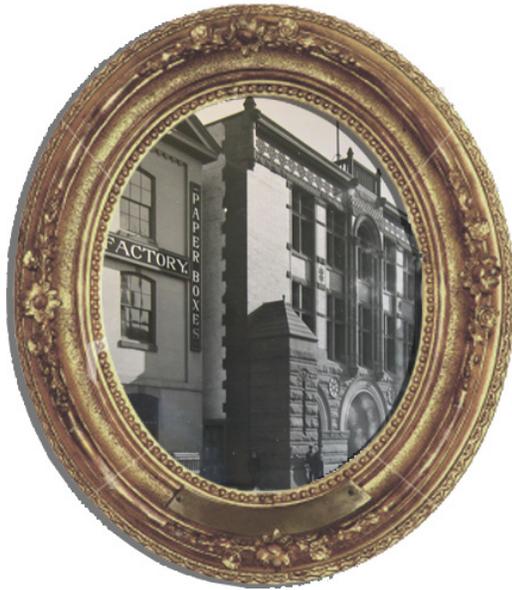




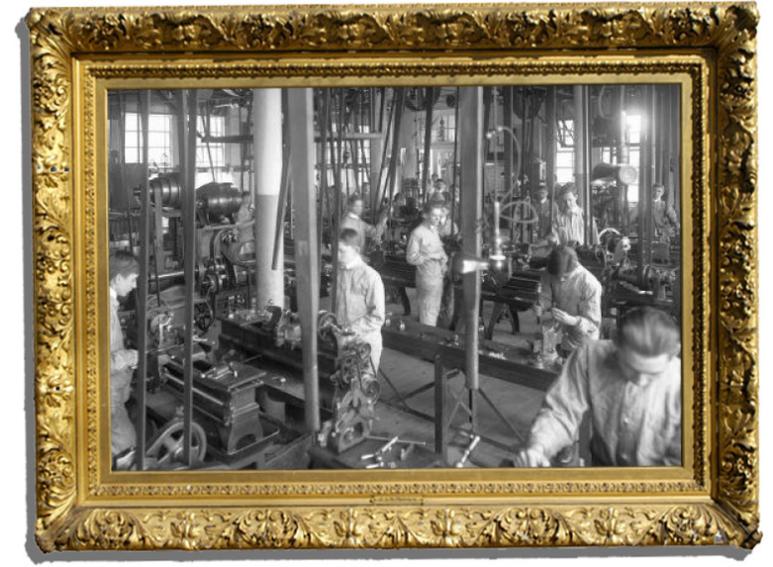
III. existing conditions



Engine House 29, N. 4th Street, 1896
 Source: City Archives



Stetson Hat Manufactory, ca. 1978
 Source: Historic American Buildings Survey



Northeast Manual Training School at Howard and Girard, ca. 1911
 Source: City of Philadelphia Department of Records

III. Existing Conditions

Context

Once an economic powerhouse and center of Philadelphia industry, Eastern North Philadelphia has suffered major decline since the 1960s when many factories closed shop or moved to more cost-effective locations outside of the City. Indeed, manufacturing flourished in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with textiles dominating. In the mid-nineteenth century, Kensington (bound by Erie Avenue, 6th and Germantown Avenue, Girard Avenue, and Frankford Avenue) housed **one third of all the textile industries and workers in Philadelphia**.¹ The carpet industry had its beginnings in the neighborhood within a cluster of mills around Oxford and Howard Streets. Factories ranged in size from small textile firms employing only a few people and home hand looming to operations that covered whole city blocks and employed hundreds. The John B. Stetson Hat Manufactory, one of the largest factory complexes in the neighborhood, was built in the late 1800s and at its peak in the 1920s employed more than 3,500 people. The company even built a hospital and a savings and loan for its employees.

¹ <http://www.workshopoftheworld.com/kensington/kensington.html>

Other major local industries included **slaughterhouses** and **meatpacking plants**, especially along American Street, as well as **tanneries** and **leather-working** industries. Burk Brothers, one of the largest leather manufacturers in Philadelphia, had a plant in the neighborhood at Hancock and Turner Streets, and the Drueding Brothers Company, which produced chamois, was housed in a building at 5th and Master that still stands.

The **North Pennsylvania Railroad** ran up American Street and provided the infrastructure for factories and coal and lumber yards to locate along the corridor. A historically working-class neighborhood, laborers lived close to the factories where they were employed, and by the late 1860s Kensington had developed the physical characteristics that still define it: rowhouse blocks amid mill buildings and large parcels that once housed enormous factory complexes.



Figure 3. Former route of the North Pennsylvania Railroad line

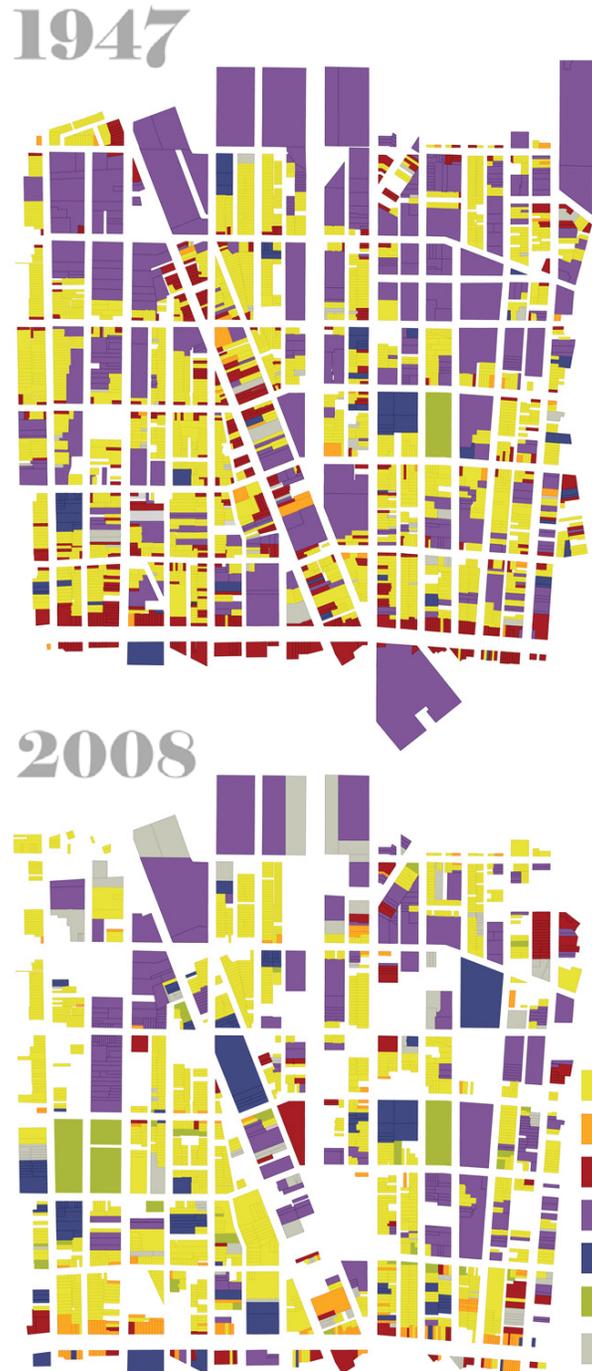


Figure 4. Change in Land Use over Time

The economic shift away from heavy industry and manufacturing left vacant holes where massive factories once operated, prompting the hollowing out of the neighborhood's stock of worker housing and small-scale businesses which once lined the historic Girard and Germantown commercial corridors. The majority of blocks in the study area now host vacant land or abandoned buildings, and gaps in the urban landscape are the norm rather than the exception. These voids are represented in white in the 2008 map of the Change in Land Use over Time diagram.

Although the entire City felt the blow of the shift from a manufacturing to a service economy and the related population drain, Eastern North Philadelphia now bears prominent physical scars from the outflow of people, activity, and investment. American Street, once the center of industry that fueled this working neighborhood, has become a wide stretch of vacancy and blight that divides our section of Eastern North Philadelphia.

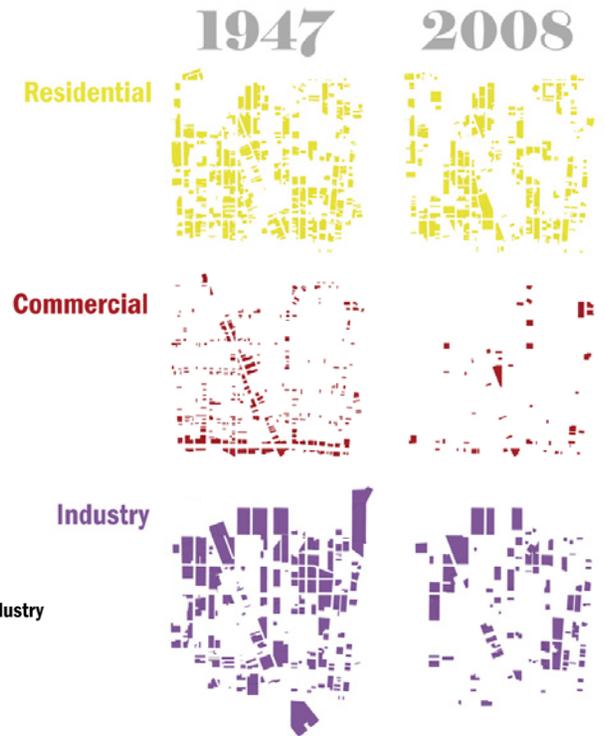


Figure 5. Detail of change in land use highlighting loss of residential, commercial, and industrial uses

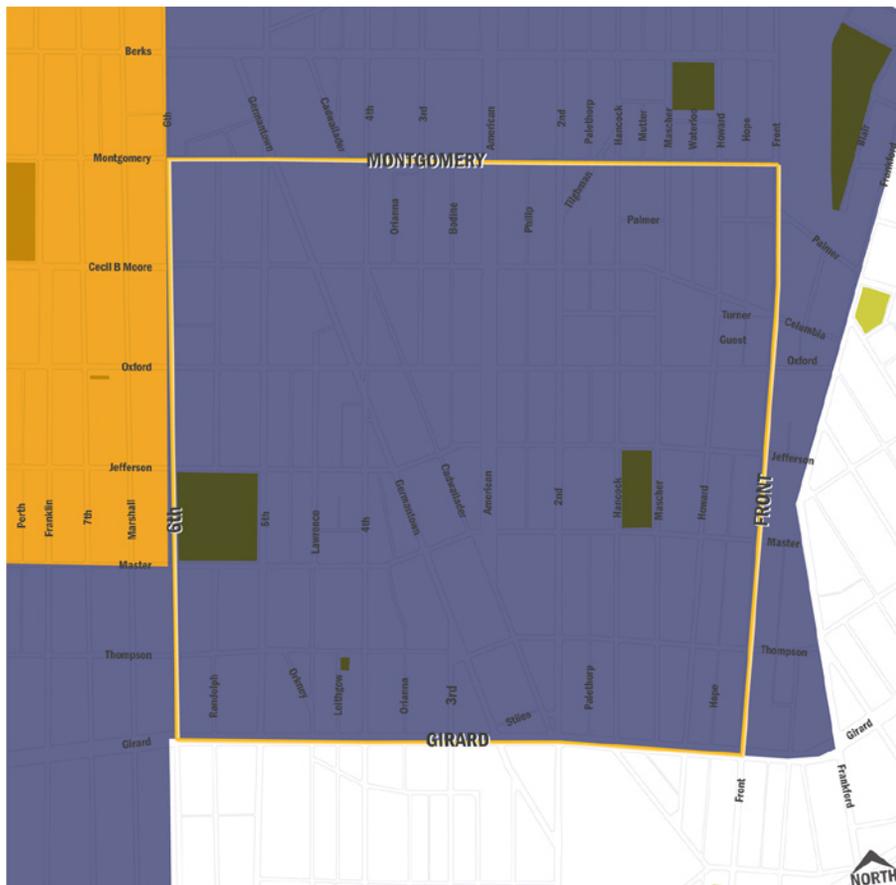


Figure 6. Incentive Zones

Incentive Zones

- Empowerment Zone
- Renewal Community

Efforts to revive industry around American Street started with federally-funded infrastructure improvements in the late 1970s and early 1980s to facilitate truck loading and delivery. In 1994, the area around American Street was designated an Empowerment Zone, one of three in the City with special tax incentives to attract businesses. In 2002, the Department of Housing and Urban Development designated portions of Philadelphia a Renewal Community, making them eligible for tax incentives to stimulate job growth, promote economic development and create affordable housing.



Top: Crane Arts Building on American Street
 Bottom: Honor Foods on Germantown Avenue

Since then, several new businesses and major companies have relocated to or expanded operations in the American Street zone, among them, Aramark, American Metal Moulding, and Honor Foods; however, the corridor still hosts large swaths of vacant land. Although heavy industry is unlikely to return to the American Street zone within the neighborhood, light industry, such as the design firms and artisanal workshops that have located in the recently renovated Crane Arts Building and its surroundings, is reactivating the community's industrial spaces.



Figure 7. Market Pressure

In recent years and in relation to the growing creative community in Eastern North Philadelphia, a new wave of investment has begun to reach into the neighborhood in the form of development pressure from Northern Liberties to the south and Fishtown to the east. Several former factory buildings in the neighborhood have been converted into residences. While adaptive reuse of the area's historic structures is a welcomed trend, this new market-rate housing has also made the neighborhood less affordable to many of its existing residents.



Top: The Flats at Girard Pointe, under construction.
Bottom: Factory Lofts at 5th and Cecil B. Moore Streets.

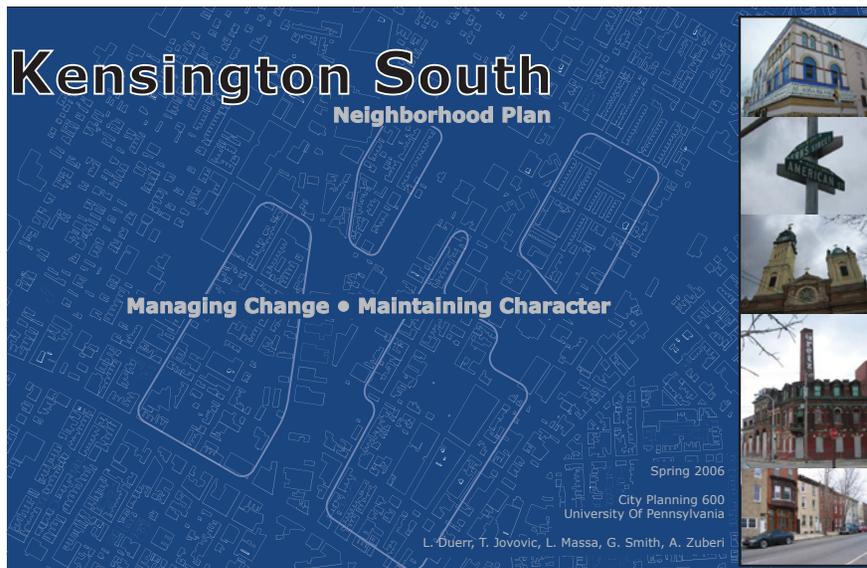
“The streets were empty, but now with new housing come new people.”

“New housing, some revitalization.

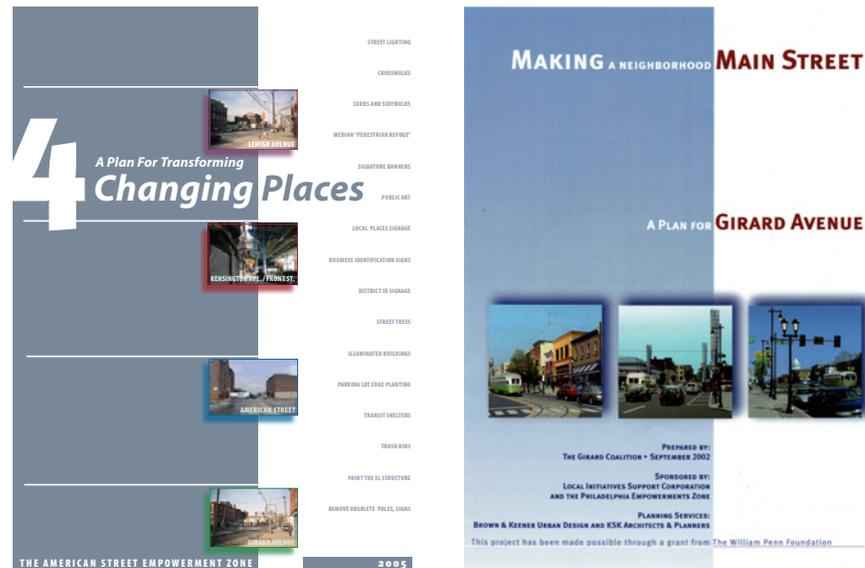
Hope - that people are moving in, not just leaving.”

“If we allow too many condos, we will be unable to control gentrification.”

It was within these shifting dynamics that this Community Plan for a section of Eastern North Philadelphia was created. Community members – including long-term residents and relative newcomers, neighborhood institutions, service providers, advocacy organizations, non-profit developers, as well as representatives of public agencies and officials – recognized the change brewing in the neighborhood and came together to organize, envision a revitalized future, and ensure that their collective voice would be heard as the neighborhood's story unfolds. This plan documents their priorities, introducing new ideas and added value, while contributing to the neighborhoods's already rich planning discussion.



Prior plans created for the neighborhood.



Prior Plans

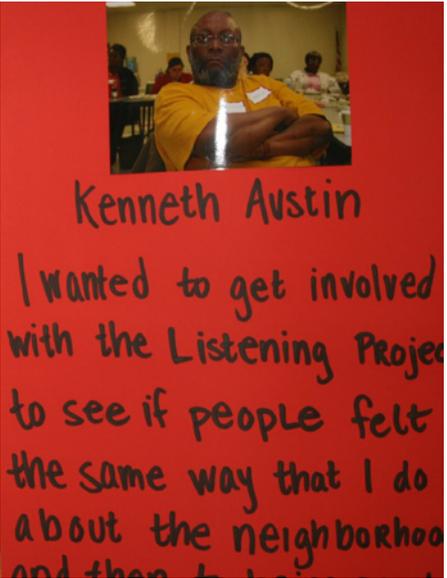
- Kensington South Neighborhood Plan (2006):** University of Pennsylvania students created this plan in their city planning workshop for the Hispanic Association of Contractors and Enterprises (HACE). The plan recommends strategies for managing change while preserving the diversity that makes the neighborhood unique. Recommendations address vacant land management, an open space fund for park improvements, mixed-income and infill development, targeted streetscape improvements, downzoning from G2 General Industrial, and creating civic spaces and neighborhood centers.
- A Plan for Transforming 4 Changing Places (2005):** Brown & Keener and Kise Straw & Kolodner (KSK) created this plan for the American Street Empowerment Zone, which encompasses most of the current plan's area. Four distinct areas within the zone are detailed: Girard Avenue, Lehigh Avenue, Front and Kensington, and American Street. The plan envisions American Street as an employment center hosting light industrial and distribution companies that is also a good neighbor to the residential blocks that surround it. Specific recommendations for American Street include streetscape and landscaping improvements, a redesigned loading zone, a clear truck route, improved lighting, and a green buffer between industrial and residential uses. Girard Avenue is the Main Street of the area, and recommendations focus on creating identity, façade and streetscape improvements, trolley signs and shelters. Recommendations for Front Street

between Girard and Diamond focus on mitigating the impact of the EI through lighting and paint, creating safer pedestrian connections, renovating storefronts, and managing vacant property.

- Girard Avenue Market Analysis Report (2003):** Urban Partners prepared this plan for the Girard Coalition and Local Initiatives Support Corporation. The report divides Girard Avenue into four segments, of which Mid Girard, between Frankford Avenue and 9th Street, falls within the boundaries of this plan's area. The report for this segment of Girard Avenue concluded that residents' retail purchases exceeded local sales captures in 43 of 65 retail categories, amounting to \$66 million being spent outside the trade area. The report identified several key development opportunities including: full-service restaurants, a pharmacy, clothing and jewelry shops, and "lifestyle" goods, such as gifts, art, sporting goods, home furnishings, electronics, computers, and books.
- Making a Neighborhood Main Street: A Plan for Girard Avenue (2002):** Brown & Keener Urban Design and KSK produced this plan for the Girard Coalition. The document addresses the length of Girard Avenue as it travels through various neighborhoods. Mid-Girard, which traverses the area for this plan, is envisioned as a restaurant row. Improvements to support this vision include pedestrian safety enhancements, streetscape and façade upgrades, and defined truck routes to connect with American Street.



Our Community Plan: a shared vision for our neighborhood in Eastern North Philadelphia builds upon these prior documents and represents the community's current concerns, priorities, and dreams.



Faces of the community planning process. Source: (left to right) Harvey Finkle, Kate Houston, Harvey Finkle, WCRP



Neighborhood youth. Source: Harvey Finkle

“The neighborhood has changed dramatically. There used to be a lot more businesses in the community and a lot more people.”

“Established families of 30, 40, 50 years just left. Businesses left because of the decrease in population.”

“[Now] there is more construction, houses, and condominiums. More people come to church. There’s a mixture of races. This has been good for the church and more people are getting involved.”

Neighborhood Profile – a demographic overview

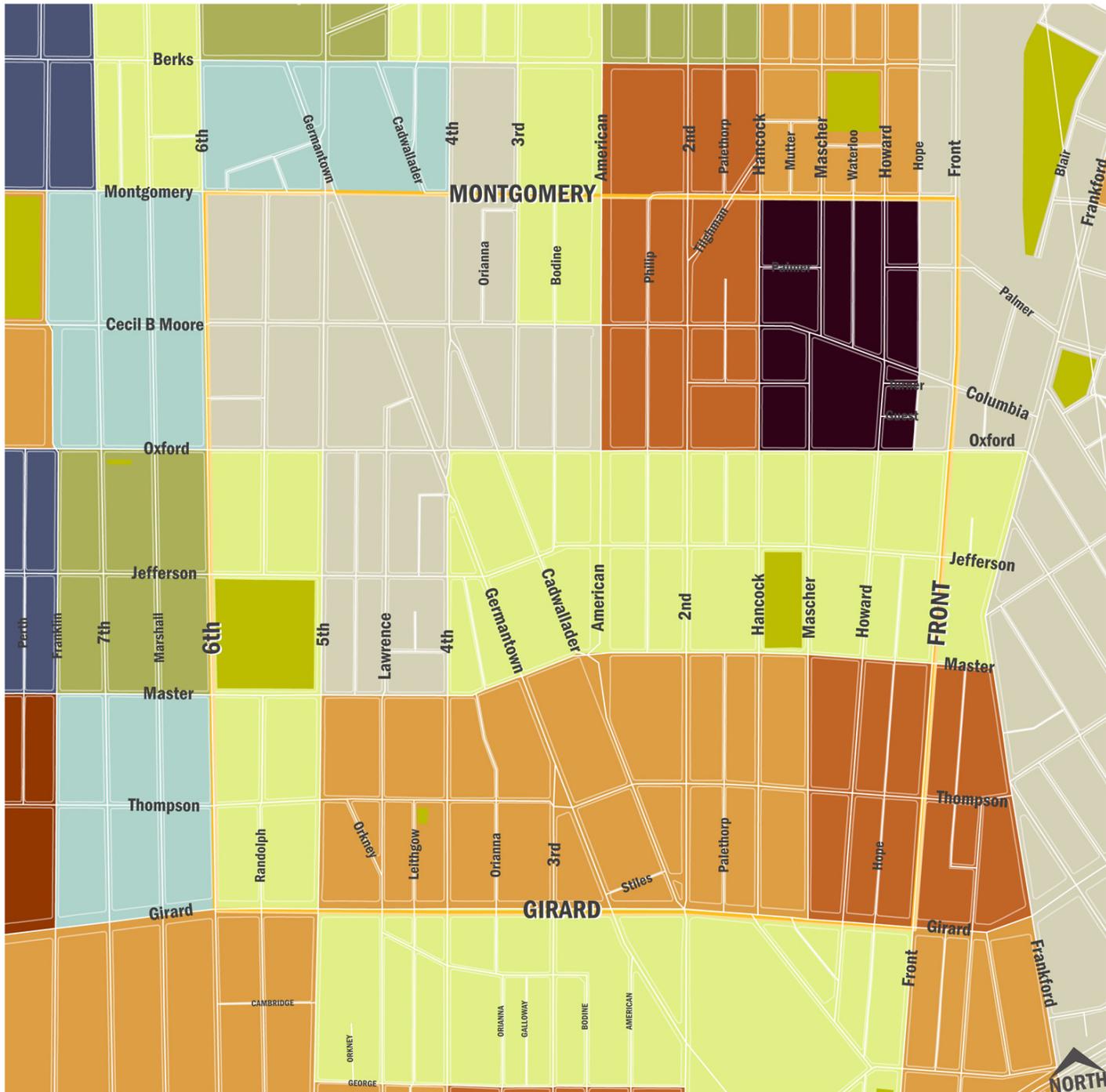
The following data was compiled using the United States Census for 1990 and 2000 and Claritas estimates for 2007. A full listing of included Census Block Groups is in the Appendix.

Population

The neighborhood population remained relatively stable between 1990 and 2000, and projections through 2007 show it holding steady. Between 1990 and 2000, the neighborhood experienced a 2% decline in population from 5,110 to 5,027 people. Over the same period, the city lost 4% of its population. Projections estimate a neighborhood population of 4,965 in 2007, which represents a 1% decline from the population in 2000.² Projections for neighborhood households indicate a 1% increase from 1,688 households in 2000 to 1,702 households in 2007. The estimated slight loss in population coupled with a gain in the number of households means that there are more households with fewer people and indicates an influx of young adults in the neighborhood.

The greatest population growth in the neighborhood between 1990 and 2000 occurred in the area around the John Moffet School between American Street and Hope Street, which grew 40-50%. The blocks around the Girard Street El station also experienced growth of between 10-20%. Generally, the blocks south of Master Street experienced growth up to 10%. Based on 2007 estimates, population growth continued to push north from Girard to Oxford, while population loss was greatest between Oxford Street and Montgomery Avenue.

² Because Claritas estimates are based on larger trends and do not take into account finer grained information like new residential development and neighborhood revitalization, these numbers may be skewed low. On the other hand, perceived population growth at the southern and eastern edges of the neighborhood may be offset by population loss to the north and west, resulting in the estimated relatively static population estimates for 2007.



Study Area
2000 population
5,027
Change 1990-2000
- 2%
2007 population (est.)
4,965

Philadelphia
2000 population
1,517,550
Change 1990-2000
- 4%

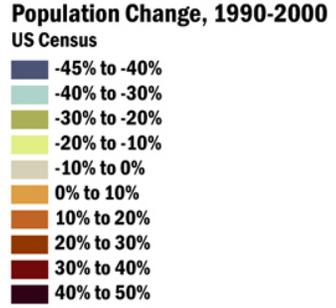


Figure 8. Population Change, 1990-2000. Source: U.S. Census 2000

Race & Ethnicity

US Census 2000

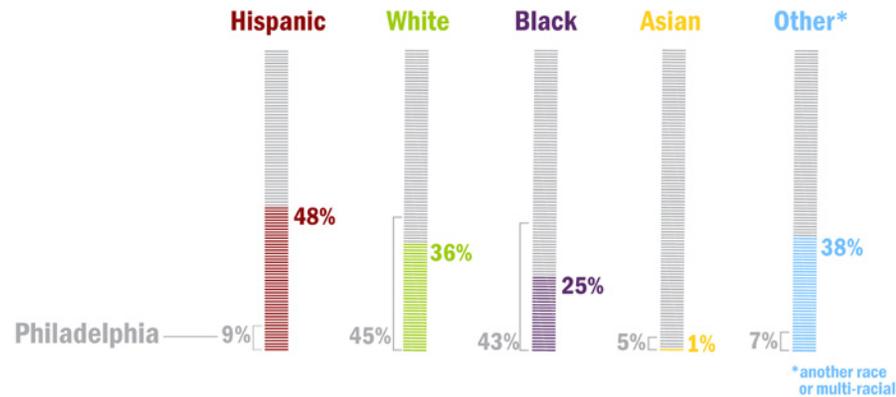


Figure 9. 2000 Race and Ethnicity. Source: U.S. Census 2000

Race and Ethnicity

The neighborhood is home to a very diverse mix of people. In 2000, the racial breakdown of the population was 37% white, 25% black, 2% Asian and 38% identified as “other,” which includes bi-racial and multi-racial residents. Almost half of the neighborhood population (48%) identified their ethnicity as Hispanic, which far exceeds the city-wide percentage of 9%. Residents and community organizations describe an increase in Arab residents in recent years, immigrating from many parts of the Arab world including Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, and most recently Iraq.

Additionally, 13% of the households in the community (compared to 5% city-wide) were considered linguistically isolated in 2000, meaning that no one in the household aged 14 or over spoke English as a native language or spoke English very well. In 2000, household language was split evenly between Spanish and English, each accounting for 45% of neighborhood households.

Household Language

US Census 2000

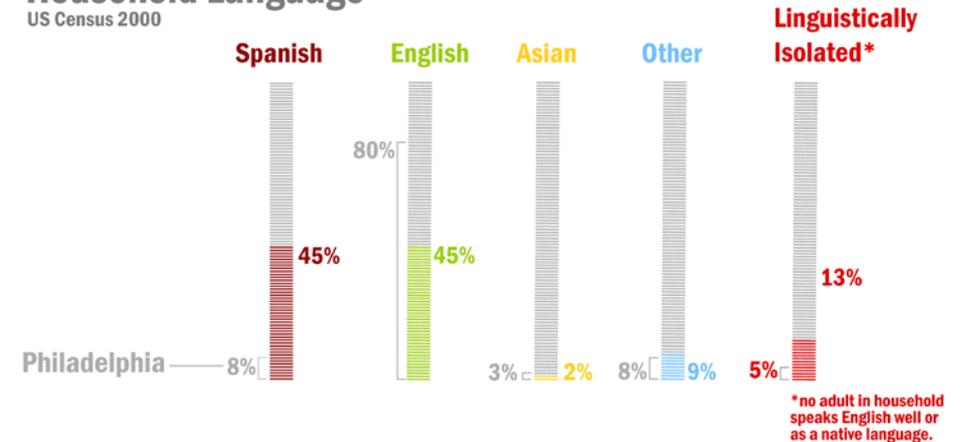


Figure 10. 2000 Household Language and Linguistic Isolation. Source: U.S. Census 2000

A study of recent immigration trends up to 2006 shows that the greater Philadelphia region (which includes the suburban counties, Wilmington, and Camden) has the largest and fastest growing immigrant population among its peers with immigrants comprising 9% of the population.³ In the early 20th century, Philadelphia was among the top ten immigrant gateway cities along with New York, Chicago, and other industrial leaders such as Detroit, Buffalo, St. Louis, and Cleveland. By the middle of the century, industrial cities such as Philadelphia were no longer attracting immigrants. While that trend continues today for most of the old industrial cities, Philadelphia has been re-emerging as a destination for immigrants, and Mayor Nutter has emphasized the importance of immigrants to the revitalization of the City.⁴ While the City’s overall population declined for most of the latter half of the 20th century, the immigrant population grew by 30% between 1970 and 2006. The community reflects this trend, as foreign-born residents made up 10% of the population in 2000. This growth in the foreign-born population has important implications for City policy as well as the design and delivery of community services.

3 Audrey Singer, Domenic Vitiello, Michael Katz, David Park. “Recent Immigration to Philadelphia: Regional Change in a Re-Emerging Gateway.” The Brookings Institution, November 2008.

4 Michael Matza. “Nutter to host new citizens’ swearing-in,” The Philadelphia Inquirer. February 6, 2009.

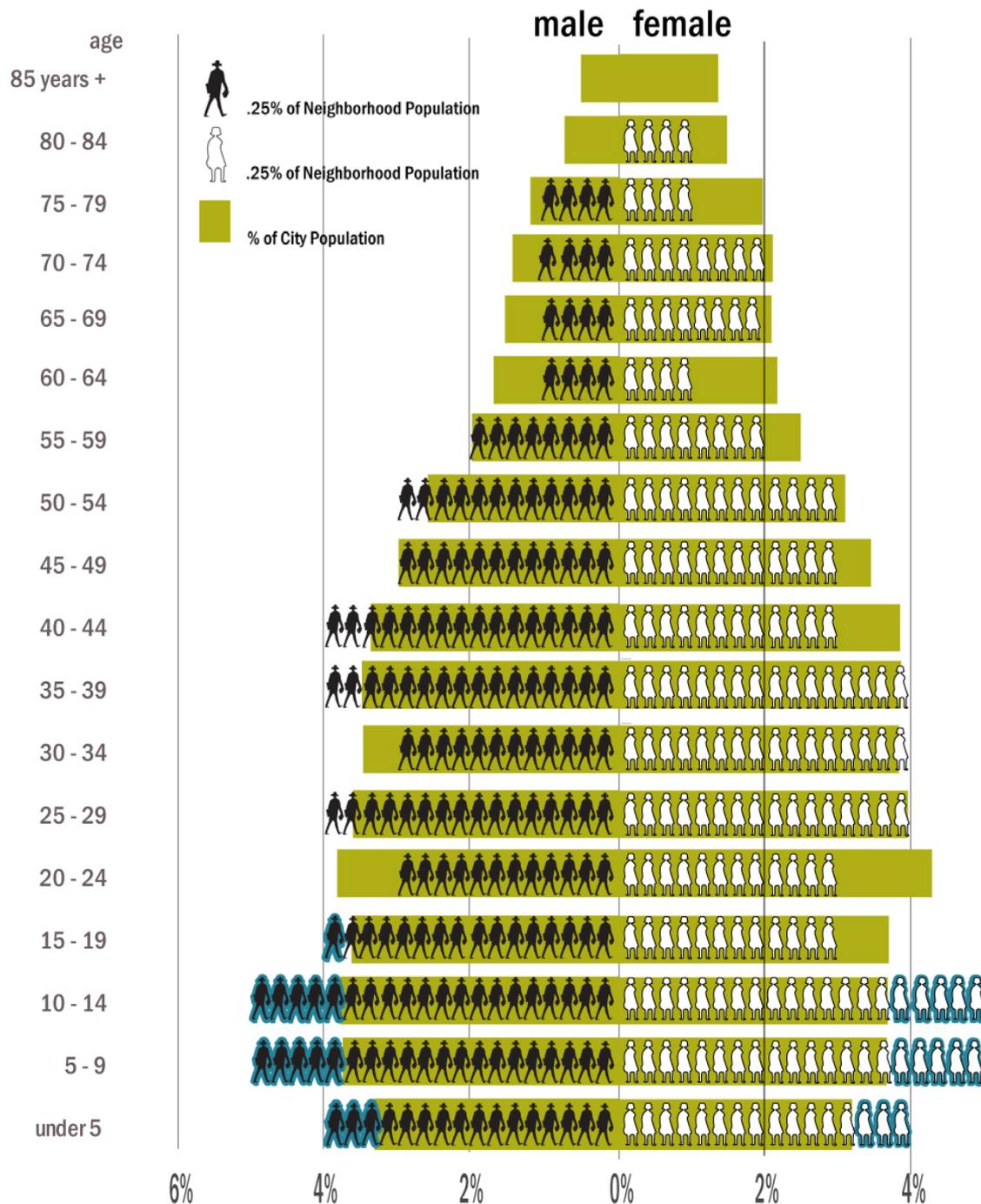


Figure 11. 2000 Age Pyramid. Source: U.S. Census 2000

In 2000, 1 out of 3 residents were under the age of 18

Age

A comparison of the age distribution between the neighborhood population and the city population in 2000 reveals a high proportion of youth under the age of 18 in the community. In 2000, 1 out of every 3 (33%) neighborhood residents was under the age of 18 compared to a citywide average of 1 in 10 residents. In contrast, the neighborhood had fewer people over 65 years of age in 2000 than the city average of 14% of the population. The large percentage of youth in the neighborhood indicates a need for services and resources for this group.

Educational Attainment: Adults 25 and Over

US Census 2000

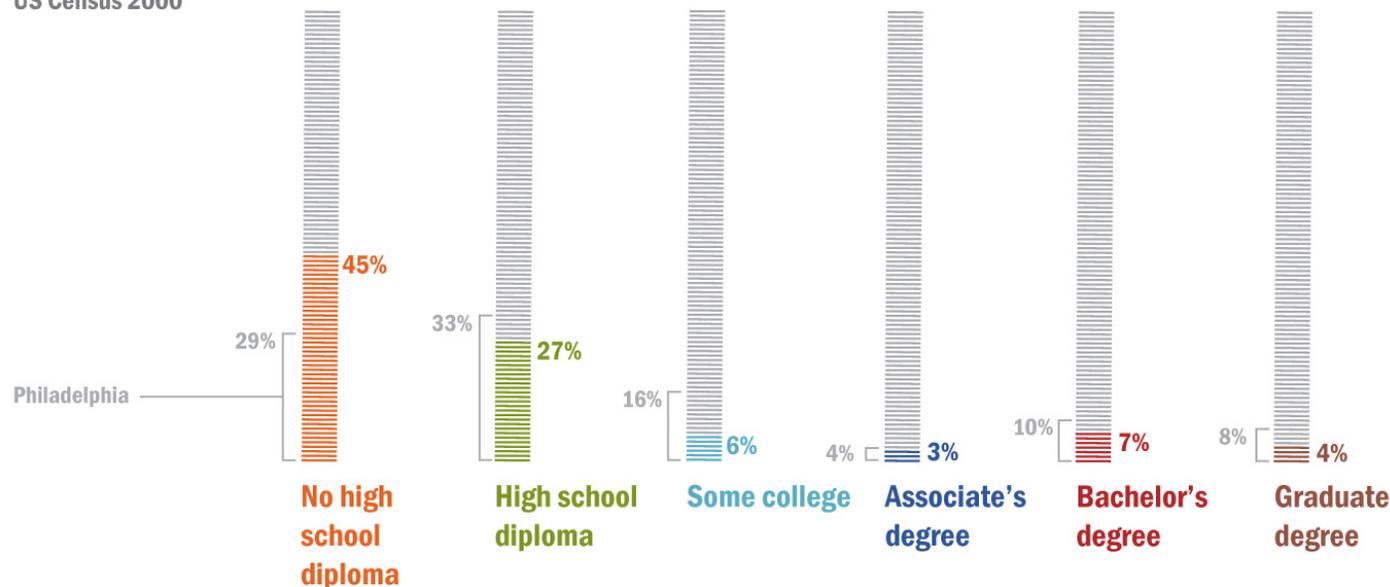


Figure 12. Educational Attainment. Source: U.S. Census 2000

Educational Attainment and Employment

In 2000, the neighborhood lagged behind the city average in educational attainment with much higher dropout rates and lower rates of high school and college-level completion. Of adults aged 25 and over, 45% in the neighborhood had not received a high school diploma, compared with the City average of 29%.

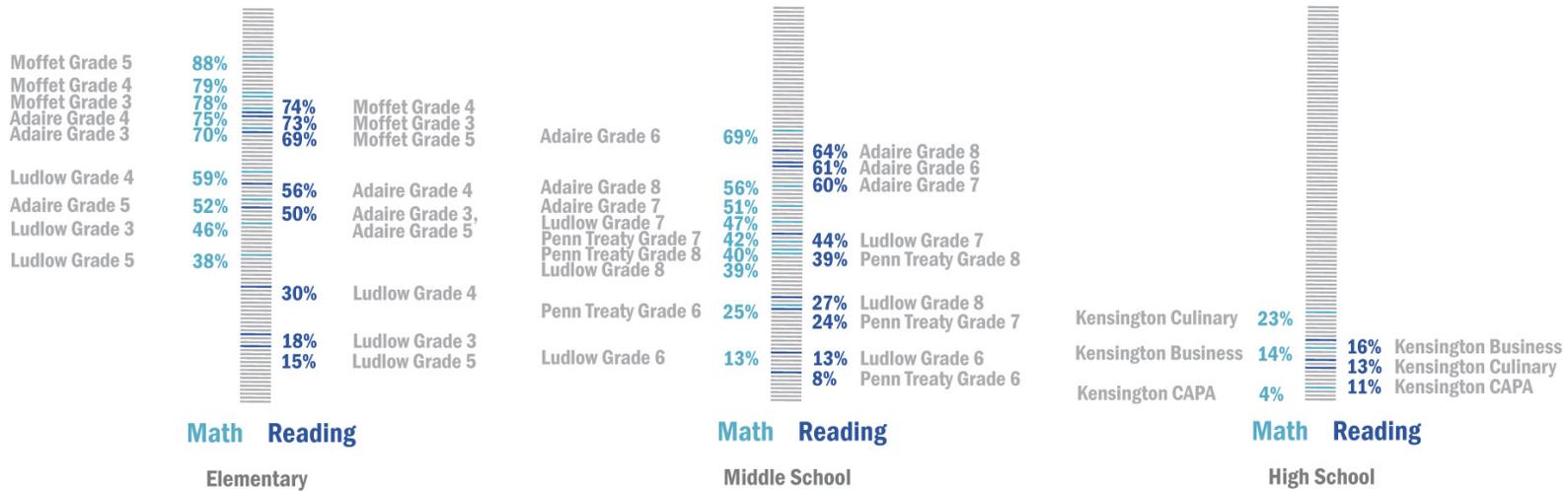
While these elevated numbers are alarming, so too are some of the state testing scores reported for the neighborhood's elementary and middle schools. Neighborhood youth enrolled in public schools attend either the John Moffet School or James R. Ludlow School for elementary school and Penn Treaty or Ludlow for middle school. There is no high school in the study area, so public high school students go to Kensington unless they test into a magnet school. Generally speaking, students perform best on State tests for reading and math performance earlier on, with grade-level scores falling over time. By high school, students have low reading and math proficiency, low SAT scores, and less than one in three local public high school graduates attend college. The incentive to remain in school is severely lacking.

As a result, the number of at-risk youth in the neighborhood is high. At-risk youth refers to the residents between 16 and 19 years of age who have either dropped out of school or graduated from high school but remain unemployed or not in the labor force.⁵ Data from the 2000 Census shows that 33.5% of youth between ages 16 and 19 in the neighborhood fall into this category compared with a city-wide rate of 15%. The community's dropout rate of 22% reported in the 2000 Census was more than twice the city average, and none of the population that had dropped out of school was in the labor force. While these statistics are alarming, community stakeholders believe that they severely underestimate the problem, suggesting that, in fact, the high school dropout rate is much higher in the neighborhood.

Closely linked to educational attainment, unemployment and low labor force participation are a challenge for many adults of working age in the neighborhood, not just those ages 16 to 19. The 2000 Census reported that 39% of the population over 16 was employed compared to 50% citywide, 10% was unemployed compared to 6% citywide, and 51% was not in the labor force compared to 44% citywide.

⁵ Labor force measures are based on the civilian non-institutional population 16 years old and over, comprising the employed and the unemployed. The remainder – those who have no job and are not looking for one are considered “not in the labor force.” After one year of continuous unemployment, individuals are no longer considered to be in the labor force. www.census.gov and www.bls.gov

Public School State-Wide Testing Performance: percent at or above proficient
PA Department of Education 2006-2007



State Average					
Grade 3	79%	73%	Grade 6	70%	64%
Grade 4	78%	70%	Grade 7	67%	67%
Grade 5	71%	60%	Grade 8	68%	75%
			Grade 11	54%	65%

Figure 13. Public School State-Wide Testing Performance. Source: PA Department of Education, 2006-2007

Public High School Performance: SAT performance and college attendance
Philadelphia Inquirer 2007

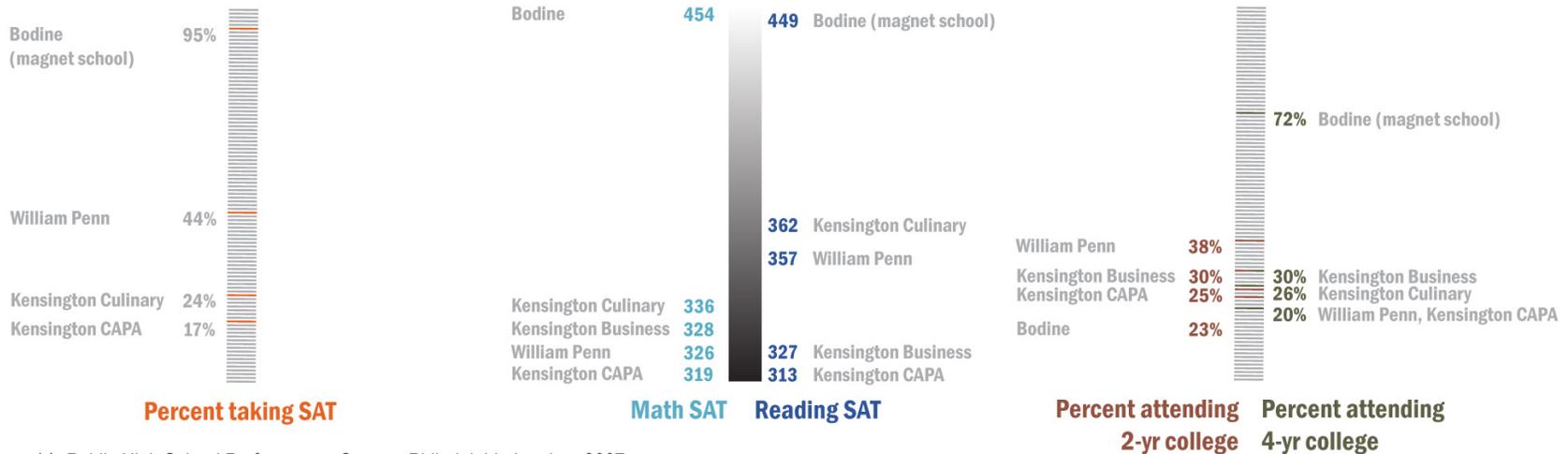


Figure 14. Public High School Performance. Source: Philadelphia Inquirer, 2007



Figure 15. 2000 Median Household Income. Source: U.S. Census 2000

Income and Poverty

The neighborhood lagged behind the City average in median income, according to the 2000 Census, and had much higher levels of poverty. The median household income in 2000 was \$21,563, below the City median of \$30,746, and was projected to rise to \$29,901 in 2007. The 2000 poverty rate⁶ in the neighborhood of 38% was far higher than the City average of 23%.

6 Poverty is determined by a family's total money income measured against thresholds that vary by size and composition. The official poverty definition uses money income before taxes and does not include capital gains or non-cash benefits such as public housing, Medicaid, and food stamps. If a family's total income is less than the family's threshold, then the entire family is considered to be in poverty. For example, the monetary value for the poverty threshold for a family of 3 in the 48 contiguous United States in 2006 was determined to be \$17,170 with \$3,480 added for each additional family member. Federal Register, Vol. 71, No. 15, January 24, 2006, pp. 3848-3849.

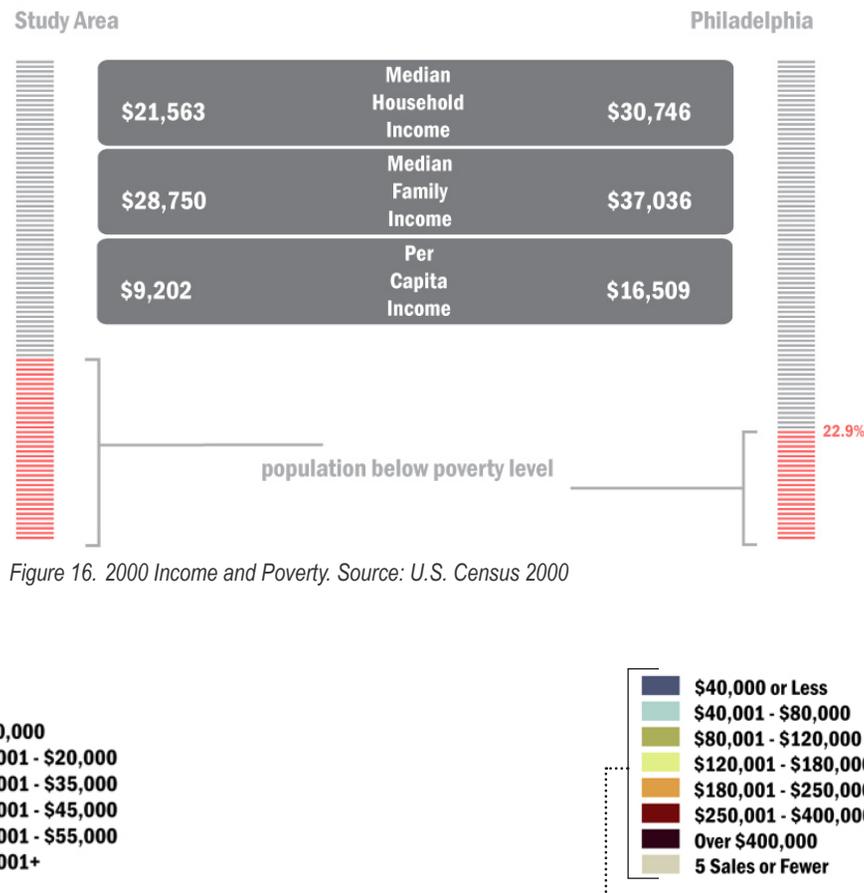


Figure 16. 2000 Income and Poverty. Source: U.S. Census 2000

Homeownership and Affordability

Homeownership rates are often used as a measure of neighborhood stability. The overall homeownership rate in the study area in 2000 was 48% compared with a city-wide rate of 59%. The highest levels of homeownership were found in the southeast quadrant of the study area, roughly east of 5th Street and south of Oxford Street where rates were 55-70%, closer to the city average and the national average of 66%.

More than 7 out of every 10 people interviewed in the Resident Satisfaction Survey did not think there were affordable homes in the neighborhood for their families. The same proportion of renters in the neighborhood would like to buy a home in the area, but the vast majority of them, 81%, cannot afford to.

The dramatic change in median sale prices in the neighborhood between 2001-02 and 2006-07 support the survey findings. In 2001-02, the median residential sale price

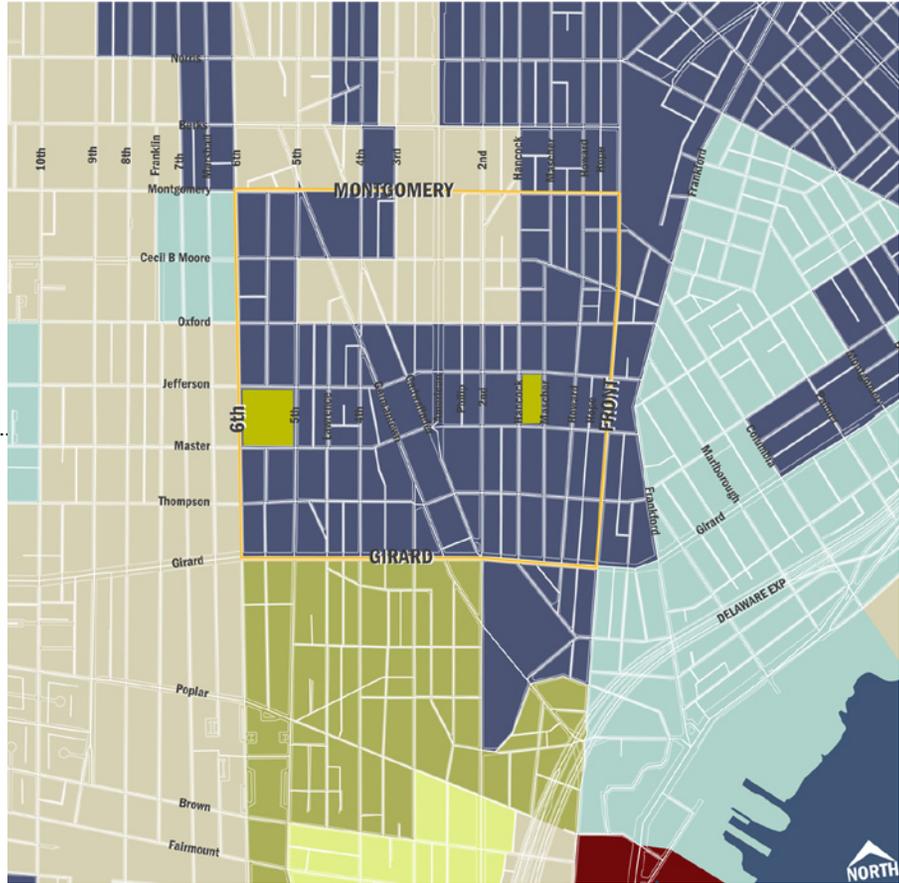


Figure 17. Median Residential Sale Price by Census Block Group, 2001-2002. Source: TRF

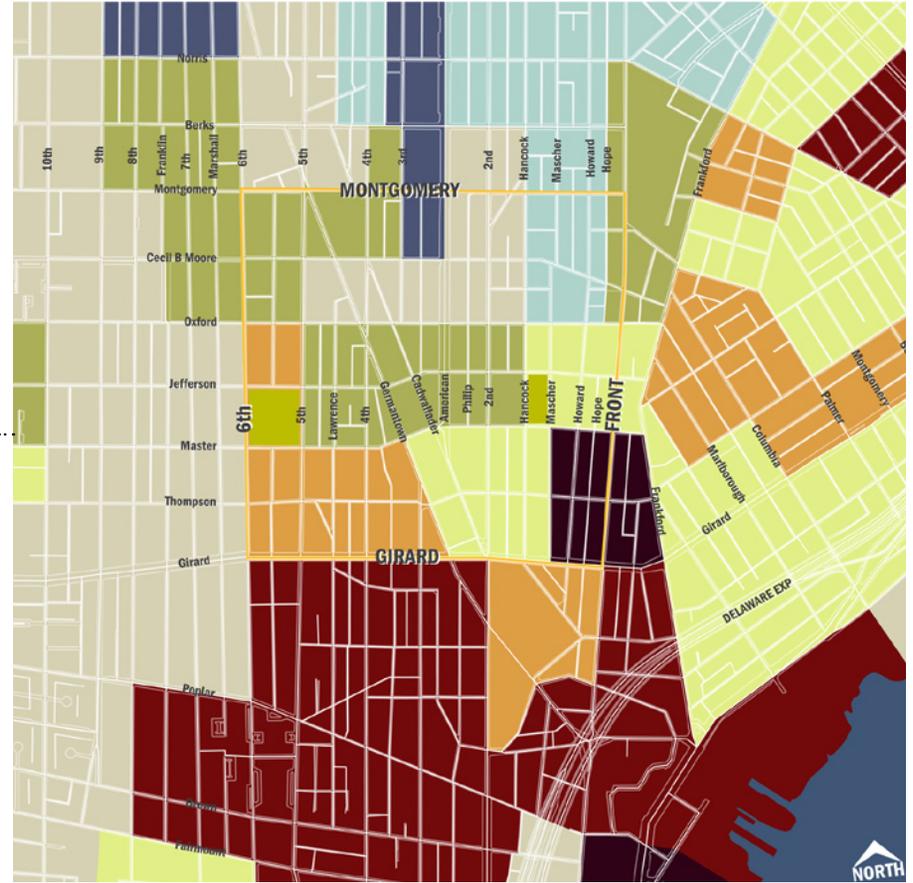
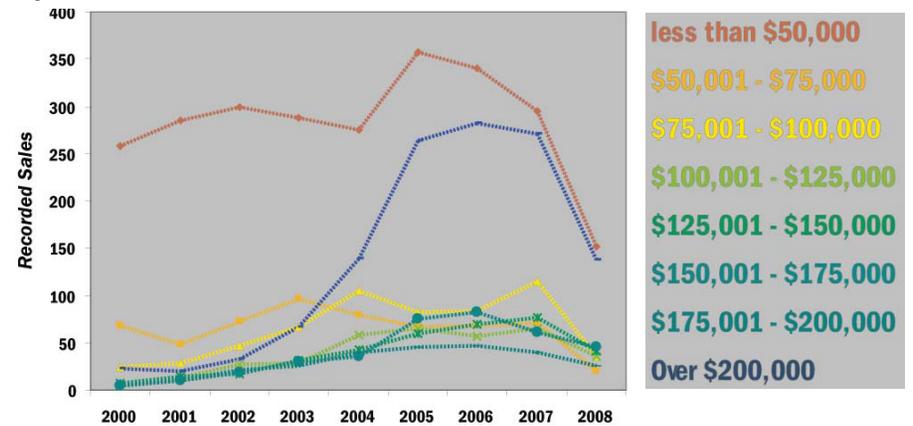


Figure 18. Median Residential Sale Price by Census Block Group, 2006-2007. Source: TRF

within the area was \$40,000 or less. By 2006-07, the median sale price had risen significantly, particularly in the block south of Master Street, where median sale prices ranged from \$120,000 to over \$400,000.

Median sale prices in the blocks south of Master have jumped more than \$180,000 and in some cases up to \$400,000 between 2001 and 2007. The dollar change in median sale prices in the blocks between Master and Oxford Streets between 2001 and 2007 ranged between \$40,000 at the low end of the scale to \$250,000 at the high end. High median sale prices and extreme increases in price over the last five years in Northern Liberties to the south of the neighborhood, and to a lesser extent Fishtown to the east, are putting pressure on the area.

Figure 19. Residential Sale Price Trend, 2000 to 2008. Source: TRF



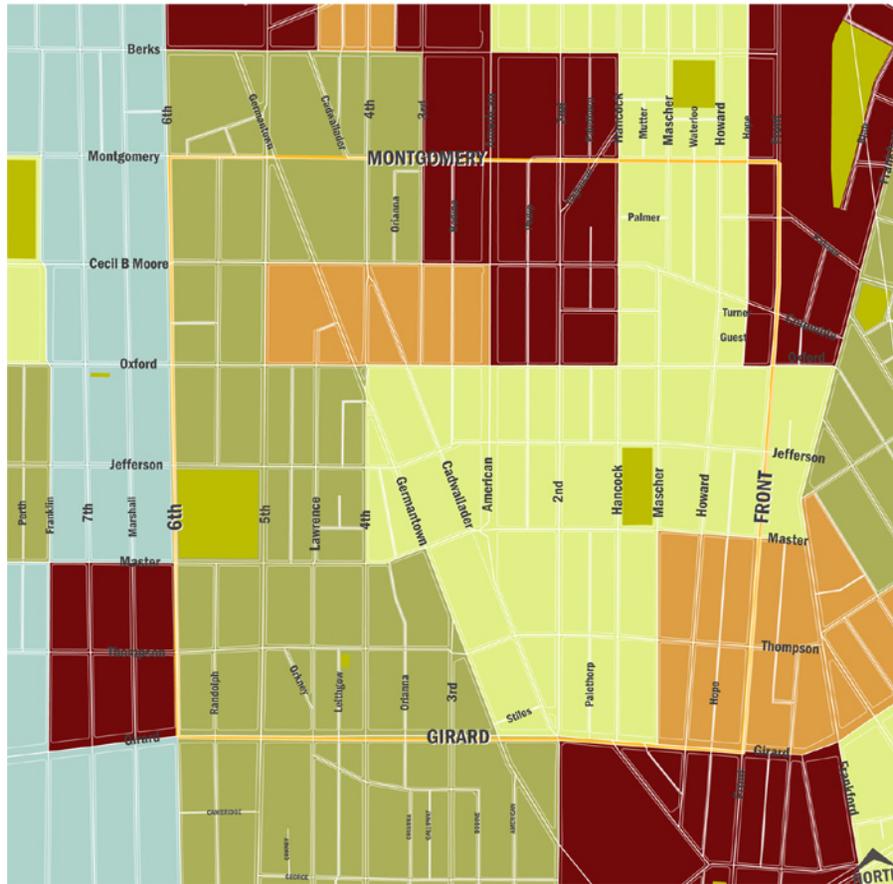


Figure 20. Median Selected Monthly Owner Costs as a Percentage of Household Income, 2000
Source: U.S. Census 2000

Rising sale prices translate to rising costs and decreased affordability in the neighborhood. In 2000, the neighborhood met the federal standard of affordability whereby median housing costs do not exceed 30% of the median household income. In both the neighborhood and the City, costs were slightly higher for renters than for owners. The highest rent-to-income ratios in 2000 were found along the western and northwestern border of the neighborhood where median rents were over 40% of the household income. The greatest homeowner burden occurred in the northeastern quadrant of the neighborhood north of Oxford Street. Although there is no new Census data regarding housing burden, extrapolating from the striking sale price and property tax increases over the last five years, the ratio of housing costs to household income has likely shifted to the detriment of those in low income brackets.

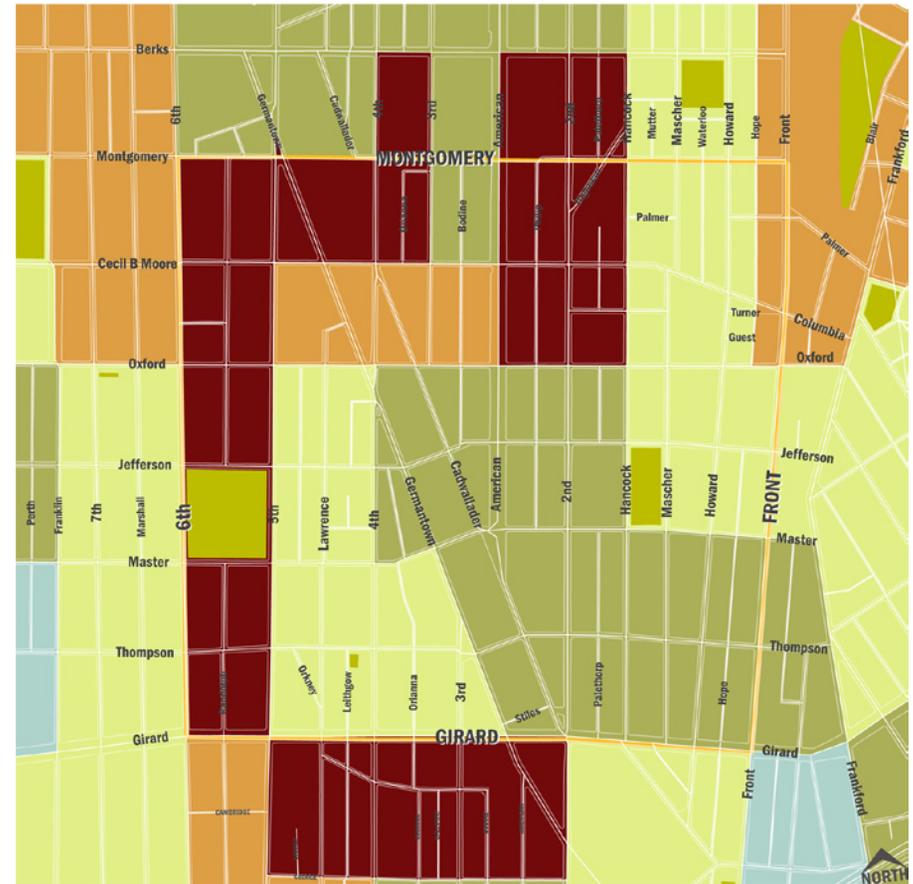
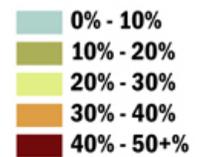


Figure 21. Median Gross Rent as Percentage of Household Income, 2000
Source: U.S. Census 2000

Through 2007, foreclosure was not yet an issue plaguing a large number of neighborhood residents, but as the economy continues to falter and job loss grows, the number of people at risk of foreclosure certainly increases. In 2007, houses in the neighborhood, especially north of Master Street, were slightly more vulnerable to foreclosure than in the City overall. Foreclosure filings in the neighborhood rose from 0.4% in 2006 to 0.7% in 2007, compared with the city rate of 0.5% in 2007. The number of foreclosures in the blocks above Master Street tripled from 5, or 0.3%, in 2006 to 15, or 0.9%, in 2007.



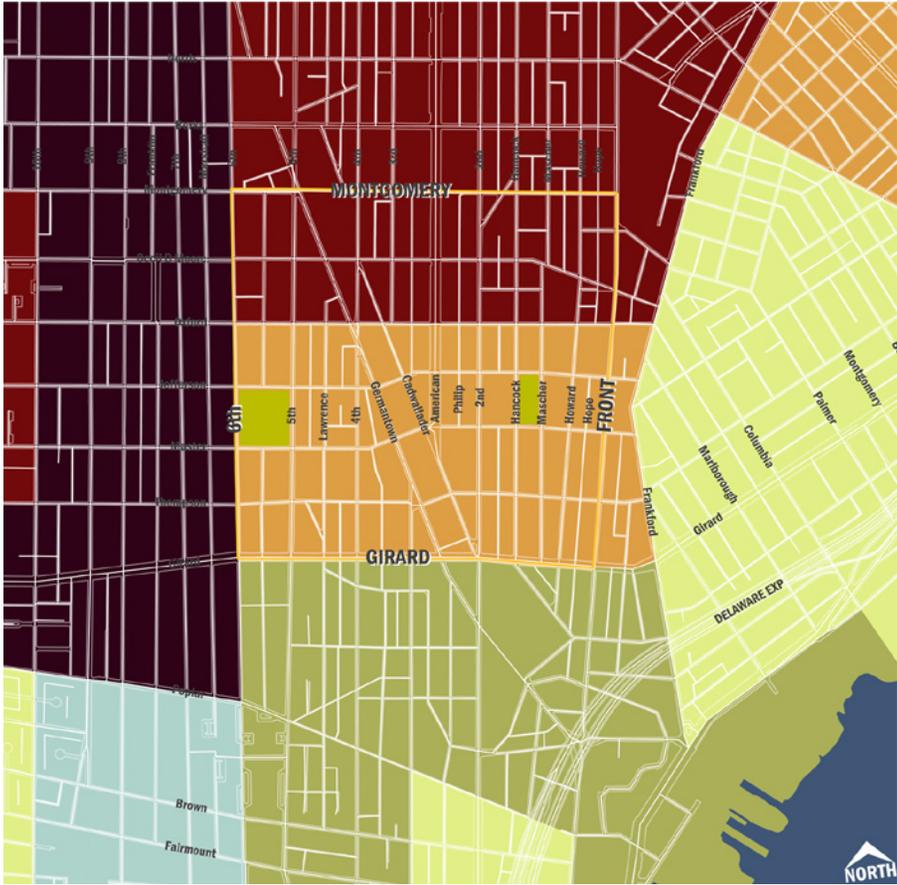


Figure 22. Percent of Mortgage Loans Subprime 2006
Source: TRF

However, according to 2006 data, the community and its northern and western neighbors had very high percentages of subprime mortgage loans, which are correlated with greater risk of default and foreclosure than prime loans. From Montgomery Avenue to Oxford Street, subprime mortgages accounted for 40-50% of loans. Between Oxford and Girard, 30-40% of mortgage loans were subprime.

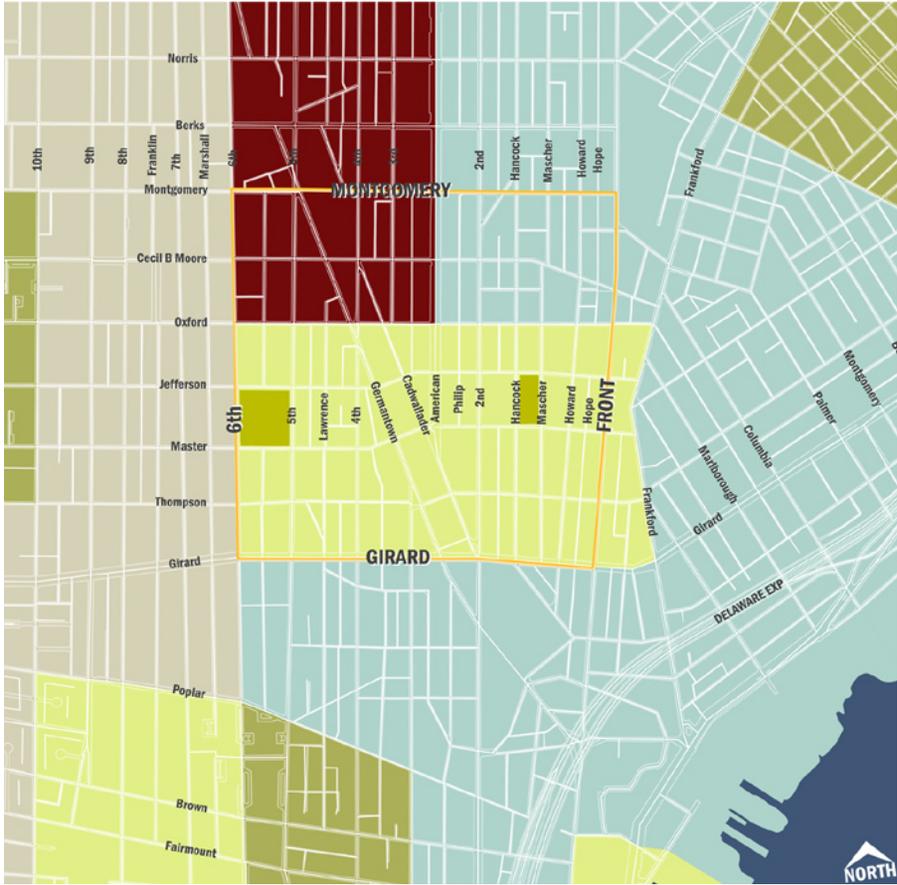
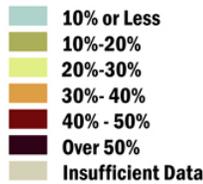
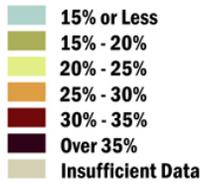


Figure 23. Percent of Purchase Loans with a Second (or Piggyback) Loan, 2006
Source: TRF

Second “piggyback” loans that enable home buyers to put little or no money down and avoid paying for mortgage insurance are another type of mortgage product associated with greater foreclosure risk. In 2006, 30-35% of purchase loans north of Oxford Street and west of American Street had a piggyback loan, while 20-25% of the loans south of Oxford Street did. The area north of Master Street also contained more properties with tax liens in 2007 than south of Master Street.



“Speculators have come in due to increases in housing values... The will of the community is absolutely not being listened to. It is horrible that people are getting pushed out and that things have gotten so expensive.”



Top: Block-long warehouse buildings.

Bottom: Lot on American Street.



Figure 24. Figure Ground Map

Physical Conditions

Built Form

The figure ground map (fig. 24) shows building footprints in black and streets, parking lots, parks and vacant lots in white to highlight the density of the urban fabric. The community appears in the map as a variegated patchwork of building sizes and street frontages. Very large industrial buildings – some occupying whole blocks – are interspersed with rowhouses. Large white holes in the fabric are apparent in the map, pointing to substantial vacancy and large surface parking lots. A significant portion of the neighborhood's street frontage consists of windowless warehouse structures, vacant land, abandoned buildings, parking lots, and fences that do not encourage street activity. The neighborhoods adjacent to the community appear more densely filled in. To the east and south of the community, the building footprints are densely packed and blocks appear as largely unbroken, with the exception of the vacant Schmidt's brewery parcel, which is currently under development. New detached and semi-detached housing construction is clearly discernable to the west of 6th Street.

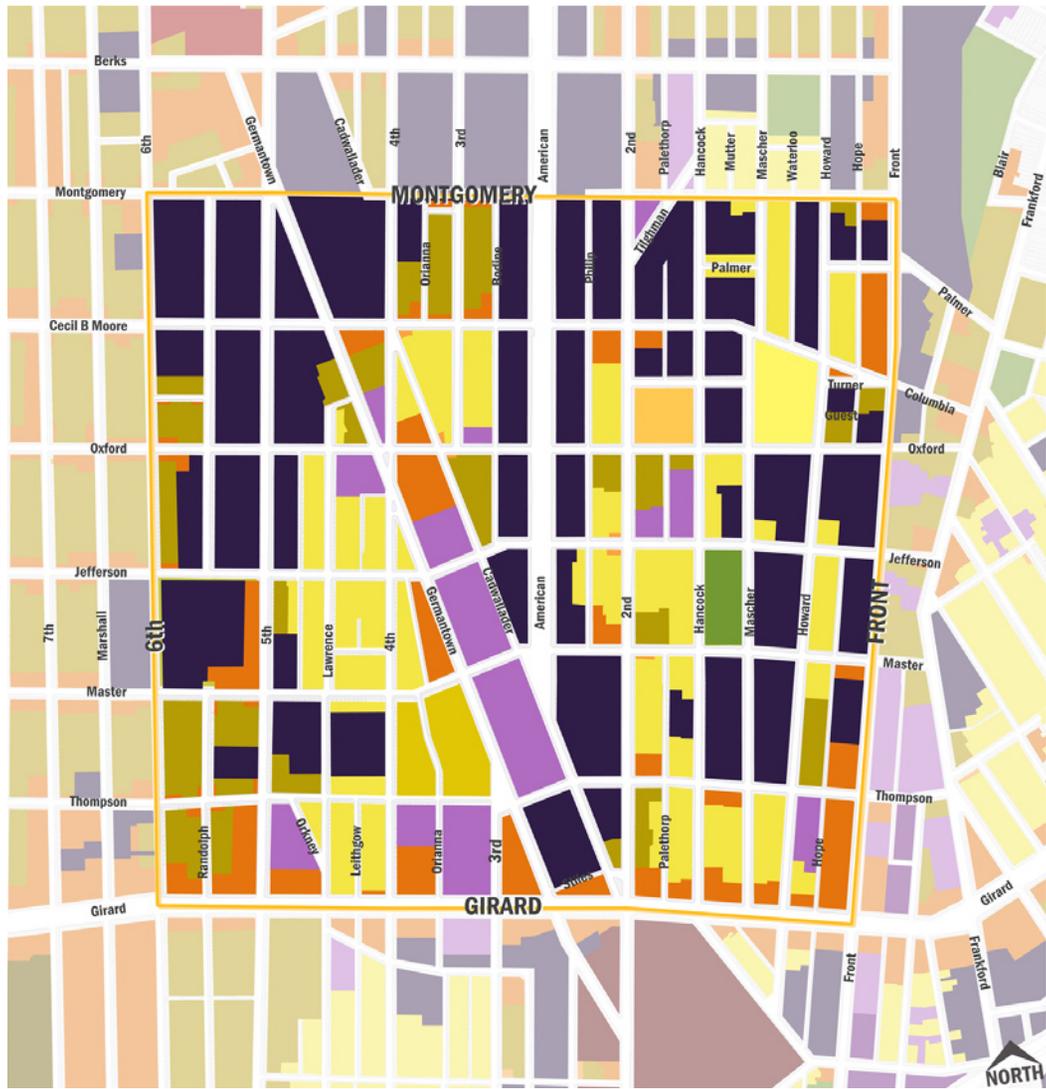
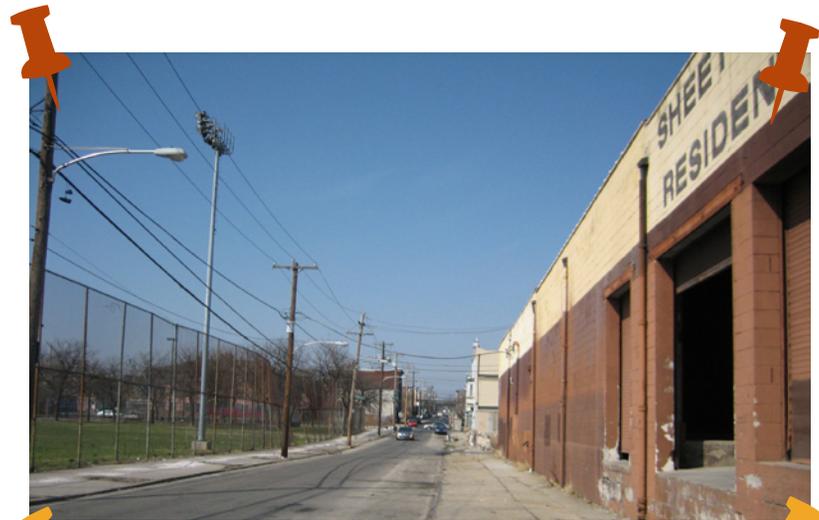


Figure 25. Zoning Map

 R9A: Single-Family Residential	 C2: Commercial/Mixed Use
 R10A: Single-Family Residential	 C3: Commercial/Mixed Use
 R20: Single-Family Residential	 C7: Commercial Center
 R10: Multi-Family Residential	 ASC: Area Shopping Center
 R12: Multi-Family Residential	 L4: Limited Industrial
 R13: Multi-Family Residential	 L5: Limited Industrial
 RC1: Residential/Commercial	 G2: General Industrial
 C1: Commercial/Mixed Use	 REC: Park



Top: Industrial building across from Cruz Rec Center.
 Bottom: Rowhouses on Palethorp Street.

Zoning and Land Use

The neighborhood zoning is overwhelmingly a blend of residential and industrial zones. American Street, Montgomery Avenue and Cecil B. Moore Avenue are zoned as predominantly G2 general industrial corridors, as are the areas adjacent to Cruz Rec Center and Hancock Park. Girard Avenue within the neighborhood is zoned almost entirely mixed-use commercial, while Germantown Avenue is a mix of everything: G2 industrial, L4 limited industrial, single and multi-family housing, and mixed use commercial.



Figure 26. Zoning of Vacant Parcels

- R9A: Single-Family Residential
- R10A: Single-Family Residential
- R20: Single-Family Residential
- R10: Multi-Family Residential
- R12: Multi-Family Residential
- R13: Multi-Family Residential
- RC1: Residential/Commercial
- C1: Commercial/Mixed Use
- C2: Commercial/Mixed Use
- C3: Commercial/Mixed Use
- C7: Commercial Center
- ASC: Area Shopping Center
- L4: Limited Industrial
- L5: Limited Industrial
- G2: General Industrial
- REC: Park

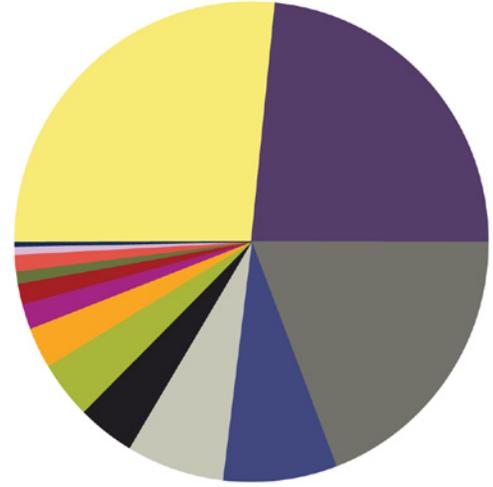
The land use map, compiled from a field survey conducted in August and September 2008, shows less industrial use than the area is zoned for. Some of the excess industrial-zoned parcels have been converted to residential and office/studio use, however many of these parcels are now vacant. Overlaying zoning with vacant parcels shows that the largest vacant parcels are zoned G2 general industrial.

Residential and industrial continue to be the dominant uses in the neighborhood: residential uses occupy 27% of the land area, the highest percentage, followed by industrial uses at 24%. Vacant land is the third greatest land use, occupying 19% of the parcel area. All commercial uses and mixed uses, including retail, office and auto, make up only 7% of the parcel area, and most are concentrated along Girard Avenue.



Figure 27. Land Use Map

- Residential
- Mixed Use
- Office/Studio
- Commercial
- Auto
- Warehousing / Industry
- Private Garage
- Public Utility
- Institution
- Park
- Garden
- Vacant Building
- Vacant Land
- Parking



Land Use	Square Feet	Acreage	% of Total Area
Residential	1,924,600	44.2	27%
Warehousing/ Industry	1,707,716	39.2	24%
Vacant Land	1,388,108	31.9	19%
Institution	558,860	12.8	8%
Parking	484,956	11.1	7%
Vacant Building	281,045	6.5	4%
Park	269,842	6.2	4%
Mixed Use	206,139	4.7	3%
Auto	117,720	2.7	2%
Commercial/Retail	102,095	2.3	1%
Garden	75,055	1.7	1%
Office/Studio	74,799	1.7	1%
Private Garage	44,806	1.0	1%
Public Utility	11,937	0.3	0%
Total	7,247,679	166.4	100%

Table 1. Land Use Breakdown

46 Institutions

Institutional uses make up 8% of the parcel area. Houses of worship are the most common institutional use found in the neighborhood. The religious institutions reflect the immense diversity of the neighborhood and include: St. Michael's Roman Catholic Church, Al-Aqsa Islamic Society, Hancock St. John's United Methodist Church, the Serbian Orthodox Church of Saint Nicholas, Albania Mosque, Iglesia Pentecostal, and Bethel Evangelistic. Ongoing participation by religious leadership and congregants from churches surrounding the study area, including Temple Presbyterian Church, Liberty Church, and Circle of Hope Church, underscores the central role that institutions in and adjacent to the area play in the community.

The community is served by 2 public schools: John Moffet Elementary School and James R. Ludlow School. Moffet Elementary provides kindergarten through 5th grade education to 424 students, and Ludlow offers kindergarten through 8th grade education and serves 288 students. Although there is currently no high school within the community, Kensington High School for the Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA) is slated to relocate to Berks and Front Street on a large parcel at the northwestern border of the neighborhood. The neighborhood also has several private schools. Al-Aqsa Islamic School provides kindergarten through 12th grade, and LaSalle Academy serves underprivileged children in 3rd through 8th grades.

Lastly, numerous social service providers and community organizations operate in the neighborhood, including Head Start programs, Drueding Center/Project Rainbow, Salvation Army, the Lutheran Settlement House, the Philadelphia Arab-American Community Development Corporation, and Kensington South Neighborhood Advisory Council. Most of the day care and youth centers are located in the southern half of the neighborhood. The neighborhood also has a city health center located on Girard Avenue. Taken together, these religious, educational, and service institutions form the civic backbone of the community, and representatives from many have participated as active, organized, and interested stakeholders in the planning process.



Figure 28. Neighborhood Institutions

“Neighborhood groups try to better the neighborhood now by promoting unity, including community meetings, block parties, and tree plantings.”



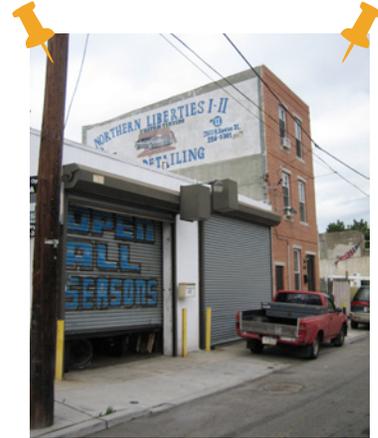
Figure 29. Commercial Properties

“There are no stores anymore. There used to be a lot of stores along Marshall St, and the open market would come every weekend. It looked like the Italian Market in South Philly. All that’s gone now.”

- Mixed Use
- Office/Studio
- Commercial
- Auto

Commercial Uses

Commercial uses make up a very small portion of the land uses in the neighborhood, only 7%. Retail uses, a subset of the total commercial uses, account for only 1% of the parcel area, while office or studio space accounts for another 1%. Auto-oriented commercial uses equal retail and office combined at 2%. Mixed use commercial occupies another 3% of the parcel area.



Auto detailing shop

Looking only at commercial parcel use, the vast majority is auto-oriented (22%), followed by an exceptionally high rate of commercial vacancy (20%). Commercial uses that benefit from and attract foot traffic, such as sit-down restaurants, bars, galleries, and shops, are scarce in the neighborhood. Almost all of this type of commercial activity occurs on Girard Avenue. Within the neighborhood, commercial land uses are scattered and represent mainly convenience stores, take-out restaurants, and auto-oriented uses.

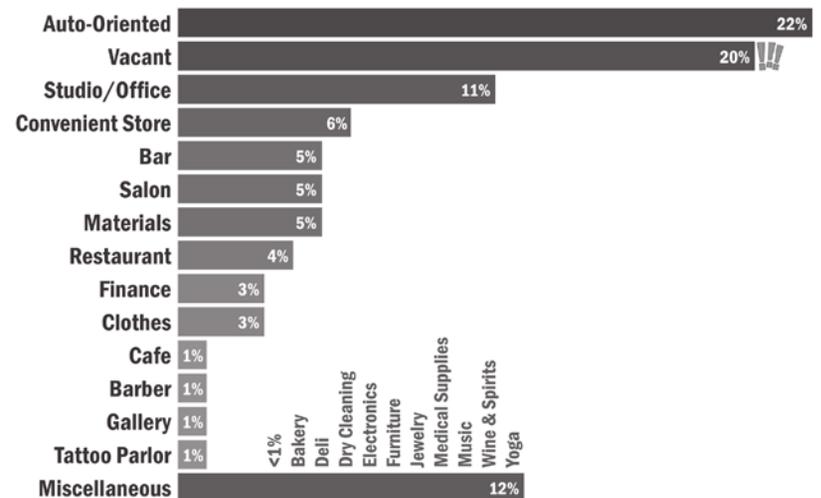


Figure 30. Commercial Use by Type



Figure 31. Neighborhood Groceries

“Seniors have to go way too far just to get food.”

Respondents to the Resident Satisfaction Survey described a lack of places to shop for fresh food as one of the major neighborhood concerns. Aside from smaller supermarkets and corner stores which do not necessarily stock fresh produce, the closest supermarket to the neighborhood is Cousin’s at 6th and Berks, which is about a half mile from the center of the community. Other large supermarkets are located at least one mile away. A planned Pathmark at 2nd Street and Girard Avenue will help bring more food shopping options to the neighborhood.

When compared with land use in 1947, the neighborhood’s commercial and industrial losses are clear. Industrial uses were dominant in 1947, particularly in the northern half of the neighborhood. Commercial activity also appears very strong in the 1947 map, and the major commercial corridors of Girard and Germantown Avenue are very clearly delineated. Several east-west and north-south secondary commercial

1947

2008

Commercial



Warehousing / Industry



Figure 32. Comparison of Past and Present Commercial and Industrial Use
Source: 1947 Sanborn Map and 2008 Field Survey

corridors are also defined in the 1947 map. In contrast the only really discernable commercial corridor in the 2008 land use map is Girard Avenue. The disappearance of local industry and commercial uses has much deeper implications than a lack of local commercial services and shopping opportunities – the jobs that once employed this working neighborhood have, to large degree, disappeared as well.



Figure 33. Vacancy Map

Vacant Building
 Vacant Land

“[This neighborhood is too full of] dilapidated houses and people moving out. The neighborhood used to be more cohesive. Now everything that is left is empty lots.”

Vacancy

The neighborhood is marked by a very high level of vacancy, and 70% of the Resident Satisfaction Survey respondents cited it as a problem in their neighborhood. Vacant land accounts for 19%, or 32 acres, of the parcel area, while another 4% of the parcel area hosts vacant buildings. In total, there are roughly 35 football fields of vacant space within the neighborhood. The vacancy is distributed throughout the neighborhood, touching almost every block. The large size or contiguous nature of some of the vacant parcels is particularly striking; many blocks with vacancy in the neighborhood are over half vacant, and sometimes the entire block is vacant. Such intense vacancy has far-reaching repercussions in the neighborhood; the vacant land and buildings detract from public perception of the area, attract illegal dumping and vandalism, reduce foot traffic, make residents feel less safe, make it more difficult for businesses to thrive, and reduce the value and security of investments.



Top: ABSCO Steel site
 Bottom: Vacant lot on Front Street

Most of the large tracts of vacant land are privately-owned, however, some large areas, notably along American Street, are publicly-owned. The vacant block along American Street at Montgomery Avenue is owned by the City and the Redevelopment Authority (RDA). At the end of American Street across from the ABSCO site is a large parcel that has been capped to prevent contact with contaminated soil and is owned by the Philadelphia Authority for Industrial Development (PAID). While these large, publicly-owned parcels represent opportunities for catalyst projects that benefit the public, some large, publicly-owned parcels have been recently disposed of to private entities, effectively removing the public from the dialogue about that land’s future reuse.

50 Building Condition

A building condition survey was conducted concurrent with the land use survey in August and September 2008. The building condition survey graded buildings on a scale of A through F, without E, like grades in school. “A” buildings, in new or excellent condition, were well maintained with no visible sign of deterioration. “B” buildings, in good condition, were found to need minor cosmetic improvements such as painting or weeding. “C” buildings, in fair condition, required more serious improvements, such as major paint or some structural repair. “D” buildings, distressed, were found to be structurally intact, but in need of major rehabilitation, and “F,” or failing buildings, were deteriorated to the extent that they posed a threat to public safety and welfare.

The survey found that the bulk of buildings in the neighborhood are in fair (31%) to good (39%) condition, with a decent number that rank as excellent (23%). Building conditions vary greatly with most blocks, but the buildings in the best condition, those ranked as A and B, were found in more abundance in the southern half of the neighborhood, below Jefferson Street. The blocks north of Jefferson Street hosted more buildings in deteriorating condition, ranked C though F.

The highest-ranked buildings include new construction and renovated buildings, such as the Johnnie Tillmon Townhouses, the Crane Arts Building, and Aramark, and institutions, such as St. Michael’s Church and Al-Aqsa Islamic Society. Warehousing and industrial buildings accounted for a large proportion of the buildings ranked in fair condition. While these buildings are for the most part structurally sound, they are in need of more substantial cosmetic improvement such as painting, window and masonry repair, and graffiti removal. Community members felt that the number of failing structures was surprisingly low compared to their perception, but the large volume of vacant land suggests that many of the neighborhood’s once abandoned buildings may have been demolished. Virtually all of the failing structures were classified as commercial and mixed use buildings that had been abandoned, relating to the dramatically diminished commercial activity in the neighborhood.

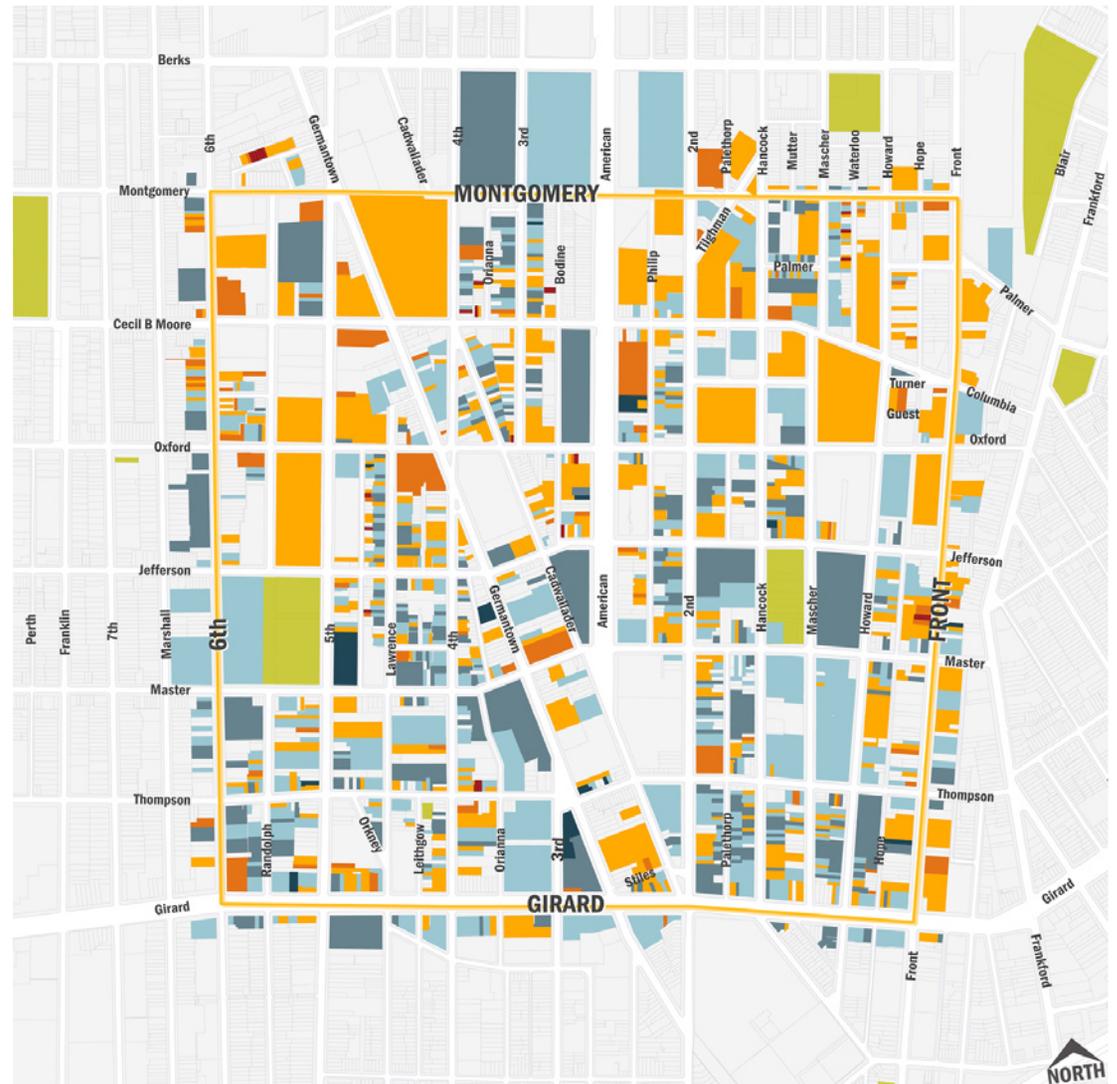


Figure 34. Building Condition





Figure 35. Building Condition Grading System

“Houses that are vacant and abandoned are a dumping ground. So are torn-down houses.”

“Ugly things happen in abandoned buildings. People die, people use drugs.”

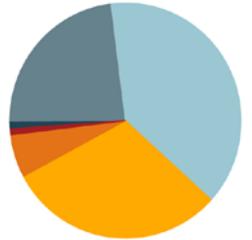
Building Type	Building Condition	Count	% of Total
Residential	A: Excellent	396	28%
	B: Good	574	41%
	C: Fair	333	24%
	D: Distressed	68	5%
	F: Failing Structure	2	0%
	Renovation/Construction	17	1%
Commercial/Mixed Use	A: Excellent	46	20%
	B: Good	83	35%
	C: Fair	70	30%
	D: Distressed	13	6%
	F: Failing Structure	19	8%
	Renovation/Construction	4	2%
Institutional	A: Excellent	35	37%
	B: Good	40	42%
	C: Fair	20	21%
	D: Distressed		0%
	F: Failing Structure		0%
	Renovation/Construction		0%
Warehousing/Industrial	A: Excellent	10	3%
	B: Good	100	31%
	C: Fair	192	59%
	D: Distressed	22	7%
	F: Failing Structure	1	0%
	Renovation/Construction	1	0%
Miscellaneous	A: Excellent	7	8%
	B: Good	28	31%
	C: Fair	33	37%
	D: Distressed	21	24%
	F: Failing Structure		0%
	Renovation/Construction		0%

Table 2. Building Condition Breakdown by Building Type



Building Condition	Count	% of Total
A: Excellent	495	23%
B: Good	822	39%
C: Fair	652	31%
D: Distressed	122	6%
F: Failing	22	1%
Renovation/Construction	22	1%
Total	2,135	100%

Table 3. Building Condition Breakdown for All Buildings





Top: Publicly-owned vacant land on American Street.
 Bottom: Public library on Girard Avenue.

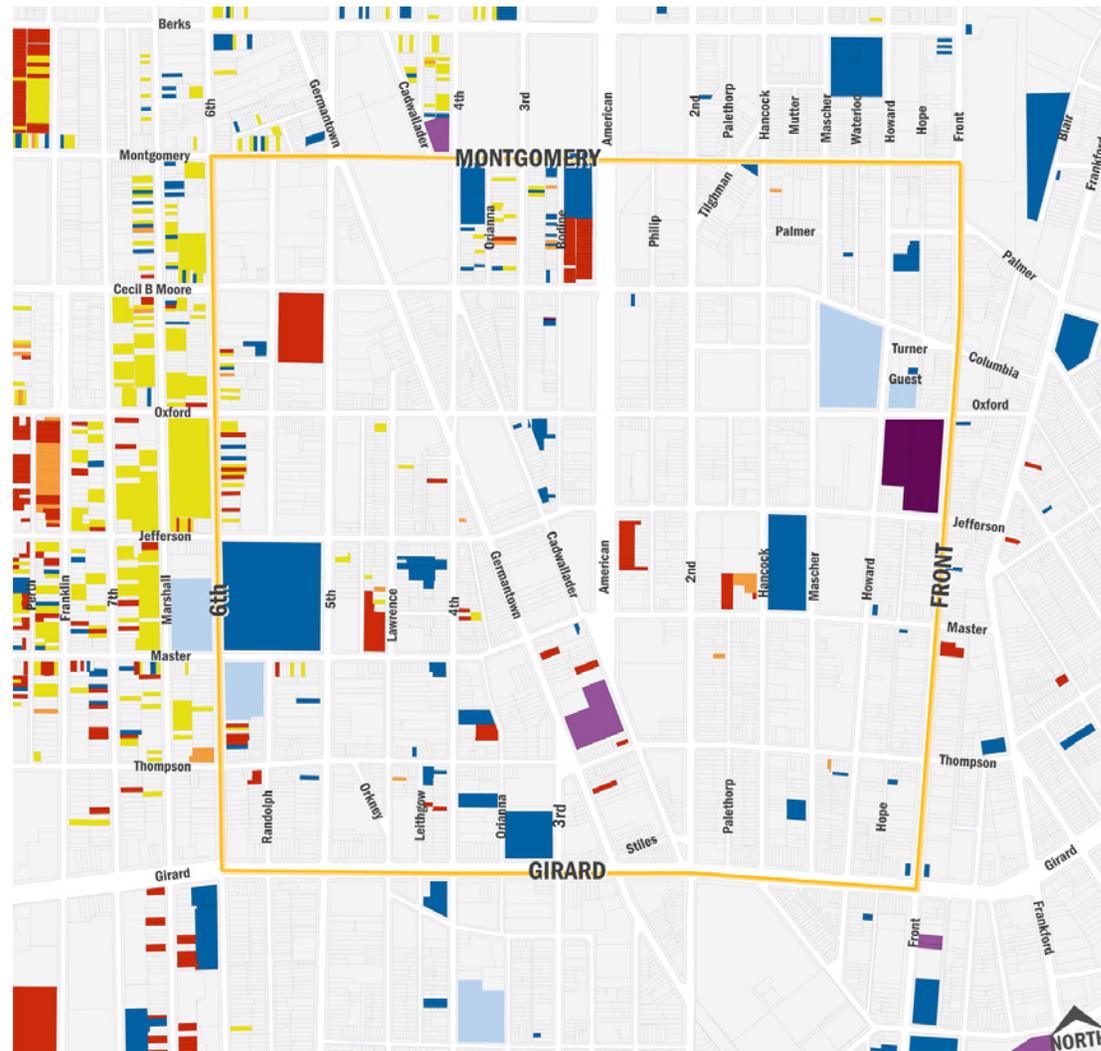


Figure 36. Public Ownership
 Source: BRT

- City of Philadelphia
- Redevelopment Authority (RDA)
- Philadelphia Housing Development Corporation (PHDC)
- Philadelphia Housing Authority (PHA)
- Philadelphia Industrial Development Corporation (PIDC)
- Philadelphia Authority for Industrial Development (PAID)
- School District of Philadelphia

Public Ownership

The neighborhood contains a number of publicly-owned properties that include the City-owned parks and recreation centers, the public schools, and industrial or formerly industrial properties owned by the Philadelphia Industrial Development Corporation, Philadelphia Authority for Industrial Development, and the Redevelopment Authority (RDA). Smaller single-lot parcels are also scattered throughout the neighborhood. Along 6th Street within the neighborhood, the Philadelphia Housing Authority (PHA), RDA and the City own single parcels. In all, the publicly-held land in the neighborhood amounts to 5.5 acres; 1.87 acres are owned by the RDA, 2.75 acres by the City, 0.73 acres by the Housing Authority; 1.2 acres by Philadelphia Authority for Industrial Development (PAID), and 0.08 acres by Philadelphia Industrial Development Corporation (PIDC).

Just west of the 6th Street boundary, publicly-owned housing developments comprise a much larger proportion of the land. Most of this land is owned by the Philadelphia Housing Authority, Philadelphia Housing Development Corporation, and the Redevelopment Authority.

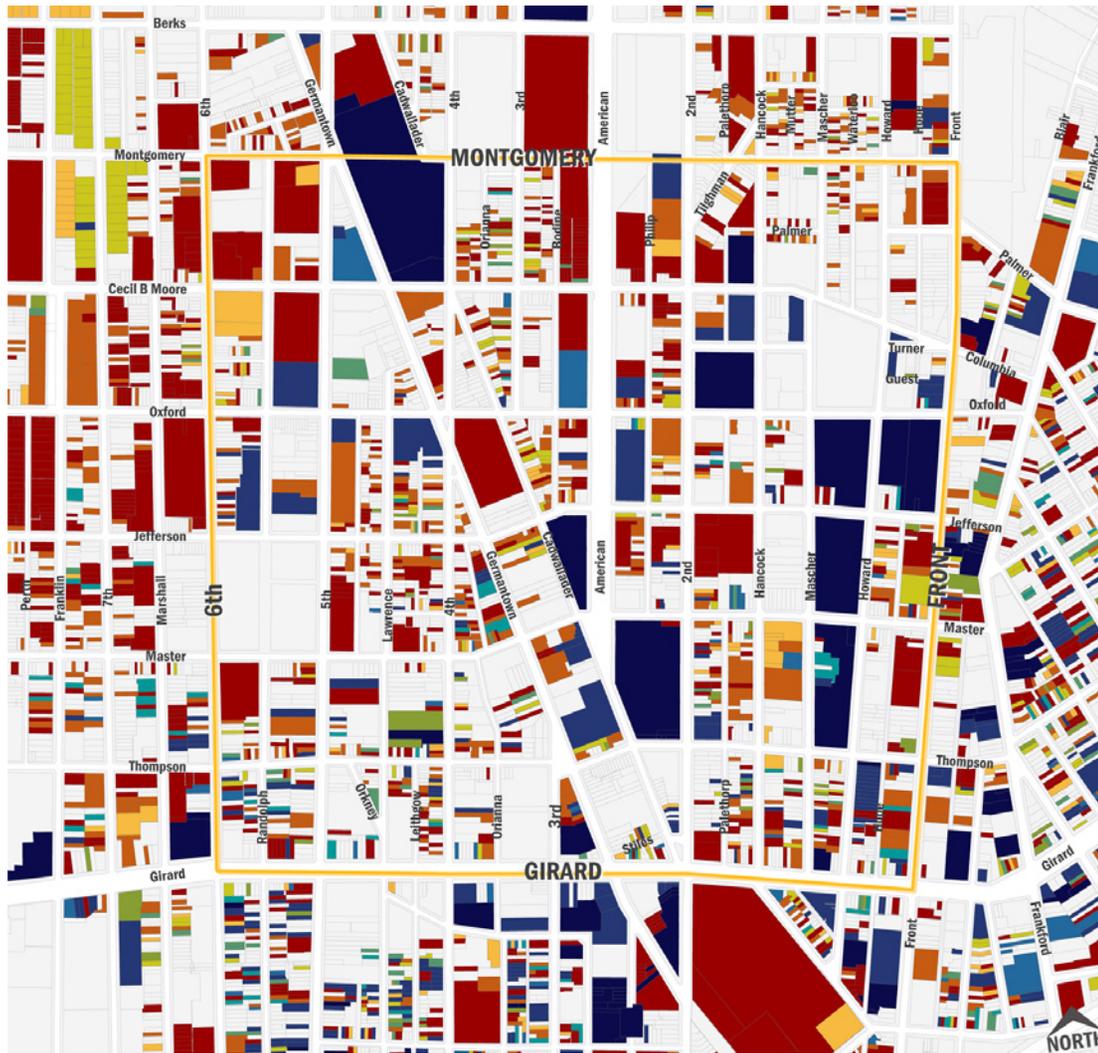


Figure 37. Property Sales Since 2000
Source: BRT

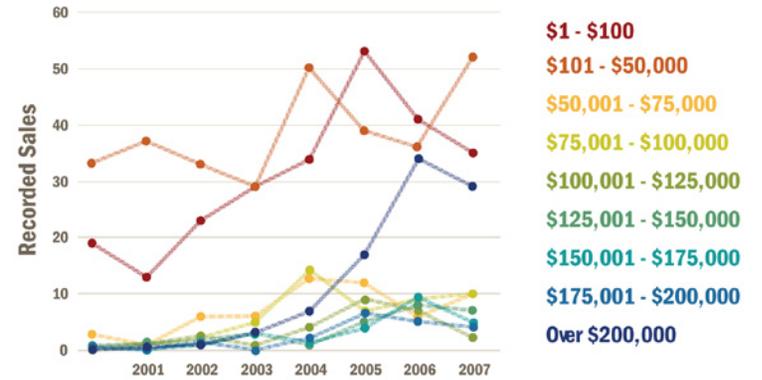


Figure 38. Property Sales Trend, 2001-2007
Source: BRT

Recent Investment

The map of sales since 2000 shows an incredible amount of activity in and around the neighborhood. The bulk of property sales fall into the \$1-\$100 and \$101-\$50,000 bracket, indicating a high instance of land transfers at nominal prices such as public disposition of property, sheriff sales, or family transfers. Between 2003 and 2006, sales exceeding \$200,000 spiked dramatically. Additionally, 14 properties (2%) sold for over \$500,000; these include Crane Arts, Pieri Creations, Honor Foods, and the ABSCO Steel site.

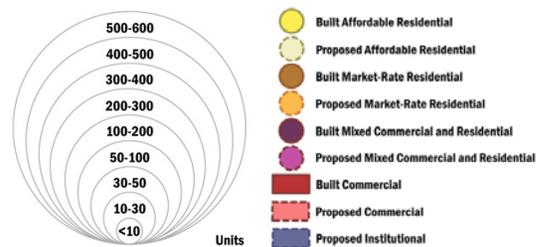
“More people are taking the time to work on their houses and make things presentable. This is probably because of the investment in the neighborhood. There is a lot more investment coming in, which leads to pride in the neighborhood.”

Most of the recent investment in the neighborhood has consisted of market-rate loft housing, heightening affordability concerns among long-term residents. Since 2000, over 180 units of market-rate housing have been built in the neighborhood. Additional large-scale market-rate housing is proposed for the ABSCO Steel site and the former Gretz brewery. The Umbrella Factory at 5th and Master has also been considered for market-rate housing. Most of the recent affordable housing development has occurred outside the neighborhood's boundaries to the west of 6th Street, with the exception of the Johnnie Tillmon Townhouses built by WCRP in the late 1990s and the Nueva Esperanza Homeownership project from 2000.

Recent commercial investment in the neighborhood includes a mix of light industrial and food distribution companies, and most recently the opening of a film studio, Invincible Studios. The Crane Building on American Street which anchors the emerging North American Street Design District, Honor Foods at 5th and Germantown, Aramark on American Street, and Pieri Creations at Front and Oxford are some of the larger companies that have invested in the neighborhood. The American Street Financial and Technical Assistance Center (FINANTA) is building an office at 2nd and Thompson Streets. Just beyond the neighborhood to the south, a Pathmark is planned as part of Tower Investment's mixed use development at 2nd and Girard.



Figure 39. New and Proposed Development



Gretz Building

“Investment has driven up prices, people feel unwelcome in the neighborhood.”

Environmental Conditions and Open Space

Topography, Drainage and Environmental Contamination

The neighborhood's landscape is relatively flat, with topography that slopes gently downward to the east and southeast as it approaches Front Street and Girard Avenue. Gravity causes water to drain downward to lower elevations. However, because of the area's generally low elevation, high water table, and lack of dramatic topography, the neighborhood is susceptible to flooding, particularly at the lowest points along the east side between Front Street and Mascher Street and between Thompson and Girard west of Germantown.

Rainwater accumulates rapidly, flowing off of the impervious surfaces created by roads, roofs, and compacted urban soil, picking up pollutants along the way, and carrying them into the storm drainage system, rivers, and creeks. During heavy rainfall, water quickly overwhelms the area's aging and dysfunctional combined sewer system, sending water into the basements of many neighborhood homes. Thompson Street has had repeated issues with flooding, and earlier in 2009, a water main break at Front Street and Girard Avenue caused a sinkhole and disrupted SEPTA EI service.

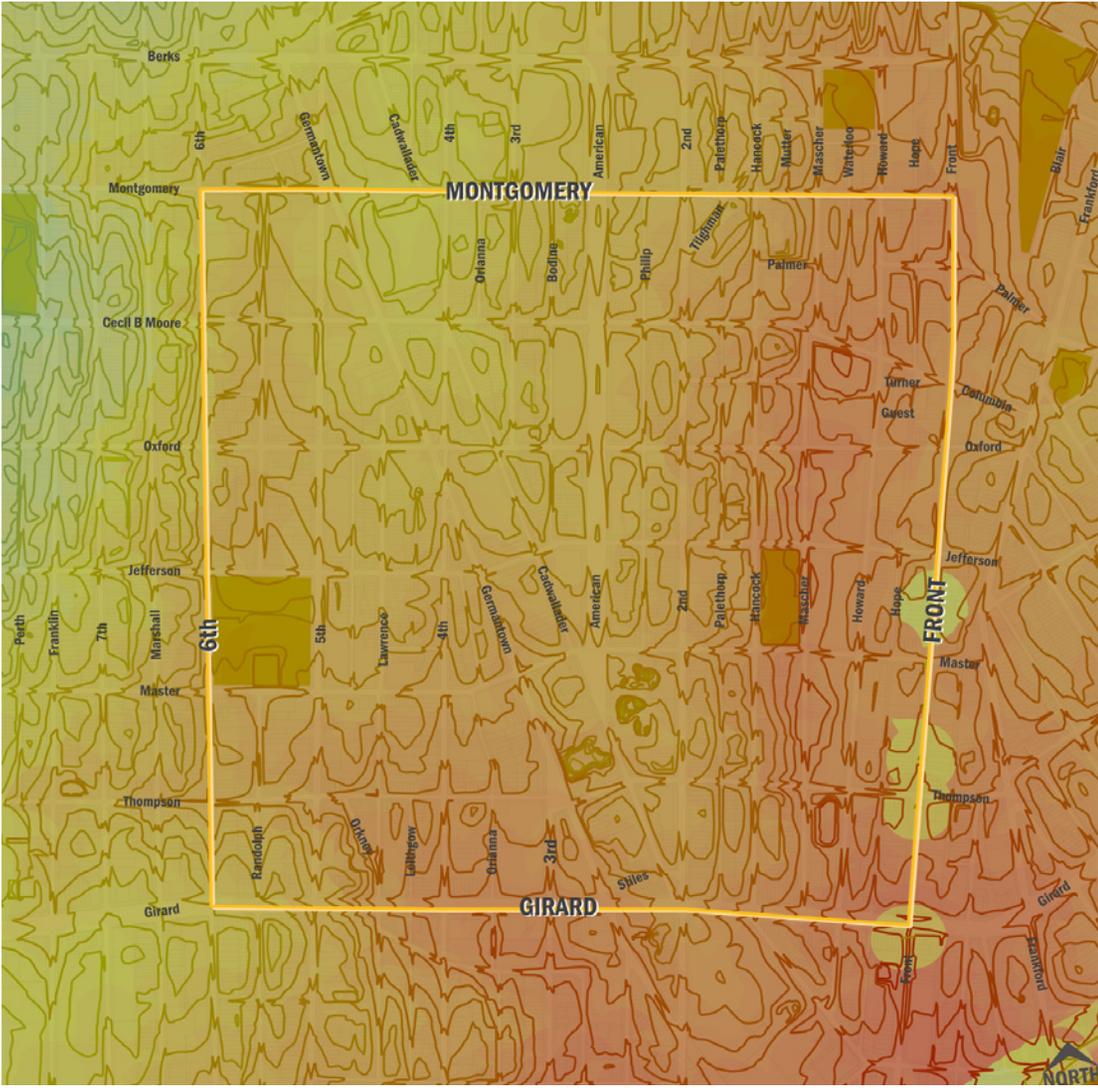
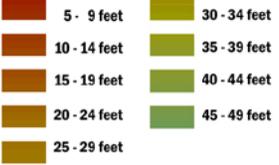


Figure 40. Topography





Top: The recently remediated ABSCO Steel site

Bottom: Vacant land with the ability to absorb stormwater

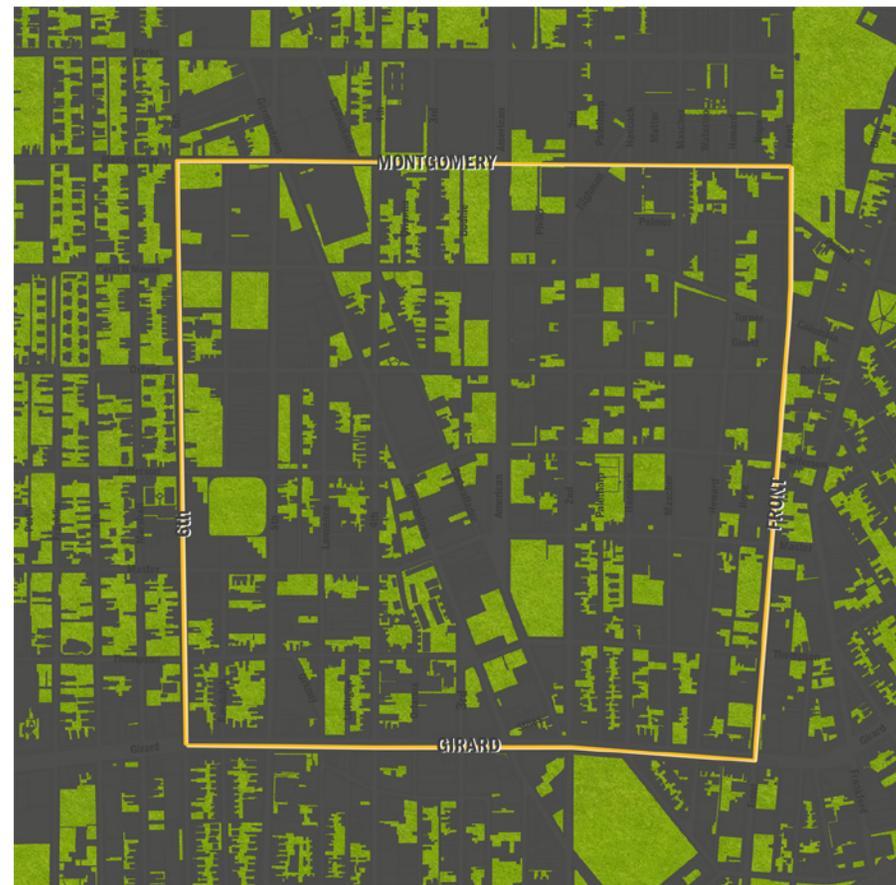


Figure 41. Impervious Surfaces



Permeable surfaces allow a more environmentally sound and gradual absorption of stormwater into the ground. With the large volume of vacant land in the neighborhood, there is a heightened proportion of permeable surfaces. However, in many cases, the soil lying below areas where buildings once stood and industry once thrived may be contaminated, thus appearing falsely environmentally friendly. As the neighborhood redevelops, it will be absolutely necessary to address both issues – stormwater management and soil remediation. The former ABSCO Steel site is a prime example; the site, which was a scrap metal yard for the past 40 years, is the most recent site to be cleaned in the neighborhood and had over 15,000 tons of contaminated soil removed from its grounds to prepare the lot for a green, mixed use residential development.



Figure 42. Tree Cover



Figure 43. Street Trees and New Trees

- New Street Trees
- Street Trees

Trees

Tree cover for the neighborhood is 5%, which is far below the recommended average tree cover for metropolitan areas of 30%. Many of the existing trees in the community are located in the parks, in residential yards, and in vacant lots. When calculating the coverage of street trees only, less than 2% of the neighborhood is covered. The community has undertaken tree planting efforts, and newly planted trees are noticeable in front of new developments and as part of the Kensington South Neighborhood Advisory Council (KSNAC) initiatives. Most of the new trees are concentrated in the southwestern quadrant of the neighborhood near the Cruz Rec Center and on the residential streets south of Master Street, and, thanks to a recent spring planting in partnership with the Al-Aqsa Islamic Society, around the mosque on Germantown Avenue.



Street trees near Hancock Park

58 Parks and Play Space

In theory, the high proportion of youth and the influx of new residents in recent years place a heavy and increasing burden on the existing parks and play spaces in the neighborhood. Using figures from the 2000 Census, the neighborhood had 1.56 acres of park space per 1,000 residents. Using recent development numbers to estimate the number of new residents who have moved into the neighborhood since 2000, the 2008 estimate of park space is even lower, at 1.20 acres per 1,000 residents. The average park space per 1,000 residents for cities of a population density comparable to Philadelphia's is 6.1 acres,⁷ and overall, Philadelphia has 6.9 acres of parkland for every 1,000 residents. However, Fairmount Park's enormous size skews this ratio of park space per resident, and most of the City's dense urban neighborhoods offer less than 2 acres of open space per 1,000 residents. This section of Eastern North Philadelphia is no exception.

The two major recreational spaces in the neighborhood are the Cruz Recreation Center and Hancock Park, both in the southern half of the neighborhood. Residents have expressed concern that these two parks are underutilized, unsafe, and unwelcoming to families and children. Before advocating for the creation of new park space in the community, local stakeholders prefer that existing parks be improved, made safer, and better maintained, especially given the challenge of shrinking resources and the ongoing struggle with stewardship of the public arena, which includes park space.

Both Cruz and Hancock have harsh edges. The Ludlow School and a headstart program sit to the south and west of Cruz Recreation Center, providing a nearby population of potential park goers, but warehousing and vacancy to the north and east limit activity along those edges of the park. The park contains a field that is used frequently by baseball players, soccer players, dog owners with their dogs, and people having an informal catch. It also contains two playgrounds, one for tots, which is old and in need of updating, and a newer space for older children. There is also a Recreation Center, a set of basketball courts surrounded by a few steps that provide theater seating, and a pool.⁸ These uses – the ball fields, pool, and playgrounds, in particular, require tall fencing to keep baseballs within the park, kids safe from traffic which moves rapidly up 5th Street and down 6th, and passersby from tripping and taking an unplanned swim.

7 Center for City Park Excellence, The Trust for Public Land, 2008 (www.tpl.org/ccpe).

8 Pool closures are a possibility for many neighborhood pools; the Mayor's latest budget keeps 46 out of 73 pools open. "Council approves \$3.8 billion budget." Philadelphia Inquirer. 22 May 2009. <http://www.philly.com/philly/news/local/45834497.html>

Open Space Ratio: Acres/1,000 Residents

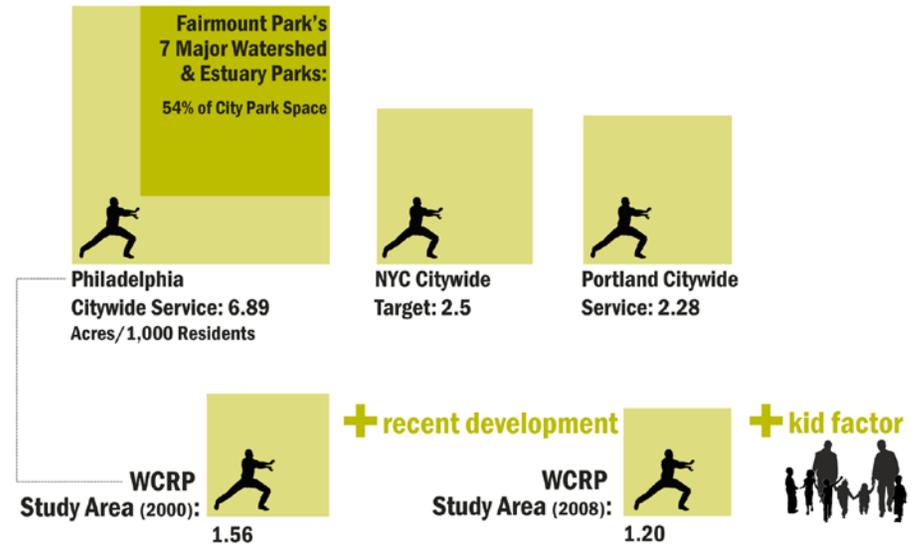


Figure 44. Open Space Ratio

Surrounding vacancy and warehousing, and the walled grounds of St. Michael's create a sense of isolation at Hancock Park, which suffers from little street activity, few nearby residences, and limited visibility into the park. Community members report that drugs and drug dealing have infiltrated this park, reducing the sense of security and, in turn, park usage. The park is surrounded by a high, dense, and prison-like metal fence atop a wall, which is necessitated by grade changes. Access to the park is limited to a single entrance on Hancock Street. The park contains a Recreation Center, a pool, a recently updated playground with a new rubber play surface for safety, and a baseball field. However, from the street, these amenities are all but invisible.

Smaller park spaces in the neighborhood include Benson Park, a pocket park with limited access from Leithgow Street (because the Lawrence and 4th Street entrances are almost always locked) between Jefferson and Harlan Streets, and Hart Playground, between 4th and Orianna Streets, in between Thompson and Master. Both are assets that could be improved upon. The neighborhood also has a number of garden spaces in various states of maintenance and disrepair. Some of the community gardens appear untended and are thus vulnerable, as market pressures drive new development upon underutilized land within the area.

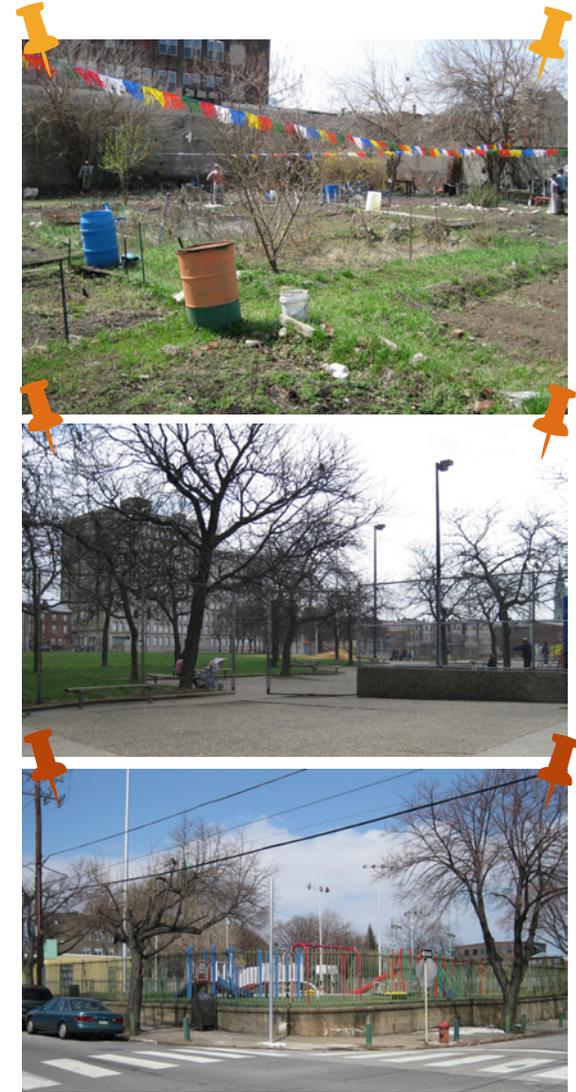


Figure 45. Public Open Space

Parks



Gardens



Top: Community garden
 Middle: Cruz Recreation Center
 Bottom: Hancock Park

Hancock Park



Walls and high fences limit park visibility and result in low usage.



Benson Park



A nice pocket park...

tucked behind locked gates.

Cruz Recreation Center



An underutilized rec center with outdated equipment; nearby industrial use and vacancy contribute to an unwelcoming atmosphere.



Transportation Street Network

The majority of streets in the neighborhood are one-way streets following the City's grid; 2nd Street, 5th Street, and 6th Street are the major one-way streets in the neighborhood, each carrying a significant volume of traffic moving at high speeds. Front Street, Girard Avenue, Cecil B. Moore, American Street, and portions of Germantown Avenue carry two-way traffic and comprise the neighborhood's biggest and most commercial or industrial corridors. Germantown Avenue and Cadwallader Street run diagonally through the community from northwest to southeast, complicating the intersections and block pattern where they intersect with streets that fit the north-south, east-west grid. The neighborhood also encompasses a handful of very small streets such as Palmer and Turner, Harlan, Leithgow, and Stiles.



Figure 46. Street Network

-  One-Way Street
-  Two-Way Street

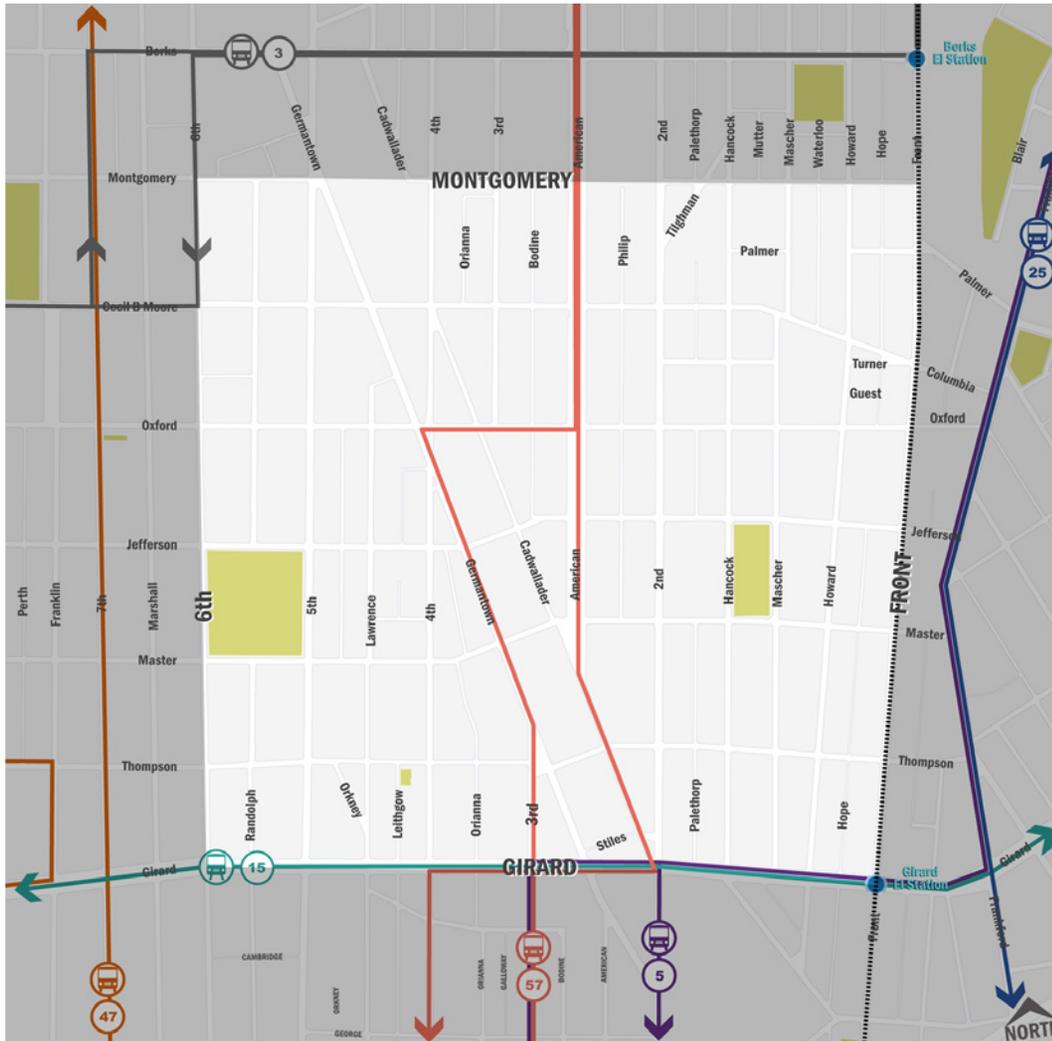


Figure 47. Public Transit

Public Transit

The neighborhood is fairly well-served by public transit. Survey respondents said that good access to transportation is one of their favorite things about the neighborhood, and 86% are satisfied with the local transportation options. There is good access to bus routes, although the number 57 along American Street is the only bus that runs through the neighborhood; the 47, 3, 5, and 25 skirt the edges of the neighborhood. Most of the buses run north-south; the only east-west service is the Girard Avenue trolley (Route 15) and the number 3 bus on Berks. Almost the entire neighborhood east of 5th Street is within a 10-minute walk of the two El stations at Girard and Berks.

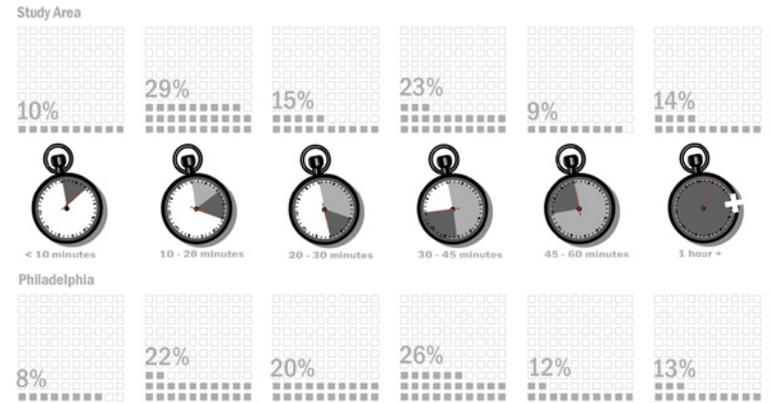


Figure 48. Travel Time to Work
Source: U.S. Census 2000

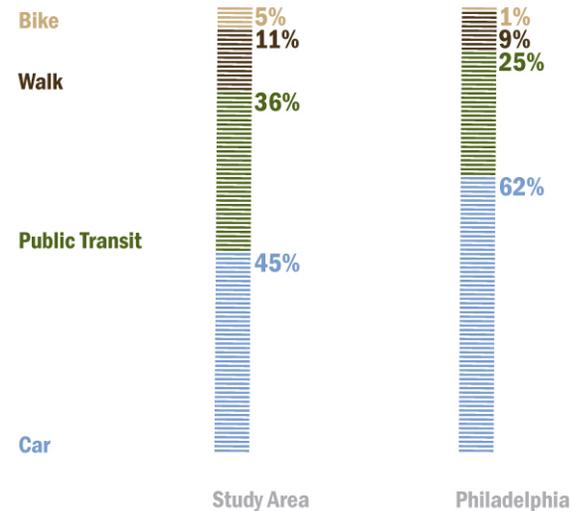


Figure 49. Means of Transportation to Work
Source: U.S. Census 2000

Commuting Patterns

According to the 2000 Census, residents in the neighborhood drove to work less and used public transit, walked, or biked more than the City average. While 62% of the City's residents drive to work, only 45% of the neighborhood's residents do. 36% of them take public transit, compared to the City's 25%, and slightly more of the neighborhood's residents walk and bike to work than the City average. The greatest percentage of residents (29%) have a 10 to 20 minute commute to work.



Sidewalks in the neighborhood range from safe and well-maintained to deteriorating to nonexistent.

Pedestrian Conditions

The high level of vacancy in the neighborhood and the abundance of auto-oriented businesses detract significantly from the pedestrian experience. Some of the vacant lots are used for parking, degrading the sidewalks next to them by eroding the curbs, and in many cases cars are parked on the sidewalk itself. The occupied residential blocks exhibit relatively well-maintained sidewalks; however, those adjacent to vacant lots are often very dilapidated, presenting a significant barrier to those with limited mobility, traveling in wheelchairs, or with strollers. Many of the neighborhood sidewalks have buckled and been patched unevenly. In some instances, the sidewalks are completely overgrown with vegetation or cracked to the point where they are barely recognizable as sidewalks and no longer traversable. Where the sidewalk has deteriorated, there is also no separation between the pedestrian and the cars in the street as the curb has worn away.

Bicycling Conditions

Of the streets in the neighborhood, Germantown Avenue, 5th Street, 4th Street, Cecil B. Moore Avenue, and Girard Avenue have been evaluated as part of the Philadelphia Bicycle Network. Of these, Girard Avenue was rated as above average for bicycling, although recent bump outs, new trolley infrastructure, and high traffic volume render cycling along this corridor both difficult and dangerous. No bike lanes currently exist in the community. Commercial areas within the community did not appear to have bike racks; however, New Kensington CDC has installed “art racks,” bicycle racks designed by local artists, along Frankford Avenue just east of the neighborhood.



Cyclists on Front Street (top) and Thompson Street (bottom).



Participants chat at a community meeting about vacant land.
Source: Harvey Finkle

“We are still pretty sociable and look out for one another.”

Quality of Life Neighborhood

One of the best aspects of the neighborhood according to the Resident Satisfaction Survey is the friendliness of neighbors. The survey shows a strong network of neighborly support; respondents indicated that they regularly engage in conversations with their neighbors and can depend on them in the event of an emergency. Fully 66% of the survey respondents have lived in the neighborhood for over 10 years, 19% for over 20 years and 34% for over 30 years. Overall, residents surveyed described the neighborhood as conveniently located, quiet and family-oriented, and expressed confidence that other residents in the neighborhood were committed to making it better. However, the lack of active meeting places or gathering spaces in the neighborhood poses a challenge to new neighbors interested in building a sense of community with longer-term residents.

Crime and Safety

Crime is perceived by residents to be one of the biggest problems in the neighborhood. Over 30% of the Resident Satisfaction Survey respondents cited crime and other safety issues as the worst thing about the neighborhood, while another 15% ranked it as the second-worst thing about the neighborhood. At the same time, 68% of the respondents said they and their family felt safe in the area.

Crime data from 1998 to 2006 show that serious incidents of crime in the neighborhood exceed the citywide average overall. However, in 2004 and 2006 the community's rates for crimes against persons and against property decreased to the same level as the city average. The breakdown of 2006 data shows that crimes against property were more prevalent than crimes against persons. Most of the property crimes in the neighborhood in 2006 were auto thefts, while thefts accounted for 30% of property crimes, and burglaries accounted for the remaining property crimes. In the neighborhood, twice as many burglaries were conducted against residential properties as commercial properties. A closer look at crimes against persons in 2006 shows the community had slightly higher rates of robbery and slightly lower rates of aggravated assault than the City average.

Trash and Vandalism

Littering and trash dumping are pervasive problems in the neighborhood. Almost 12% of the Resident Satisfaction Survey respondents cited litter and graffiti as the worst problem in the neighborhood, and another 15% listed it as the second-worst aspect of the neighborhood. Many of the vacant lots and the sidewalks in front of them are littered with trash and large items such as rusted cars, furniture, tires, and scrapped building materials. Additionally, graffiti and broken or boarded up windows are characteristic of many of the vacant buildings in the neighborhood.

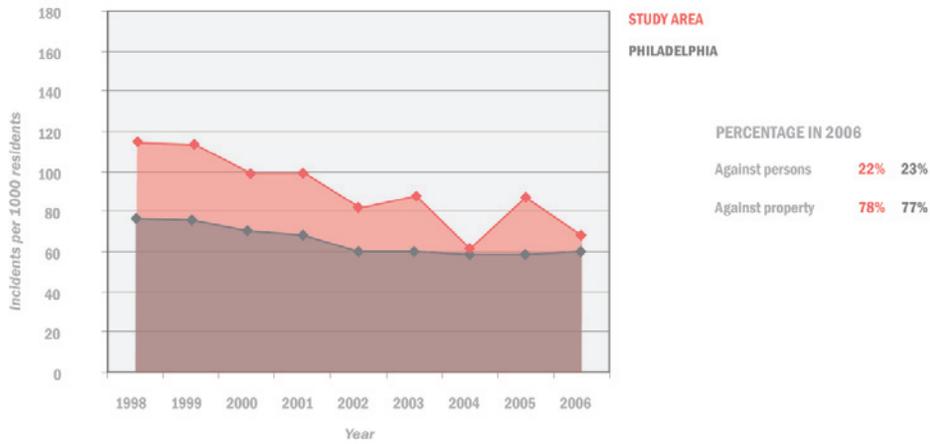


Figure 50. Crime: All Serious Incidents Per 1,000 Residents, 1998-2006
Source: Cartographic Modeling Lab (CML)



Figure 51. Crime: All Serious Incidents Against Property Per 1,000 Residents, 1998-2006
Source: CML



Graffiti, illegal dumping, and abandonment detract from neighborhood morale.

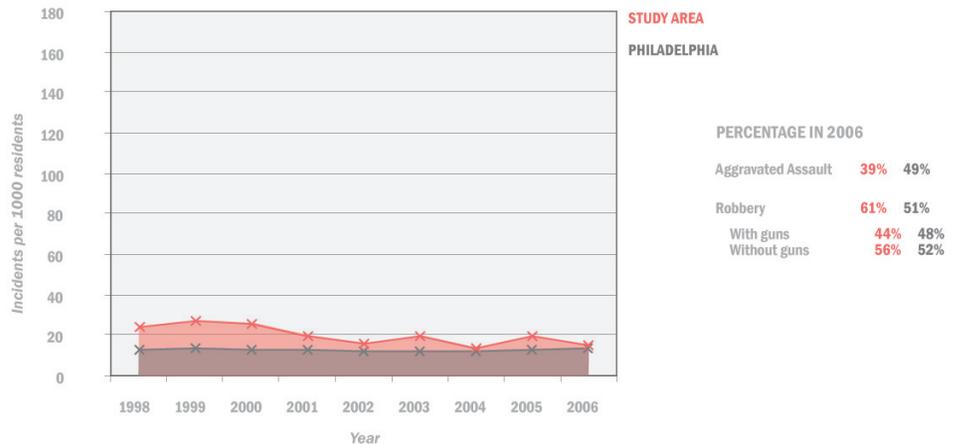


Figure 52. Crime: All Serious Incidents Against Persons Per 1,000 Residents, 1998-2006
Source: CML

“People used to sit on the porch all night, and there was more of a sense of community. It was safer. Now there is more crime and less togetherness.”

66 Summary

The shift from heavy industry and manufacturing to a service economy has had an enormous impact on this Eastern North Philadelphia community. Emptied of jobs when the factories shut down, the neighborhood now suffers a high rate of poverty, low educational attainment, and high unemployment rates. Vacancy and neglect have created a fragmented neighborhood riven with long stretches of empty land or broken windows, detracting from community morale and public perception of place while also contributing to a sense that the neighborhood is not safe.

The challenge of such high levels of vacancy can also be seen as a unique opportunity. The neighborhood today is remarkably diverse in terms of ethnicity and race, income, religion, and tenure. With its excellent transit options, amount of developable land, strong neighbor-to-neighbor relationships, and stock of historic factory and warehouse buildings, the neighborhood has many strong assets to build upon. New market-rate residential conversions and rehabilitated rowhomes have helped to restore the neighborhood's former density and vibrancy, but have brought with them rising housing costs, which pose a threat to long-term and lower-income residents. As the neighborhood continues to evolve, the main challenge is to manage change in a balanced way that meets the needs of all residents while building community among neighbors, new and old.

