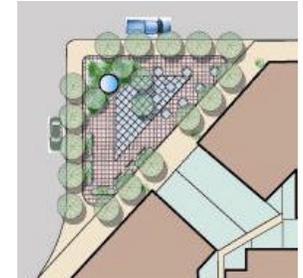


## South of South Community Plan



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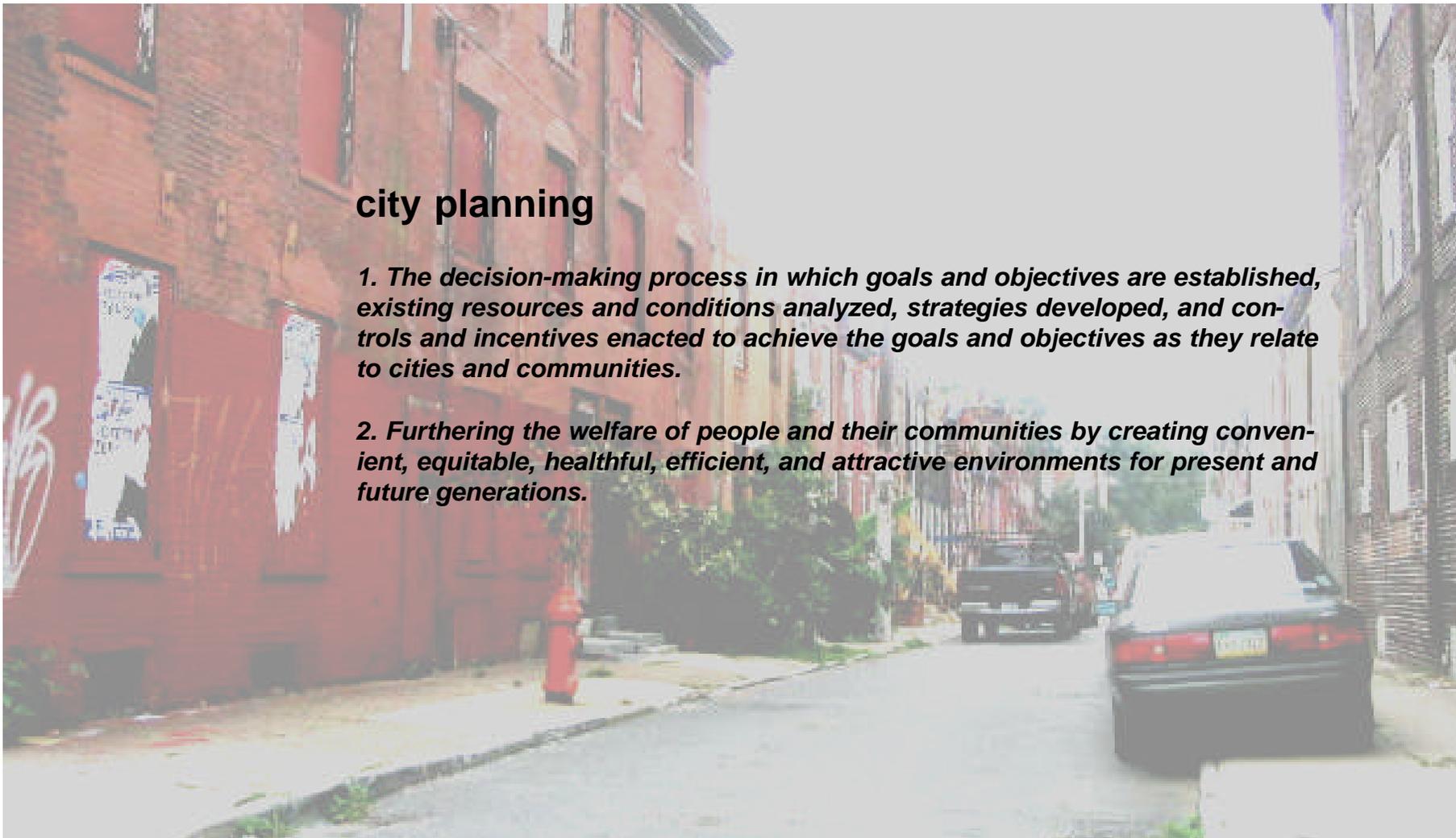
*Acknowledgements*

*Important contributions were made by many members of the Planning Commission staff, representing all divisions within the Planning Commission and the Office of Strategic Planning. Other contributors include community members, representatives of City agencies and City Council who enthusiastically participated in meetings and workshops during the planning process.*

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## city planning

- 1. The decision-making process in which goals and objectives are established, existing resources and conditions analyzed, strategies developed, and controls and incentives enacted to achieve the goals and objectives as they relate to cities and communities.***
- 2. Furthering the welfare of people and their communities by creating convenient, equitable, healthful, efficient, and attractive environments for present and future generations.***

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## Executive Summary



South Street

Home to over ten thousand people, South of South is a growing, diverse and exciting community. Located next to Center City, this neighborhood has seen substantial renewed interest over the last few years. With a convenient location close to downtown jobs and attractions, the housing market in South of South has been very active, with significant renovation, new construction and rising values in recent years. More recently, an enhanced mix of retail and service establishments is being introduced into the area. Robust property values are encouraging private investment and new businesses. Additionally, the South of South Neighborhood Association Community Development Corporation has successfully applied for a ten-year tax credit program with the Pathmark Corporation that will support economic development over the next ten years.

Public resources have been directed to the community to retain and support the existing residential population as well as commercial development. The Targeted Basic Systems Repair Program (TBSRP), housing counseling through the Office of Housing and Community Development (OHCD), and the City's support of affordable housing development are just a few of the programs that have helped to support existing residents. Additionally, capital program money from the City has been invested in the community's public infrastructure along Broad Street, Washington Avenue and South Street. Other public resources committed to citywide redevelopment include various tax abatement programs for construction and reinvestment, and the Renewal Community designation from the federal government, which can leverage additional resources.

Both new and old residents of this community have

come together to celebrate their community and help encourage its future success. The planning process has encouraged the community to articulate a vision for the future as well as indicate special characteristics of the area that are important to retain and celebrate. With a strong neighborhood history of civic action and involvement, the plan was crafted with extensive support and input from area residents, local business leaders, institutions and elected officials. This plan is the culmination of that work and will help guide community action for the future.

## Section One: The Planning Process

The Neighborhood Transformation Initiative (NTI) community planning process is intended to be transparent, open and inclusive, involving a high degree of interaction and consistency and take place within the context of district and citywide visions.

Phases of this process include:

- 1) Review of NTI goals, objectives and investment strategy
- 2) Discussion of community vision
- 3) Preparation of a community assessment and existing conditions analysis
- 4) The reviewing of options
- 5) Development of an implementation strategy
- 6) Wide distribution of the draft community plan for public comment

This plan was undertaken with input from several local organizations as well as City Council President Anna C. Verna and neighborhood stakeholders. We would like to thank those involved in the outreach process. This document would have been impossible without them.

### Planning Workshops and Meetings

During the community outreach phase, the City Planning Commission facilitated numerous public meetings held between fall of 2002 and fall/winter of 2003/2004. We interviewed stakeholders, read surveys completed by participants and recorded comments in several ways during the course of community outreach.

Participating Organizations Include:

- The Brandywine Workshop
- Christian Street YMCA
- Council President Verna's Office
- Graduate Hospital
- Greater St. Matthew's CDC
- Jubilee Village
- Marian Anderson Recreation Center
- ODUNDE
- Scottish Rite Tenants Association
- South of South Neighborhood Association
- South Street West Business Association
- Universal Companies
- South of South CDC



Above: Aerial view of the neighborhood



Top: SEPTA bus  
Bottom: A public planning meeting

### Community Outreach

Community workshops were held in several places over the course of eighteen months, with stakeholder outreach beginning in the fall of 2002 and concluding early in 2004. Residents were invited to participate in the planning process in two major ways - in workshops where issues were discussed and recorded and through a paper questionnaire that could be filled out at the meeting or sent in at a later time. After workshop discussions were held, residents were invited to vote for issues they felt were most important. What follows is a summary of both the workshop comments and tabulation of the written questionnaires.

### Likes:

- Location was often cited as a strong reason to live in this community, with many people indicating that proximity to Center City was very important to them
- Participants indicated that they liked their neighbors - the community is filled with friendly people
- Active civic associations and institutions are an important part of the community, including churches, arts and culture organizations and community based organizations
- New and old members of the community prize the area's diversity
- The community's affordability was attractive for many residents who felt the area was a good buy and that property values were increasing
- Respondents generally liked the diversity of the housing stock in the area and wanted to maintain a mix of owner and renter occupied units.

### Dislikes:

- Public safety and trash were a strong concern for the community

- People were concerned by a lack of access to open space and greenery in the area
- Residents did not want the city to use eminent domain for the taking of private property
- The lack of smaller, local businesses in the neighborhood is a problem for some residents who would like to see more restaurants and mixed used districts close to residents
- Many were alarmed by garages on the front of new homes and their impact on the sidewalk, street and parking in the community
- Scarce resources and financial aid available to homeowners were highlighted as an issue within the neighborhood
- Slow redevelopment of important community heritage sites such as the Royal Theater is an ongoing concern
- Vacancy continued to be a problem in some areas of the community, although redevelopment is helping to alleviate much of the problem
- Residents indicated that a variety of housing tenures (owner or renter) as well as a variety of affordable housing was desirable
- Safety and security of the alleys in the neighborhood.

## Section Two: South of South Yesterday and Today

### Community Heritage - Tradition and Progress

South of South is a neighborhood with a proud history of ethnic co-existence and has been home to many historic sites and famous people throughout the last 200 years. The neighborhood began developing at its eastern end from 1800-1820, growing west as the city expanded. This neighborhood was actually south of the border of the City of Philadelphia at this time and was not incorporated until 1854. Because of its location, the South Street (originally called Cedar Street) corridor became a magnet for entertainment businesses prohibited by the Quaker establishment within the City. The area has historically provided low-cost housing for an ethnically mixed population, including African-American residents and Irish immigrants.

Residential development did not occur west of 19th Street until the second half of the nineteenth century. At the western end of the neighborhood, however, military and industrial development began to occur along the Schuylkill River in the 1830s. The U.S. Naval Asylum (later called the Naval Home) was built on Grays Ferry Avenue in 1833 to provide care for sick, disabled and impoverished sailors. The Naval Asylum site also included the Naval Hospital and part of the first Naval Academy. The site was in active use until 1976, when the Naval Home moved to new quarters in Gulfport, Mississippi. The remaining buildings and grounds stand as unique monuments of national and local heritage. The architectural and historical significance of the site is documented by historic certifications at national and local levels.

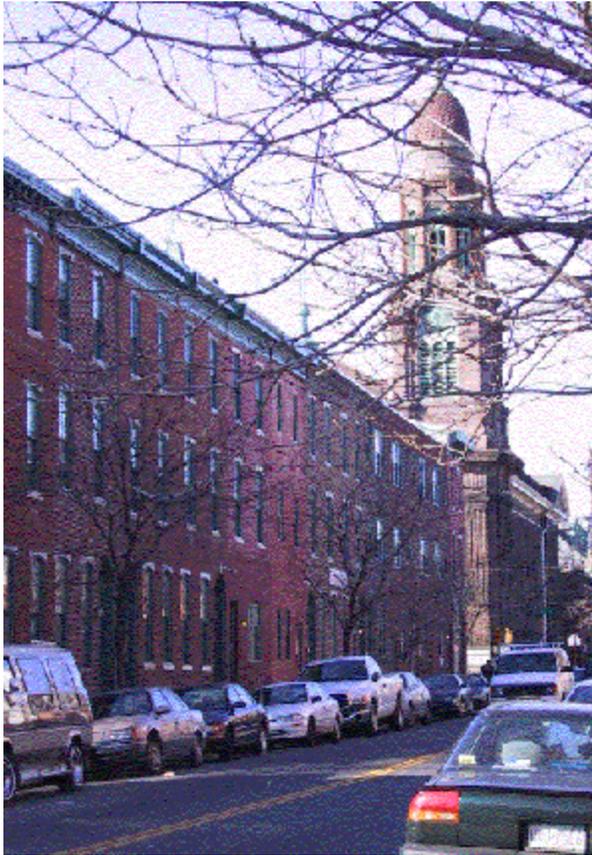
The construction of the South Street Bridge in the late 1800s led to significant land use change in the

area, particularly west of 19th Street. Grays Ferry Avenue, Christian Street and Bainbridge Street became lined with new residential construction. Many of the neighborhood's earliest residents were employed in service industry in Center City's homes, hotels and restaurants. The Schuylkill Navigational Terminal on the Schuylkill River was an additional source of employment for the residents of this area and nearby Gray's Ferry. The Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore Railroad (PW&B) was constructed on Washington Avenue (originally Prime Street) to a terminus on Broad Street; a fragment of the freight depot, built in 1876, remains at 15th and Carpenter Streets. Factories, industries and coal yards developed along Washington Avenue as a result of this rail line and attracted additional labor to the neighborhood. Businesses like the Frankford Chocolate Company, which opened at 2101 Washington Avenue in 1880, made this area their home. Many artisans moved to the neighborhood in the 1880s to help in the expanding construction of the Rittenhouse Square area.

The existing community infrastructure established by African-Americans provided support for waves of emancipated slaves who arrived during the second half of the nineteenth century. The Philadelphia Tribune, the nation's oldest African-American newspaper, moved to its current location at 522 South 16th Street in 1884. The First African Baptist Church, which dates to 1813, was established at 16th and Christian Streets. Development of the neighborhood was nearly complete by 1889. Many of the area's early Irish immigrants eventually moved west to Delaware County, following the movement of industry, though a significant Irish population remains to this day in the western end of



Above: Graduate Hospital's Tuttleman Center



Above: Christian Street

the neighborhood.

The neighborhood became largely African-American during the 20th Century, and community infrastructure for this population continued to develop. The Mercy Hospital was founded in 1907 at 17th and Bainbridge and later evolved into the Mercy-Douglas Hospital in 1948 (Artists' Village now occupies this site). The Polyclinic College for Graduates in Medicine moved to 19th and Lombard in 1889 and operated a free clinic that helped to train African-American medical professionals. Polyclinic later merged with the University of Pennsylvania to establish the Graduate Hospital. The original Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, now a world-renowned medical institution, was located just west of this site at 18th and Bainbridge (now the site of Coventry Court). Tindley Temple was founded in 1902 at 762 South Broad Street and the Royal Theater in the 1500 block of South Street became an entertainment destination. The Theater hosted performers such as Billie Holiday, also a neighborhood resident. Marian Anderson launched her operatic career singing at the Union Baptist Church at 1910 Fitzwater, and the Marian Anderson Recreation Center stands as a monument to her at 17th and Fitzwater Streets. A museum has been created to celebrate her life at her former residence at 762 S Martin Street (Marian Anderson Way), a property she purchased in 1924 and owned for almost 70 years. Julian Abele, an architect of the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the first African-American to graduate with an architectural degree from the University of Pennsylvania, once lived in this neighborhood. The Citizens and Southern Bank was also organized as one of the first African-American banks in Philadelphia at a location near Graduate Hospital.

The Christian Street YMCA, the fourth African American YMCA in the country, has a rich history, having been established in 1889 by William Still in his home. For many years, it was a residential facility and a place African-American visitors to the city could stay during segregation in hotels. It was rebuilt in its present location in 1970 after a major fire.

Like many other communities in Philadelphia and other older industrial cities, the neighborhood faced economic and population decline during the middle of the 20th Century, as residents left for newer sections of Philadelphia and the suburbs. Changes in technology, transportation and industry helped accelerate population and job loss. Industries needed larger, one-story buildings for assembling products, while residents wanted private lawns, driveways and newer, larger housing.

A major contribution to the decline was the City's condemnation of properties along South Street in the 1960s for the planned Crosstown Expressway to link the Schuylkill Expressway and the proposed Interstate Route 95. As properties were condemned for the proposed highway, scores of business and residences along South Street closed and were left abandoned. Many buildings became vacant and the retail and service sector that had served the neighborhoods to the south disappeared. Residents began to leave the neighborhood, moving to West and Northwest Philadelphia. By the time the city abandoned plans for the roadway in response to strong opposition, South Street's commercial core had virtually disappeared and many residents had fled for more cohesive neighborhoods. After plans for the expressway were cancelled, speculators bought properties along South Street and allowed them to fall

into disrepair.

The community continued to deteriorate physically and lose population until the 1970s, when Graduate Hospital built a new facility in the 1800 block of South Street. Professionals began to move into the neighborhood, particularly west of South 17th Street. High levels of vacancy ensured that newcomers arrived into the area with little displacement of existing residents. More recently, the designation of and planning for South Broad Street as the Avenue of the Arts has served as a catalyst for reinvestment activity east of 17th Street. Community-based organizations such as Universal Companies and SOSNA have worked to improve the neighborhood while minimizing displacement of low-income residents. Universal Companies, led by music mogul, entrepreneur and neighborhood resident Kenny Gamble, has taken a multifaceted approach to this neighborhood's rebirth through housing construction in conjunction with workforce and business development, education, and retail services to the community.

Despite these efforts, the South of South neighborhood still bears the marks of decline. Fifty years of change have left vacant lots, abandoned housing, and industrial buildings commingled with a vibrant, historic and proud community comprised of newcomers and longtime residents. While many challenges still face this community, recent years have seen a rapid pace of renovation, speculation and increased property values. Having successfully weathered the rise and fall of the industrial revolution, the South of South community is well positioned for success in the twenty-first century. By capitalizing on its inherent strengths and with the

memory of its roots intact, the community can direct growth and change toward a brighter future.

### Historic Properties

Architecturally historic and significant buildings in South of South include the Royal Theater, the Naval Home and several ornate homes on the 2200 block of Bainbridge Street, including the Alexander Calder home at 2201. Three entire blocks of St Albans Place and Madison Square are on the local register of historic structures because they contain gardens where the streets would normally be - an unusual situation in the city. Many other places in the neighborhood simply contain older, handsome row homes and town homes that are attractive and well built, but not protected from alteration. Other historic locations in the community are identified by signs and markers, like the Marian Anderson marker at the Union Baptist Church at 19th and Fitzwater Streets and the Christian Street YMCA at 17th Street.

### Review of Previous Plans - How Far We've Come

Knowing where we stand is critical to any planning effort and this is no exception. Of the 1995 South of South Neighborhood Plan's many recommendations addressing community issues, some have been resolved, while others continue to be addressed. A summary of the 1995 plan's recommendations and where they stand is below:

#### Housing

Much of the vacancy that was such a problem in 1995 is on its way to being resolved through housing rehabilitation, demolition or cleaning and sealing. Several affordable housing developments have shored up otherwise crumbling portions of the com-

### Demographic Trends

- Population loss has slowed - from a 14% decline between 1980 and 1990 to a 1% loss between 1990 and 2000, with the total population at 10,624 in 2000.
- People over age 65 make up 14% of the population, the same proportion of older people (over age 65) as the city, but fewer than in 1980 and 1990.
- Residents are younger than the city overall, with 43% of the population between 20 and 44 in the 2000 census - a larger proportion of the population than city-wide (37%).
- The population under 20 has remained much the same since 1980, with 24% of the total population. This is close to the City average of 28% of the population under 20 years old.
- The neighborhood has become more diverse since 1980, when 91% of the population were African Americans and 8% of the population white. In 2000, the community was 73% African-American and 21% white, with a growing Asian and Latino community making up the remainder.
- Female-headed households are on the decline in South of South, moving to 49% of the total households in 2000 from 53% in 1980.
- Both median household income and aggregate income (total income for the area) have grown substantially from 1980 to 2000. From a low of \$16,500 in 1990 to \$24,400 in 2000, median income is now 79% of the citywide median.

Demographic Information - continued

- Poverty in the community is declining, with 28% of the population living below the federal poverty line in 2000, compared to 40% in 1990. Citywide, 22% of the population is living below the poverty line.
- In 1980, there were just over 7,100 housing units in the neighborhood, declining to just over 5,900 units by the 2000 census - a loss of over 1,100 housing units.
- Vacancy has declined in the community from 25% of housing units vacant in 1980 to 17% vacancy in 2000, while the city average is 11%. This local decline can be at least partially attributed to a large number of demolitions and conversions of multi units into single family units in the community.
- Residents are mostly renters, with 60% of the population in rental housing and 40% of the community owning their own home, proportions exactly opposite the citywide averages of 60% homeowners and 40% renters.
- This area has only 0.6 vehicles available per household, compared to the city average of 0.9 vehicles per household.

munity over the last decade, including Doctor's Row, Artists Village, Universal Courts and Christian Street Apartments. Market rate housing development and new construction - previously unheard of - are now commonplace throughout much of the community. SOSNA was awarded a Targeted Basic Systems Repair Program grant in 2003 and has been awarding small grants to homeowners on 1900 Montrose, 2000 and 2100 Fitzwater, 2200 and 2300 Madison Square, 2000, 2100 and 2300 blocks of St Albans and the 2000, 2200 blocks of Catharine Street. The entire community has benefited from various real estate tax abatement programs, for both new construction and improvements to existing structures, offered by the city since 2000.

**Community Heritage, Arts and Culture**

Culturally significant landmarks have had mixed success in the community since 1995, although some promising recent development is cause for optimism. Revitalization of the Royal Theater has taken longer than anticipated and work after the unfortunate fire at the Naval Home is underway, but both projects are far from completion. At the Royal, much work has been done to stabilize the building envelope and structural and architectural evaluations are underway. The roof of the Naval Home has been replaced and further development of the site is ongoing. While some clubs, restaurants, retail and neighborhood serving businesses are located along the South Street West (of Broad Street) corridor, more work needs to be done before the district becomes a lively mix of regional attraction and local service establishments. The Brandywine Workshop, Jubilee Village, Odunde and other community-based organizations continue to do great work in support of arts and culture in the community. Brandywine, the Clef Club and the

High School for the Creative and Performing Arts have helped encourage the Avenue of the Arts to extend south of Pine Street. Development of the site at Broad and Pine will help to push the excitement of the arts district south to its terminus at Washington Avenue, also the site of a large development parcel.

**Commercial and Economic Development**

The health of the South Street West corridor is crucial to the future of the neighborhood, both for stability and desirability. The City has helped to support the corridor through substantial investment in street lighting, new curbs and sidewalks and signals. Some portions of the corridor remain underdeveloped, although recent investment in the community's housing stock seems poised to encourage more commercial investment. Street cleaning equipment was purchased by SOSNA in order to clean the South Street corridor, although it has remained dormant and unused without personnel to operate it. The South Street West Business Association is an important resource for local small businesspeople and continues its efforts to support the commercial corridor.

**Parks, Recreation and Open Space**

The community remains largely bereft of public open space and parkland, with the obvious exception of Marian Anderson Recreation Center, which is clearly a well-used facility. Recreation in private facilities, such as the Christian Street Y and area schools and schoolyards is critical to many community members and contributes to the strength of the area. Passive park space and green space are in short supply in the community and what little exists is being eroded through development. When the South Street Bridge is reconstructed, it will have

stairs and a ramp down to the extension of the Schuylkill River Park trail. This will substantially increase the community's access to the river park and trail system. Balancing access to open space, which supports healthy communities, with future development in this community will continue to be a challenge.

**Community Facilities and Support**

Marian Anderson Recreation Center is the only truly public recreation center in the community and is well used for activities, events, and sports. Support of the ongoing community use of this facility has been fairly good, given limited City support for such facilities and the City's dramatically reduced resources. Numerous area churches, the Christian Street YMCA and other organizations provide community space for meetings, activities, training and support for the community.

**Existing Conditions -  
Where We Are Now**

Many residents have long enjoyed the area's convenience to downtown for employment and entertainment and newer residents are being attracted by this proximity. The neighborhood is within walking distance of several of the City's largest employment centers, including Center City and University City. Additionally, the neighborhood is close to shopping, dining, culture and entertainment downtown. Location is one of the community's bedrock strengths and has contributed significantly to renewed interest in the neighborhood.

**Land Use and Zoning**

Much of the community is residential, although some light commercial activity is interspersed

throughout the interior. More intense commercial uses are along South and Broad Streets, while some warehousing, manufacturing and light industrial are located along Washington Avenue. Commercial uses along South Street tend to be service oriented, with cleaners, restaurants and other establishments, while the commercial on the interior of the neighborhood tends to be convenience retail goods.

Tying the neighborhood to the larger economic life of the city and region is the South Street Bridge connection to University City and as South Street crosses the Avenue of the Arts at Broad Street.

Functioning both as a boundary and gateway, offering a mix of neighborhood services, institutions and attractions, South Street continues to evolve and mature as the neighborhood experiences development. Washington Avenue continues to be a regional source for building materials, warehousing and wholesaling after a history as an industrial and manufacturing corridor.

**Housing**

Residential blocks in this area are almost exclusively made up of two and three story brick row structures coming right up to the street with small rear yards and alleys. Vacancy is a waning issue in the northern and western portions of the community, although the southern and eastern sections of the area still exhibit scattered vacancy and abandonment. New construction and rehabilitation soon will erase this remaining vacancy.

**Parks, Open Space and Recreation**

Marian Anderson Recreation Center at 17th and Fitzwater Streets and the YMCA at 1724 Christian Street are the only substantial recreation facilities



Top: Housing construction  
Bottom: Vacant Lot



Top: Historic Train Shed at 15th and Carpenter Streets

Bottom: Power generation plant at Christian Street and Grays Ferry Avenue

located within the community. Anderson Recreation Center has an indoor basketball gym, fitness center, meeting rooms and event spaces as well as outdoor basketball courts, a baseball diamond, batting cage and pool. The Christian Street YMCA has a deep water indoor pool, gym, and fitness center as well as numerous childcare programs, including after school, summer camp and weekend programs. Three charter schools use the gym as home court for basketball games and practice, while the fitness center has over 400 adult members making use of the facility and taking classes like pilates, aerobics and strength training. A community garden is being constructed behind the facility until the space is needed for expansion. Children attending programs are encouraged to grow plants in the garden and enjoy the garden space.

Although several community gardens have sprung up on privately owned vacant lots throughout the community, there is no centrally located park with green space open for public enjoyment. While they can be seen and enjoyed from outside, most of the community gardens are fenced in and not available for public use. As more development occurs in this dense community, lack of green space will continue to be a challenge.

#### **Commercial / Retail**

Although the residential portions of the neighborhood are often home to corner commercial establishments, much of the commercial and retail activity continues to be concentrated along the South Street, Broad Street and Washington Avenue corridors in increasingly automobile oriented patterns. While much of the South Street Corridor is zoned for commercial uses, residential uses have moved into the

area through zoning variance. Consumer oriented goods and services include personal service, cleaners, corner bars and restaurants and some specialty retail.

#### **Industrial**

Much of the land along Washington Avenue is zoned for industrial use. Many businesses along the avenue, from Broad to 25th Street, are design and construction related, with several tile, masonry, and building materials supply stores located alongside kitchen design stores. Roofing supply houses, fabrication shops, automobile oriented business and warehousing round out the mix of businesses along Washington Avenue. This unique and complementary mix of uses has a character all its own and provides an important set of suppliers for nearby construction and renovation.

#### **Institutions**

Numerous institutions thrive in the community, including many churches, a hospital and several schools. Many of these institutions help reinforce the fabric, character and economic base of the community, both through their facilities and programs and as employers. Several notable churches in the community have not only beautiful and historic facilities, but also are important to the cultural history of the neighborhood.

#### **Streets, Circulation and Transportation**

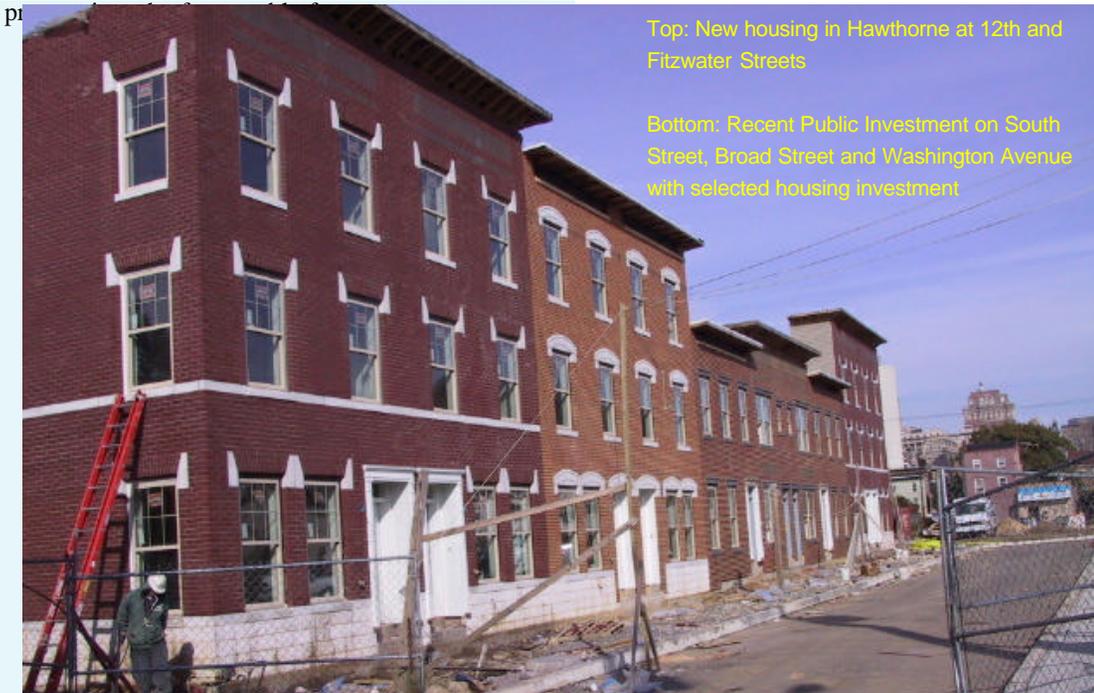
The community is well positioned for workers who are employed in Center City, University City and South Philadelphia. The neighborhood is walkable, with predictable traffic patterns, generally slow speeds and interstections that are easy to cross. Washington Avenue was recently improved, with

sidewalk extensions (bump outs) at the intersections to shorten crossing distances. Bicyclists can make their way around the area with ease on most streets. Interstate 76 lies just over the South Street Bridge and AMTRAK's 30th Street Station is not far. SEPTA's Broad Street subway and routes 2, 12, 17 and 7 pass through the neighborhood on north-south streets, giving direct access to the Center City business district as well as North Philadelphia.

**Recent Public Investment - Housing**

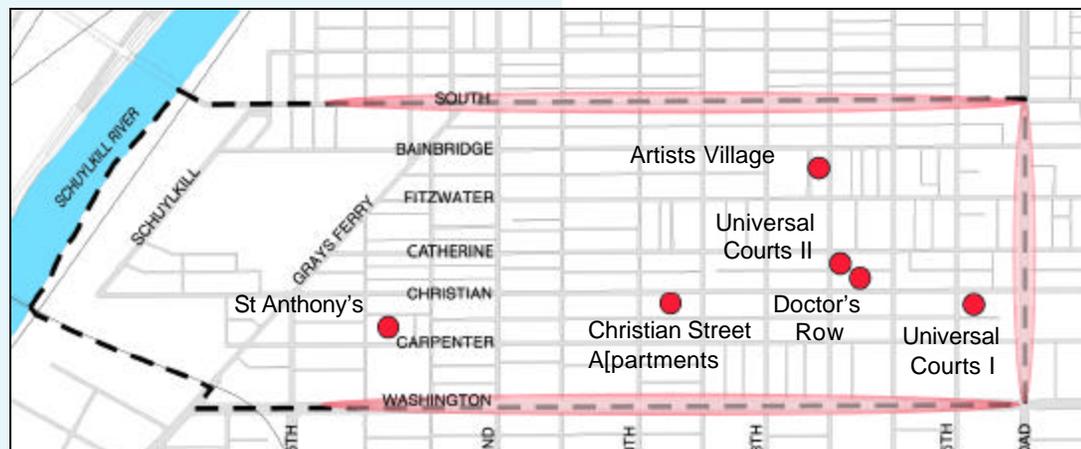
The eastern section of the neighborhood, which has been particularly hard-hit by housing vacancy and deterioration, has seen the bulk of recent publicly funded housing redevelopment. Several developments have been built in this area, mostly involving partnerships between Universal Companies, SOSNA and private developers. In the western portion, the Greater St. Matthews CDC is contemplating the construction of new and rehabilitated homes.

Another housing investment undertaken by the public sector is the ongoing redevelopment of the Martin Luther King, Jr. public housing site at 13th and Fitzwater Streets. While this location is outside of the immediate study area, the redevelopment has clearly encouraged new investment and housing rehabilitation in the eastern part of the community close to Broad Street. The redevelopment is a Department of Housing and Urban Development HOPE VI funded project through a partnership between the Philadelphia Housing Authority and Universal Companies. The replacement housing has encouraged investment in nearby neighborhoods and removed the blighting influence of the deteriorated towers, now demolished. The easternmost portions of South of South will continue to benefit from this



Top: New housing in Hawthorne at 12th and Fitzwater Streets

Bottom: Recent Public Investment on South Street, Broad Street and Washington Avenue with selected housing investment



## Section Three: Neighborhood Analysis



Above: Carpenter Street

This section focuses on neighborhood elements including the mix and appropriateness of land uses, transportation, recreation, the appearance of private and public space, retail districts and community services. In addition to comparing neighborhood conditions with planning standards that indicate good communities, information used in the analysis came from community workshops, staff studies and resident questionnaires. Citywide and neighborhood trends, proposed private developments and previous plans were also reviewed as part of this effort.

### What Makes a Good Neighborhood?

If we want to develop neighborhoods that will be great places to live throughout the 21st Century, we need to understand and be able to describe and measure the basic elements that define good neighborhoods - homes in good condition, good transit, quality shopping, nearby playgrounds and libraries, adequate parking and safe streets. The City Planning Commission staff gathered standards from many places, including our own past studies, national organizations like the American Library Association and from surveys of Philadelphia residents. Planning standards can provide a consistent basis for determining community need and measuring program success. They let us know if things are improving or not.

The Planning Commission established standards in the following areas:

- Housing
- Retail Services
- Transportation
- Community Services
- Environmental
- Public Safety

South of South is meeting some of the standards, but not all. This is indicative of the neighborhood's advantages and strengths.

Standards are being met or exceeded in these areas:

- Transit Access
- Highway Access
- Library Facilities
- Recreation Centers
- Neighborhood Retail Services
- Fire-Fighting Facilities

However, conditions need to be improved to meet standards in several key areas. The specific standards where South of South needs improvement include:

- Community appearance
- Housing condition
- Housing stock (features and amenities of the homes)
- Housing vacancy
- Condition of sidewalks in residential and commercial areas
- Tax delinquency
- Parking
- Parkland
- Public Safety
- School facilities

**Neighborhood Issues**

**Housing Conditions**

Housing conditions are improving rapidly in the community. While vacant and abandoned buildings do exist in the community, strong real estate values and active construction point to the rehabilitation of blighted properties in the foreseeable future. Vacancy is on the decline in the community.

**Land Use Conflicts**

The southern edge of this neighborhood has historically contained industrial facilities in close proximity to residential blocks. These homes were constructed close to employment and workers often walked to these factories and warehouses from nearby homes. Though much of Washington Avenue has become more commercial than industrial in recent years, there remains an abrupt transition from these uses to residential blocks to the north. Many homes face the rear of Washington Avenue stores and warehouses, where loading occurs and dumpsters are kept. Similar land-use conflicts can be found at the western end of Christian Street. As redevelopment occurs in this section of the community, it will be critical to ensure that friction is minimized between the larger commercial land uses such as warehousing and distribution and the surrounding residential community.

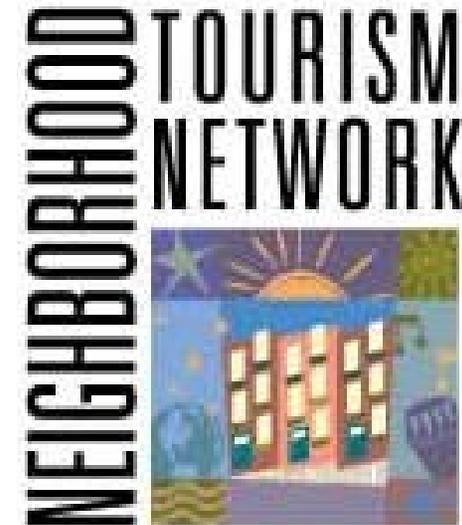
**Access to Parks and Recreation**

The neighborhood does not contain any public parks and a substantial portion of the neighborhood is not even within a comfortable walking distance of any public park. While portions of the neighborhood are within a half mile of Center City parks such as Rittenhouse Square, Fidler Square and Schuylkill River Park, the community does not have substantial

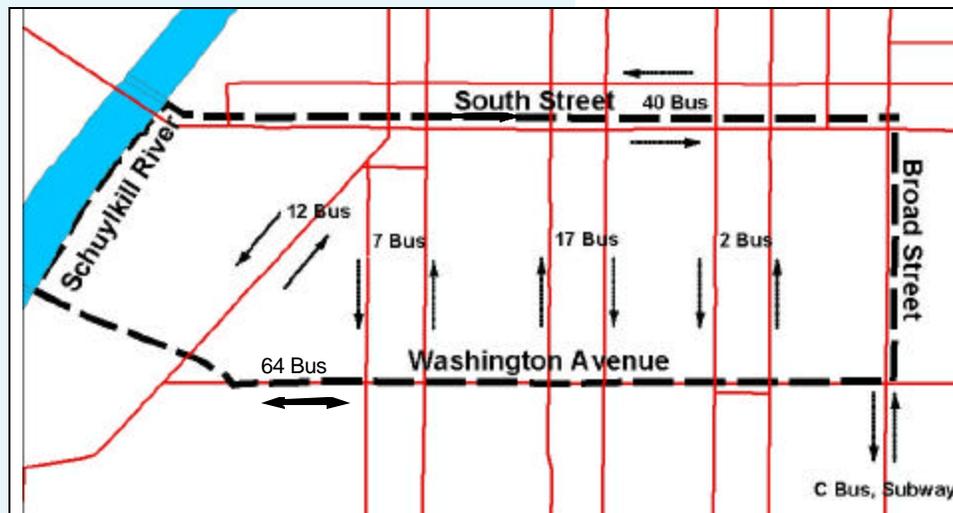
green park space of its own. Some areas are within 1/2 mile of Chew Playground in the Point Breeze neighborhood, but residents must traverse the pedestrian-unfriendly industrial zone along Washington Avenue to get to it. Providing open space and greening in the community is likely to continue to be a challenge for the neighborhood, especially in light of recent interest in building housing on vacant land.

**Streets and Public Transportation**

As indicated in the map below, the community is well served by public transportation, with both bus and subway service available. Generally, traffic congestion on the streets is not a problem in this area, with many intersections still controlled by stop signs. Narrow, one-way streets and short blocks help ensure traffic stays relatively calm throughout the area. Christian Street has some areas of special concern near facilities that are used by school age children like the YMCA, Stanton School and St



Top: Neighborhood Tourism brochure  
Bottom: SEPTA Transit throughout the area





Charles Borromeo Church.

**Traffic and Parking**

Industrial buildings along Washington Avenue were originally designed for access to freight rail lines that once ran along Washington Avenue. Today, the remaining industrial and commercial buildings are served by trucks, which often must load at the fronts of the buildings, blocking traffic on Washington Avenue. Parking is becoming tighter in the community as more vacancies are reoccupied. Traffic congestion is generally not a problem, but loading and unloading along Washington Avenue can cause safety problems and truck movement through the residential areas of the community is undesirable.

**Quality of Shopping**

Residents expressed concern about the lack of quality retail and restaurant establishments through the interior of the community, although clearly many such places exist along the South Street business corridor. The community has access to several grocery stores in relatively close proximity, although they tend to be at the edges of the neighborhood. Recent years have seen the establishment of several new retail stores along South Street, and a much-anticipated bank is locating at 19th and South. With increasing numbers of homes being rehabilitated, new business investment should follow. Careful management of new retail commercial in the community can augment the options available to residents.

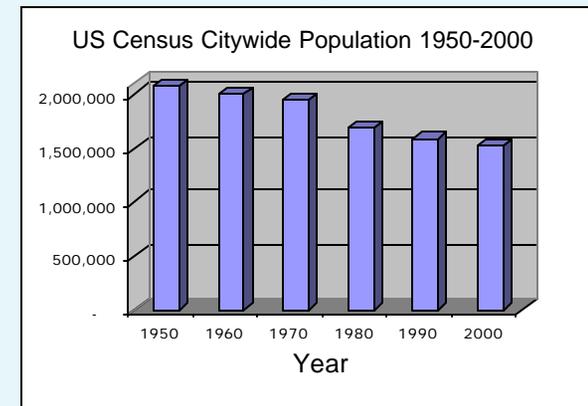
**Community Resources**

The neighborhood has many organizations providing a wealth of services to residents, including Odunde, SOSNA, Universal Companies, Marian Anderson

Recreation Center and Marian Anderson Home and Museum. The area’s many churches, Greater Saint Matthew’s CDC, SOSNA CDC (with its new funding stream), the South Street West Business Association, Jubilee Village and Brandywine Workshop all enrich the opportunities available to residents.

**Citywide Trends - Population Loss**

While the city continues losing population overall, the South of South community seems to have turned the corner. The 2000 census indicates that population loss had slowed to 1% between 1990 and 2000 from a loss of 14% between 1980 and 1990. With ongoing rehabilitation of large numbers of houses



and new construction in evidence throughout the community within the last two years, population seems poised to grow. Unfortunately, the city has experienced a dramatic decline in population and tax base, making substantial new investment in communities a difficult proposition. Maintaining current infrastructure and services - streets, trash removal, public safety, parks and recreation facilities, libraries and the like has become more of a challenge. As the population of the city declined, financial support for



Top: Marian Anderson Recreation Center, 17th and Fitzwater Streets

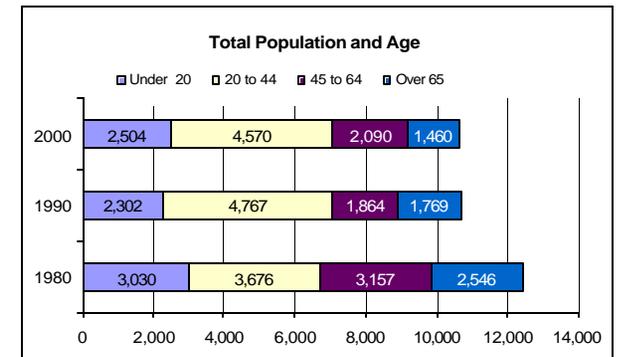
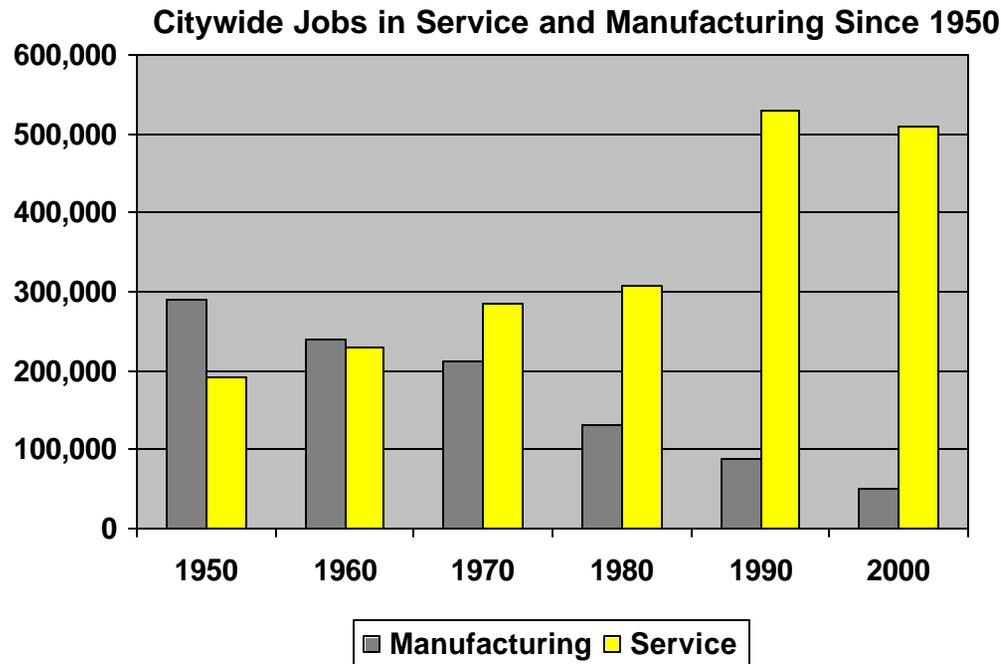
Bottom: Corner garden at 22nd and Catharine Streets

existing facilities and services was diminished. Like empty-nesters in large homes often have under-used rooms, the city has under-used facilities because of population loss.

**Decline of Manufacturing Industry**

Neighborhoods citywide have witnessed the loss of larger manufacturing establishments that were the foundation upon which many residential communities were established, providing employment for residents. South of South is no exception, having lost many of the industries that employed large numbers of residents who walked to work. Companies lining

Washington Avenue have departed along with the railroad cars that used to line the street. No longer is there a working waterfront along the Schuylkill River that might employ community members. While the process of transition from a manufacturing economy to a more service based economy has been painful for South of South, the community seems to have weathered the storm and emerged largely intact.



Top: Washington Avenue

Bottom: South of South total population and age information from the 2000 Census

Left: Citywide manufacturing and service jobs since 1950

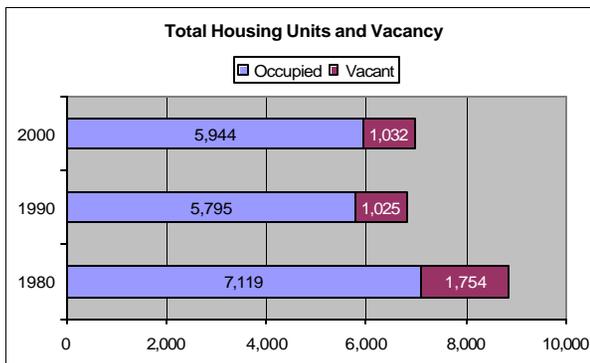
## Section Four: Recommendations

### Assets

Location - central and convenient  
 Diversity - people and place  
 Housing - varied and a good value  
 Civic life - active and friendly  
 Vacancy - declining  
 Investment - public and private  
 Movement - accessible and easy

### Challenges

Open Space and green space - scarce and declining  
 Development - rising values hurt some  
 Cleanliness - streets sidewalks, alleys  
 Parking - on street/off street/ garages  
 Significant development sites - Royal, Naval Home, JFK School, Broad Street, Washington Avenue  
 Lack of local commercial offerings  
 Loading and deliveries - Washington Avenue



Above and Middle: Community Comments

Bottom: Total housing units and vacancy since 1980 in South of South

### Housing

Housing development in the community is ongoing, with a mix of affordable and market rate units in projects with a wide range of sizes, from multi-unit projects to single-family homes being renovated by their occupants. Interest in preserving the mix of housing in the community, both in terms of affordability and tenure (own or rent), has been voiced throughout the planning process. Fortunately, programs and organizations working in the community are in place that will help to shore up the community's diversity of housing stock. Between housing development and programs like the Targeted Basic Systems Repair Program, PHILoan, Home Repair Program, Homestart and various tax abatements, there is substantial assistance, both public and private, flowing into this community for housing.

#### Goal:

**Eliminate substantial pockets of vacancy and neglect within the community.**

#### Strategy:

**Encourage a broad mix of housing types throughout the community, including rental and ownership units in a range of prices.**

Building upon the diversity of the existing housing stock will help ensure the vitality of the community moving into the future.

#### Strategy:

**Support affordable housing in the community, especially where long term vacant properties are reused.**

Affordability is a concern for the community as

more market interest drives up real estate prices. Supporting affordable housing in the community should be a priority where feasible.

#### Strategy:

**Support market rate housing investment in the neighborhood - it improves the value of the neighborhood.**

Housing investment in the neighborhood is important to residents who are also investors in the community. New housing development in the community will help to ensure long term vitality.

#### Goal:

**Support residents who wish to remain within the community**

#### Strategy:

**Promote and target existing housing revitalization programs**

Many residents of the community have weathered much change and provide an important foundation for the community. They should be encouraged to remain in the community and to make use of existing programs that help support them.

### Community Heritage

While the community is rich with history, it is not an asset that currently is providing much benefit to the community. With a strong historic tourism program that helped to highlight the community's significant artistic and cultural contributions over time, there could be much benefit. The Greater Philadelphia Tourism and Marketing Corporation may have some programs that could help the community to capital-

ize further on its rich cultural assets through neighborhood tourism.

**Culturally Significant Landmarks**

South of South is particularly fortunate to possess several historically certified buildings and a variety of architectural styles. Examples of certified buildings include the three garden blocks of St. Albans Place and Madison Square. Christian Street contains many large, ornate homes that, while not historically certified, possess architectural significance. Other significant landmarks are the Royal Theater, the Naval Home and the numerous beautiful churches in the community. Development in the community should retain as much as possible the historic fabric of existing buildings, even if they are not locally protected through listing. Projects reusing historically certified buildings should also be aware of the tax credits that are available for income producing investments in historically certified structures.

**Goal:**

**Capitalize on the rich history in the community**

**Strategy:**

**Enliven the Avenue of the Arts along Broad Street to Washington Avenue**

Encouraging the Avenue of the Arts would bring into being a vibrant community edge along Broad Street. Activating the corridor all the way to Washington Avenue with arts and arts-related uses would make the community a more exciting place. The expansion of Brandywine Workshop, the theater development at Pine and Broad, and the vacant development site at Broad and Washington are ways to extend to the south the vibrance of the Avenue of the Arts.

**Strategy:**

**Celebrate community heritage and history by highlighting historic figures who called this community home.**

While neighborhood tours do pass through this area, more can be done to ensure that the community is celebrated and more benefit can flow to locals if better signage were installed and more information was available. Marian Anderson is an example of an important historic figure in the community’s history.

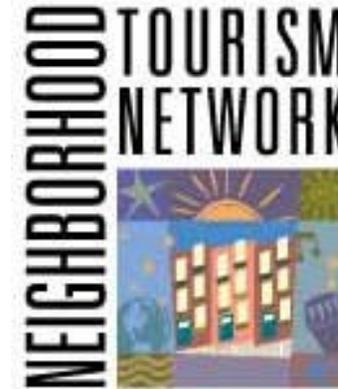
**Strategy:**

**Develop the Royal Theater as an anchor destination.**

The Royal Theater is an important landmark along South Street and should be brought back into productive use. It will require some creativity to develop an appropriate project for the site, but clearly it is a crucial site and could be a catalyst for further development along South Street West. It should not sit vacant while the neighborhood develops around it. Desirable uses should attract people to the area without undue congestion and should be consistent throughout the day, ensuring a constant flow of activity.

**Commercial and Economic Development**

South Street has historically been a shopping area for the communities located both to the north and to the south. The ominous threat and land acquisition by the city to advance the Crosstown Expressway proposal (eventually defeated) ensured that this business strip would struggle for decades. The combination of a lack of investment and a transitional economy caused the deterioration of this and many other

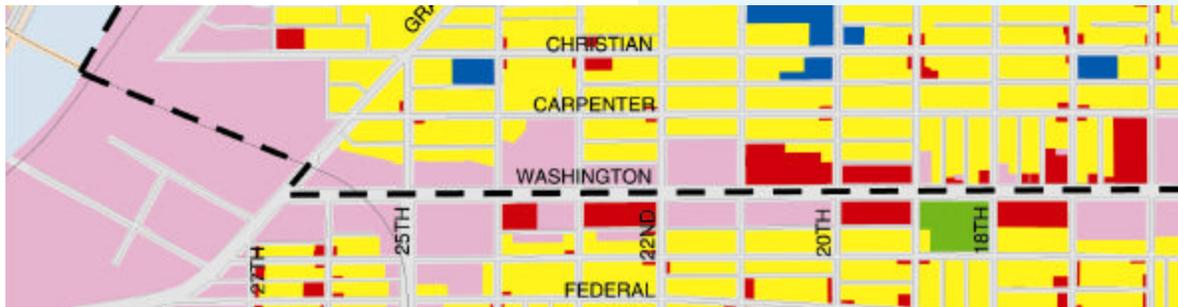


Top: Neighborhood Tourism Network logo  
 Bottom: The Royal Theater on South Street



Top: South Street storefronts

Bottom: Washington Avenue Zoning. Pink colors are industrial classifications, red are commercial and yellow are residential.



commercial locations in the community, such as Washington Avenue, Broad Street and corner convenience retail. Where opportunities exist to reinforce the pedestrian nature of the community through retail development, infill type development would help establish a critical mass of commercial activity within existing nodes. Along South Street, infill near existing stores around 22nd/23rd and 15th through 19th Streets would help to shore up the character and function of these business districts. Former corner commercial locations could be reactivated in the neighborhood to meet any further needs. While the neighborhood grows and changes, additional consumer oriented establishments should be sensitively introduced, both along South Street and at smaller commercial locations.

**Goal:**  
**Reintroduce commercial activity where practical and reasonable in the neighborhood to support the needs of area residents**

**Strategy:**  
**Encourage commercial use where it supports residential activity.**

Many of the corner commercial locations in the community have become residential over the years. Reactivating these locations, perhaps with convenience retail, would help support nearby residents.

**Strategy:**  
**Continue to improve public spaces and streetscape in commercial areas along South Street, Washington Avenue and Broad Street**

South Street, Broad Street and Washington Avenue have all been dramatically improved over the last five years and these improvements should be continued and managed into the future. As major thoroughfares and places of significance they should be well tended. Street lights, new paving and striping are only some of the improvements to streets like South Street. Broad Street and Washington Avenue are other examples that have been improved in recent years with curb bump-outs for pedestrians and new lighting, surfacing and striping. Maintaining these streets to ensure they are clean and litter free is crucial to their upkeep.

**Strategy:**  
**Buffer incompatible land uses in the neighborhood, particularly in commercial areas.**

As the neighborhood redevelops over time, land uses that are conflicting may arise near one another. Buffers, like the green strip behind Graduate Hospital's parking deck, can be an effective way to ensure that minimal problems arise from incompatible land uses. Areas where this is appropriate would be along Washington Avenue and near large unsightly installations like the power transformers at Schuylkill Avenue. Plantings and other kinds of

buffers would make this environment more comfortable for pedestrians.

**Strategy:**

**Examine zoning along Washington Avenue and at the River’s edge.**

Recent changes along Washington Avenue and along the riverfront may warrant a reexamination of the industrial zoning of those areas. The Planning Commission’s zoning remapping program can guide the community through the process of remapping.

**Strategy:**

**Market Washington Avenue as the “Avenue of Applied Arts” or a “Design Zone”**

Clearly the character of Washington Avenue has evolved over time. Supporting existing businesses by highlighting the design, construction and craft related businesses located there would help improve business and help cement an identity.

**Parks, Recreation and Open Space**

Older, densely developed places need more green space to be competitive with growing cities and suburbs. Green space is critical to the quality of life that attracts new residents and keeps existing residents as well as improves air quality, water quality, saves energy and mitigates urban heat. Improved parks can anchor neighborhood revitalization and provide economic stability. Improved open space can make commercial areas more attractive to customers. Trails can provide alternative transportation and health benefits.

The South of South neighborhood contains several

garden plots that have been maintained by residents for years. In a neighborhood without sufficient access to greenspace, these gardens might provide opportunities for conversion to public parks. Options that enhance the greenspace available in the community will need to be explored. Some possibilities include publicly owned property, schools and private institutions that may lend themselves to increasing green space in the neighborhood.

The neighborhood abuts a section of riverfront that is currently separated from the rest of the neighborhood by railroad tracks and the John F. Kennedy Center. The Schuylkill River Development Corporation (SRDC) has produced a vision for the portion of the Schuylkill River between Fairmount Park and the Delaware River. SRDC has worked with communities and stakeholders along the river to produce a series of short-term and long-term recommendations for future redevelopment along this river, including the section forming the western border of South of South. The northern arm of the Schuylkill River Park has been recently completed, bringing much of the Fairmount Park system closer to the neighborhood, with entrances only blocks to the north - this success can be replicated south of the South Street Bridge.

**Goal:**

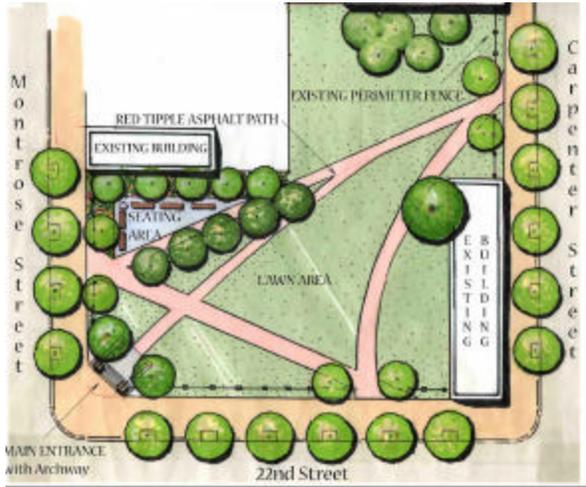
**Increase green space and open space in the community wherever possible.**

**Strategy:**

**Engourage the preservation of neighborhood open space through land acquisition where appropriate.**



Top: Power equipment at Christian and Taney Streets  
Bottom: JFK Vocational Technical Education Center



Top: Conceptual Park Design at 20th and Catharine Streets  
 Bottom: Loading along Washington Avenue

The community has benefitted over the last decades from ‘found’ open space. This vacant land is being developed in many cases and the relief provided by these temporary open spaces is being eroded. Careful acquisition of land for public open space where appropriate would benefit the existing and new residents of the community.

**Strategy:**  
**Build a small community park in the community – perhaps at 22nd and Carpenter Streets.**

This collection of lots along 22nd Street is a good location for a park. The property has already been fenced, cleaned and greened through the Neighborhood Transformation Initiative and much of the property is in public control.

**Strategy:**  
**Green the neighborhood through street trees, flower boxes, planters and other treatments.**

Carefully employing street tree plantings, flower boxes and other forms of smaller greenery would dramatically increase the amount of vegetation in the community and would provide significant benefit for residents.

**Strategy:**  
**Close the 2200 block of Grays Ferry Ave to cars and expand the small pocket park that currently exists – perhaps outdoor seating and tables could be installed, creating a kind of plaza or sitting space.**

This small stretch of roadway is already part of the public right of way, but provides no benefit beyond

parking. With the right furnishings and plantings placed where the street is, the sitting park could be expanded.

**Goal:**  
**Connect the community to the Schuylkill River.**

**Strategy:**  
**Use redevelopment to make a stronger connection with the river.**

As the former Naval Home is redeveloped and the John F. Kennedy Center is poised to change hands, the community can make a stronger link to its riverfront. Replacement of the South Street Bridge will construct ramps and stairs to the riverfront trail for improved access. While narrow, the trail provides a wealth of opportunity for walking, running, and biking.

### Community Facilities and Support

Many longstanding members of the community are active in local institutions, like churches, clubs and other organizations. These institutions should be supported to improve the services they deliver.

**Goal:**  
**Help neighborhood institutions thrive.**

**Strategy:**  
**Continue to improve and support both public and private recreation centers.**

The Marian Anderson Recreation Center is programmed to receive small capital improvements and can continue to be an important public resource for the community. Private community facilities should

also be encouraged as they provide services for the neighborhood.

### Transportation

South of South was designed for pedestrians and horse carriages prior to the invention of the automobile. The area's buildings are placed close to narrow streets, well served by mass transit and within walking distance of employment and retail services. This may be the neighborhood's bedrock strength and one of the reasons for renewed interest. New street lighting on South Street and South Broad Street has improved light levels on the sidewalk and increased safety for both cars and pedestrians. This community is well served by transit, with bus and subway lines passing through the area as well as bike trails and, eventually, the Schuylkill River Park Trail.

**Goal:**

**Enhance mobility in the neighborhood.**

**Strategy:**

**Reinforce the use of public transportation, walking, bicycling and carpooling**

Benches, trash cans, shelter and bike racks are among the small street elements that support and increase use of neighborhood transportation.

**Strategy:**

**Support Philly CarShare, a car sharing service seeking to expand mobility efficiently**

This service allows people to rent cars at low rates for short periods of time. Households that belong to Philly CarShare can get by with owning fewer cars.



Existing small sitting park

Top Left: Philly CarShare logo  
 Top Right: Existing park at Grays Ferry Ave and 23rd Street  
 Bottom: Expanded park at same location

Residents of this community are strong candidates who might find Philly CarShare a helpful service that reduces their need for a personal auto and also helps reduce congestion and parking problems on the street. Including CarShare locations in the neighborhood will help support the reduction of car use and expand parking opportunities for the future.

**Strategy:**  
**Retain street parking**

Working with developers to ensure that street parking is retained while off street parking is provided for new units will be a challenge for the future. Where possible, off street spaces should be provided for new units without removing street spaces.

**Strategy:**  
**Explore traffic calming strategies in areas of the community with speeding or dangerous intersection problems**

**Strategy:**  
**Enforce parking and loading regulations**

Parking and loading regulations are intended to protect traffic flow and safety and to fairly allocate the scarce resource of curb space. When these regulations are not enforced traffic congestion, poor visibility and other problems develop.

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