1.1 Paoli History

The town of Paoli grew around an inn kept in 1769 by Joshua Evans, whose father bought 500 acres (200 ha) from William Penn in 1719 near the current site of the Paoli Post Office. Evans named his inn after General Pasquale Paoli, a Corsican, after he had received the 45th and final toast at the inn’s Saint Patrick’s Day celebration. In 1777, during the American Revolutionary War, the Battle of Paoli occurred in Paoli and nearby Malvern, Pennsylvania.

From a transportation perspective, Paoli was situated along the Philadelphia and Lancaster Turnpike, which was later absorbed into the Lincoln Highway, and became U.S. 30 still later. For generations, Paoli was the western terminus of Pennsylvania Railroad commuter trains coming from Philadelphia on the Main Line. The “Paoli Local” became iconic in the western suburbs. Amtrak’s Keystone Line stops at the Paoli station, but with the decline of long-distance train travel, the stops are now less frequent.
Paoli Transportation Center

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, which includes daily train service between Harrisburg, Philadelphia, and New York. The station is also used by SEPTA for the Paoli-Thorndale Regional Rail line connecting Philadelphia with the western suburbs. West of the station, across North Valley Road, is the Paoli Rail Yards site, 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 as a federal Superfund site. Storage and maintenance activities at the Rail Yard property ceased around that time. Over the years since, Tredyffrin Township, Willistown Township, Chester County, SEPTA, DVRPC, PennDOT, and various other entities have been engaged in the planning for the redevelopment of the Rail Yard property. The project history timeline on the next page illustrates the efforts completed to date.

This Road Feasibility Study is a continuation of previous planning efforts completed thus far. This Study builds upon these previous efforts as well as current community input and the preliminary results of SEPTA’s feasibility study (including the location of a new Paoli Transportation Center) in order to identify the transportation needs of the surrounding roadway network within Paoli.

Other Related Projects and Studies

A number of planning studies have been completed for the Paoli area many of which have been associated with the future development of the Paoli Transportation Center, as noted in the project history timeline. Also, a number of projects are currently in the engineering/design phase.

Tredyffrin Township completed the Paoli Trail Connections study in April 2011. The goal of the study was to make downtown Paoli more walkable for residents and local merchants, as well as to evaluate opportunities to enhance pedestrian and bicycle connections between the Paoli Train Station and the Chester Valley Trail.

The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) completed the Paoli Station Intermodal Access and Parking Study in November 2009 to guide planning efforts related to providing better access to all users for both the current station as well as for the planned Paoli Intermodal Transportation Center.
1.2 Project History

1984
- Amtrak’s Paoli railroad marshaling yard or “rail yard” declared a federal Superfund site.

1994
- SEPTA decides to move its regional commuter rail system car storage station from the rail yard. Amtrak (as the landowner) starts to make plans to utilize the vacant property.

1996
- The Paoli Rail Yard Task Force is formed to monitor the Superfund cleanup and coordinate planning for the reuse of the rail yard. Consultants complete the “Paoli Rail Yard and Transportation Center Plan” for the Task Force. The Plan recommends relocating the Paoli Amtrak/R5 train station to the rail yard.

2001
- Tredyffrin and Willistown adopt the Paoli Community Master Plan, with long-range development plans and transportation improvements for the Paoli Business District. Recommendations included redeveloping Amtrak’s Paoli Yard with a new train station and improved access and waiting areas for connecting buses and shuttles, upgrading the road system to handle increased traffic and improve access for bikes and pedestrians; and updating zoning for the Rail Yard and surrounding business district.

2005
- The Superfund site is complete.

2007
- Tredyffrin and Willistown adopt ordinance amendments to regulate and guide development at the rail yard and surrounding business districts.

2012
- Paoli Road Improvement Study – Feasibility Study and Public Involvement: Tredyffrin Township selects the McMahon Associates, Inc. team to complete a study outlining specific recommendations for road improvements needed to support the planned Transportation Center.
- Train Station: SEPTA awarded a $7.5 million contract for design of a new Paoli regional rail station and parking garage.
- Keystone Line Interlocking: Preliminary and final design of interlocking on the Keystone Line between Philadelphia and Harrisburg. This work includes the Paoli Intermodal Transportation Center.
The Work Plan for this study includes a Four Phase Process. The four phases of the project include: (1) discovery and fact-finding by the consultant team (2) listening to the community and receiving public input (3) testing and refining the improvement concepts or options with further public input, (4) and providing an objective evaluations of the various improvement concepts so that the Township can decide on final recommendations. The efforts to date by Tredyffrin Township will be carried forward in this Paoli Transportation Improvement Project. With the initiatives underway by SEPTA and Amtrak, it is essential that this Study provides the necessary solutions to improve the supporting infrastructure to serve vehicle and pedestrian traffic to/from the area around the new Paoli Intermodal Transportation Center.

Our approach to the Paoli Road Improvement Feasibility Study is to guide community stakeholders and the public through the process of understanding the needs and interests of the Paoli Community, and then evaluate a range of transportation solutions to build consensus for a balanced and prioritized improvement program for public streets and walkways.

The Work Plan timeline for this Study is illustrated on the next page.
1.3 Work Plan

Work Plan Timeline

The Paoli Road Improvement Feasibility Study was completed over a several month process according to the following schedule:

**Phase 1: Discovery**  
(April to July 2012)
- Set project goals
- Assess existing traffic & pedestrian conditions
- Coordinate with other ongoing Paoli projects

**Phase 2: Listening**  
(August to October 2012)
- Refined project Goals
- Conduct 8 neighborhood and business stakeholder meetings
- Launch PaoliOnTheMove.org website
- Conduct Visual Preference Survey
- Invite community to participate in Transportation Open House #1 October 2012

**Phase 3: Scenarios**  
(Nov 2012 to March 2013)
- Identify preliminary improvement concepts
- Conduct 2 stakeholder meetings
- Refine improvement concepts
- Invite community to participate in Transportation Open House #2 February 2013

**Phase 4: Deciding**  
(April 2013 to Sept 2014)*
- Refine improvement concepts
- Assess and compare improvement concepts
- Seek community input on preferred concepts at Transportation Open House #3 April 2013
- Complete DRAFT and FINAL Study

* - PennDOT review process followed submission of the DRAFT Study. The FINAL Study was completed upon receipt of PennDOT comments and submitted to the Township.
The Community Engagement process guided and directed the focus of the technical tasks. The outreach effort for this Study began with multiple stakeholder meetings, which offered the residents and business community the opportunity to identify transportation problems, their vision for Paoli, and identify preferred roadway and intersection improvements. A project website was also launched to inform the public of the various projects within Paoli, as well as to provide input during the project process.

More information on the public outreach effort, as well as a summary of these efforts, is provided Chapters 3 and 6.
The goals of the Paoli Road Improvement Feasibility Study are succinctly summarized as follows:

**1. Implement an effective outreach program** to engage the project stakeholders and public, to seek community input and obtain feedback on the transportation improvement concepts to accommodate motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit that will support a more "walkable" community offering multi-modal transportation choices.

**2. Develop conceptual transportation improvement concepts** to accommodate motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit that will support a more "walkable" community offering multi-modal transportation choices.

**3. Support the Township in the selection of a preferred transportation improvement plan** that addresses the project needs and Paoli community vision, while balancing the many factors affecting implementation feasibility, such as costs, safety, physical constraints, environmental impacts, and community impacts.
The following Project Partners have been coordinating to varying degree in order to improve the transportation network within Paoli and to realize the vision for the new Paoli Intermodal Transportation Center:

- Tredyffrin Township, Chester County
- Willistown Township, Chester County
- Southeast Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA)
- Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT)
- Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC)
- Amtrak
- Chester County Planning Commission
- Paoli Transit Associates—Station Area Developer
- Local and State Officials
1.7 Project Team

Tredyffrin Township has engaged McMahon Associates Inc. and their consultant team to provide planning, engineering & public involvement services for this Paoli Road Improvement Feasibility Study & Public Involvement Project. The consultant team includes:

- McMahon Associates, Inc.
  - Smart Transportation Solutions & Community Outreach
  - Prime Consultant

- Stell Environmental Enterprises, Inc.
  - Environmental Review

- Greater Valley Forge Transportation Management Association
  - Outreach & Social Media Specialists

- Town Planning Partnership, LLC.
  - Community Outreach & Planning

- Glackin Thomas Panzak, Inc.
  - Landscape Architecture & Community Outreach

- Meliora Design, LLC
  - Green Streets & Stormwater Management Techniques

- Meliora Design, LLC
  - Green Streets & Stormwater Management Techniques

- Stell Environmental Enterprises, Inc.
  - Environmental Review
This study provides an evaluation of the existing and future transportation needs for all users in the Paoli area, particularly along Lancaster Avenue, N. Valley Road, East Central Avenue, and West Central Avenue. The Study also identifies and evaluates several transportation improvements based on several measures of performance or effectiveness, as well as cost and implementation factors. While this study does not provide a recommendation, it lays out the foundation for the Township to select a preferred transportation concept for each location.

The various transportation improvement concepts were developed based on feedback received from the community during the extensive public engagement process. The community was given the opportunity to select (and comment on) their preferred transportation improvement concept. As the Township moves forward and selects the transportation improvement projects to advance, community support/preference will be one of many important considerations. Also, some projects may ultimately be modified to address project challenges, available funding, property impacts, and other challenges and constraints.

Early during the public engagement process, it became clear that the community’s strong vision for Paoli involved more than just transportation improvements, particularly along Lancaster Avenue and around the Paoli train station. The vision included transforming the Paoli business district into a vibrant “main street” village setting that would serve multi-modal commuters (those driving, walking, biking, and using transit), attracting customers for retail establishments, and creating a sense of place. Lancaster Avenue and surrounding roadways could be a desirable destination where visitors would stroll the sidewalks and frequent businesses, rest on benches in the shade, and enjoy outdoor dining. Accordingly, this Study considers the land use and zoning implications of the community’s vision. Given the strong relationship between transportation and land use, the Township should also pursue modifications to its ordinances as well as implementing the transportation improvements in order to transform Lancaster Avenue into a vibrant and successful main street that the community desires. Some initial recommendations to this regard are provided in this Study.

Due to the magnitude of transportation improvements within the study area, the Township will need to phase the preferred improvements and advance projects once funding and/or project partners become available. Further, the preferred transportation improvements will need to be more fully engineered for the permitting processes of applicable agencies, as the engineering design completed as part of this Study included detailed conceptual level layouts of the various transportation improvements.

The Township can utilize this Study as a guide as it advances various projects in Paoli during completion as well as a reference when private projects are proposed. The various planning and zoning recommendations should be considered for implementation to ensure the community vision is achieved. Private development projects should also consult this Study as a reference when planning their projects.