

BUSINESS



A community lobby at Apex Fort Washington, a three-building campus. Fort Washington, home to one of the nation's first business parks, is drawing new tenants attracted to the area, with support from Upper Dublin Township. JESSICA GRIFFIN / Staff Photographer.

\$250M upgrade for Fargo Center

Rather than building a new arena, Comcast Spectacor will overhaul the 20-year-old site.

By Bob Fernandez
STAFF WRITER

The CoreStates Center in South Philadelphia opened on Aug. 13, 1996, with a private concert featuring the inimitable Ray Charles.

Multiple name changes, thousands of concerts and pro games, and one Guns 'N Roses riot later, the arena's owner, Comcast Spectacor, believes it's time for a major overhaul of the venue, now known as the Wells Fargo Center.

Arena executives said last week they would put \$250 million into the still-evolving plan.

The bulk of the upgrade will come over the next three summers, with about 21,500 seats being replaced so as to not disrupt Flyers and 76ers games. Concerts will continue through the construction.

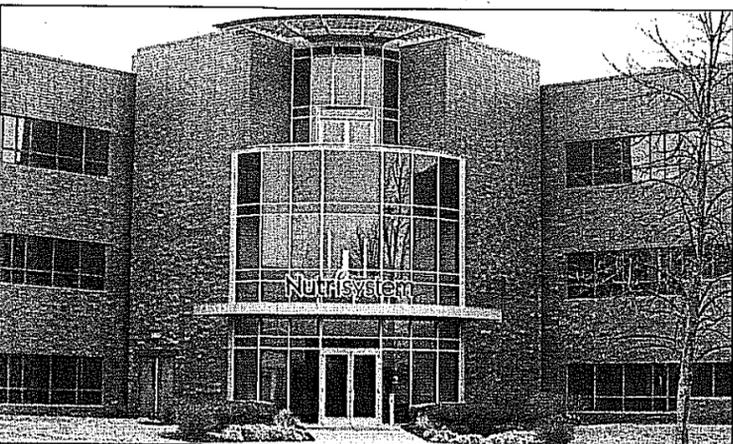
Plans are evolving, but one big idea: Court- and rink-side suites.

Gone will be some of the balcony luxury boxes, which are less popular than they were in the 1990s. Also, some of the black-colored seats below the mezzanine level will be zapped. But new premium seating will come in the form of court- and rink-side suites — a new arena trend.

The concourse hallways throughout the arena will be widened by several feet. New windows looking north toward the city skyline will add to the ambience for fans. There will be more places to buy food, cutting down lines. Digital screens will be added. Flooring will be replaced and player locker rooms redone.

See **WELLS FARGO** on C4

The Past Is Now



The Nutrisystem entrance at Apex Fort Washington, home to 600 Nutrisystem workers.

New life for early office park in Ft. Washington.

By Rebecca Heilwell
STAFF WRITER

In 1955, Philip and Nathan Seltzer broke ground on one of the country's first business parks, just off the Pennsylvania Turnpike in Fort Washington. At the time, sprawling corporate campuses were thought to be the workplace of the future.

But over the years, the Fort Washington Office Park, like many of its peers, showed its age, struggling to attract and keep tenants, a problem compounded by persistent flooding.

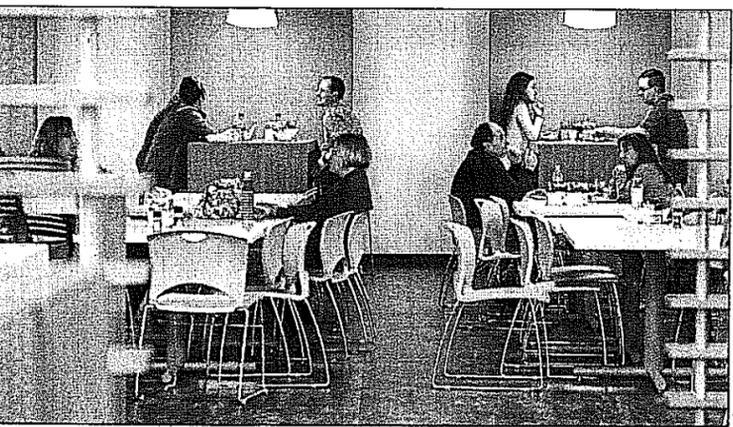
Now, with the help of local officials, the office park is enjoying a second life.

In 2017, Fort Washington leased the most net office space across Philadelphia — 214,000 square feet — according to Jones Lang La Salle, the real estate firm.

The park has already attracted Life Time Inc., a 130,000-square-foot athletic resort. Future plans include a work, play, and live community of offices surrounded by restaurants, a hotel, a library, and apartments for 1,200 people.

JLL forecasts nationally that the 14.9 percent office vacancy rate will rise in 2018 and 2019 — a number that includes tech companies, which have been driving the market's leasing activity. Meanwhile, in Fort Washington, the office vacancy rate, about 16 percent in late 2017, is declining (in the Philadelphia suburbs overall, the office vacancy rate is 13.4 percent).

See **OFFICE PARK** on C3



The cafeteria at Nutrisystem. Apex is home to corporate headquarters for Nutrisystem, which selected the office park in part for its proximity to the turnpike.

MUSIC REVIEW | C8



Michael Tilson Thomas puts music to Carl Sandburg's verse.

Heritage breeds and cutting-edge coops. This is a different kind of egg-laying.

Silicon Valley's new status symbol: Chickens

By Peter Holley
WASHINGTON POST

SAN FRANCISCO — Johan Land has a life that stands out even among Silicon Valley's tech elite: He's the lead product manager at Waymo (formerly known as Google's self-driving car project), a job that keeps him glued to computer screens and fixated on the future.

Excelling at his work, Land said, requires an obsessive focus on it. But maintaining that passion — especially with his fourth child on the way — means knowing when to detach. Land's secret to success: relaxing with a glass of wine in the backyard alongside his wife, kids, and the family's 13 chickens and three sheep.

It's mindless, he said, but far

While an ordinary chicken might cost \$15 at the local feed store, Silicon Valley residents might spend more than \$350 for one must-have breed.

from banal.

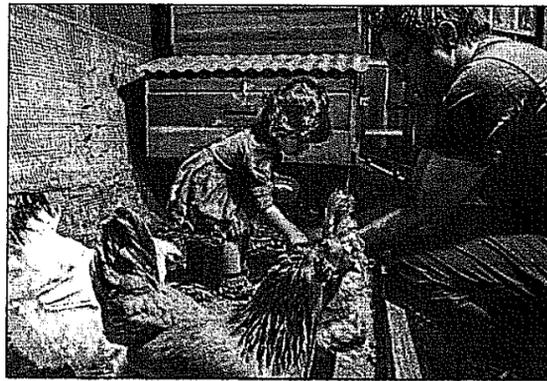
"It's a fascinating thing to sit and watch the animals, because instead of looking at a screen, you're looking at the life cycle," Land said. "It's very different from the abstract work that I do."

In America's rural and working-class areas, keeping chickens has long been a thrifty way to provide fresh eggs. In recent years, the

practice has emerged as an unlikely badge of urban modishness. But in the Bay Area — where the nation's preeminent local food movement overlaps with the nation's tech elite — egg-laying chickens are now a trendy, eco-conscious humblebrag on par with driving a Tesla.

In true Silicon Valley fashion, chicken owners approach their birds as any savvy venture capitalist might: By throwing lots of money at a promising flock (spending as much as \$20,000 for high-tech coops). By charting their productivity (number and color of eggs). And by finding new ways to optimize their birds' happiness as well as their own.

See **CHICKENS** on C2



Matt Van Horn and daughter Sadie feed their chickens in a below-deck coop. In his non-egg hours, Van Horn cofounded June, which makes internet-connected ovens. Washington Post



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Big bucks? Think again

Never mind striking it rich via YouTube. Few can even make a living.

By Todd C. Frankel
WASHINGTON POST

One of the main attractions of YouTube is that anyone can become a star. There are no gatekeepers. No talent agents or television executives need to be won over. Stars can come from anywhere. And they do.

Forbes' recent list of the richest YouTubers is proof: It is filled with people who post clips about playing video games or kids playing with toys. The top spot went to Daniel Middleton, known as DanTDM. He's a 26-year-old British gamer — and he earned \$16.5 million last year.

But a new study finds that the odds of striking it rich on Google-owned YouTube — or even making a modest living — are vanishingly small.

Reaching the top 3.5 percent of YouTube's most-viewed channels — which means at least one million video views a month — is worth only about \$12,000 to \$16,000 a year in advertising revenue, according to Mathias Bartl, a professor at the Offenburg University of Applied Sciences in Germany, whose study is one of the first to probe YouTube data for clues about how it works for creators.

Bartl found that it's gotten harder for new creators to reach the top,

as YouTube alone adds 300 hours of video every minute and the biggest stars become more successful. The median views per video has plummeted to 89 in 2016 from 10,262 a decade earlier. At the same time, YouTube's biggest channels are gobbling up more eyeballs. The top 3 percent of channels got 64 percent of all views in 2006. A decade later, the top channels took 90 percent.

YouTube did not immediately respond to a request to comment on the study.

What's happening on YouTube is occurring across the internet, where creators are finding that long odds of success in the online world are not so different from other areas.

In fact, they might be worse. In music, song streaming services like Spotify and Apple Music have mostly benefited superstar acts. No one needs to fight a music label to get a song distributed, but getting listeners is a different problem. Less than 1 percent of songs represented 86 percent of the music streamed last year, according to the market research firm Nielsen.

And since no one buys music these days, making even a little money from streaming requires songs to be played millions of

times. That's hurt the music industry's middle-of-the-road acts the most, the kind of musician who once could eke out a decent living selling several thousand albums a year and touring the nation without ever breaking into the mainstream. Increasingly, such acts face the pressure of going viral or going home.

In television, so many new shows are being made that no one can watch them all; nearly 500 scripted original series were aired last year. The traditional networks are being challenged by cable outlets and streaming services. That's led to plenty of new opportunities for actors and writers. But the new era has some distinct challenges, including shorter seasons and less predictable schedules that make it harder for many to make ends meet.

Now, YouTube is taking steps that make it even harder for creators at the bottom. The company recently said channels need to reach 1,000 subscribers and 4,000 hours of watch time over the last 12 months before they can start to earn money from ads. YouTube said that the change is aimed at discouraging videos with objectionable or offensive content and that it would "affect a significant number of channels."

Office Park

Continued from C1

Aon Affinity, TruMark Financial, Lincoln Financial, and Ashfield Healthcare have all moved in.

To attract tenants back to the once-thriving office park, Upper Dublin Township first had to face its flooding.

"We have had cars trapped in storm water," said Rick Barton, the township's zoning officer. "People had to be rescued by the fire company." Businesses left and in 1989 an employee crossing the office park during a heavy rainstorm was swept down a drain and died. URS, the engineering firm, estimated that flooding, on average, caused about \$3.7 million in damage annually, according to its 2010 study.

Governor's Award

The flooding "sealed in our mind the need to do something," said Ira Tackel, president of the township's Board of Commissioners. Upper Dublin depends on the office park's success. It provides about 16.5 percent of the township's revenue and 10.5 percent of its school district's funding. In 2006, the township commissioned a \$620,000 federally funded study to investigate solutions to the park's storm-water and transportation challenges. After \$11 million in state and county-funded grants and \$3 million of the township's funds, the park now benefits from two damlike structures designed to lessen the impact of future storms.

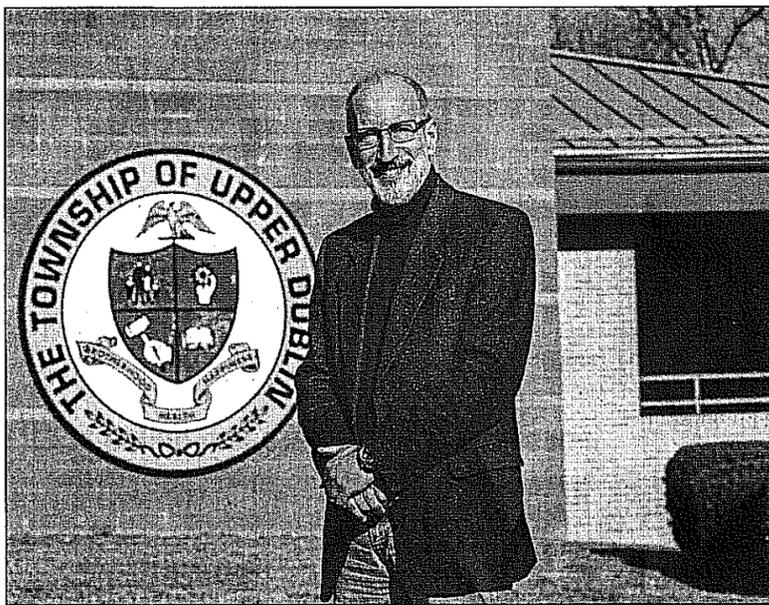
"Thus far, although we haven't had a 100-year flood that we've had in the past," Tackel said, "we've had some significant rain events, and the flood retaining structures have done what they're supposed to do."

Overall, the first phase of revitalization, including the reconstruction of two bridges, is estimated to cost \$38.7 million, with more than 17 percent coming from the township. For its efforts, Upper Dublin recently won a Governor's Award for local government excellence in promoting economic revitalization.

Today, increases in occupancy and rental rates in Fort Washington are largely due to "investment in office assets and retail amenities," said Lauren Gilchrist, JLL Philadelphia's research director.

Real estate investors, such as Kairos, have transformed properties like Apex Fort Washington at 600 Office Center Drive into "Class A" properties, attracting new tenants and raising rental rates. Apex is home to Nutrisystem's corporate headquarters (and its 600 employees), which selected the site in part for its proximity to the turnpike.

The Seltzer brothers, who



Ira Tackel heads Upper Dublin's Board of Commissioners. Millions in revenue from the office park have helped fund anti-flooding efforts. JESSICA GRIFFIN / Staff Photographer

headed the Delaware Valley Industrial Properties, purchased the office park's land back in 1947. "At the time, a lot of manufacturing that was in Philadelphia [was] done in multistory buildings," said Rick Seltzer, Philip's son, who once worked at the office park. "They thought the idea of putting it on one floor would facilitate communication."

The brothers believed the set-up would also be attractive to employees who wanted less expensive parking, Rick Seltzer said.

Initially, Fort Washington residents needed convincing. "People imagined smokestacks," he said. Despite some opposition, Honewell, the park's first major resident, set up shop in 1955 and remains today.

Louise Mazingo, an environmental planning professor at the University of California at Berkeley, said that, nationally, tight urban conditions, congestion, and racial tensions pushed companies out of cities in the 1950s. Increasing funding for highways, better expansion opportunities, and cheaper parking made the suburbs attractive.

"[Even] Suburban housewives are given employment opportunities," Philip Seltzer told the Inquirer in 1964, "close enough to their homes that they can beat their husbands [home] from work."

'Wild overbuilding'

Back then, there was no Clean Water Act or a National Environmental Policy Act to discourage construction in a floodplain — or stringent regulation of the use of concrete, which can cover soil essential to absorbing water during severe storms.

But "wild overbuilding of office parks in the late 1980s" catalyzed the suburban office park's decline, said Mazingo. That's when the Seltzers began selling off parcels of the office park's properties, operated by several owners today. In 2016, the township created a new municipal

authority to manage the park collectively.

In 2013, the township tried to spur less vulnerable, and more diverse, development through a transferable development rights program. It offered development "credits" to property owners in the park's vulnerable floodplain who moved out to re-purpose (or construct) multi-use buildings in other parts of the area. These credits could also be sold.

"We had developers that were ready and willing to buy," said Barton, "but no one was willing to sell credits." Last fall, the township started the process of rewriting its zoning code, with the help of Thomas Comitta, a landscape architect.

'The Manayunk model'

As revitalization efforts continue, the township anticipates spending at least \$34 million more on improving surrounding trail connections, installing pedestrian lighting, and further improving storm-water management, according to Graham Copeland, the township's economic development expert.

To further diversify the park, the township purchased a new \$5 million, 65,400-square-foot building for its new library.

There are plans for a new turnpike ramp that provides direct access into the office park and a trail that's better connected to the Fort Washington SEPTA station. The hope is to encourage more carpooling, public transportation use, biking, and walking. Now, 94 percent of the office park's employees drive to work alone, according to the township's recent transportation demand management plan.

As Comitta thinks about the future of Fort Washington, he remembers how his father used to walk to his factory job in Manayunk. "In 2038, which is just 20 years from now, we will be back to the Manayunk model," he said.

✉ RHeitwell@phillynews.com

At the Convention Centers

Conventions expecting 500 or more to attend.

	Date	Attendance
Pennsylvania Convention Center		
National Association of Student Personal Administrators — The Placement Exchange & NASPA Annual Meeting ^{1,2}	Mar 4-7	6,000
Pennsylvania Horticulture Society: Philadelphia Flower Show 2018 ¹	Mar 4-11	300,000
Travel & Adventure Show (TAS) by Unicom, LLC ¹	Mar 10-11	10,000
Life Sciences Pennsylvania ³	Mar 14	1,000
Transportation, Building & Construction ³	Mar 15	900
SAVMA Symposium ³	Mar 17	1,000
Urban One LLC ³	Mar 17	1,000
PMBC 2018 Block Captain Conference (City of Philadelphia Streets Department) ³	Mar 17	900
American Bridal Show ¹	Mar 18	1,000
Public Library Association (PLA), A Division of the American Library Association ^{1,4}	Mar 21-23	8,000
CGI Racing: The Love Run ¹	Mar 23-24	15,000
Under Armour NEQ ^{2,4}	Mar 30-Apr 8	27,000

Greater Philadelphia Expo Center

Just Between Friends ¹	Mar 15-18
Sugarloaf Craft Festival ¹	Mar 16-19
Super Billiards Expo ¹	Apr 12-15

NOTES: 1. Open to the public 2. Trade show 3. Advance registration required 4. Convention 5. Job Fair SOURCES: Centers listed. Attendance estimates are as reported by event sponsors.

Business Briefs

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Wendy Hamilton to Receive 2018 Paradigm Award

The Chamber of Commerce for Greater Philadelphia announced Wendy Hamilton, general manager of SugarHouse Casino, as the recipient of the 2018 Paradigm Award, the most prestigious award for businesswomen. The ceremony will take place on March 14 at 11 a.m. at The Bellevue Hotel.

Wendy oversees 1,500 Team Members and all daily casino operations. Under her leadership, SugarHouse has been the title sponsor for the city's New Year's Eve fireworks and Mummers Parade, and contributed more than \$8 million to local community organizations.

Her outstanding leadership and dedication have led to Wendy receiving numerous awards for making positive community impacts.

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