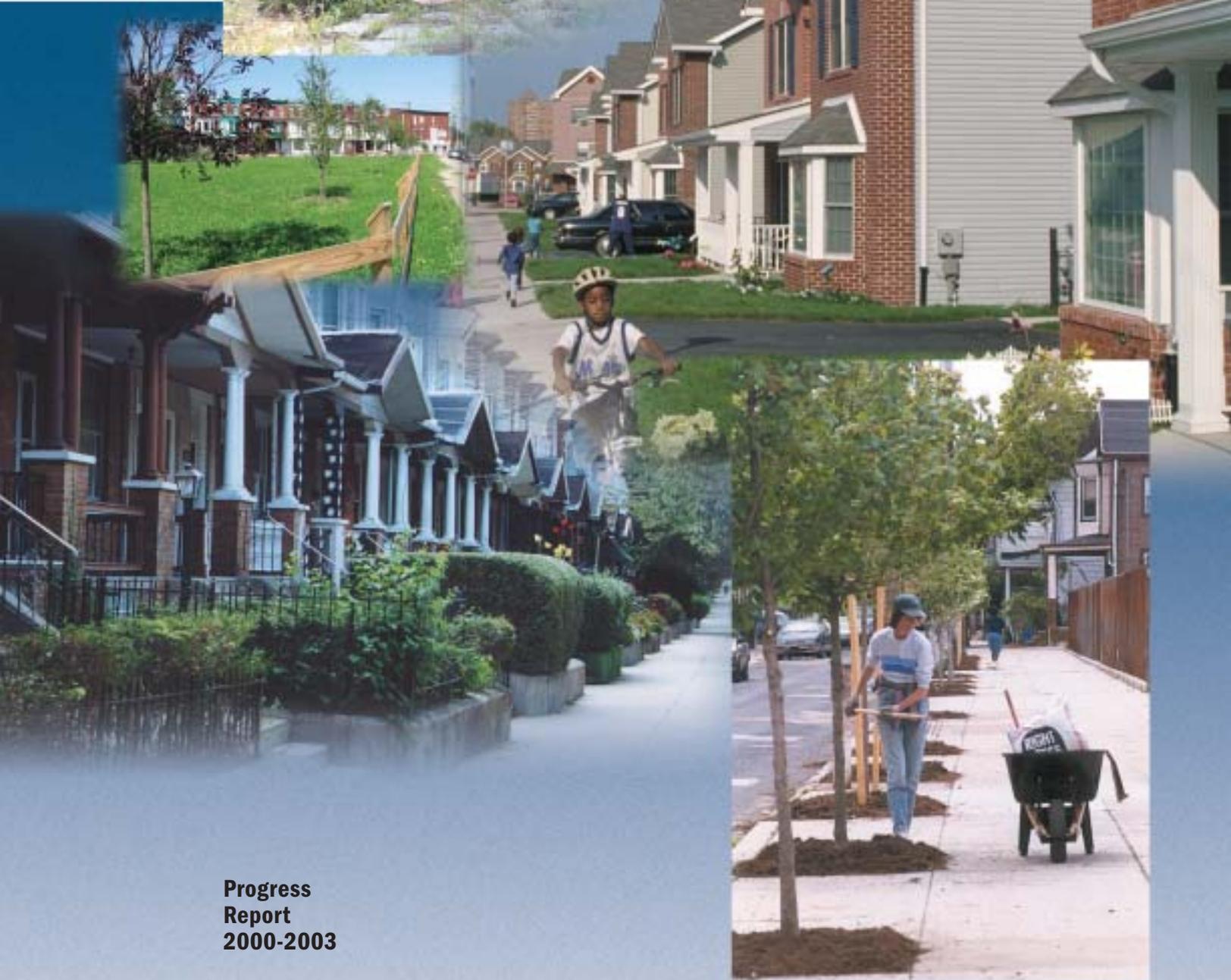


Transforming Our Neighborhoods— Building Our Future



Progress
Report
2000-2003



Years ago,
the poet Langston Hughes asked
“What happens to a dream deferred?”

For decades, many Philadelphians have had to defer their dreams of living in an attractive, well-built home in a clean, safe and vibrant neighborhood. Instead, many watched their dreams get buried beneath the harsh reality of urban blight.

As the decades marched on, many people came to believe that the problem had become so vast, so complicated and so costly, it had simply outgrown any possible solution. After all, what could any one person do? Or any one neighborhood?

But with strong, visionary leadership and innovative thinking we have begun forging new partnerships across street corners, living rooms, community halls and boardrooms. In the process, we have empowered our citizens to dare to dream again.

The result has been one of the most ambitious endeavors of its kind in the nation. In just a few short years, the Neighborhood Transformation Initiative has begun to transform not just our streets and skylines, it has transformed despair into hope and dreams into reality. In this report, we invite you to learn about the many ways Philadelphia’s neighborhoods are moving ahead.



New townhome communities in once blighted neighborhoods are drawing homeowners back to every corner of Philadelphia.

Photo: James B. Abbott

Making citywide change a reality

From John F. Street, Mayor of Philadelphia

As I travel around Philadelphia's neighborhoods, from the Far Northeast to South Philadelphia, I see exciting changes taking place everywhere.

The Neighborhood Transformation Initiative (NTI) was launched in April 2001 as a bold plan to address the greatest challenge we face today: the 50-year-long decline and abandonment of the City's neighborhoods that has long blighted prospects, not only for Philadelphia but the entire region.

We have successfully mobilized expertise, partnerships and resources on a scale greater than any other city in the nation, including investing \$275 million in bond proceeds over five years, amplified by private and public investments of all kinds. As a result, our citizens are now enjoying cleaner and safer streets, greener outdoor spaces, a robust housing market and a spectacular array of new housing choices.

At record rates, we have hauled away debris from vacant lots, removed abandoned cars from City streets, demolished some of the City's most dangerous buildings and erased graffiti. We are acquiring vacant land at an unprecedented pace—paving the way for new housing and commercial development—and providing thousands of affordable housing opportunities for residents.

We are transforming the way City government manages the sale and development of land. We are helping homeowners to maintain their properties, protecting residents from predatory lenders and assisting first-time buyers to reach their dreams.

Citizens, City Council members and community organizations have participated in the development of NTI. Together, we have made a dramatic beginning. By staying the course, we will realize a better life for all of our citizens. We invite you to take a look at all we have done, and imagine what the next few years will hold.



John F. Street

Mayor, City of Philadelphia

From Patricia L. Smith, Director of Neighborhood Transformation

The Neighborhood Transformation Initiative (NTI) is a bold and ground-breaking endeavor to reverse decades of decline and change the face of the city. It is a comprehensive, citywide effort to strengthen and revitalize entire communities—to enhance job creation, public safety and economic opportunity. NTI embodies Mayor Street's commitment to neighborhoods and represents an unprecedented investment of resources to help make Philadelphia a world-class city, where all neighborhoods are great places to live, work, shop, learn and play.

This report tells a story of enormous achievement in a short period of time against a backdrop of decades of divestment and neglect. Although we've faced some tough challenges, we couldn't be happier with our progress to date. A citywide initiative on this scale takes time, determination and persistence. We are certainly up to the task.

For me, one of the most rewarding aspects of the process has been the tremendous amount of collaboration and teamwork that is helping NTI to succeed. We have worked together with City Council members, City agencies and community organizations. We have had conversations with thousands of citizens to outline the goals and strategies for building healthy neighborhoods. I wish to take a moment to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of my colleagues in City government, our partner organizations and citizens across the City. I give my heartfelt thanks to each and every one of you.



Patricia L. Smith, Esq.

Director of Neighborhood Transformation



Mayor John F. Street



Patricia L. Smith, Esq.

Tackling the greatest challenge to Philadelphia—and the region

The lure of the suburbs

Like many other American cities in the first half of the 20th century, Philadelphia was once a thriving metropolis of well-kept homes and streets, with a robust economy fueled by a strong manufacturing base. At its height, the City numbered more than 2.1 million people.

Some thought the boom times would never end. But, for many neighborhoods throughout Philadelphia, they did. Manufacturing has declined. Since the end of World War II, the City has hemorrhaged nearly a half a million people and thousands of jobs to the suburbs and beyond. The reasons for this are complex.

Low-interest FHA and VA mortgages and government incentives to developers put the dream of suburban homeownership into the hands of thousands of working-class families. A combination of housing, banking, insurance, property and tax

policies rewarded the construction of single homes in the suburbs, while discouraging the preservation or renovation of existing homes in the City, or creation of new urban housing developments.

Those who could afford to fled. Those who could not became trapped in a vicious cycle of decline.

Loss of people and jobs

In the past 50 years, Philadelphia has witnessed unprecedented losses of both people and jobs that have decimated the property values, quality of life and sense of community in many once-proud neighborhoods. Between 1950 and 2000, some sections of Philadelphia lost half to two-thirds of their residents. Formerly thriving commercial and retail corridors have closed.

A 2000 study by the Brookings Institution revealed that Philadelphia had the highest number of vacant structures of all 83 cities it surveyed. In 2001, the City laid claim to a staggering 26,000 vacant homes, 31,000 vacant lots and 2,500 vacant industrial and commercial buildings.

The decline of Philadelphia's urban neighborhoods has gone hand in hand with the sprawling, uncontrolled growth of its suburbs—creating

increased traffic, greater tax burdens and taller barriers to regional planning. At a time when the vitality of the central city is increasingly seen as essential to the vitality of the region, the combination of urban blight and suburban sprawl has made it far more difficult for all of us to move ahead.



Photo: David E. Schpok



Photo: Temple University Libraries, Urban Archives, Philadelphia, PA

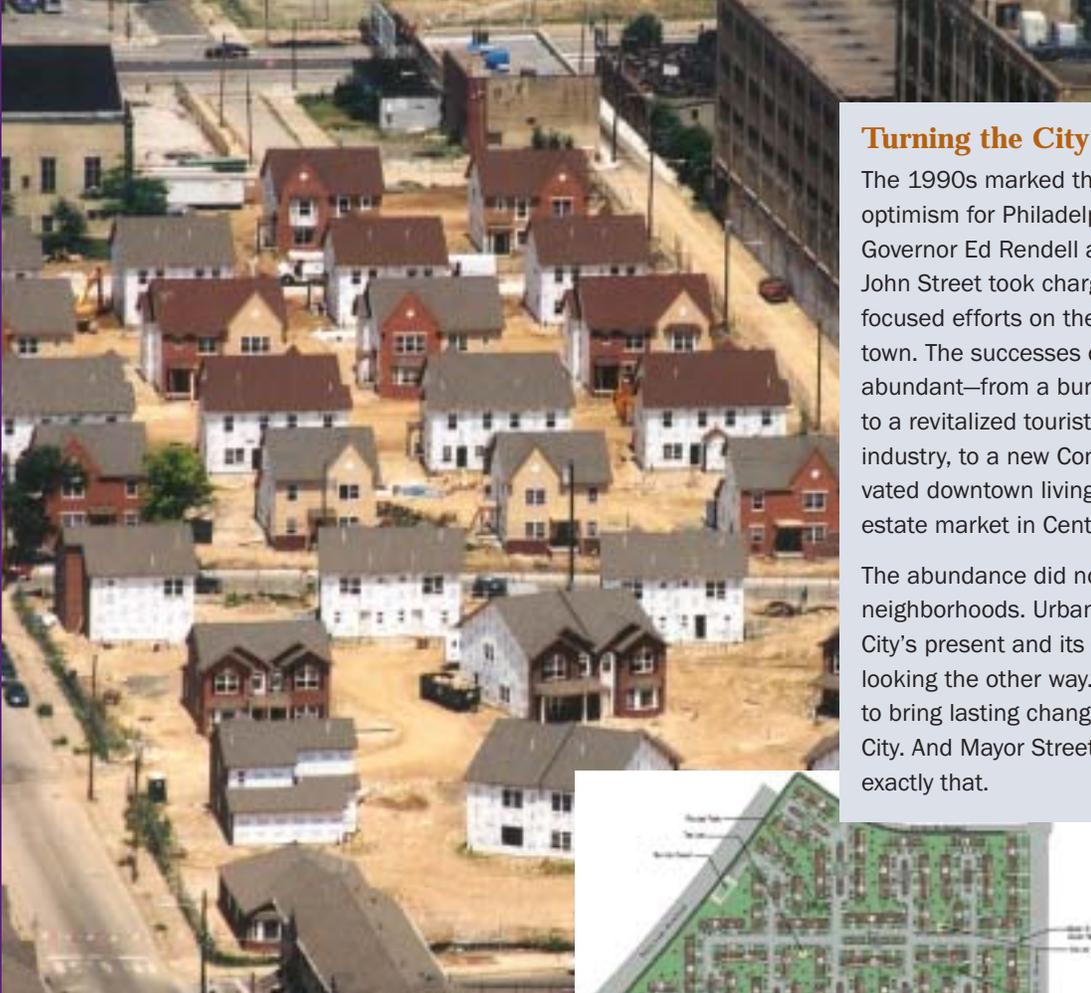


Photo: Jane Whitehouse

Turning the City around

The 1990s marked the beginning of a new era of optimism for Philadelphia. Former Mayor—now Governor Ed Rendell and then Council President John Street took charge of the City's budget and focused efforts on the revitalization of downtown. The successes of the 1990s were abundant—from a burgeoning Avenue of the Arts, to a revitalized tourist, restaurant and hotel industry, to a new Convention Center and renovated downtown living space—fueling a hot real estate market in Center City.

The abundance did not, however, make it to all neighborhoods. Urban blight was eroding the City's present and its future. It was time to stop looking the other way. Something had to be done to bring lasting change to every corner of the City. And Mayor Street proposed a plan to do exactly that.



The scope of Philadelphia's urban blight demanded an equally unparalleled plan to revitalize and transform City neighborhoods.

“I think the best way to stop suburban sprawl is to have a strong city. The idea is to go from being the hole in the doughnut to being the crème.”

Hal Real
Developer of the new World Café Life,
From the Philadelphia *Inquirer*, September 13, 2003

Transforming Philadelphia: A bold plan

A city at the crossroads

With its acres of vacant land and abandoned properties, Philadelphia stood at a critical crossroads.

In April 2001, Mayor Street made a clear choice. Launching the Neighborhood Transformation Initiative (NTI) sent a powerful signal to communities that the City's leadership was committed to implementing a lasting solution to the problem of urban blight.

Clearly, this effort demanded a strategic vision. With so much at stake, the City could ill afford to squander precious time, resources and momentum on piecemeal approaches and factional divides. Even though the hard work of revitalizing the City eventually proceeds forward one house, one vacant lot or one street at a time, keeping a focus on the big picture is critical in order to reach NTI's extraordinary goals.

These goals are nothing less than to:

- Reverse a decades-long history of blight and divestment
- Preserve and build clean, safe and vibrant neighborhoods
- Create opportunities for development
- Streamline and strengthen the delivery of government services
- Increase the City's population by 5% by the year 2010.

A framework for the what, where and how of neighborhood transformation

From the beginning, the NTI has moved ahead swiftly to define and communicate its mission and to map out the framework for achieving it. The NTI team has focused on setting clear goals, soliciting guidance and expertise and devising a detailed plan of action. They have also established priorities in the face of competing needs, worked closely with communities, unified the vision, nurtured partnerships and found ways to make one dollar do the job of ten.

The NTI framework is comprehensive and encompasses the following basic facets:

Supporting neighborhood planning

NTI facilitates and supports community-based planning and the development of area plans that reflect citywide and neighborhood visions.

Eliminating blight

NTI eradicates blight caused by dangerous buildings, debris-filled lots, abandoned cars, litter and graffiti to improve the quality of life for all Philadelphians.

Preventing blight

NTI targets and coordinates blight prevention programs that enforce City codes and abate public nuisances.

Assembling land

NTI improves the City's ability to assemble land for development, and re-engineers and streamlines government processes related to neighborhood development.

Investing in neighborhoods

NTI invests public funds in neighborhood preservation and pre-development activities.

Leveraging resources

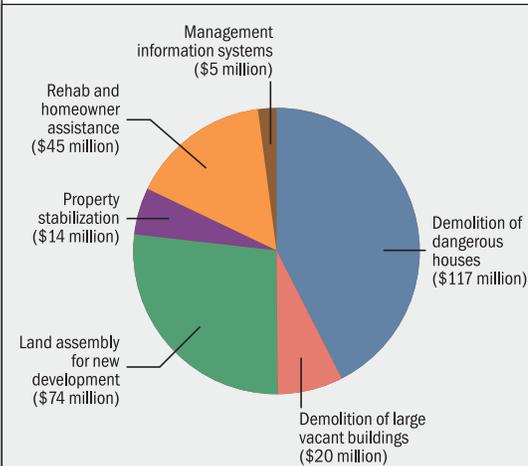
NTI uses a variety of government resources to more effectively attract private investment.

Committing significant resources

Through the sale of municipal bonds, the City has been able to take on some of the most labor-intensive and challenging hurdles to overcoming urban blight. These investments support not only the process of development but a host of measures to strengthen neighborhoods:

- Demolition of dangerous, abandoned houses and vacant buildings
- Land acquisition
- Property stabilization and neighborhood preservation through home improvement loans, housing rehabilitation and home repair grants.
- Technology improvements

A \$275 million investment in reclaiming our communities



Source: City of Philadelphia, June 2003

Roughly half of NTI bond funds are earmarked for demolition of vacant and hazardous houses and buildings. The other half is going toward preservation and stabilization of existing properties, land assembly to enhance development opportunities and improvement of information systems.

Forging partnerships across the City and region

No effort as large as NTI could succeed without the active participation of stakeholders throughout the region. Through NTI, the City has forged key partnerships that have helped to maximize efforts to revitalize neighborhoods.

Citizens are engaged in a community planning process that encompasses more than 30 neighborhoods around the City, led by the Philadelphia City Planning Commission.

Area banks are investing more than \$120 million in loans and services. The Philadelphia Housing Authority (PHA) is using its resources to jumpstart neighborhood markets in Mill Creek, Grays Ferry, East Falls and West Poplar. PHA is one of only two national housing authorities selected for the federal Moving-to-Work Program, which will provide PHA with \$37 million over the next seven years for operational support, family self-sufficiency and property revitalization and modernization.

Community development corporations (CDCs), the guerrilla fighters in the war against blight and divestment, have built more than 839 of the 5,128 affordable housing units completed since Mayor Street took office, with another 1808 units planned.

In addition, NTI is also partnering with Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, Keep Philadelphia Beautiful, Center City Development Corporation, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Banking partners lend a helping hand

Housing production is on the rise due to unprecedented commitments from private financial institutions like Citizens Bank, which has pledged \$104.3 million over five years to support revitalization efforts in Philadelphia's most economically depressed neighborhoods. This initiative will provide:

- More than \$50 million in residential mortgage and home improvement loans
- \$25 million in small business loans
- \$26 million in project financing for community development and property acquisition
- \$850,000 in grant money for technical assistance for small businesses
- Implementation of the "Clean and Green" project
- Support for the anti-predatory lending campaign "Don't Borrow Trouble".

Tailoring solutions to neighborhood housing markets

Achieving such ambitious goals demands changing the way that City government operates. It means rethinking how the City allocates resources, facilitates development, leverages private capital and interacts with neighborhoods.

The NTI five-year master plan provides a framework for managing this complex vision for moving swiftly ahead in many directions simultaneously. Recognizing that neighborhoods have different needs and priorities, City government has tailored programs and interventions to the unique market conditions of each neighborhood.

While all neighborhoods require similar basic levels of service, such as code enforcement, street maintenance and graffiti removal, some may benefit from a greater emphasis on a particular set of strategies, depending on the specific characteristics of the housing market within that community.

The NTI Framework: Defining neighborhoods as “housing markets”

The Street Administration commissioned The Reinvestment Fund (TRF) to conduct an analysis of Philadelphia’s real estate market conditions using the following data:

- Housing tenure (i.e., whether a housing unit is owner or renter occupied)
- Age of housing (i.e., percent of homes built after 1950)
- Percent of units demolished
- Percent of properties vacant
- Percent of properties deemed dangerous and imminently dangerous
- Percent of properties categorized as commercial
- Year, value, type and sale price of the most recent sale
- Total count of residential units
- Percent of households surveyed with high and very high risk credit scores.

Using these data, each neighborhood was analyzed and characterized as predominantly one of six market types: Regional Choice, High Value/Appreciating, Steady, Transitional, Distressed or Reclamation.

This analysis has provided a framework for targeting government investments to provide maximum benefit to each “market cluster”. For example, “Appreciating” neighborhoods may benefit most from activities that promote already strong real estate markets. “Stable” neighborhoods may be best served by focusing investment on activities that preserve existing homes. “Reclamation” neighborhoods need investment that is people-based, that develops new assets and creates conditions for wholesale rebuilding.



Photo: James B. Abbott



Photo: Jane F. Century

Mapping the City's housing markets by type

The map below demonstrates how TRF data analysis was used to determine which neighborhoods most closely match which housing market type. Using this map as a guide has enabled NTI to more clearly define the scope of different neighborhood challenges and tailor intervention strategies to the specific needs and strengths of each neighborhood sector.

Regional Choice

Highest housing values. Housing stock is in good condition. Mix of both residential and commercial uses. Mix of owners and renters.

NTI Strategies:

Promote and propel the market.

High Value/Appreciating

Very high housing values. Strong appreciation and population stability. Older housing in good condition.

NTI Strategies:

Facilitate healthy functioning of the private market.

Steady

High housing values. High owner-occupancy rates. Newer (post-1950) housing. Low vacancy rates.

NTI Strategies:

Respond to changes in any troubled sub-markets.

Transitional

Above-average housing values but many neighborhoods are subject to rapid increases or decreases in housing prices.

NTI Strategies:

Respond rapidly to physical or economic deterioration.

Distressed

Below-average housing values. Older and deteriorated housing stock. Elevated vacancies and dangerous properties. Significant population losses.

NTI Strategies:

Build from strength.

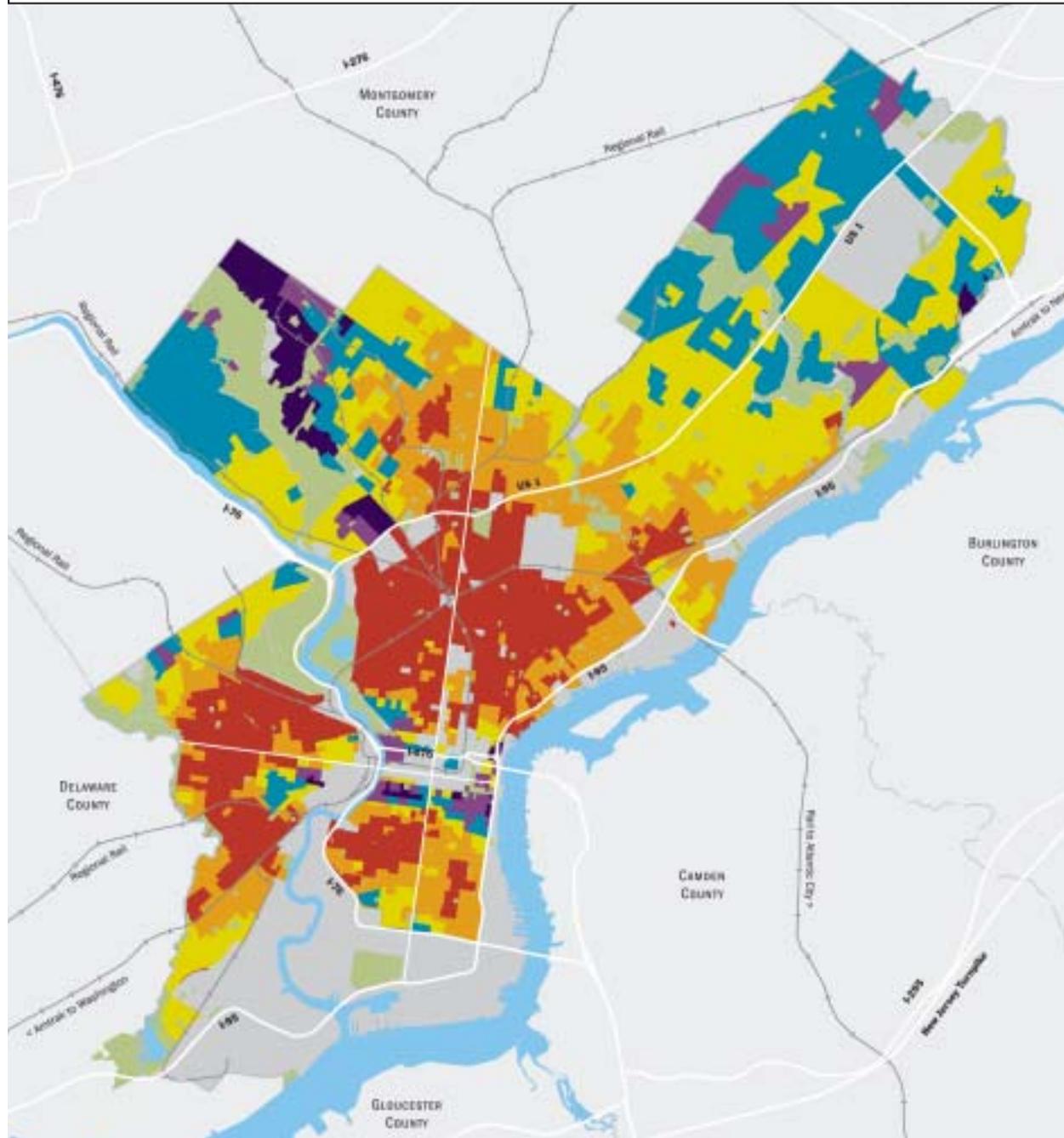
Reclamation

Oldest housing with the lowest average values. Very high rates of vacancy and physical deterioration. Substantial population loss.

NTI Strategies:

Build from strength and create conditions for market rebirth.

Neighborhood housing markets by type



Source: The Reinvestment Fund

NTI: A national model

NTI has gained national prominence as one of the most comprehensive neighborhood revitalization projects a city has ever attempted. It has been the subject of academic research and has been extensively featured in local and national media, including *The Washington Post* and the *New York Times* and the *NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*.

Philadelphia's progress is not just measured in the many lots cleared, homes built and parcels of land acquired. It is also reflected in the faces of proud new homeowners, of families and of business and community leaders who are benefiting from cleaner and safer streets.

The results are clear: NTI is changing Philadelphia from the ground up. It has made communities cleaner and safer, spurred housing investments and improved the way government does business. Through NTI, Mayor Street is building a solid foundation for neighborhood stability and growth.



Photo: Jane Whitehouse



Photo: David E. Schpok

Making neighborhoods cleaner and safer

Vacant buildings, debris-filled lots, abandoned cars and graffiti can attract criminal activity, dissuade investors and impede development. By cleaning up neighborhoods, NTI has improved both the perception and the reality of safety, reduced crime and made the City more attractive for development and investment.

Investing in communities

NTI embraces a dual strategy of facilitating new development while investing in existing housing stock. This approach enhances neighborhoods for the benefit of all residents, whether they have lived here for generations or just moved to the City. Wherever you go in the city, you can see evidence of new construction, rehabilitation or demolition. These activities combined with a more lively real estate market have led to a dramatic increase in citywide property values since 2000.

Transforming the business of government

Changing the way government does business ensures that changes made under NTI will be sustained for the long term. By fostering interagency cooperation, improving technology and streamlining processes and systems, NTI has allowed City government to cut through the miles of red tape that slowed progress in the past. Governmental agencies have also begun reforming internal rules and procedures and reorganizing to make their departments smarter, more efficient and productive.

Under NTI, City agencies working together—many for the first time—have achieved impressive results.

Celebrating significant progress

Operation Safe Streets:

Neighborhood Transformation Initiative: Summary of Achievements

Goals and Progress January 2000-June 2003

Activity	5 Year Goal	Progress
Vacant Lot Cleaning	Clean all 31,000 vacant lots.	Cleaned all lots in first year. Maintained 12,186 lots in FY03. Removed 33,950 tons of debris.
Demolition	8,000-10,000 demolitions.	4,106 total demolitions of dangerous properties. Improved demolition methodology.
Abandoned Car Removal	33,000 cars in 40 days.	Removed 185,000 cars. Backlog erased. Process in place for ongoing removal.
Tree Removal	Remove 4,100 trees in FY03 and FY04.	Removed 15,081 trees.
Tree Pruning	Prune 14,000 trees in FY03 and FY04.	Pruned 41,281 trees.
Market Rate Housing Development	Create 6,000 new units.	5,000 new market-rate units have come on line through the conversion and renovation of 51 buildings.
Affordable Housing Development	Build and/or renovate 3,500 new affordable units.	5,128 units completed and 3,698 planned or underway.
Housing Preservation Investments	4,500 preservation investments.	11,673 homes preserved through rehabilitation or settlement assistance.
Housing Units in Large-scale Developments (50+ homes)	Build 2,000 new units in new communities.	2,100 units underway.

Source: City of Philadelphia (as of June 30, 2003)

Taking Back the Streets

Reducing crime is a fundamental component of neighborhood transformation. In 2002, Mayor Street launched Operation Safe Streets. Through an active partnership among the police, communities, faith-based organizations and the City social services agencies, community engagement, the City is working to eliminate the violence and tragedies associated with drugs.

Since Operation Safe Streets began, the Police Department has closed down more than 300 open-air drug markets and reopened streets and sidewalks to law-abiding neighborhood residents. In one year, from 2002-03, an increased police presence contributed to an 18% drop in the number of incidents of major crimes, and seizures of narcotics soared from \$14 to \$65 million.

A welcome relief

“My children can go out and play in the yard now,” she said.

“The police have to keep this up.”

Peaches Ramos

Last August, when Safe Streets was still new, Peaches Ramos marveled at the change in her Fairhill neighborhood, long one of the city’s most notorious narcotics hot spots. Gunfire was such a regular occurrence outside her home that her children had learned to duck beneath the windows at the first explosive sound. But in the two months following the launch of Safe Streets, she heard the telltale pop-pop of gunshots only once.

From the *Philadelphia Weekly*, April 4, 2003

Transforming our streets and surroundings

The City has towed away 185,000 abandoned cars

A full year before the strategic plan for neighborhood transformation was unveiled, the City launched its first attack on blight by removing 33,000 abandoned cars in 40 days!

Junk cars depress a neighborhood both in spirit and safety. They diminish a neighborhood's appearance, pose safety hazards for children and become havens for illegal drugs and weapons.

Since January 2000, the City has towed away abandoned cars at record rates—more than doubling the number of cars taken off the streets during just the first year. The City has since accelerated its pace, removing vehicles that had been around far too long. With the backlog now out of the way, the City is focusing its attention on removing abandoned cars whenever they are reported.

The bottom line

In the past four years, the City removed 185,000 abandoned cars from Philadelphia streets. Parked end to end, they would stretch all the way from Philadelphia to Toledo, Ohio—or fill a parking lot the size of the state of Delaware!

Graffiti has been blasted off of 189,394 buildings

Graffiti is vandalism. It defaces neighborhoods, diminishes property values, attracts more criminal activity and creates a sense of hopelessness within the community.

Removing graffiti is hard work. Graffiti Abatement Teams from the City's Anti-Graffiti Network use mobile high-pressure power washers to "blast" graffiti from building surfaces. Team members also provide community organizations, businesses, vacant lot owners and homeowners with free power-washing services to combat graffiti vandalism. In addition, team members follow clean-up crews into vacant parcels to remove graffiti that might have been obscured by debris and weeds.

The City's purchase of new power-washers and hiring of additional workers has significantly sped up graffiti removal. Working with the Anti-Graffiti Network, graffiti has been removed from every business, billboard, terminal and other structure visible from the Market-Frankford Elevated Line—and the Mural Arts has Program put up three new murals along the train line.

The bottom line

Since January 2000, the City has cleaned graffiti from 189,394 properties—almost double the number cleaned during the previous six years combined.

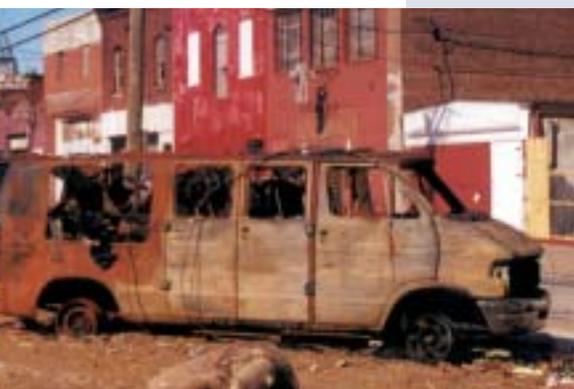
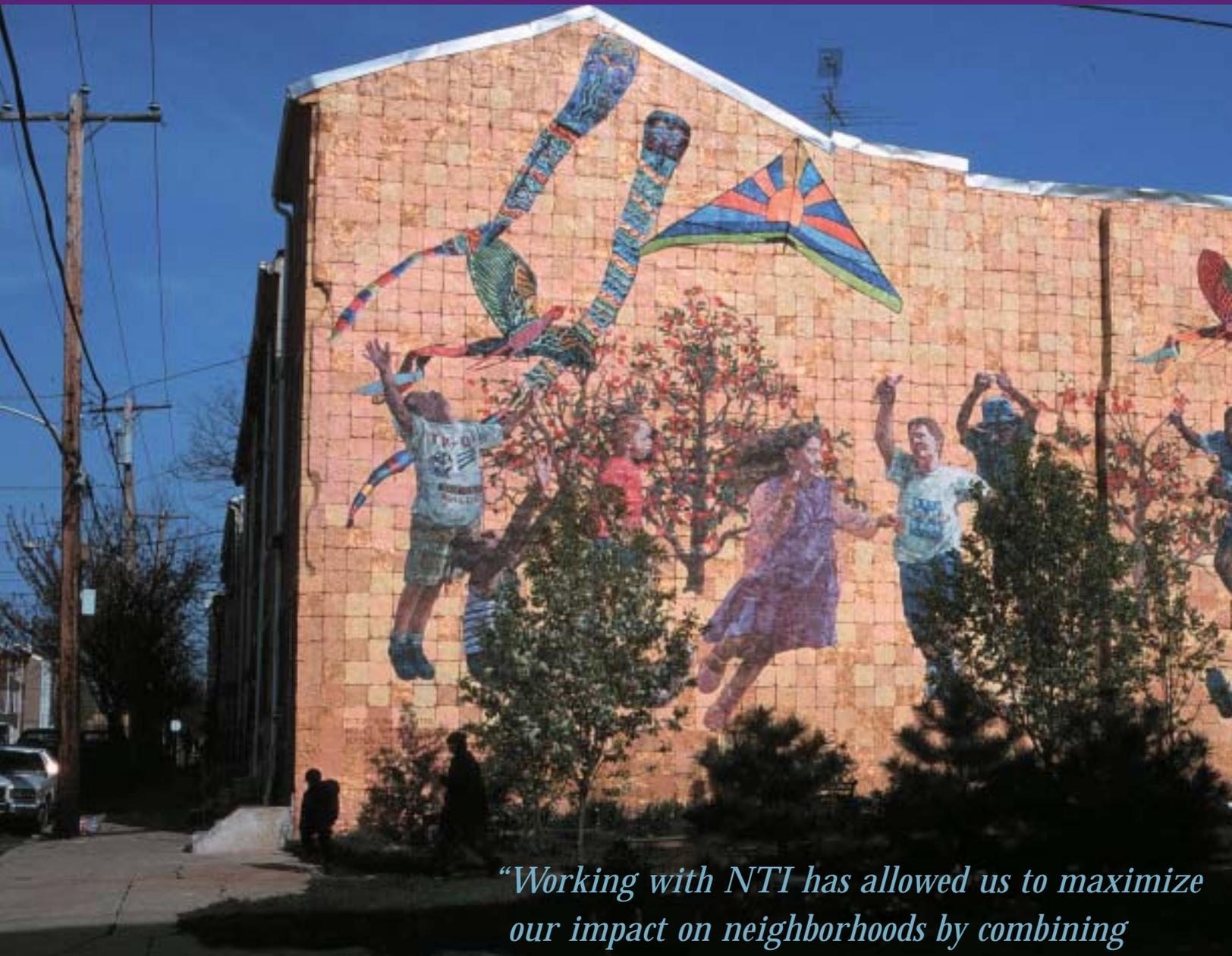


Photo: Jane Whitehouse



Photo: David E. Scrippok



Since its inception in 1984, the Mural Arts Program has completed more murals than any other public art program in the nation—more than 2,300 indoor and outdoor murals throughout Philadelphia.

This effort has brought art to the cityscape, transforming graffiti-scarred walls into scenic views, portraits of community heroes, and abstract creations

“Working with NTI has allowed us to maximize our impact on neighborhoods by combining inspiring public art with a wide variety of city services. This is truly a model of innovative city government!”

Jane Golden
Program Director
Mural Arts Program
City of Philadelphia
Department of Recreation

Keeping vacant lots clean

33,950 tons of debris cleared from vacant lots

Strewn with debris, the City's vacant lots had become dumping sites for mountains of construction waste, old appliances, tires and loose trash. These lots, if kept clean, represent the potential for future development, gardens or community space.

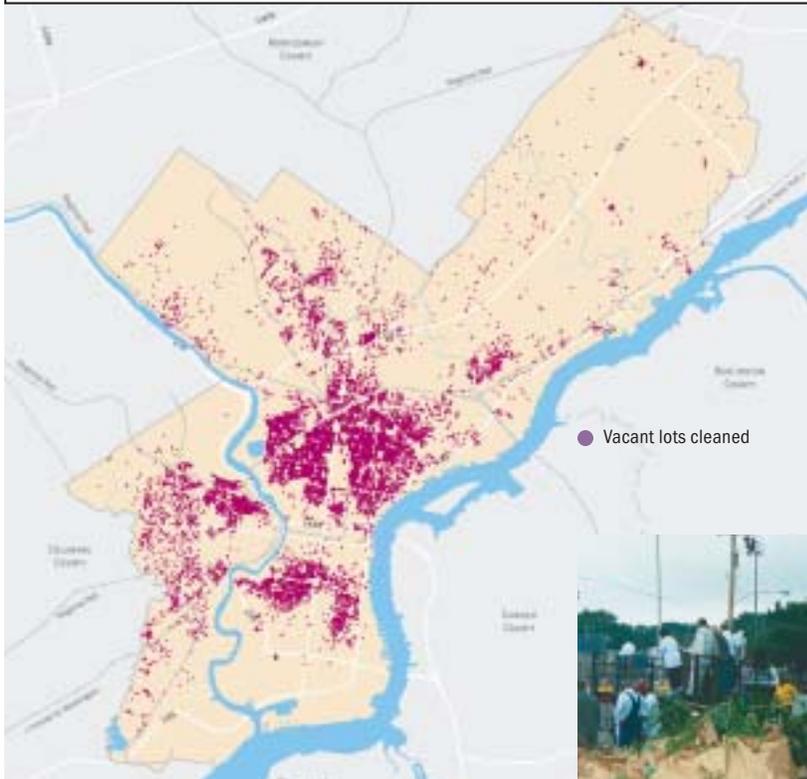
In June 2001, the Street Administration launched an unprecedented campaign to clean—and keep clean—the City's more than 31,000 vacant lots. The City mobilized 19 crews of at least three people, eight front-end loaders and seven dump trucks to clean and maintain vacant lots. Once the City did the heavy lifting, community groups and volunteers frequently agreed to

maintain the cleared lots. Forging a partnership between the City and the community around lot maintenance is the best way to keep things clean.

Although the goal for the Vacant Lot Clean-Up Program was to clean up every lot within a five-year period, the program cleared through the entire backlog in one year—even returning to do some lots more than once.

The Street Administration also changed the way the City maintains cleaned vacant lots—so the blight is gone for good. Working with block captains and contracting with community groups the City has been able to maintain lots, while cracking down on illegal dumping.

More than 31,000 vacant lots cleaned across the City



Source: The City of Philadelphia
Map created by The Reinvestment Fund

The bottom line

Since July 2002, the Street Administration cleared every one of the City's more than 31,000 vacant lots at least once, and removed 33,950 tons of debris. In addition, police have cracked down on illegal dumpers, issuing 4,678 citations for sanitation violations and arresting more than 450 people for illegal dumping in the last two years.



Mountains of trash have been removed from 31,000 vacant lots.

Photo: Jane Whitehouse

... and green!

Beautifying and greening vacant lots

Clearing and greening vacant lots enhances the appearance and the “curb appeal” of a neighborhood for residents, business owners and homebuyers. Since the 1970s, the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (PHS) has brought its energy, experience and green thumb to help stabilize vacant land in Philadelphia neighborhoods through its “Philadelphia Green” program.

The Street Administration adopted PHS’s Green City Strategy as a critical component of NTI. The strategy calls for greening vacant lots to fight urban blight and bring much-needed, well-managed open space to City neighborhoods. PHS has embraced the opportunity to effect change on an unprecedented scale.

Working with the Mayor’s Office and key neighborhood stakeholders, PHS has begun to implement greening projects in target areas of vacant land. The work includes clearing land of debris, replacing topsoil, planting grass seed and trees and erecting post and rail fencing. This new partnership also expands collaboration with community groups, and includes workshops, events, training sessions, programs to enhance the actions and quality of the NTI’s efforts.

Enjoying a whole new view

Millie Peña-Figueroa is a long-time resident of North Philadelphia and founder of Caribe Social Services. When Millie began Caribe seven years ago, her neighborhood was at its worst. The vacant lots, which plagued the streets, had become a central location for dumping. Trash in some of the lots, Millie recalls, was piled higher than her head. The situation deteriorated when drug dealers began to use the debris as a hiding place

for their drugs. Much has changed in the last few years. Countless lots, previously used for drugs, have been cleared and Millie’s neighbors, who used to leave their homes infrequently, are now taking a more active role in clean-up efforts. Though more change is needed, Millie applauds the improvements NTI has made in her neighborhood.



Photo courtesy of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society

The bottom line

The City has “greened” more than 13 acres on 471 parcels of land in the last three years. The City, PHS and the Empowerment Zone will green 1,000 lots in FY 2004. Of these, 584 lots will be completed during Fall 2003.

“Green spaces are an asset to housing values and to how people feel. They let people get involved in something small and then move in different directions. We’re not just growing plants. We’re growing leaders.”

Jane Pepper
President
Pennsylvania Historical Society

Maintaining and planting street trees

The City pruned 41,281 tree limbs and cut down 15,081 hazardous trees

Pruning trees enhances their health and longevity and reduces the potential for costly and dangerous safety hazards, particularly during ice and wind storms. To maintain more healthy street trees and reduce the number needing removal in the future, the Park Commission phased in a more frequent pruning cycle, pruning 17,044 trees last year alone—significantly more than any year in the past.

There are more than 250,000 trees along our streets and another 2 million in our parks. Many are in danger of collapse and need to be removed. As part of NTI, the City stepped up efforts to get rid of the dangerous ones while caring for the rest. In FY 2003 alone, twice as

many dead and sick trees were removed from our streets as in the year before and in the last four years, a total of 15,081 dangerous trees were taken down.

The bottom line

The City pruned more than 41,281 healthy trees and removed 15,081 dangerous trees between 2000-03. These preventive measures have helped drive down the frequency and impact of power outages during severe storms and significantly enhanced public safety.

Greening our streets, thousands of trees and shrubs at a time

Trees provide our homes with shade, filter pollutants from the air and enhance the beauty and property value of our neighborhoods. In spring 2003, the City launched an unprecedented, multi-departmental effort to plant new trees along city streets, at recreation centers, in new housing developments, in formerly vacant lots and in parks.

The bottom line

In Spring 2003, Mayor Street set a goal of 4,000 new trees to be planted on streets, vacant lots and in neighborhood parks. By September 2003, more than 7,000 were planted.

Pruning and removing hazardous street trees throughout the City



Source: The City of Philadelphia
Map created by The Reinvestment Fund



Strengthening code enforcement

The City cracked down on more than 13,000 code violators

Under NTI, the City has piloted a dramatic new system for addressing quality-of-life issues through comprehensive enforcement of health and safety codes. Under the Community Life Improvement Program (CLIP), City agencies that historically did not collaborate now work collectively to increase compliance with health and safety ordinances by abating the problem and ordering liens to recoup costs from property owners.

In Northeast Philadelphia, CLIP results have been remarkable. In fact, the percentage of owners responding to citations within a 10-day time period has almost doubled since the CLIP program began.

In West Philadelphia, the City is working with residents to create safe and clean communities by establishing the West Philadelphia Improvement Program (WPIP). Citizens in the WPIP area actively engage City services by informing a special unit in the Managing Director's Office of quality-of-life concerns. The special unit then has 72 hours within which to issue the necessary response.

In the American Street Empowerment Zone, the City is tracking neighborhood and business complaints, promoting aggressive enforcement against nuisance businesses, coordinating efforts with state and federal enforcement agencies and assessing gaps in local codes.

During 2004, the City will work with Council members to design comprehensive NTI code enforcement programs in each area of the City.

The bottom line

CLIP officers reported 3,617 sanitation violations and 10,349 code violations, citing high weeds, unsafe buildings, animal feces and rodent or insect infestations. Since January 2003, WPIP has cleaned 492 vacant lots, removed graffiti from 4,105 properties and towed 2,802 abandoned vehicles.



Photos: Jane Whitehouse



Mayor Street joins young helpers to kick off the City's major tree-planting effort.

“CLIP has been a tremendous success in the Northeast in addressing quality of life issues affecting our neighborhood.”

Joan Krajewski
Councilwoman
City of Philadelphia

Demolishing dangerous vacant buildings

The City demolished 4,106 vacant properties

With nearly 26,000 vacant buildings, the City of Philadelphia has the highest per capita vacancy rate in the country. Abandoned for decades, more than 7,000 buildings present a serious threat to the public's health and safety.

Consequently, the routine demolition of vacant buildings has become an unfortunate, but necessary, evil for many Philadelphia neighborhoods.

In the past, the City cleaned, sealed, and demolished buildings on a complaint-driven, emergency basis. Under NTI, the City demolishes dangerous buildings in a targeted, data-driven way, aimed at maximizing economies of scale and opportunities for future development of vacant land.



Photo: Jane Whitehouse

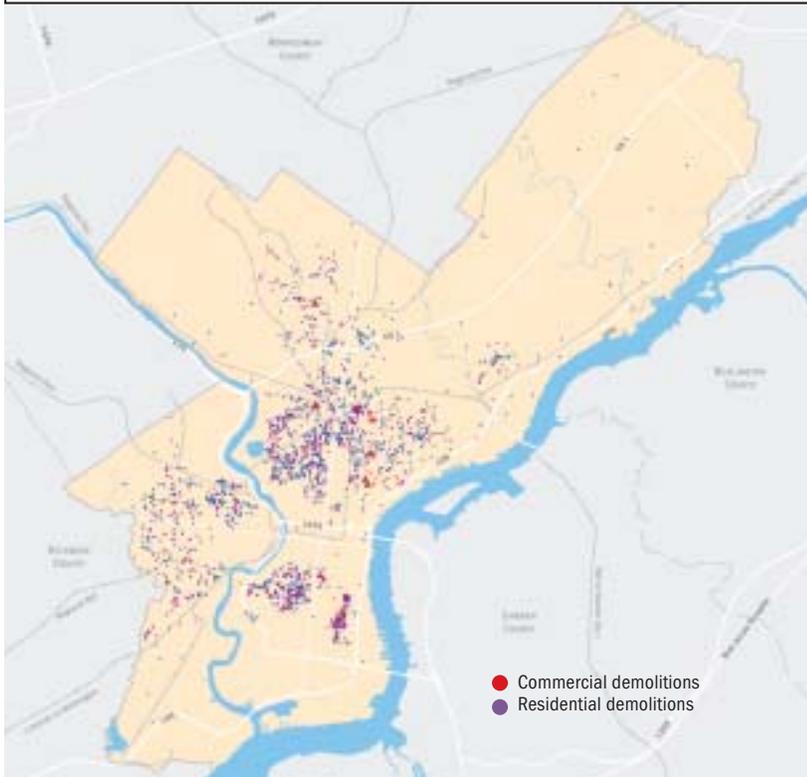
Contractors now bid on the entire demolition procedure, including removing asbestos, repairing party walls and hauling away debris. In addition, NTI specifications now require contractors to grade the site, cover it with six inches of topsoil, plant grass seed to slow the growth of weeds and, when appropriate, install post and rail wood fencing.

Taking the time for community input

Initially, the NTI plan called for a large-scale and targeted demolition of 14,000 dangerous houses, at an average rate of 2,800 per year, over a five-year period. While the work itself could have been completed at this ambitious rate, a slower pace is necessary to allow community residents more time to better understand the many factors that go into deciding when to tear down a building. Residents are often unfamiliar with the signs and symptoms of structural defects, or are unable to see them from the ground.

The City does not intend to bulldoze its way through neighborhoods. Good communication takes time. Although this has meant revising our initial goals, the Street Administration is committed to having a substantive, cooperative dialogue with neighborhood residents, community leaders and Council members.

Demolishing more than 4,100 vacant, hazardous buildings (2002-03)



Source: The City of Philadelphia
Map created by The Reinvestment Fund

The bottom line

Since January 2000, 4,106 dangerous vacant buildings have been demolished. Under NTI, the quality of the City's demolition work has improved dramatically and reduced complaints. Changes to the bidding process have resulted in greater accountability.

Building opportunities for disadvantaged firms

While the primary objective of the NTI demolition program is to eliminate dangerous buildings from Philadelphia neighborhoods, the Street Administration understands that NTI can be a tool to create business and employment opportunities, particularly for minority businesses and City residents.

The NTI Economic Opportunity Plan established the following goals for participation of Minority, Women and Disabled-owned businesses:

- 35% minority-owned firms
- 12% of women-owned businesses
- 2% disabled-owned businesses.

In addition, the plan calls for a good faith effort on the part of contractors to employ a workforce that meets the goal that the total work hours for each trade be performed by at least 75% minority and 10% female employees. Further, the plan calls for 80% participation of Philadelphia residents for the entire workforce.

The bottom line

More than \$10.8 million in demolition contracts have been awarded since January 1, 2003, and NTI exceeded its goals for diverse participation. Firms owned by minorities and women have performed 47% and 26% of the work respectively. Minorities have averaged 78% and women have averaged 3% of the total hours worked on all NTI demolition sites. Philadelphia residents have performed 83% of the total hours worked.

Emerging Contractors Program

Building 21st Century communities throughout Philadelphia, means doing more than simply removing and demolishing. Addressing blight can be an engine of economic development that strengthens the ability of a community to sustain its own long-term recovery. The Emerging Contractors Program was created to help disadvantaged businesses access opportunities under NTI.

Conceived by the Contractors Roundtable of the African-American Chamber of Commerce, the program provides intense, hands-on training for city-based contractors whose businesses have annual revenues of less than \$500,000.

The program introduces participants to financing and bond assistance programs. Based on their level of skill and experience, they receive technical and management assistance to help them grow their businesses. Instructors include staff from Temple University's Small Business Development Center. Upon completion of the program, the contractors are ready to compete for NTI demolition work.



Photo: Jane Century

“When they passed out these applications, I said, ‘I don’t want to work for somebody else for the rest of my life. It’ll be excellent for me, because I was raised up in the same neighborhood and I know everybody out there’.”

Sam Jackson

Contractor, discussing the Emerging Contractors Program
From the Philadelphia *Tribune*, September 5, 2003

Fueling rebounding housing market

Growth in housing value in neighborhoods across the City

Philadelphia's housing market has remained relatively affordable over the past 30 years, compared with other major U.S. cities. But the reason, many experts found, was too little demand. As a result, housing values in Philadelphia did not appreciate nearly as quickly as in the region as a whole.

Happily, things have started to change. In the past three years, Philadelphia's residential property market has grown at a rate that is nothing short of spectacular, creating greater wealth, even for those with modest incomes. Since 2000 alone, the average home in Philadelphia has appreciated by a whopping 30%—adjusted for inflation.

In that same period, the City's housing appreciated in value at a rate nearly double that of the

surrounding region. The population of Center City, skyrocketed by 14% from 1990 to 2000, fueling a boom in the housing market. Developers have created apartments and condominiums from former downtown warehouses, schools, office and industrial buildings, creating more than 4,880 new market-rate units that are being snapped up as quickly as they can be built.

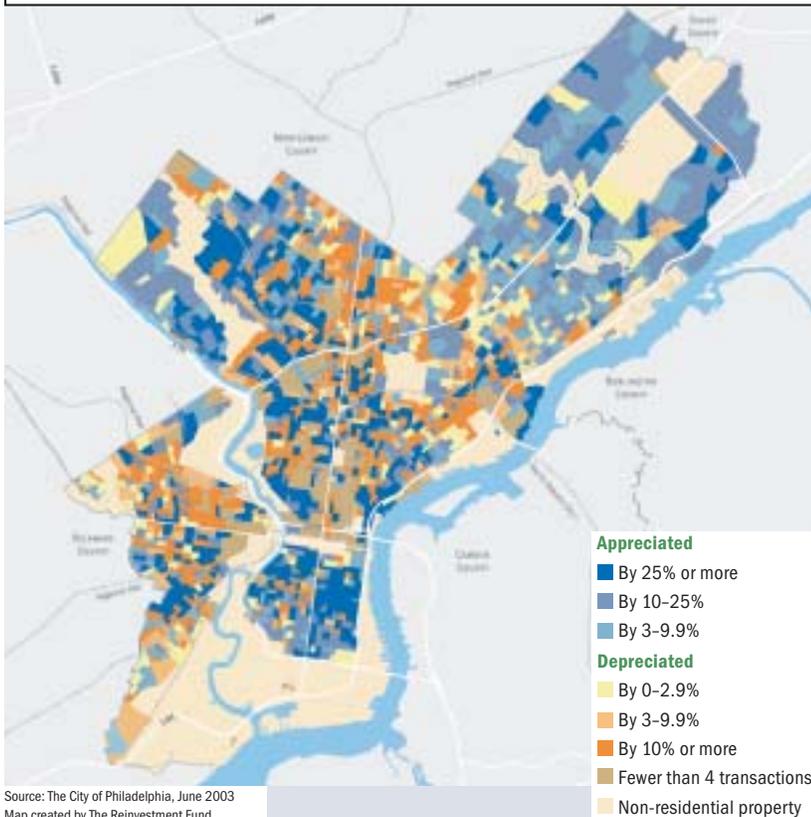
And home price appreciation in Philadelphia is not just limited to Center City. Areas such as Fox Chase, Rhawnhurst, Port Richmond, Fishtown, Grays Ferry, Point Breeze, University City, Roxborough, Manayunk, Overbrook Farms, East Mt. Airy and East Oak Lane—to name a few—have all seen robust real price appreciation. These areas offer very different housing stock, amenities and demographics from each other, yet they have benefited from the stronger housing market.

Growth in choices of new housing

Under NTI, the Street Administration has encouraged increased development of a range of housing choices—market rate, affordable and low-income housing, as well as commercial development, and supported the strengthening of the City's neighborhoods by:

- Promoting large-scale development (50 units or more) to reverse blight and restore neighborhood vitality
- Marketing stable, existing neighborhoods to build wealth
- Aggressively acquiring and packaging land in strategic locations for reuse and redevelopment
- Helping more individuals and families to maintain and renovate the homes they own, or become first-time homeowners.

Home values are appreciating throughout Philadelphia



Source: The City of Philadelphia, June 2003
Map created by The Reinvestment Fund



Large-scale new communities, such as this one on the former site of the Tasker Homes public housing, will provide many choices of housing types with many other amenities.

Remember the old neighborhood? You just might not recognize it.

If you haven't driven through North, South, Central or West Philadelphia lately, you're in for quite a surprise. Many extraordinary changes are taking place. Neighborhoods that were nothing more than barren stretches of despair and desolation are now streets lined with beautiful homes and manicured lawns, alive with the sounds of family life.

The new urban communities springing up in Philadelphia have been conceived at a scale large enough to have an economic and social impact far beyond that of a single new home or apartment complex. These developments can

New large-scale community developments



help jump-start neighborhood revitalization or eliminate a pocket of blight in an otherwise stable neighborhood.

Large-scale developments present an opportunity for us to create entirely new neighborhoods—complete with new homes, condominiums, apartments, parks and retail space. Their large size also helps entice regional and

national developers, who need to achieve economies of scale when building homes.

Since NTI's inception, the City has begun working toward creation of 2,100 new homes—in six neighborhoods in Philadelphia. These large-scale developments represent a combination of market-rate, affordable and public housing, as well as commercial development, and provide options for families with a wide range of incomes.

Minimizing relocations

Some residents are understandably concerned about the possible need to relocate during the process of demolition and construction. The City is sensitive to those concerns and has worked to minimize the number of residents who are disrupted by relocation as a result of NTI. Only those located in an active development area will be affected.

All residents who are relocated will be eligible for full benefits under the Federal Uniform Relocation Act, and will be assigned a City staff member to help guide them through the process. The City will make every effort to help residents find alternate housing in the same neighborhood, whenever possible, and ensure they will be first in line to qualify for purchase or rental of any new housing units created in their neighborhoods.



Photo: James B. Abbott

Realizing new possibilities

Brewerytown



Prior to the Civil War, housing in the Fairmount Park section of Brewerytown rose faster than the head on a glass of lager.

Once home to more than a dozen beer distilleries, the area was hit hard by Prohibition, and began a downward slide that bottomed out in the 1970s.

Westrum Development Company recognized the potential of Brewerytown's formerly industrial assets, its spacious views of the City skyline and its convenience to Fairmount Park and the Philadelphia Museum of Art. The developer is transforming 12 acres of vacant land and abandoned industrial buildings in Brewerytown. Construction will begin in the coming months on more than 400 new affordable and market-rate townhomes, condominiums and loft apartments.

Capehart: The Reserve at Packer Park



The Capehart neighborhood, located in South Philadelphia, once housed officers serving at the Philadelphia Naval Station.

This 24-acre site, closed and gated off since 1991, will soon become a community of 230 new market-rate townhomes with new landscaping, tot lots, pocket parks and modernized infrastructure. Capehart, another project of Westrum Development, is ideally located next to FDR Park, major sports stadiums, extensive shopping facilities and public transportation.



Construction under way at Capehart site.



Aerial view of Brewerytown shows vacant land and warehouse structures that will be transformed to new mixed-income housing.

Photos: Jane Whitehouse

Rediscovering city neighborhoods

New homes and schools near the Avenue of the Arts



Universal Companies, a CDC founded by Kenny Gamble, is in the process of building 400 homes in South Central Philadelphia over the next four years. The development is strategically located near Broad Street, the Avenue of the Arts and all of the amenities of Center City. The new homes will offer a mixture of rental, affordable and market-rate units. As part of the project, Universal plans to also build a new Audenried High School.

A meadow grows in North Philadelphia



Last spring, in the heart of Philadelphia's Latino community in North Philadelphia, construction workers put the finishing touches on 50 new single family homes in a development called the "Pradera", Spanish for "the Meadow". This project is the most recent phase of the Asociación de Puertorriqueños en Marcha's (APM) ambitious revitalization plan for this area.

Located adjacent to Temple University, and a ten-minute ride from Center City, Pradera homes represent a major success story for a community in which as much as 70% of the property on some blocks was abandoned and deteriorated. Thanks to new Pennsylvania Homeownership Choice funding, designed to revitalize blighted urban areas, and help from NTI and private foundations, APM was able to move ahead. A second development that targets middle-income homeowners is in the planning stages, as is a rental development.



Young singles are discovering the joys of homeownership in new townhomes south of Center City and in the heart of the City's Latino community.



All photos this page: James B. Abbott



Re-envisioning public housing

Tasker Homes



Like so many public housing projects, Tasker Homes in the Grays Ferry section of South Philadelphia, isolated residents

from the surrounding neighborhood, and became a haven for violence, drugs and crime. Built in 1940 alongside the Schuylkill Expressway, it was the oldest such project in the City.

The Philadelphia Housing Authority (PHA) is overseeing a dramatic change. They are demolishing 1,100 units of blighted public housing and transforming the area into a community of 550 new homes, apartments and senior living for individuals and families of varying income levels. A better street design reintegrates the new 40-acre development with the surrounding community, and calls for rebuilding nearby

Lanier Park with a new community center, recreational area, senior center, new retail space and a workforce-training center.

Photo: Jane F. Century



Large townhomes going up at the site of formerly blighted and isolated public housing in South Philadelphia are part of a range of housing choices for a thriving new community.



Mill Creek



When PHA demolished three high-rise apartment buildings that loomed over the Mill Creek neighborhood of West Philadelphia, many former residents breathed a sigh of relief. The structures, built in the 1950's to provide public housing, had become crime-infested and structurally unsafe.

In August 2003, PHA broke ground on 38-acre site that will combine 627 new affordable units with sale prices starting at \$65,000, including 200 apartments, 341 senior housing units and a new 2.5 acre landscaped park. The development will be called the Lucien E. Blackwell Homes, in honor of the late West Philadelphia City Council member and Congressman.



Photos: Jane Whitehouse

“At Mill Creek and Tasker, PHA is building much more than developments; we're rebuilding neighborhoods and changing the face of Grays Ferry and West Philadelphia.”

Carl Greene
President
Pennsylvania Historical Society

Returning a barren landscape to a thriving mixed-income community

Cecil B. Moore Homeownership Zone

The Cecil B. Moore Homeownership Zone is an area within North Central Philadelphia, located near Temple University and Broad Street. Between 1960 and 1990, the area's population plummeted by almost 72%, turning a once lively community into a bleak, abandoned landscape.

Plans called for commercial revitalization and construction of mixed-income housing in pockets of vacant land, so-called "infill" housing designed to be in harmony with Philadelphia's tradition of row houses and restoration of the area's most historically significant structures. Now in its third and final phase of development this joint venture between Orleans Homebuilders and Michaels Development Company will turn 43 acres of mostly vacant land into 151 new homes, with retail, educational and commercial opportunities. A new park and open space will also be created in the neighborhood. These new homes will complement the more than 145 new and rehabilitated townhomes that have already been built or are under construction in the Zone.



Photo: David E. Schpok



Photo: James B. Abbott

Blocks and blocks of vacant land near the Temple University campus are being transformed into vibrant neighborhoods with lots of curb appeal.



Creating housing opportunities for all

Assuring a balance of affordable and market-rate housing

Rising real estate prices allow homeowners and neighborhoods to create wealth. But they can also make some communities expensive and unaffordable for low- or moderate-income families. As Philadelphia neighborhoods continue to appreciate, NTI has focused on achieving a balance between promoting a strong housing market and increasing the production of affordable housing.

Research indicates that communities made up of residents at a range of income levels offer greater stability. A goal of NTI is to attract new residents to the City, but not in ways that displace long-term residents or make neighborhoods unattainable to all but the privileged few. With a combination of affordable housing and housing preservation programs, NTI is working to create a host of appealing options that will make all residents feel they live in a “great neighborhood.”

The bottom line

The Street Administration is committed to ensuring quality affordable housing opportunities throughout the City and has created 5,128 new affordable units since January 2000. Another 3,698 are planned or underway to ensure that affordable production keeps pace with market rate development. The following table shows how many have been built to date.

Helping low-income homebuyers cover settlement costs

The City helps low- and moderate-income families buy their first home by providing them with grants of up to \$800 to cover settlement costs for the purchase of a home in Philadelphia—provided they attend homeownership counseling. This program is being funded with \$550,000 in NTI funds. In FY 2003, as many as 600 new buyers will receive assistance.



Photo: James B. Abbott

Number of completed low- and moderate-income housing units

2000-2003

Fiscal year	January- June 2000	2001	2002	2003	Total
Homeownership Units	65	192	165	155	577
Rental Units	68	781	324	143	1,316
Special Needs Units	36	71	122	136	365
Public Housing Units					2,870
Total Production					5,128

Source: City of Philadelphia, Philadelphia Housing Authority

Preserving neighborhoods

A key strategy for keeping blight from spreading and preserving stable neighborhoods involves helping homeowners make repairs to their homes and rehabilitating vacant properties that stand on otherwise good, solid blocks. While historically, middle-income and working-class homeowners living in these neighborhoods were not seen as a part of the City's housing and community development programs, under the Street Administration and NTI, that has changed.

Stabilizing and rehabilitating saleable vacant properties

The Street Administration created the Vacant Property Stabilization Program to protect vacant buildings on stable blocks from deteriorating to the point where they must be torn down. Through this program, the City will stabilize between 1,000 and 2,500 buildings; these structures will be rehabilitated and sold to new owners.

Without additional action, however, stabilized properties will be vulnerable to vandalism, fire damage and further deterioration. The Homeownership Rehabilitation Program (HRP) provides incentives to developers to rehabilitate vacant properties in order to market them to new buyers. Through the use of NTI dollars, the City provides an average subsidy of \$35,000 for the rehabilitation of vacant houses on stable blocks, opening the program to for-profit as well as non-profit developers, and expanding the market to include higher income buyers.

Helping homeowners keep up with costly home repairs

Many Philadelphians lack the funds to pay for needed home repairs. Left unattended, a broken heater, leaking roof, or sagging porch can turn a once attractive, solid home into a blighted and hazardous eyesore.

Helping residents help themselves has been a major tenet of NTI. The Street Administration has made home repair loan programs more accessible to Philadelphia homeowners and is partnering with private institutions to increase the number of homeowners served.

Two examples of this include:

- Philadelphia Home Improvement Loan (PHIL)** The City and its partners, Citizens Bank, First Union, Fleet and PNC Banks offer low-interest loans of up to \$25,000 for home improvement projects.
- Targeted Basic Systems Repair Program (TBSRP)** The Targeted Basic Systems Repair Program provides a match of an affordable loan with an NTI grant to homeowners whose income levels are too high to qualify for outright grants for systems repairs.

TBSRP is administered by 10 community development corporations in their respective neighborhoods: Asociación de Puertorriqueños en Marcha (APM), Frankford CDC, New Kensington CDC, Peoples Emergency Center, West Philadelphia Partnership, Korean CDC, Yorktown CDC, Mt. Airy CDC, South of South Street Neighborhood Association (SOSNA), and Project HOME.

**GREAT CITY
GREAT RATE** 3%

Home Improvement Loans
For Philadelphia Homeowners
877-4-U-PHILA
www.PhilaLoan.com

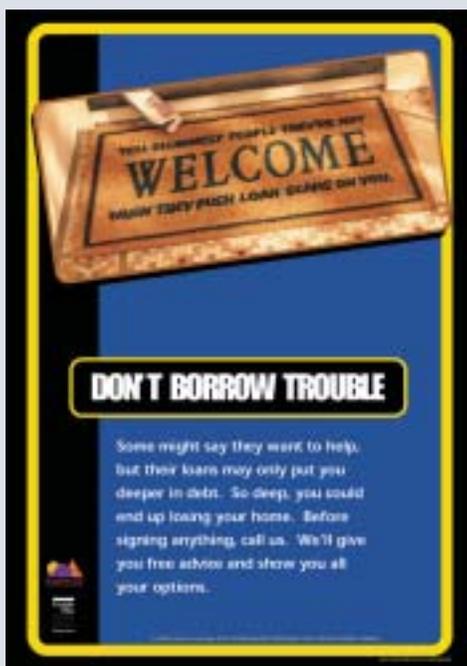
**Cash advance requirements apply. Offer may be discontinued at any time.

NTI Fleet Bank Citizens Bank Wachovia Mortgage PNC Bank

Attacking predatory lending in our most vulnerable neighborhoods

Too many Philadelphia homeowners fall victim to the tactics of predatory lenders. Targeting vulnerable, financially unsophisticated homeowners, predatory lenders drain equity from communities by charging excessive interest rates, or up-front fees, using deceitful business practices and falsifying financial information. Predatory lending can force homeowners into foreclosure and increase vacancy rates throughout the City. The Street Administration and NTI recognize the need to attack predatory lending tactics and are doing so on a number of fronts.

To educate the public about the threat of predatory lenders, the Street Administration partnered with Freddie Mac to create **Don't Borrow Trouble**, an advertising and consumer education campaign to alert families to predatory lending practices. The City invested more than \$500,000 to train housing counselors on this issue and finance legal support at Community Legal Services to fight the problem. Homeowners who believe they have been the victims of these practices should call the Hotline at 215.523.9520 for assistance.



Providing alternative loan products

To provide homeowners with a safe loan alternative, the Street Administration pioneered two new products: PHIL-Plus and Mini-PHIL. These programs will allow homeowners with credit problems or those who do not meet the requirements for the Philadelphia Home Improvement Loan (PHIL) program to avoid predatory lending products. The following banks are participating:

- Beneficial Savings Bank
- Citizens Bank
- Commerce Bank
- Fleet Bank
- PNC Bank
- National Penn Bank
- Sovereign Bank
- United Bank of Philadelphia
- First Union/Wachovia.

To help victims of predatory lenders, the City created the **Home Equity Loan Preservation Program (HELPP)**. The program will help victims to refinance their home loans at a reasonable rate. HELPP will be administered by the Homeownership Counseling Association of Delaware Valley, the community group ACORN and The Reinvestment Fund (TRF).

The bottom line

Significant resources are being committed to rehabilitation activities and such programs are being opened up to more working-class families. Since 2000, the City either directly rehabilitated or helped homeowners make repairs to 11,673 properties.

Helping foster a strong housing market

Working to foster employer-assisted housing programs

Nationwide, employers are increasingly helping their employees buy or improve a home. Many, provide settlement assistance, housing counseling, lower mortgage interest rates, mortgage guarantees or home improvement loans. These programs are particularly helpful to lower-income employees who might not otherwise be able to purchase a home.

In Philadelphia, the University of Pennsylvania has led the way with a highly successful employee assistance program that has re-energized the local housing market and attracted first-class food, entertainment and retail outlets. NTI has worked to expand on the Penn model, through a collaboration with the Greater Philadel-

phia Urban Affairs Coalition (GPUAC), by encouraging Philadelphia employers to start employer-assisted housing programs.

Keeping college graduates, public school teachers in the City

To make the City a more attractive choice for recent college graduates and help the City recruit and retain public school teachers, NTI is working with local lenders to determine ways to offer incentives, such as below-market interest rates and assistance with closing costs.

A new ad campaign markets the City's neighborhoods

To bolster real estate markets in individual City neighborhoods, the Central Philadelphia Development Corporation (CPDC) worked with NTI market analysis and launched the Philadelphia Neighborhood Marketing Program.

The pilot program, funded by the William Penn Foundation, promotes urban living in six middle-income neighborhoods across Philadelphia that each offer distinct housing types appealing to different types of households. They include: Cedar Park, Fox Chase, Mt. Airy, Overbrook Farms, Roxborough and Southwest Center City. The marketing campaign targets homebuyers who are either moving here from outside the region or are current City residents, and who may be choosing between the City and suburbs.



Colorful brochures and real estate ads are helping highlight the unique advantages of urban living in six distinct city neighborhoods.

Transforming the business of government

Giving citizens a voice in neighborhood planning

Successful neighborhood development requires careful and extensive preparation, and the understanding, support and participation of community stakeholders. NTI is committed to a planning process that helps communities sort through and prioritize needs, and guide the City in allocating resources to meet those needs.

The Philadelphia City Planning Department (PCPC) began a comprehensive planning process in 31 neighborhoods and three corridors. These planning areas represent a diverse array of market types and community characteristics. Some neighborhoods have never engaged in planning, while others have extensive experience with the process.

Results of the planning process will help guide future investments, preservation strategies and priorities for acquisition and demolition. The process also gives the community a voice in the transformation process.

Neighborhood planning districts give stakeholders a voice



Reinventing the way government handles development and land purchases

Under NTI, the Street Administration has begun an effort to focus, reorganize and streamline the functions of housing and neighborhood development agencies to make operations more transparent and more user-friendly.

The first step was to appoint a Secretary of Housing and Neighborhood Preservation. Mayor Street charged the Secretary with the task of overseeing multiple agencies, creating a focus for market-rate development, and pursuing increased affordable housing and neighborhood preservation production.



The City Planning Commission has designated 31 neighborhoods and 3 corridors to involve civic neighborhood and business groups in the planning process.

Clearing the way for development

Building codes for the 21st Century

Many of the City's building codes and zoning laws have not been updated since the 1950s—an era in which few could envision converting industrial buildings to “internet hotels”, sleek condominiums or handicapped-accessible restaurants. Many of these codes and laws are no longer suitable for modern day needs. The City Planning Commission and the Legal Department are actively reviewing existing building codes to see how they can be better adapted to 21st Century urban life.

Land assembly and land banking

The ability to assemble land for reuse and redevelopment is critical to stabilize and rebuild our neighborhoods. The City's 31,000 newly cleared vacant lots offer valuable development potential—but many are not large enough to sustain significant commercial, industrial or residential investment.

In the past, the City assembled land for redevelopment in a reactive, developer-driven process marked by significant delays and resource constraints. Through NTI, the system is being overhauled. An interagency team has assembled to review and prioritize acquisition requests from community development corporations, private developers, non-profit organizations and private citizens.

By the end of June 2003, the Street Administration had obtained City Council authorization to acquire over 5,000 properties through urban renewal condemnation and another 260 properties through “Act 94”—or spot condemnation. This is ten times the number of properties we typically condemn in any year.

The Street Administration designated five acquisition zones based on an analysis of vacancy throughout the City. This will allow the City to bank land and package enough properties in strategic areas to create sound development parcels. Working with communities, the City will develop new visions for these parcels and market them for development.

Approved land acquisitions



Source: The City of Philadelphia, June 2003
Map created by The Reinvestment Fund

Acquiring groups of cleared, vacant land parcels in targeted areas makes them more attractive for development.



Photo courtesy of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society

Improving information technology to track land parcels and transactions

Not so long ago, City agencies were collecting and recording land information on three-by-five index cards. In a city with over 31,000 vacant lots and buildings this “system” was inaccurate at best.

Over time, agencies developed separate computer systems to track information, but these systems did not use a common address format and were unable to communicate. What was up to date in one database, may not have been entered in another. Under NTI, the City has undertaken a comprehensive effort to change all of this by developing state-of-the-art technology systems to effectively and strategically manage land in the City.

First, City agencies need to be able to share data about individual parcels of land in the City. To do this, the City is developing the **Unified Land Records System (ULRS)**. The ULRS will, for the first time, collect accurate and current land record data from the many independent city agency databases that contain property-specific information.

Second, improving the City’s acquisition and disposition systems requires an efficient electronic tracking system. Right now, the City cannot track individual parcels as they wind their way through

the multitude of City agencies. The Street administration is creating a **Vacant Property Management Information System (VPMIS)** to track the City’s land acquisition and disposition processes.

Using the technology of ULRS, property-specific data will be linked by one common address to an accurate, up-to-date parcel map. This means that any department wishing to access information linked to a specific property will be working from the same exact map of that property, block or neighborhood as all other departments.

Making the hiring of City construction workers more affordable

Many developers have shied away from City projects, not because they see no potential buyers, but because wage costs can often be far higher than in the suburbs. The Street Administration is committed to decreasing the cost of development in the City and just recently achieved a major milestone in this effort.

Under a new Redevelopment Authority (RDA) rule, developers who buy land at fair market value from the RDA will have the flexibility to negotiate wage rates on a project-by-project basis.

“The lack of [a prevailing wage] requirement gives both the developers and the trades the opportunity to build houses cost effectively. The developer and the unions are free to negotiate agreements which are mutually beneficial.”

Brett Altman

President, Allied Construction Services II
(a builder with operations in the City and suburbs.)

From the Philadelphia *Inquirer*, August 28, 2003

Before a building goes up, construction crews must spend long months digging down into the bedrock,

creating a solid underpinning for upward growth. Once the foundation is laid, growth can begin. Under the leadership of Mayor Street, the Neighborhood Transformation Initiative has established a strong foundation for growth. After decades of neglect, NTI is transforming Philadelphia's greatest challenge into its greatest opportunity.

In a short time, NTI has generated an upward spiral of investment and change on a scale that few dreamed possible. Some of NTI's successes have been marked by what's been taken away. The unprecedented removal of abandoned cars, graffiti, trash, dying trees, blighted structures and open-air drug dealing has managed to return the word "hope" to the vocabulary of residents across the city and region.

And many successes proudly stand in full view: the gleaming front porches and carefully tended yards of new homes on streets that have not heard the sound of children playing outdoors in years. Whole new communities are starting to take root—creating both stability and opportunity.

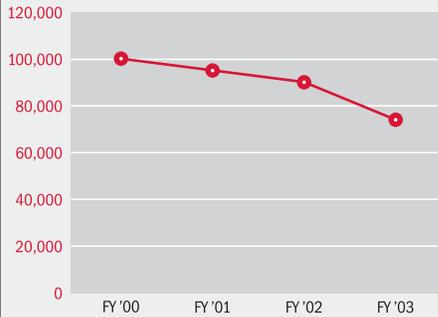
What has been accomplished is enormous by any measure. But there is much work to do. Continuing to improve public safety and address quality-of-life issues in neighborhoods is essential. These efforts must be complemented by strong public schools and more employment opportunities. Neighborhood transformation will be achieved when all Philadelphia neighborhoods are recognized as great places to live, work, shop, learn and play.



Appendix

Major crimes

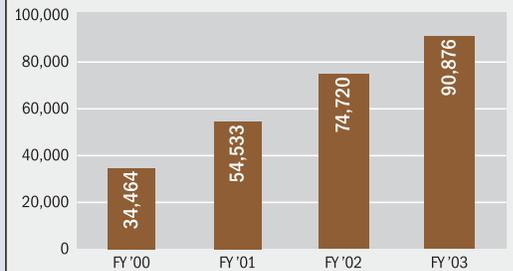
Safe Streets has reduced crime (pg. 11)



Source: FY00-FY02: Mayor's Report on City Services, July 2001 to June 2002
FY03: NTI Monthly Reports, Mayor's Office

Graffiti removed

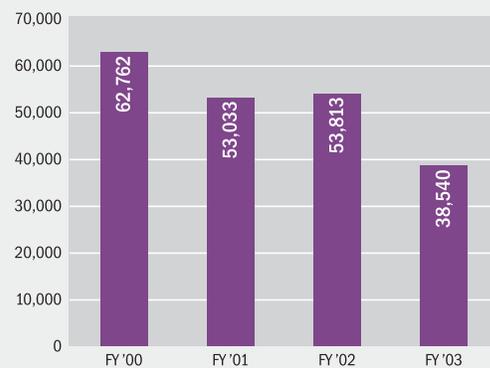
We cleaned 189,394 properties—almost double the number cleaned during the previous six years combined. (pg. 12)



Source: FY00-FY02: Mayor's Report on City Services, July 2001 to June 2002
FY03: NTI Monthly Reports, Mayor's Office

Abandoned vehicles removed

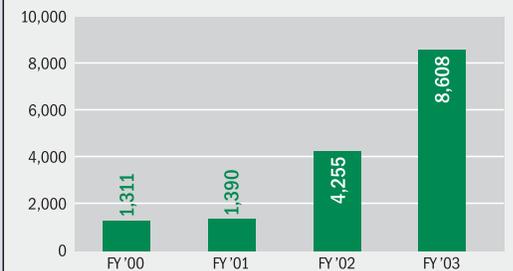
We have towed away 185,000 abandoned vehicles. (pg. 12)



Source: FY00-FY02: Mayor's Report on City Services, July 2001 to June 2002
FY03: NTI Monthly Reports, Mayor's Office

Dead trees removed

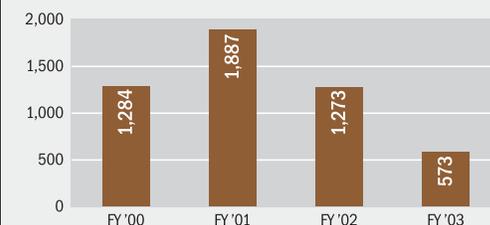
We have removed 15,081 dangerous trees. By pruning thousands of trees, we reduced the potential for costly and dangerous safety hazards. (pg. 16)



Source: FY00-FY02: Mayor's Report on City Services, July 2001 to June 2002
FY03: NTI Monthly Reports, Mayor's Office

All building demolished

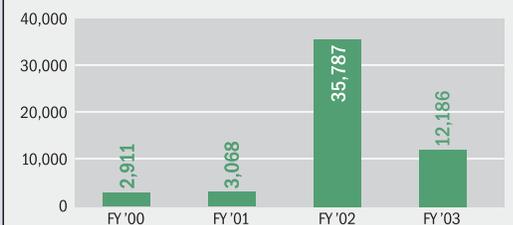
We're working with communities to tear down dangerous buildings. (pg. 18)



Source: FY00: Mayor's Report on City Services
FY01-02: Department of Licenses and Inspections
FY03: NTI Monthly Reports, Mayor's Office

Number of lots cleaned

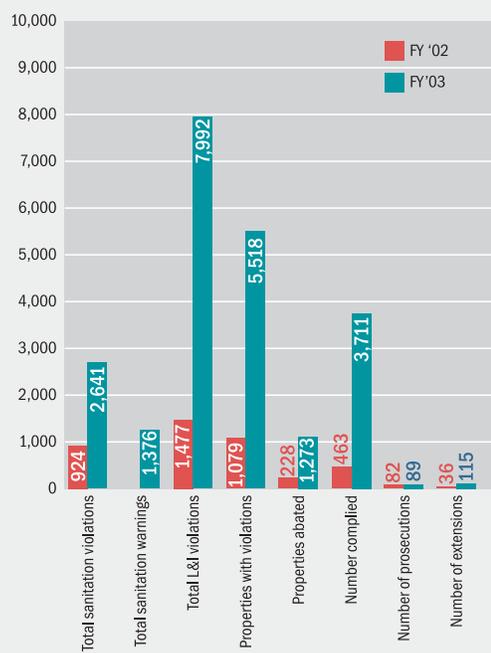
We cleaned up 35,787 lots in one year and are keeping them clean. (pg. 15)



Source: FY00-FY02: Mayor's Report on City Services, July 2001 to June 2002
FY03: NTI Monthly Reports, Mayor's Office

**CLIP activity 6th District:
progress in one year**

We got tough on violations of health and safety codes. (pg.17)



Source: FY02: Reflects data from April to June 2002
FY03: Community Life Improvement Program (CLIP) 6th District Report

Acknowledgements

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Jannie L. Blackwell, *Third District*

Michael A. Nutter, *Fourth District*

Darrell Clarke, *Fifth District*

Joan L. Krajewski, *Sixth District*

Richard T. Mariano, *Seventh District*

Donna Reed Miller, *Eighth District*

Marian B. Tasco, *Nine District*

Brian J. O'Neill, *Tenth District*

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Jane Whitehouse

“I believe we have a unique opportunity to rethink our neighborhoods and develop solutions that will make them vibrant, exciting and desirable communities in which to live well into the 21st century.”

John F. Street
Mayor
City of Philadelphia

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Transformation
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