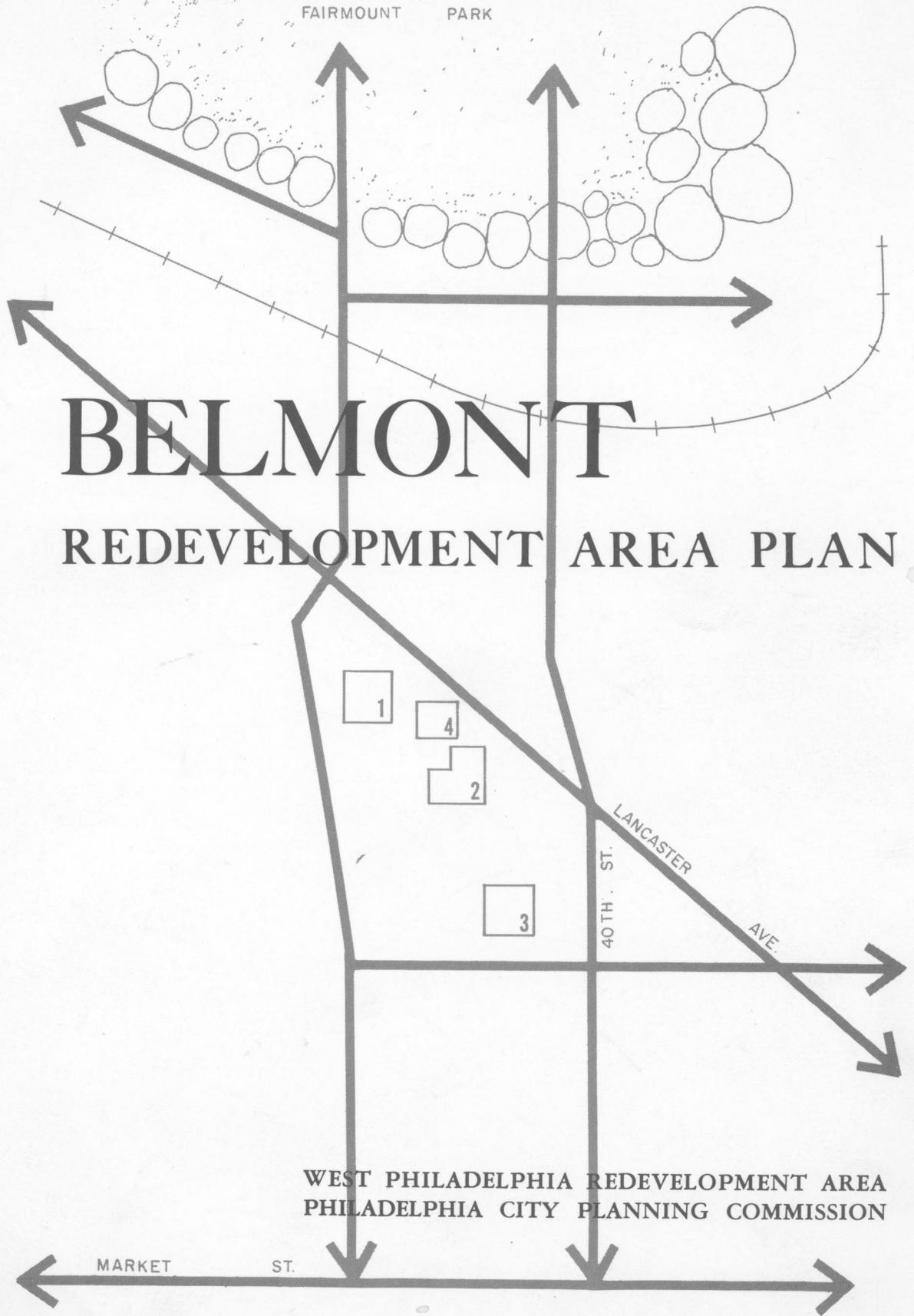


FAIRMOUNT PARK



BELMONT

REDEVELOPMENT AREA PLAN

WEST PHILADELPHIA REDEVELOPMENT AREA
PHILADELPHIA CITY PLANNING COMMISSION



CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

PHILADELPHIA CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
13th Floor, City Hall Annex
S. E. Cor., Juniper & Filbert Sts., Philadelphia, Pa. 19107
MU 6-9700

BERNARD C. MELTZER
Chairman

R. DAMON CHILDS
Executive Director

February 8, 1972

Dr. F. Bruce Baldwin, Jr.
Chairman
Redevelopment Authority
of the City of Philadelphia
11th Floor, City Hall Annex
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19107

Dear Dr. Baldwin:

Transmitted herewith is the Belmont Redevelopment Area Plan which has been prepared by the City Planning Commission in accordance with the provisions of the Urban Redevelopment Law of May 24, 1945, P. L. 991, as amended. The Belmont Area is a part of the certified West Philadelphia Redevelopment Area.

The Belmont Redevelopment Area Plan includes the area generally bounded by 40th Street, Powelton and Lancaster Avenues and Penn Central Railroad on the east, Market Street on the south, 46th Street, Haverford Avenue, 44th Street and Belmont Avenue on the west, and Parkside and Girard Avenues on the north. This plan is in general conformity with the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan for the City of Philadelphia dated May 1960 as amended; and was approved by the City Planning Commission at its meeting of February 8, 1972.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bernard C. Meltzer".

Bernard C. Meltzer
Chairman

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
EXISTING CONDITIONS	2
EXISTING LAND USE & BOUNDARIES	4
PUBLIC USE & TRANSPORTATION	6
PROPOSED LAND USE	7
ILLUSTRATIVE SITE PLAN	8
EXISTING ZONING	9
PROPOSED STANDARDS OF DENSITY, LAND COVERAGE & BUILDING INTENSITY	9
PROPOSED STREET CHANGES	9
REHOUSING OF DISPLACED FAMILIES	10
ESTIMATED COST OF ACQUISITION	10
CONTROLS	10

INTRODUCTION

The Belmont Area is a residential community in West Philadelphia bordered by the Mantua Area on the east, the Mill Creek Area on the west, Fairmount Park on the north and Market Street on the south. Although the area remains predominantly residential with an active strip of commercial use on Lancaster Avenue, it is threatened by several concentrations of blight which have extended into residential blocks and may continue to spread if not checked.

The Certification of the West Philadelphia Redevelopment Area on August 20, 1963 in accordance with the provisions of the Urban Redevelopment Law, and the preparation of this Redevelopment Area Plan are the first steps toward the initiation of a city program of federally—aided renewal in this area.

This plan has been developed in close cooperation with three Belmont community groups: Concerned Community Council, Belmont Area Residents Concerned, and the Fairmount Park Civic Association.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

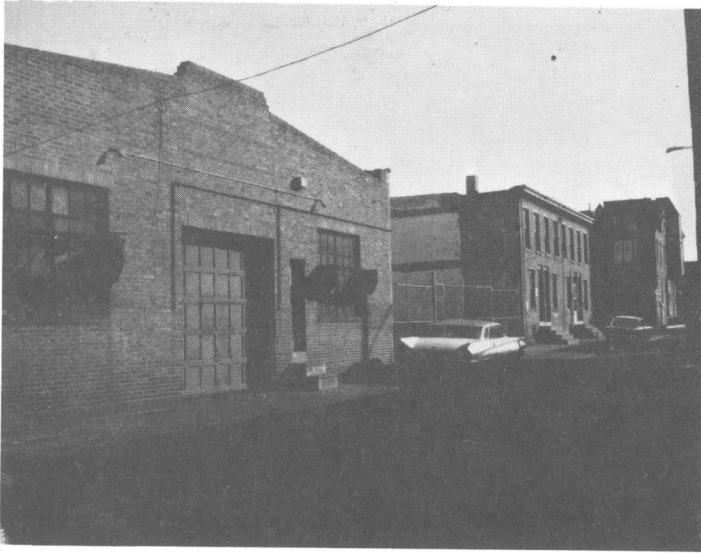
On August 20, 1963, the City Planning Commission certified that the following characteristics existed which warranted the designation of West Philadelphia as a Redevelopment Area.

- a. Unsafe, unsanitary, inadequate, or overcrowded conditions of certain buildings.
- b. Inadequate planning of the area
- c. Excessive land coverage
- d. Lack of proper light, air and open space
- e. Faulty street layout
- f. Defective design and arrangement of buildings
- g. Economically or socially undesirable land uses.

The Belmont Area is a portion of the West Philadelphia Redevelopment Area and contains many of the characteristics which warranted the certification of the West Philadelphia Redevelopment Area.

There have been no major programs undertaken during the last decade to substantially improve or eliminate the substandard conditions which were found to exist. Additionally, due to the low and moderate income level of the Belmont community, private redevelopment has been quite sparse.

Photographs on the following pages show examples of the deterioration of some of the existing buildings in the area, the obsolete design and layout of the industrial properties, and the undesirable juxtaposition of certain land uses. The worst areas of blight have been caused by the intrusion of incompatible industrial and commercial uses into residential neighborhoods. Examples of this can be found in the area of Haverford Avenue and Budd Street, the 4100 Block of Powelton Avenue, the 900 Block of North 41st Street, and 42nd and Leidy Streets. The commercial uses behind the storefronts on Lancaster Avenue also tend to deteriorate the adjacent residential areas. This is a common condition on both the north and the south sides of Lancaster Avenue.



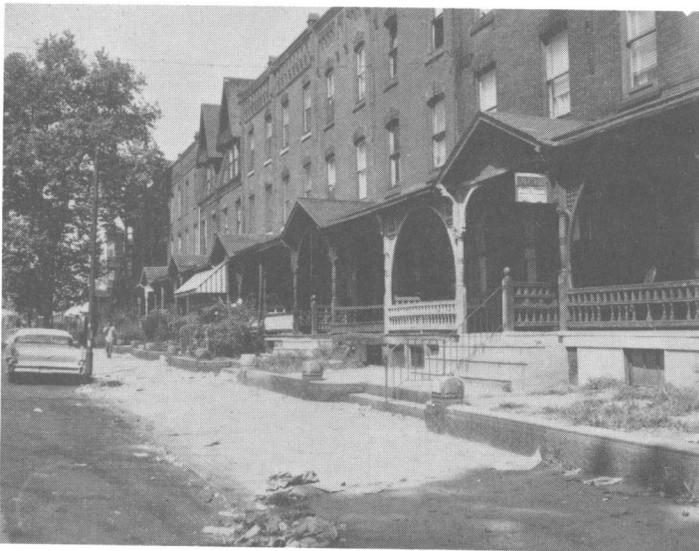
Industrial intrusion in residential areas



Vacant commercial building



Industry with street loading



Lack of adequate street lighting, and landscaping



Unsafe, unsanitary conditions

Vacant Lots . . .

Vacant, Abandoned
Structures.



The only two public open spaces serving the 25,619 people in this community are the Lee Center at 44th Street and Haverford Avenue and the small recreation area at 28th Street and Wyalusing Avenue. The two elementary schools, the Belmont School and the Leidy School, have undeveloped (asphalt) recreation facilities, although the physical space is available. These facilities are not adequate to meet the recreation needs of the area.

According to the 1970 Census of Housing, there were 7831 dwelling units in this area. Several of these are in deteriorating or dilapidated condition.

The 1970 Census figures reflect many of the problems of the area:

	Belmont	%	Citywide Area
1. Population	25,619		1,948,609
2. No. of Housing Units	7,831		673,524
3. No. of Housing Units Owner-Occupied	3,156	37%	57%
4. Avg. Value - Owner Occupied Units	\$7,000		\$11,967
5. Avg. Rent - Renter Occupied Units	\$64.00		\$91.00
6. No. of Housing Units Vacant	726	9%	5%
7. No. of Housing Units Vacant/Not Available	323	4%	2%

If the blighting influences cited above are permitted to remain, they will undoubtedly continue to spread and to discourage the maintenance of a sound residential community. If these same blighted areas can be replaced with the assistance of redevelopment action including recreation facilities, retail shopping and good housing, a desirable residential area can be encouraged and strengthened.

EXISTING LAND USE AND BOUNDARIES

The Belmont Plan covers the area described within the following boundaries:

South: Market Street between 40th Street & 46th Street

E a s t: 40th Street to Powelton Avenue, Powelton Avenue to Lancaster Avenue, Lancaster Avenue to 40th Street, 40th Street to Main Line Branch of Penn Central Railroad and the Main Line Branch to a Connector east of 40th Street leading to the Belmont Branch of Penn Central Railroad.

North: Girard Avenue to Parkside Avenue and Parkside Avenue to Belmont Avenue.

West: Belmont Avenue to 44th Street, 44th Street to Haverford Avenue, Haverford Avenue and 46th Street to Market Street.

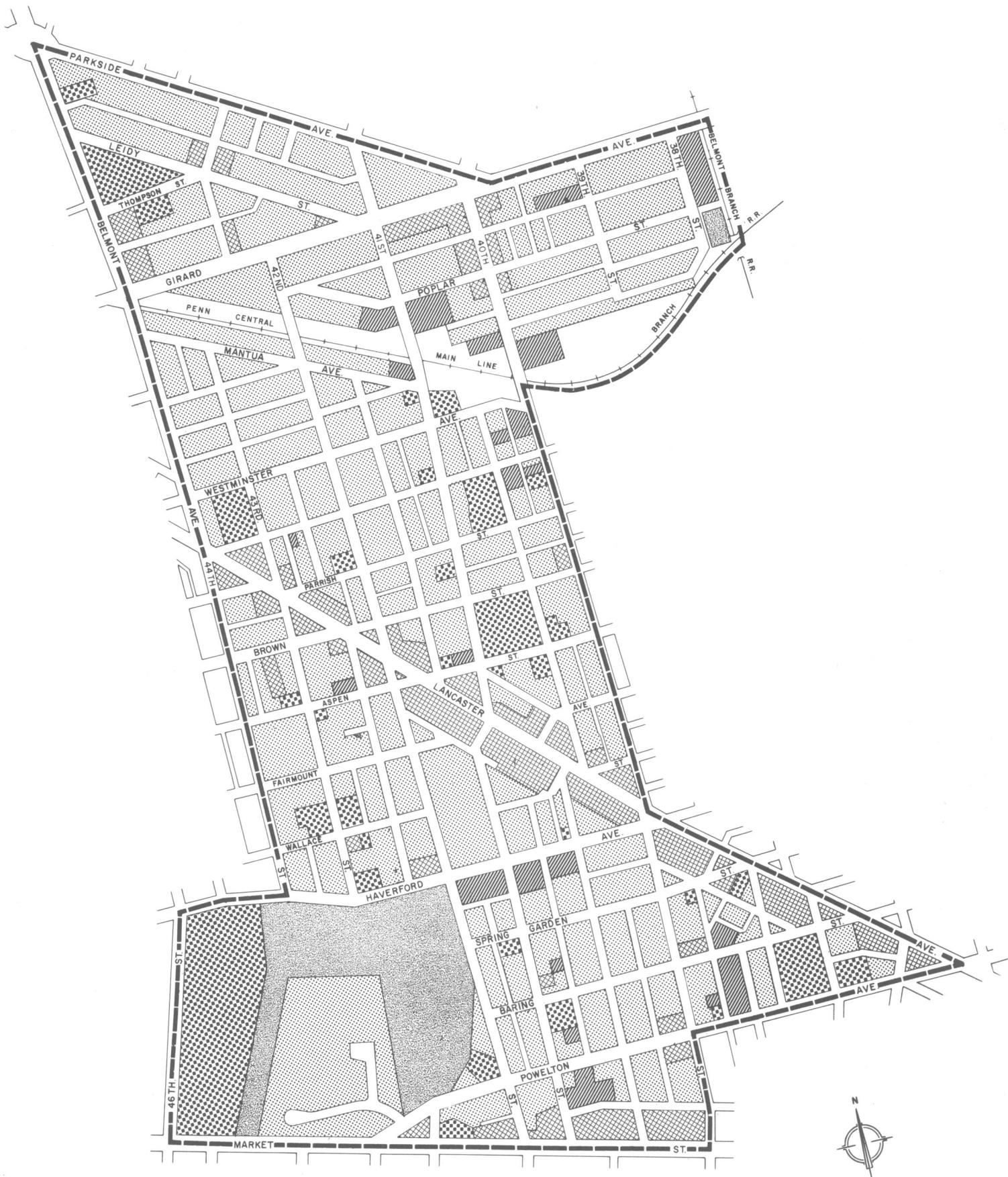
A survey of existing land uses shows the high proportion of residential land in Belmont, even with the intrusion of commercial and industrial activities. More than 300 acres (or 65%) of the total 460 acres of land are in residential use. A large part of this is single-family row housing that has been well maintained despite the monotony of a grid-iron street pattern and a lack of such amenities as shade trees and play yards.

At the present time, almost all retail commercial activities are located in structures also containing dwelling units. Where these mixed residential and commercial uses occur on arterial streets and at important intersections, they often reflect an attempt to serve the neighborhood or community shopping needs. Too often however, the large number of residential conversions indicates an uneconomical excess of commercially used property.

Much of the land shown in the commercial land-use category is not used by retail shops alone. Filling stations, automobile service establishments, parking garages, wholesaling activities and junkyards are the major commercial land uses.

Industries in the area cover a wide range of activities, from the manufacturing of precision instruments to automobile wrecking. Some industrial plants are well maintained and are quite compatible with residential neighbors while others emit noxious odors, use residential streets for truck loading, and are visually so objectionable as to blight entire blocks. A large portion of Belmont's commercial land use is suffering from a lack of demand and consequent vacancies have had a blighting influence in the following three areas: Lancaster Avenue between 38th Street and 44th Street, Girard Avenue between 40th Street and 44th Street, 40th Street between Girard Avenue and Brown Street.

Institutions and recreation together use less than 7 acres of land although these include two public schools, a recreation center, a parochial school and a number of churches. Present recreational uses are peripheral to the community and interior recreation spaces are one of the most important needs of the area.



- | | | | |
|---|---------------|---|------------|
|  | RESIDENTIAL |  | COMMERCIAL |
|  | INSTITUTIONAL |  | INDUSTRIAL |
|  | RECREATION |  | BOUNDARY |

**EXISTING LAND USE AND BOUNDARIES
BELMONT REDEVELOPMENT AREA PLAN**

400 0 800 1600 FT.

PHILADELPHIA CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

PUBLIC USE & TRANSPORTATION

Public and semi-public facilities in Belmont are limited to four schools, two recreation areas, and numerous churches. The schools are strategically located and could better service the community if their full potential for recreational development and other community uses were realized.

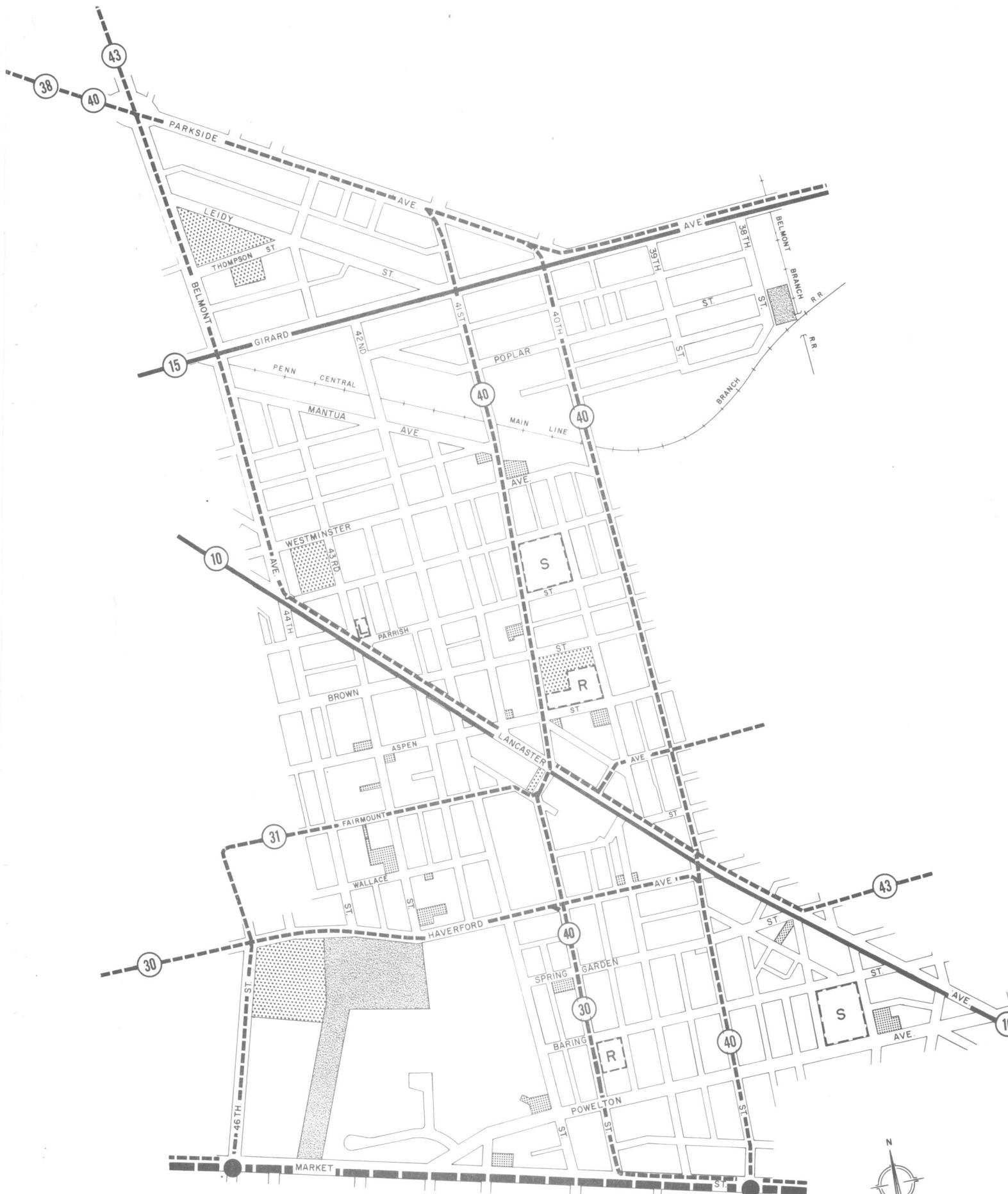
Belmont is served by several modes of transportation throughout the area. The Market Street subway, with transit stops at 40th and Market Streets and 46th and Market Streets is a major transportation resource serving the southern portion of the Belmont community. The northern portion of Belmont is serviced by two subway surface routes, the No. 10 trolley on Lancaster Avenue, and the No. 15 trolley on Girard Avenue. Also several buses serve Belmont; the No. 31 on Market Street, the Nos. 40 and 30-40 on 41st Street and 40th Street, the No. 43 on Lancaster Avenue and Belmont Avenue and the Nos. 38 and 38-40 on Parkside Avenue and Girard Avenue.

Easy accessibility to mass transit is one of Belmont's greatest assets and should encourage regrowth and rebuilding in this community.

Proposed public facilities to date are as follows:

1. A free library branch in the vicinity of 42nd Street and Lancaster Avenue.
2. Recreation sites at 41st & Baring Streets and the development of the existing Belmont schoolyard for community recreational purposes.
3. Two middle school sites at 41st and Parrish Streets and at 39th and Saunders Streets.

The successful completion of these facilities will be a positive step toward stabilization of the Belmont community,



- | | | | | | |
|---|----------------------|---|-------------------|---|--------------|
|  | TRANSIT STOP |  | SEMI-PUBLIC AREAS |  | SCHEDULED |
|  | SUBWAY-ELEVATED LINE |  | PUBLIC AREAS |  | R-RECREATION |
|  | BUS ROUTE AND NUMBER |  | PUBLIC RECREATION |  | S-SCHOOL |
|  | TROLLEY LINES | | | | L-LIBRARY |

**PUBLIC USE AND TRANSPORTATION
BELMONT REDEVELOPMENT AREA PLAN**

400 0 800 1600 FT.

PHILADELPHIA CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

PROPOSED LAND USE

The generalized Land Use Plan will be divided into six categories: residential and related, institutional and related, commercial and related, industrial and related, recreation and a special study area. The related uses consist of supporting or incidental uses which may be permitted within the predominant category. The special study area includes the Lancaster Avenue commercial frontage between 40th Street and Belmont Avenue and the residential blocks immediately affected by this strip. Lancaster Avenue is an arterial passing through almost every neighborhood in the northern section of West Philadelphia with various mixed uses along the route. This section of Lancaster Avenue has the potential to become a strong commercial center serving the Belmont community and the surrounding neighborhood. Therefore it is proposed that in the future a detailed study should be undertaken to determine the character of this special study area in a manner that will be beneficial to the residential community and the local business community.

The major concern of plans for Belmont is the maintenance of a sound residential environment. The plan suggests the need of programs designed to protect the many blocks of good housing through rehabilitation of scattered vacant structures, financial assistance to homeowners for repairs, and new construction where necessary.

New housing is proposed in the vicinity of

1. Wiota Street and Powelton Avenue
2. 38th & Sloan Streets
3. 41st Street & Powelton Avenue
4. Budd Street between Spring Garden and Wallace Streets
5. Olive and Brooklyn Streets
6. 41st & Parrish Streets
7. Haverford Avenue between Preston and 42nd Streets

A variety of types and sizes of housing is planned in order to accommodate the varying needs of the Belmont residents.



- | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|---|-------------------------|
|  | RESIDENTIAL & RELATED |  | INSTITUTIONAL & RELATED |
|  | COMMERCIAL & RELATED |  | RECREATION |
|  | INDUSTRIAL & RELATED |  | SPECIAL STUDY AREA |

PROPOSED LAND USE
BELMONT REDEVELOPMENT AREA PLAN

400 0 800 1600 FT.

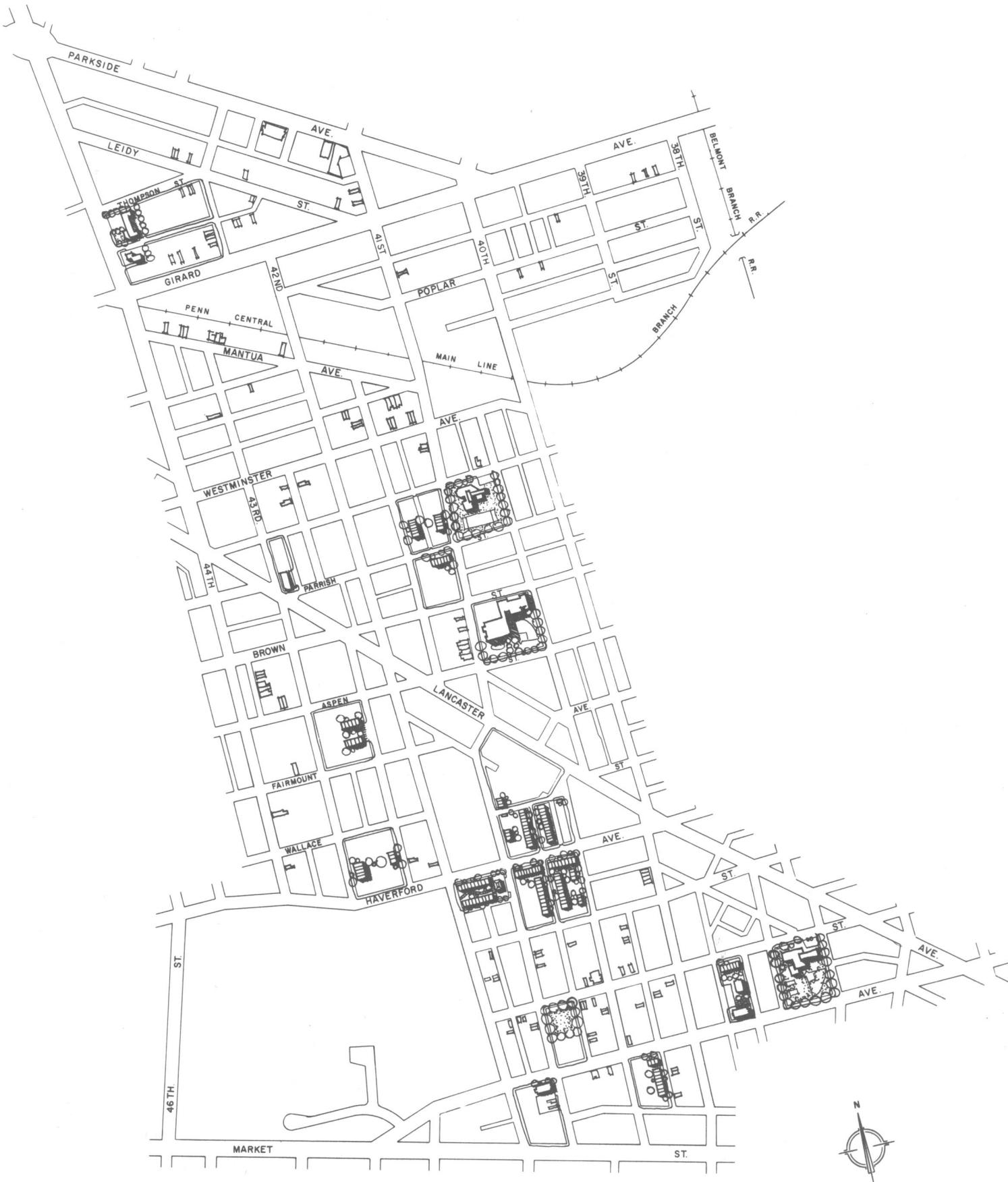
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Proposed neighborhood service facilities (two school sites, a free library, a recreation site, and expanded recreation of the existing Belmont Lower Schoolyard) should greatly enhance life within the Belmont community. Wherever possible, small tot lots are encouraged in one lot vacancies on a street.

Small areas for light industrial use is shown along Belmont Avenue above Girard Avenue and in the vicinity of 40th Street along the Penn Central Railroad tracks. Light manufacturers, not harmful to the residential community, are encouraged to locate in these areas.

ILLUSTRATIVE SITE PLAN

The illustrative site plan further delineates the design concepts indicated in the proposed land use plan. New construction areas are indicated and also some possible rehabilitation locations. Other new construction areas may become available and will be built on where feasible and in accordance with community plans.



**ILLUSTRATIVE SITE PLAN
BELMONT REDEVELOPMENT AREA PLAN**

400 0 800 1600 FT.

PHILADELPHIA CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

EXISTING ZONING

In Belmont, the existing zoning gives only a general indication of today's pattern of land usage. The residential district designations do not precisely conform to the actual house type already built. Extensive areas are zoned for commercial development, but are used for housing. In several blocks boundaries between zoning districts do not follow the existing lot lines.

An unplanned mixture of uses is permitted by the zoning without adequate controls to insure that adjacent uses are compatible. Generally, the blocks in which conditions warrant clearance are those in which a mixture of industrial and residential uses have been permitted along the same street frontage.

The excessive amount of commercial zoning has permitted stores to be interspersed with residences in areas of predominantly residential usage.

The proposed zoning remapping will better relate to existing land use patterns and proposed land use changes and development.

PROPOSED STANDARDS OF DENSITY, LAND COVERAGE AND BUILDING INTENSITY

The proposed standards for density, land coverage and building intensity will be controlled by the zoning district regulations.

PROPOSED STREET CHANGES

There are no specific street changes proposed in the Belmont Redevelopment Area Plan at this time. The changes shown in the Proposed Land Use and Preliminary Site Plans are subject to revision as detailed development occurs. All final street changes will be conditional upon approval of the City Planning Commission and the Department of Streets.



RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS

□ R 1 - R 19

COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS

■ C-4
 ▨ C-3
 ▩ C-2

INDUSTRIAL DISTRICTS

▧ L 1 - L 4
 ▨ G 1 - G 2

EXISTING ZONING
 BELMONT REDEVELOPMENT AREA PLAN
 400 0 800 1600 FT.
 PHILADELPHIA CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

REHOUSING OF DISPLACED FAMILIES

Residential clearance will be kept at a minimum to avoid possible hardship to families of the Belmont Area. It is estimated that 25 families will have to be relocated in the redevelopment area. Opportunities for relocation will be furnished by the new residential construction planned for the area. All relocation assistance will be handled by the Centralized Relocation Bureau in the Office of the Deputy Managing Director for Housing.

ESTIMATED COST OF ACQUISITION

The preliminary estimated cost of land acquisition, site preparation and administration in the Belmont Redevelopment Area as prepared by the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority is \$12,800,000 net cost for the entire project.

CONTROLS

The Pennsylvania Urban Redevelopment Law of 1945, as amended, and the United States Housing Act of 1949, as amended, regulate Philadelphia's redevelopment and urban renewal.

Redevelopment in Belmont will be in conformity with the provisions of the Redevelopment Area Plan. It will be in accord with the requirements of any Redevelopment Proposal prepared by the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Philadelphia for the area, and will comply with the Code of General Ordinances of the City of Philadelphia. All plans and proposals prepared by the Redevelopment Authority will be subject to the recommendations of the City Planning Commission and the approval of the Council of the City of Philadelphia.

