York Road – Technical Assistance Panel
June 18th and 19th, 2013
The York Road TAP Team

• ULI – York Road TAP Chairperson
  – Addison Palmer, STV Incorporated

• Technical Assistance Panelists
  – Robb Aumiller, MacKenzie Commercial
  – Mickey Cornelius, The Traffic Group
  – Joe Cronyn, Valbridge Property Advisors / Lipman Frizzell & Mitchell
  – Wes Guckert, The Traffic Group
  – Bill Jones, Economic Alliance of Greater Baltimore
  – Steve Smith, Gaylord Brooks Land Development
  – Keith Weaver, EDSA
The York Road TAP Team

• **Sponsors**
  - Loyola University Maryland
  - Govanstowne Business Association
  - Notre Dame of Maryland University

• **Partners**
  - Baltimore City
  - Baltimore County
  - Baltimore Development Corporation
  - York Road Partnership
The Urban Land Institute (ULI) is a nonprofit research and education organization that focuses on issues of land use and real estate development.

Our Mission is -

To promote leadership in the responsible use of land and to create and sustain thriving communities worldwide
Who Are ULI Members?

With over 30,000 members worldwide, the heart of the ULI experience is an open exchange of ideas, networking opportunities, and the ability to work with the leaders of the land use industry.

Members include:

• Developers
• Builders
• Engineers
• Attorneys
• Brokers
• Planners
• Market Analysts
• Investors, Bankers and Financiers
  • Academicians
• Architects and Designers
• Public officials
TAP Study Limits

Northern Boundary Towson/ Baltimore County

Southern Boundary
42nd Street
Pen Lucy/Guilford, Baltimore
Day One – Tour the Study Area

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Day One – Stakeholder Meetings

- Understanding of the materials provided,
- Review of questions to address,
- Meeting with community stakeholders, and
- Understanding of community strengths, weaknesses and opportunities.
TAP Questions to Answer

The Market
1. What is the market demand for new businesses and mixed-use development, including student housing?
2. What should the marketing/branding strategy look like, especially given the impact of the retail and amenities in Towson?
3. What specific policies and plans can York Road implement to leverage on the strength of Towson’s commercial offerings? What to avoid?

Development Reality
1. What revitalization strategies can position the corridor for a turnaround and sustainable growth?
2. Where or how should revitalization efforts be focused or phased?
3. Which of the identified nodes have the strongest potential for redevelopment and ability to bring about substantial positive change?
Questions Continued

**Design Quality**

1. How can specific revitalization efforts on York Road positively influence and strengthen surrounding residential neighborhoods?

2. How can the residential, commercial and institutional relationships benefit all parties/uses?

3. What components of the streetscape are most promising for recreating a sense of place and the impression that one has entered a unique community?

4. How can the relationship between Belvedere Square and York Road be strengthened without detracting from Belvedere Square? How does parking relate to the strength of Belvedere Square?

**Transportation**

1. How can York Road be transformed into a more pedestrian-friendly mixed-use place without disrupting commuter traffic?
Govans Main Street – Baltimore City Market
What We Heard

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Strengths and Weaknesses

Strengths:
• Regional Location
• Strong Transportation Network
• Diversity and Urbanity
• Residential and Institutional Engagement

Weaknesses:
• Corridor as a Dividing Line (City/County & East West)
• Public Safety
• Aesthetics
• Lack of family friendly environment
  • Walkability
  • Amenities, including food
  • Public Space
• Low Density, Multiple Owners, Linear Commercial Space
The Vision

TO:

- Build on the existing strengths of one of Baltimore’s most important and historic corridors
- Reinforce and revitalize the commercial and residential environment
- Better connect and serve the entire existing community

*A vibrant York Road commercial corridor will enhance and benefit all surrounding residential neighborhoods.*
Opportunities and Recommendations

1. **Build from the existing strengths**
   - Strong transit and road network
   - Involved and organized community
   - Proximity of nearby universities
   - Economic strength of Belvedere Square, Drumcastle and Towson
   - Initially focus redevelopment near these areas, then radiate out

2. **Meet the large underserved demand for basic services**
   - Grocery market (address the food desert of the lower study area)
   - Dine-in restaurants, student amenities, neighborhood cafes, home improvement stores
   - Community centers, social and medical services
   - Central, visible public spaces and recreational opportunities for all ages
Opportunities and Recommendations

3. **Address destabilizing elements**
   - Relocate areas of high loitering to more visible areas which can be better policed
   - Improve code enforcement, trash collection, and police presence
   - Design public spaces to better promote safe use
   - Consider rezoning as a tool to discourage destabilizing elements

4. **Pursue mixed-use and co-located uses**
   - Combine residential, commercial and parking uses into single developments
   - Encourage multi-family uses along York Road in conjunction with ground floor retail
   - Encourage partnerships between businesses to create synergy and address common problems such as parking
Opportunities and Recommendations

5. Grow universities’ presence
   • Promote the establishment of campus life (offices, classrooms, retail, student housing) by Loyola, Notre Dame, Morgan and Towson along York Road to address their growth needs
   • Explore partnership opportunities with universities to create locations where students can interact with the community (for the benefit of the students and the community)
   • Provide housing, shopping and recreation opportunities for underserved university students

6. Reconfigure roads to help improve and attract commercial uses
   • Focus on creating a “main street” atmosphere and concentrating commercial uses
   • Include parallel parking, bike lanes and more sidewalk along York Road
   • Reduce traffic lanes to create safer and more walkable roads
Opportunities and Recommendations

7. Improve transit hubs

• Make bus stops more user friendly and interconnected to facilitate easy transfer of bus lines and reduce dangerous jaywalking

• Create bus linkage to Light Rail

• Improve bus stops with shelters, seating, trash cans and landscaping

• Explore shared university shuttle bus system / City Circulator among all campuses
Implementation Suggestions

1. Create a blanket organization to champion the York Road vision on an ongoing basis
   • Manage and consider the needs of all community and business groups (e.g., Main Street / Downtown Partnership / Community Development Corporation)
   • Focus on outreach to developers, retailers and builders to promote investment
   • Expert on all incentives offered by City and County
   • Maintain communication with owners of high priority parcels and consistently promote redevelopment to a higher and better use

2. Redefine the nodes/zones
   • 4 nodes focused on the places, not the intersections
   • Varying land use themes to differentiate each zone
Govans Main Street Zone 1 - Entertainment Node

- Family-Serving
- Entertainment
- Regional Appeal
- More density (housing & commercial)
- Mix of day and night activity
Govans Main Street Zone 1 - Entertainment Node

- Expand parking opportunities (e.g. Staples, Belvedere Square)
- Transit hub (to help solve some pedestrian/transit rider safety issue)
- Verizon Building – Opportunity Site
- Triangle as important gateway site
Govans Main Street Zone 2 – The College Node

- Family-Oriented
- Mixed-use
- More density (housing & commercial)
- Positive outdoor activities (outdoor seating) – minimize presence of negative behavior
- Gaps in commercial services (Grocery, food, medical, student amenities)
Govans Main Street Zone 2 – The College Node

- Enhance pedestrian connections to neighborhoods
- Enhance university presence
- Amenities for students (ie., vintage clothing, books, coffee shop)
- 5315 York (Family Dollar) – opportunity site
- 5104 York (Loyola Property) – opportunity site
Govans Main Street Zone 3 – Southern Node

- Visible public space on corridor
- Options:
  - Concentrate commercial space
  - Embrace, expand personal service establishments
  - Embrace auto uses
Govans Main Street Zone 3 – Southern Node

- Extend elementary school to get presence on York Road
- DGS property – opportunity site
York Road Zone 4: City/County Line, York Rd Plaza, Drumcastle

- Potential for moderately scaled infill development
- Potential for mix of uses to create a more walkable district
- More residents or workers to patronize local businesses.
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Physical Design Enhancements

**Greenspace**

- **Enhance existing spaces** (Maintenance – Leverage Parks and People Foundation)
- **Improve visibility** (Pockets vs. gateways)
Physical Design Enhancements

Signage Organization

- Guidelines for uniformity
- Design review and enforcement – Possible Neighborhood Design Center support services
Physical Design Enhancements

Complete Streets

• Accommodate pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages

• Easier to cross the street, walk to shops, bike to work

• Result will increase parking to support existing commercial uses
Street Comparison

York Road Corridor

ADT 17,000 – 22,000

Harford Road Corridor

ADT 17,000 – 22,000
Streetscape Sections

Key Points

- Designed for all users
- Uses existing cross-section
- Improved safety
Streetscape Sections

Key Points

- Curb extensions
- Improved pedestrian safety
- Clearly delineated crosswalks
- Landscape opportunities
Streetscape Sections

Key Points

• Separate lane for left turns
• At locations with significant turning volumes
• Maintains pedestrian safety
Mid-Block Crosswalks

Key Points

- Provides pedestrian island
- Clearly delineated crosswalks
The York Road TAP – Conclusions

The Best Route Forward:

1. Share the plan and get buy in from ALL stakeholders

2. Form a NEW organization that will CHAMPION implementation

3. Establish short, mid, and long term implementation goals
   a. Inventory available opportunity sites and link to identified needs/uses
   b. Implement physical improvement priorities – parking, street improvements, façade improvements, etc.

4. Maintain continuous communications with ALL stakeholders and hold annual community meetings to show concrete change and update goals
Questions and Comments