LOWER NORTH

> DISTRICT PLAN 2014

City of Philadelphia
MAYOR MICHAEL A. NUTTER
LIFE • LIBERTY • AND YOU™

PHILADELPHIA 2035

The future begins with *Philadelphia2035*. It builds on our city's recent achievements and long-established assets to guide physical development for the next 25 years and beyond.

>The Philadelphia Home Rule Charter requires the Philadelphia City Planning Commission(PCPC) to adopt and maintain a comprehensive plan. *Philadelphia2035* is our two-phase comprehensive plan. The *Citywide Vision* portion was adopted by the PCPC in June 2011. Over the next several years, the PCPC will complete 18 strategic district plans, taking many of the broad-brush objectives of the *Citywide Vision* and applying them at the local level.

Phase 1:
Citywide Vision
> Informs District Plans

Phase 2:
District Plans
> Informs zoning map revisions

>The PCPC also prepares the Capital Program, a six-year funding plan for public facilities and infrastructure such as transit lines, highways, parks, playgrounds, libraries, health centers, and other municipal facilities. Specific recommendations for these facilities are included in the district plans.

>*Philadelphia2035* is part of an integrated planning and zoning process that includes zoning reform and the *Citizens Planning Institute.* A new zoning code was signed into law in December 2011. The new code is user-friendly and consistent with today's uses and development trends. The *Citizens Planning Institute* offers classes in planning, zoning, and development.

PHILADELPHIA
2035
www.phila2035.org

***Philadelphia2035* is our blueprint for a 21st-century city** that thrives with new growth and opportunities, connects to the region and the world, and renews its valued resources for future generations.

> CITYWIDE VISION

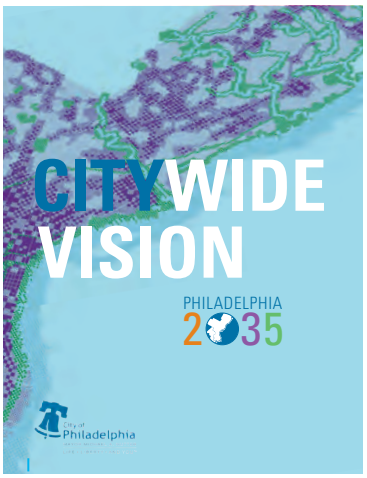
The *Citywide Vision* lays out broad, far-reaching goals for the future under the themes of THRIVE, CONNECT and RENEW.

These themes and their related goals are described through specific objectives across the nine planning elements of neighborhoods, economic development, land management, transportation, utilities, open space, environmental resources, historic preservation, and the public realm.

The *Citywide Vision* builds on our strengths of a strong metropolitan center, diverse neighborhoods, and industrial legacy areas by recommending goals that contribute to a stronger economy, a healthier population, and a smaller environmental footprint.

The *Citywide Vision* also includes an ambitious forecast for population and employment in 2035 of an additional 100,000 people and 40,000 jobs.

Implementation of the *Citywide Vision* is ongoing. Progress is tracked at regularly scheduled "Exchange Meetings" with City agencies and partners. The PCPC with also provide an annual update on progress to the public.



+100,000 people in 2035

+40,000 jobs in 2035

> DISTRICT PLANS

There are three major products of the district plans: land use plans, planning focus areas, and Capital Program recommendations.

The 18 district plans are focused on a shorter time frame than the 25-year *Citywide Vision*. While the majority of the land use and development recommendations are meant to be accomplished within a 10-year period, some of the recommendations are early action items designed to lay the foundation for longer-term proposals. Strategic recommendations for municipal facilities, infrastructure, and City-owned land are addressed because of PCPC's leadership role in the Capital Program process. The district plans present priority planning focus areas to illustrate the written recommendations and suggest visionary changes in these areas. The district plans' land use maps guide the zoning map revisions, a public process that begins after each district plan is complete.

The civic engagement planning process for each district plan includes three public meetings, frequent Steering Committee meetings, and several public presentations to the PCPC. When the PCPC completes all 18 district plans, the entire *Philadelphia2035* planning process will be revised and updated, thereby maintaining a current comprehensive plan for the city.

This is the **LOWER NORTH DISTRICT PLAN**. It was adopted by the PCPC on May 20, 2014.

THE 18 DISTRICTS:

- CENTRAL
- CENTRAL NORTHEAST
- LOWER FAR NORTHEAST
- LOWER NORTH
- LOWER NORTHEAST
- LOWER NORTHWEST
- LOWER SOUTH
- LOWER SOUTHWEST
- NORTH
- NORTH DELAWARE
- RIVER WARDS
- SOUTH
- UNIVERSITY/SOUTHWEST
- UPPER FAR NORTHEAST
- UPPER NORTH
- UPPER NORTHWEST
- WEST
- WEST PARK

LOWER NORTH DISTRICT PLAN

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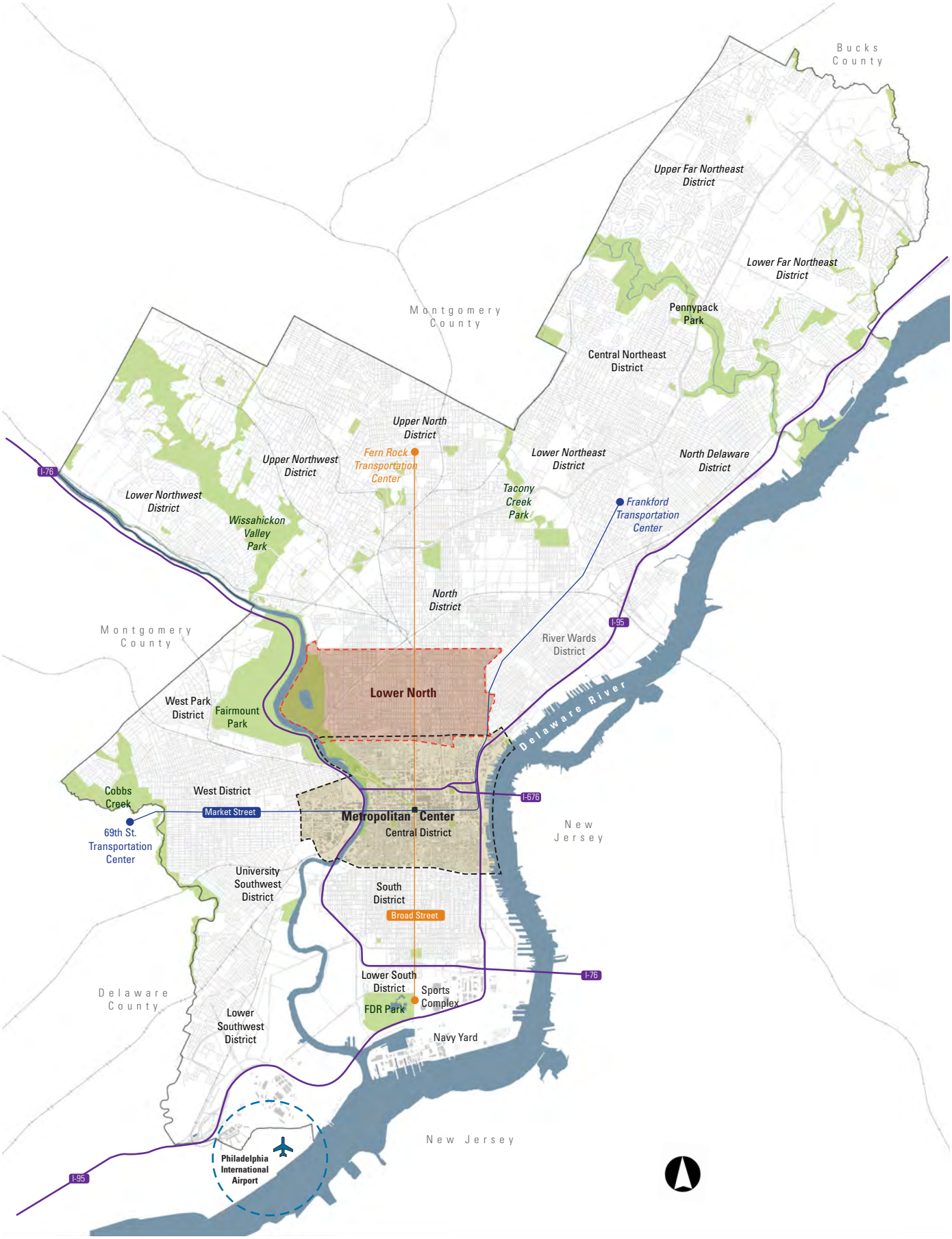
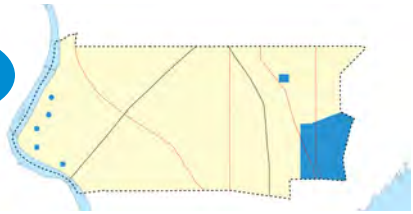

Bucks County
Upper Far Northeast District
Lower Far Northeast District
Pennypack Park
Montgomery County
Central Northeast District
Upper North District
Fern Rock Transportation Center
Upper Northwest District
Lower Northeast District
North Delaware District
I-76
Lower Northwest District
Tacony Creek Park
Frankford Transportation Center
Wissahickon Valley Park
North District
I-95
Montgomery County
River Wards District
Lower North
West Park District
Fairmount Park
Delaware River
Cobbs Creek
West District
I-676
Market Street
Metropolitan Center
Central District
New Jersey
69th St. Transportation Center
University Southwest District
South District
Broad Street
I-76
Lower South District
Sports Complex
Delaware County
FDR Park
Lower Southwest District
Navy Yard
New Jersey
Philadelphia International Airport
I-95

LOWER NORTH DISTRICT

The Lower North District covers 5.9 square miles and has a population of 95,176 people, according to the 2010 census. The district hosts institutions including Temple University, Girard College, St. Joseph's Preparatory School, and the North Philadelphia Health System. It also includes the neighborhoods of Brewerytown, Cecil B. Moore, Green Hills, Ludlow, Norris Square, Olde Kensington, Sharswood, South Kensington, Strawberry Mansion, West Kensington, and Yorktown. The plan's boundaries also include small sections of Fishtown, Poplar, Francisville, and Fairmount.

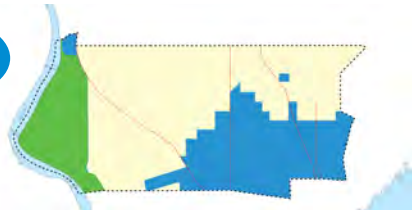
Development History

1800



Early patterns of settlement and growth prior to industrialization

1850



1900

The growth of industry, its impact on neighborhoods and the expansion of the Fairmount Park system.

Social History and Housing

1664: Peter Larsson Cock buys the Shackamaxon tract, which becomes the foundation for growth near the Delaware River.

1830s–1840s: Immigration to "West Kensington" follows the area's incorporation into Kensington.

East Fairmount Park (Source: Free Library of Philadelphia)

1844: Riots break out in Olde Kensington as a result of rising anti-Catholic sentiments and tensions between ethnic groups. The fighting highlights the need for more control of Philadelphia's surrounding settlements, eventually resulting in the district's consolidation into the city in 1854.

The original FairHill estate (Source: Free Library of Philadelphia)

Open Space

1750s–1800s: Country estates emerge along the Schuylkill River during the largest estate development boom in the area's history.

1848: After Isaac Norris's death, members of the Norris family allot portions of his estate to establish Fairhill Square.

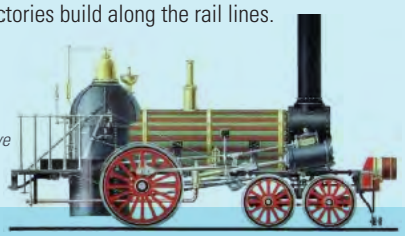
1868: The City of Philadelphia passes an act allowing Fairmount Park to expand its boundaries, resulting in the creation of East Fairmount Park.

Transportation and Industry

1775: Philadelphia's carpet manufacturing industry, concentrated in Kensington, is founded with the desire to reduce reliance on British goods.

1803: Philadelphia's first textile mill is established at the corner of Girard and Germantown Avenues.

1832: The Philadelphia, Germantown, and Norristown Railroad begins service with its line running directly through Lower North. Manufacturing and industrial development explodes as factories build along the rail lines.



1830s Norris Locomotive
Source: Hidden City

1845: Charles Engel and Charles Wolf dig lager beer vaults along the Schuylkill River, ultimately creating Brewerytown.

1850s: Horse-drawn streetcars begin service on Girard Avenue. The service is electrified in the 1890s.

1865: John B. Stetson founds the Stetson Hat Company. At its peak, it employs over 5,000 workers at its North Philadelphia plant, pictured below.

Stetson Hat Company (Source: Historical Society of Philadelphia)

Institutions

1831: Stephen Girard leaves the city $6 million dollars in his will to establish a school for needy (white) boys.

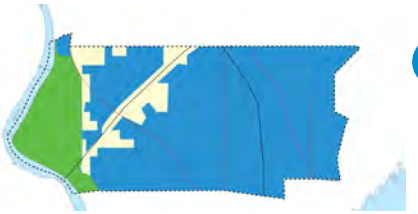
Girard College, 1869
Source: #Phillyhistory.org

1855: The Wagner Free Institute of Science opens at 17th and Montgomery Streets.

1876: St. Joseph's Preparatory School moves from near Independence Hall to Girard Avenue, east of Girard College.

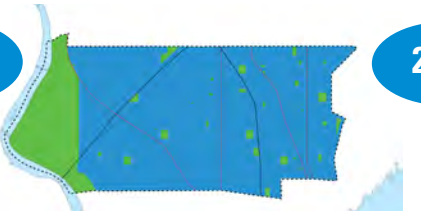
1884: Temple College begins an informal study group led by Dr. Russell Conwell, becoming a university in 1907. The school's main campus grows to 115 acres.

St. Joseph's Preparatory School,1910
Source: Phillyhistory.org



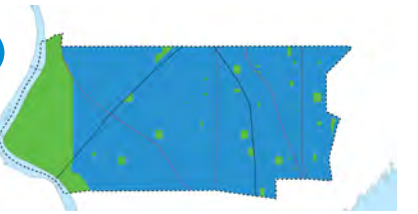
Industrialization and rapid urbanization

1950



The beginning of population loss and industrial decline

2000



Institutions expand and a favorable location attracts investment as some areas are revitalized

1910: Strawberry Mansion and Brewerytown expand to become two of Philadelphia's largest Jewish neighborhoods.

1940: The Philadelphia Housing Authority builds its housing complex in the district, James Weldon Johnson Homes.

1948: The City Planning Commission certifies the neighborhood around Temple University as blighted. This enables several large private and public urban renewal projects. The resulting development forces over 7,700 people to relocate.

1964: Three days of ethnic tension and rioting between Jewish and African American residents help to fuel Jewish migration out of the district.

1969: The Denny Development Corporation finishes building Yorktown, creating the city's first planned neighborhood for African Americans.

2005: The Westrum Development Company opens Brewerytown Square, 144 market-rate townhomes on the site of former industry.

2010: The City and private developers finish the final phase of the Cecil B. Moore Homeownership Zone, 151 units of subsidized housing in North Central.

Source: Philadelphia City Planning Commission

1887: The Baker Bowl, home to the Eagles and Phillies, and the host of the Negro World Series, opens at Broad Street and Lehigh Avenue.

1894–95: Fotterall Square is established at 11th and York Streets under the Meehan Ordinances (1892), which authorized the City to acquire land for neighborhood parks.

1989: Lily Yeh founds the Village of Arts and Humanities in Hartranft, a neighborhood near Germantown and Lehigh avenues. The Village uses art to educate area youth and has transformed vacant land into community green space.

1900: Railroad advancement spurs development in the 28th Ward, with the population growing from 10,000 to 76,000 in a 30-year period. The 28th Ward encompasses portions of present-day Strawberry Mansion and North Central.

1928: The Broad Street Subway begins service north of City Hall.

1944: The federal government orders the Philadelphia Transit Company to begin training African Americans as motormen and conductors. White transit workers organize a strike to protest the company's decision. U.S. troops take over the system to end the strike.

1970s: The City buys the remaining right-of-way for American Street from the Reading Company and rebuilds the street, consolidating railroad spurs into one rail line. The Reading Company later abandons the line.

1977: The Stetson Hat Company donates its nine-acre factory to the City, which demolishes some structures and develops the site as an industrial park. The site is currently home to Honor Foods.

2000s: The former Crane Plumbing Company opens as the Crane Arts Building: 16,000 square feet of studio space for arts production on the 1400 block of N. American Street, beginning a wave of manufacturing building reuse.

Source: Philadelphia City Planning Commission

1900: The Berean Industrial Manual Training School, later the Berean Institute, opens to educate African Americans.

1905: The "3rd Era" of public school construction, when most of Lower North's schools were built, begins. Eleven of the schools, designed by the firm of Catherine and Richards, still stand.

Murrell Dobbins Vocational School, 2010
Source: wikicommons

1966: Fire burns most of St. Joseph's Prep. The school opens a new building in 1968.

1968: Girard College desegregates following a Supreme Court decision.

1993: The Catholic Archdiocese closes seven churches in Lower North, part of a region-wide realignment of parishes due to declining attendance.

2011: The Philadelphia School District closes eight of the district's schools, including two that are historically certified, William Harrison Elementary and Thomas Fitzsimons Junior High.

2013: Temple University begins Visualize Temple, the process to create a new campus master plan.

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A Slowly Growing Population

> General Population in the District

The major force shaping the Lower North District over the last 50 years has been population loss and renewal. This planning district reached its high point in 1950 with nearly 272,000 residents. Decline followed until a slight uptick from 2000 to 2010. That increase continues today.

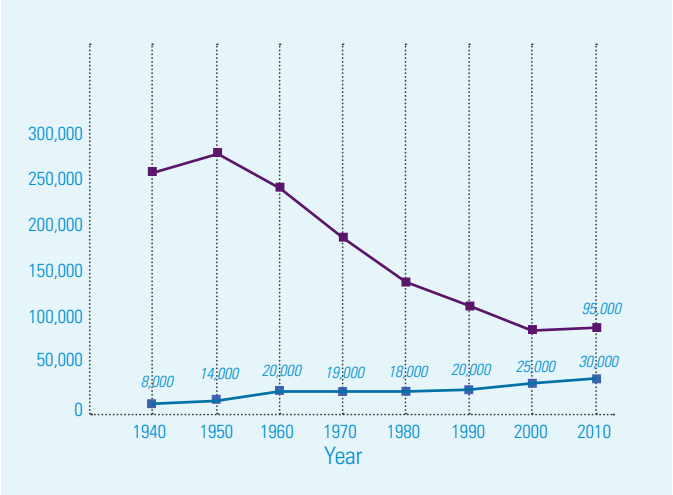
This population loss coincided with a loss of low-skilled manufacturing jobs and, in many cases, a lack of anything to replace them. Lower population and job loss caused an increase in vacant land and buildings. Some of these empty acres have been consumed by redevelopment, mainly in the neighborhoods around Temple University's Main Campus.

> University Student Population

Temple University has grown significantly since its founding in 1884. The largest growth in the University's history occurred after 1950, when its campus increased from four acres to its current 115 acres. This was made possible with state funding and the City's use of eminent domain.

Almost 30,500 students attended Temple University's Main Campus in 2012. Over 5,300 lived on campus, while an estimated 7,000 lived in privately owned housing nearby. The large number of off-campus students is partly due to a lack of university-owned dorm rooms.

Change in the General and Student Populations



Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Temple University

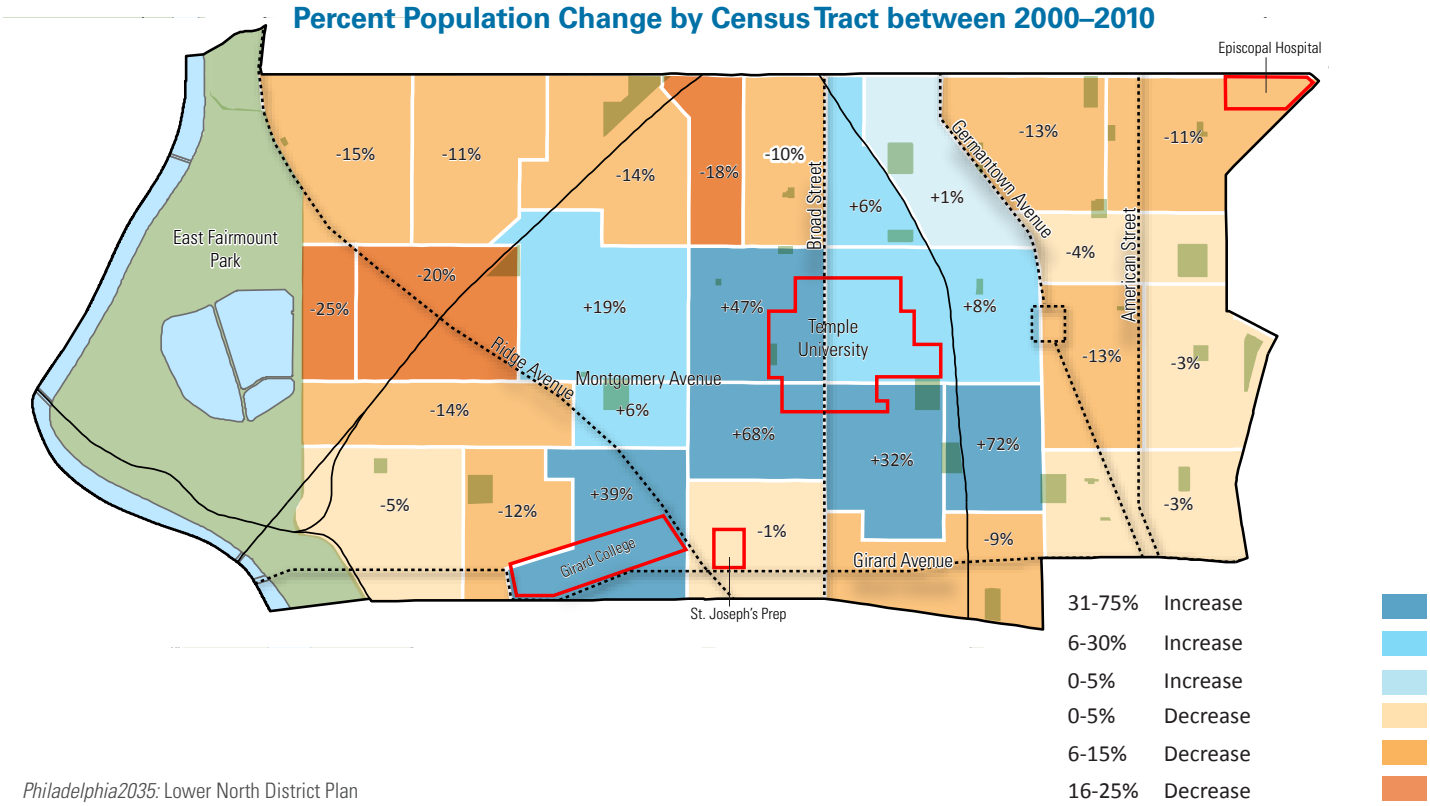
General Population

Temple University Main Campus Enrollment *

This district has just over 95,000 residents, a slight increase of 147 people. The PCPC estimates that by 2035, the district's population will grow to 112,000, a gain of almost 17,000 people.

* *Student population numbers are rounded*

Percent Population Change by Census Tract between 2000–2010



Although student enrollment has sharply risen since 1940, it has grown far more slowly in the last 10 years, with less than a 1 percent increase in the last 2 years. With more university-owned beds coming online, and slowing student enrollment, the vigorous growth in privately-built apartments for students is expected to slow in the next 10 years as fewer students are forced to seek off-campus rooms.

The university plans to build about 2,000 more beds on campus according to its *Temple 20/20* master plan. Private developers have built housing for at least 2,000 students in the last 10 years. Up to 1,000 beds are either under construction or have been recently approved as of 2013.

> Racial/Ethnic Composition and Immigration

69 percent of the population of the population of the Lower District is African American. However, the number of African American residents has declined by over 40 percent since 1980, from about 113,000 to just over 65,000. The white population has grown by 6,700, while the number of Asians has increased to almost 2,000.

The district lost a little more than 1,000 Latino residents since 1980, but saw a small uptick from 2000 to 2010. And the district attracted about 520 immigrants since 2000, mostly from Vietnam and India.

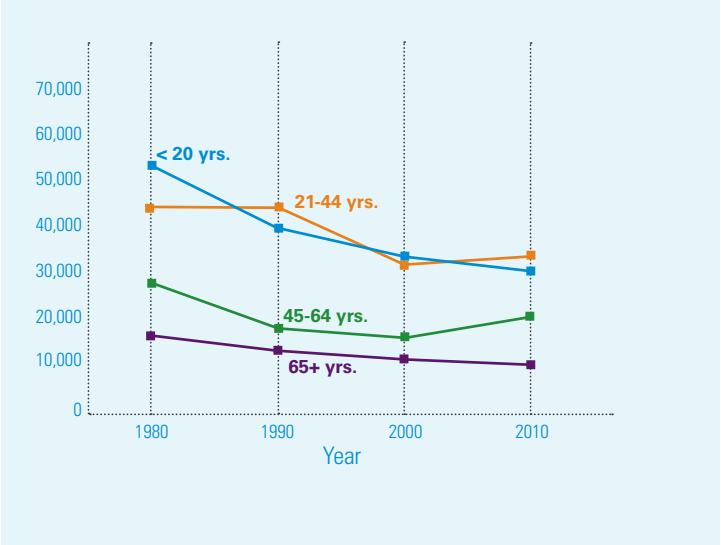
> Age Trends

Lower North is growing slowly, despite the large loss of youth under age 20. The working-age population, between 20 and 64, has risen by 11 percent in the last 10 years. Although the senior population is shrinking, this age group will increase as the population under age 64 continues to age.

> Household Size

The average household size decreased to about two and a half residents, down from over three in 1980. And the percentage of one-person households increased from 27 percent to 33 percent of all households from 1980 to 2010, following a citywide trend.

Change in Population by Age Since 1980

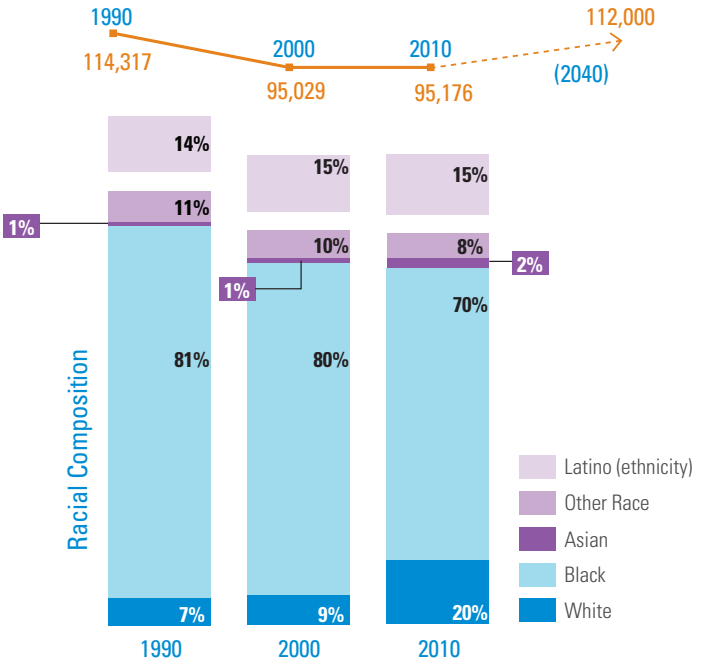


Source: US Census Bureau

Under 20 yrs.
21-44 yrs.
45-64 yrs
65 + yrs.

Change in Population by Race and Ethnicity

Total Population in the District



Source: US Census Bureau

A Changing Economy With Unmet Spending Potential

> Income and Jobs

In Lower North, one-third of households are either middle-class or above, while almost half of individuals live in poverty. Median household income across the district in 2010 was just under $17,000, compared to $36,957 citywide. However, this figure varies, with some households earning well above the citywide median both in areas that are gaining and losing population.

Although these numbers may seem alarming, the large number of college students contributes to low reported median income. Temple University estimates that approximately 11,000 students live on or near its Main Campus. According to recent surveys, the average college student earns an income well below the poverty line while in school.[1]

1. Herzog, Karen. "Working Your Way Through College Doesn't Add Up for Today's Students." *Milwaukee Wisconsin Journal Sentinel*. June 1, 2013.

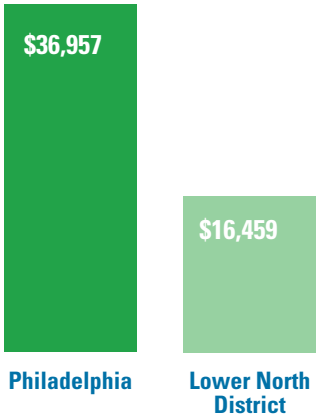
Spending Potential

Despite relatively low household incomes, Lower North's stores could capture more of the money that residents spend, potentially adding more jobs in retail and food services.

According to ESRI's Retail Marketplace Profile, in 2012, residents spent almost $120 million outside of the district on consumer goods.

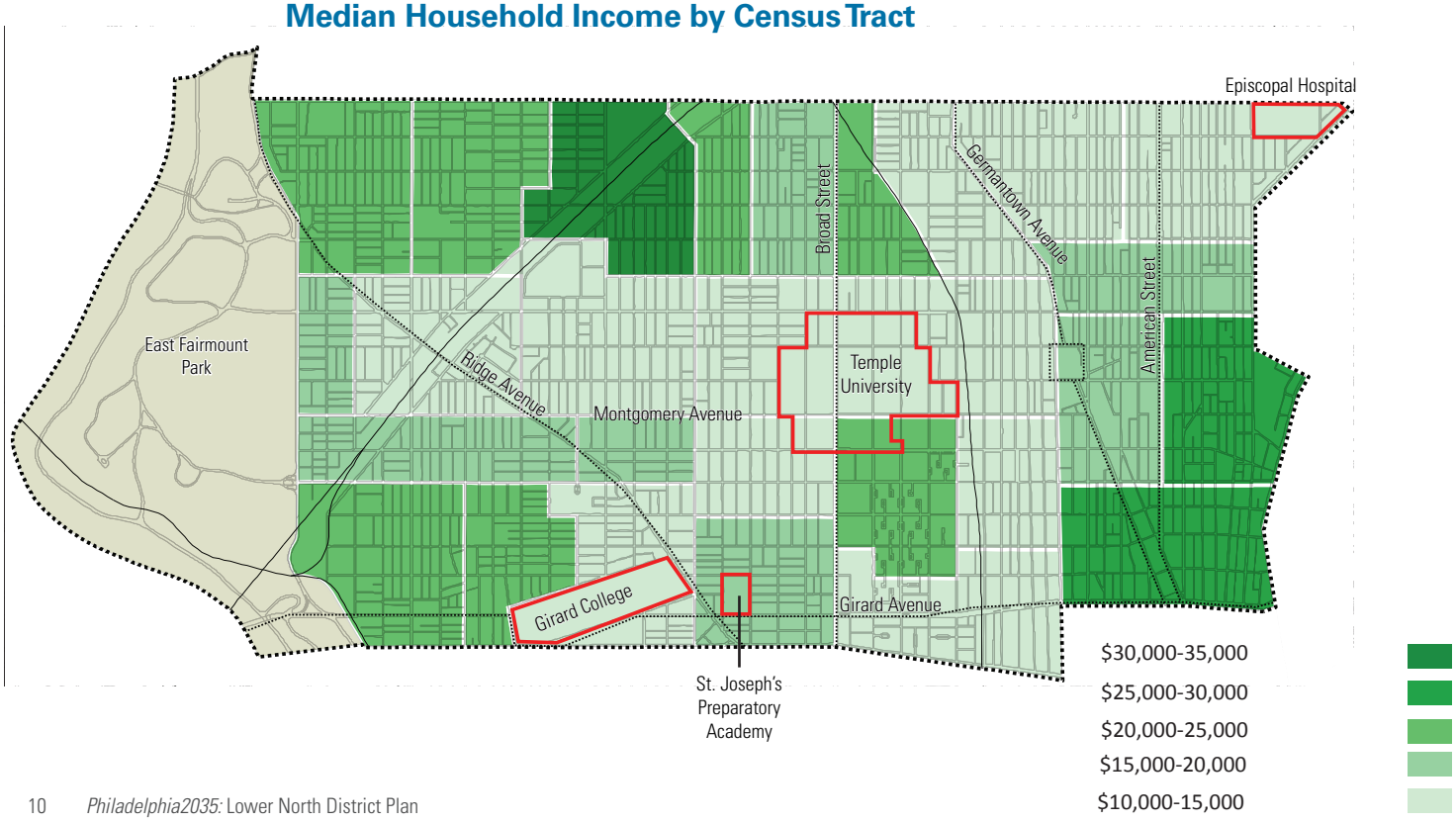
The information gathered at this plan's public meetings shows that many residents are traveling to shopping centers in South and Northeast Philadelphia.

Median Household Income Comparisons (2010)



Source: http://money.msn.com/how-to-invest/9-ways-to-know-if-youre-middle-class

Median Household Income by Census Tract

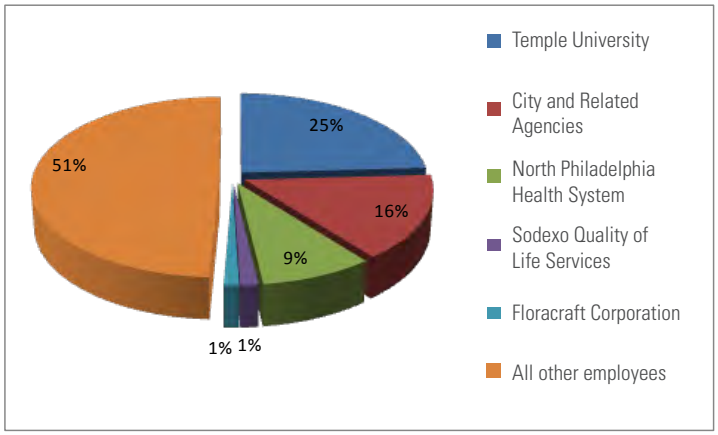


In 2011, 25,500 working-age residents in Lower North were employed, while 6,500 were unemployed; 67 percent worked in Philadelphia. Jobs available in the district skewed heavily towards education, health care, and administration. The largest growth in the number of available jobs occurred in accommodation and food services. Six of the 10 largest employers were either government agencies or received significant public funding.

The number of jobs within the district remained stable over the last 10 years, dropping by less than 2 percent according to the U.S. Census Bureau. This is comparable to the citywide loss in jobs.

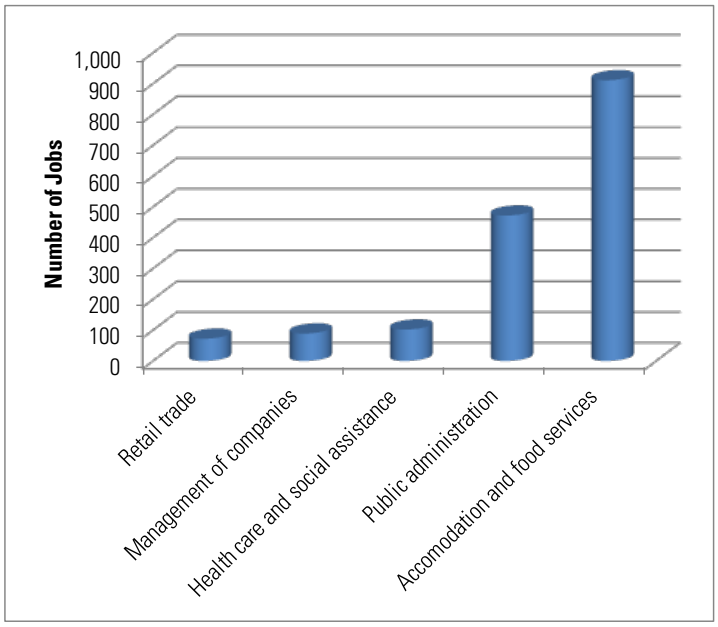
While a high unemployment rate and continued population loss in some parts of the district are a challenge to sustaining businesses, there are also opportunities. When combined, the district's large amount of redevelopable acreage, proximity to the Metropolitan Center, unmet needs for goods and services, and good access to the regional highway and transit network, can help to attract new enterprises.

Top Employers as a Percentage of Total Jobs



Source: US Census Bureau, OnTheMap and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics

Largest Employment Growth by Job Category from 2002 to 2011



Widespread and Frequent SEPTA Service

Since almost 60 percent of households in Lower North do not have access to a car, and many cannot afford one, maintaining a high level of SEPTA service is critical to getting residents to and from jobs, shopping, and other destinations. SEPTA ridership here is well above the regional average, with over 131,000 boardings and alightings every weekday.

SEPTA serves the Lower North District with 16 bus routes, one trolley line, four Market-Frankford Line stations, four Broad Street Line stations, and two Regional Rail stops. Bus routes provide one-seat rides to the Frankford Transportation Center, Center City, and South Philadelphia, including Pier 70 shopping, Chestnut Hill, and Roxborough.

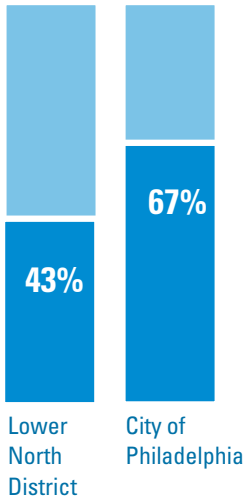
This district hosts several transit hubs that serve over 5,000 riders per weekday: Broad and Lehigh, Broad and Cecil B. Moore, Broad and Girard, Front and Girard, and the Temple University Regional Rail station. The Temple University station alone hosts 7,000 riders per day, the fourth busiest Regional Rail stop in the system.

In addition to these, all of the Broad Street Line and Market-Frankford Line stations serve at least 1,500 people per weekday. The Girard Avenue and Lehigh Avenue stations provide express service to Fern Rock and Center City.

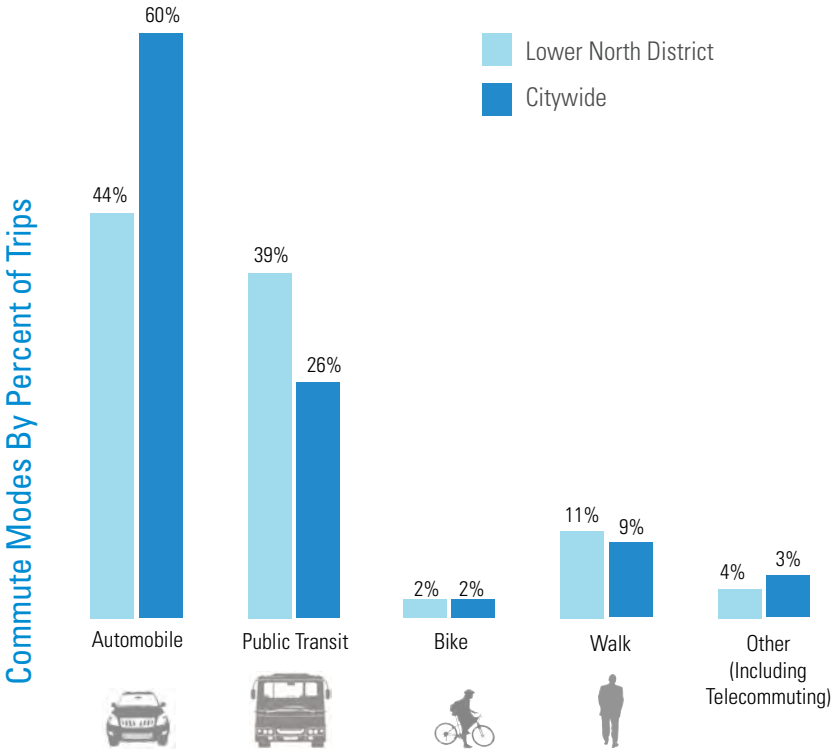
The Route 15 trolley serves slightly more than one of every 10 transit riders in the district, with nearly 15,000 people riding each weekday.

Bus routes serve nearly every section of the Lower North District. The busiest service is the Route 54, which moves 19,000 passengers, 14 percent of all district riders, connecting Strawberry Mansion and Port Richmond to the Broad Street Line and the Market-Frankford Line.

Percent of Households that Have Access to a Car



Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2013



Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey

Obsolete Spaces Transforming

Finding new uses for what someone else has left behind is one of the ways that an area innovates and renews itself. In this district, the investment has been driven mostly by private individuals and organizations. In Lower North, over 200 former house lots have become gardens, miniature parks, or other green spaces. About 30 percent of those produce fruit or vegetables.

The Village of Arts and Humanities has transformed unused spaces into a network of neighborhood assets near Huntingdon Street and Germantown Avenue. Former homes and commercial sites are now parks, programmed green spaces, and learning spaces for neighborhood children.

PhillyEarth, a spin-of the Village, teaches permaculture and "appropriate technologies" to local youth. Appropriate technology simply means using what's available, in a sustainable way, to solve problems and encourage self-sufficiency. Another nonprofit, the Philadelphia Urban Creators, has started Life Do Grow, a garden and greenhouse at 11th and Dauphin Streets that educates and empowers youth.

Developers have created nearly 900 residential units in former schools, such as Sartain and St. Elizabeth's, and former mills. For example, Seawall Development and D^3 Real Estate Development have turned a historic mill complex at 100 W Oxford Street into housing and offices. The Oxford Mills will include 114 apartments, 36,000 square feet of workspace, a fitness center, and a cafe. The project cost nearly $40 million. The building, formerly Quaker City Dyeworks, was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2012. The site is within one-half mile of two Market-Frankford Line stations, a full-service grocery store, and several parks, recreation centers, and schools.

Developers have also built nearly 300,000 square feet of arts production and performance spaces, and almost 100,000 square feet of office space in former factories, warehouses, and churches. An example is the Mascher Space Co-op, on the 100 block of Cecil B. Moore Avenue, a dance cooperative in a former truck trailer factory.

Other spaces have different kinds of industry than they once had. For instance, a halal butcher at Hancock Street and Lehigh Avenue occupies a former Philadelphia Transportation Company car painting garage. The City will continue to encourage thoughtful reuse of these spaces through zoning variances, upzoning or downzoning when appropriate, and by providing subsidies if they are available.

In 2006, Miles and Generalis turned a former auto garage at 1203 N 3rd Street into North Point Lofts, a residential building. This is a good example of adaptive reuse.

Philadelphia Urban Creators established Life Do Grow at 11th and Dauphin Streets on the site of a former box factory. The organization produces food and products that are sold to local stores.

Village of the Arts and Humanities has used a grassroots economic model to improve residents' lives and beautify their neighborhood since 1989.

Land Use and Zoning

What Is Land Use?

Planners categorize and map land use to document and understand the current state of development. Land use refers to broad categories such as residential, commercial, or industrial and can be broken out into more detail such as high-density residential, office commercial, or warehousing/distribution. Maps can help planners identify potential uses that, if developed, could enhance the quality of life or economic productivity of an area. Intensity or type of land use also impacts infrastructure needs such as transit or utilities. Most importantly, land use impacts development regulations such as zoning.

What Is Zoning?

Zoning is the primary tool for regulating land use. Zoning is a set of regulations governing land development and permitted uses for property. These laws regulate what type of activities can occur (use), where buildings can be located on a property (area), and the size of the building (bulk). Existing properties may not conform with zoning regulations if they have received a variance for their use, area, or bulk, or if they legally existed prior to the zoning laws being enacted.

Zoning Map Revision Process

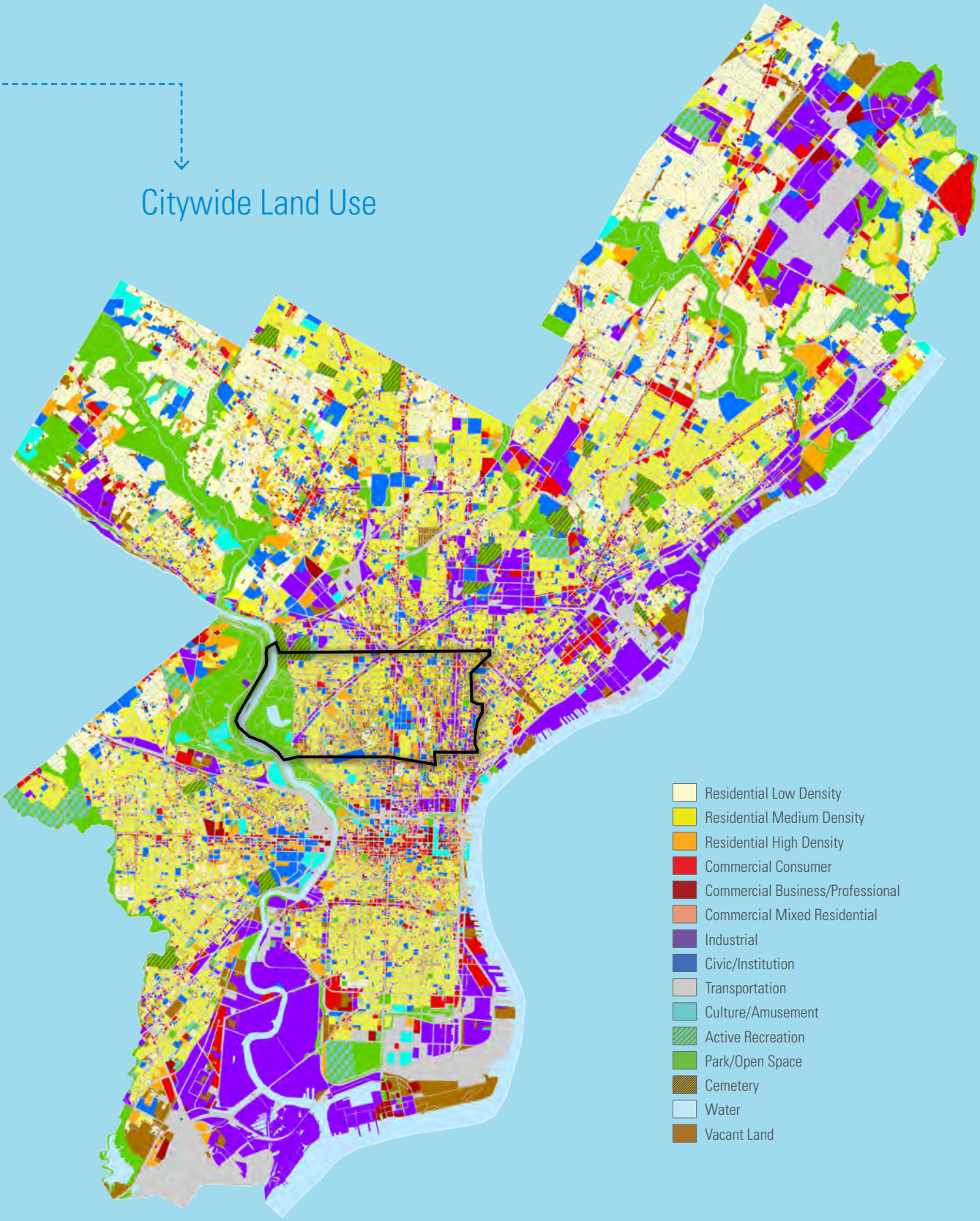
When analyzed together, land use and zoning inform planners if a property or area is zoned correctly for current conditions or if zoning changes are necessary either to reflect existing conditions or bring about changes to future physical development. Over time, changes in land use may require a remapping, or a change to a property's zoning district classification as shown on the official zoning map. Zoning map revision is a public process for updating and revising the zoning in an area and requires an action by City Council.

Adoption of the New Zoning Code

In August 2012, following a four-year process to create the first comprehensive rewrite of the Philadelphia Zoning Code in 50 years, the revised zoning code took effect. The new zoning code is better organized and easier to navigate. The purpose of the zoning code is to set clear rules and expectations about land use, preserve neighborhood character, protect open space, and encourage investment and jobs.

The zoning code rewrite was the first part of the zoning reform process; the other major part is making zoning map revisions. This district plan is key to the zoning map revision process by providing land use and zoning recommendations. These recommendations ensure that the new code is properly mapped to reflect both existing and future land use needs.

Citywide Land Use



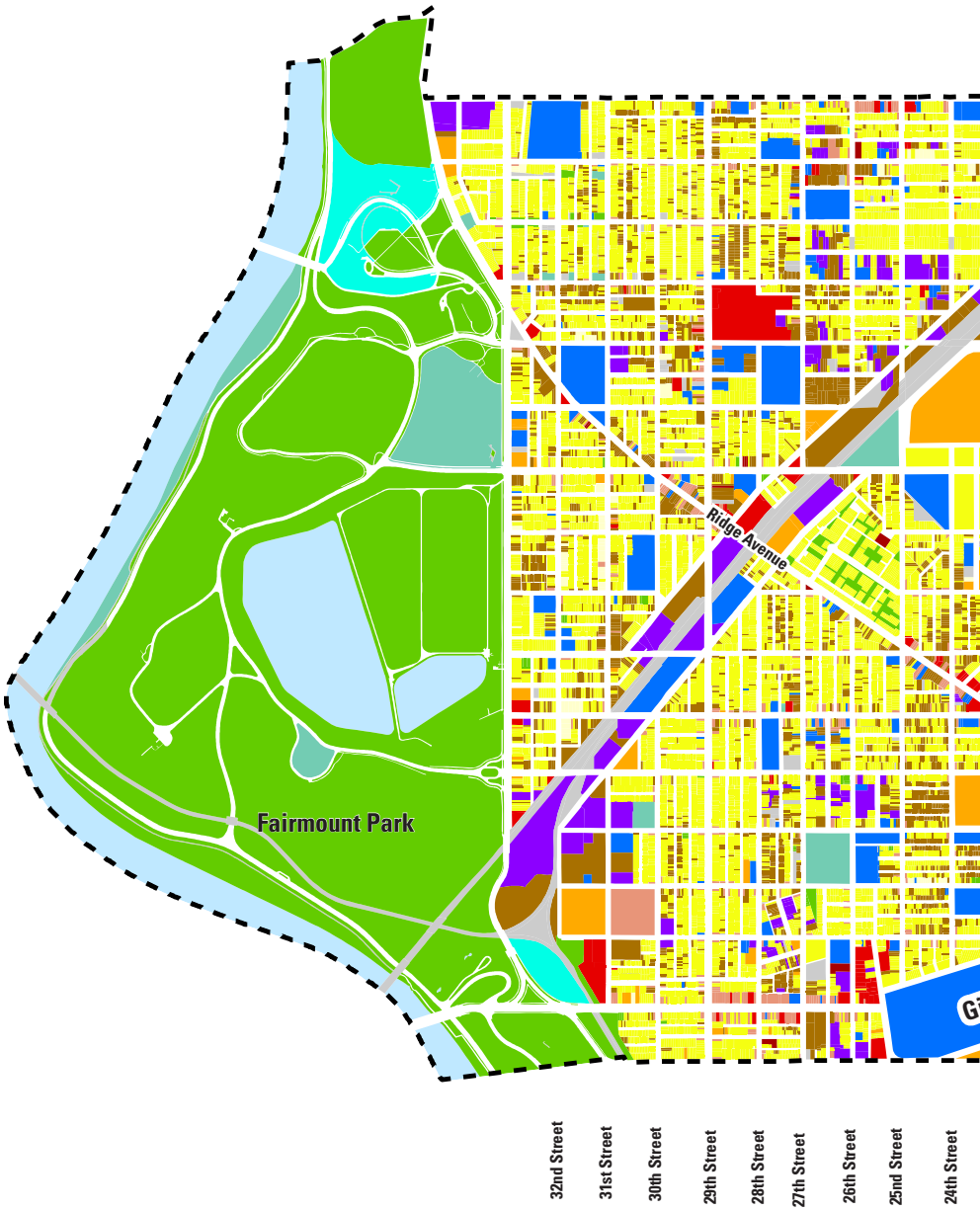
Existing Land Use

PCPC staff completed a land use survey in 2013. To collect this information, staff created a map from various City sources, including the Office of Property Assessment, which was then verified by in-field surveys conducted by PCPC staff. The land use data is stored in a geographic information system (GIS) database maintained by PCPC. Color codes are used to represent 15 major categories of land use.

The Lower North District has always been largely residential. Despite population loss, apartments and houses still make up one-third of the district's acreage. Because East Fairmount Park is included, parks and open spaces comprise over 400 acres. Civic and institutional uses, mostly churches, schools, and institutions like Temple University and Girard College, make up one of every ten acres. By definition, vacancy is the absence of use. But if it were a land use, vacant land would be the district's third largest. Only 13 percent of the district is used for commerce or industry.

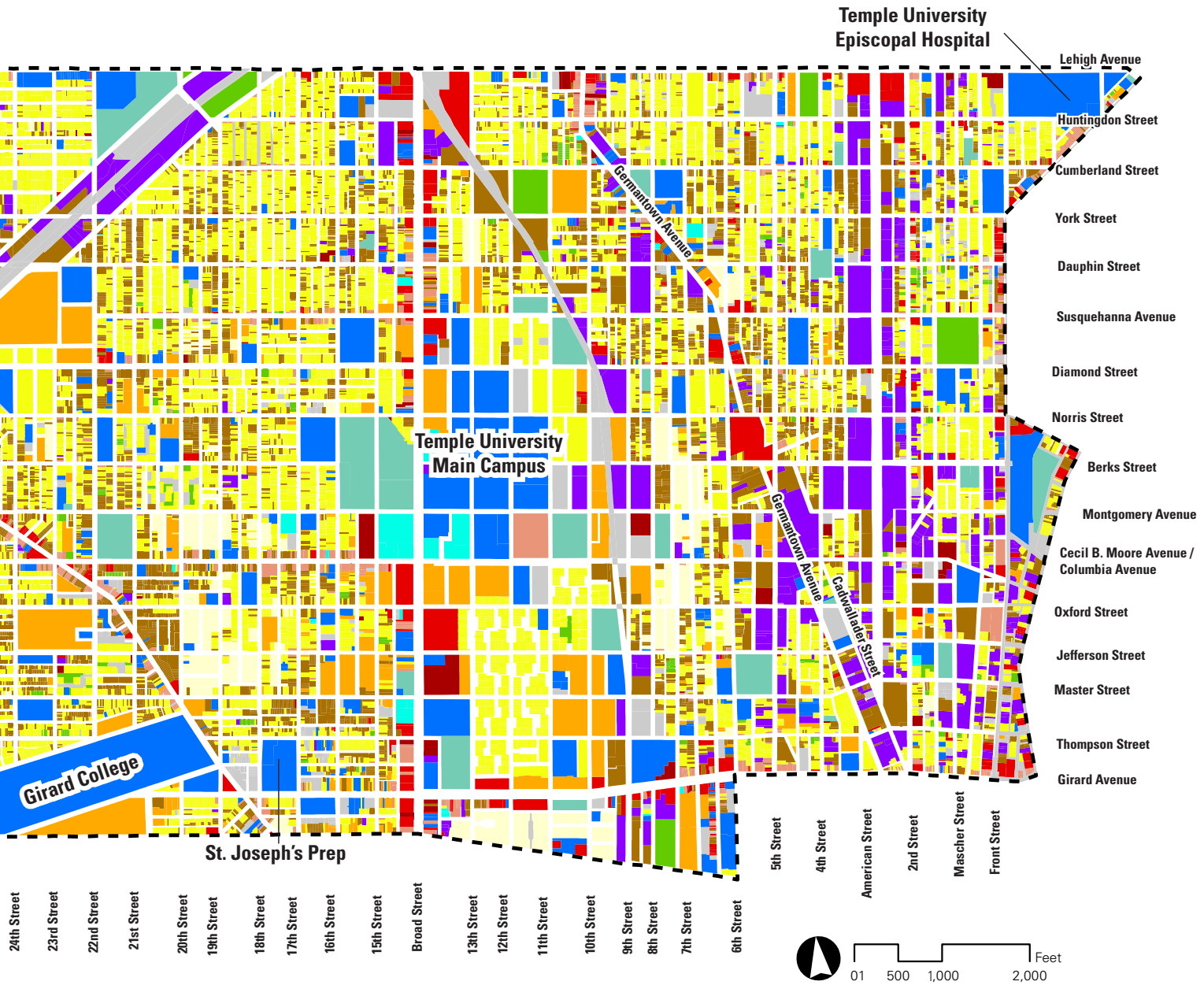
Lower-density development is mostly located in areas that the City targeted for housing redevelopment: south of Girard Avenue between 6th and Broad Streets; between 18th and 20th Streets, Montgomery and Master Streets; and between Jefferson and Berks Streets, 6th to 8th Streets.

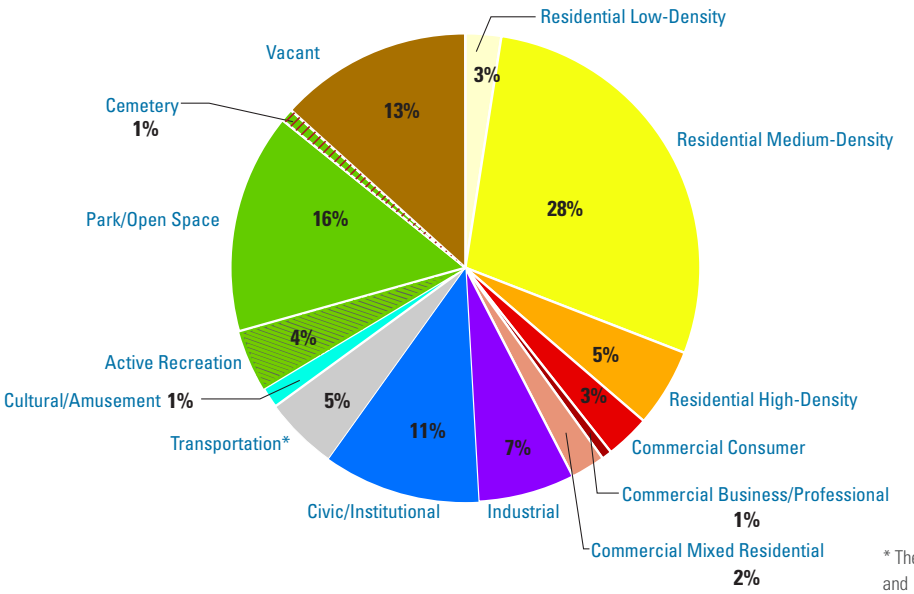
High-density development occurs mostly around Temple University, and in areas with high concentrations of public housing, such as Johnson Homes, and the Blumberg and Fairhill high-rises. Industry is situated along current or former rail corridors. Examples are the Philadelphia Gas Works headquarters, next to the SEPTA Regional Rail line, and food distributors along American Street.



Existing Land Use

- Residential Low Density
- Residential Medium Density
- Residential High Density
- Commercial Consumer
- Commercial Business/Professional
- Commercial Mixed Residential
- Industrial
- Civic/Institution
- Transportation
- Culture/Amusement
- Active Recreation
- Park/Open Space
- Cemetery
- Water
- Vacant





* The Transportation percentage does not include streets and sidewalks, which cover 928 acres. Water parcels have also been excluded from these percentages.

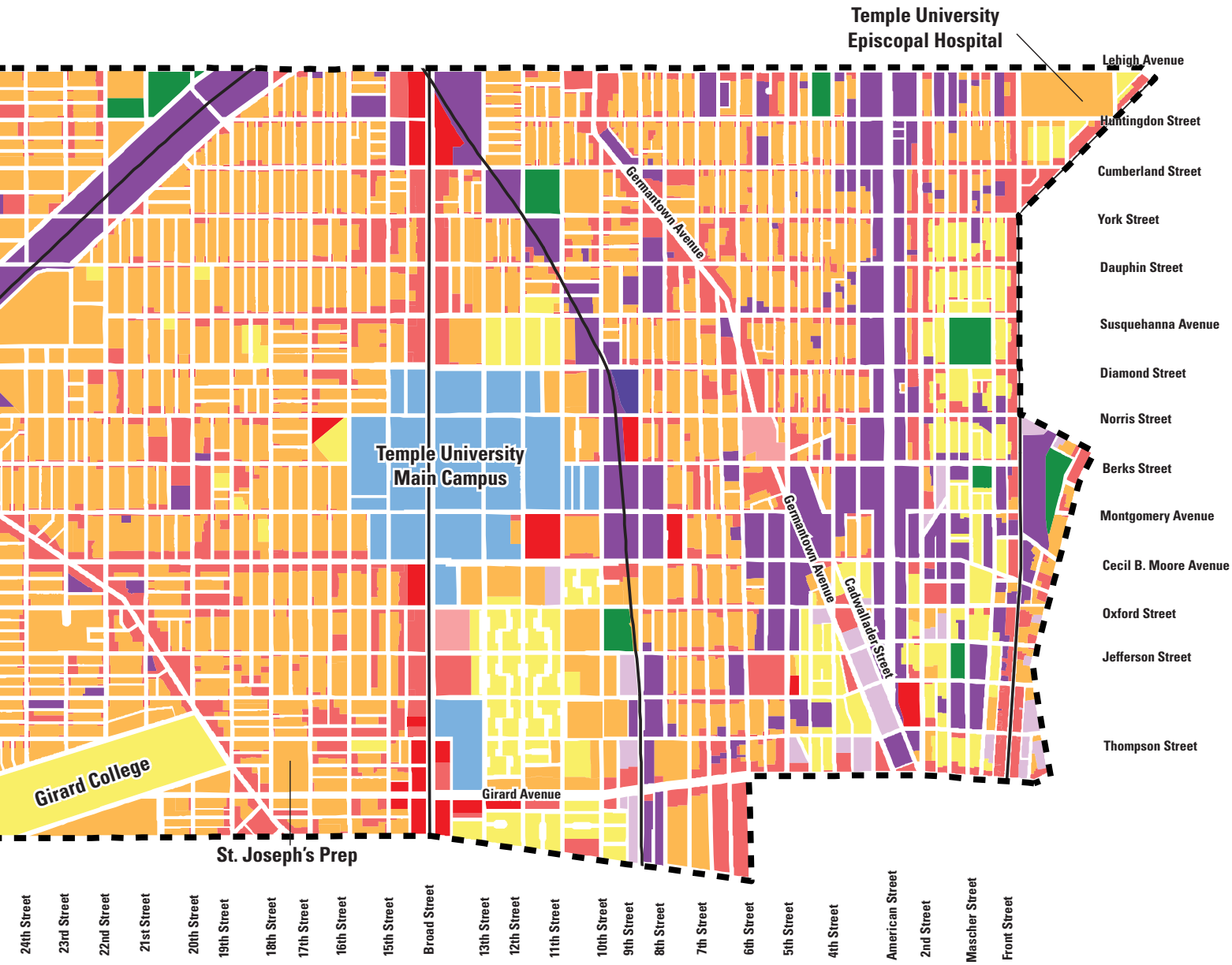
Existing Zoning

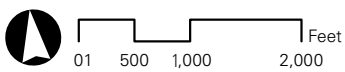
Since Lower North has historically been a place to live, shop and work, these activities are allowed throughout the district. Just under half of all land is zoned for residential use, the majority for multiple families. This reflects the district's history as a home for large families, attracted by the jobs provided by factories, which used to operate on land that is still zoned for industry. Numerous commercial districts are still zoned for selling goods and services.

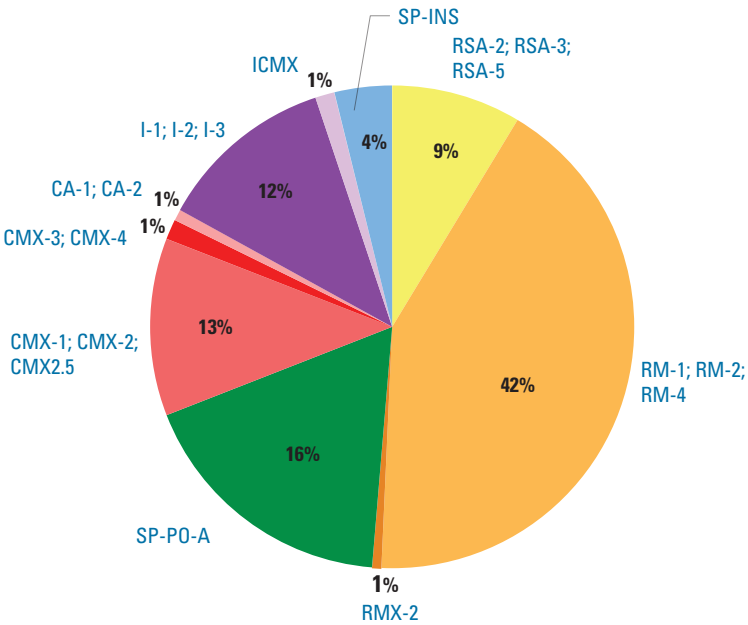
Only 430 acres contain zoning that is inconsistent with the underlying land use, 11 percent of the district's total acres. Of those, the greatest mismatches occur within the CMX-2 (mixed commercial and residential), I-2 (industrial), and RM-1 (residential multi-family) districts. Land use changes have accelerated in the last 10 years where land has transitioned away from industry to residential, and the current zoning does not reflect this change.

Existing Zoning

Residential Single-Family Attached	RSA-2; RSA-3; RSA-5
Residential MultiFamily	RM-1; RM-2; RM-4
Residential Mixed-Use	RMX-2
Auto-Oriented Commercial	CA-1; CA-2
Neighborhood Commercial Mixed-Use	CMX-1; CMX-2; CMX-2.5
Community/Center City Commercial Mixed-Use	CMX-3; CMX-4
Medium Industrial	I-1; I-2
Heavy Industrial	I-3
Industrial Commercial Mixed-Use	ICMX
Institutional Development	SP-INS
Recreation	SP-PO-A


Temple University
Episcopal Hospital
Lehigh Avenue
Huntingdon Street
Cumberland Street
York Street
Dauphin Street
Susquehanna Avenue
Diamond Street
Norris Street
Berks Street
Montgomery Avenue
Cecil B. Moore Avenue
Oxford Street
Jefferson Street
Thompson Street
Germantown Avenue
Temple University
Main Campus
Germantown Avenue
Cadwallader Street
Girard College
Girard Avenue
St. Joseph's Prep
24th Street
23rd Street
22nd Street
21st Street
20th Street
19th Street
18th Street
17th Street
16th Street
15th Street
Broad Street
13th Street
12th Street
11th Street
10th Street
9th Street
8th Street
7th Street
6th Street
5th Street
4th Street
American Street
2nd Street
Mascher Street
Front Street


Feet
01
500
1,000
2,000


SP-INS
4%
RSA-2; RSA-3;
RSA-5
9%
ICMX
1%
I-1; I-2; I-3
12%
CA-1; CA-2
1%
CMX-3; CMX-4
1%
CMX-1; CMX-2;
CMX2.5
13%
RM-1; RM-2;
RM-4
42%
16%
SP-PO-A
1%
RMX-2

FRAMING OUR FUTURE

Credit: Betsy Manning

24 | Focus Areas

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- 32 | Synergizing Public and Private Investment on Ridge Avenue

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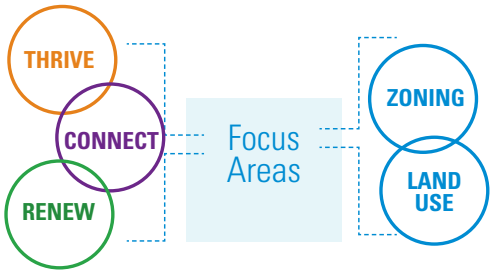
- 60 | CONNECT
- 64 | RENEW

74 | Proposed Land Use

Two Focus Areas and One Focus Topic

Focus areas identify locations in the district that have the potential to stimulate positive change for their larger context through redevelopment. These areas illustrate how multiple recommendations from **THRIVE**, **CONNECT**, and **RENEW** might work together to have a transformative effect.

Along with areas that have adopted plans and those with growth potential that have private sector investment, these areas will help the long-term development of the Lower North District to reach its potential.



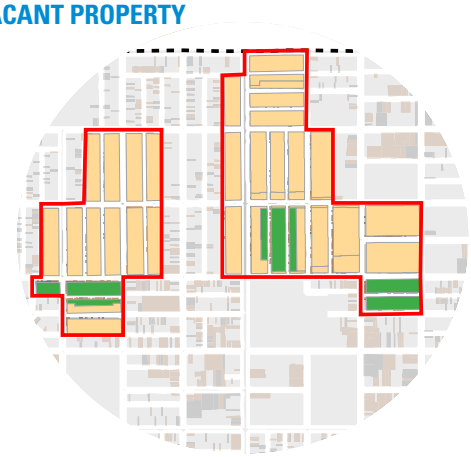
> Focus Areas

Reimagining these areas as more dynamic economically, aesthetically, or functionally can have a transformational effect. These long-term visions provide inspiration and a framework for smaller improvements to occur incrementally.

Planning focus areas typically have the following characteristics:

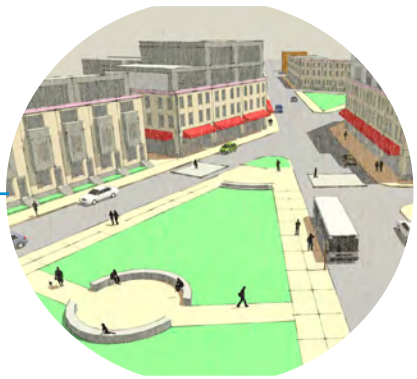
- Focus areas could have underutilized land or have an inappropriate zoning classification. Therefore, focus areas have land use and/or zoning recommendations in the plan.
- Focus areas illustrate the written recommendations from **THRIVE**, **CONNECT**, and **RENEW**. They show how individual recommendations work together to transform a place comprehensively.
- Focus areas are catalysts for their larger context. They are strategically located sites with the potential to benefit the entire district, or even the city as a whole.

FOCUS TOPIC:
VACANT PROPERTY

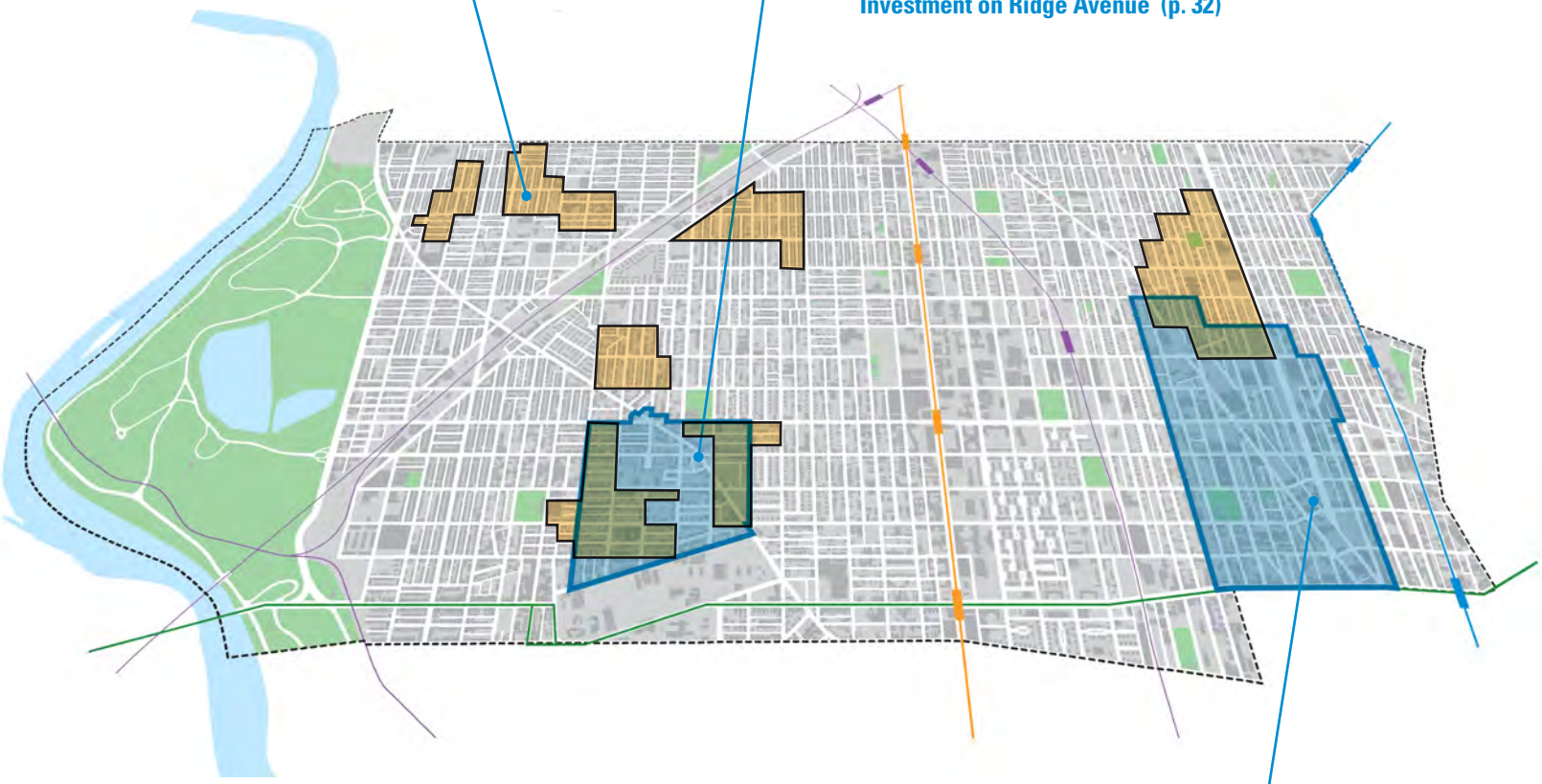


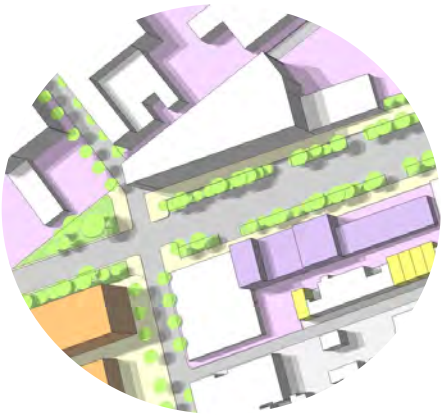
Turning Vacant Property from a Liability into an Asset (p. 38)

FOCUS AREA:
RIDGE AVENUE



Synergizing Public and Private Investment on Ridge Avenue (p. 32)





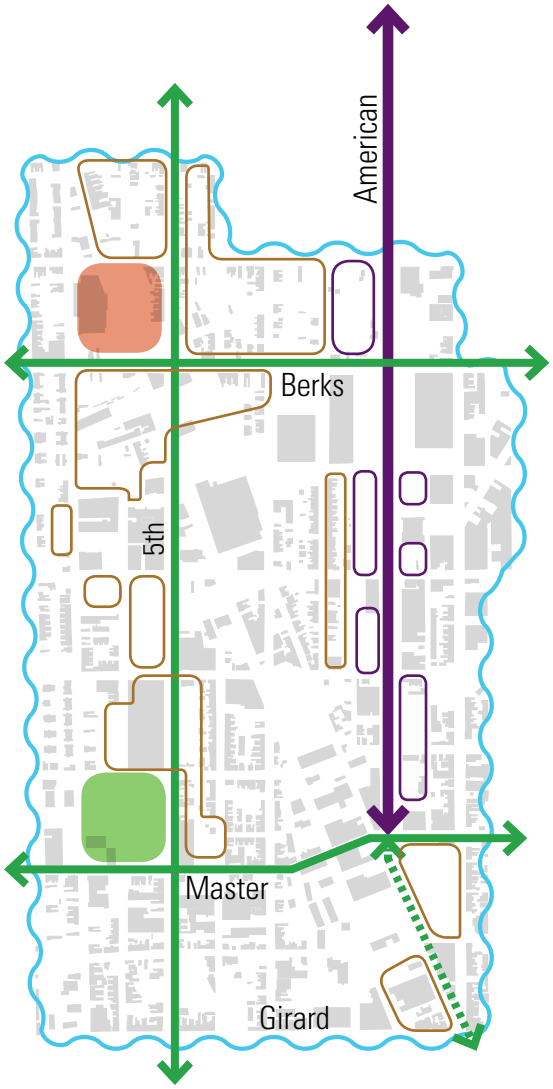
FOCUS AREA:
AMERICAN STREET

Balancing Industrial Legacy and Neighborhood Growth on American Street (p. 24)

FOCUS AREA >

American Street

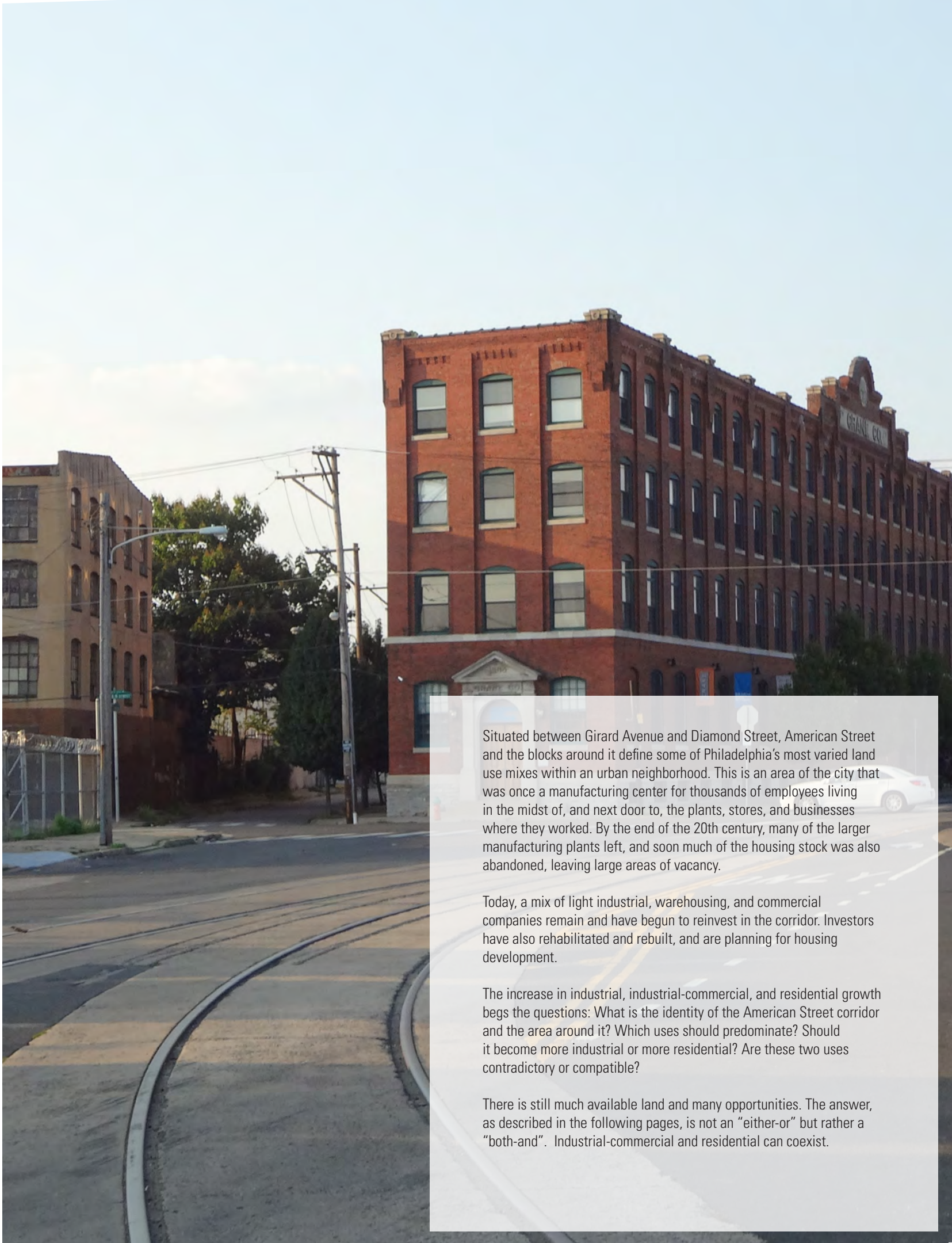
Balancing Industrial Legacy and Neighborhood Growth



Focus Area Goals

> **Improve the public realm**
- Green the 5th Street, Germantown Avenue, and American Street corridors
- Improve connections between residential blocks and neighborhood destinations
- Provide opportunities for stormwater infrastructure

> **Clarify the locations of industrial and residential uses**
- Identify areas for residential and industrial growth
- Clarify locations for single-family and multifamily residential development
- Identify, protect, and enhance the infrastructure that serves each type of land use



Situated between Girard Avenue and Diamond Street, American Street and the blocks around it define some of Philadelphia's most varied land use mixes within an urban neighborhood. This is an area of the city that was once a manufacturing center for thousands of employees living in the midst of, and next door to, the plants, stores, and businesses where they worked. By the end of the 20th century, many of the larger manufacturing plants left, and soon much of the housing stock was also abandoned, leaving large areas of vacancy.

Today, a mix of light industrial, warehousing, and commercial companies remain and have begun to reinvest in the corridor. Investors have also rehabilitated and rebuilt, and are planning for housing development.

The increase in industrial, industrial-commercial, and residential growth begs the questions: What is the identity of the American Street corridor and the area around it? Which uses should predominate? Should it become more industrial or more residential? Are these two uses contradictory or compatible?

There is still much available land and many opportunities. The answer, as described in the following pages, is not an "either-or" but rather a "both-and". Industrial-commercial and residential can coexist.

>Focus Area American Street - Existing Conditions

Differing Land Uses, a Variety of Opportunities

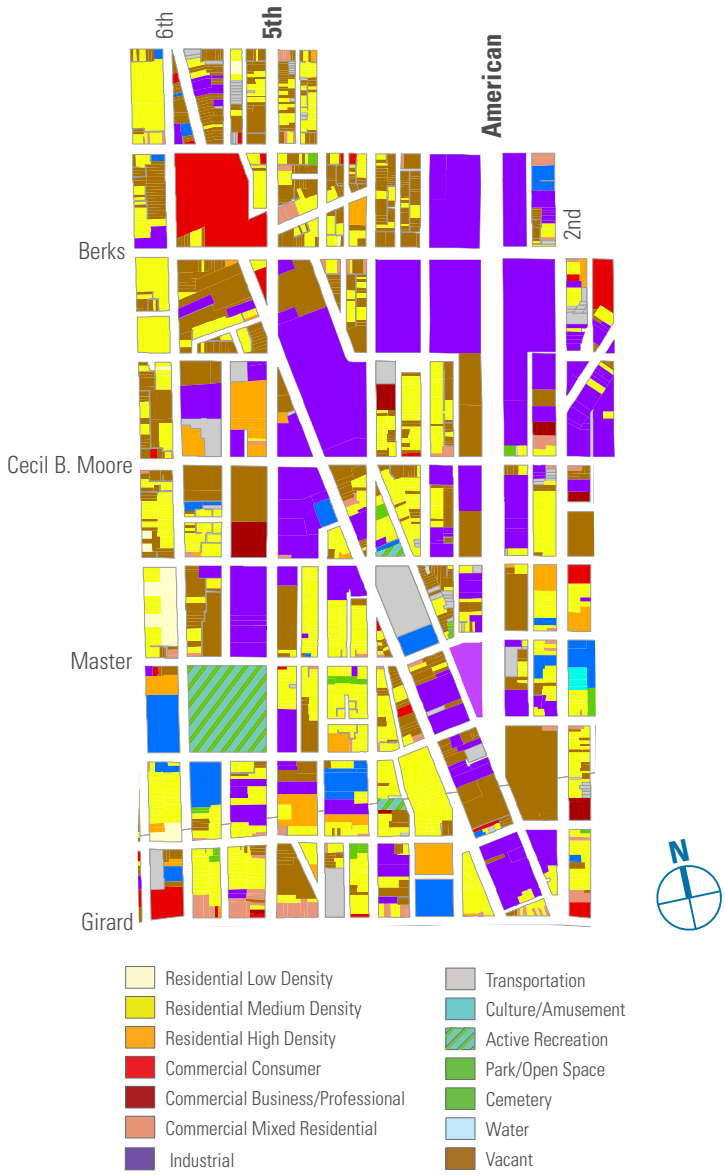
> Industrial and residential uses are already neighbors
- Across the street and next door
- Often share the same streets for access

> Streets and vacant lots vary in width, use, and amount of access
- Very narrow residential streets to the broadness of American Street
- Truck traffic is only reasonable on some streets, including American Street.

> Recent investment for residential, industrial, and commercial uses
- Both housing and places of local employment show growth.

> Vacant lots and buildings available in a variety of locations
- Housing growth can happen away from established industrial corridors.
- Selective industrial investment can occur close to existing residential blocks.

Existing Land Use



Industrial

Chaes Food

Industrial/Commercial

Crane Arts Building

Retail/Commercial

Cousin's Supermarket

MultiFamily Housing

Proposed SOKO Lofts

Single-Family Housing

2nd Street Corridor

Vacant Property

6th and Berks Vacant Land

>American Street - General Recommendations

Recommendations

Maintain, redevelop, and/or expand existing industrial uses.

Maintain, redevelop, and/or expand industrial-commercial mixed uses.

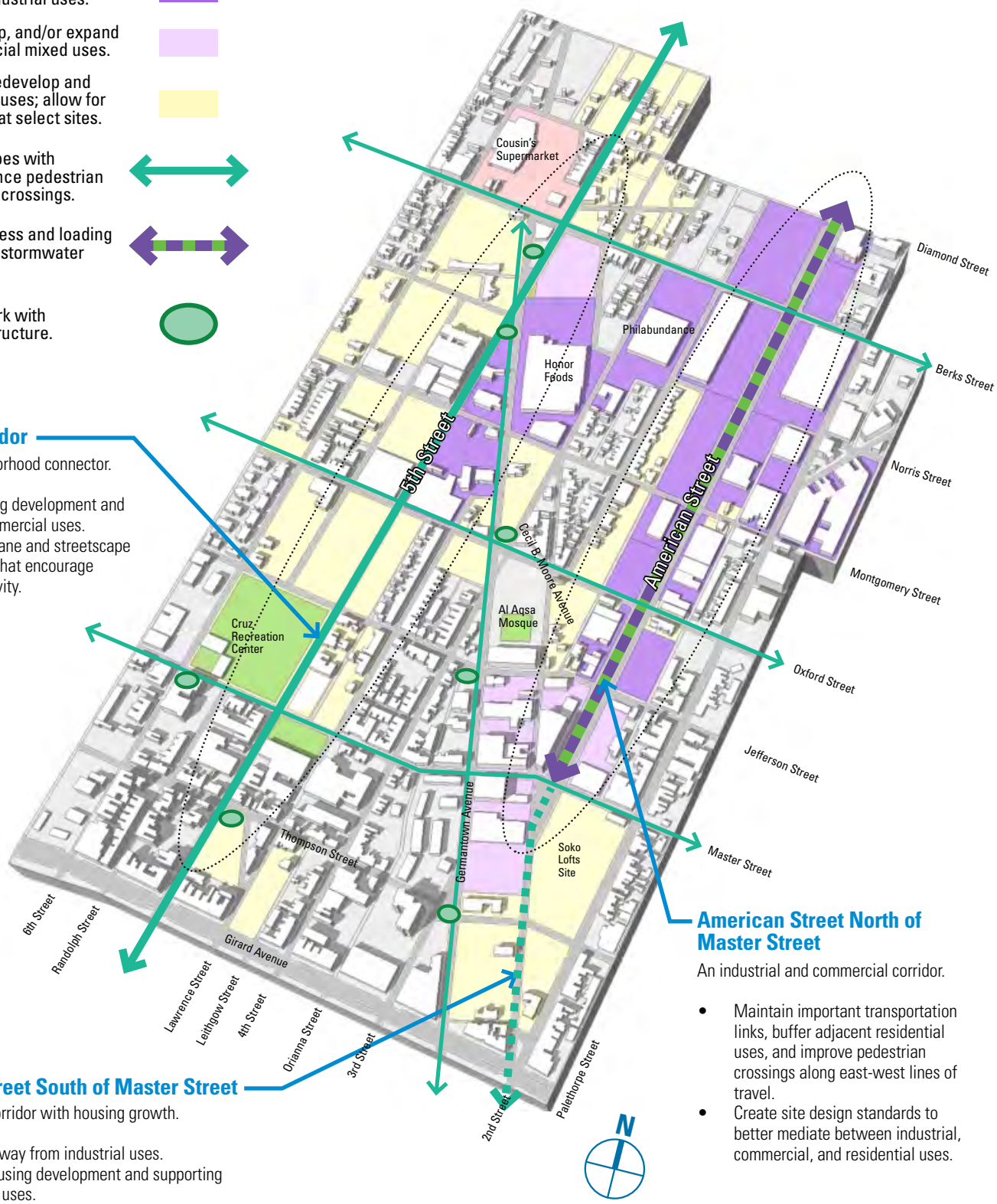
Priority blocks to redevelop and infill for residential uses; allow for ground-floor retail at select sites.

Improve streetscapes with landscaping. Enhance pedestrian access with better crossings.

Maintain truck access and loading areas. Incorporate stormwater improvements.

Develop pocket park with stormwater infrastructure.

NOTE:
Recommended changes in zoning for this focus area can be found on pages 80-83.



5th Street Corridor

An important neighborhood connector.

- Promote housing development and supporting commercial uses.
- Add a bicycle lane and streetscape improvements that encourage pedestrian activity.

American Street North of Master Street

An industrial and commercial corridor.

- Maintain important transportation links, buffer adjacent residential uses, and improve pedestrian crossings along east-west lines of travel.
- Create site design standards to better mediate between industrial, commercial, and residential uses.

American Street South of Master Street

A transitioning corridor with housing growth.

- Transition away from industrial uses.
- Promote housing development and supporting commercial uses.
- Add streetscape improvements that encourage pedestrian activity.

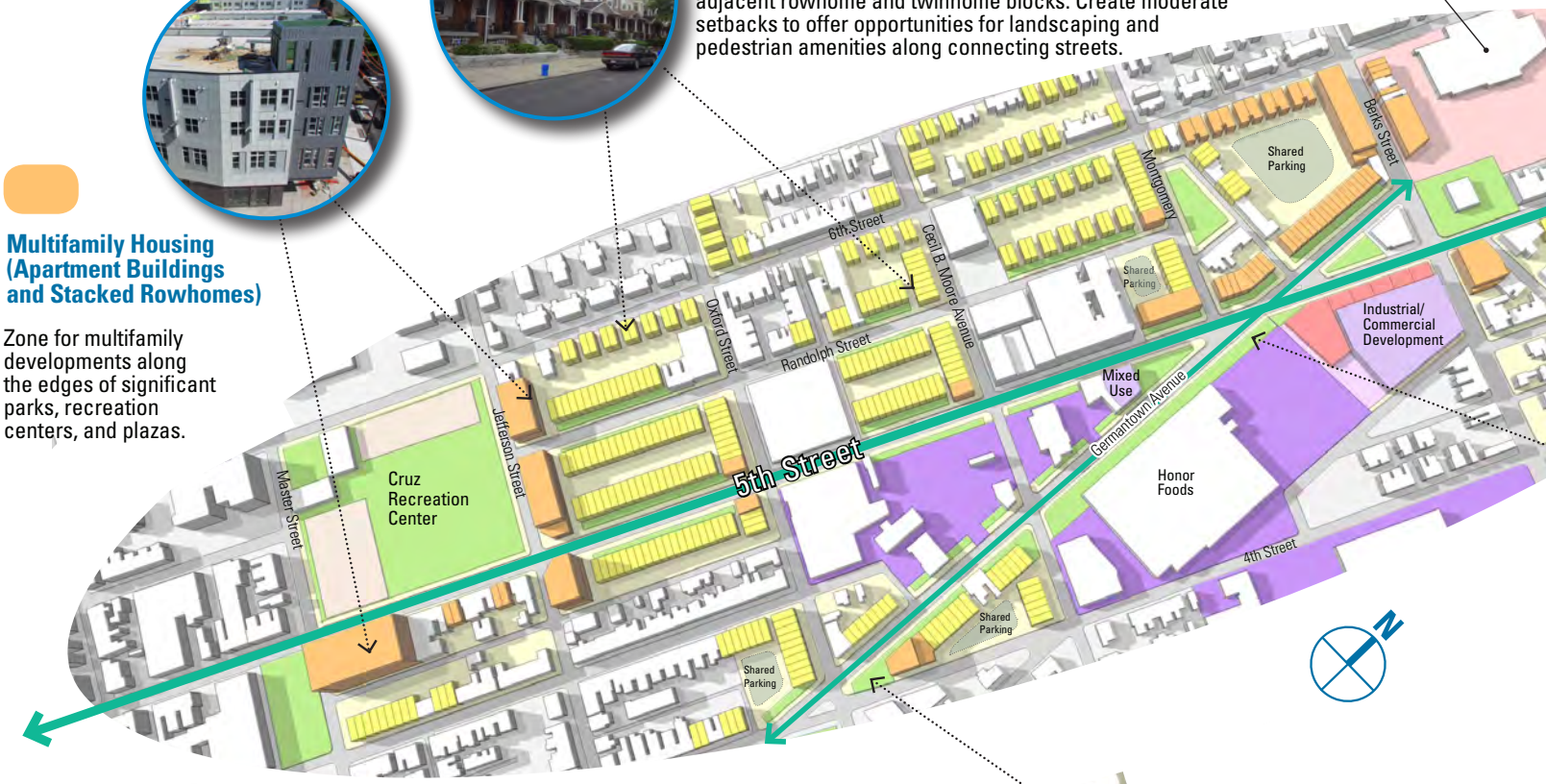
FOCUS AREA > American Street - Corridor Recommendations

Single-Family Housing (Twins and Rowhomes)

Zone for single-family developments consistent with adjacent rowhome and twinhome blocks. Create moderate setbacks to offer opportunities for landscaping and pedestrian amenities along connecting streets.

Multifamily Housing (Apartment Buildings and Stacked Rowhomes)

Zone for multifamily developments along the edges of significant parks, recreation centers, and plazas.



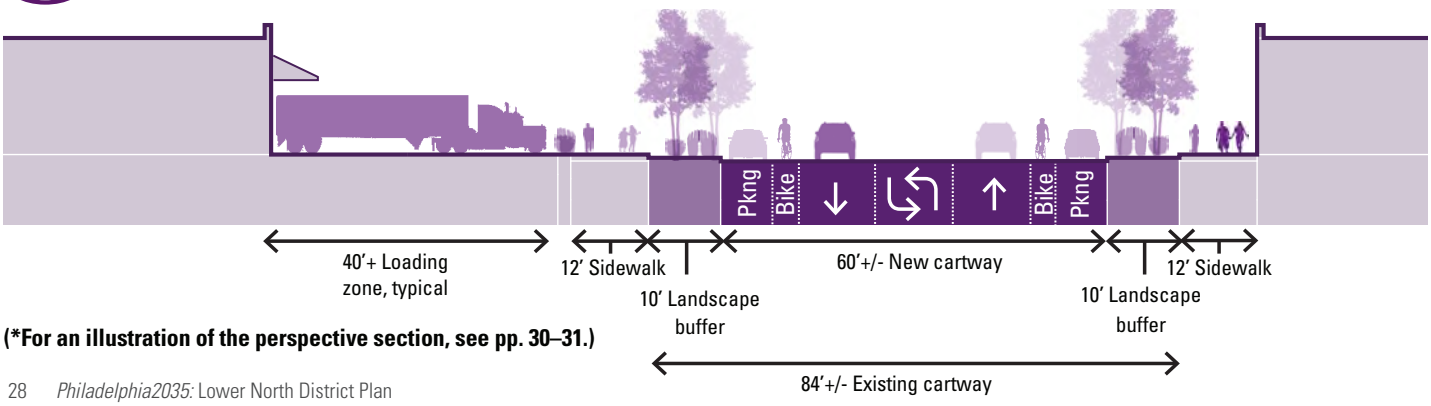
Over 900 new housing units are possible around the 5th Street corridor

5th Street Neighborhood Corridor

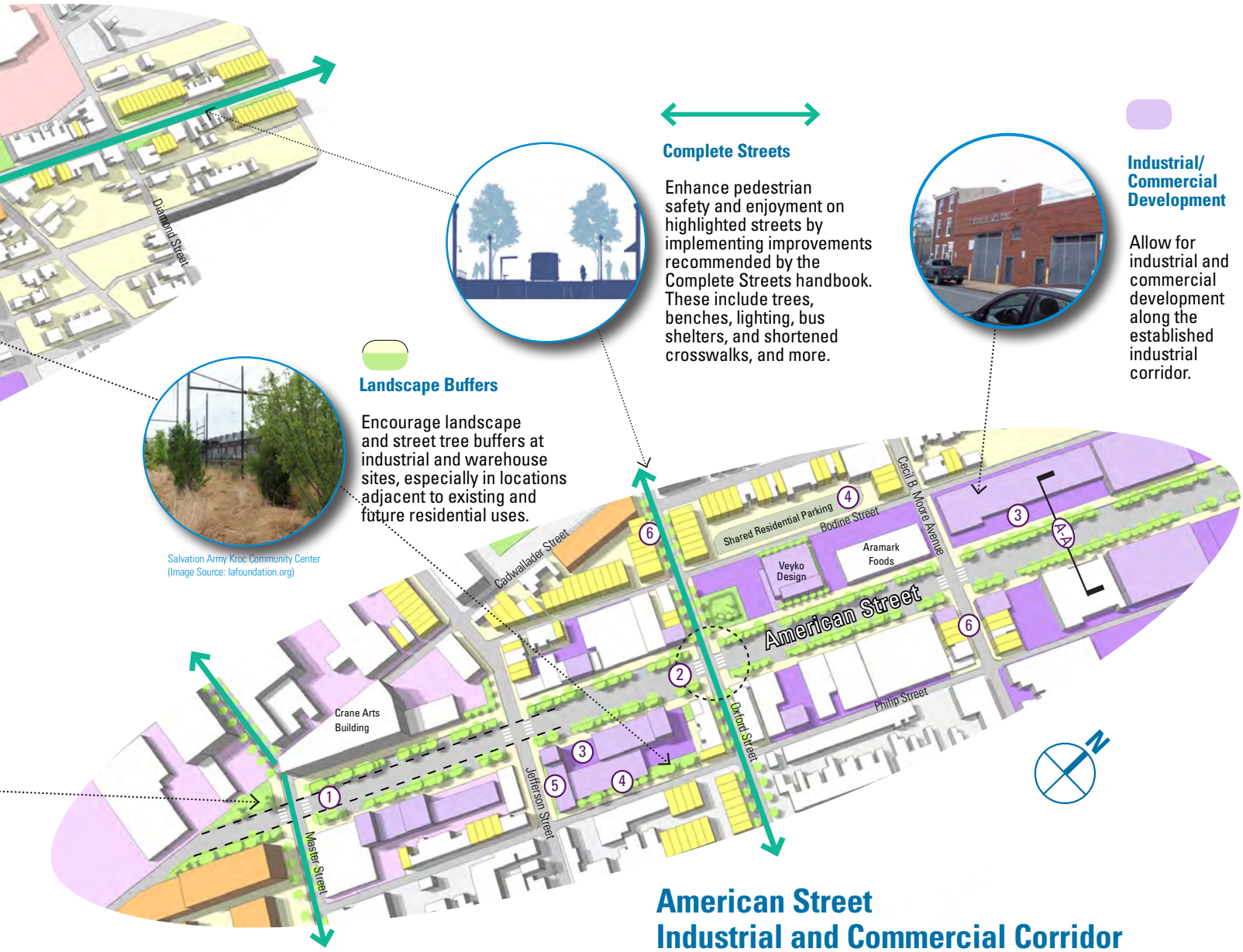
Pocket Parks

At triangular sites that are less suitable for redevelopment, encourage pocket parks with possible stormwater infrastructure where feasible.

A-A Typical Cross–Section at American Street*



(*For an illustration of the perspective section, see pp. 30–31.)



American Street Industrial and Commercial Corridor

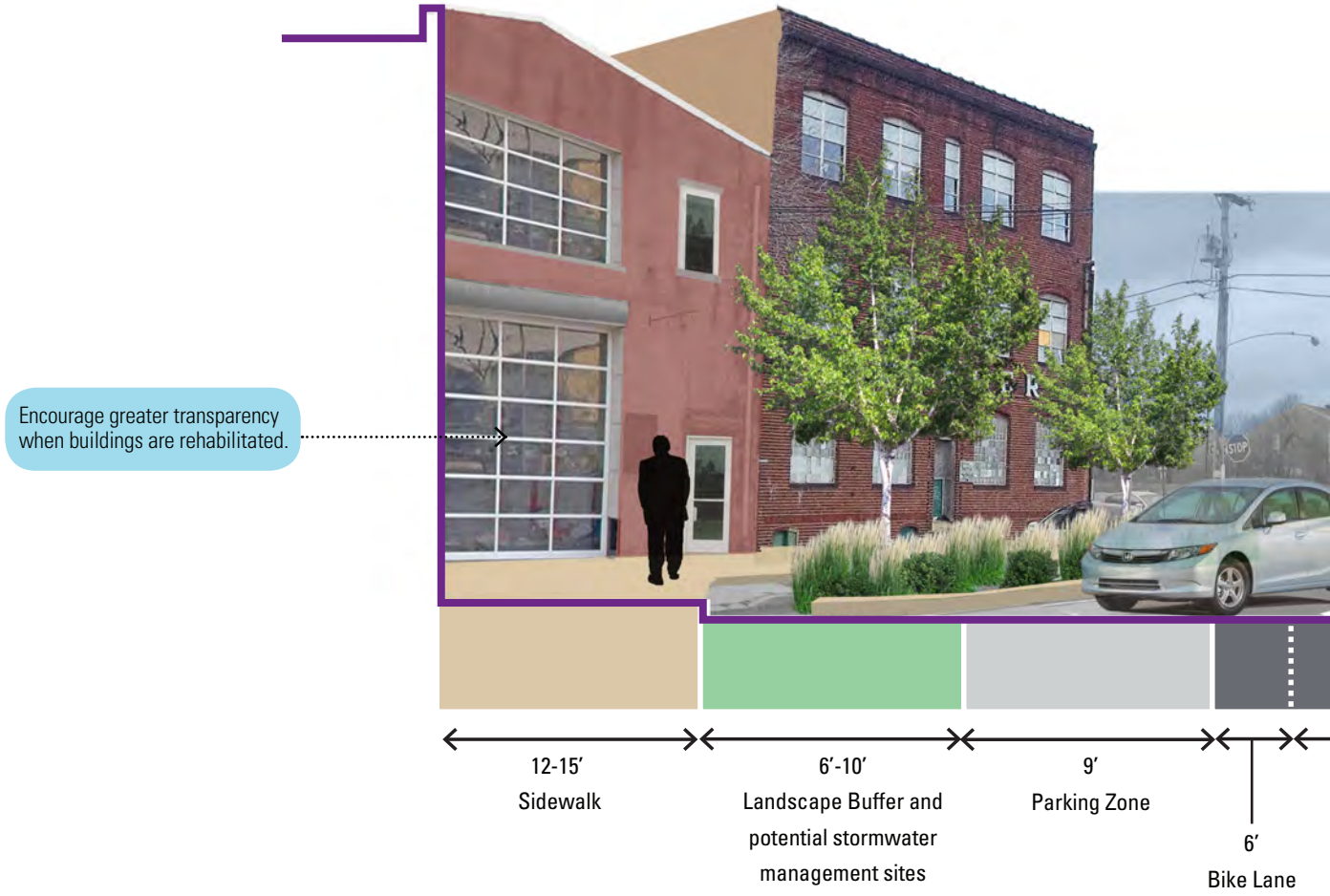
Proposed Design Standards for American Street

1. Maintain drive aisles for consistent truck traffic access.
2. Add curb bump–outs to shorten crosswalks at prominent intersections.
3. Place parking and loading facilities along American Street and away from residential streets.
4. Create buffers of parking and/or landscaping between industrial and residential uses.
5. On east-west connecting streets, restore street walls and allow infill housing on existing residential lots.
6. On east-west connecting streets, create architectural scales and use materials complementary to existing residential uses.

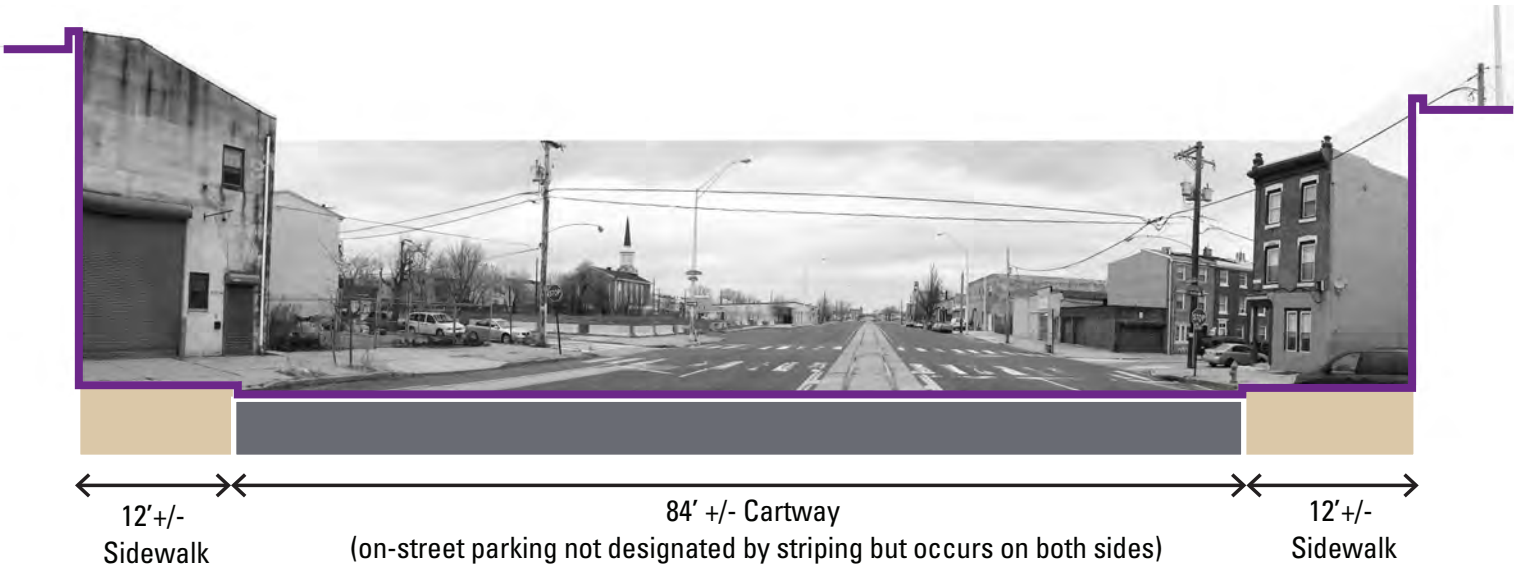
> Focus Area > American Street Proposed Cross Section

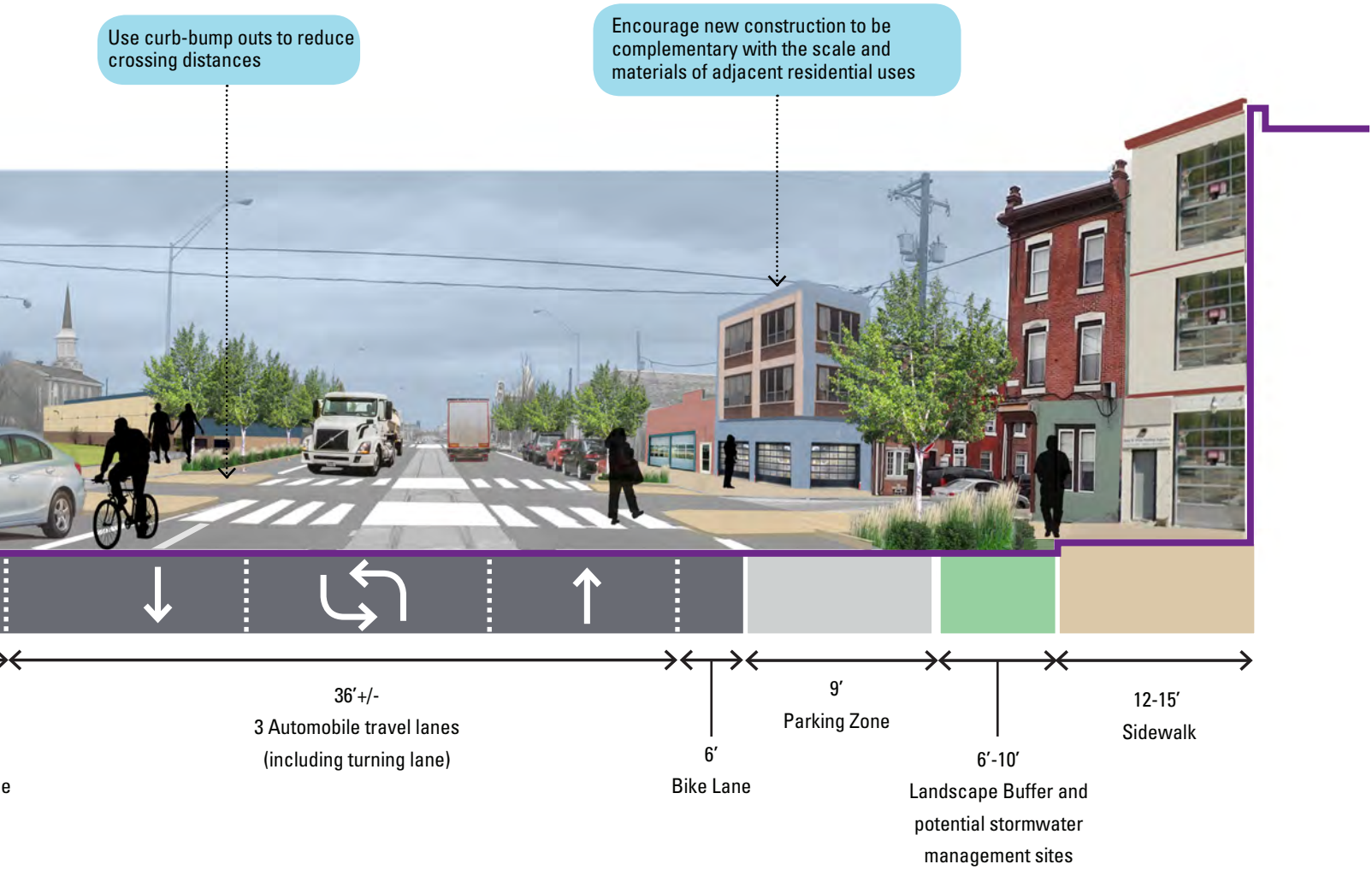
Balancing Industrial Uses and Residential Neighbors

- **The existing cartway is wider than is needed by industrial users**
  Excess capacity can support landscaping, stormwater infrastructure, and street beautification
  Excess capacity can support bike lanes
- **Industrial, commercial, and professional service uses can be neighborhood friendly**
  Encourage development and rehabilitation that has greater transparency on prominent street frontages
  Encourage architecture that is complementary to the scale and materials of neighboring residential structures
- **Changes and enhancements can improve pedestrian safety, access**
  Use curb bump-outs and shorten crosswalks
  Buffer pedestrian means of access with landscaping where possible, both along the cartway and along edges of industrial sites



> Existing Section





FOCUS AREA > Ridge Avenue

Synergizing Public and Private Investment

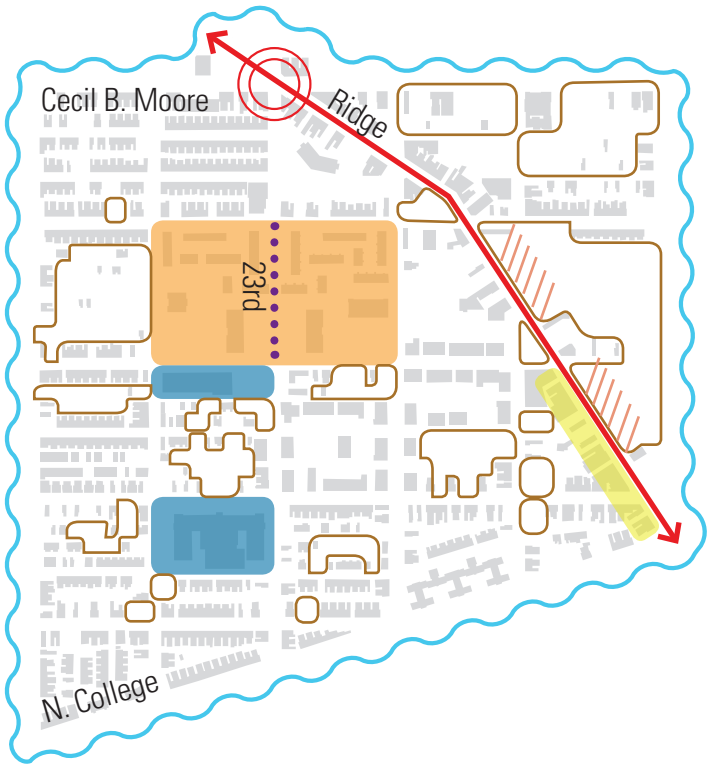
Focus Area Goals

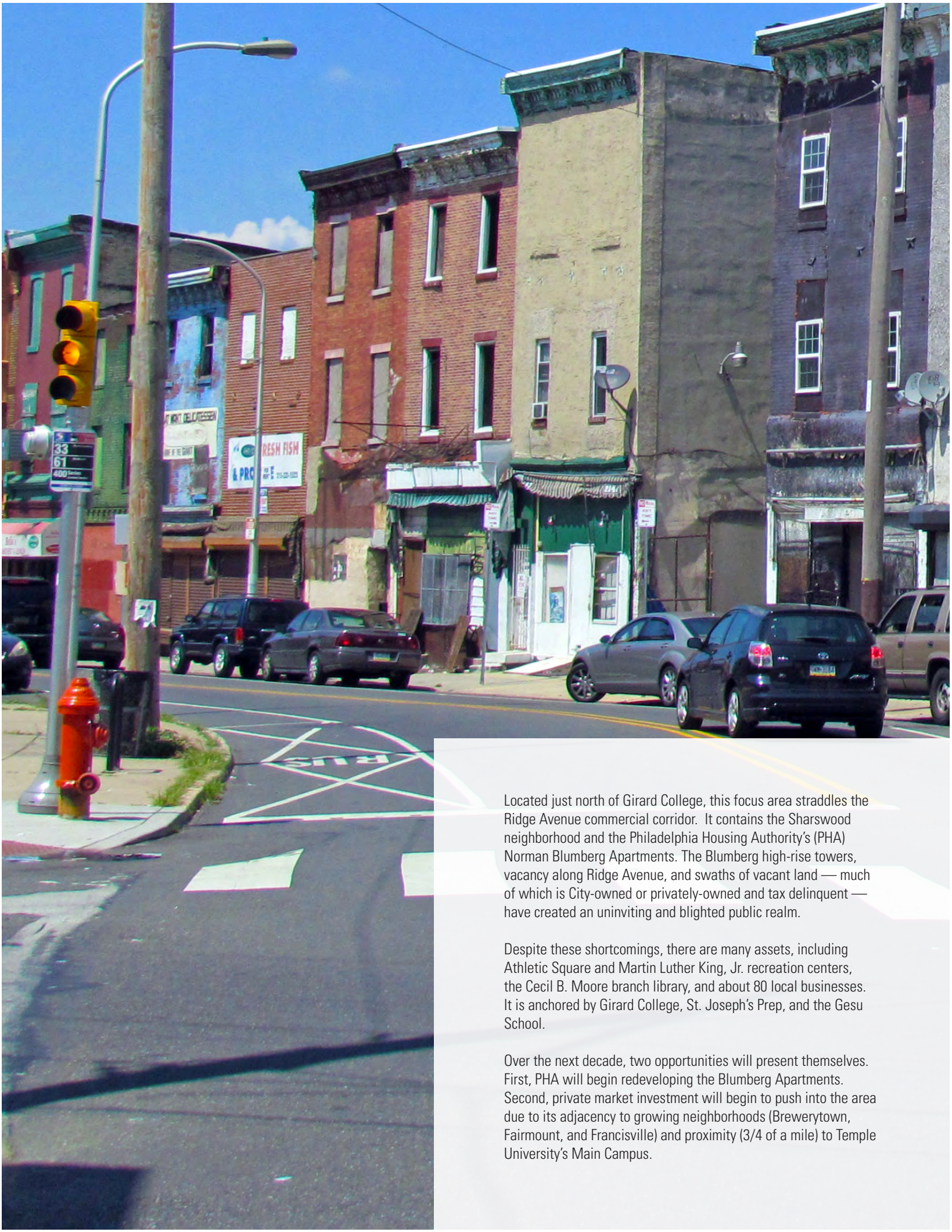
> Create a mixed-income community

- Redevelop the Norman Blumberg Apartments
- Repurpose vacant land with infill development
- Identify reuse opportunities for closed schools
- Create a new passive open space for the community

> Strengthen the Ridge Avenue commercial corridor

- Support existing businesses where the corridor is strong
- Transition away from commercial uses where the corridor is weak
- Repurpose vacant land with comtemporary retail space and green stormwater management infrastructure
- Beautify the corridor to enhance its role as an important gateway



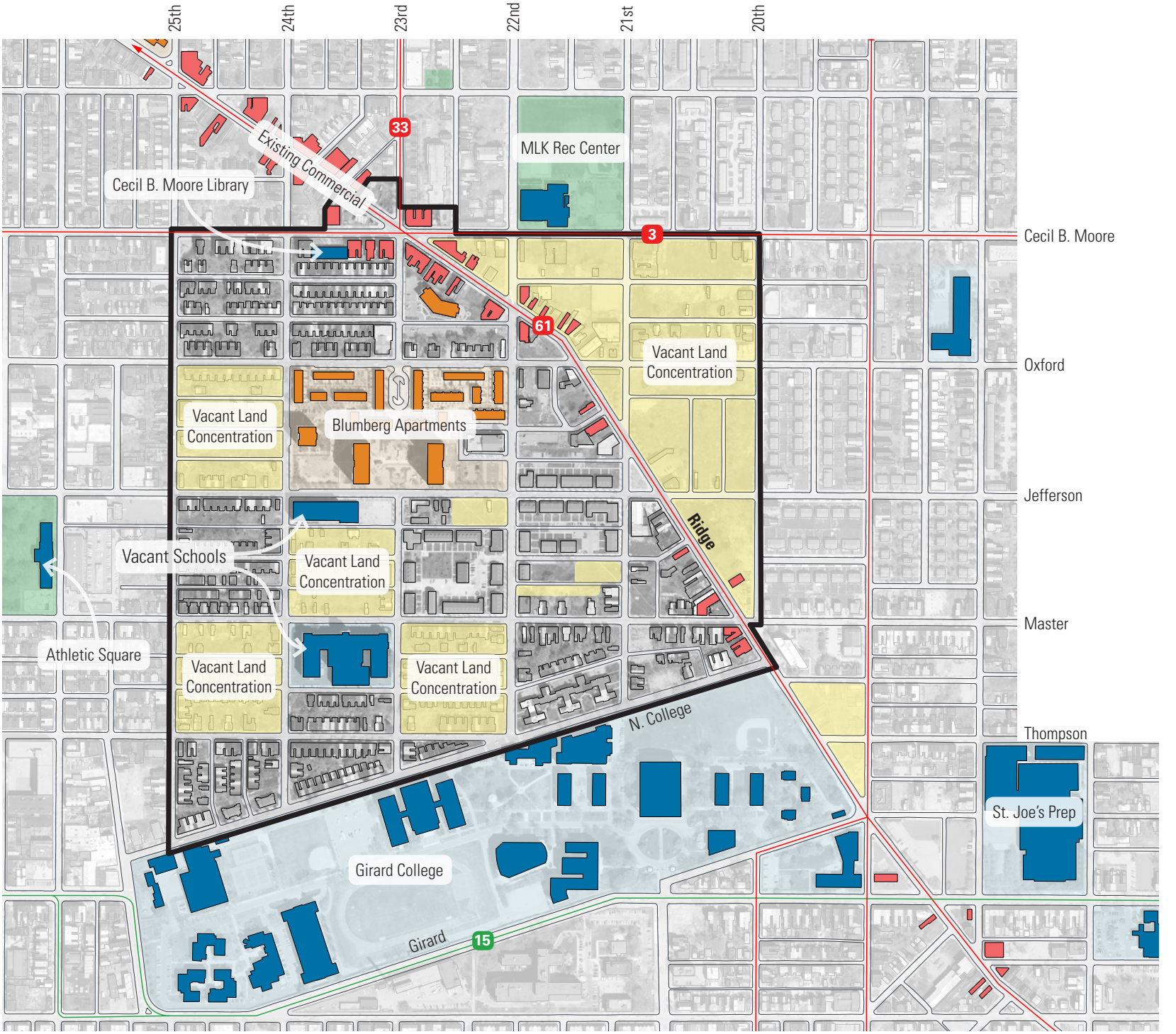


Located just north of Girard College, this focus area straddles the Ridge Avenue commercial corridor. It contains the Sharswood neighborhood and the Philadelphia Housing Authority's (PHA) Norman Blumberg Apartments. The Blumberg high-rise towers, vacancy along Ridge Avenue, and swaths of vacant land — much of which is City-owned or privately-owned and tax delinquent — have created an uninviting and blighted public realm.

Despite these shortcomings, there are many assets, including Athletic Square and Martin Luther King, Jr. recreation centers, the Cecil B. Moore branch library, and about 80 local businesses. It is anchored by Girard College, St. Joseph's Prep, and the Gesu School.

Over the next decade, two opportunities will present themselves. First, PHA will begin redeveloping the Blumberg Apartments. Second, private market investment will begin to push into the area due to its adjacency to growing neighborhoods (Brewerytown, Fairmount, and Francisville) and proximity (3/4 of a mile) to Temple University's Main Campus.

FOCUS AREA > Ridge Avenue - Existing Conditions



Towards a Mixed-Income Community

The Philadelphia Housing Authority will proceed with the redevelopment of the 501-unit Norman Blumberg Apartments. An abundance of vacant land in the area allows for a 1 to 1 replacement of the existing units. This can be accomplished through the redevelopment of the Blumberg site at a lower density (approximately 250 units) with the remainder of the affordable units scattered throughout the neighborhood side by side with up to 500 new market-rate units. Meanwhile, vacancy along Ridge Avenue between Oxford and Master Streets can be abated through the construction of larger-format retail along the eastern blockface and the rezoning of the western block face to a multifamily residential district.

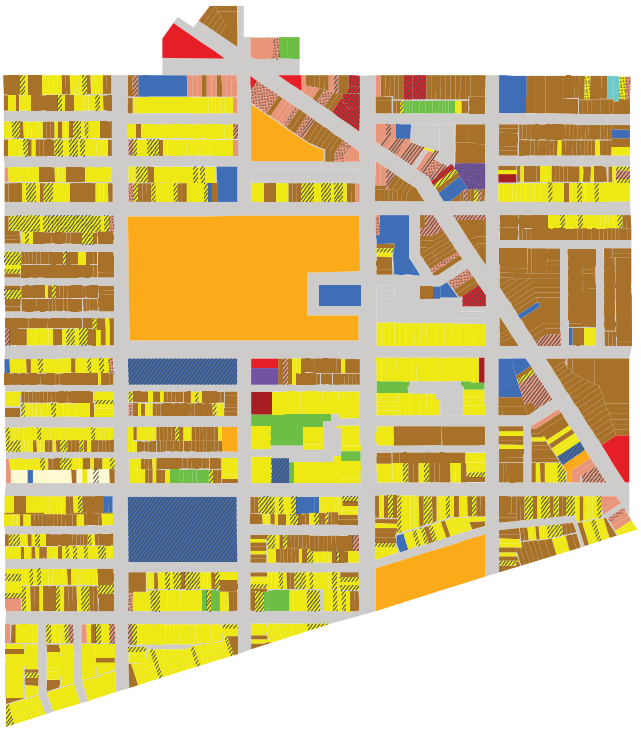
CASE STUDY

Martin Luther King, Jr. Plaza

In 2011, the Philadelphia Housing Authority completed the final phase of a 490-unit, mixed-income, mixed-tenure redevelopment in the Hawthorne neighborhood, located just north of Washington Avenue. MLK Plaza replaced a 576-unit high-rise block that had a blighting influence on the surrounding community. This public investment occurred in concert with a boom in the private real estate market in Hawthorne. As a result, affordable units are located side-by-side with market-rate units in a vibrant and walkable mixed-income community. MLK Plaza serves as a stunning example of how to leverage public and private investment towards the creation of a mixed-income community.

Hawthorne Park
Photo: Sandy Smith

Existing Land Use



- Residential Medium Density
- Residential High Density
- Commercial Consumer
- Commercial Business/Professional
- Commercial Mixed Residential
- Industrial
- Transportation
- Culture/Amusement
- Civic/Institutional
- Park/Open Space
- Vacant Land
- Vacant Building
- Partially Vacant Building

FOCUS AREA > Ridge Avenue - Recommendations

Infill Housing

> Redevelop blocks with high vacancy, City ownership, and tax delinquency with a mix of 750 subsidized and market-rate housing units. A mix of units will ensure against recreating concentrations of poverty.

> Emphasize rehabilitating existing units, minimal displacement, context-sensitive design, a slight reduction in traditional density, and the conversion of narrow side streets into rear parking areas.

Sharswood Park

> Build a park on a centrally located plot of land characterized by high vacancy, City ownership, and tax delinquency. This recommendation is a placeholder for some type of green space within the redevelopment. If the park is not built, the plan does not fail.

> Frame the park with repurposed buildings to activate it.

Adaptive Reuse of Schools

> Encourage the reuse of Vaux and Reynolds Schools for community services and senior housing.

See detail study, pp. 38-39

Blumberg Apartments

> Redevelop the Blumberg Apartments into lower-density housing that matches the traditional neighborhood context.
> 150 replacement units should be occupied by mixed-income, mixed-tenure households (the target is at least 40 percent homeowner).
> The senior housing tower should remain.
> 23rd Street should be reintroduced to provide greater connectivity within the neighborhood.

Support Businesses

> Support businesses on Ridge Avenue through streetscape improvements, facade improvements, and corridor cleaning.

Image source: Google Streets

Mixed-Use, Larger-Format Retail with Residential Above

> Reposition concentrations of vacant land along Ridge Avenue to allow for retail uses such as a modern grocery store or pharmacy.

> Require the buildings to hold the street wall and to be oriented towards Ridge Avenue, with parking located to the side or rear.

> Encourage residential or commercial uses on the upper floors.

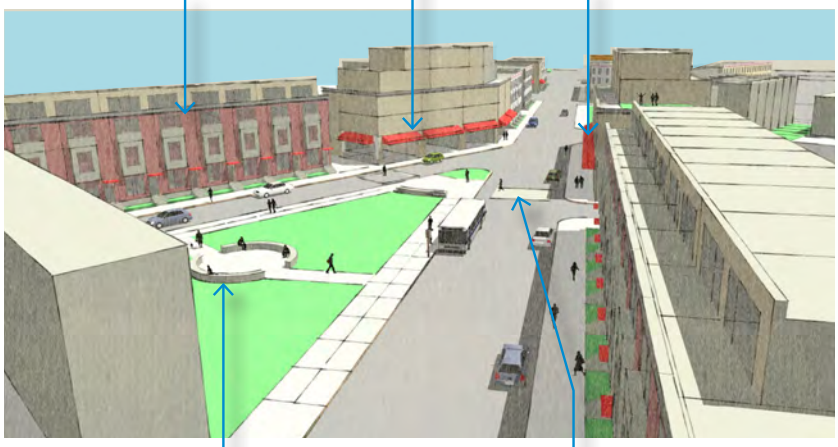
Neighborhood Greening

> Explore using irregularly shaped land at prominent corners along Ridge Avenue for green stormwater infrastructure projects. These projects could become placemaking elements in the larger redevelopment scheme.

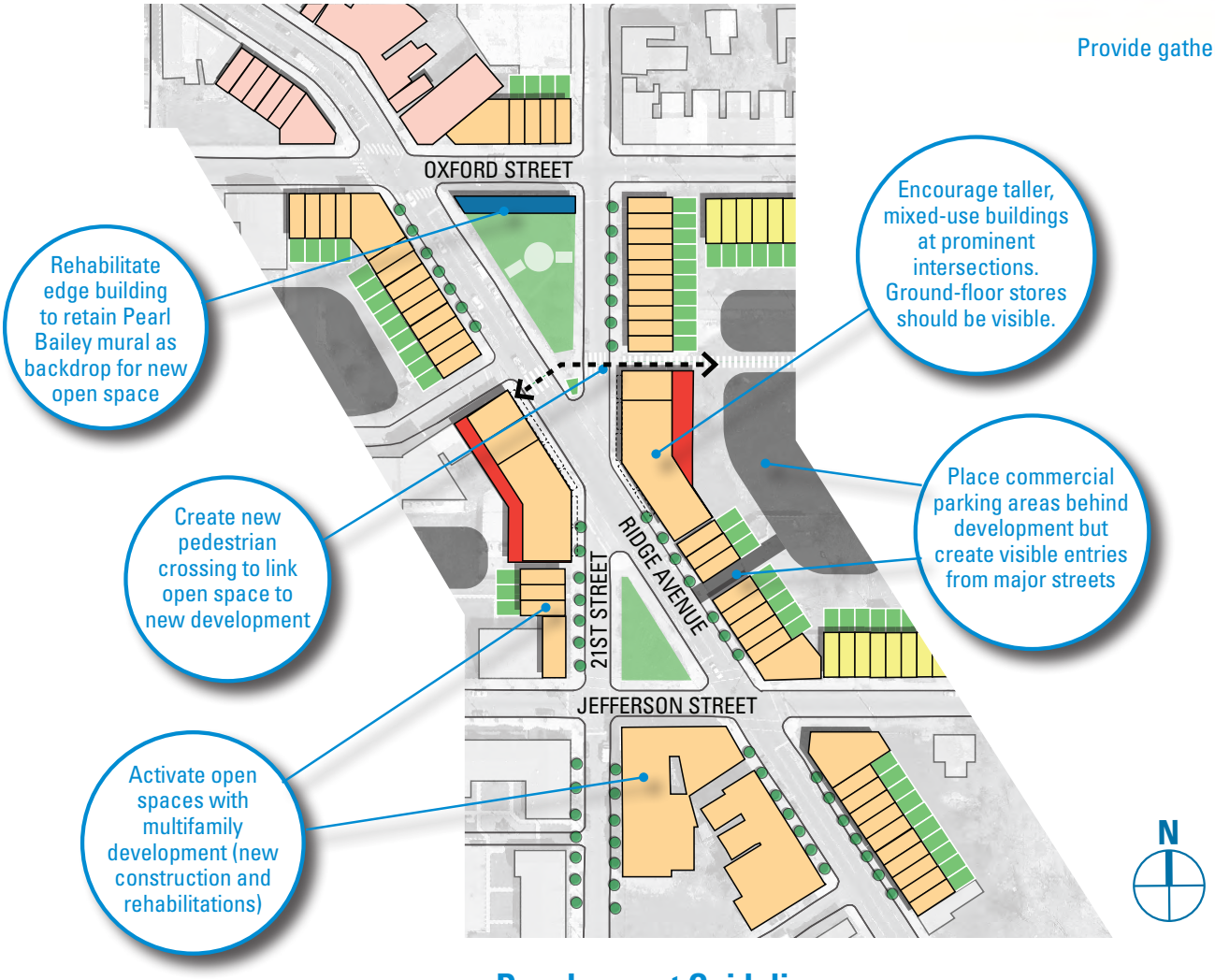
"Right Sizing" Ridge Avenue

> Rezone sections of Ridge Avenue where commercial uses are no longer viable. The zoning should allow only multifamily uses.

FOCUS AREA > 21st and Ridge Avenue - Detail Area



Bird's-Eye View Looking South



Development Guidelines

Proposed Eye-Level View
Ridge Avenue Looking Southeast

Existing Eye-Level View
Ridge Avenue Looking Southeast

Recreating a neighborhood hub with new residents

The intersection of 21st Street and Ridge Avenue is surrounded by mostly vacant land and buildings as well as by a mural honoring singer Pearl Bailey. There is a promising opportunity to recreate a vibrant neighborhood crossing by retaining the vacant land between 21st Street and Ridge Avenue as community open space that is surrounded by new residential development. Modest multifamily construction along open space edges can restore people and activity, while future retail and mixed-used development may be best placed at the crossing of 21st Street and Ridge Avenue. At that location, retail stores can takenadvantage of multiple sight and travel lines for signage as well as foot traffic.

FOCUS TOPIC > Vacant Property

Turning a Liability into an Asset

Focus Area Goals

> **Identify areas and types of vacancy in which to concentrate stabilization and development strategies.**

- Select concentrations in both City Council districts (5th and 7th)
- Select concentrations throughout the Lower North district
- Coordinate actions with recently established Philadelphia Land Bank

> **Develop common-sense interventions, taking into account:**

- Clusters of homeowners
- Surrounding assets (recreation centers, shopping plazas)
- The strength or weakness of the real estate market
- The expense and likelihood of City interventions

The 480 acres of vacant property in the Lower North District, if assembled, would equal all of the land between Philadelphia's five original squares.

Vacant and unkept properties are ubiquitous in the Lower North District: 66 percent of blocks contain some level of vacancy. Almost one-third of the City's vacant land is located within the Lower North District. Citywide, the cost is felt as decreased revenue from property taxes, as well as the allocation of resources to maintenance, upkeep, and safety measures. At the community level, property owners face decreased property values and diminished public safety by being located near vacant land and buildings.

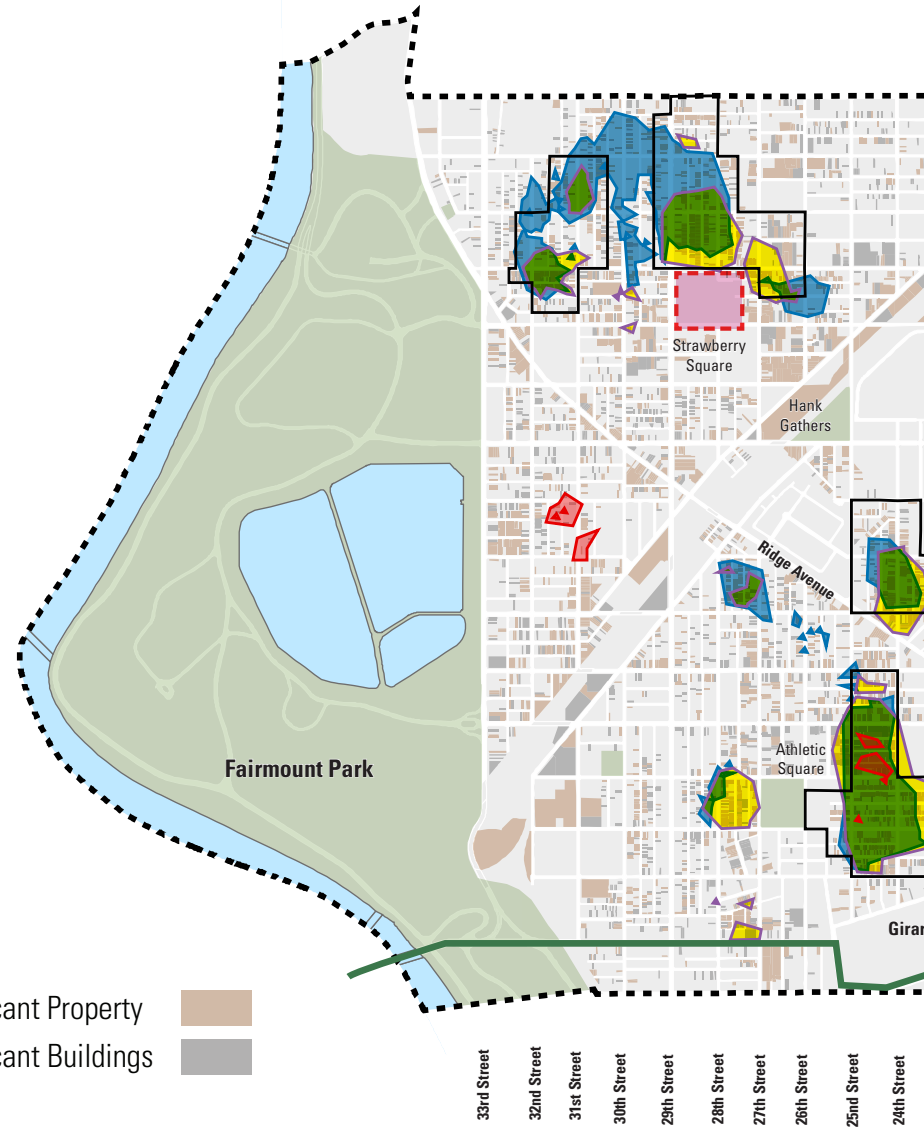
The vacant land and structures in the Lower North District present an opportunity to implement both traditional and innovative strategies to improve residents' lives. Philadelphia's Land Bank will ensure that these opportunities are realized by consolidating land disposition within one agency and encouraging faster disposition to return land and buildings to productive use.

FOCUS TOPIC > Vacant Property - District Wide Analysis

In 2014, the City of Philadelphia created the Philadelphia Land Bank. The land bank's major goal is to return vacant property to productive use by consolidating surplus City property into one agency, streamlining disposition, and acquiring tax delinquent private property.

For the Lower North District Plan, PCPC identified census tracts with three characteristics: concentrations of vacancy; a high number of tax delinquent properties; and many vacant City-owned lots and buildings. Seven areas emerged which this plan suggests for priority interventions. These recommendations could become part of the strategic plan that the PCPC and the land bank are required to prepare to guide acquisition and the sale of land held by the land bank.

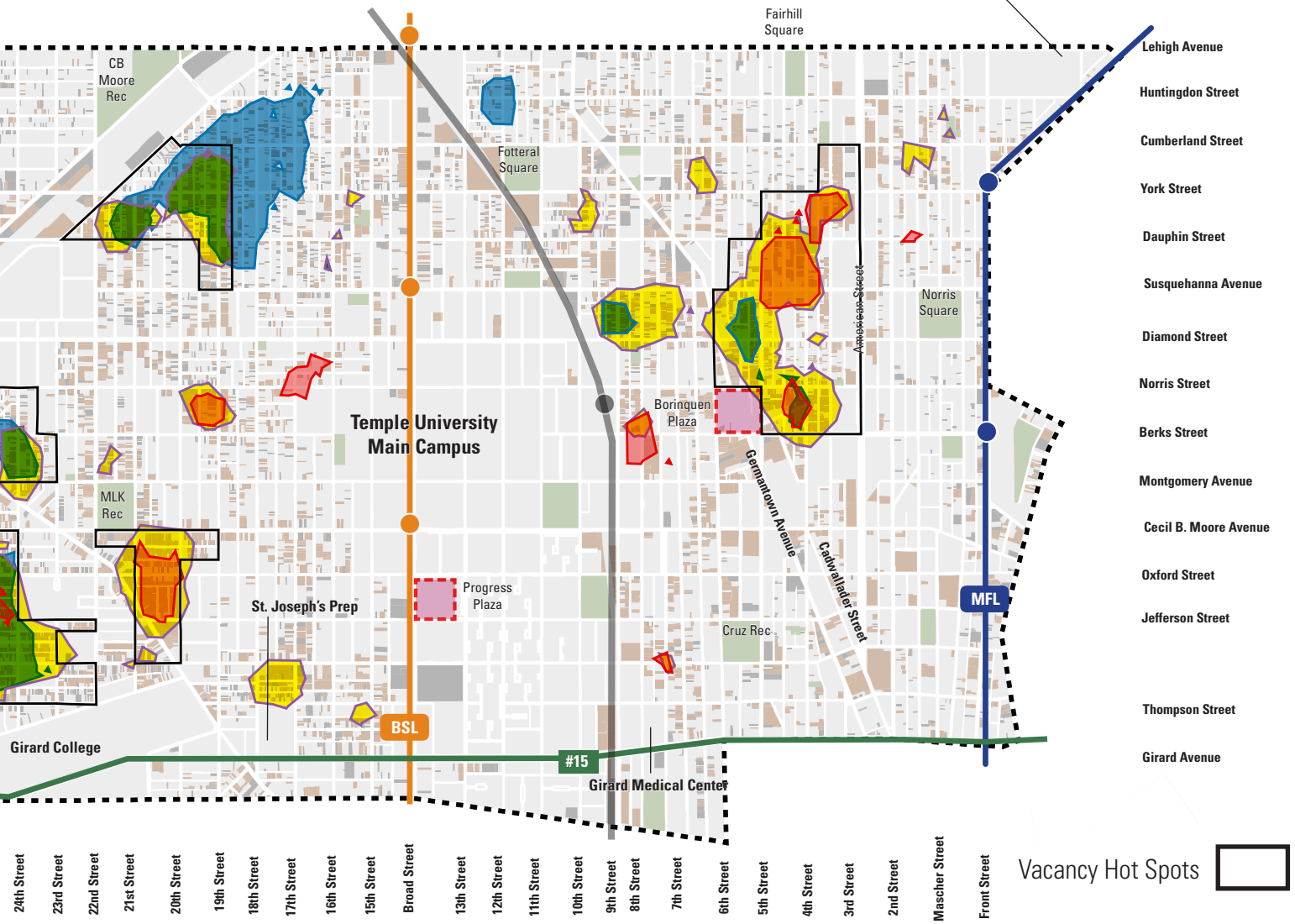
The strategic plan must include the following elements: an analysis of market conditions, an inventory and mapping of vacant properties, recommended uses of properties, annual targets for the number of properties acquired and transferred; and proposed goals that support *Philadelphia 2035* and accepted community-produced plans where equitable development is addressed.

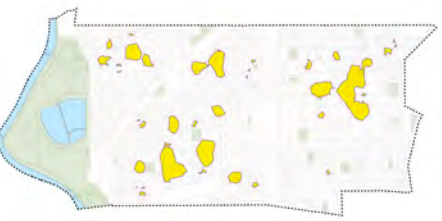


How much vacant residential property is in the Lower North District?

Of the approximately 34,000 rowhome lots in the Lower North District, there are roughly 8,000 vacant lots and 3,000 vacant structures, about 3 in every 10 rowhome properties.

Vacant Property Hot Spots

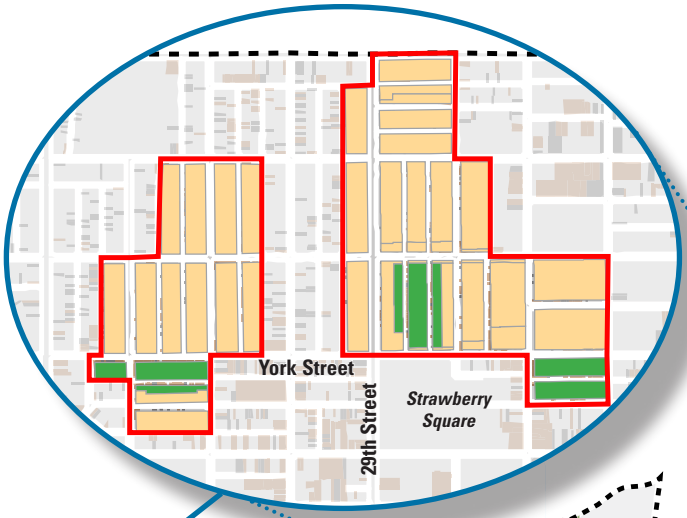




Concentrations of Vacant Property

Concentrations of Tax Delinquent Property

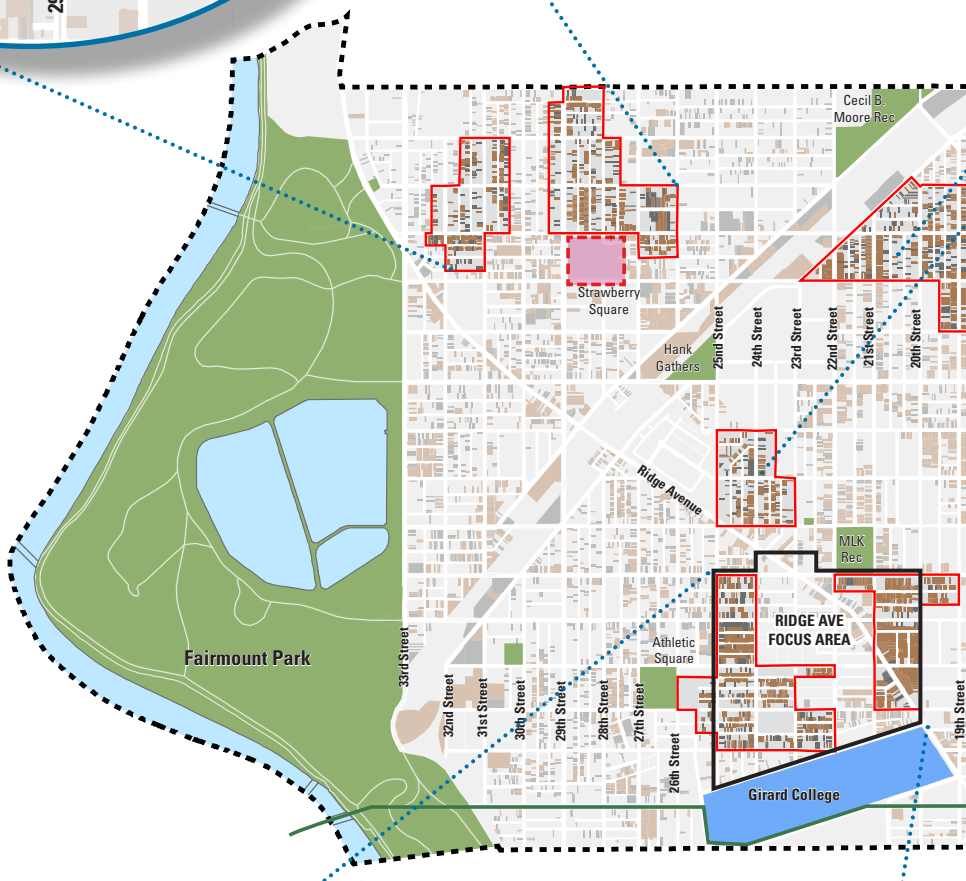
Concentrations of Government Owned Property



Strawberry Mansion: These areas were selected because of the prevalence of properties that have been tax delinquent for more than two years. Many blocks are intact, although vacant buildings are prevalent on a few blocks. Strategies are focused on improving the quality of life for existing residents.

Vacant homes on largely occupied blocks should be rehabilitated and occupied, whereas vacant lots should be cleaned, greened, and subject to targeted code enforcement. Existing programs that assist homeowners with property repairs should also be targeted on these blocks.

Larger blocks of vacant land should be greened and preserved for development; vacant structures on these blocks should be sealed. Further investigation should be made into the causes of tax delinquency within this zone. Relief measures should be explored for homeowners able to demonstrate financial hardship.



Hot Spot Strategies

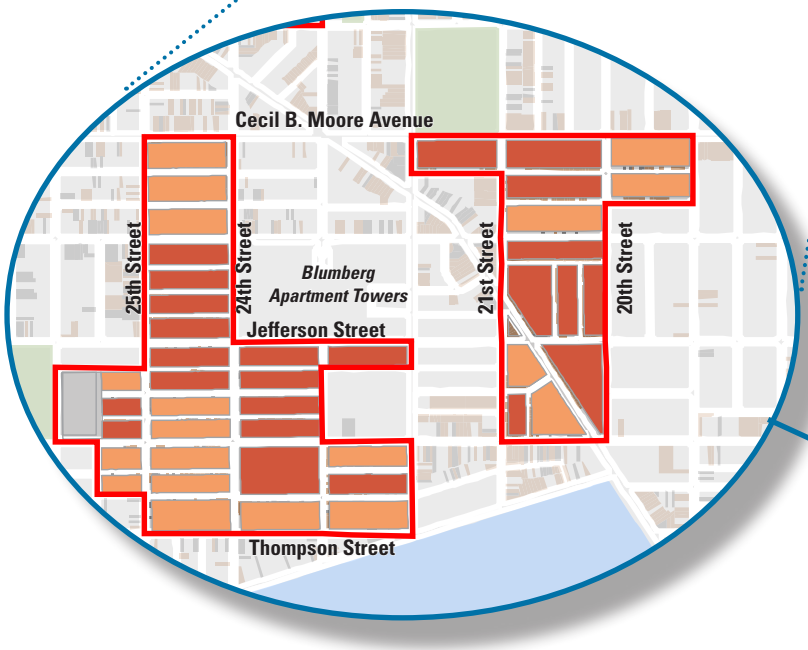
Residential Stabilization

Infill Development

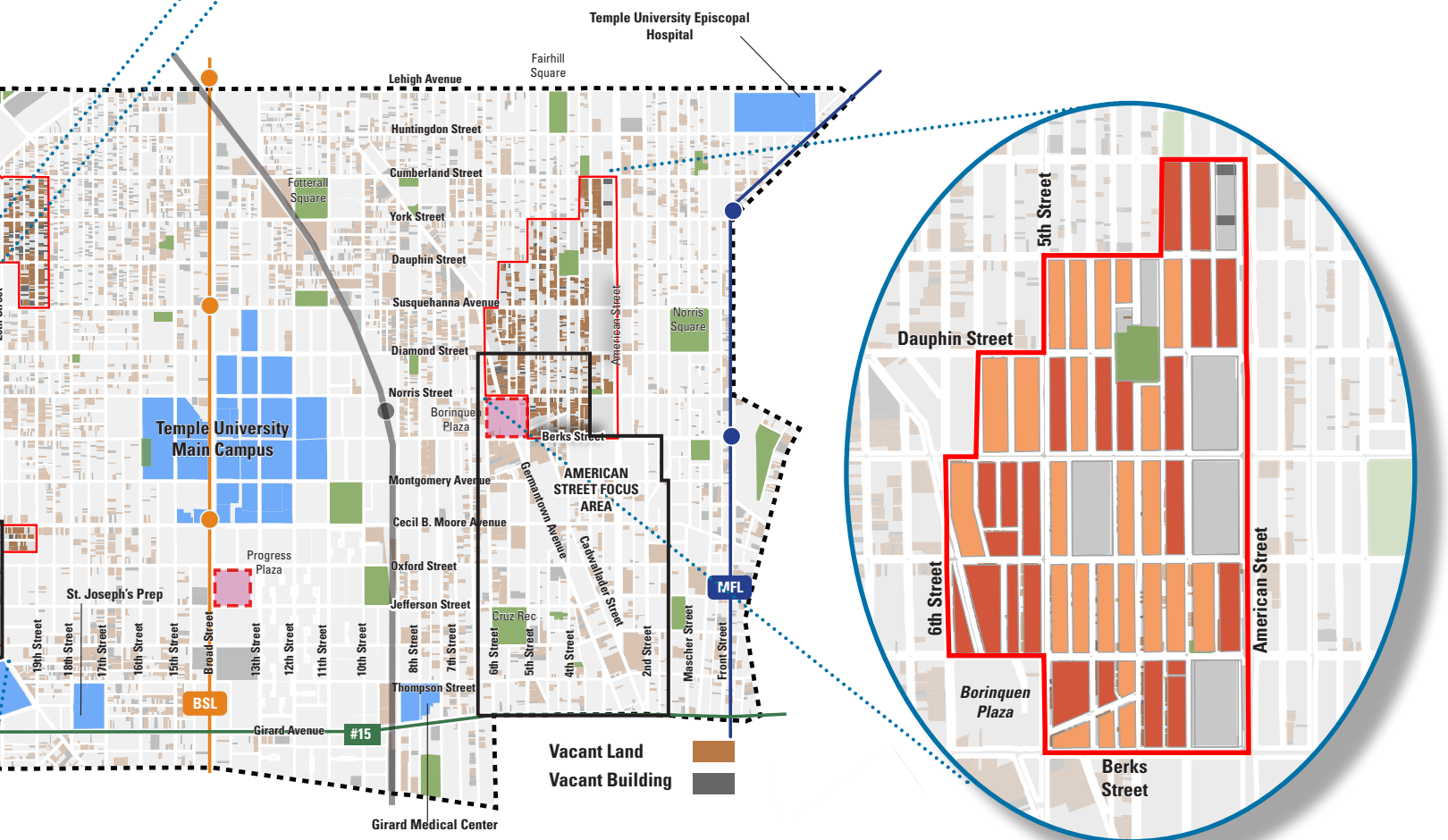
Wholesale (whole block) Development

Clean and Maintain Vacant Lots/ Secure Vacant Houses

No Action



North Central: The concentration of tax delinquent properties and vacant land in this area make them prime for specific interventions. Each of the tools is intended to be applied for the entirety of the designated area. The most immediate is targeted code enforcement. Code enforcement involves inspectors from the Department of Licenses & Inspections visiting the area to ensure that each property and use is in compliance with City code. Another strategy involves investigating whether there are parcels that could be used for community open space or stormwater management. A third is cleaning and greening the existing vacant lots. Improving the current state of vacant lots will increase the quality of life for residents and will help protect their investment.



Eastern North Philadelphia: This area has both City-owned property and vacant land that could be assembled for development. The analysis for these blocks focused on whether wholesale or infill development should be encouraged. The current level of occupancy, building type, and condition of the structures were all considered. There are also a series of blocks within the area in which no action was recommended. For instance, existing active industrial uses are recommended to remain. On blocks within which infill is designated (see the graphic at right), proposed development should respect the surrounding density and form of development.

Sharswood: This area, defined by Ridge Avenue and Girard College, has the greatest potential for market-rate development compared to the other intervention zones, based on a 2012 market analysis performed by The Reinvestment Fund and increasing home sale prices. It is also the most blighted. East of Ridge Avenue, blocks of vacant land dominate: to the west, vacant and tax delinquent buildings abound. Anchoring these areas is the Blumberg Apartments, one of the few high-rise public housing sites left in the city. This property, slated to be demolished and redeveloped, has the potential to redefine this quadrant. Incentives for market-rate development would be well invested in this zone. Wholesale development is encouraged where there are large assemblages of vacant or severely tax-delinquent properties. In blocks where there are high proportions of sound buildings, infill development is more appropriate. Housing assistance for existing homeowners should be targeted to these infill

FOCUS TOPIC > Vacant Property - Detailed Analysis

Relative Vacancy Analysis

Range of Opportunities and Strategies

A further analysis of the Lower North District east of Broad Street shows specific interventions based on the amount of vacancy, and the configuration of vacancy, in each block.

Large sections of South Kensington and Norris Square, especially around Towey Recreation Center and Hancock Playground, have low vacancy. Blocks surrounding Cruz Recreation Center in South Kensington/ Olde Kensington and Fairhill Square in West Kensington should be prioritized for interventions. The types of interventions are listed on the following page.

Low-vacancy blocks require the fewest amount of actions, but the most consistent attention by the City to ensure their continued stability. High-vacancy blocks are the most appropriate for clearance and assembly for redevelopment. Code enforcement and disposition of City-owned land should be used within all block types.

In low-vacancy and moderate-vacancy blocks, renovations of existing buildings, if they are structurally sound, should be prioritized over demolition and new construction.

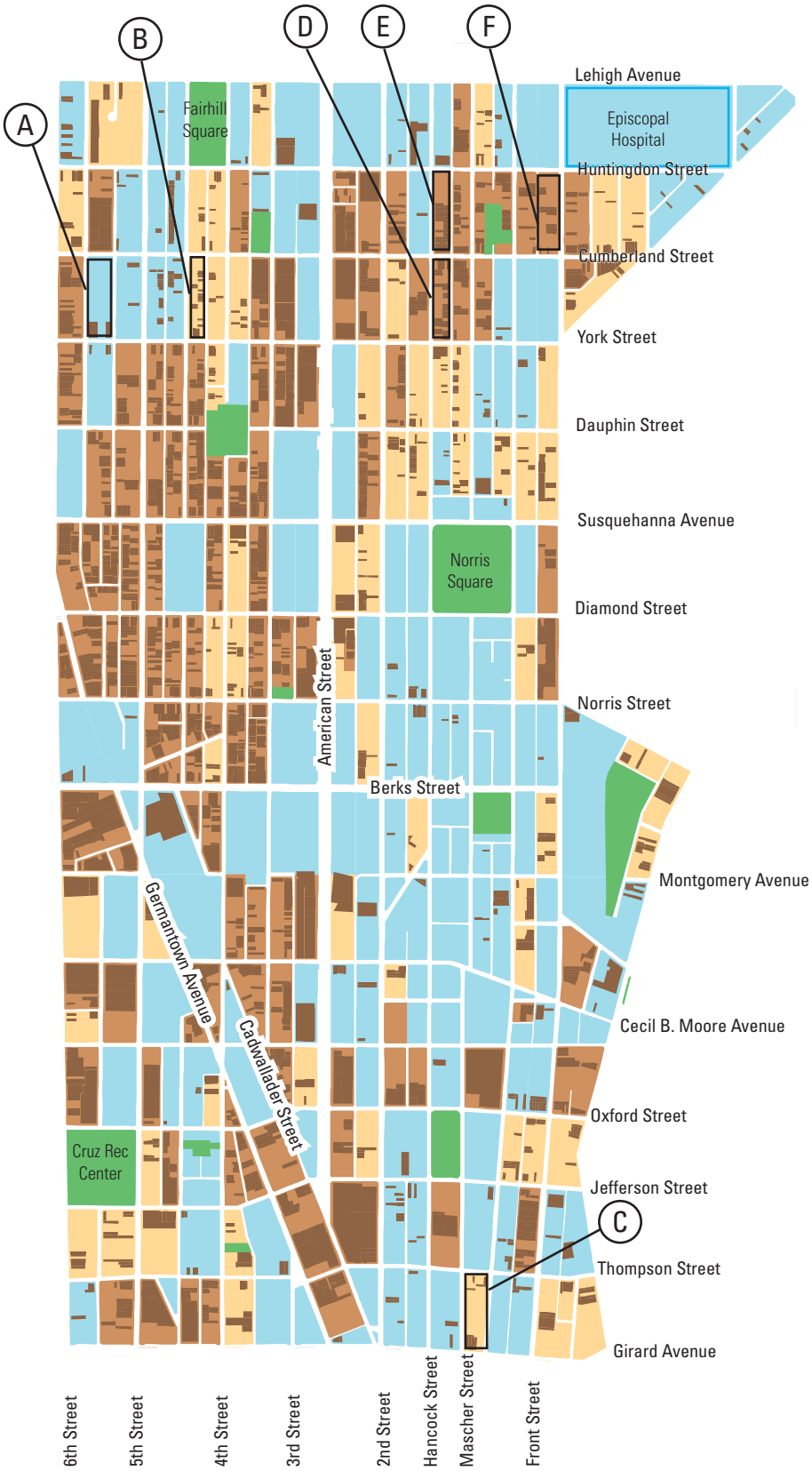
Vacant Parcels

Relative Vacancy

Low Vacancy/Stable

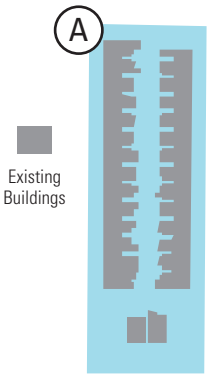
Moderate Vacancy

High Vacancy



Relative Vacancy Case Studies

Low Vacancy/Stable



Encourage the use of vacant lots for sideyards or infill construction. Employ code enforcement of existing structures to prevent block deterioration.

Moderate Vacancy

Scattered

Encourage the adaptation of vacant lots in a manner compatible with residential uses. Examples include sideyards and gardens. Discourage parking and auto storage.

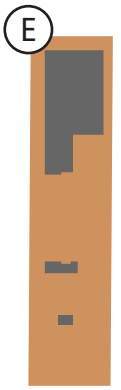
Clustered

Encourage the consolidation and adaptation of vacant lots in a manner compatible with residential uses. Examples include passive open spaces accessible to the public and landscaped community parking areas.

High Vacancy

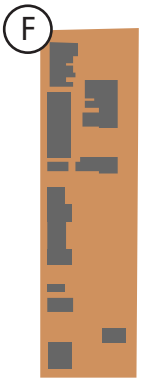
Scattered

Prioritize interventions that will reinforce the street wall. Sideyard and community parking reuses should include attractive borders such as fencing or landscaping. Encourage infill development where feasible.



Clustered Across Block

Assemble and hold vacant lots for future large-scale developments. Employ heightened code enforcement on extant buildings that are occupied.



Clustered on One Side

Reinforce street wall on the most stable half of the block through preservation and infill. Allow mostly vacant side to be used for accessory uses such as parking and rear yards.

Vacancy Examples

Example of Low-Vacancy Block

Example of Moderate-Vacancy Block

Example of High-Vacancy Block

Recommendations

Land use and zoning recommendations for the Lower North District are organized into three forward-looking themes: THRIVE, CONNECT, and RENEW. These themes reflect the goals and strategies of the *Citywide Vision*.

Within the three themes are eight elements from the *Citywide Vision* that address the major issues, opportunities, and unique qualities of the Lower North District. Each element is broken into topics that include a description of existing conditions, district-specific recommendations, responsible implementing agencies, and references to applicable objectives from the *Citywide Vision* (labeled in this chapter as *CW)*. A complete list of objectives from the *Citywide Vision* is provided in the Appendix.

> THRIVE

50 | Neighborhoods
Improve neighborhood livability

58 | Municipal Facilities
Locate and manage all municipal support facilities efficiently

59 | Land Management
Capitalize on land assets

> CONNECT

60 | Transportation
Improve transportation safety, efficiency, and convenience

> RENEW

64 | Open Space
Increase equitable access to open-space resources

68 | Historic Preservation
Preserve and reuse historic resources

72 | Public Realm
Achieve excellence in the design and quality of Philadelphia's built environment

> THRIVE

The Lower North District's neighborhoods are unique, each with it's own character, cultural traditions and commercial corridors. Vacant land and buildings continue to be a presence in all of them, and commercial corridors continue to struggle. Directing housing subsidies to targeted areas surrounding key assets like recreation centers, and continuing to support several important commercial districts will help to turn vacancy into an asset, improving the chances that Lower North's neighborhoods will remain good places to live.

> CONNECT

The Lower North District's transportation system is robust, with high rates of ridership at many stations. Improving the Route 15 trolley, installing priority signals on key bus routes, changing the direction of several one-way streets, and creating more bike lanes to tie into the cycling network will improve chances for residents to access job centers in Center City and surrounding areas.

> RENEW

The Lower North District has a large amount of natural and recreational assets, including East Fairmount Park and many parks and open spaces; however, many recreation centers need further repair. The Lower North District has many individual properties and districts that are recognized as historic, but some important assets are not protected. Listing additional resources on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places will ensure their continued preservation.

THRIVE > Neighborhoods

Philadelphia2035 Citywide Vision

Goal 1.1.2:
Strengthen neighborhood centers by developing viable commercial corridors

Commercial Districts

Lower North Philadelphia has 18 commercial districts: 11 of these have vacancy rates of over 20 percent. Two of these, Broad and Girard and 2nd and Girard, are located in areas with growing population and rising income and property values. In corridors such as Front and Kensington and Germantown and Lehigh, portions are vibrant, but other sections have buildings that are too small for modern retailing or are in disrepair. There is unmet market demand of about $119 million district-wide for consumer goods and services, which may be able to fill some of this empty space.

In 2014, the Department of Commerce will spend $3.2 million dollars on new curbs, sidewalks and street lights at Germantown and Lehigh. This builds on Philly Painting, a nearly half-million dollar art project completed in 2012. The City will also spend $1.1 million to install decorative light masts in the median on North Broad Street from Spring Garden Street to Norris Street, and street trees as far as Glenwood Avenue.

Industrial Districts

Industry has disappeared from many of its traditional locations in Philadelphia but remains an important part of the City's economic development portfolio. The PCPC has brokered an agreement between City agencies and civic associations to allow the private market to take over obsolete industrial parcels throughout the district, while preserving the option for job creation along the spine of American Street and small adjacent industrial clusters. This plan recommends maintaining approximately 60 acres of land in industrial or industrial-commercial mix zoning, while allowing about 90 acres, 60 percent of industrially zoned land within the American Street Empowerment Zone, to transition to other uses *(see American Street Focus Area, p. 24)*.

Germantown Avenue near Lehigh has seen recent improvements from the Mural Arts Program but still has high vacancy and could benefit from physical and administrative improvements.

Strawberry Square at 29th Street has high vacancy at its edges and could benefit from allowing other commercial development to locate around its edges.

Recommendations

1. Invest City resources into viable commercial districts where private investment is occurring.
   - Replace curbs and sidewalks on Girard Avenue from 25th to 30th Streets.
   - Create corridor management programs for Germantown and Lehigh, American, Broad and Cecil B. Moore, Front and Kensington, and Ridge and Cecil B. Moore.
   - Implement a corridor cleaning program and install new sidewalks, curbs, and streetlights at Germantown and Lehigh.

   > Implementing Agencies: Commerce, City Council, NCEZ, PWD | CW Objective: 1.1.2

2. Encourage business development in sections of Strawberry Mansion.
   - Rezone Ridge Avenue between Sedgley Avenue and York Street from RM-1 to CMX-2
   - Rezone 29th Street between Dauphin and York Streets from RM-1 to CMX-2.

   > Implementing Agencies: City Council, PCPC | CW Objective: 1.1.2

3. Maintain industrial or industrial-commercial mix zoning on American Street and specific areas to the east and west, from Master Street to Lehigh Avenue. Allow vacant industrially zoned parcels off of American Street to transition to other uses.
   - Explore a design overlay that would require buildings to address the public realm and discourage specific uses that are incompatible with residential and industrial development.
   - Before creating an overlay, review current land uses and define existing activity in a way that is agreeable to City staff and neighborhood associations.

   > Implementing Agencies: City Council, Commerce, PCPC, PIDC | CW Objective: 2.2.1

Recommended Areas for Commercial District Improvements and Zoning Incentives

Commercial Corridors and Shopping Centers				
	Location	**Size**	**Vacancy**	**Improvement Strategies**
A	Broad and Cecil B. Moore (including Progress Plaza)	200,000	7.8%	Create a corridor management organization
B	American and Lehigh	80,000	9.7%	Improve pedestrian crossings across Lehigh Avenue
C	Strawberry Square	92,000	10.8%	Encourage adjacent commercial development through zoning changes
D	6th and Germantown (including Borinquen Plaza)	84,000	12.5%	Encourage housing development around the edges (see pg 52–53)
E	Broad and Girard	287,000	13.6%	Encourage density near Girard BSL by upzoning and creating a T.O.D. overlay
F	Germantown and Lehigh	240,000	23.0%	Create a corridor management organization; build streetscape improvements; continue the corridor cleaning program.
G	Front and Kensington	207,000	34.3%	Create a corridor management organization; ensure that zoning continues to allow a unique array of activities
H	Ridge and Cecil B. Moore	152,000	47.5%	Create a corridor management organization; package City-owned land for mid-rise commercial or mixed-use development
I	Broad and Susquehanna	146,000	31.1%	Review zoning; explore lot consolidation to create larger retail footprints

The commercial areas shown above are defined by *PhilaShops*, an inventory of the health of commercial districts conducted by the PCPC and the Commerce Department periodically since 1988. The inclusion of a district in the list above indicates that it is a priority, but does not preclude interventions in other commercial areas.

THRIVE > Neighborhoods

From 2002 to 2012, Lower North Philadelphia lost 360 jobs. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the district's unemployment rate in 2012 was 22 percent, compared to 14 percent citywide. This means nearly 4,500 people who could be employed were not. Only one-third of the areas zoned for commercial activities—those areas where commerce was conducted and people were employed—were used for commerce as of 2013.

For all of these reasons, City government has an interest in increasing jobs available to residents in Lower North. The tools available to encourage business owners to create jobs include: rezoning to allow a greater variety of activities; consolidating parcels to set aside for development; administering incentive programs like Empowerment Zones and Keystone Opportunity Zones; and providing assistance, such as matching grants and safety improvements, within commercial corridors.

Credit: Henry Pyatt, New Kensington CDC

East Girard Avenue is an example of a healthy commercial district. It runs through three neighborhoods, Fishtown, Northern Liberties and South Kensington.

Empowerment Zones

The United States federal government established the Philadelphia Empowerment Zone program in 1994 to attract jobs to areas with high unemployment. Tax incentives associated with the Empowerment Zone designation ended in 2009, but the Community Trust Boards, the governance structure for the Empowerment Zone, and the City of Philadelphia, created the Neighborhood Funding Stream to continue the program's mission. The Neighborhood Funding Stream is a $26 million endowment providing grants toward economic development that promote job creation, remove blight, and encourage economic opportunities for residents and businesses located in each district. The Lower North District includes two Empowerment Zones, American Street and North Central.

The Community Trust Boards created two lending institutions to provide financing to businesses located in the boundaries of the American Street and North Central Empowerment Zones: the North Philadelphia Financial Partnership and FINATA (formerly the American Street Financial Services Center). Since 2007, these organizations have provided nearly $50 million to create or retain approximately 1,000 jobs. Empowerment Zone activities have also included free tax preparation for residents, gap financing for developers, streetscape improvements, murals, and other physical improvements.

Keystone Opportunity Zones

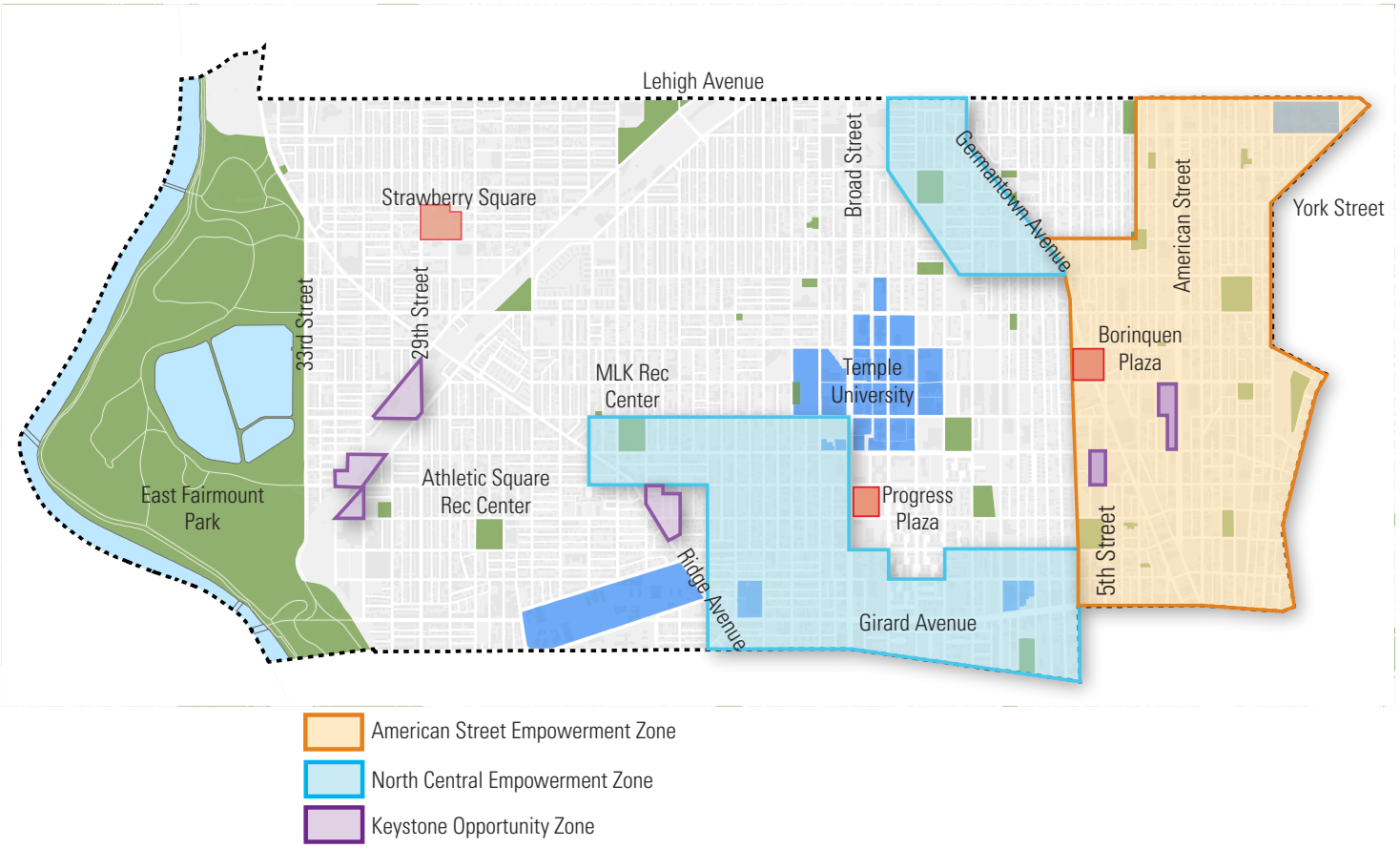
The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania established Keystone Opportunity Zones (KOZs) to promote job creation in areas with high poverty rates, large amounts of vacancy, significant population or job loss, and the infrastructure to support development. These zones allow new businesses to reduce city and state taxes and forgo paying taxes in exchange for investing in a specific property or hiring employees. Only specific parcels within each zone are eligible for these tax breaks.

For more information on these programs, please contact the Commerce Department or visit the following websites:

http://www.phila.gov/commerce/neighborhoods/Pages/EmpowermentZones.aspx

http://www.phila.gov/commerce/realEstate/Pages/KeystoneOpportunityZones.aspx

Job Attraction Incentive Zones



What Makes a Commercial District Healthy?

For commercial districts, success depends on proximity to a strong source of customers, a complementary mix of stores and establishments, and limited competition from outside of the district.

According to *Commercial Corridors: A Strategic Investment Framework for Philadelphia*, a 2009 study by Econsult Corporation, healthy commercial areas are also associated with the following elements:

- Effective leadership;
- A business organization, such as a business improvement district (BID) or neighborhood improvement district (NID) to supplement services and improvements;
- Cleanliness and safety;
- Proximity to a strong institutional anchor that generates a steady flow of customers; and
- A chain pharmacy or supermarket nearby.

Other interventions that can help a commercial district become more successful include:

- A market study to help business owners and investors gauge current and future customer demand;
- Parking and transit improvements;
- Streetscape improvements and design guidelines;
- Code enforcement; and
- Security or property improvement incentives such as the Commerce Department's Storefront Improvement Program and the Police Department's SafeCam Program.

THRIVE > Neighborhoods

Philadelphia2035 Citywide Vision

Goal 1.2:
Improve the quality and diversity of new and existing housing.

In Lower North, many traditional rowhome blocks (1&2) and commercial corridors are interrupted by large areas of vacant land and blocks rebuilt with less housing and driveways and large yards.(3) Many blocks close to Temple University have been rebuilt to higher than traditional densities (4).

Housing

Housing types and conditions are diverse in the Lower North District. Development of student housing is responsible for an infusion of modern and rehabilitated homes on and around the Temple University campus. In portions of the district closer to the Metropolitan Center, the private market for single family homes is gaining strength. Median residential sales prices here are comparable to citywide figures; many homes have sold for more than 10 times the value of homes in weaker market portions of the district. Private and local government organizations continue to invest in new affordable housing within Lower North. Since 2000, more than $100 million has been invested. In many areas, however, these investments are not accompanied by market rate activity. As a result, widespread disinvestment continues to hold sway.

New housing in the district is being developed at densities that differ from the traditional form. Most of the residential properties in Lower North were built and maintained as single-family rowhomes. Many affordable housing developments have been built as semidetached and single homes. These lower density homes accommodate modern tastes and reactivate more of the district's vacant land than rowhomes would. At the other end of the spectrum, developers of student housing frequently take advantage of existing multifamily zoning and may create three or four units where there had previously been only one. The addition of student apartments among family households may increase the potential for neighborhood conflict.

Changes in the housing market are a source of concern for longtime residents of the district. There is a perception among some that existing residents are being excluded from the developing identity of the district. There has been a dearth of new rental and homeownership opportunities that are affordable to the working and middle class families that once occupied the district in greater proportions. Upgrades of occupied homes by residents are sometimes impeded by inadequate access to credit or complications from informal ownership transfers such as tangled titles and property liens. Existing residents would benefit from technical assistance to expand their understanding of how they can overcome these obstacles and participate in property investment.

Recommendations

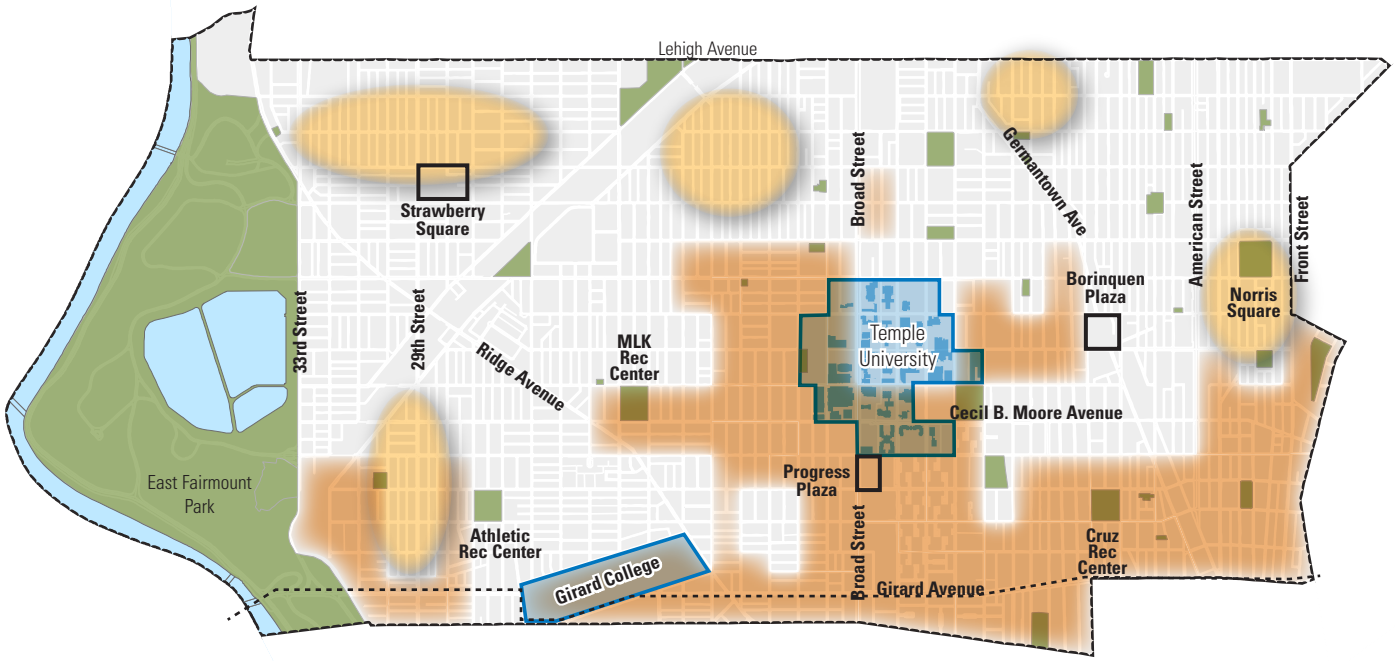
4. Fortify residential blocks where homeownership is dominant by:
   - Selling government-owned land for infill development
   - Targeting resources for home improvements to property owners
   - Using Community Development Block Grant funds for ambient street lighting, sidewalk replacement, or other public realm improvements
   - Downzoning blocks from RM-1 to RSA-5 to protect from conversion to multifamily units (*see proposed zoning, pgs. 80–81*)

     > Implementing Agencies: City Council, OHCD, PCPC, PRA | CW Objective 1.1.2

5. Commission a study to determine what impacts, if any, rising property values have on current renters and homeowners. The study should answer the following questions:
   - Are residents being forced to leave?
   - If so, who are they and where do they live?

     > Implementing Agencies: OHCD, PCPC | CW Objective 1.2.2

Median Home Sales and Homeownership Rates



Rising home prices and increasing construction are seen just north of Girard Avenue and around Temple University. However, some blocks with high percentages of owner-occupied housing, identified in the ovals in the map above, have not seen this market growth. These areas could benefit from public assistance programs aimed at maintaining and rehabilitating the housing stock.

Census tracts with median home sales greater than $100,000.00

Areas with the highest homeownership rates of the district (20–55% homeownership, usually single-family rowhomes)

Repair and Tax Relief Programs for Homeowners

The **Basic Systems Repair Program**, administered by the Philadelphia Housing Development Corporation, provides free repairs to the electrical, plumbing, and heating systems.

The **Keystone Home Energy Loan Program** (Keystone HELP®) offers low-rate loans for energy efficiency improvements. Loans range from $1,000 to $15,000. Philadelphia Gas Works' **EnergySense** program offers incentives to existing customers to convert their heating systems from oil to gas. Homeowners could receive up to $4,620 in rebates and credits for making energy efficiency upgrades. This program is designed to work in conjunction with Keystone HELP®.

The City of Philadelphia and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania provide tax relief for homeowners and senior citizens. Homeowners are eligible for Philadelphia's **Homestead Exemption,** which reduces taxable liability by $30,000 on a primary residence.

The **Longtime Owner Occupants Program** and **Senior Citizen Tax Freeze** programs protect longtime owner-occupants from steep increases in their tax bills due to nearby development. The state provides up to $650 in refunds on property tax and rent paid by eligible seniors. Homeowners with a mortgage are also eligible to apply for the federal **Home Mortgage Interest Deduction**.

THRIVE > Neighborhoods

Philadelphia2035 Citywide Vision

Goal 1.1.3
Strengthen neighborhood centers by promoting transit-oriented development around stations

Encourage Development Around Assets

The "gap-tooth" effect of numerous vacancies makes for an inconsistent, and at times, unsafe public realm. The lack of populated edges and eyes on the street is especially a concern around destinations such as parks and recreational facilities, commercial corridors, and shopping centers. Local communities could benefit from prioritizing these areas for redevelopment efforts.

Commercial Corridors and Shopping Centers

Population loss has reduced the foot-traffic that normally supports stores and businesses. Large areas of vacancy adjacent to existing businesses also detract from the levels of activity that normally make a corridor feel like a destination worth visiting and a place to shop. Prioritizing commercial and residential development on and adjacent to the corridor could assist in restoring street life and customers as well as raising perceptions of safety.

Parks and Recreational Facilities

In the Lower North district there are a few historic, well-staffed parks and recreational facilities that are surrounded by vacant property and a lack of residents at their edges. These edges could benefit from mixed-use redevelopment and higher densities that foster activity and bring eyes onto the street. Prominent recreation centers that could benefit from surrounding development include Athletic Square, Cecil B. Moore Recreation Center, Cruz Recreation Center, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Recreation Center.

The high vacancy shown along Ridge Avenue helps to explain why the remaining businesses struggle to attract foot traffic and customers. For more information on recommendations for Ridge Avenue see the Ridge Avenue Focus Area on pages 33-37.

Athletic Square is one example of a Parks and Recreation facility with high adjacent vacancies and a lack of residential uses. These contribute to a lack of eyes on the street and detract from its ability to be a vibrant neighborhood anchor.

Recommendations

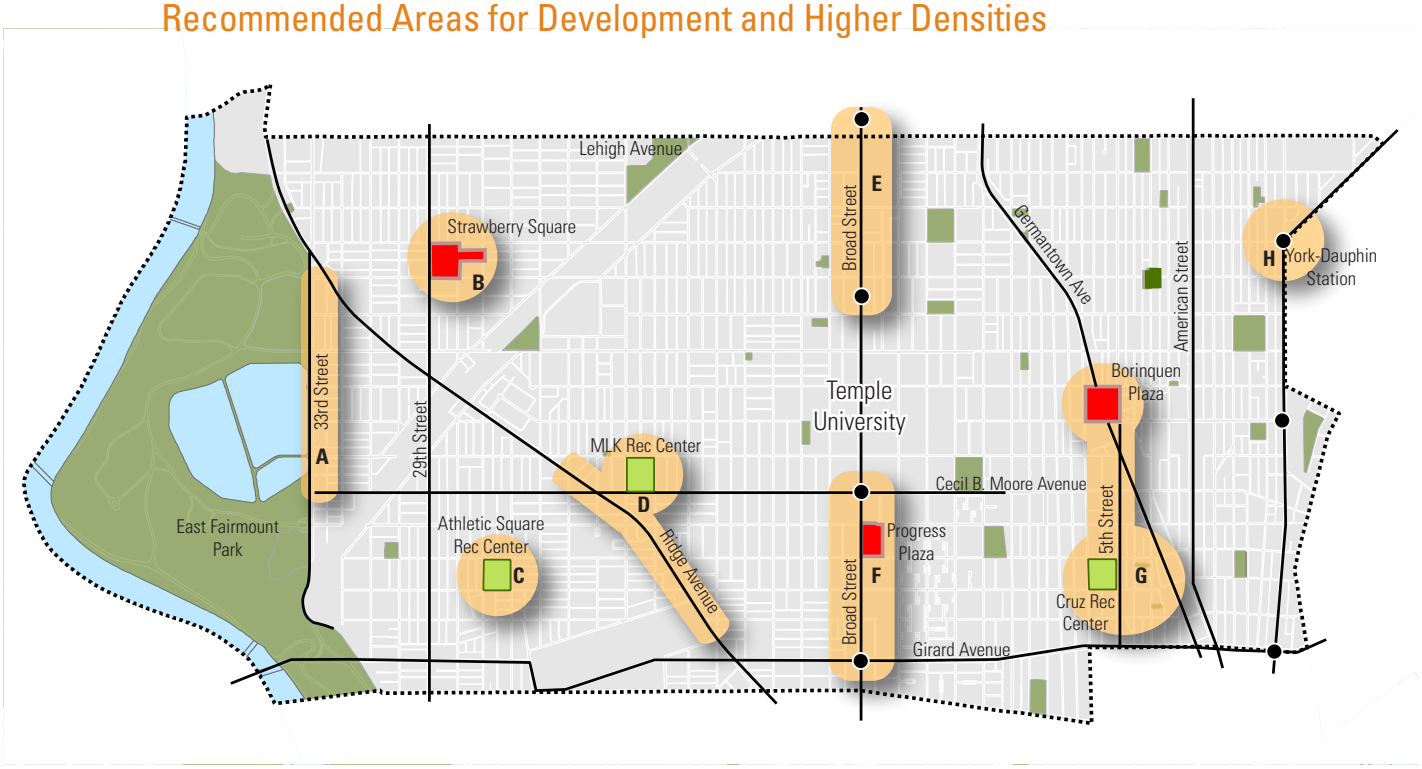
6. Direct City housing subsidies and redevelopment assistance to vacant land and buildings adjacent to
   - Recreation centers: Athletic Square, Cruz Recreation Center, MLK Recreation Center
   - Shopping centers: Borinquen Plaza, and Strawberry Square
   - Diamond Street Historic District

   > Implementing Agencies: Commerce, OHCD, PRA | CW Objective 1.1.2

7. Create Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) overlay districts at the following locations to encourage walkable mixed-use and mixed-income development (see Proposed Zoning, pp. 82–83):
   - 2nd Street and Girard Avenue
   - Broad Street and Girard Avenue
   - Broad Street and Lehigh Avenue

   > Implementing Agencies: City Council, PCPC | CW Objective: 1.1.3

Recommended Areas for Development and Higher Densities



Developable Lots Close to Parks and Recreational Facilities, Commercial Corridors, and Shopping Centers		
A	East Fairmount Park (along 33rd Street)	Adjust zoning to allow higher densities. See Proposed Zoning recommendations, pp. 80-83. Direct development subsidies to these areas.
B	Strawberry Mansion	
C	Athletic Square Recreation Center	
D	Martin Luther King Recreation Center and Ridge Avenue	
E	North Broad, Susquehanna to Lehigh Avenues	
F	North Broad, Girard to Cecil B. Moore Avenues	
G	5th Street from Cruz Recreation Center to Borinquen Plaza	
H	York-Dauphin MFL Station	

Municipal and Community-Serving Facilities

Philadelphia2035 Citywide Vision

Goal 3.3.1
Reduce expenditures for municipal support facilities

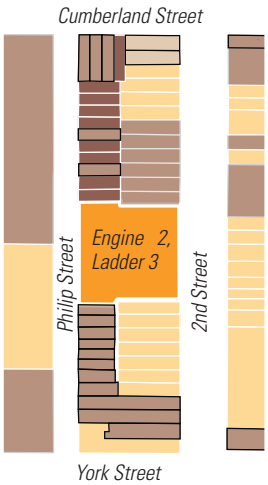
Community-serving facilities serve the general public. Examples include recreation centers, parks, libraries, fire stations, and health centers. Municipal-serving facilities serve City operations and are generally not used by the public, such as fuel sites or salt yards.

The district's four firehouses are on average over 50 years old and all need additional space for equipment. While operations have modernized to include emergency and medical response activities, stations have not been upgraded to manage additional trucks, trailers, and equipment storage.

All of the district's stations need traffic signal delay controls to give their vehicles priority at traffic lights when leaving the station to respond to an emergency. Out of the four stations Engine 2,Ladder 3, on the 2400 block of 2nd Street, could be the easiest to expand. Over half of the block where the station is located is vacant. At least nine lots are City owned and seven are tax delinquent. Expanding this firehouse would meet goal 3.3.1a in *Philadelphia 2035: Citywide Vision*, modernize municipal support facilities.

The 22nd and 23rd Police Districts are housed in an aging building at 17th Street and Montgomery Avenue where parking and office space are scarce. The Police Department has requested $1.7 million for building system renovations for fiscal year 2014. However, with the large number of vacant lots in Lower North, building a new station could be a less expensive long-term solution for office space and parking constraints.

Vacant lots near Engine 2, Ladder 3



Legend

Occupied Property

Vacant Property

Vacant, City-Owned Property

Tax Delinquent

Recommendations

8. Install traffic signal priority controls at Fire Engine 34 (28th and Thompson streets), Fire Engine 45/ Ladder 14 (26th and York streets), Fire Engine 2/Ladder 3 (2642 N 2nd Street), and Fire Engine 27 (19th and Oxford streets).
   > Implementing Agencies: Fire, Streets | CW Objective:1.1.1e

9. Expand Engine 2/Ladder 3 onto adjacent vacant lots.
   - Conduct a needs assessment to determine the amount of space needed.
   - Condemn the adjacent vacant land and bring it into the City's inventory.
   > Implementing Agencies: DPP, Fire, PRA, PWD | CW Objective: 3.3.1a

10. Evaluate the 22nd/23rd Police District facility at 17th Street and Montgomery Avenue to determine its feasibility for renovation or replacement.
   > Implementing Agencies: DPP, Police, PWD | CW Objective:1.1.1e

Land Management

Redevelopment

Redevelopment is a tool for developing vacant land, occurring when government condemns land and assembles sites for projects that are deemed to be a public good. In 1945, Pennsylvania authorized cities to use eminent domain for redevelopment. By the late 1940s, the City was clearing parts of North Philadelphia that suffered from blight, substandard housing, and residential overcrowding. Using this tool, Temple University grew, Yorktown developed, developers built four shopping centers, and the City and School District built at least seven schools and recreation centers.

The state defines low-to-moderate income housing as a public good, allowing Philadelphia to use eminent domain to assist developers to acquire land and buildings. Lower North has roughly 7,000 units of low-to-moderate income housing, 17 percent of all occupied units. About 15 percent of these units were built or renovated in the last 10 years, an investment of over $100 million. The Philadelphia Housing Authority plans a major redevelopment of the Blumberg Apartments in Sharswood into mixed-come rowhomes and twins (*see the Ridge Avenue Area, p. 32)*. This development may require eminent domain to condemn privately owned land or buildings.

State law requires the City to create a Redevelopment Area Plan to guide redevelopment. The City published the North Philadelphia Redevelopment Area Plan in 1968. At that time, PCPC staff certified an area from Spring Garden Street to Lehigh Avenue and Front Street to 33rd Street. Since then, large sections, especially south of Girard Avenue, have stabilized due to private and public investment.

Philadelphia2035: Citywide Vision

Goal 3.1.3
Reuse vacant land and structures in innovative ways

Definition | *Redevelopment and Blight Certification:*

To begin the Redevelopment process, the Philadelphia City Planning Commission must determine if an area meets the state's definition of blight. Blight may exist if any of the following are found:

(1) Unsafe, unsanitary, inadequate or overcrowded conditions; (2) Inadequate planning; (3) Excessive land coverage; (4) Lack of proper light, air and open space (5) Faulty street and lot layout; (6) Defective design and arrangement of buildings; (7) Economically and socially undesirable land uses.

Recommendation

11. Recertify for blighted conditions and update portions of the North Philadelphia Redevelopment Area Plan
    - Address new standards for land use density per acre.
    - Establish updated design standards to reflect the existing and current architectural trends and styles.

    > Implementing Agencies: PCPC, PRA | CW Objective: 3.1.3

12. Redevelop the Blumberg Apartments into lower-scale houses while reintroducing rights-of-way through the former superblock. Include green spaces as place-making elements.

    > Implementing Agencies: City Council, PCPC, PHA, PRA, PWD, Streets | CW Objective: 1.2.2

Projects Assisted by the Redevelopment Process

Chae's Foods

Nellie Reynolds Gardens

Bottom Dollar Grocery Store

CONNECT > Transportation

Philadelphia2035 Citywide Vision

Goal 4.1
Increase the use of transit to reduce environmental impacts and travel time.

Definition | Transit First

The City's Transit First policy is defined as "the prioritization of safe, comfortable, reliable and efficient movement of transit vehicles and riders." The City and SEPTA are collaborating on implementing Transit First through a variety of methods that have the potential to positively impact all components of the city's transit network. As part of the concept, the City is considering strategies such as modifying and consolidating bus stops and reallocating parking spaces.

Definition | Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)

A bus-based mass transit system that is characterized by dedicated bus-only traffic lanes, limited fixed stations much like rail lines, and off-board fare payment. These characteristics allow BRT lines to serve more passengers quickly over longer routes at a lower implementation cost than fixed rail. BRT often also includes special branded vehicles, park-and-ride facilities at stations, transit signal prioritization, center roadway alignment, and traffic queue jumping treatments.

Source: SEPTA

Transit

SEPTA's extensive transit network connects Lower North to the city and the region. The district's average density of about 18,500 people per square mile supports high levels of service, particularly on north-south bus routes connecting to the employment hub of Center City. Ridership in Lower North is double the region's average, with 131,503 passengers boarding or leaving a transit stop or station somewhere in the district each weekday (1.3 roundtrips per weekday per resident).

The district contains four Broad Street Line (BSL) stations, four Market-Frankford Line (MFL) stations, and two Regional Rail stations. Several station areas are experiencing increases in development that may increase ridership, including Temple University Regional Rail station, Cecil B. Moore station, and Girard MFL station. The Lower North District Plan recommends a Transit-Oriented Development Overlay around the Girard MFL Station to encourage density. An additional TOD overlay and changes to base zoning may also be appropriate at Broad and Girard.

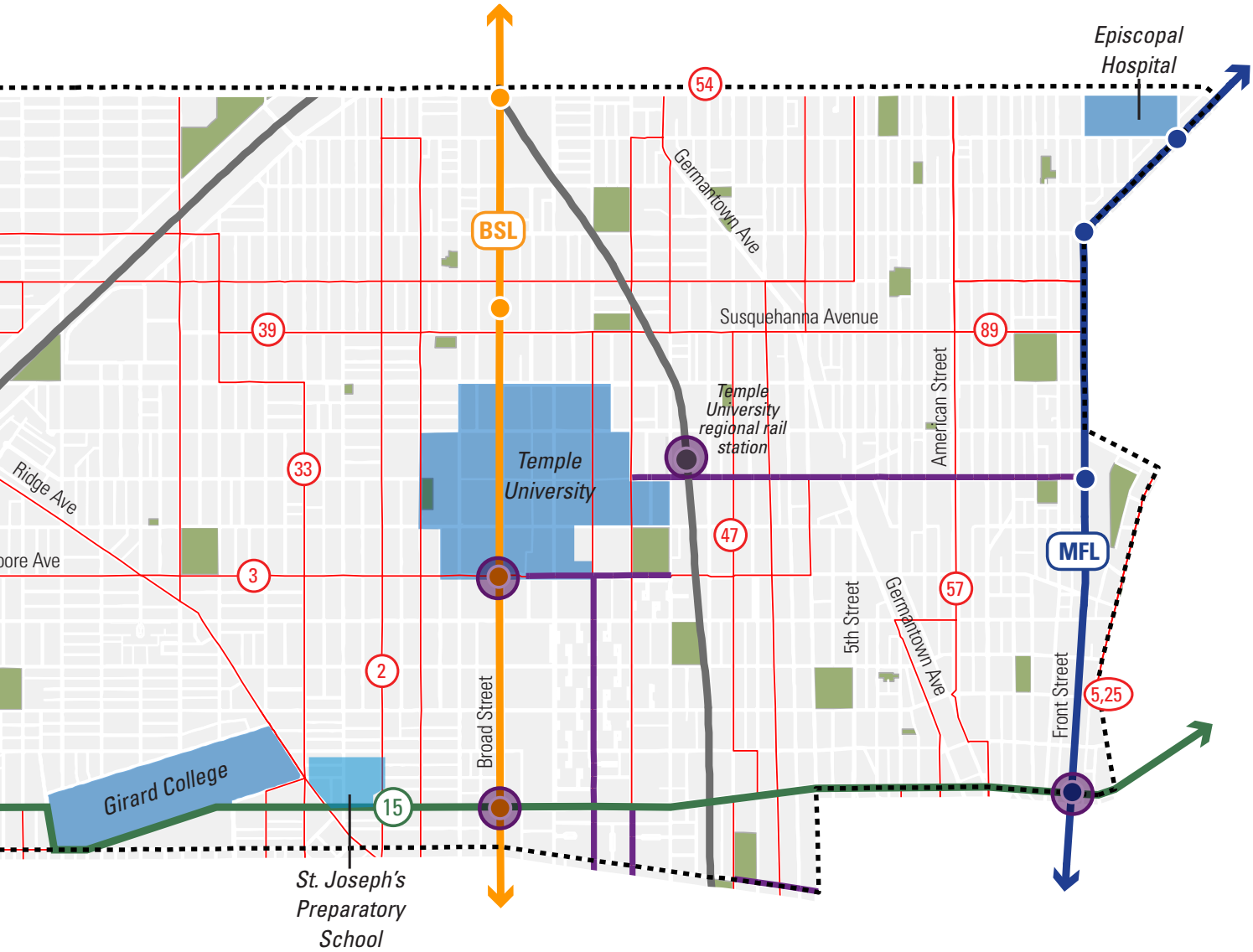
Existing Transit and Bicycle Network

Broad Street Line
#15 Trolley
Market-Frankford Line
Regional Rail
Bus Routes
Bicycle Facility
Transit hubs with a large number of riders

Subway and Regional Rail lines offer high-speed and frequent service throughout the eastern half of the district. The western portion relies exclusively on bus service, making the Lower North District a good candidate for transit-first treatments such Transit Signal Prioritization or other Bus Rapid Transit. The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission will conduct a study over the next year to assess the feasibility of using the City Branch for transit service, including express bus service for existing bus lines that serve neighborhoods in the western part of Lower North.

The City Branch, running from Broad Street to 27th Street along Callowhill Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, is currently unused by SEPTA. The Lower North District Plan recommends this passage for a "Cultural Corridor BRT" line connecting Center City to the Parkside neighborhood via Fairmount, Brewerytown, and East Parkside.

Narrow, one-way streets in much of the district limit automobile use and promote walking, but also complicate the installation of bike facilities.



CONNECT > Transportation

Philadelphia2035 Citywide Vision

Goal 4.2
Balance the use of roadways to ensure safe and efficient travel by all modes.

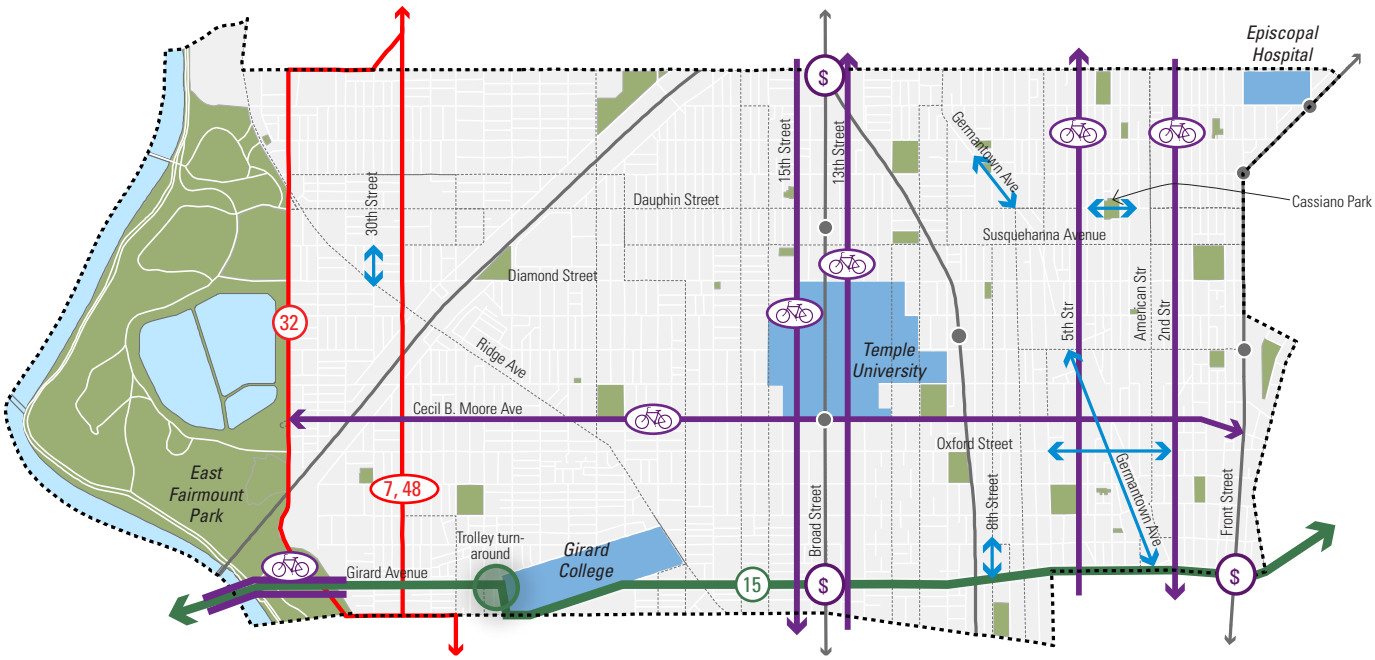
Complete Streets

The majority of streets in the district are one way. Some portions of numbered and arterial streets have been closed and removed from the City Plan to accommodate development, and there are a number of instances where one-way streets change direction.

The district's proximity to major job centers and the presence of Temple University and Fairmount Park make cycling an appealing transportation mode to invest in. The City can create a cohesive bicycle network linking Lower North to the rest of Philadelphia by implementing the Philadelphia Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan recommendations for bike lanes and sharrows, taking advantage of excess roadway capacity on arterial streets.

The City envisions a bike share system to include deployment of bike stations across the Lower North District at an average density of approximately eight stations per square mile. Careful co-location of these stations, where riders can rent a bicycle and return it later, with major traffic generators and on-street infrastructure, will boost transportation options.

Transit and Transportation Recommendations



Recommendations

13. Prioritize the following SEPTA stations for capital improvements: Girard BSL, North Philadelphia BSL, and Girard MFL. Improvements should include: ADA accessibility upgrades, Art in Transit, bicycle parking and storage, landscape and streetscape treatment, and lighting and signage upgrades to complement proposed TOD zoning (see recommendation LNO 8).
    > Implementing Agencies: Commerce, MOTU, SEPTA | CW Objective: 4.1.1

14. Implement Transit First policies along high-volume bus routes 7, 32, and 48 to meet transit demand and reduce travel times. Policies should include Transit Signal Prioritization, far-side stops, and dedicated rights-of-way potentially using the City Branch for Bus Rapid Transit (see definitions of Bus Rapid Transit and Transit First).
    > Implementing Agencies: SEPTA, Streets | CW Objective: 4.1.1

15. Improve and expand Route 15 trolley service, in conjunction with fleet modernization, through the following enhancement projects:
    - Evaluate the utility of the existing turnaround near Girard College to allow short-turning vehicles for more frequent service on the most-traveled section of the line;
    - Eliminate left turn lanes where feasible to expand the route's separated right-of-way;
    - Pilot stop consolidations based on ridership and access and make successful pilots permanent; and
    - Study options for retaining service on the Frankford Avenue branch while restoring service to Port Richmond, including the procurement of more vehicles or modified scheduling.
    > Implementing Agencies: MOTU, PennDOT, SEPTA, Streets | CW Objective: 4.1.1

16. Implement high-priority bicycle infrastructure from the Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan including:
    - Bicycle lanes on 2nd Street and 5th Street;
    - Sharrows on Cecil B. Moore Avenue from Frankford Avenue to 10th Street and on Cecil B. Moore Avenue from Park Avenue to 33rd Street; and
    - Sharrows or bike lanes on 13th Street and 15th Street.

    Implementing Agencies: MOTU, Streets | CW Objective: 4.2.2

17. Change the traffic direction on certain street segments to improve traffic flow and safety:
    - 8th Street from Girard Avenue to Thompson Street to align with the remainder of 8th Street;
    - Germantown Avenue between Girard Avenue and Berks Street by returning to a two-way pattern;
    - Germantown Avenue at 7th Street, 8th Street, and 9th Street;
    - Oxford Street between Front Street and 6th Street;
    - 30th Street between Susquehanna Avenue and Diamond Street; and
    - 4th Street and Dauphin Street.
    > Implementing Agencies: Streets | CW Objective: 4.3.2

Districtwide

CASE STUDY

Melbourne Australia's yarra trams

A streetcar, or tram, travels St. Kilda Road in Melbourne Australia, in a dedicated right-of-way. The floor of the vehicle is level with the boarding platform. Riders pay for their trip using a smartcard.

Keolis Downer EDI Rail, a private company, operates Melbourne's yarra tram streetcar system under franchise agreement with the State of Victoria. A streetcar like this could replace the Route 15 trolley.

RENEW > Open Space

Watershed Parks, Trails, and Waterfronts

Philadelphia2035 Citywide Vision

Goal 6.3.2
Connect neighborhood parks and trails to neighborhood centers and major public facilities.

Goal 7.3.1
Increase the overall tree canopy across the city to 30 percent.

Located on the western edge of the district, along the Schuylkill River, East Fairmount Park is one of the most cherished open space assets in the region. It contains approximately 358 acres and is by far the largest park in Lower North. Amenities within the park include the Kelly Drive recreational trail, Dell Music Center, Smith Playground, Strawberry Green Driving Range, Sedgley Woods Disc Golf Course, many historic homes, and ballfields.

However, access to the park from the adjacent neighborhoods of Strawberry Mansion and Brewerytown is limited. This is attributed to the width of 33rd Street, its heavy traffic volume, deficient pedestrian signal timing, conflicts between turning automobiles and crossing pedestrians, and lack of attractive gateways. Access to the Kelly Drive recreation trail is also impeded by the lack of a connection at Girard Avenue. As a result of these disconnects, use of the park by Lower North residents is generally confined to the area around the Mander Recreation Center at 33rd and Diamond Streets.

PennPraxis, under contract from Philadelphia Parks and Recreation, completed a study of East and West Fairmount Park to determine how the City can address issues of access and connectivity. Some of this plan's recommendations are included in the study.

Trees are important resources that improve the quality of life in Philadelphia's neighborhoods. The neighborhoods closest to East Fairmount Park generally have the highest amount of tree cover, while neighborhoods furthest away have the least. While small sections of Strawberry Mansion and Brewerytown could benefit from more trees, the greatest need is east of Broad Street in Norris Square, South Kensington, West Kensington, and Yorktown. In portions of these neighborhoods, the tree canopy stands at under 10 percent. The City of Philadelphia's goal is for tree cover Citywide to reach least 30 percent.

The newly completed pedestrian bridge at Locust Street provides a safe link to the Schuylkill Banks river trail by crossing over the freight rail tracks that separate it from adjacent neighborhoods. Similar connections are needed for East Fairmount Park.

Source: Friends of Schuylkill River Park

Recommendations

18. Improve the connection between East Fairmount Park and the Strawberry Mansion neighborhood by adjusting the timing of traffic signals and installing pedestrian safety improvements at 33rd Street and Ridge Avenue.
    > Implementing Agencies: Streets | CW Objectives: 4.2.3, 6.3.2

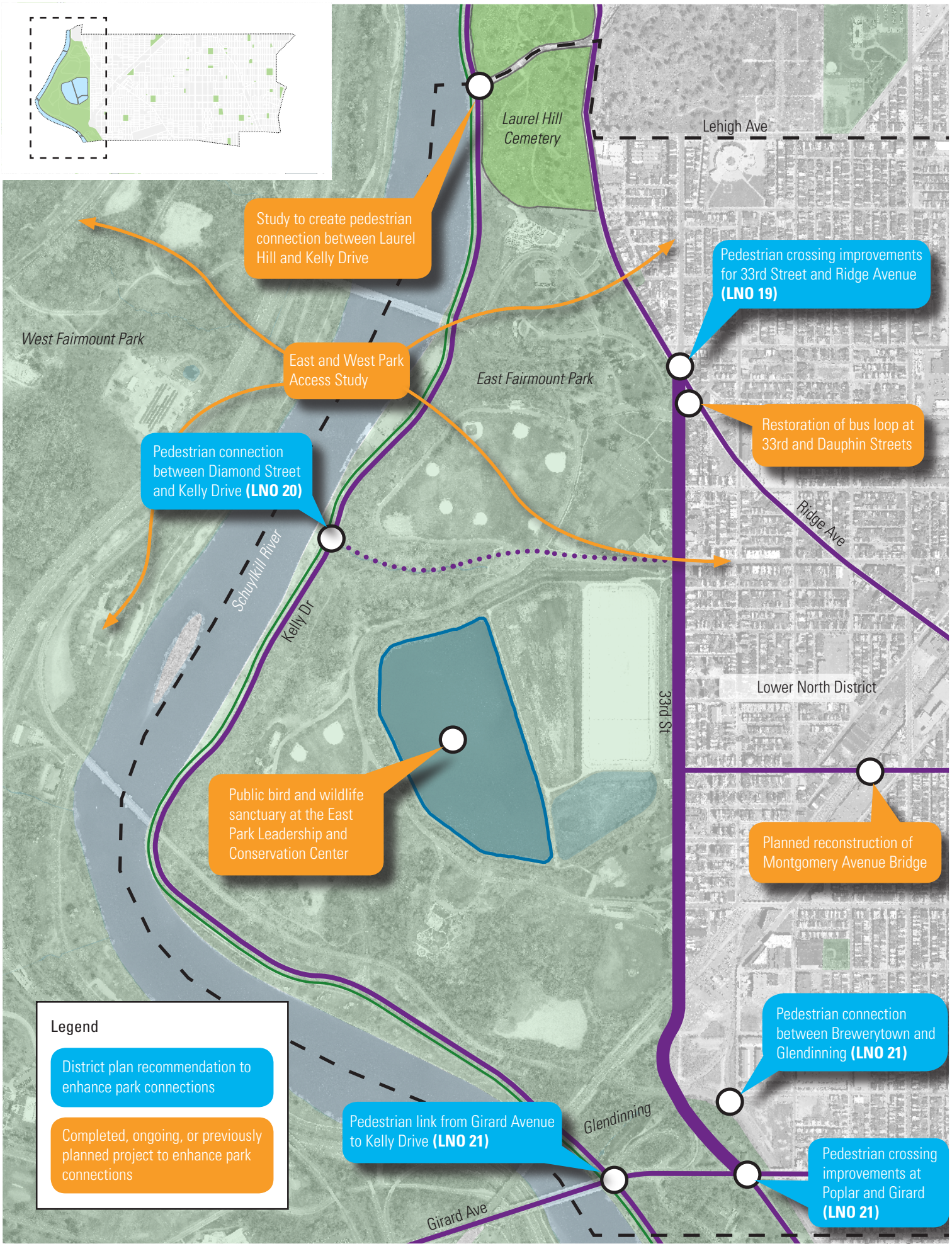
19. Create a pedestrian connection from Diamond Street to Kelly Drive via the Boxer's Trail.
    > Implementing Agencies: PPR, Streets, PWD | CW Objective: 6.3.2

20. Improve connections between East Fairmount Park and Brewerytown:
    - Adjust the timing of traffic signals and install pedestrian safety improvements at Poplar Drive and Girard Avenue;
    - Create a safe, direct pedestrian connection between the Girard Avenue bridge and Kelly Drive
    - Create a safe, direct pedestrian connection at Thompson Street between Brewerytown and the Glendinning Rock Garden.

    > Implementing Agencies: PPR, Streets, PWD | CW Objectives: 4.2.3, 6.3.2

21. Initiate a directional signage package for East Fairmount Park pedestrian access.
    > Implementing Agencies: PPR | CW Objective: 6.3.2

22. Improve the tree canopy by planting trees in Norris Square, South Kensington, West Kensington, and Yorktown.
    > Implementing Agencies: PHS, PPR | CW Objective: 7.3.1


Laurel Hill Cemetery
Lehigh Ave
Study to create pedestrian connection between Laurel Hill and Kelly Drive
Pedestrian crossing improvements for 33rd Street and Ridge Avenue (LNO 19)
West Fairmount Park
East and West Park Access Study
East Fairmount Park
Restoration of bus loop at 33rd and Dauphin Streets
Pedestrian connection between Diamond Street and Kelly Drive (LNO 20)
Ridge Ave
Schuylkill River
Kelly Dr
Lower North District
33rd St
Public bird and wildlife sanctuary at the East Park Leadership and Conservation Center
Planned reconstruction of Montgomery Avenue Bridge
Legend
District plan recommendation to enhance park connections
Completed, ongoing, or previously planned project to enhance park connections
Pedestrian connection between Brewerytown and Glendinning (LNO 21)
Pedestrian link from Girard Avenue to Kelly Drive (LNO 21)
Glendinning
Pedestrian crossing improvements at Poplar and Girard (LNO 21)
Girard Ave

RENEW > Open Space

Neighborhood Parks and Recreation

Philadelphia2035 Citywide Vision

Goal 6.3
Expand access to neighborhood parks and recreation.

Lower North has 23 parks and recreation facilities — more than any other planning district in the city. Large neighborhood parks and recreation centers include Norris Square and Fairhill Square, Gathers, Shissler, Martin Luther King, Cruz and Athletic Square Recreation Centers. Smaller recreation centers include Towey, 8th and Diamond, Winchester, Nelson, Waterloo and Cecil B. Moore. From 2000 to 2010, the City spent more than $35 million on facilities in Lower North, but because of budget restrictions, each facility still needs capital improvements.

All centers with indoor recreation space need air conditioning, while some need repairs or upgrades to playground equipment. The Cecil B. Moore Recreation Center has spaces that are unusable or are in severe disrepair including bathrooms and a basement-level weight room. Waterloo Playground has a large concrete expanse that could benefit from landscaping or stormwater management, and is hidden from view by surrounding buildings. Additionally, senior citizens at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Recreation Center believe that they need a new space for their activities.

Definition | *Green Stormwater Infrastructure*

A range of soil-water-plant systems that intercept stormwater, infiltrate a portion of it into the ground, evaporate a portion of it into the air, and in some cases release a portion of it slowly back into the sewer system.

Recommendations

23. Build a new Martin Luther King, Jr. Older Adult Center at 21st Street and Cecil B. Moore Avenue.
    > Implementing Agencies: City Council, DPP, PPR, PWD | CW Objective: 1.1.1

24. Improve public recreation facilities by:
    - Repairing a leaky roof, removing mold, providing ventilation in bathrooms, and reinforcing the ceiling in the basement weight room at the Cecil B. Moore (a.k.a. Connie Mack) Recreation Center; and
    - Installing entrance signs and gateway features at the Waterloo Playground, resurfacing basketball courts, replacing excess concrete with active play space, and condemning additional land adjacent to the center if needed.

    > Implementing Agencies: City Council, DPP, PPR, PWD | CW Objective: 1.1.1.e

CASE STUDY

East and West Fairmont Park Plan (PennPraxis)

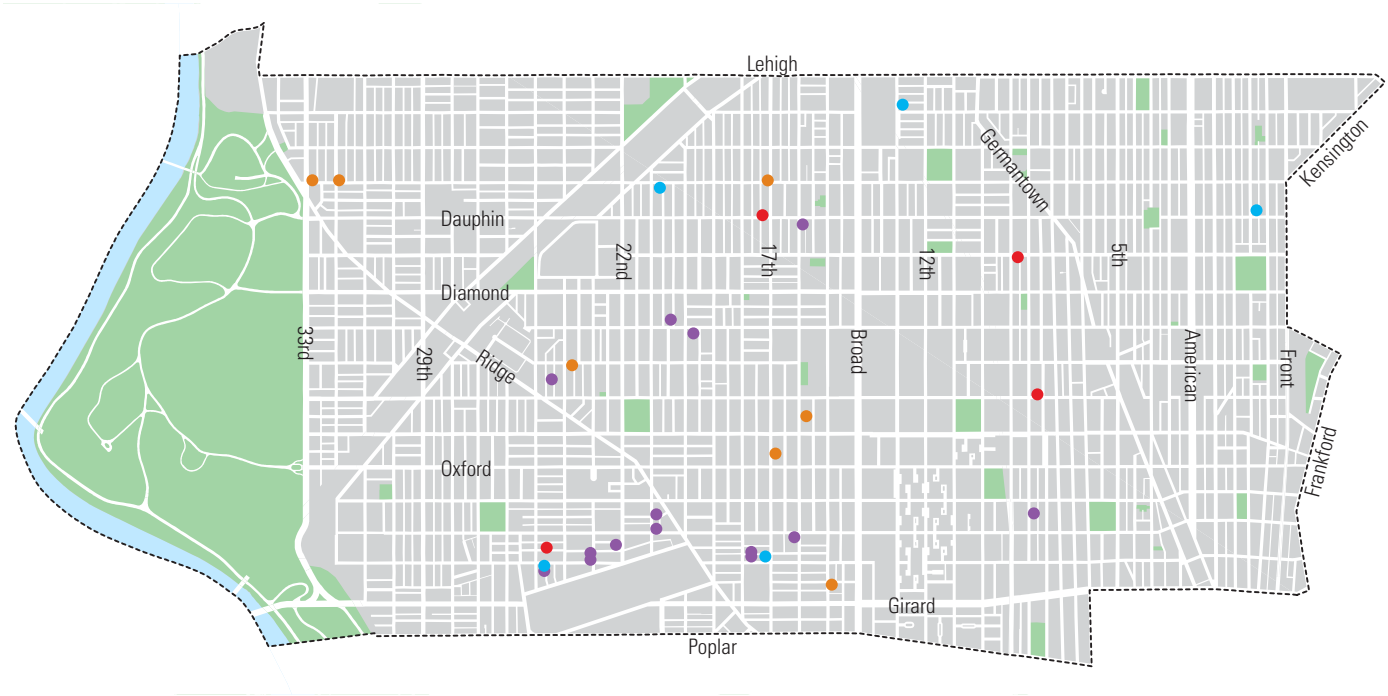
In 2014, PennPraxis released a plan for East and West Fairmount Park. The plan recognizes the rich history of the park and creates numerous recommendations for its enhancement and enjoyment. The plan draws relationships between the park, its varied activities, and the large number of residents and neighborhoods that engage its borders. The priority recommendations would improve existing park spaces and enhance connectivity to and within the park network. A clear overarching priority of the plan is ensuring good access for all of those Philadelphians who consider the park an integral part of their neighborhood.

Abandoned Former Mini-Parks

The PCPC has identified over 40 parcels in the City's property records, some of which were mini-parks but no longer are. Most are owned by the City, but several are privately-owned. The mini-parks, created in the 1990s with federal urban renewal grants, were never transferred to Philadelphia Parks and Recreation. Others may have been maintained by neighborhood groups or individuals but have been forgotten. Many have become blighting influences on their blocks. The City-owned surplus scattered sites should be sold.

Ownership

- City of Philadelphia
- Phila Redevelopment Authority
- Phila Housing Development Corp
- Private owner



Recommendations

25. Identify City-owned land on which to install green stormwater infrastructure (see Framing Our Future, pp. 44-45).
    > Implementing Agencies: PCPC, PWD | CW Objective: 7.2.3

26. Sell surplus abandoned mini-parks when a viable neighborhood steward cannot be found.
    > Implementing Agencies: City Council, DPP, PCPC | CW Objective: 3.1

A small park at 32nd and Sergeant streets is overgrown and unused.

RENEW > Historic Preservation

Cultural and Historical Resources

Philadelphia2035 Citywide Vision

Goal 6.1.1 Preserve culturally, historically, and architecturally significant buildings, sites, structures and districts.

Several major events have shaped development within Lower North: the introduction of the railroads and growth of textile factories in the 1800s, the subsequent population boom, the creation of East Fairmount Park in the late 1800s, the introduction of the Market-Frankford Line and Broad Street Line in the early 1900s, and the Second Great Migration of African Americans following World War II. Each of these events has contributed to a rich history within the district. This legacy has left many physical artifacts that have been preserved and some that still could be.

Lower North has 10 National Register Historic Districts and two Philadelphia Register Historic Districts. In addition there are dozens of National Register and Philadelphia Register Historic Sites, seven National Historic Landmarks, one National Historic Landmark District, and three Philadelphia Register Historic Streets. In the last 10 years, developers have invested over $116 million in or adjacent to these historic districts, including at least 850 units of new housing.

National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places is the federal government's official list of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects deemed worthy of preservation. Owners of income-producing properties listed individually on the National Register of Historic Places or of properties that are contributing resources within a National Register Historic District may be eligible for tax credits for the rehabilitation of the historic structure.

National Historic Landmarks and Landmark Districts

National Historic Landmarks are nationally significant historic sites, buildings, structures, or objects designated by the Secretary of the Interior because they possess exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the heritage of the United States. National Historic Landmark Districts are historic districts that have received the same designation.

National Designation

Local Designation

Philadelphia Register of Historic Places

The Philadelphia Historical Commission (PHC) is responsible for ensuring the preservation of historically significant buildings, structures, sites, objects, interiors, and districts in the city. The commission identifies and designates historic resources, listing them on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. It regulates preservation through the City's building and other permitting processes.

Registered Cultural and Historic Resources

- National Register Site
- National Register District (ND)
- National Historic Landmark
- Girard College National Historic Landmark District
- Philadelphia Register Site
- Philadelphia Register District (LD)
- Philadelphia Register Street Paving District

RENEW > Historic Preservation

Recommendations

27. Direct housing subsidies and commercial assistance into areas within or adjacent to the Diamond Street Local Historic District and West Diamond Street National Historic District.
    > Implementing Agencies: OHCD, Commerce | CW Objective: 8.1.3

28. Pursue nomination of the following sites to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places:
    - The Pyramid Club (1517 W. Girard Avenue)
    - Legendary Blue Horizon (1314 N. Broad Street)
    - Church of the Gesu (1734–54 W. Thompson Street)
    - Berean Presbyterian Church (2101 N. Broad Street)
    - Teatro Puerto Rico/Diamond Theatre (2119 Germantown Avenue)
    - The townhomes at 1416–32 W. Girard Avenue
    - F.A. Poth Brewery (31st and Jefferson Streets)

    > Implementing Agencies: Nonprofits, PHC | CW Objective: 8.1.1

29. Pursue nomination of the Strawberry Mansion Southwest District to the National Register of Historic Places:
    > Implementing Agencies: Nonprofits, PHC | CW Objective: 8.1.1

30. Facilitate partnerships to utilize underused religious buildings:
    - Partner arts organizations and congregations with large facilities; and
    - Provide flexibility in the building code to accommodate uses other than religious services in existing buildings.

    > Implementing Agencies: MOACCE, L&I, Non-profits | CW Objectives: 8.1.5

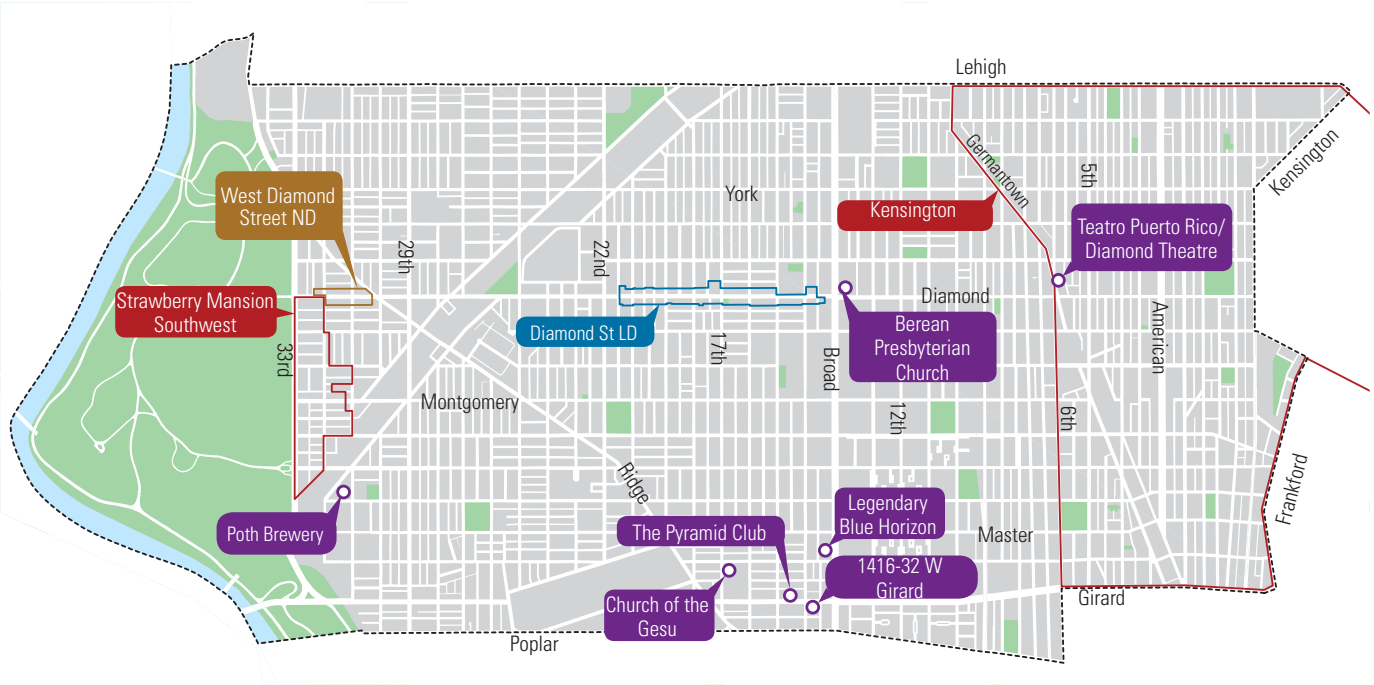
Late 19th century townhomes anchor the 1400 block of W. Girard Avenue. Inappropriate commercial signage and building reuse, like the building pictured at left, threaten to diminish the integrity of this block. The block should be locally designated.

CASE STUDY

Church of the Advocate

Located at 18th and Diamond Streets, this Gothic Revival North Philadelphia church was completed in 1897. Between 1973 and 1976, fourteen large-scale murals were installed that depict the black experience in the United States. Along with its small congregation, a soup kitchen, and summer camp, the church now shares space with *Art Sanctuary*, an organization dedicated to bringing citizens together through the community-building power of black art. The Church of the Advocate provides an impressive example of how congregations can develop partnerships to enable the utilization and preservation of their large facilities.

Historic Resources Addressed in the Recommendations



RENEW > Public Realm

Development Patterns and Urban Design

Philadelphia2035 Citywide Vision

Goal 9.1
Enhance and improve the walkable form with buildings and spaces that have appropriately scaled heights, massing, and setbacks.

Goal 9.2
Elevate public demand for good design in the public realm.

The Lower North District has at its core the numbered streets of the original plan for Philadelphia. This block structure has been the template for growth and resulted in high population densities during the district's peak in the 1950s. Despite Lower North's high vacancy rate and changing development patterns, it maintains a population density of roughly 25 people per acre — compared to 29 people per acre in the Central District.

Many blocks are divided in half by streets with the Philadelphia rowhouse as the primary building type. However, in the majority of residential blocks, a typical city block (400'x400') has been subdivided to create three or four blocks, making for very short lot depths and small homes with no rear access and no off-street parking. While this layout produces a cityscape that is pedestrian friendly, it also creates a framework that can be incompatible with the contemporary housing market which tends towards larger homes and some provision for off-street parking.

Interruptions in the grid are attributed to Lenni Lenape trails that predate the grid and are today Frankford, Germantown, and Ridge Avenues. These commercial thoroughfares run diagonal to the grid, which has resulted in the creation of blocks that are generally small, with awkwardly shaped parcels, and experience high vacancy. Other encumbrances to the traditional grid include East Fairmount Park, Girard College, the Northeast Corridor rail line, and the SEPTA commuter rail lines.

Beginning in the 1960s, Lower North experienced significant population decline, increased vacancy, and blight. In response, redevelopment projects led to the consolidation of blocks into "superblocks" and the development of high-density, inward-facing buildings that did not respect the existing scale, architecture, and urban fabric of the surrounding areas. Over the last 20 years, new subsidized developments have introduced housing typologies that deviate from the traditional rowhouse and incorporate front yard setbacks, porches, front-facing garages, and rear courtyard parking. Much of this was an attempt to reduce density, accomodate the automobile, and absorb vacant land. This has resulted in a suburban-style housing typology along major corridors and nodes.

With new demand for market-rate housing, developers have attempted to reconnect with the traditional character of Lower North. As such, recent construction is generally more respectful of its urban context through the use of more compatible materials and building forms. Nonetheless, automobile use and the desire for off-street parking remain difficult issues to resolve within a dense street network and desire for larger homes.

Design Guideline Publications

In 2003, the PCPC published *Design Guidelines for Commercial Facade Improvements*, followed by *Design Guidelines for Off-Street Parking* in 2010.

This plan recommends requiring similar standards for all development that receives City subsidies or is built on land owned by a City agency.

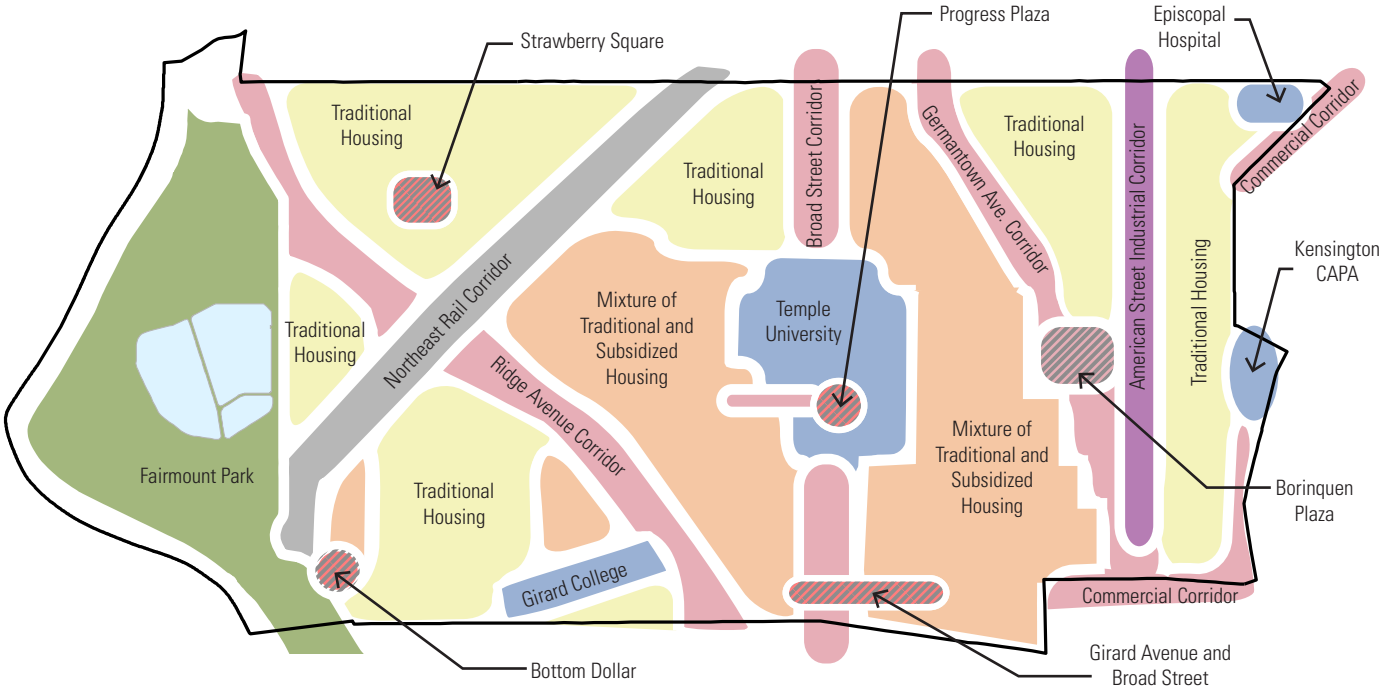
Recommendations

31. Create design requirements for developments that receive City subsidies or are built on properties controlled by the City of Philadelphia, the Philadelphia Housing Authority, or the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority:
    - Achieve a minimum of 20 units per net acre for all residential development;
    - Create front and sideyard setbacks that are consistent with adjacent blocks;
    - Place all off-street parking in the rear of developments or along service streets; and
    - Minimize the number of curb cuts on all numbered streets and streets of similar width.

      > Implementing Agencies: PCPC, PHA, PRA, OHCD | CW Objective: 9.1.2

Development Patterns in Lower North

Diagonal thoroughfares, Girard College, East Fairmount Park, and various rail lines preceded much of Lower North's development. City planners did their best to impose a street grid around this infrastructure. Housing and commercial development were shaped by, yet sometimes modified, this grid.



Traditional Housing Blocks

Built before 1950

Mixed Housing Blocks

Subsidized housing built over the last two decades

Proposed Land Use

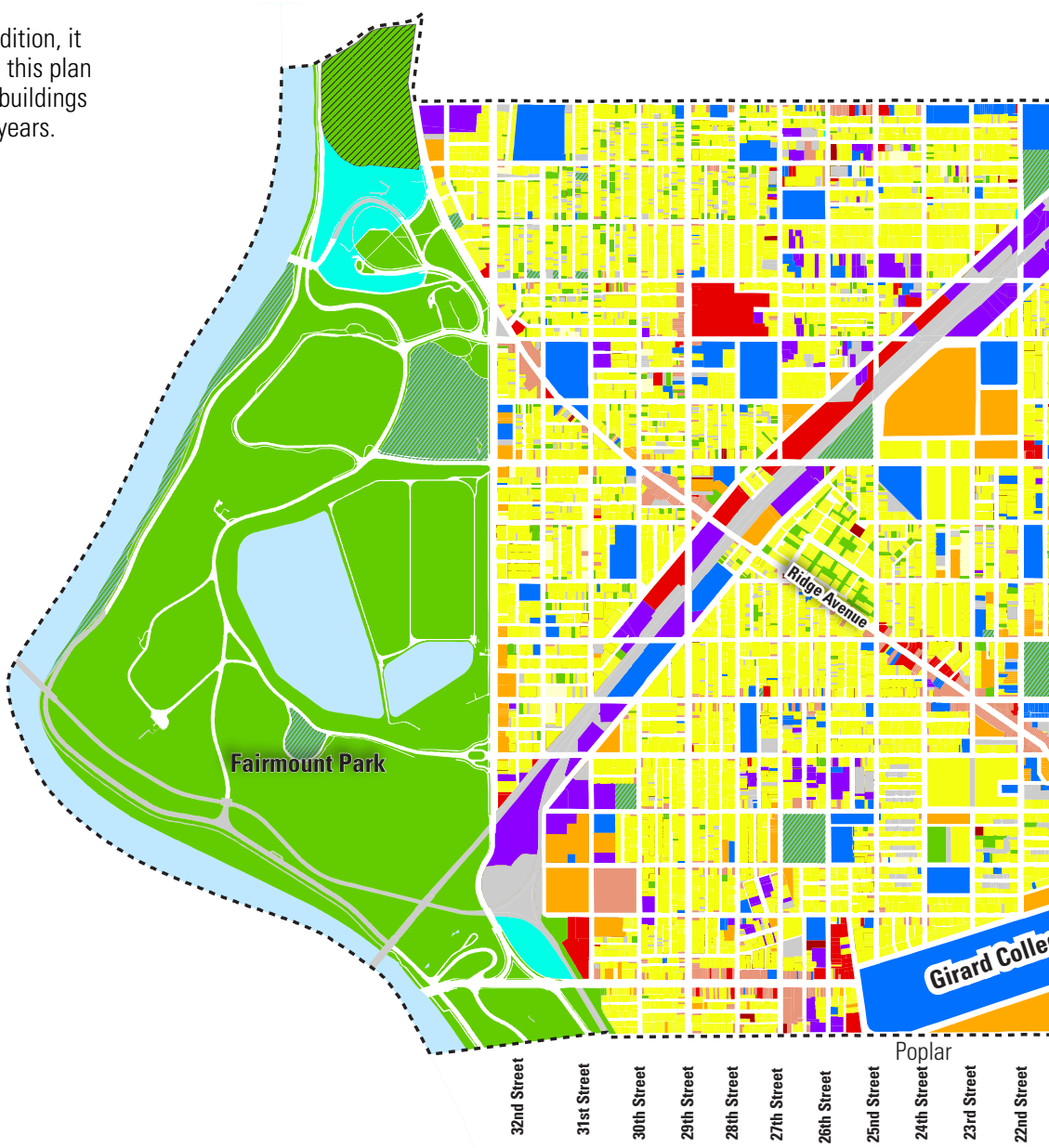
The proposed land use map illustrates desirable development patterns in the district given the assumptions contained in this plan's recommendations: low growth forecasts; investment directed to land surrounding key assets including transit stations, recreation centers, shopping centers, and historic districts; and weak demand for market-rate housing in large sections of the district.

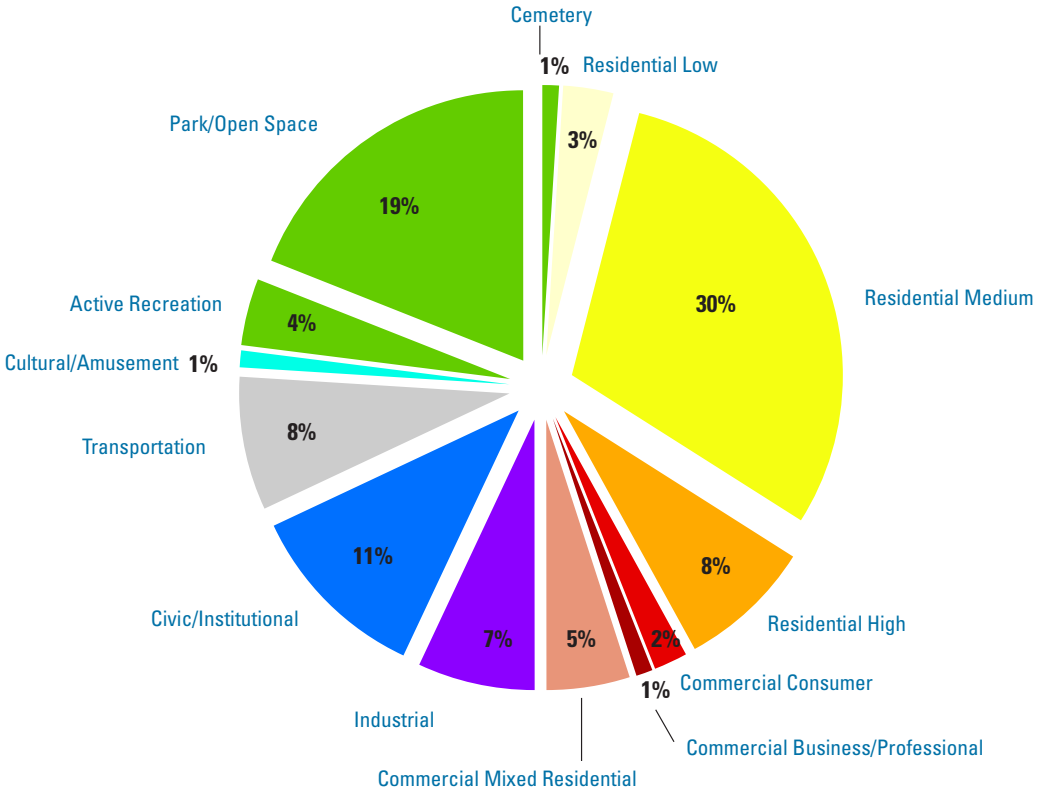
Many areas, such as residential neighborhoods or commercial corridors, function well and their land uses should continue.

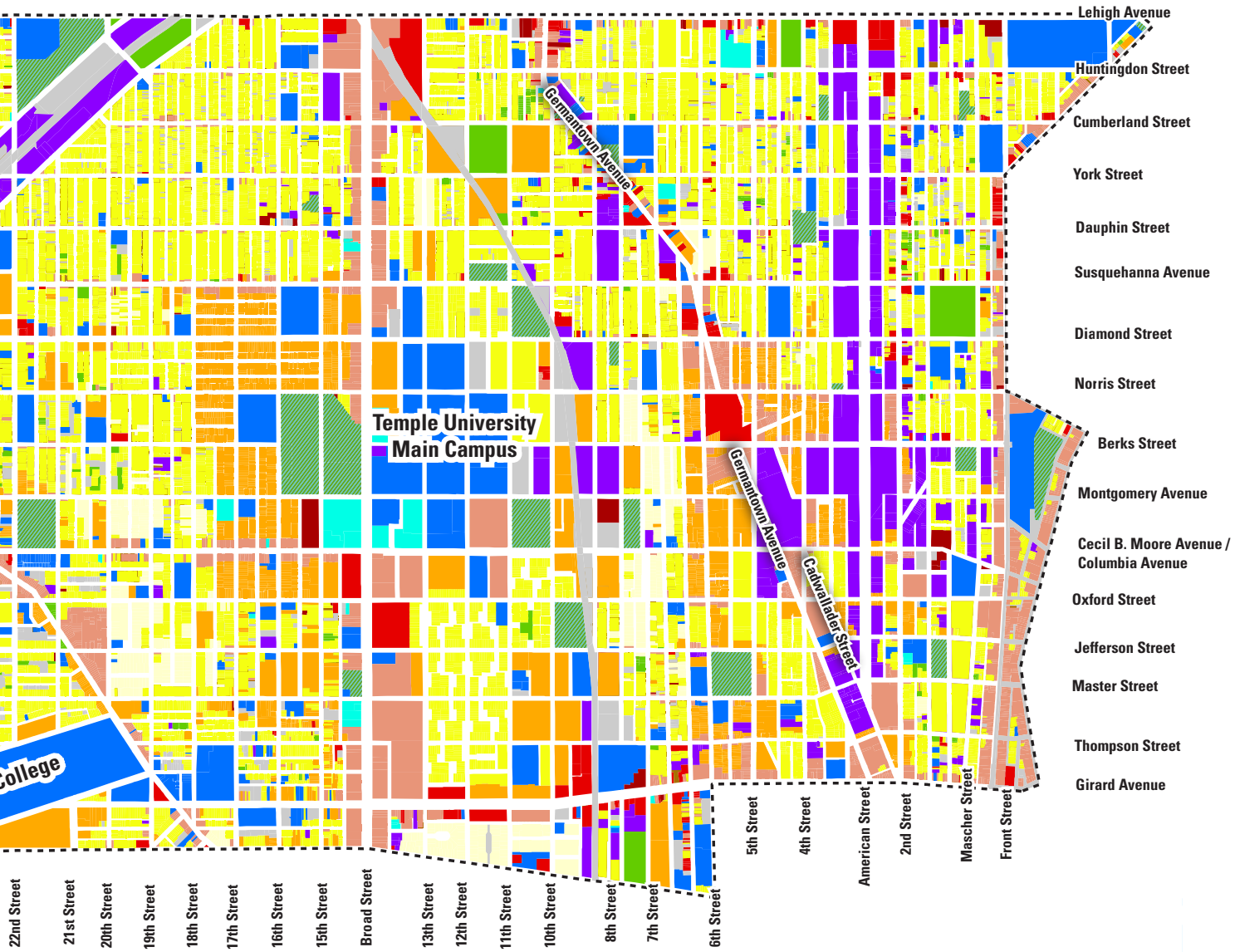
Since vacancy is not a desirable condition, it is not shown on this map. However, this plan acknowledges that vacant land and buildings will persist at least for the next ten years.

Legend

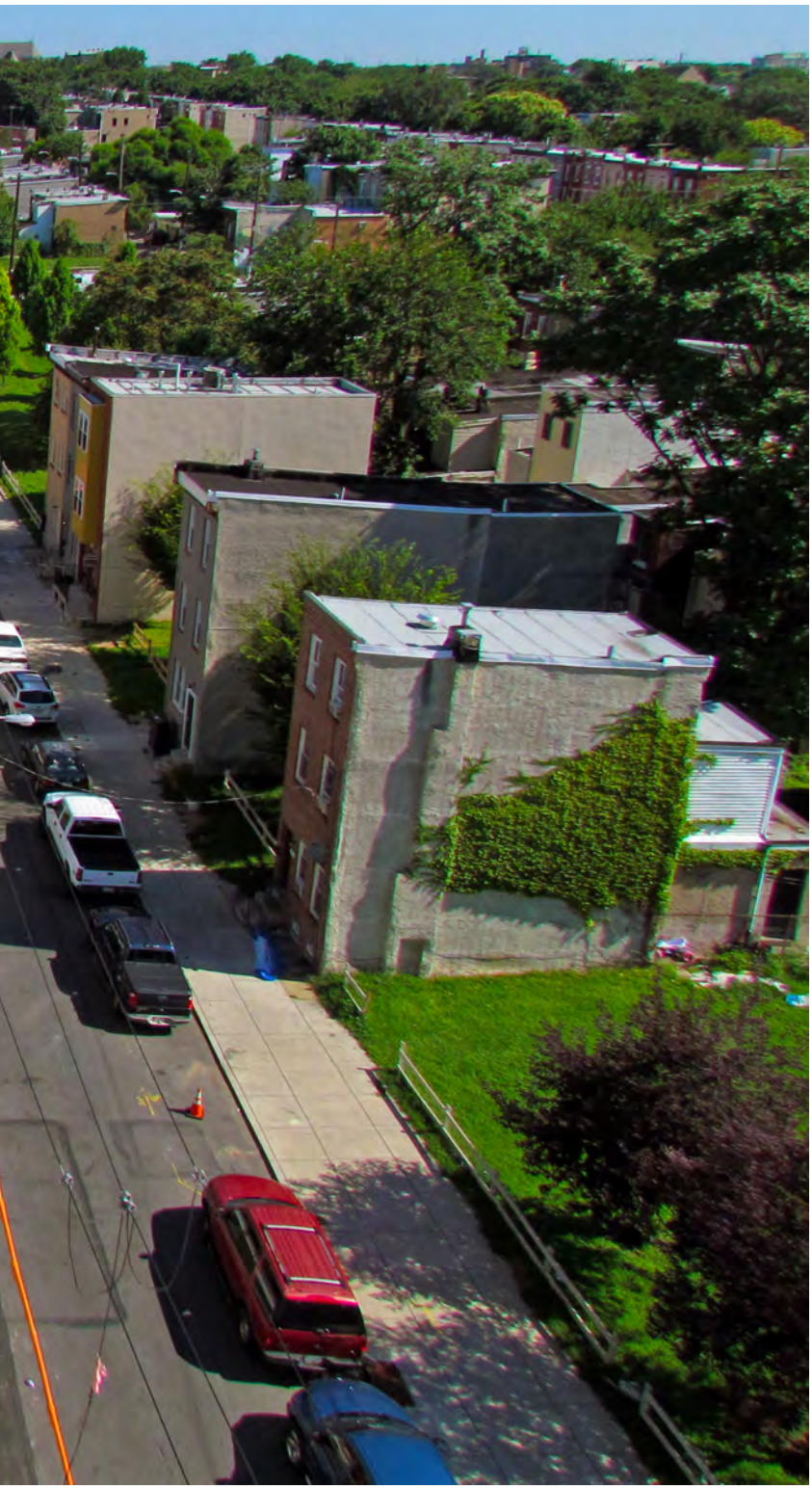
- Residential Low Density
- Residential Medium Density
- Residential High Density
- Commercial Consumer
- Commercial Business / Professional
- Commercial Mixed Residential
- Industrial
- Civic/Institution
- Transportation
- Culture / Amusement
- Active Recreation
- Park / Open Space
- Cemetery
- Water




Cemetery
1%
Residential Low
3%
Park/Open Space
19%
Active Recreation
4%
Cultural/Amusement
1%
Transportation
8%
Civic/Institutional
11%
Industrial
7%
Commercial Mixed Residential
5%
Commercial Business/Professional
2%
Commercial Consumer
1%
Residential High
8%
Residential Medium
30%


Lehigh Avenue
Huntingdon Street
Cumberland Street
York Street
Dauphin Street
Susquehanna Avenue
Diamond Street
Norris Street
Berks Street
Montgomery Avenue
Cecil B. Moore Avenue / Columbia Avenue
Oxford Street
Jefferson Street
Master Street
Thompson Street
Girard Avenue
Germantown Avenue
Germantown Avenue
Cadwallader Street
Temple University Main Campus
College
22nd Street
21st Street
20th Street
19th Street
18th Street
17th Street
16th Street
15th Street
Broad Street
13th Street
12th Street
11th Street
10th Street
8th Street
7th Street
6th Street
5th Street
4th Street
American Street
2nd Street
Mascher Street
Front Street

MAKING IT HAPPEN



Mixed-income construction in the Lower North District

78 | Implementing the District Plan

79 | Priority Recommendations

80 | Proposed Zoning

Implementing the District Plan

> Public Process for Zoning Map Revisions

After the Lower North District Plan is adopted by the PCPC, civic engagement will continue to ensure that the zoning recommendations in this plan are appropriate and implemented.

The PCPC will use the district plan's future land use map and zoning recommendations to prepare draft zoning maps and ordinances. After discussion with the Steering Committee and input from public meetings, the PCPC will make revisions to the draft maps and ordinances and then submit final versions to City Council for introduction as bills.

Both the PCPC and City Council will host public hearings to discuss the zoning legislation. If the bills pass Council, they will go to the mayor for approval. After the bill is enacted into law with the mayor's signature, the PCPC will change the official City zoning maps to reflect the new revisions.

> Making Proactive Investments with the City's Capital Program

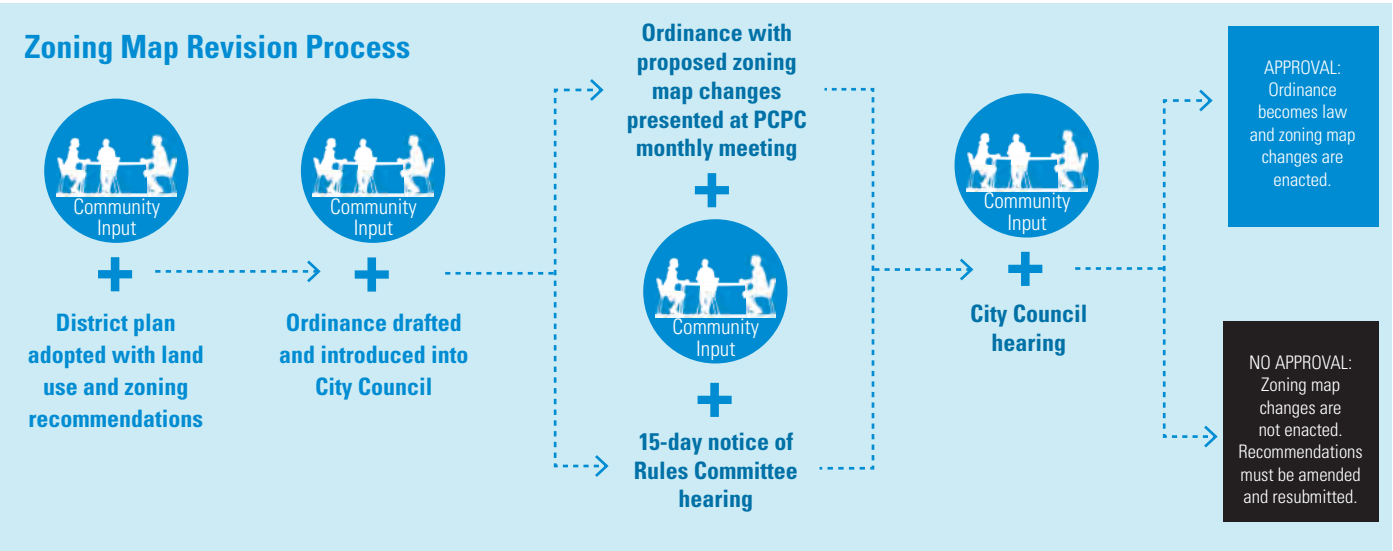
The Capital Program is the City's six-year investment strategy for infrastructure and facilities. The first year of the six-year program is known as the Capital Budget. The Capital Budget ordinance along with the voters' authorization enables the City to spend funds on public improvements.

The Capital Program plays an important role in strategic planning for City government. It can be an effective tool for aligning scarce resources with the needs of Philadelphia's diverse population and its use of City facilities, and can aid in decision-making about the future of those facilities. In recent years, however, without the benefit of an up-to-date comprehensive plan, the Capital Program has served as a reactive mechanism for dealing with deferred maintenance and has had little influence on the planning of facilities based on current and future needs.

The City's last comprehensive look at public facilities was in 1960. That analysis did not anticipate the significant population decline that took place between 1960 and 2000, and created a legacy of public facilities and infrastructure built for a much larger 1960s-era population. Recent population growth in Philadelphia has not altered that legacy significantly, but with our new comprehensive plan, *Philadelphia2035*, the City now has the means for making proactive investment decisions. The PCPC, the Department of Public Property, and the Office of the Finance Director—the agencies most involved in preparing the Capital Budget and Program–can use the recommendations of *Philadelphia2035* as a framework for future capital projects.

Each district plan identifies opportunities for improved delivery of city services through new, renovated, and/or consolidated public facilities. The annual Capital Program process, coordinated by the PCPC, will help implement recommendations for public facilities contained in the district plans.

The Mayor's Task Force on City-owned Facilities released a report in December 2013. The report highlighted recommendations for improving the use, management and maintenance of the City's owned and leased facilities. The PCPC, a member of the Task Force, ensured that the recommendations were consistent with the goals and objections of *Philadelphia2035*.



Priority Recommendations

LNO corresponds with Lower North District. Each district has its own 2- or 3-letter designation.
corresponds with the recommendation number in the plan.

Thrive

LNO 2 Invest City resources into viable commercial districts where private investment is occurring.
- Replace curbs and sidewalks on Girard Avenue from 25th to 30th streets;
- Create corridor management programs for Germantown and Lehigh, American, Broad and Cecil B. Moore, Front and Kensington, and Ridge and Cecil B. Moore; and
- Implement a corridor cleaning program and install new sidewalks, curbs, and streetlights at Germantown and Lehigh.

LNO 6 Fortify residential blocks where homeownership is dominant.
- Sell government-owned land for infill development;
- Target resources for home improvement to property owners;
- Use Community Development Block Grant funds for ambient street lighting, sidewalk replacement, or other public realm improvements; and
- Downzone these blocks from RM-1 to RSA-5 to protect from conversion to multifamily units.

LNO 7 Commission a study to determine what impacts, if any, rising property values have on current renters and homeowners. The study should answer the following questions:
- Are residents being forced to leave? If so, who are they, where are they located, and what can be done to help?

LNO 12 Redevelop the Blumberg Apartments into lower-scale houses while reintroducing rights-of-way through the former superblock.
- Include green spaces as placemaking elements

Connect

LNO 14 Implement infrastructure changes along high-volume bus routes 7, 32, and 48 to meet transit demand and reduce travel times.

LNO 15 Improve and expand Route 15 trolley service through the following enhancement projects:
- Identify and construct a turnaround location in the vicinity of Girard College;
- Eliminate left turn lanes where feasible to expand the route's separated right-of-way;
- Study options for retaining service on the Frankford Avenue branch while restoring service to Port Richmond, including the procurement of more vehicles or modified scheduling;

LNO 16 Implement the following priority recommendations of the Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan:
- Install a bike lane on 2nd Street;
- Install marked shared lanes on 5th Street and Cecil B. Moore Avenue;
- Make 13th and 15th bicycle-friendly streets; and
- Install appropriate infrastructure for safer travel at the approaches to the Girard Avenue and Strawberry Mansion bridges.

Renew

LNO 23 Build a new Martin Luther King, Jr. Older Adult Center at 21st Street and Cecil B. Moore Avenue.

LNO 24 Improve public recreation facilities by:
- Repairing a leaky roof, removing mold, installing ventilation in bathrooms, and reinforcing the ceiling in the basement weight room at the Cecil B. Moore Recreation Center; and
- Installing entrance signs and gateway features at the Waterloo Playground, resurfacing basketball courts, replacing excess concrete with active play space, and condemning additional land adjacent to the center if needed.

LNO 28 Pursue nomination of the following sites to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places:
- The Pyramid Club (1517 W. Girard Avenue); Legendary Blue Horizon (1314 N. Broad Street); Church of the Gesu (1734–54 W. Thompson Street); Berean Presbyterian Church (2101 N. Broad Street); Teatro Puerto Rico/Diamond Theatre (2119 Germantown Avenue); and the townhomes at 1416–32 W. Girard Avenue.

In addition to the zoning map revision process, implementation efforts include advancing priority recommendations contained within the district plan. Through its *Philadelphia2035* Exchange Meeting process, PCPC will coordinate with relevant agencies and organizations and help to facilitate the next steps. The recommendations listed are identified as priorities because of factors such as:

- Master plans or feasibility studies indicate need and strong public support;
- Zoning map revisions will facilitate development;
- Availability of resources; and
- Multiphase planning or development processes require initial studies.

The priority recommendations of the district plans support the 73 objectives of the *Citywide Vision* (see Appendix for the complete list). The PCPC is measuring progress on citywide objectives through its Exchange Meetings with city agencies responsible for implementation. Additionally, the PCPC is preparing annual progress reports for *Philadelphia2035* to indicate how district plan recommendations contribute to overall *Citywide Vision* goals and objectives.

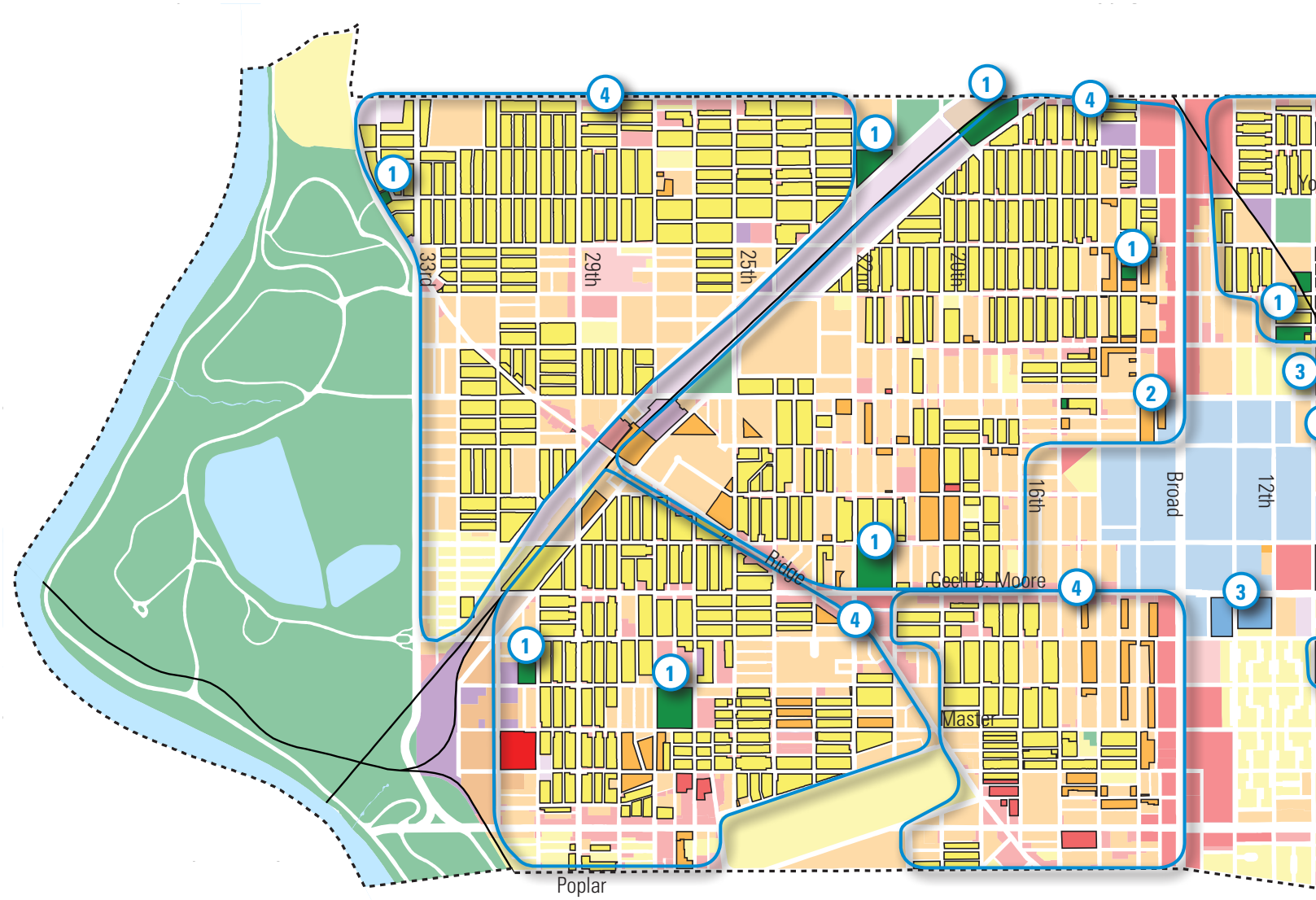
Proposed Zoning

Zoning is the primary tool to regulate land use (use), where a building can locate on the property (area), and building size (bulk). The zoning of a parcel is analyzed to ensure that it can implement the desired future land use. In some areas, the zoning does not match the existing and future land use and, therefore, an option is **Corrective Zoning**. Other areas are targeted for long-term transition to new uses and development as envisioned by the community through the planning process. These zoning revisions are referred to as **Zoning to Advance the Plan.** Proposed changes to the zoning map are specified on the following pages.

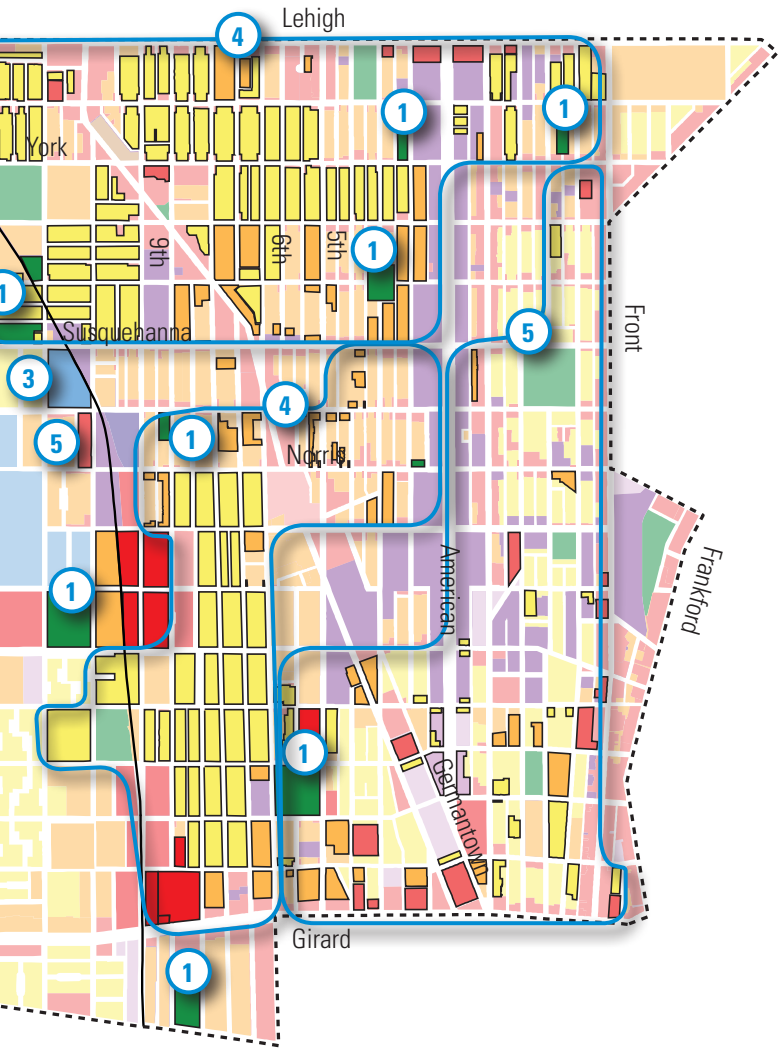
Corrective Zoning

Matches zoning with existing land use.

These are areas where the "mismatch" may cause unnecessary zoning variances or certificates, or allow an inappropriate use.



Proposed Corrective Zoning Map Legend:		Existing Zoning	Proposed Zoning	Reason for Rezoning
Corrective Zoning	1. Recreation Centers and Open Space	RSA-3, CMX-2, I-2	SP-PO-A	Align zoning to the existing land use. These are areas where the "mismatch" may cause unnecessary zoning variances or certificates or allow an inappropriate use.
	2. Temple University	SP-INS	RM-1	
	3. Temple University	I2, RSA-5, RM-1, CMX-2	SP-INS	
	4. Strawberry Mansion, Brewerytown, Sharswood, North Central, Green Hills, North Philadelphia, West Kensington, Ludlow, Yorktown	RM-1, CMX-2, I-2	RSA-5, RM-1	
	5. South Kensington / Olde Kensington / Norris Square	I-2	RSA-5, RM-1, CMX-2, CMX-3	



Residential Single-Family Attached	RSA-2; RSA-3; RSA-5
Residential Two-Family Attached	RTA-1
Residential Multifamily	RM-1; RM-2; RM-4
Auto-Oriented Commercial	CA-1; CA-2
Neighborhood Commercial Mixed-Use	CMX-1; CMX-2; CMX2.5
Community/Center City Commercial Mixed-Use	CMX-3; CMX-4
Center City Core Commercial Mixed-Use	CMX-5
Light Industrial	I-1
Medium Industrial	I-2
Industrial Commercial Mixed-Use	ICMX
Industrial Residential Mixed-Use	IRMX
Institutional Development	SP-INS
Recreation	SP-PO-A
Zoning Change	

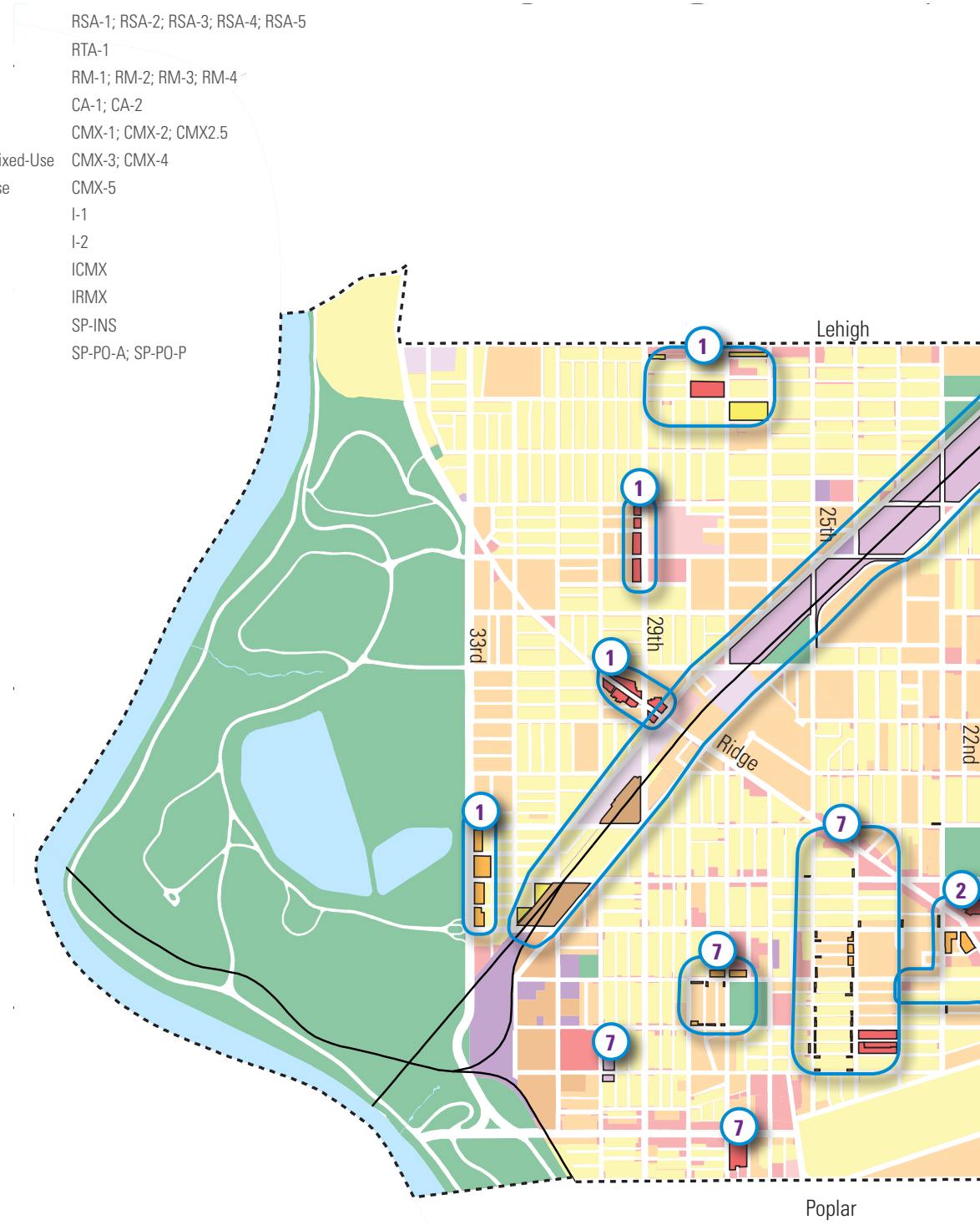
Proposed Zoning

Zoning to Advance the Plan

Encourages development and uses envisioned by the community through the planning process.

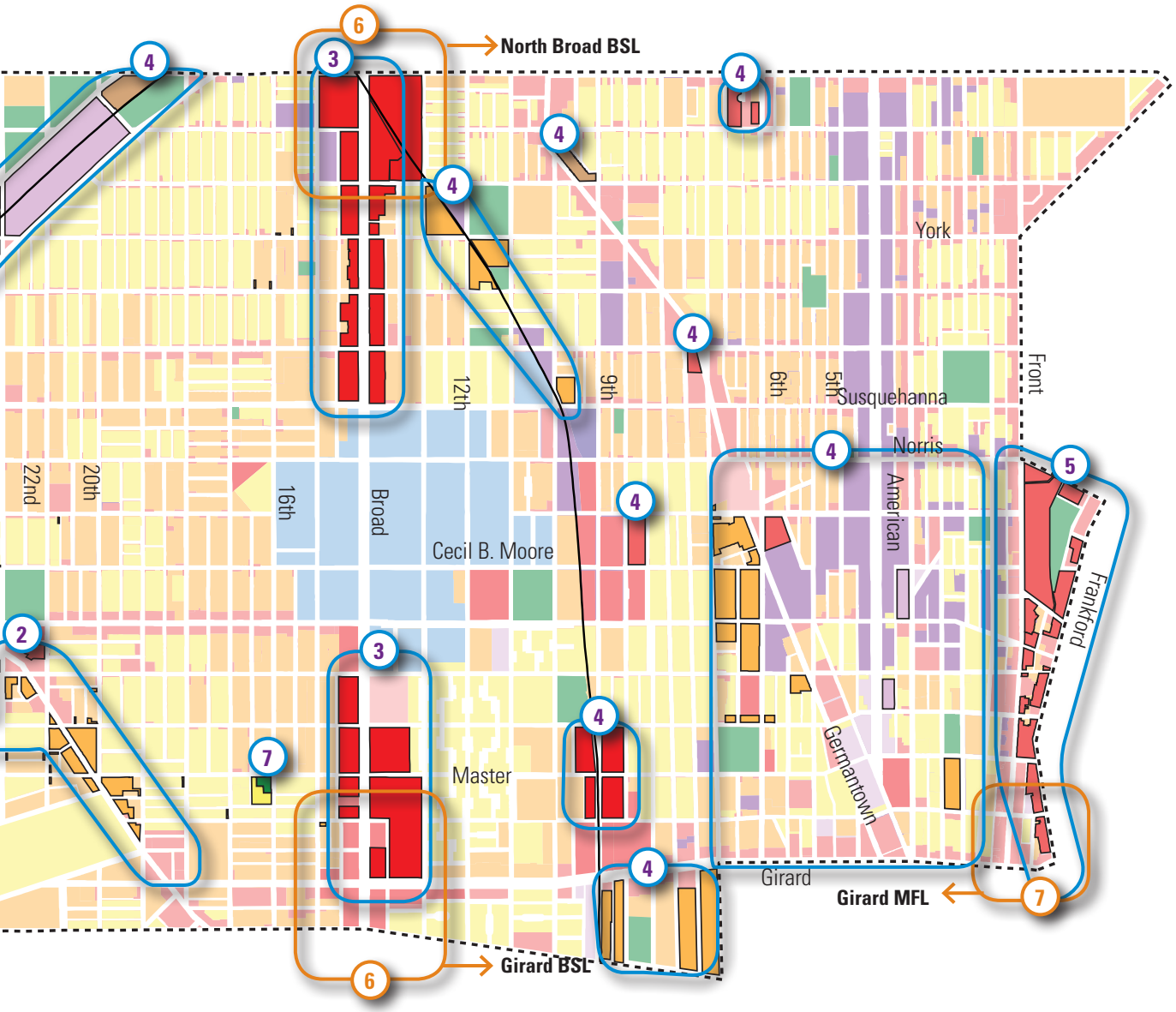
These are areas where revisions to the zoning code will enable development as recommended by this plan. These recommendations are based on the Proposed Land Use map (p. 74), not what exists today.

Residential Single-Family Attached	RSA-1; RSA-2; RSA-3; RSA-4; RSA-5
Residential Two-Family Attached	RTA-1
Residential Multifamily	RM-1; RM-2; RM-3; RM-4
Auto-Oriented Commercial	CA-1; CA-2
Neighborhood Commercial Mixed-Use	CMX-1; CMX-2; CMX2.5
Community/Center City Commercial Mixed-Use	CMX-3; CMX-4
Center City Core Commercial Mixed-Use	CMX-5
Light Industrial	I-1
Medium Industrial	I-2
Industrial Commercial Mixed-Use	ICMX
Industrial Residential Mixed-Use	IRMX
Institutional Development	SP-INS
Recreation	SP-PO-A; SP-PO-P
Zoning Change	



Proposed Zoning Map Legend:

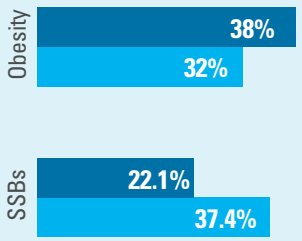
		Existing Zoning	Proposed Zoning	Reason for Rezoning
	1. Strawberry Mansion	RSA-5, RM-1, RM-2, CMX-2	RM-1, CMX-2, RMX-3	Encourage development adjacent to Strawberry Square/ Encourage reuse of vacant land and buildings
	2. Ridge Avenue	CMX-2, RM-1	CMX-2.5, RM-1	Encourage larger-footprint retail and multifamily housing; right size the commercial district,
	3. North Broad Street	CMX-2, CMX-2.5, SP-INS	CMX-4	Encourage higher-density development and increased activity
	4. South Kensington / Olde Kensington / West Kensington / North Philadelphia / Northeast Rail Corridor	I-2	CMX-2, ICMX, IRMX, RSA-5, RM-1	Transition obsolete industrial land to residential, commercial, or an industrial commercial mix
	5. Fishtown	I-2, ICMX, RM-1	CMX-2, CMX-2.5	Transition obsolete industrial land to commercial mixed-use
	6. Transit Hubs	Various	TOD Overlay	Encourage mixed use, mixed-income development
	7. Brewerytown / Sharswood / Fairmount / Green Hills	CA-1, I-2, CMX-2	CMX-3, ICMX, RM-1, RSA-5, SP-PO-A, RMX-3	Encourage redevelopment of obsolete commercial properties



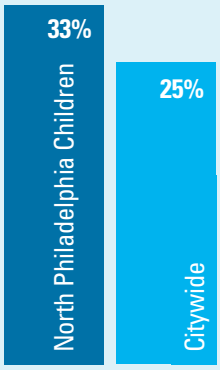
APPENDIX

86 | Health Profile
87 | Summary of Public Meetings
91 | *Citywide Vision* Objectives
93 | Agency Names and Abbreviations
94| Acknowledgments

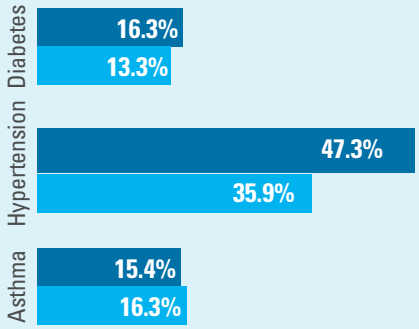
Lower North District Health Profile



Obesity and Sugar-Sweetened Beverage Consumption Comparison



Childhood Obesity Rate



Chronic Disease Comparison

Lower North
City of Philadelphia

The Built Environment and Public Health

There are strong associations between land use, transportation, and public health outcomes. Land use decisions determine proximity of jobs, parks, fresh food, and essential services to residents, affecting levels of physical activity, nutrition, and the likelihood of chronic disease. As a partner in the Get Healthy Philly initiative with the Department of Public Health (PDPH), PCPC considers the health impacts that the implementation of district plan recommendations can have on the city's residents.

> Access to Healthy Foods

A screening of the Lower North District reveals recent progress on improving healthy food access, though significant challenges remain. More residents travel outside of their own neighborhood to reach a supermarket (44 percent) than in any other planning district. Since this data was collected in 2010, the city has worked with private developers to attract new supermarkets to the district, including Super Fresh at 2nd and Girard (open), and Bottom Dollar Food at 31st and Girard (open) and 9th and Girard (under construction).

While non-automotive access to major supermarkets remains an issue for Lower North, the Health Department's recruitment of corner stores into the Healthy Corner Store network has greatly improved the overall healthy food landscape by providing more healthy options within neighborhoods. For this reason, scores for walkable access to healthy foods improved greatly in the past two years in Lower North, completely eliminating "No Access" areas (as defined by PDPH's methodology) and shrinking "Low Access" areas to specific blocks north of Temple University's main campus, along Girard Avenue west of Broad, and in the upper corner of Strawberry Mansion. Full report available here: www.phila.gov/health/pdfs/Food_access_report.pdf

> Obesity and Chronic Disease Rates

Over 33 percent of North Philadelphia's children are obese. Within Lower North where data is available for the adult population, we find an adult obesity rate of 38 percent. Both of these exceed the citywide averages for children and adults (25.4 percent and 32.2 percent respectively). When overweight adults are included in the calculation, nearly three quarters of the adult population in Lower North qualifies as obese and/or overweight. These populations are at risk for chronic diseases related to higher weight, including hypertension and diabetes.

Lower North exceeds citywide averages for these conditions as well: adult rates for hypertension and diabetes are 47.3 percent and 16.3 percent within the district, while the city overall reports rates at 35.8 percent and 13.3 percent. A combination of food choices within neighborhoods, walkable proximity of key resources, and perceived safety and road condition that influence transportation choices contribute to these statistics. The district also reports slightly lower-than-average rates of asthma (15.4 percent to the city's 16.3 percent).

> Active Transportation

Active transportation describes modes that involve physical activity–namely, biking and walking. A great number of district residents work in Center City, making walking an unsuitable choice in most cases. The district does offer some of the most comprehensive transit access to employment hubs in Center City and other parts of the region, making transit a viable and popular option that helps build physical activity into many daily commutes.

Though currently lacking in significant bicycle infrastructure, the district's distance from, and connectivity to, Center City and University City make it a strong commuting possibility. As such, the City hopes that its planned bike-share program–which would include stations throughout Lower North–will open another active mode to populations who currently have very low bicycle mode-share for commuting.

Summary of Public Meetings

The PCPC held three rounds of public meetings to solicit ideas, priorities, recommendations, and feedback at various stages of the planning process. Each of these meetings was held within the district. These public meetings were open to all interested citizens, regardless of their ties to the district. Additional information for the public meetings can be found at www.Phila2035.org.

> First Round of Community Open Houses

The first round of open houses on June 23, June 30, and August 15 dealt with three topics: reusing vacant land, commercial development, and density. PCPC hosted these meetings at the Martin Luther King Recreation Center, Cruz Recreation Center, and the Columbia North YMCA.

Participants selected from choices to answer the following questions:

- Where it is possible to restore or rebuild new homes, what those homes should be closest to?
- When new construction is not an option, would you want to see vacant land reused as community spaces, parking, sideyards, or community gardens?
- Where do you work?
- How do you get to your job?
- Where do you prefer to shop?
- How do you currently shop?
- How would you prefer to shop?
- My decision to shop is most influenced by:
- Are there enough people living on your street or on your block?

The last two meetings featured a "positive station" where attendees described what they like today and what they'd like to see in 10 years. Nearly 230 people attended this round of meetings.

> Second Public Meeting: Priority Zoning and Focus Area Recommendations

On October 29, staff hosted its second public meeting at the Columbia North YMCA. Just over 100 people attended. Participants listened to a presentation describing the night's activities, then broke into small groups where they discussed interventions in seven sub areas.

These seven areas had high levels of vacancy, large numbers of tax delinquent properties and many City-owned lots. Participants prioritized six interventions for these areas, including new houses, public open space, stormwater management, cleaning and greening land, formalizing informal parking arrangements, and targeted code enforcement.

Participants also gave input on draft recommendations in two focus areas: Ridge Avenue from Girard Avenue to Cecil B. Moore Avenue and surrounding blocks; and American Street from Girard Avenue to Norris Street and part of the neighborhood to either side.

And they reviewed draft zoning recommendations, including:

- Downzoning properties just outside the Temple University area from multifamily to single family, while preserving space for limited multifamily development;
- Downzoning properties in two sections of single-family homes in Strawberry Mansion to protect them from conversions to multifamily; and
- Upzoning properties on 33rd Street across from East Fairmount Park to encourage reuse of large homes.

> Final Open House: Recommendations

The Commission hosted the final open house on December 11 at the Howard Gittis Student Center at Temple University.

Participants spoke individually with staff at various stations about draft recommendations from Thrive, Connect, and Renew, proposed zoning, and focus area interventions.

Staff then presented a 10-minute recap of background information and priority interventions, followed by a question-and-answer session.

> Other Community Outreach

City planners also attended meetings at the request of civic associations. Staff met with: the American Street Empowerment Zone Community Trust Board; All in the Family CDC with Strawberry Mansion block captains; Norris Square Civic Association; and the South Kensington NAC executive committee.

> Special Thanks

We would like to acknowledge the generosity of our meeting hosts at the Columbia North YMCA who generously donated their space for two of our public meetings.

Selected Responses from the First Public Meetings

When it IS possible to restore or build new houses, they should be closest to....

Mass Transit

28%

Existing Housing

34%

Parks and Recreation Centers

23%

Stores and Businesses

15%

When new construction IS NOT an option, you want to see vacant land re-used as...

Sideyards

12%

Parking

12%

Community Open Space/Cultural

39%

Community Gardens

37%

More would be done to clean, maintain, and use vacant land in my neighborhood IF...

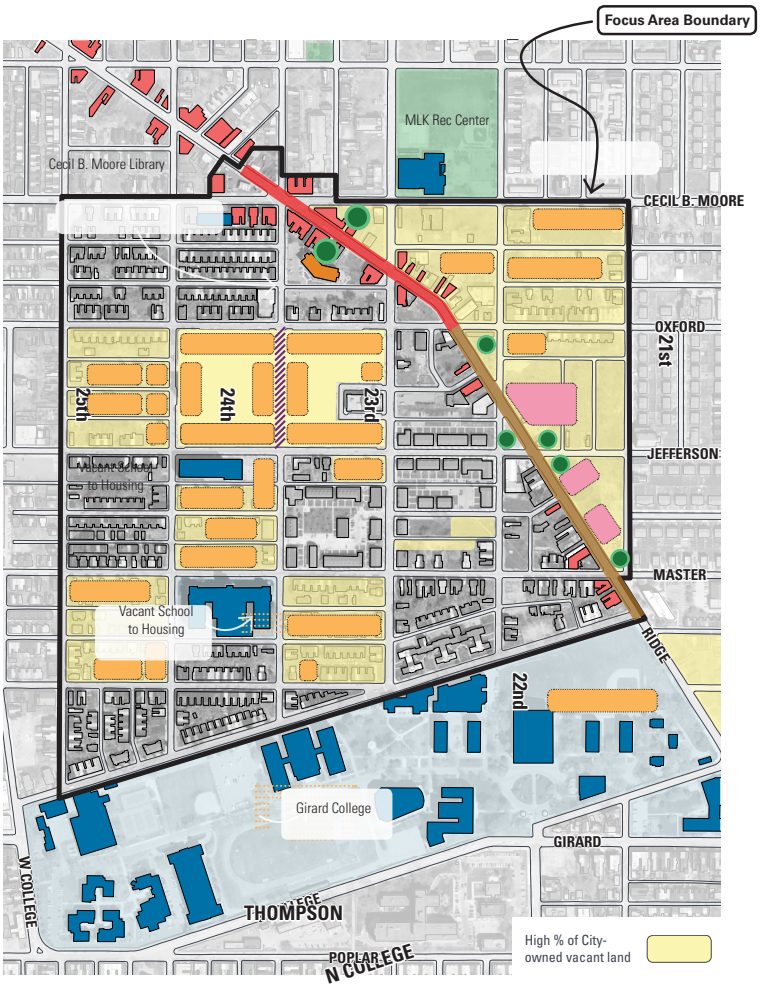
Many respondents had answers to this question. Below are some of the representative answers.

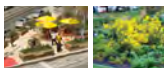
- There was more funding/resources provided by the City
- The results of improvements were lasting (no dumping or vandalism)
- Residents could take ownership
- Residents were educated about reuse opportunities

Selected Responses from the Second Public Meeting

Ridge Avenue Focus Area - Draft Recommendations

Participants were asked to prioritize recommendations for the Focus Areas. The percentages below represent how many considered each recommendation a prior-



Draft Recommendation	Priority
Maintain and enhance existing commercial blocks	19%
Develop "large format" retail uses on clusters of vacant land	19%
Redevelop the PHA Blumberg Apartments into a mixed-income neighborhood consisting of a variety of housing types	22%
Reintroduce 23rd Street from Oxford to Jefferson	14%
"Right size" Ridge Avenue commercial corridor through rezoning	14%
Beautify prominent intersections 	12%

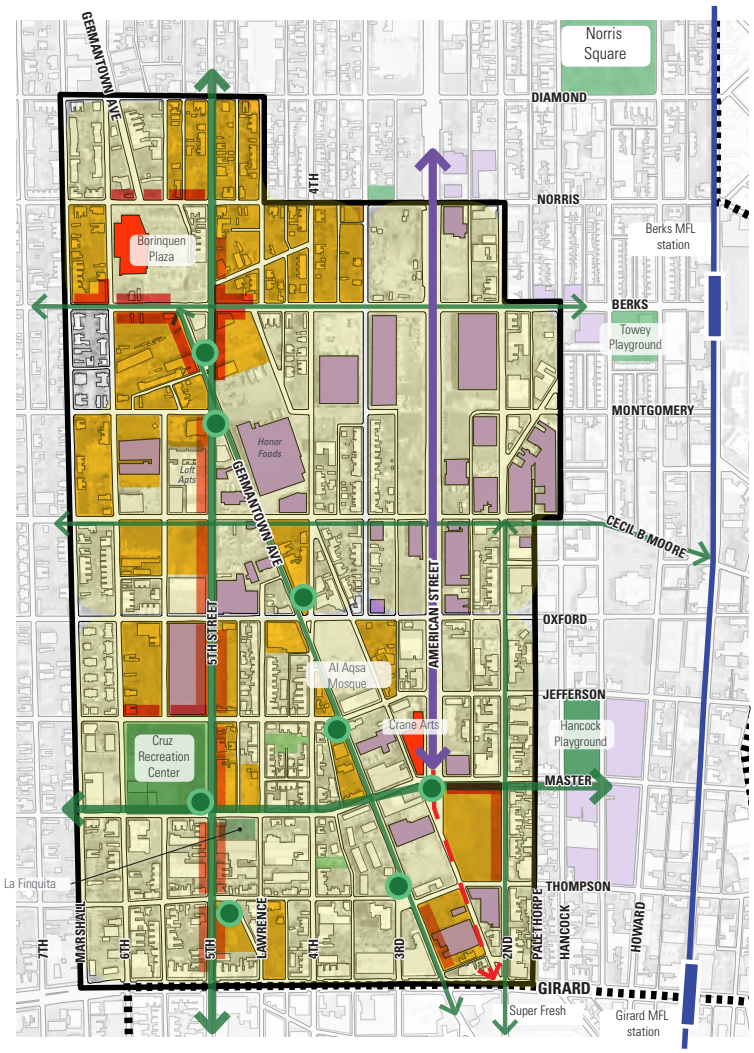
Additional Public Comments on Focus Area

- In order for area to grow, there needs to be financial and tax-based change
- Don't take down Blumberg and replace it with the same thing
- Need homeowners, something new
- Need a new school, elementary and high school
- Add green space around Blumberg
- Add public art, attractive lighting, walkways

Selected Responses from the Second Public Meeting

American Street Focus Area - Draft Recommendations

Participants were asked to prioritize recommendations for the Focus Areas. The percentages below represent how many considered each recommendation a priority.



Draft Recommendation		Priority
Explore residential redevelopment and infill		26%
Explore commercial zoning and/or retail uses		11%
Maintain and enhance the industrial core		19%
Allow a transition away from industry		26%
Improve important connector streets		11%
Develop small open spaces and manage stormwater		7%

Additional Public Comments on Focus Area

- Bicycles and pedestrians need to be considered for American Street corridor
- Would rather see more single-family development, especially at Cruz Recreation Center
- Support Ludlow School
- American Street should be a business corridor, industry is incompatible,

Citywide Vision Objectives

THRIVE

Neighborhoods

Neighborhood Centers

1.1.1 Strengthen neighborhood centers by clustering community-serving public facilities.

1.1.2 Strengthen neighborhood centers by developing viable commercial corridors.

1.1.3 Strengthen neighborhood centers by promoting transit-oriented development around stations.

Housing

1.2.1 Stabilize and upgrade existing housing stock.

1.2.2 Ensure a wide mix of housing is available to residents of all income levels.

1.2.3 Promote new affordable housing development to strengthen existing neighborhood assets.

Economic Development

Industrial Land

2.2.1 Ensure an adequate supply and distribution of industrially zoned land.

2.2.2 Reposition former industrial sites for new users.

Land Management

Vacant Land and Structures

3.1.1 Centralize land management in a single City agency to track and dispose of surplus land and structures, and return publicly owned vacant parcels to taxable status.

3.1.3 Reuse vacant land structures in innovative ways.

Municipal Support Facilities

3.3.1 Reduce expenditures for municipal support facilities.

CONNECT

Transit

4.1.1 Invest in existing infrastructure to improve service and attract riders.

4.1.3 Coordinate land use decisions with existing and planned transit assets to increase transportation choices; decrease reliance on automobiles; increase access to jobs, goods, and services; and maximize the economic, environmental, and public health benefits of transit.

Complete Streets

4.2.2 Expand on- and off-street networks serving pedestrians and bicyclists.

4.2.3 Improve safety for pedestrians and bicyclists and reduce pedestrian and bicycle crashes.

Streets and Highways

4.3.2 Control automobile congestion through traffic management and planning.

4.3.4 Improve pedestrian connections across major rights-of-way.

Citywide Vision Objectives

RENEW

Open Space

Neighborhood Parks and Recreation

6.3.2 Connect neighborhood parks and trails to neighborhood centers and major public facilities.

6.3.3 Ensure proper maintenance and vibrancy of parks and recreation facilities.

Environmental Resources

7.2.3 Support stormwater regulations set by the Philadelphia Water Department to capture stormwater on-site and reduce flooding damage.

Historic Preservation

Cultural, Architectural, and Historic Resources

8.1.1 Preserve culturally, historically, and architecturally significant buildings, sites, structures, and districts.

8.1.3 Preserve and reuse all "at risk" historic anchor buildings, commercial corridor buildings, and districts' elements.

8.1.7 Preserve cultural and ethnic traditions, places, and resources.

Heritage Tourism

8.2.1 Create new and enhance existing tourism programs based on various cultural experiences unique to Philadelphia.

Public Realm

Development Patterns

9.1.2 Ensure that new development reinforces the urban scale.

Urban Design

9.2.1 Apply sound design principles to guide development across the city.

9.2.2 Create welcoming, well-designed public spaces, gateways, and corridors.

Agency Names and Abbreviations

As noted in the Framing Our Future section, the goals and objectives found in *Philadelphia2035* will be accomplished with the partnership of various agencies and organizations. Below is a listing of organizations and government agencies at the state, regional, and local levels that will play a role the implementation of the *Lower North District Plan*. The abbreviations correspond with those used in the *Citywide Vision*.

Full Name	Abbreviation
Regional Agencies	
Pennsylvania Department of Transportation	PennDOT
Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority	SEPTA
Quasi-Governmental Agencies	
Philadelphia Industrial Development Corporation	PIDC
North Central Empowerment Zone Community Trust Board	NCEZ
American Street Empowerment Zone Community Trust Board	ASEZ
Philadelphia Housing Development Corporation	PHDC
Other	
Pennsylvania Horticultural Society	PHS

Full Name	Abbreviation
City Agencies	
Department of Public Property	DPP
Mayor's Office of Transportation and Utilities	MOTU
Office of Housing and Community Development	OHCD
Philadelphia City Council	City Council
Philadelphia City Planning Commission	PCPC
Philadelphia Department of Commerce	Commerce
Philadelphia Department of Licenses and Inspections	L&I
Philadelphia Fire Department	PFD
Philadelphia Historical Commission	PHC
Philadelphia Housing Authority	PHA
Philadelphia Parks and Recreation Department	PPR
Philadelphia Police Department	PPD
Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority	PRA
Philadelphia Streets Department	Streets
Philadelphia Water Department	PWD

Acknowledgments

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Mark Goodheart	Temple Area Property Association
Tonetta Graham	Strawberry Mansion CDC
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Christina Gutierrez	Ludlow Homeowners Association
Zenobia Harris	Office of Council President Darrell Clarke
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Melissa Jest	Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia
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Helen Reddy	Cecil B. Moore CDC
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Judith Robinson	Susquehanna Clean Up Pick Up
Maria Sourbeer	Norris Square Civic Association
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Leah Murphy	South Kensington Community Partners
Kevin Upshur	Strawberry Mansion Learning Center
Vivian VanStory	Community Land Trust Corporation
Ariel Vazquez	South Kensington Community Partners

> Stakeholders Interviewed

Jennifer Barr	Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority
John Carpenter	Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority
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Vince Dougherty	Philadelphia Department of Commerce
Karen Fegley	Philadelphia Department of Commerce
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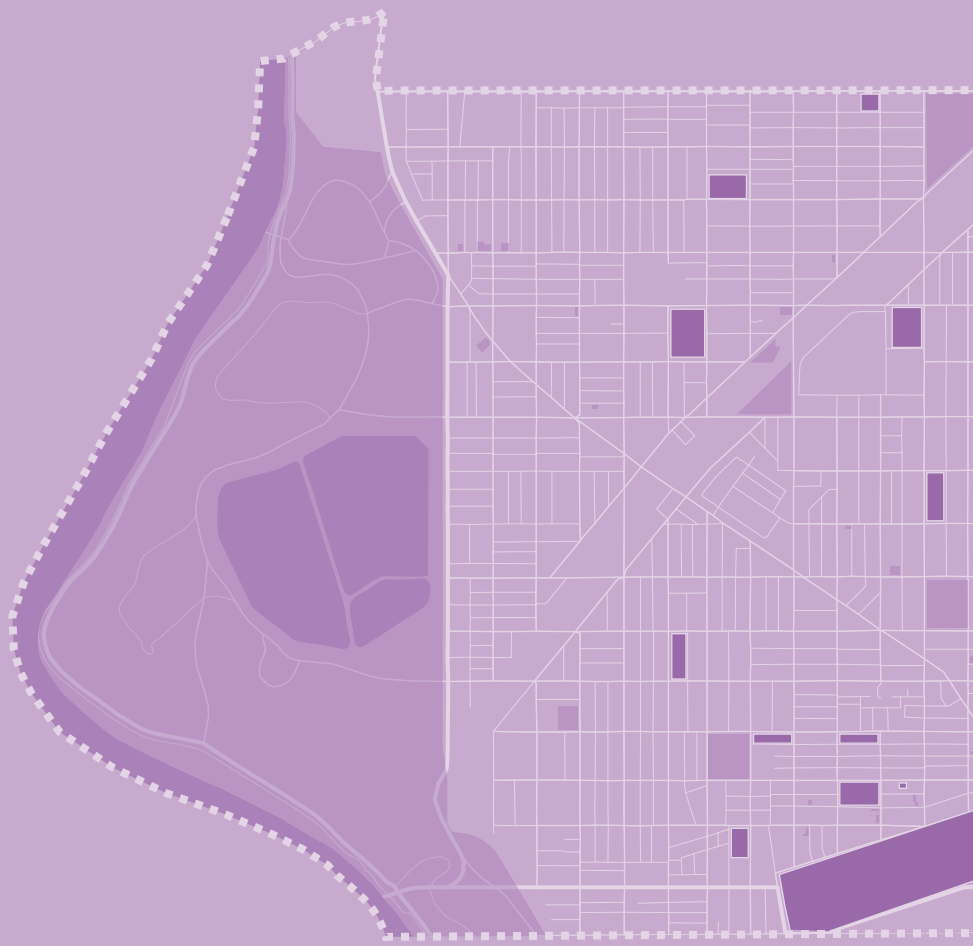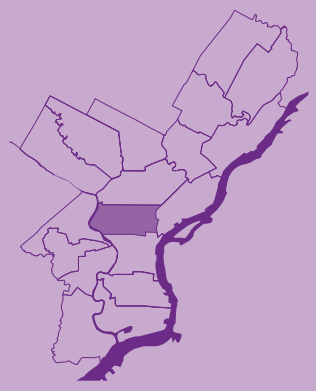
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