tax	1,092,368	-	1,092,368
Local Services Tax	251,368	-	251,368
Miscellaneous Revenues	36,261	-	36,261
Total Annual Revenues (2009 \$)	\$ 2,367,041	\$ 4,861,457	\$ 7,228,498
			-
			-
Less: Incremental Public Costs	\$ (1,004,671)	\$ (819,112)	\$ (1,823,783)
Net Annual Incremental Tax Revenue (2009 \$)	\$ 1,362,370	\$ 4,042,345	\$ 5,404,715

The estimate of net annual incremental tax revenues accruing to the Township did not take into account any road construction or other extraordinary public works activities associated with implementation of the development program. The estimated incremental Township tax revenues could be capitalized as debt service to assist in financing these initiatives.