

101 Commerce Drive
Exton, Pennsylvania 19341



Tel: (610) 363-9525
www.westwhiteland.org

November 10, 2020

Dear West Whiteland Township Residents,

You may have seen news reports that the owner of the Exton Square Mall, the Pennsylvania Real Estate Investment Trust (PREIT), filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy on November 1. A few days later, PREIT advised their tenants and business partners that the protection provided by the filing would allow them to continue operating through the end of the year.

West Whiteland Township shares the community's concern and curiosity about the future of the mall. The Township does not know what, if anything, PREIT's bankruptcy filing means for the mall's future and the potential redevelopment of the site.

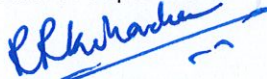
Almost fifty years after it opened, the mall (like many across the country) isn't the destination it used to be, but the location is still prime real estate. Located at the "Exton Crossroads" of Pottstown Pike and Lincoln Highway, it sits at one of the most prominent intersections in Chester County, the wealthiest county in the state. That level of access and opportunity leads to the widespread assumption that the site will be redeveloped at some point.

The property owner, not the local government, determines if or when to redevelop land. However, Township planning and ordinances provide the framework for redevelopment – for what can and cannot be considered. We can assure the community that the zoning of the mall property does not allow warehouses, for Amazon or anyone else, and that will not change. But what would work at that site, in this current economy and for the long term?


To solicit ideas, the Township hosted a three-day "Technical Assistance Panel" from the Urban Land Institute (ULI). Design and development professionals toured the area, interviewed stakeholders, learned about the planning already done by the Township, and offered recommendations for next steps that could add vibrancy and a sense of identity to the Exton Crossroads area, including the mall site. We are looking forward to their report, which will be completed around the end of the year.

We will share the ULI report with residents and look forward to engaging our community in discussions about the vision and future for the Exton Crossroads. Stay tuned for opportunities to learn about the ULI report and participate in community conversations, as we work together to build a vision for an Exton Crossroads area where people will want to be for years to come.

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