Chapter 3 | Public Involvement - Discovery & Listening

3.1 | Public Outreach Process
3.1A Paoli On The Move Website
3.1B Public Outreach Events
3.1C Summary of Events

3.2 | Public Outreach Results
from the Discover & Learning Phase
3.2A Transportation Hotspots
3.2B Pedestrian Hotspots
3.2C The Top Ranked Issues
3.2D Visual Preference Survey Results

3.3 | Key Issues to Consider
3.1 Public Outreach Process

**Communications Plan & Goals**

One of the primary goals of the Paoli Road Improvement Feasibility Study is to:

“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 achieve this goal, the following community involvement activities have been initiated:

- Conducted a Community Questionnaire to establish preferred modes of travel and identify key transportation issues
- Conducted a Visual Preference Survey to determine preferred community character for streetscapes, traffic calming and civic spaces
- Hosted 10 Community Stakeholder Meetings to engage the neighborhoods and the business community
- Led 3 Community Open Houses each attended by 200 to 300 people to engage the community in the process of designing Paoli’s streets, walkways and civic spaces
- Two Community Presentations were held in the Spring and Summer of 2014

**Planning Transparency**

The Paoli Road Improvement Feasibility Study involved four phases. Through these phases a wide range of information about roadways, traffic, sidewalks and best practices was shared and the community offered extensive feedback and fresh ideas. The communications plan utilized various web tools and social media elements to solicit input, notify citizens of meetings, and create barrier-free channels for citizen participation.

The open-houses created multiple opportunities for citizen-participants to record their votes on visual preferences, call-out traffic and pedestrian hot-spots, and submit detailed comments and suggestions.

**Stakeholder Engagement**

The community stakeholders that participated in the study included:

- Tredyffrin Township
- Neighbors & Neighborhoods
- Rail Patrons
- Local Businesses
- Property Owners
- PennDOT
- SEPTA
- Amtrak
- Rail Yards Developer—Paoli Transit Associates
- Willistown Township

Throughout the process all stakeholders were given multiple opportunities and channels to communicate their preferences and ideas to the study team and the Township. The result was a vision for the Paoli area regarding preferred transportation and streetscape improvements.

**Overview of this four phase planning and outreach process**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase 1: Discovery</th>
<th>Phase 2: Listening</th>
<th>Phase 3: Scenarios</th>
<th>Phase 4: Deciding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Gather the facts</td>
<td>• What is most important?</td>
<td>• Develop &amp; test conceptual solutions</td>
<td>• Identify the public’s preferences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Agree on the goals</td>
<td>• Who wants to be involved?</td>
<td>• Refine solutions</td>
<td>• Compare improvement concepts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Paoli community members offering their ideas at Paoli Transportation Visions Open House #1 in October 2012
3.1A Paoli On The Move Website

The Visual Preference online voting allowed participants to select their favorite images and provide their input without the need to attend the meetings. The website enabled those with mobility or evening availability conflicts to participate. The site outlines the basic work plan, schedule, project team and partners.

Paoli on the Web

The Paoli On The Move website provides visitors with history of the Paoli area as well as maps and images from the past to provide historical context. It tells a story of the background of the transportation center and the recent developments that were the genesis of this feasibility study. Information pages inform visitors of upcoming meeting dates and events in addition to providing notices and pushing new information out via email notifications.

The website provided a channel for visitors to participate in surveys as well as upload images and ideas. Online public participation during the listening phases was excellent with more than 300 unique website visitors participating in the online Visual Preference Survey and sharing their visions for Paoli.

Online Paoli Project Portal

The centerpiece of the Communications Plan was the online project portal website, www.PaoliOnTheMove.org. In addition to being a source for information for the Paoli Road Improvement Feasibility Study & Public Involvement Project, it was a portal to information about the other four projects nearby. To provide better clarity for the public and understanding of the distinction between these separate projects, the landing page has a map and links to the other project websites involving the Paoli station area. In addition to this Paoli Road Improvement Study, the other projects linked on the PaoliOnTheMove.org landing page include: the Route30/Route 252 Improvements, the Paoli Intermodal Transportation Station, the Amtrak Rail Improvements project, and the Paoli Transit Associates Station Area Development project.

This helped reduce confusion about the scope of the five different and distinct projects. These other projects are shown on a map and hot-linked to their own respective web sites.

Over 3,000 unique visitors came to the Paoli On The Move Web Site
## 3.1B Public Outreach Events

### Outreach Events during the Discovery & Listening Phases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mtg. #</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Attendees</th>
<th>Event Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neighborhood Stakeholder Meetings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total of 150 attendees at 4 events during the Discovery &amp; Listening Phases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>West Central Avenue Neighbors Meeting</td>
<td>Sept. 6, 2012</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Introduction to Paoli Road Improvement Feasibility Study and project timeline; Listened to attendees from each neighborhood and documented goals, opportunities and constraints; introduced Paoli On The Move web site and upcoming community engagement process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ronnie Park Neighbors Meeting</td>
<td>Sept. 10, 2012</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>East Central Avenue Neighbors Meeting</td>
<td>Sept. 19, 2012</td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>South Paoli Neighbors Meeting</td>
<td>Oct. 4, 2012</td>
<td>55</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Business Stakeholder Meetings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total of 110 attendees at 4 events during the Discovery &amp; Listening Phases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Paoli Business and Professional Association Meeting</td>
<td>Jul. 26, 2012</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Introduction to Paoli Road Improvement Feasibility Study and project timeline; Listened to attendees from business community, property owners and documented goals, opportunities and constraints; introduced Paoli On The Move web site and upcoming community engagement process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Paoli Area Major Employers Meeting #1</td>
<td>Aug. 21, 2012</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Paoli Area Businesses Meeting</td>
<td>Sept. 5, 2012</td>
<td>45</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Paoli Area Employers Meeting #2</td>
<td>Sept. 5, 2012</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Paoli Road Improvement &amp; SEPTA Intermodal Transportation Center Open House Meetings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total of 324 attendees at 1 event during the Discovery &amp; Listening Phases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Paoli Transportation Open House #1</td>
<td>Oct. 24, 2012</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>Project Introduction; Pedestrian Hot Spots; Traffic Hot Spots; Safety Assessment; Documented community ideas and concerns about traffic, sidewalks and safety; Conducted Visual Preference Survey for Streetscape Ideas; Joint Meeting with SEPTA—3 Alternate Station Sites</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**We facilitated 9 Public Outreach Meetings...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Attendees</th>
<th>Event Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Over a 10 Month period...</td>
<td></td>
<td>And engaged over 580 Attendees during the Phase 1: Discovery &amp; Phase 2: Listening</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary of Events
A comprehensive Community Outreach effort was undertaken to engage the Paoli community in the Paoli Road Improvement Feasibility Study and Public Involvement Project:

1. Launched www.PaoliOnTheMove.org website to inform the community about five Paoli area projects
   - Paoli Road Improvement Study—Tredyffrin Township
   - Route 30/252 Improvements—Tredyffrin Township
   - SEPTA Intermodal Transportation Center
   - Amtrak Rail Improvements
   - Paoli Transit Associates—Rail Yards Developer

2. Hosted Neighborhood and Business Community Stakeholder Meetings

3. Hosted Transportation Vision Open Houses

4. Prepared Community Surveys and Questionnaires
   We have received and analyzed over 244 questionnaires, including:
   - 110 Residential Stakeholders
   - 73 Business Stakeholders
   - 61 Online Stakeholders

5. Conducted an Online Visual Preference Survey with over 310 participants to test community design preferences for Streetscape Design, Traffic Calming, Crosswalks and Community Identity,

6. Facilitated Property Owner Meetings to Review Transportation Improvement Concepts and discuss possible impacts and opportunities of the various improvement options.

3.1C Summary of Events

Project Schedule for Discovery & Listening Phases

Phases 3 (Concepts) and 4 (Deciding) are summarized later in the report.
3.2 Public Outreach Results from the Discovery & Learning Phase

Feedback Results: Top Traffic Priorities

1. Lancaster Avenue and Route 252
2. Valley Road Traffic
3. Lancaster Avenue and Signal Timing
4. West Central Avenue
5. East Central Avenue
6. Traffic From Great Valley

Traffic Priorities

The Major Themes:

- Traffic, Congestion, and Safety
- Train Station and Transit
- Pedestrian Mobility and Streetscape
- Bikes and Trails
- Bridges
- Parking

Feedback Results: Non-traffic Priorities

Pedestrian Improvements
The top theme in this category was a clear community desire for public improvements to better pedestrian safety and convenience. Sidewalks, crosswalks, pedestrian connections and pedestrian signalization were frequently cited as needing improvement.

Streetscape Aesthetics
Another strong message was that an attractive streetscape is important to the future success of Paoli. These elements of safety and aesthetics are complementary and many features can accomplish both.

Train Station
Paoli is a transportation-centric town and its future is tied to the planned intermodal transportation center. The message is that planning of the station must be integrated into these studies and planning efforts.

Retail Parking
The business community was clear in stating that a viable retail sector requires visible and accessible parking. On-street parking and more public parking was a clear priority.

Railroad Bridge Crossing
The Valley Road railroad bridge was a common complaint. The poor site distances and lack of safe pedestrian facilities made it an unpopular favorite.
3.2 Public Outreach Results from the Discovery & Learning Phase

Paoli Transportation Visions Open House

This event held in October of 2012 offered 324 individuals opportunities to share their ideas about where they live, where they work, pedestrian conflict areas, problem intersections, and participate in a survey.

During several of the public outreach events, the attendees identified several issues outside of the study area or outside the scope of improvements. These comments are documented in Appendix D.
3.2A Transportation Hot Spots

As part of the Discovery and Listening Phase, participants in our open houses were given adhesive “dots” and asked to place them on maps to designate places they considered traffic and pedestrian problem areas. This “dot-mocracy” process identified places in Paoli that warranted closer study for safety and mobility improvements. The “hot-spots” shown above have the total number of votes displayed within the shaded area. Although this study is limited to Tredyffrin Township, some areas in Willistown were shown.

The problem traffic areas identified in the map graphic above demonstrated that the Lancaster Avenue and N./S. Valley intersection is considered the worst in the Paoli corridor. The second worst intersection according to participants was the Lancaster Avenue and Route 252 intersection. These intersections are the two highest traffic areas and where conflicting turning movements and volume peaks due to rush-hour commuter train station traffic converge. The third-worst intersection is N. Valley and W. Central Avenue.

**Top Traffic Hot Spots**

1. Lancaster Ave and N./S. Valley 100
2. Lancaster Ave and Rt. 252 80
3. N. Valley and W. Central 46
4. Lancaster Ave and Paoli Pike 45
5. N. Valley and E. Central 35
6. Lancaster Ave and Darby Road 31
7. N. Valley Bridge 30

*Number shown equals votes per location.*
3.2B Pedestrian Hot Spots

The same map was provided for Pedestrian “hotspots.” Here participants identified the areas that they, as walkers or joggers, have found to be unsafe or lacking proper pedestrian facilities. In many cases, the worst pedestrian intersections are also the worst for vehicular traffic. In this voting, it is also apparent that Paoli train station pedestrian traffic is the largest generator of reported conflicts. While the collision history and police reports may not indicate such, the map shows that the perception is that the top vote-getting areas are less safe and functional than desirable.

**Top Pedestrian Hot Spots**

1. Lancaster Ave and N./S. Valley 81
2. Lancaster Ave and Rt. 252 45
3. N. Valley Train Bridge 44
4. Lancaster Ave and Paoli Pike 37
5. Lancaster Ave and Darby Road 23
6. N. Valley and E. Central 16
7. N. Valley Bridge 30

* Number shown equals votes per location.

Participants voted using adhesive dots placed on aerial
3.2C The Top Ranked Issues

Beginning in 2012, the Public Outreach efforts began with an extensive series of Business and Residential Stakeholders meetings held in Paoli. During these meetings, and also available online at PaoliOntheMove.org website, a survey questionnaire was available for participants to rank the issues they felt was most important. These survey results help identify what issues are important to both the residential and business interests in Paoli. The survey also allowed free-form comments and suggestions. Hundreds of surveys were filled out from a diverse sampling of residential and business interests in Paoli.

A first series of stakeholder meetings were held with three business groups. The first was the Paoli Business and Professional Association on July 26, 2012. The second was with a group of Paoli-area businesses and the third was with a group of major employers in the Paoli region, both held on September 5, 2012.
Residents of four surrounding areas were asked to rank important issues, and also important locations on a map. The highest “importance” location was the Rt. 252/Lancaster Pike intersection with the Valley Road/Lancaster Avenue area a close second.
3.2C The Top Ranked Issues

**Questionnaire Results**

More than 400 surveys and questionnaires were submitted during the early Discovery and Listening Phase. The totals were calculated and issues were ranked. The number one issue for respondents was traffic congestion, followed by vehicular/pedestrian safety, pedestrian access, and parking availability. The more abstract issues of economic development, streetscape enhancements, and environmental sustainability trailed behind. The issue of "speeding/cut through" and "bus/truck" traffic were listed as a separate items but could also be considered a sub-set of both traffic congestion and/or vehicular pedestrian safety—both top ranking issues.

Bicycle access ranked near the bottom, perhaps reflecting the lack of an established bicycle culture in the Lancaster Avenue area of Paoli in part due to excess traffic volume and better nearby alternative cycling routes. Driveway access controls (driveway location and number) finished at the bottom of the survey.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Most Important for Paoli Stakeholders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Traffic Congestion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Vehicular/Pedestrian Safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Pedestrian Access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Parking Availability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Economic Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Streetscape Enhancements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Speeding/Cut Through</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Environmental Sustainability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Bus/Truck traffic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Bicycle Access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Number and Spacing of Driveways</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Top Questionnaire Comments**

- "...better pedestrian walkways and sidewalks"
- "...speeding on all roads"
- "... traffic at intersections"
- "...train bridge needs improvements"
- "... cut through traffic in residential areas"
- "...not enough parking"
- "...empty shops are blight"
- "...train station improvements (needed)"
- "...sync traffic lights"
- "...fix up appearance of downtown"
- "...road maintenance"
Visual Preference Survey

To learn more about the aesthetic preferences of the Paoli community, a Visual Preference Survey was created. This survey was administered online at PaoliOnTheMove.org website. It was also administered in breakout sessions at the open houses. More than five hundred people participated in the online survey alone, with these visitors casting more than 13,000 combined votes for their favorite images and visual preferences for the Paoli Community.

The survey was comprised of five sections:

- **Residential Sidewalks**
- **Commercial Sidewalks**
- **Community Identity Elements**
- **Crosswalks**
- **Traffic Calming Elements**

Survey takers were shown a screen with numbered options and were asked to select one or more that were appropriate. Most of the images are not from Paoli, but rather are a sample of photos from across the United States. These images are typical of various conditions and design elements found in typical Main Street communities.

### Residential Sidewalks

The residential sidewalk image that scored the highest contained several important design elements including:

- Brick-paver sidewalks
- Wide curb-lawn ("verge")
- Mature street trees
- Period-style lights

Image #10 below has a landscaped curb edge, but was less popular than the simple turf verge (buffer). The least popular image has no green areas adjacent to roadway. These curb-lawns provide separation for pedestrians from the cartway, and allow street trees, lights and signage to be placed outside of the sidewalk. During Pennsylvania winters, these areas also provide areas for snow plow "windrows" to pile up while reducing the resulting obstruction of adjacent sidewalks.

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3.2D Visual Preference Survey Results

- **492 Likes**
- **472 Likes**
- **464 Likes**
- **475 Likes**
3.2D Visual Preference Survey Results

Commercial Sidewalks

The most popular commercial sidewalk image combined patterned sidewalk paving, projecting signs, street trees, historic lamp posts, and cast iron-type street furniture such as benches, bollards, and trash and cigarette receptacles. The popular image also shows sidewalk dining, tasteful signs projecting overhead, awnings, and potted and hanging flower planters. Other popular images combine some of these design elements.
Crosswalks

Textured or patterned crosswalks scored well in the survey with brick paver crosswalks selected as the most popular style. These can be clay brick pavers, red concrete pavers, or colored and stamped asphalt paving. Another style that was nearly as popular was a stamped asphalt black and white brick pattern shown in image #14. The “continental” painted crosswalk in image #13 scored higher than the standard parallel white lines. Paver, textured or stamped crosswalks have been demonstrated to increase driver awareness by providing increased visibility and tactile feedback, or “rumble”, to the driver that they are within a crosswalk. The addition of colored and textured crosswalks in to the Lancaster Avenue corridor will likely have measurable impact on vehicle-pedestrian awareness.

Community Identity Elements

A community is often defined by a combination of major elements such as parks and greens, and the little things like landscaping, flowers and civic icons such as clocks, fountains and monuments. The images in this portion of the survey showed community identity elements such as fountains, pocket parks, gazebos, clocks, and village greens. The top vote-getter was an image of a traditional Main Street with a public clock against a background of landscaped sidewalks including street trees. Other community identity elements that scored well included a public lawn/green space with benches and shade trees. Other images comprised a gazebo structure. The least popular image of this set was a modest circular fountain encircled by benches.
3.2D Visual Preference Survey Results

Traffic Calming Elements

Traffic Calming has been used successfully in many Pennsylvania communities. The term refers to techniques and road design elements that achieve reduced vehicle speeds and improve driver speed awareness. Survey participants were asked which images they preferred of various constructed traffic calming improvements. Top vote-getters included landscaped traffic island and also an image of a “roundabout” in Keswick Village, Pennsylvania.

These types of intersections are typically best suited for collector and local roads with single lane feeders. They are not the “New Jersey” style traffic circles with multiple incoming and exiting lanes, but rather are smaller scale and have slower speeds. This approach was favored by many survey participants.

Road alignments that shift and require the driver to actively navigate the travel lane have been proven to reduce vehicle speeds.

Larger and more gentle than speed “bumps,” these parabolic-crowned speed “humps” are appropriate for 25mph roads. Utilized extensively in many communities, these reduce vehicle speeds and have been proven to not significantly impede emergency vehicles or snow plow operations.

On-street parking generally reduces vehicle speeds due to the close proximity of the parked cars to the travel lanes. The on-street parking produces a perceived “friction” by creating visual feedback to the driver of their relative speed.

An effective traffic calming element that changes the vertical alignment of the roadway for a short distance, these are similar to speed bumps and speed humps. These are more gentle than the others and often incorporate a raised crosswalk.

Elevating the entire intersection box is another vertical alignment change that has proven to reduce vehicle speeds. The use of contrasting colored paving materials and pavers increase driver alertness and pedestrian awareness.

Islands provide horizontal changes to road alignments similar to chicanes and lane shifts. These popular road elements provide aesthetic value and additional greenspace in highly visible locations.

Usually used as “end-caps” to rows of on-street parking, these reduce crosswalk length, improve pedestrian visibility, and provide additional opportunities for street trees, landscaping, and street furniture such as benches, bollards and trash cans.
3.3 Key Issues to Consider

More than one thousand citizens participated online or at one of the many public meetings. After the thousands of votes were cast and hundreds of comments collected, several themes emerged. These key issues informed the next assessment phase and the evaluations that followed.

- Identify strategies to reduce traffic congestion on major roadways without creating additional cut-through traffic on residential neighborhood streets
- Enhance the pedestrian environment by improving connectivity and safety between neighborhoods, village commercial areas and the train station
- Promote a distributed network of commuter parking areas and commercial parking areas that promotes a “park once” approach with easy pedestrian access to other village destinations
- Enhance and improve sidewalks, civic spaces and streetscapes to create safer and more attractive places to walk, and access the Paoli Intermodal Transportation Center
- Identify access management strategies to reduce the number of and spacing between driveways on major commercial streets
- Create multi-modal transportation strategies to optimize the use of buses, jitneys, taxis, bicycles, and walking thereby reducing automobile traffic congestion
- Promote environmental sustainability solutions that will better manage stormwater, reduce energy consumption and reduce carbon emissions