

# Paoli Planning History

Paoli is in the middle of a high tech and high income corridor that extends west from Philadelphia through portions of Montgomery, Delaware and Chester Counties. The growth corridor roughly parallels Septa's R5 Regional Rail line heading west from Philadelphia and includes the U.S. Route 202 corridor through King of Prussia, Valley Forge, and Great Valley, Pennsylvania, one of the strongest office/industrial markets in the country. Paoli is bisected by Route 30 (Lancaster Avenue), a heavily used arterial road, and is identified as an "urban center" in Chester County's comprehensive policy plan, "Landscapes."

The focal point of Paoli is the train station, which is located north of Route 30 and east of North Valley Road. It is owned and used by Amtrak as a stop for the Keystone Line to Harrisburg, but is used much more extensively by Septa for the R5 Regional Rail line connecting Philadelphia with the western suburbs. West of the station, across North Valley Road, is the Paoli Rail Yards, also owned by Amtrak and previously used for rail car storage and maintenance. In 1984, PCBs were found there and the Rail Yards eventually was designated a federal Superfund site. Storage and maintenance activities at the Rail Yards ceased around that time.

In 1996, the Paoli Rail Yards Task Force, composed of representatives from Tredyffrin and Willistown Townships, Chester County, Septa, Amtrak, the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, PennDOT and elected officials, completed a study examining the feasibility of constructing a transportation center in Paoli to replace the existing train station. The station has high daily ridership but cannot meet the needs of a fully integrated intermodal transportation center. The Paoli Rail Yards and Transportation Center Plan, prepared by Norman Day Associates, recommended:

- construction of a new station and associated facilities 800 feet west of the current station;
- preparation of a conceptual transportation center, access and development plan; and
- preparation of preliminary development costs and income potential.

Other publications followed, including a plan commissioned by the Paoli Business and Professional Association, also prepared by Norman Day Associates, with recommendations for improvements to the pedestrian environment in Paoli, and a 1998 financial plan for implementation of the Paoli Intermodal Transportation Center concept commissioned by the Paoli Rail Yards Task Force and prepared by Allee King Rosen and Fleming, Inc.

Based on the pedestrian plan, streetscape guidelines for Lancaster Avenue were developed. They include provisions for sidewalks, lighting and landscaping. Although neither Township has formally adopted them, Tredyffrin's Planning Commission has

been successful in persuading applicants presenting land development plans for properties on Lancaster Avenue, including the Paoli area, to follow the guidelines.

In 2001, a master plan for the Paoli area was completed by Norman Day Associates and adopted as comprehensive plan amendments by both Tredyffrin and Willistown Townships. The "Paoli Community Master Plan" carries forward the recommendation from the 1996 Paoli Rail Yards and Transportation Center Plan for a new intermodal transportation center on the Rail Yards site, along with associated road improvements, and applies transit oriented development principles to the land use recommendations for the new transportation center and surrounding area.

The Paoli Rail Yards Task Force continues to monitor the progress of the Superfund cleanup at the Paoli Rail Yards and to plan for implementation of the Master Plan.