

Commercial Landscapes Series

# Reinventing Office Parks for the 21st Century







# Table of Contents

Purpose .....	4
Introduction .....	5
Where Are We Now .....	7
Potential Issues in the Near Future .....	7
Overview of Countywide Office Market & Submarkets .....	10
Analysis of Planning Practices .....	12
Business Analyst .....	13
Office Parks – SWOT Analysis .....	14
The Vision for Revitalization .....	15
How Do We Get There .....	16
Organization .....	17
Regulatory Guidance .....	19
Physical Improvements .....	23
Conclusion .....	26

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# Purpose

This document is one of four in a planning series known as “Commercial Landscapes” (Office Parks, Transit Oriented Development (TOD), Brownfields, and Greyfields). The series serves as a collaborative effort between agencies and stakeholders focused on improving critical commercial areas located throughout the county. The goal is to provide a planning tool that offers guidance to municipal officials and professional planners, developers, and property owners about how to maximize the value of these commercial areas today and in the future to better implement the goals in municipal and county policy documents (Landscapes2, the County’s Comprehensive Plan and VISTA 2025, the County’s Economic Development Plan). This series will also play a major role as a planning tool for Landscapes3, the County Comprehensive Plan update.

This document presents a set of guidelines and strategies to assist in the potential need for revitalizing some of the office parks in Chester County. The purpose is to educate communities on the importance of office parks as revenue generating employment centers in the County and to provide guidance and techniques on how to keep them viable and sustainable in the future.





# Introduction

Chester County is projected by DVRPC to gain over 100,000 jobs between 2015–2045, and it is important to prepare for this future growth with good planning. While growth is generally good for the local economy, the office market is changing in ways that may be a challenge in years to come. While Chester County is home to many world class employers, recent employment trends point toward office users downsizing, seeking non-traditional types of space, and more frequently locating in more urban AND walkable areas. As a result of these trends, many of the county's existing suburban office parks may begin to have difficulty maintaining tenants and expected rents in the near future. Given the fact that many municipalities and the county rely heavily on these sites for employment and tax revenues, it is important to plan ahead and think about how these properties can maintain their economic vibrancy in the future.

In order to plan for changes to our office parks, the Chester County Planning Commission has put together a Commercial Landscapes Task Force. The task force has been developed to review the challenges these changes present to local governments, residential neighborhoods, property owners, existing businesses, real estate developers, and other stakeholders in the county. The task force has helped us develop key strategies and recommendations that will be helpful and useful for the stakeholders affected by the changes to office parks.



*“Based on a study of five representative suburban submarkets from coast to coast we conclude that 14% to 22% of the suburban office inventory is in some stage of obsolescence”*

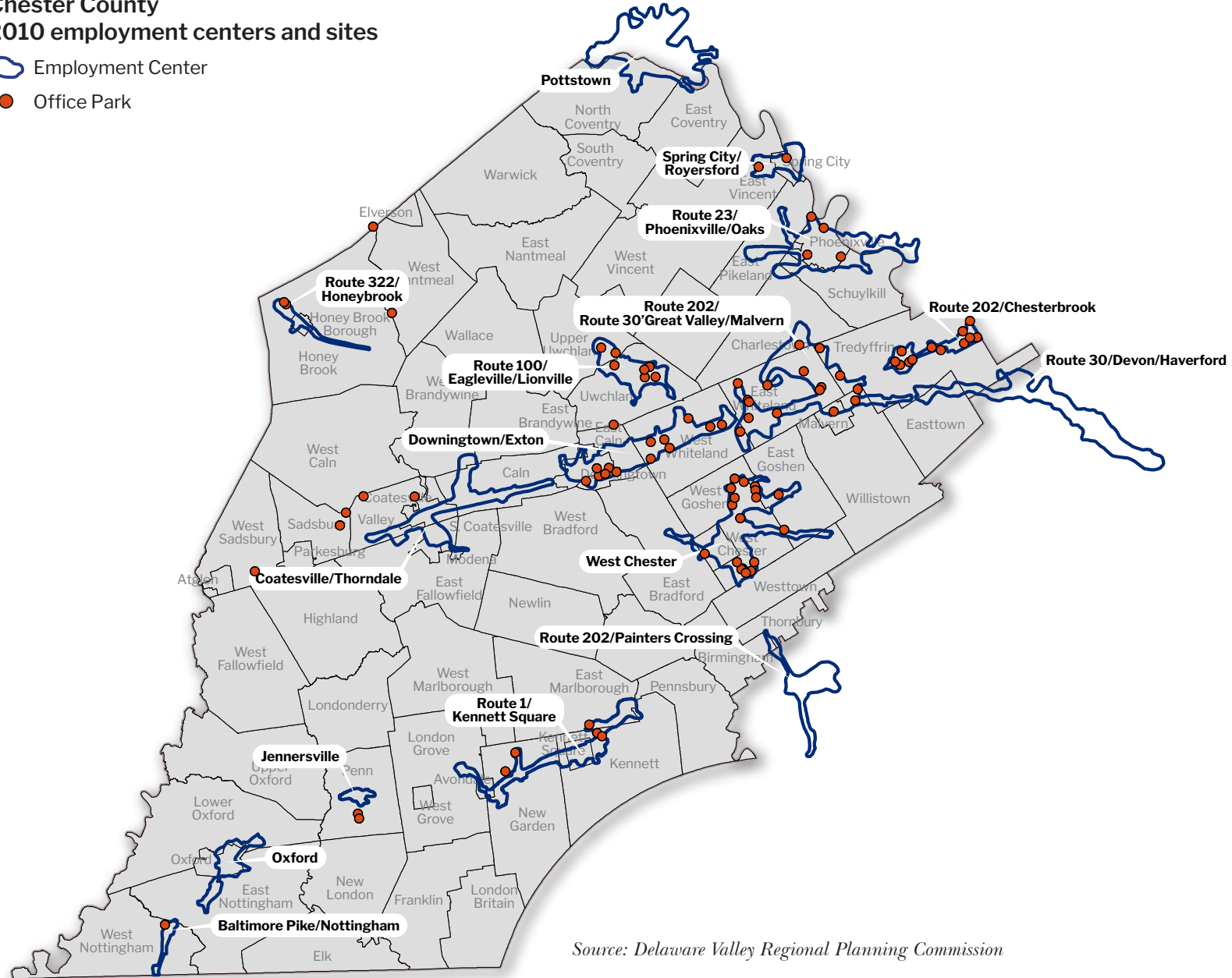
*–“Suburban Office Obsolescence” Quantifying Challenges and Opportunities, Newmark Grubb Knight Frank, September 2015*

*Aerial photo of Great Valley Corporate Center*



## Chester County 2010 employment centers and sites

-  Employment Center
-  Office Park



Source: Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission



## Potential Issues in the Near Future

### Weakening demand for office space

The economy has become increasingly reliant on the internet over the past 20 years, and less reliant on desktops and paper. As a result, many more people are now working from home or in shared work spaces. This is a trend that is likely to cause less need and less demand for office spaces to house those workers.

*“Ten years ago, 250 square feet per office employee was the gold standard in office real estate. Today, that average has dropped to approximately 195 square feet. While some office tenants are hesitating to commit to large leases primarily due to economic uncertainties, the long-term trend is clearly shifting towards efficient space usage.”*

*–Tim Wang, Director of Research for Clarion Partners in NY (March 2013)*



*Office of PolicyMap in Philadelphia*

### Changes in the ways companies view employees and work spaces

Employers are well aware of the changes and trends in the office market, and many are looking to capitalize on these changes. A common benchmark that has been used for the amount of space a company plans per employee has been 250 square feet per employee (source: Tim Wang quote from *Changing Office Trends Hold Major Implications for Future Office Demand* – CoStar news article from March 13, 2013). This standard is falling quickly to below 200 square feet

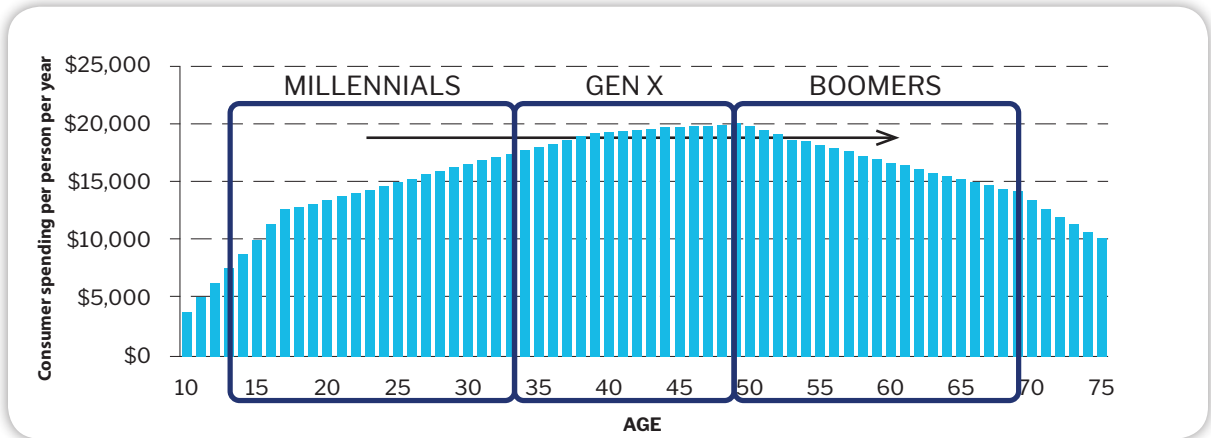
per employee in some cases. This average may continue to drop in the future as demand weakens and technology improves, having a negative effect on the demand for existing office space. Changes in the demand of space also has a large impact on the amount of parking necessary for buildings as well as other infrastructure.

More employers are also allowing for flexible work hours and the ability for employees to work from home more than they have in the past, which created even less need for space that employers must pay to rent on a monthly basis.

## Demographic changes

Large demographic shifts are also driving change in office uses. Office environments have been geared toward the needs and desires of Baby Boomers (approximately aged 50-68) for the past generation, but by the year 2020 it is expected that the most common age groups in the U.S. will be between the ages of 25-35 (Source: *Calculated Risk* blog article from June 27, 2016 citing 2015 U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates). This means that the office market, along with most other markets, will likely become geared toward the needs and desires of younger workers as Baby Boomers retire. The preferences of younger workers will be key to the future of office parks and the local economy as a whole in the very near future.

## Millennials are entering their prime spending years



Source: Bureau of Labor and statistics via Goldman Sachs (#4 in this article) [To view](#) ▶

## The generations defined

### The Millennial Generation

Born 1981 to 1997  
Age of adults in 2015: 18 to 34

### Generation X

Born 1965 to 1980  
Age of adults in 2015: 35 to 50

### The Baby Boom Generation

Born 1946 to 1964  
Age of adults in 2015: 51 to 69

### The Silent Generation

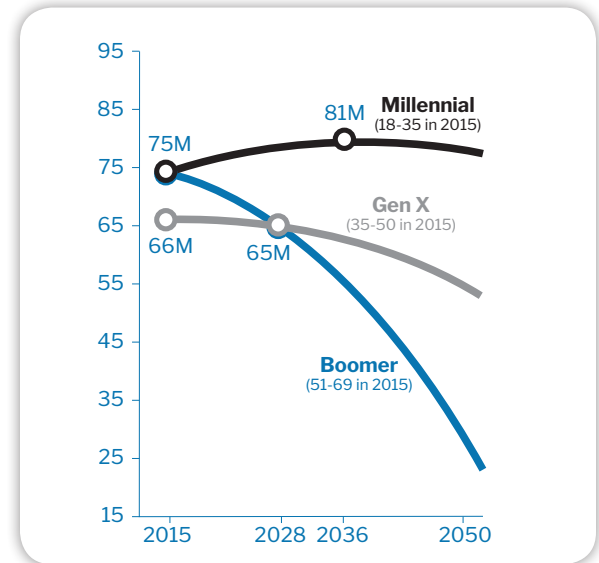
Born 1928 to 1945  
Age of adults in 2015: 70 to 87

### The Greatest Generation

Born before 1928  
Age of adults in 2015: 88 to 100

Source: Pew Research Center

## Projected population by generation (in millions)



Source: Pew Research Center





## Growing importance of company culture

Many experts suspect that in the Millennial generation (approximately aged 18–35) have significantly different ideals and goals than their predecessors. One of the changes that has been noted is the growing importance of company culture to younger employees. Studies have shown that Millennials are more likely to accept a job for less money if they have a more favorable view of a prospective company’s culture (*Fully Engaged* research report from Jones Lang LaSalle–January 2016). Instead of the corner office, open and flexible environments are now desired by some of the best and brightest young minds. Taking these demands into consideration, the current age and obsolescence of existing office buildings will likely need to be addressed in the near future.

## Desire to live, work and play in walkable and active environments

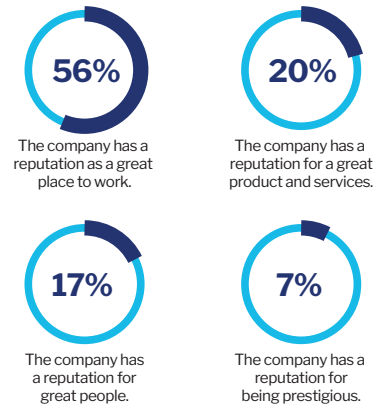
While these larger demographic changes present a challenge to some municipalities, they also present opportunities. Across all age groups, most people now desire to live and work in dynamic places with walkable environments and a mix of uses. Where appropriate, some of the county’s office locations can take advantage of these trends and transform in a way that provides these amenities. Many of the county’s urban centers are already benefitting from the desire to live and work in these types of locations. (source: ULI America in 2015 report)

## The benefits of a desirable workplace

Likelihood of accepting following positions if salary is 5% lower than the lowest acceptable salary and position is with a company:



Which of the following is the most important if you were to consider a new job?

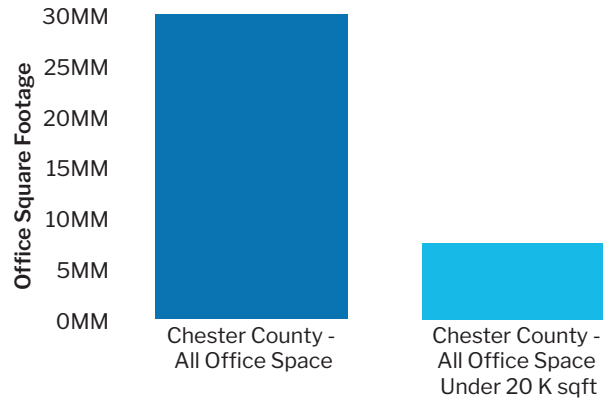


Source: JLL, *Fully Engaged* Jones Lang LaSalle, © 2016 Jones Lang LaSalle IP, Inc. All rights reserved. The items in this publication have been compiled from the various sources acknowledged. The information is from sources we deem reliable; however, no representation or warranty is made to the accuracy thereof.

# Overview of Countywide Office Market & Submarkets

CoStar (a provider of information, analytics and marketing services to the commercial real estate industry) was used to gather commercial real estate data for Chester County office markets during the research phase of this study. In the graph to the right, existing square footage and the number of existing buildings is summarized countywide for all of Chester County and for only the buildings which are under 20,000 square feet. Additionally in the graphic to the bottom right is an analysis that shows very high end “trophy” Class A buildings in the suburban Philadelphia market significantly outperforming all other buildings in terms of vacancy rates recently. An analysis was also done for office submarkets in the county, shown on the next page, in which the largest concentrations of office space were surveyed. For each area, the number of existing buildings, total square footage, gross rent, gross rent per square foot average over five years, and vacancy are summarized.

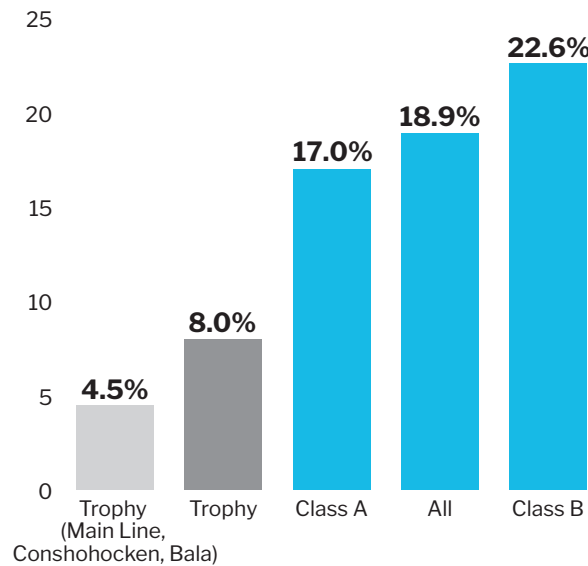
## Existing square footage



As the graph to the left shows, the vast majority of office space in Chester County is located in buildings that are larger than 20,000 square feet in size. While smaller office buildings are very important to their communities (particularly for Class B & C clientele), much of the need for the re-use or redevelopment of existing office properties will be focused on these larger office buildings which are often located in large office parks.

Source: CoStar

## Suburban Philadelphia office vacancy rates by class of building

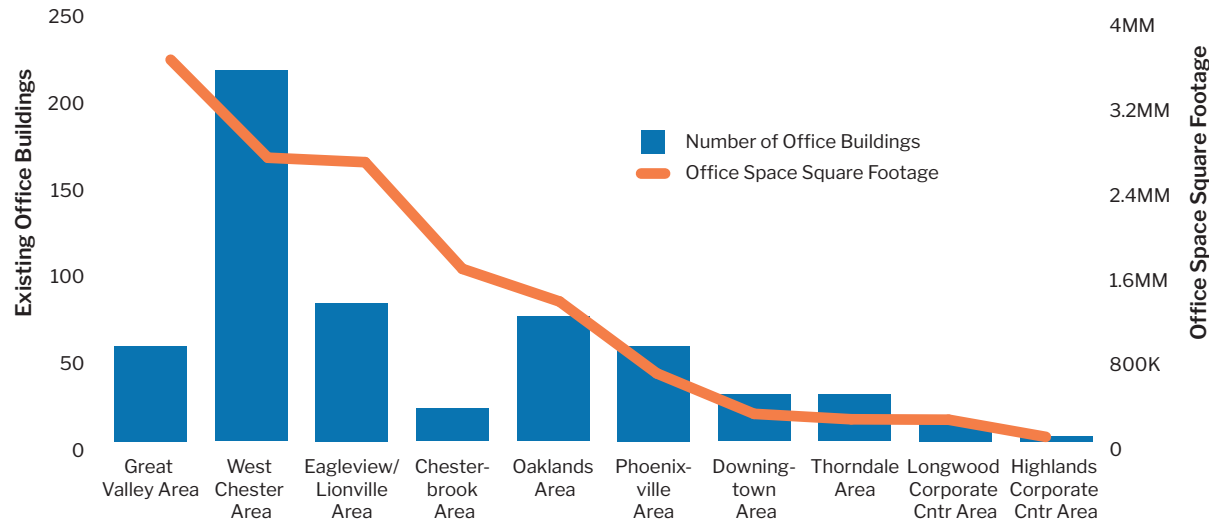


There is a vast difference in market fundamentals between the premier suburban “trophy” office properties and the rest of the suburban market in the Philadelphia Region. The lack of vacant space in “trophy” suburban office buildings becomes more extreme in high demand submarkets along the Main Line and in places like Conshohocken and Bala Cynwyd. The weaker demand for Class A & B office buildings that are not the premier “trophy” properties is a worrisome trend for property owners and municipalities.

Source: CBRE Research Q3 2015, Viewpoint—Philadelphia Office, “The Booming ‘burbs”



## Square footage and number of office buildings in Chester County office areas



The Great Valley, Eagleview/Lionville and Chesterbrook areas are all populated by larger office buildings, while West Chester, Oaklands and Phoenixville have smaller office buildings on average. In terms of total square footage, Great Valley, West Chester and Eagleview/Lionville together encompass the majority of office space in the county.

## Rent per square foot and vacancy in Chester County offices



Higher vacancy rates and low rents are typically a sign of a weaker office market. The Chesterbrook and Great Valley areas have higher rents, but their vacancy rates are also higher than the county average. Submarkets such as West Chester or the Oaklands area look strong given that they have low vacancy rates with average rents. The Eagleview/Lionville area looks relatively weak given its high vacancy rate coupled with average rents.

## Analysis of Planning

The planning team performed an analysis of both comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances in twelve municipalities from around the County (Downingtown, East Caln, East Goshen, East Whiteland, Malvern, Sadsbury, Tredyffrin, Upper Uwchlan, Valley, West Goshen, and West Whiteland). These municipalities were identified due to the fact that they have significant office use clusters located within them. Most municipalities in this analysis included recommendations in their comprehensive plans for office parks and some identified certain office parks as future mixed-use growth areas.

The zoning analysis showed that 30 districts allowed office uses “by-right” and only 12 districts permitted both residential and commercial uses as a conditional use or special exception.





# Business Analyst

ESRI's Business Analyst is a GIS-based subscription service providing economic data, customer profiling, and market analysis. This tool was used to show the demographics and household lifestyles or **Tapstry Segmentations** for Chester County as well as the top four office market areas in Chester County.

The data shows demographic differences between each of the submarkets. Submarket areas were identified using a 10 mile radius from a central point in each of the office locations. By using the data shown in the chart as well as the Tapestry segment reports that are linked in the chart, both municipalities and businesses can get a better sense of the variety of groups that live in each of these markets. For example, the Great Valley and Chesterbrook areas share the "Top Tier" as their most common segment. The "Top Tier" segment is a very high income middle aged demographic with a high net worth and over 90% homeownership rate. They are described in the report as likely to spend money on keeping up their homes and frequenting salons, spas, high end fitness centers and luxury retail

destinations. However, West Chester and Eagleview both include a significant portion of the "Enterprising Professionals" segment, which is significantly younger, medium income, and 48% are renters. The "Enterprising Professionals" are likely to be very well educated, change jobs more frequently, and enjoy very high end technology at home including high speed internet with premier channels and services. This group is also likely to be early adopters of new technology and like to eat organic foods, do yoga, and buy name brands and trendy clothes online.

**LifeMode Group: Affluent Estates**  
**Top Tier**

Households: 2,052,000  
Average Household Size: 2.82  
Median Age: 46.2  
Median Household Income: \$157,000

**WHO ARE WE?**  
The residents of the wealthiest Tapestry market, Top Tier, earn more than three times the US household income. They have the purchasing power to indulge any choice, but what do their hearts desire? Aside from the obvious expense for the upkeep of their lavish homes, consumers select upscale salons, spas, and fitness centers for their personal well-being and shop at high-end retailers for their frequent vacations spend no expense. Residents fill their weekends and evenings with opera, classical music concerts, charity dinners, and shopping. These highly educated professionals have reached their corporate career goals. With an accumulated average net worth of over 1.5 million dollars and income from a strong investment portfolio, many of these older residents have moved into consulting roles or operate their own businesses.

**OUR NEIGHBORHOOD**  
• Married couples without children or married couples with older children dominate this market.  
• Housing units are owner occupied with the highest home values—and above average use of mortgages.  
• Neighborhoods are older and located in the suburban periphery of the largest metropolitan areas, especially along the coasts.

**SOCIOECONOMIC TRAITS**  
• Top Tier is a highly educated, successful consumer market: more than one in three residents has a postgraduate degree.  
• Annually, they earn more than three times the US median household income, primarily from wages and salary, but also self-employment income (Index 177) and investments (Index 242).  
• These are the nation's wealthiest consumers. They hire financial advisers to manage their diverse investment portfolios but stay abreast of current financial trends and products.  
• Socially responsible consumers who are for a balanced lifestyle, they are goal oriented and hardworking but make time for their kids or grandkids and maintain a close-knit group of friends.  
• These busy consumers seek variety in life. They take an interest in the fine arts, read to expand their knowledge, and consider the internet, radio, and newspapers as key media sources.  
• They regularly cook their meals at home, attentive to good nutrition and fresh organic foods.

**TAPESTRY SEGMENTATION**

*The largest ESRI Tapestry segment in the Great Valley area is "Top Tier".*

**Table 1: Chester County office areas: Tapestry Segmentation lifestyle groups**

Commercial Area (10 mile radius)	Lifemode Segment #1 (% of households)	Lifemode Segment References			Report Links
		Median Age	Homeownership Rate	Median Household Income*	
Chesterbrook	<b>Top Tier</b> ▶ (30.0)	46.2	90.5% Own SF Homes	\$157,000	<a href="#">Report ▶</a>
Downingtown	<b>Professional Pride</b> ▶ (22.6)	40.5	92% Own SF Homes	\$127,000	<a href="#">Report ▶</a>
Eagleview	<b>Professional Pride</b> ▶ (32.2)	40.5	92% Own SF Homes	\$127,000	<a href="#">Report ▶</a>
Great Valley	<b>Top Tier</b> ▶ (20.7)	46.2	90.5% Own SF Homes	\$157,000	<a href="#">Report ▶</a>
Highlands	<b>Parks &amp; Rec</b> ▶ (16.0)	40.3	70.7% Own SF Homes	\$55,000	<a href="#">Report ▶</a>
Longwood	<b>Top Tier</b> ▶ (19.7)	46.2	90.5% Own SF Homes	\$157,000	<a href="#">Report ▶</a>
Oaklands	<b>Enterprising Professionals</b> ▶ (27.0)	34.8	52.3% Own SF Home	\$77,000	<a href="#">Report ▶</a>
Phoenixville	<b>Emerald City</b> ▶ (12.8)	36.6	50.4% Rent Home or Apt	\$52,000	<a href="#">Report ▶</a>
Thorndale	<b>Parks &amp; Rec</b> ▶ (14.8)	40.3	70.7% Own SF Homes	\$55,000	<a href="#">Report ▶</a>
West Chester	<b>Savvy Suburbanites</b> ▶ (14.2)	44.1	91.0% Own SF Home	\$104,000	<a href="#">Report ▶</a>

Source: ESRI Business Analyst: Tapestry Segmentation Data, 2016

\* Median Household Income is the U.S. average income for the corresponding lifestyle group.

# Office Parks — SWOT Analysis

The planning team and taskforce completed a SWOT analysis to identify the overall status of office parks in Chester County. This analysis is organized to show the **strengths** and **weaknesses** that office parks in Chester County can build upon and correct, while also looking at both **opportunities** and **threats** to office parks in Chester County.

This analysis assisted in establishing the basis for the vision of office parks in the County.

## STRENGTHS

- Highly educated and experienced professional workforce
- Strong existing employers, industries, and employment centers
- Access to rail lines (Amtrak and SEPTA), bus routes and major highway corridors
- Desirable location for employees and employers to live (good schools and low crime)
- Good quality of life (open space, trail networks)

## WEAKNESSES

- Long approval process for new development
- Lack of flexibility in zoning for redevelopment (including parking requirements)
- Limited connectivity to transit
- Many office buildings are aging
- Limited affordable housing within a reasonable commuting distance
- Segregation of office parks from other land uses and service industries

## OPPORTUNITIES

- Projected population and employment growth
- Willingness to address office parks holistically with plans and ordinances
- Prime locations without many of the conflicts and obstacles often seen with redevelopment sites
- High demand for amenities, public spaces and a diverse mix of uses
- Transportation on demand now feasible, along with demand for multi-modal transportation
- Increasing interest in both industrial uses and multifamily residential uses

## THREATS

- Weakening demand for office space due to broader economic forces
- Outdated floor plans and building designs are not responsive to today's employment market
- Complexity and cost of stormwater requirements
- Overbuilding specific uses during redevelopment
- Difficulty with attracting and retaining employees
- Technology, a 'collaborative' economy and co-working spaces along with millennial behavioral changes are threats to how office parks will be used in the future



# The Vision for Revitalization

*Chester County office parks will remain viable and competitive in the future with diverse businesses that attract talented and creative workers. These office parks will remain employment centers, but will be able to react to market forces with adaptations in land uses, additional amenities, and transportation options to meet the evolving needs of employers and workers.*



Source: Great Valley Corporate Center; Malvern, PA redevelopment concept. Prepared for Liberty Property Trust by Gensler.

# How Do We Get There?

This section highlights key steps, strategies, provisions, and improvements to use when implementing changes or new development in an office park. The section is categorized under three planning areas

which provide realistic and tangible recommendations to achieve the overall vision from an organizational, regulatory and physical perspective.

## Organization

- **Begin public outreach early**
- **Identify a realistic vision for your community**
- **Organize businesses**
- **Create a Business Improvement District or Incentive District**

## Regulatory Guidance

- **Create employment centers that are “Innovation Districts” by allowing for diverse uses and building types in zoning**
- **Allow for more flexibility in office zoning and reduce “zoning impediments”**
- **Reduce “soft costs” on developers**
- **Create an “expedited process” for targeted areas**

## Physical Improvements (Placemaking & Connectivity)

- **Revitalize current “form” of existing office buildings to attract tenants and employees**
- **Incentivize development of existing and future office sites**
- **Accommodate all transportation modes**
- **Improve connections to adjacent land uses**
- **Allow for “pop up” uses (temporary non-permanent uses)**
- **Manage parking for both work-day and after-work day uses**
- **Install additional physical improvements**



# Organization

## ■ Begin public outreach early

- Developers should seek local community input on the potential redevelopment of office parks from a very early stage in the process. This can be done by working with municipalities to host public events geared toward gaining community input on potential development, meeting with community groups and stakeholders, and meeting with local businesses.
- Municipalities and developers should be prepared for both positive and negative feedback on proposed changes to office park environments. In some cases residents may be uncomfortable with changing uses and it is important to understand their concerns.
- Assistance and guidance may be available from county and state agencies, and it is critical to seek any potential assistance early in the process.



## ■ Identify a realistic vision for your community

- Feedback from the public should be used to help a municipality identify a realistic vision for their community. Changes to office parks should be made with both community desires and market realities in mind.
- In some cases, it may be necessary to reduce the supply of noncompetitive or outdated office space with uses that are in higher demand. Municipalities should seek to match permitted uses with long term market demand for the area.
- There should also be a focus on economic development that supports existing businesses in local communities during any redevelopment or re-use process. The growth of these existing businesses is equally important to the success of new businesses or uses.

## ■ Assist and market your existing properties and businesses

Local governments and the county can help property owners and local businesses in many ways. Here are a few examples that have been successful in Chester County:

- Hold a tour for property owners, developers, and government officials. This has been done successfully in East Goshen and West Whiteland.
- Hold meetings with property owners to determine any issues they have and what their future plans might be. This has been done in Tredyffrin.
- Gather and share data on the local demographic and business climate with information such as incomes, educational levels, and jobs, with local businesses.

Often times businesses may not realize how strong their area is or that they may not be targeting the best groups.

## ■ Organize businesses

- Organize municipally-lead groups that meet regularly to discuss issues of interest related to the local economy such as marketing, market analysis, transportation improvements, events, infrastructure issues, shared shuttle services, stormwater problems, gateway installation, and publicly accessible bus stops.
- Coordinate with local interest groups, Chambers of Commerce, the Chester County Economic Development Council, or the Chester County Chamber of Business and Industry to help advance the issues listed above as well as other economic

development issues such as advocacy for local businesses, changing tax policy, or lobbying for funding.

## ■ Create a formal Business Improvement District or Neighborhood Improvement District

- A business improvement district (BID), such as the King of Prussia District, is a defined area within which businesses are required to pay an additional tax (or levy) in order to fund projects within the district's boundaries. In Pennsylvania, these districts are often private not-for-profit organizations under the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Neighborhood Improvement District legislation. These districts typically fund services which are perceived by some businesses as being inadequately performed by government with its existing tax revenues, such as building structured parking, cleaning streets, providing security, constructing pedestrian and streetscape enhancements, and marketing the area. The services provided by BIDs are supplemental to those already provided by the municipality.
- If a redevelopment plan has been approved, tax increment financing (TIFs) can be used to finance parking garages and minimize surface parking lots to accommodate additional temporary uses.





# Regulatory Guidance

■ **Create employment centers that are designed to be “Innovation Districts” rather than simply places to locate office buildings by allowing for diverse uses and building types in zoning.**

It is unlikely in the current office market that a developer or property owner will be willing to invest a great deal of money into an office park site without changes to existing zoning. In many cases office parks would need to be re-zoned in order to permit a more expansive list of uses and building types. Allowing building heights to increase may also be necessary for new development depending on the community. Changes in regulations such as the relaxation of building height requirements can also be used as a measure to compromise with developers in order to gain new improvements desired by the community.

Some additional uses for consideration may include:

- Ground floor commercial space in multi-story buildings
- Light industrial/warehouse (located in areas that are separated from community-centric uses)
- Multi-family townhomes
- Multi-family apartments
- Community/civic recreational uses (indoor & outdoor)
- Institutional and civic uses

Ground floor commercial space in multi-story buildings



Multi-family townhomes



Light industrial/warehouse (located in areas that are separated from community-centric uses)





## ■ Allow for more flexibility in office zoning and reduce “zoning impediments” to achieve desired changes

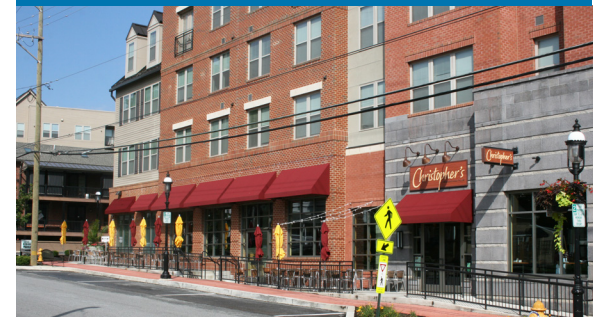
If a new vision for office parks has been defined by a community, it will be important to review current standards and processes in a community’s zoning to ensure that it allows for the realization of that vision. In some cases it may not be feasible to change existing standards, but places to consider for greater “flexibility” in zoning include:

- Changes to height limitations
- Reduced setbacks
- Adjusting FAR requirements
- Stormwater standards
- Environmental constraints such as steep slopes and wet areas
- Management of parking and parking requirements
- Using the MPC to allow approval authority to be delegated to a Municipal Planning Commission for some decisions.
- Allow developers of large projects to make revisions to both conditional use and land development applications concurrently

Stormwater standards



Reduced setbacks



Management of parking and parking requirements



In many cases, allowing more commercial uses may make an office park more economically viable in the long term. It may benefit anchor institutions, existing businesses, and office property owners to incorporate a mix of uses in an area as a way to create an environment that will attract talented high tech and creative employees and entrepreneurs. A strong mix of uses along with density and good design elements can also encourage more walkable environments with great public gathering spaces and better transit options.

### Restaurants



### Hotels & convention space



### Health clubs & gyms



### “Pop-up” uses such as food trucks or weekend farmers markets



### Day care facilities



### Supportive services such as copy shops, parcel services, dry cleaners, office supply stores, etc.





## ■ Reduce “soft costs” on developers

- A complaint from many developers is that “soft costs” imposed upon them by a municipality deters new development. “Soft costs” include additional changes or requests from a municipality that have not been made clear at the beginning of the development process. These changes represent out of pocket costs for developers that are not taken into consideration initially. It is important for communities to decide upon a vision for new developments first, and then to present clear standards for design elements and community amenities early in the process.
- Some site improvement standards are also considered “soft costs” by developers. These may include a lack of flexibility on parking ratios, parking standards for things such as aisle widths, excessive demands in landscaping and tree ordinances, and asking developers to go above and beyond local building standards. This is especially problematic for developers looking to build in lower income areas due to the tighter profit margins.

## ■ Create an “expedited process” for targeted areas

- In order to incentivize the redevelopment of some office parks, it may be in a community’s interest to allow an “expedited process” for targeted locations once a vision has been developed for these areas by the community.

This may be done by allowing more leniency to a developer in “target” areas in order to allow redevelopment to occur more quickly.

- Start fresh with regulations. Many municipalities have codes that include ordinances and standards that are either outdated or unclear. To address this, a municipality may want to adopt an entirely new SDLO and zoning code instead of modifying their existing ordinance.
- While updating their zoning codes, municipalities may want to consider including design standards instead of more traditional technical standards in some targeted areas.
- Minimize the conditional use process.

- Municipal consultants (engineers and solicitors) can sometimes have an impact on project delays. Consultants should be reminded as to what the municipality’s objectives are and held accountable for meeting those objectives.
- Area identified specifically for redevelopment should have a place in zoning, especially revitalization projects. The zoning for these areas should be inclusive of many uses.
- Municipalities should consider the additional costs for redeveloping a property as opposed to developing a greenfield, or undeveloped property. Allowing for higher density and higher impervious coverages in previously developed areas may be necessary for a developer to take on such a project due to these additional costs.





## Physical Improvements (Placemaking & Connectivity)

### ■ Revitalize current design of existing office buildings to attract tenants and employees

- Adapt to current office design trends and be responsive to present and future employment markets. Some examples in Chester County of office buildings that have attempted to adapt to a more modern design of office are the Endo International building and the CertainTeed Innovation Center in East Whiteland Township, the Mars Drinks building in East Goshen Township, and the Dansko building in Penn Township.
- Provide incentives for renovation of existing buildings that are aging or becoming obsolete such as a density bonus or energy credits for energy savings and sustainability enhancements.



### ■ Incentivize the development of existing and future office sites to accommodate permanent and temporary amenities for a 24-hour environment.

- Amenities can include parks, green and/or hardscape gathering areas, and pavilions.
- Create “experience based” places with non-office hour attractions for the larger community such as party or concert spaces, sports activities, and other events both indoor and outdoor.
- Restaurants, health clubs & gyms, convention space, and hotels are additional examples of uses that could remain active after office hours.

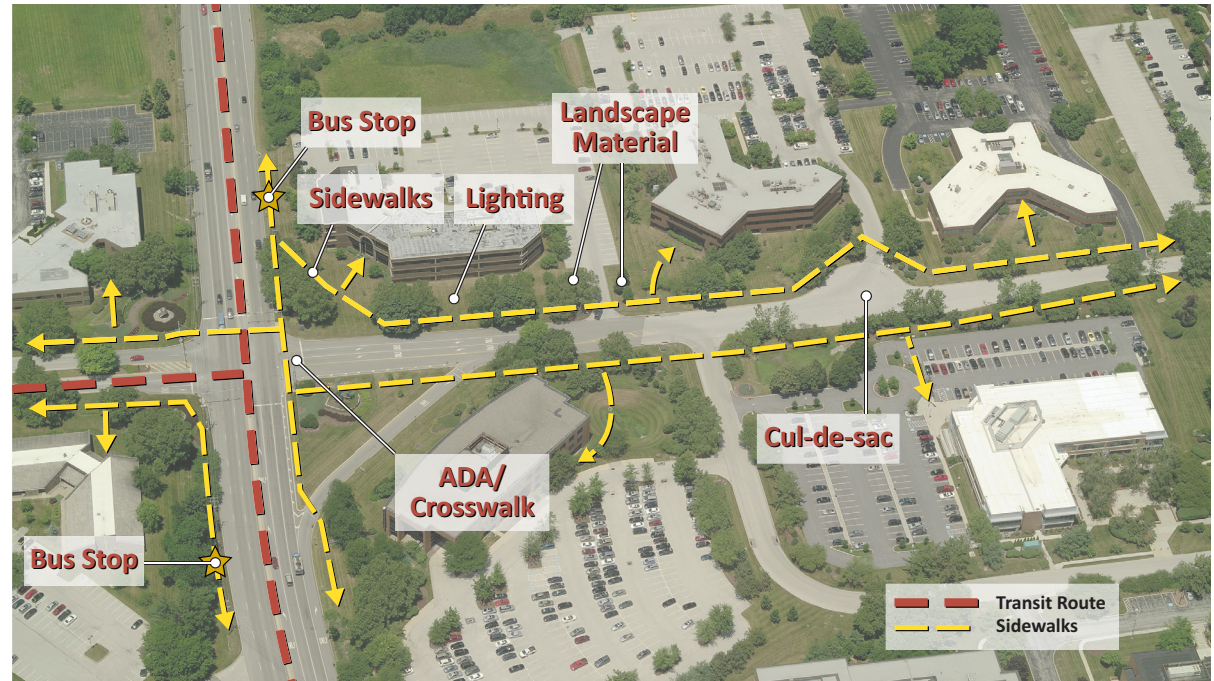
### ■ Accommodate all transportation modes

- Create or enhance multimodal (bicycle, pedestrian, bus, shuttle, or rail) infrastructure to accommodate needs.
- New or improved amenities should include trails, sidewalks, bike lanes, bike parking, and bus stops.
- Ensure that office parks are adaptable to changes in parking demand due to the increasing impact of flexible work hours, automated vehicles, and services such as Uber & Lyft. As these new transportation technologies develop, it may be feasible to reduce parking ratios and re-think the land use policies and regulations in affected areas.



■ **Improve connections to adjacent land use through building design, sidewalks, regional trails, bike routes, local parks, and open spaces.**

- Directly connecting existing office parks to existing commercial centers can provide benefits to both uses. This can be done with pedestrian connections, trails, and by linking roads and parking lots.
- Create new “walkable environments” and public spaces such as small “pocket parks”, picnic areas, walking paths, crosswalks, and plazas for employees and the surrounding community to enjoy.



■ **Allow for “pop up” uses (temporary non-permanent uses) within office parks such as**

- Outlined walking paths
- Food trucks
- Events such as farmers markets or outdoor festivals
- Pop-up retail spots at vacant office space

■ **Manage parking for both work-day and after-work day amenities and other temporary venues**

- Ensure that parking is managed in such a way that it can accommodate for potential events that could be held outside of normal work hours.



■ **Additional specific physical improvements may include:**

- Gateways
- Recreational areas such as ballfields or playgrounds
- Signage
- Landscaping
- Bike share programs
- Green energy
- Electric vehicle charging areas
- Natural habitat areas
- Water features

Gateways



Electric vehicle charging areas



Signage



Recreational areas



Natural habitat areas



Water features





# Conclusion

Chester County office parks have been central to the economic growth of the county and its commercial landscape for decades as important centers of employment. Employment is what drives a large portion of any local economy, and Chester County is no different. Due in part to advances in technology, recent employment trends point toward office users downsizing, seeking non-traditional types of space, and more frequently locating in more urban & walkable

areas. In the coming years it will be extremely important to keep these employment centers viable and competitive in order to continue attracting diverse businesses with talented and creative workers. There is a great deal of employment growth projected for the county, and it is critical that the county captures that growth in areas like office parks that are already designated as large employment centers. Many of the recommendations in this document are intended to help office parks

become more flexible and allow for a mix of additional land uses as well as amenities and features that meet the needs and desires of today's employers and workers. By becoming more flexible and adapting to the changing office environment, communities can grow in a way that maintains the strength of the overall economy while limiting sprawl out into less developed portions of the county.



**Before**



**After**

*Source: Brandywine Realty – Radnor Financial Center*

