



Charrette enables residents and students to design the future of Route 30



[0]Route 30 Charrette: Project Manager Alexander Graziani takes a closer look at the development site
By Dylan Nice / Editor-in-chief

UPG students and the public are being offered the chance to shape the future development along Route 30 at a public workshop being held this week in Smith Hall.

The weeklong charrette began Monday night and drew a crowd of about 100 residents. Attendees used maps and scissors to plot out the future of two pieces of land outside Latrobe set aside for experimental development. Workshop host, Smart Growth Partnership of Westmoreland County employees brainstormed with residents about what should be built on the 23- and 11-acre plots.

“We’re looking at this as a new town,” Project Team Manager Hannah Twaddell said. “Anything goes on this site.”

Project Manager Alexander Graziani opened the session by saying that instead of residents being “Monday-morning quarterbacks,” who notice flaws and inconveniences in roadway and facility design, anyone could contribute to the planning.

“We all drive past things, point and say, ‘What were they thinking when they did that?’” Graziani said. “Tonight we’re looking at what your vision would be.”

The session began with a keynote address on the history of the 40-mile stretch of road by Kevin J. Patrick, professor of geography and regional planning at IUP. Patrick said that Pittsburgh is decentralizing and moving out into the regions surrounding it. Areas most affected will be those along Pittsburgh’s main corridors like Route 30.

“Dramatic change is about to happen,” Patrick said. “The suburbs are moving out away from the city and becoming less and less dense.”

Patrick said that when Greensburg was built, its designers and inhabitants established a sense of permanence to the landscape by building the things like Westmoreland County Courthouse and marble-faced banks. The centralization of the establishments and homes also creates sense of community, Patrick said.

Patrick said the commercial expansion including along Route 30 is not part of this “heritage landscape” and is

designed to be bulldozed. Adding that the development plan should control this suburban sprawl, but also stimulate growth.

The design of the 23-acre demonstration site is located at the corner of state Route 981 and Arnold Palmer Drive, southeast of the Route 30/981 intersection in Unity Township. The future site is planned to promote walking and relieve congestion on Route 30. An additional 11-acre plot that includes Arnold Palmer Motors will also be considered for development. Attendees discussed building of houses, non-franchise stores, restaurants and hotels.

“I don’t want to see a Ramada Inn there,” one resident said. “I want a new Mountain View Inn there.”

Graziani said he encourages Pitt-Greensburg students to attend because young people are going to be the ones living with the changes made now.

“Just like the guys who built Washington D.C., we’re not building this for ourselves,” Graziani said. “People who are young now are the ones who are going to own this site.”

Graziani said anyone attending can enter a drawing to win a 32-inch Sony flat screen television or airfare credit voucher.

Based on the designs suggested, the Smart Growth team will develop three potential scenarios for Wednesday’s session at 7 p.m. A final design will be decided on Friday at 2 p.m. Both sessions are in Smith Hall.

For more information, visit the project Web site, www.route30plan.com [1].

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