Background and Summary

City government exists to improve the quality of life of Philadelphians. Safety and the sense of stability are core to a resident’s quality of life and their desire to live and work in the City. All of Philadelphia’s neighborhoods should be desirable and thriving places to live and work. The PhillyRising Collaborative helps neighborhoods achieve these goals by altering the way the City delivers services to its residents. Specifically, PhillyRising targets areas with chronic crime and disorder problems that require a coordinated multi-agency response.

The PhillyRising Frankford site is located in the core of the greater Frankford neighborhood. It also correlated to the highest concentrations of crime, drug activity, vacant businesses and empty lots in the area. PhillyRising began operations in Frankford on April 13, 2011. Since the initial kickoff meeting PhillyRising has conducted a neighborhood walkthrough to identify vacant properties and code violations, hosted summer camp expos to connect area parents with local camp operators, participated in several neighborhood cleanups, and attended multiple community meetings to get a feel for the neighborhood. This groundwork set the path for a Frankford Action Plan meeting on October 12th, 2011 that was attended by close to twenty residents and community leaders. This draft document represents the initial findings from that meeting and articulates proposed action items to address the community needs which have been identified.

Description of the targeted area

- 15th Police District; Northeast Police Division. The area immediately in the vicinity of Frankford Hospital located at 4900 Frankford Avenue.

- Street Boundaries: Arrot Street → to Oxford Ave → to Saul Street → to Dyre Street → to Duffield Street → Margaret Street → to Arrot Street. Total size is 0.14 square miles.

- Demographics:¹
  - A total of 3237 residents live within the PhillyRising Frankford site boundaries
  - 27.2% of the population are children under the age of 18
  - 6.4 % are seniors over the age of 65
  - Racial and ethnic makeup of the community is roughly:
    - 59% African American
    - 23% Caucasian
    - 17% Latino

¹ Demographic analysis is based on 2010 US Census block-level data queried on 10/19/2011
Local Groups Involved in the Targeted Area

Office of Councilwoman Maria D. Quinones-Sanchez
Frankford Community Development Corporation
Frankford Civic Association
Frankford Special Services District
15th Police District Advisory Council
Frankford Historical Society
Friends of Frankford Library
Frankford Boys & Girls Club
Frankford Business and Professional Association
Mural Arts

Office of State Representative Tony Payton Jr.
Northeast EPIC Stakeholders
Faith Assembly of God Church
Second Baptist Church
Campbell AME Church
The Frankford Parks Group
Communities in Schools
Arts Rising
Secret Society Vehicle Club

Issues

- Children & Young Adults Programming – residents have identified a significant need for after school activities for youth. Additionally, residents have indicated a lack of information on what youth activities are available. Tied into this are concerns about youth safety in the neighborhood, including safe routes to schools.

- Community Health – residents feel that access and information regarding health care is limited. Some critical health services, such as childbirth, are not available in Frankford. Residents also have concerns regarding the availability of fresh fruits & vegetables in the neighborhood.
Several residents and community partners commented that sales of “loosey” cigarettes were a problem along Frankford Avenue.

- **Economic Development** – residents noted the high number of vacancies along Frankford Avenue and are worried that they will drive away potential business owners. More generally, residents and community stakeholders alike are concerned about the overall perception of Frankford Avenue as a business corridor. The limited variety of stores on Frankford Ave and continuous troubles with loitering and crowd control were indicated as issues which need to be resolved.

- **General Quality of Life** – residents are concerned about the high volume of trash in Frankford. Residents also indicated there are problems associated with several nuisance bars in the neighborhood. In a broader sense, residents and community stakeholders indicated a lack of clarity on how to access city services; and in some cases, a lack of response on the part of city government. An associated issue was the lack of a single channel that could get information out into the neighborhood at large.

- **Infrastructure / Vacant Land** – residents and community stakeholders repeatedly mentioned several ‘flagship’ properties, such as the Frankford Salvation Army and Frankford YMCA, that have become vacant in recent years. Bringing these properties back into productive use is a priority for the community. The large number of small vacant lots was also noted. Residents are concerned that lots are being used as dumping grounds and as locations for criminal behavior.

**Vision**

Community stakeholders in the PhillyRising Frankford site strive for a future without vacant lots and blight on residential streets; one where green space is utilized as community gardens and play-space for children. Their goal is also a vibrant and stable business district along Frankford Avenue that serves as an anchor for the greater neighborhood. Through collaboration and partnership with PhillyRising and city agencies, community stakeholders will realize their goal of a revitalized Frankford. This Action Plan is the guiding document to accomplishing these goals.
Action Items

Children & Young Adults Programming

- Two summer camp expos for the 2010-2011 school year. Parents in the PhillyRising Frankford site identified a need for more information and access to summer camp options. PhillyRising addressed this need by hosting two summer camp expos to connect parents with service providers in the Frankford area that offered summer camp for children and young adults.
  - Fifteen community partners attended the summer camp expos and promoted local summer camp options.
  - Status – Completed.
- Summer camp expos for the 2011-2012 school year. PhillyRising will run the summer camp expo project again at the close of the current school year.
  - Status – In planning stage. The expos for this school year will be held in May or June of 2012.
- Mastery Charter School (at Smedley Elementary) / 15th Police District public safety day on October 8th. PhillyRising staff attended this event to speak with parents about PhillyRising accomplishments and operational goals in the Frankford neighborhood.
  - Mannys Citron will reach out to PTA at Frankford High School and Harding Middle School to recruit volunteers for this program.
- Safe Routes to Schools program. PhillyRising to assist NE Epic Stakeholders and neighborhood residents in developing a Safe Routes to Schools program for the Frankford area.
  - Status – In progress. PhillyRising has contacted City Year, Communities in Schools, the Boys & Girls Club, and the Frankford High School Jr. ROTC about the programs and services they offer.
  - Once the guide is completed it will be provided to parents and children in Frankford.
- Youth Activity Resource Guide. PhillyRising will partner with youth focused organizations to develop a guide to youth activities and services in the Frankford neighborhood.
  - Status – In progress. PhillyRising has contacted City Year, Communities in Schools, the Boys & Girls Club, and the Frankford High School Jr. ROTC about the programs and services they offer.
  - Once the guide is completed it will be provided to parents and children in Frankford.
- Holiday Toy Drive. PhillyRising partnered with city agencies to support existing toy drives being run by community groups in Frankford
  - PhillyRising coordinated a city-wide toy drive with SERVE Philadelphia that included toy collection sites in five city locations.
  - More than 125 toys were collected between December 8-16; these toys were distributed to the PhillyRising partners in the Frankford Community.
  - Status – Completed
Community Health

- No-smoking education campaign. PhillyRising will coordinate with the Philadelphia Youth Commission to develop and implement a no-smoking educational campaign to target children & young adults in the Frankford Area.
  - A specific community concern is education about “loosey” cigarettes available on Frankford Ave.
  - Status – In planning stage. PhillyRising has contacted the Philadelphia Youth Commission, the 15th Police District, and SEPTA regarding illegal cigarette sales near the Frankford Transportation Center.
- Frankford Area Health Coalition. PhillyRising will facilitate the creation of a coalition of health providers in the Frankford Area for the purpose of expanding knowledge about health and health care options to the general population in the neighborhood.
- Community health awareness. PhillyRising will collaborate with partners to reach out to residents and increase awareness about health option in the Frankford Area.
  - Status – In progress. PhillyRising has facilitated communications between Frankford Hospital and Faith Assembly of God Church. Frankford hospital will send health outreach staff to the church to teach members about how to manage and avoid common health issues.
- Community Gardens. PhillyRising to assist community stakeholders in starting community gardens.
  - Status – In progress. The Philadelphia City Planning Commission has provided a map showing city-owned vacant lots in Frankford. PhillyRising has partnered with the Office of Councilwoman Sanchez, the Frankford Parks Group, and the Frankford Garden Club to select locations for community gardens.
  - The Department of Public Property has issued an Urban Gardening Agreement for the requested properties and planning is underway to install the garden in spring of 2012.

Economic Development

- Walkthrough of Frankford Avenue businesses on September 16th. PhillyRising participated in a walkthrough with Frankford CDC and the Commerce Department to meet local business owners and inform them of PhillyRising activities in Frankford.
  - Status – Completed.
- Art installations in vacant storefronts. PhillyRising will work with local stakeholders to match artists with property owners for this project. This action item will reduce the visual impact of vacancies along Frankford Ave by replacing vacant storefronts with art installations.
  - Status – In planning stage: PhillyRising has contacted State Representative Tony Payton, Jr., Frankford CDC, and Arts Rising about this project.
  - This project will also need to include the Commerce Department to determine any license or permit requirements.
Retail study of Frankford Avenue. PhillyRising will partner with State Representative Tony Payton, Jr. and Frankford CDC to secure funding for a retail study of Frankford Ave. The Retail study will be used as a tool to facilitate business attraction / expansion / retention along Frankford Ave.

- Status – In progress. Frankford CDC is requesting quotes from consultants and State Representative Tony Payton, Jr. has confirmed that he will make a funding request to DCED to cover the cost of a retail study.
- PhillyRising is also developing a grant proposal as an alternative funding option for the retail study.

Develop a Frankford Avenue Business Directory. Frankford CDC will conduct an exhaustive business survey of Frankford Avenue and develop a business resource guide for the public.

- Status – In Progress. Frankford CDC will review its current business database and begin updating it to turn into a business directory.
- Funding will need to be secured for printing costs for a pilot run of the business directory; subsequent editions will need to be funded through add revenue.

- Lighting and Cameras under the El. PhillyRising will reach out to SEPTA and the Streets department regarding installation of new lighting and / or cameras under the El.
- Status – In planning stage. PhillyRising has met with community leadership about this and will bring the proposal to SEPTA and the Streets department in the near future.

General Quality of Life

District Attorney Community Action Center. PhillyRising in partnership with community organizations and State Representative Tony Payton, Jr. will request that a DA Community Action Center be located on Frankford Avenue.

- Status – In progress. State Representative Payton has met with the DA’s office about this request. PhillyRising will also meet with the DA’s office in the near future.

- Nuisance Bar / nuisance property mitigation. PhillyRising will act as a point of contact between community stakeholders and the Philadelphia DA’s Office Nuisance Property Task Force to communicate information on nuisance bars and properties in the Frankford area. PhillyRising will work with the 15th Police District and Philly 311 to educate residents on which issues are 911 calls vs. 311 calls.
- Once nuisance properties are identified and called in, PhillyRising will coordinate with appropriate city agencies to ensure follow up on complaints
- Status – Ongoing. PhillyRising has reported nuisance bars and nuisance properties to the appropriate City agencies as it learns of them.

Frankford Gazette. In August of 2011 PhillyRising facilitated a partnership between the Frankford Gazette, Frankford CDC and Frankford SSD to begin distributing a print edition of the Frankford Gazette newspaper. PhillyRising is currently assisting the Frankford Gazette in resolving its long-term need for a printer.
Status – In progress. PhillyRising submitted a grant requests to fund a new printer and is also promoting a partnership of local groups to underwrite the cost of a new printer.

PhillyRising Citizens Engagement Academy planned for early 2012. The Citizens Engagement Academy is a multi-session community outreach tool that allows residents to learn about various city departments and access the services they provide.

- Status – In planning stage. PhillyRising will coordinate a Citizens Engagement Academy for residents and community leaders in the Frankford area after the 2011 holiday season has ended.

- Philly 311 Neighborhood Liaison training. PhillyRising will partner with Philly 311 to host a Neighborhood Liaison training specifically targeted to Frankford area residents. The Neighborhood Liaison program instructs local residents/employees on methods for entering service requests to the 311 system. A VIP account will be created that allows each Liaison to enter service requests for any 311 issue in the neighborhood and track progress on those requests.
  - On Monday December 5th PhillyRising hosted a Philly 311 Neighborhood Liaison training specifically for residents in the Frankford community. Several community residents received 311 training and access to VIP accounts.
  - Status – Completed.

- 15th District PDAC Thanksgiving Dinner. PhillyRising assisted the 15th District PDAC (Police District Advisory Council) in hosting a Thanksgiving Dinner for needy residents and families. In total, 137 people including children and elderly attended the dinner at Mater Dolorosa Catholic Church on Saturday, November 19th.
  - Status – Completed.

- Neighborhood Computer Lab. PhillyRising has partnered with the Temple Computer Recycling Center to install a neighborhood computer lab at Frankford CDC.
  - Status – Completed. The computer lab was opened on Friday, January 6, 2012. It is free to use, open to the public, and provided at no cost to the residents of Frankford.

- Free FAFSA and income tax filing at the Frankford CDC Computer Lab. PhillyRising has partnered with PhillyGoes2College, the Office of State Representative Tony Payton, Jr., Frankford CDC, and the Campaign for Working Families to host a free FAFSA and income tax filing day at the Frankford CDC computer lab. Accountants from the Campaign for Working Families will be on hand to file 2012 FAFSA and income tax forms at no cost to residents.
  - Status – Completed. The free FAFSA and income tax filing event at the Frankford CDC Computer lab was held on Sunday, February 26, 2012.

**Infrastructure / Vacant Land**

- Frankford Community Walkthrough was held on July 7th. PhillyRising staff coordinated a site walkthrough which included representatives from Streets, Commerce, L & I, the 15th Police District, Neighborhood Services and other related departments. As a result of the walkthrough
12 lots were cleaned and added to the PHS vacant land management list, graffiti was abated on three properties and code violations were issued to four properties.
  - Status – Completed.
- Villanova Service Day was held on September 24th. PhillyRising staff coordinated students in cleaning up a community garden located near the corner of Penn & Foulkrod Streets. Neighboring blocks also received litter removal during this event.
  - PhillyRising coordinated with 311 and the Sanitation Division to have trash removed after the cleanup.
  - Status – Completed.
- Vanguard Day of Service / Frankford Boys & Girls Club cleanup was held on October 1st. PhillyRising assisted in this fall cleanup event to prepare the Frankford Boys & Girls club for operations during the school year.
  - Status – Completed.
- Soccer Field pocket park grant proposal. PhillyRising will partner with the Police & Fire soccer league and outside funding agencies to turn vacant land into pocket parks where neighborhood children can play soccer. The Police & Fire soccer league has indicated that its members can serve as mentors and host soccer clinics.
  - Status – In progress. PhillyRising has reached out to city agencies for assistance in determining costs associated with site demo, grading and maintenance.
  - Once costs are estimated, a funding source will need to be secured.
- Frankford Community Walkthrough (spring 2012). PhillyRising will coordinate with city agencies on a date for follow up walkthrough.
  - Status – In planning stage. The walkthrough is tentatively planned for May or June of 2012.
- Stabilize vacant lots as community green space. PhillyRising will coordinate between city agencies and community stakeholders to see about stabilizing vacant and replanting them as green space to serve as pocket parks for residents.
  - Status – In progress. Manny Citron has contacted the Philadelphia City Planning Commission for a map showing city-owned vacant lots in Frankford.
  - Once the map is ready, PhillyRising and the Frankford Garden Club will collaborate on selecting a community garden location.
- The Great Frankford Tree Survey. PhillyRising will partner with Philadelphia Parks & Recreation and local parks and community groups to conduct a comprehensive tree survey of Frankford. Philadelphia Parks & Recreation will use the survey data to plan tree planting and dead tree removal in 2012.
  - Status – In progress. The Jr. ROTC at Frankford High School has volunteered to help with this project and will start surveying in the fall of 2011.
  - PhillyRising has also met with local parks and community groups to request volunteers for this project.
• Wilmont Park Day of Service hosted by the Frankford Parks & Community Group, the Office of Councilwoman Maria Quinones Sanchez, Honeywell Corporation and Rebuilding Together Philadelphia. PhillyRising assisted in the Wilmont Park day of service on Friday, November 18th. Projects completed include new backboards, rims and benches installed at the basketball courts; new trees, bushes and flowers planted; new lighting installed; and a new flag pole at the northeast corner of Meadow and Mulberry.
  o Status - Completed

Measures of Success

The basic goal of PhillyRising is to lower crime, in both a real and perceived sense, and to increase residents’ self-sufficiency and involvement in their community. Aside from a reduction in crime, success in Frankford will be measured by the number of vacant lots which are stabilized and eventually returned into productive use; by improved community access to government through understanding and utilization of government services; and by the retention and expansion of businesses along Frankford Avenue. These measures will be monitored and given quarterly progress reports at PhillyStat sessions after the majority of the action items have been completed.
The signatures below represent a commitment from each department, community stakeholder, and elected official to contribute to the improvement of Frankford by working towards the community vision articulated in the action items listed above.

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