





CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

Michael A. Nutter, Mayor



Philadelphia City Planning Commission

Alan Greenberger, AIA Chairman

Joseph Syrnick Vice Chairman

Rob Dubow

Patrick J. Eiding

Bernard Lee, Esq

Elizabeth K. Miller

Richard Negrin

Nancy Rogo Trainer, AIA, AICP

Nilda Iris Ruiz, MBA

Gary J. Jastrzab Executive Director

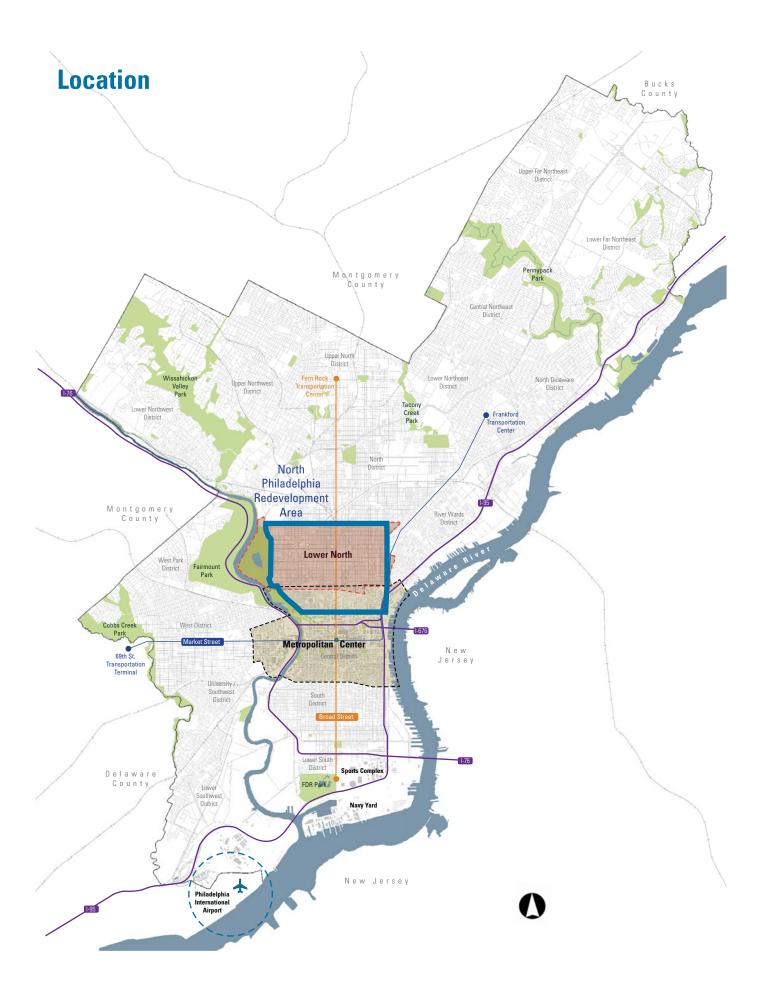
Planning Division

Laura M. Spina Division Director

David Fecteau, AICP Lower North and River Wards Planner

Table of Contents

Location	1
Letter of Trasmittal	2
Certification	3
Introduction	4
Active Blight Certification	5
History	6
Redevelopment Objectives	7
Existing Conditions	8
Proposed Land Use	15
Existing and Proposed Zoning	17
Public Improvements	19
Housing of Displaced Families	19
Estimated Cost of Acquisition	19
Proposed Standards and Controls	20
Illustrative Site Plans	21
Historic Preservation Priorities	24





December 19, 2014

James J Cuorato, Chairman Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority 1234 Market Street, 16th Floor Philadelphia, PA 19107

Dear Mr. Cuorato:

Transmitted herewith is the North Philadelphia Redevelopment Area Plan which has been updated by the City Planning Commission in accordance with the provisions of the Urban Redevelopment Law of May 24, 1945, P.L. 991, as amended.

This Redevelopment Area Plan covers the area bounded on the north by Lehigh Avenue, on the east by Front Street, on the south by Spring Garden Street, and on the west by Fairmount Park.

It is in conformity with the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan for the City of Philadelphia dated June 2011 and was approved by the City Planning Commission at its meeting of November 18, 2014.

Sincerely yours,

Alan Greenberger, FAIA Chair

> 1515 Arch 9 13. Floor Philodelphia, PA (910)

215 p83 4e15 letephone

www.philo.gov/cityplanning

Certification

WHEREAS Pennsylvania Urban Redevelopment Law, Act of May 24, 1945 (P.L. 991 as amended, authorizes the Philadelphia City Planning Commission to certify as blighted specific areas which may then, in whole or in part, be made the subject of redevelopment proposals formulated by the Redevelopment Authority in accordance with said Act, and

WHEREAS, in January 2011, August 2011, January 2005, April 2005, February 2002 and July 2002, the Philadelphia City Planning Commission certified certain areas as blighted (see map of active blight certifications on page 5), and

WHEREAS, since first certified in 1968 certain sections of the North Philadelphia Redevelopment Area have improved and are no longer in need of redevelopment assistance, specifically 2010 Census Tracts 131, 132, 134.01, 134.02, 135, 136.01, 136.02, 142, 145, 146, 367, 376 and both 141 and 377 west of the SEPTA regional rail tracks, and

WHEREAS, after substantial review, the Philadelphia City Planning Commission staff has presented a report concluding that some sections of the North Philadelphia Redevelopment Area, in addition to those with active blight certifications, may exhibit blighting conditions, and

WHEREAS the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority holds land within the Redevelopment Area, which must be disposed of in accordance with an udpated Redevelopment Area Plan, and

WHEREAS the Philadelphia City Planning Commission concurs with the findings and conclusions set forth in this staff report, and further recognizes this Redevelopment Area Plan to be in conformance with *Philadelphia 2035*, the City's Comprehensive Plan,

NOW THEREFORE, this 21st day of October 2014, the Philadelphia City Planning Commission hereby finds, based upon its staff report dated October 2014, that some sections of the area bounded by Spring Garden Street, Front Street, Lehigh Avenue, 33rd Street, Ridge Avenue and Pennsylvania Avenue exhibit the following characteristic of blight as established by Pennsylvania Urban Redevelopment Law:

Economically or socially undesirable land use,

Except for 2010 Census Tracts 131, 132, 134.01, 134.02, 135, 136.01, 136.02, 142, 145, 146, 367, 376 and both 141 and 377 west of the SEPTA regional rail tracks, and hereby certifies the above described area as a Redevelopment Area under the terms and provisions of the said Act.





Eminent domain made possible the expansion of Temple University and the creation of Yorktown (above) in the 1960s and 1970s.

Introduction

The Philadelphia City Planning Commission last made a major revision to the *North Philadelphia Redevelopment Area Plan* in 1968. Since then, large sections of the Redevelopment Area have seen dramatic changes. Spring Garden, Northern Liberties, Fairmount and Yorktown have all become stable, healthy, economically-viable neighborhoods. Temple University has expanded its Main Campus to cover 115 acres. It has become the largest employer in the area with over 5,000 employees. Population has begun to slowly grow again after decreasing to its lowest point in the early 2000s.

Because of this, certain census tracts no longer need redevelopment assistance including: 131, 132, 134.01, 134.02, 135, 136.01, 136.02, 142, 145, 146, 367, 376 and both 141 and 377 west of the SEPTA regional rail tracks.

The North Philadelphia Redevelopment Area Plan covers the area within the North Philadelphia Redevelopment Area certified by the Philadelphia City Planning Commission on November 26, 1968. The Redevelopment Area is bounded by Lehigh Avenue on the north, Spring Garden Street on the south, Front Street on the east, and Fairmount Park on the west. It encompasses approximately 4,700 acres with a population of 126,183 people and 57,586 dwelling units, of which 84 percent are occupied, according to the 2010 census. The Redevelopment Area exists within two PCPC planning districts, Central and Lower North.

Active blight certifications exist for the following areas generally bounded by:

- A. 19th Street, 23rd Street, Master Street and Montgomery Avenue (*certified in 2011*)
- B. Germantown Avenue, 2nd Street and Oxford Street (certified in 2011);
- C. 26th Street, Girard Avenue, 27th Street and Poplar Street (certified in 2005);
- D. Oxford Street, Dover Street, Harper Street and Myrtlewood Street (*certified in 2005*);
- E. 6th Street, Girard Avenue, 7th Street and Poplar Street (certified in 2002);
- F. 30th Street, Girard Avenue, 33rd Street and Oxford Street (certified in 2002).

Pennsylvania's Urban Redevelopment Law requires redevelopment area plans to be in conformance with the City's Comprehensive Plan. This update will bring the *North Philadelphia Redevelopment Area Plan* into conformance with the *Philadelphia 2035: Lower North District Plan* and the *Central District Plan*. The update supercedes all previous redevelopment area plans within its boundaries.



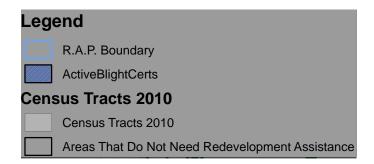


The Bottom Dollar grocery store at 31st Street and Girard Avenue (above) and Brewerytown Square (below) were also assisted by the City's redevelopment process.

Active Blight Certifications

In a blighted area, little private investment is occuring and public interventions are required to get the Real Estate market working again. The areas in blue have been certified as blighted within the last ten years.

Within the Census Tracts outlined in black, substantial private and/or public investment has occured. These areas have relatively low amounts of publicly-held land, few vacant lots and buildings, and a high percentage of owner-occupied homes valued near or greater than Citywide median values.





History of Redevelopment in North Philadelphia

As an implementation tool, following the guidance of the *North Philadelphia Redevelopment Area Plan* and the 1960 Comprehensive Plan, redevelopment was successful in improving the living condition and business climate for some sections of the North Philadelphia Redevelopment Area.

Projects which received City redevelopment assistance include:

Commercial or Industrial

- Boringuen Plaza (1900 N 5th Street)
- Bottom Dollar grocery store (31st and Girard)
- Chaes Food (2100 N American Street)
- Progress Plaza (1501 N Broad Street)
- Strawberry Square shopping plaza (29th and Dauphin streets)

Institutional

- Bright Hope Baptist Church expansion (1601 N 12th Street)
- Temple University (various)
- Dr. Ethel Allen School (3200 W Lehigh Avenue)
- James G. Blaine School expansion (3001 W Berks)
- Duckrey School (1501 W Diamond Street), built 1968
- Hunter Elementary School (2400 N Front Street), built 2004
- John Wanamaker School (11th Street and Cecil B Moore Avenue)
- John Welsh Elementary School playground (2331 N 4th Street)
- Wright Elementary School (2700 W Dauphin Street)

Residential

- Fairhill Apartments (11th and York streets)
- Norman Blumberg Apartments (23rd and Jefferson streets)
- Norris Apartments (2013 N 11th Street)
- Yorktown neighborhood and Yorktown Arms
- Ingersoll Commons (16th Street and Master Street)
- Strawberry Mansion Townhouses (N 31st Street)

Recreational

- Amos Playground (1817 N 16th Street)
- Columbia Field (1001 Cecil B Moore Avenue)
- Cruz Recreation Center (1430 N 5th Street)
- East Poplar Playground (901 N 8th Street)
- Marie Dendy Recreation Center / Schwartz Playground (1101 Cecil B Moore Avenue)
- Martin Luther King Jr. Recreation Center (2101 Cecil B Moore Avenue)
- Winchester Playground (2332 N 15th Street)
- Ingersoll Park (16th Street and Master Street)







The Cecil B Moore Homeownership Zone (top), Chaes Food (middle), and Dr. Ethel Allen School (bottom) were built on land assembled as part of the redevelopment process, using the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority's condemnation process.

Redevelopment Objectives

The *North Philadelphia Redevelopment Area Plan* is a statement of long-term community development intentions, and a means of advancing the implementation of project proposals that are ready to proceed. The principal purpose for establishing a redevelopment area is to allow selective public interventions that will promote the conservation of positive physical characteristics.

Specific objectives are:

- To eliminate blight;
- To reaffirm the need for redevelopment assistance in certain areas and to acknowledge that other areas no longer need assistance;
- To direct investment into neighborhoods with low property values compared to the City and a high number of vacant, tax delinquent and dangerous property;
- To encourage investment in vacant areas surrounding recreation centers and shopping plazas and within historic districts.





The Piazza at Schmidt's, at 2nd Street and Girard Avenue (top) is a \$100 million project funded by a private developer. The project contains 430 market-rate apartments and 100,000 square feet of commercial space, including a 51,000 square foot grocery store.

New rowhomes on the 1100 block of Mt Vernon Street (bottom) were also built without subsidies or the use of eminent domain.

CASE STUDY



Folsom Powerhouse

Postgreen Homes and Equinox Management and Construction LLC are building the Folsom Powerhouse on the 1700 block of Folsom Street and 700 block of 18th Street in Francisville. The development will include 29 dwelling units plus a ground floor flex space that could accomodate retail. The Redevelopment Authority assembled the land and sold it through a request for proposals. The project is not receiving public subsidies but the builders have agreed to provide several units of housing affordable to people who make between 80 percent and 100 percent of area median income, which equals an annual salary of about \$65,000 per year.

Existing Conditions

The North Philadelphia Redevelopment Area was certified on November 26, 1968 based on the following criteria:

- Unsafe, unsanitary, inadequate or overcrowded condition of certain dwellings;
- Inadequate planning of the area;
- Lack of proper light, air and open space;
- Faulty street or lot layout;
- Defective design and arrangement of buildings; and
- Economically and socially undesirable land uses.

At that time, the City Planning Commission also cited the following reasons to justify redevelopment: inadequate access to parks; a deficit of parking spaces; substandard housing units; and a lack of access to public transportation to enable residents to reach job centers. Since then, most of these conditions have been elminated.

- SEPTA now serves the area with an extensive transit network including 17 bus routes, one trolley line, five Market-Frankford Line stations, six Broad Street Line stations, and two regional rail stops;
- Over \$1.6 billion in publicly and privately-financed housing, commercial and industrial development has been built in the last ten years;
- As of 2013, most residents lived within a ten-minute walk to a park or recreation facility;
- As an indicator of substandard housing units, approximately one percent of households lacked complete plumbing facilities (572 units) or complete kitchen facilities (501 units) according to the 2008-2012 American Community Survey.

The only criterion that still applies to this redevelopment area is the last, *economically and socially undesirable land uses*. These include empty lots, vacant residential, commercial and industrial sites, tax delinquent sites and dangerous buildings. These land uses are mostly concentrated north of Poplar Street.

- In 2013, over 4,100 buildings stood vacant. Of those, the City labeled 22 percent as unsafe and three percent as imminently dangerous.
- The area also had over 11,600 vacant lots in 2013: 27 percent of all land and buildings were vacant. However, most of this vacancy is clustered within specific census tracts.
- Almost 15,900 properties, roughly 28 percent of all properties, were tax delinquent in 2013, owing two or more years worth of taxes. The highest percentage of tax delinquency is located north of Susquehanna Avenue and in an area generally west of 19th Street and north of Poplar Street.

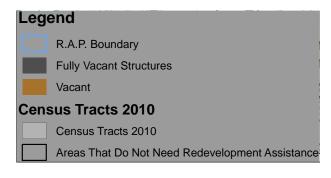


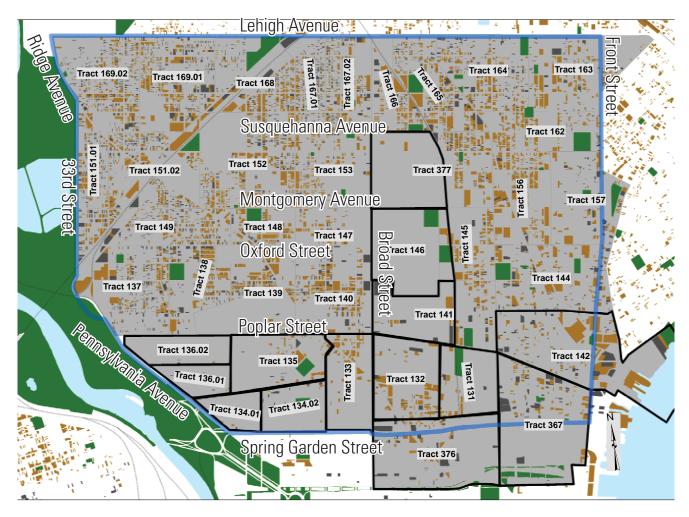


Blighted conditions still exist in many sections of the Redevelopment Area north of Poplar Street. In Strawberry Mansion, a cluster of homes at 32nd and Fontain streets (top) is a quick walk from new townhomes on 31st Street. The entire 1700 block of Ingersoll Street (bottom) in Green Hills is vacant, one block north of St. Joseph's Preparatory School's campus.

Vacant Land and Buildings by Census Tract

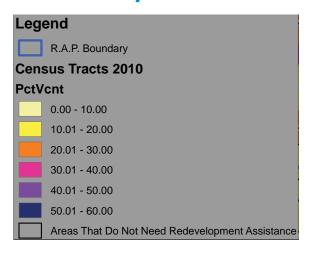
Vacancy is the absence of use. In 2012 and 2013, PCPC staff conducted a survey of all parcels in the Lower North and Central Planning districts, within which this Redevelopment Area falls. Parcels that did not appear to have any present use were called vacant. This map does not show parcels where staff observed gardens, yards or other activity, and does not take into account whether the user owned the land.

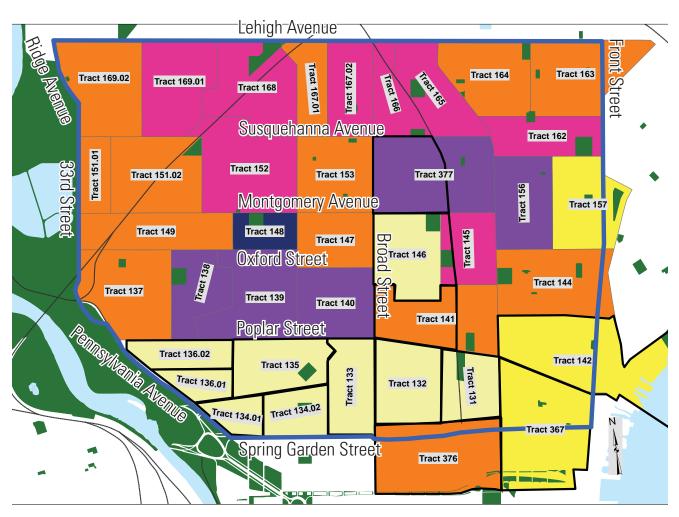




Percentage of Land That is Vacant by Census Tract

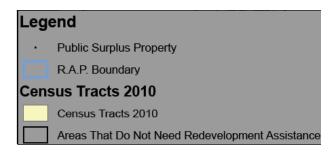
Vacancy can also be displayed as a comparison of vacant lots to occupied lots. The lowest percentage of vacant land is located in Yorktown (tract 148) with only one or two vacant lots, and south of Poplar Street. These areas also correspond to locations where the largest number of new housing units was built in the last ten years, and where property values are the highest.





Publicly Owned Surplus Property by Census Tract

Publicly owned land which is available for sale is clustered primarily in tracts that have seen either slight population increases or where population continues to decline. The largest concentrations are in tracts where property values are low and tax delinquency is high. Some tracts with few public surplus properties have been heavily redeveloped using eminent domain, including 377 (Temple University), 148 (Yorktown) and 141 (Cambridge Plaza and West Poplar Nehemiah).

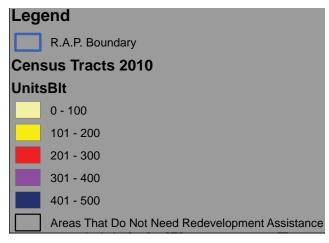


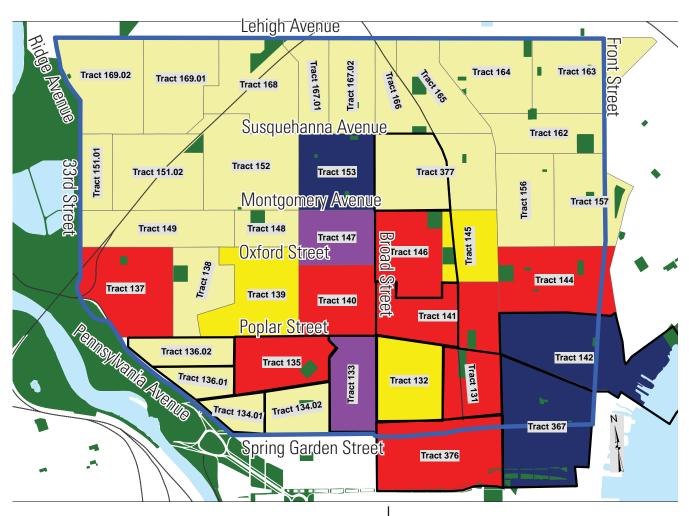


Source: Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority

Housing Units Built (2003 to 2013) by Census Tract

New construction over the last ten years has been robust in some census tracts and nearly absent in others. The strongest markets for development were tracts 142 and 387 (Northern Liberties, Callowhill and Fishtown) and tract 163 just west of Temple University's Main Campus. Tracts 137 (Brewerytown), 136 (Fracisville), Tracts south of Poplar Street which have seen little construction are mostly built-out. Tracts north of Poplar Street in lighter colors correspond to a weak Real Estate market with relatively low property values.

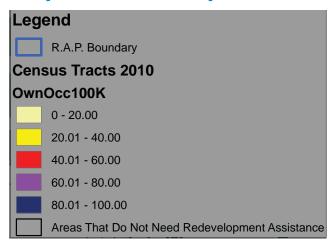


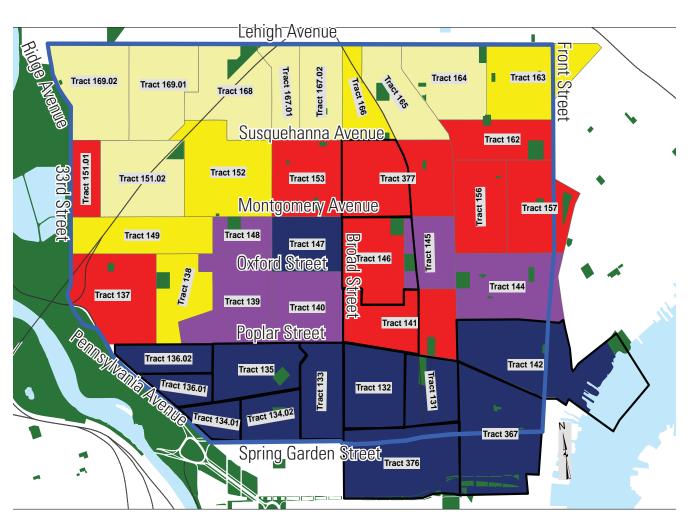


Source: Philadelphia Department of Licenses and Inspections

Percent of Owner Occupied Homes Valued at over \$100,000 (Citywide Median) by Census Tract

The percentage of owner occupied homes valued at over \$100,000 is high in areas south of Poplar Street and adjacent to Temple University's Main Campus. The lowest property values tend to be north of Susquehanna Avenue, in tracts that have seen little new construction in the last ten years. These also correspond to areas with large numbers of delinquent properties.

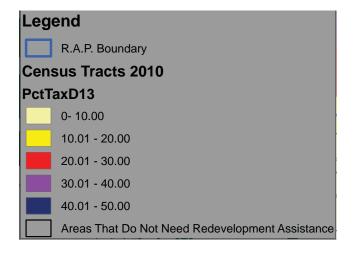


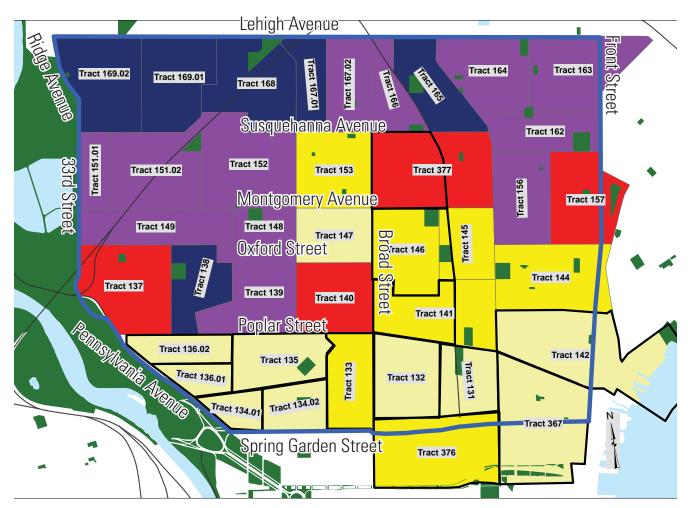


Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Tax Delinquency (as of 2013) by Census Tract

Tax delinquency data represents a snapshot in time. This map shows the numbers of tax delinquent properties by census tract. Lighter colored tracts have the fewest delinquent parcels, while darker colored tracts have the most. The most tax compliant parcels appear to be in areas where property values are rising the fastest and where construction has been prolific in the last ten years, primarily south of Poplar Street and immediately to the west of Temple University (tract 147).





Source: Philadelphia Department of Revenue

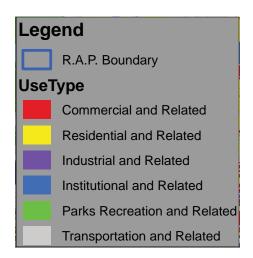
Proposed Land Use

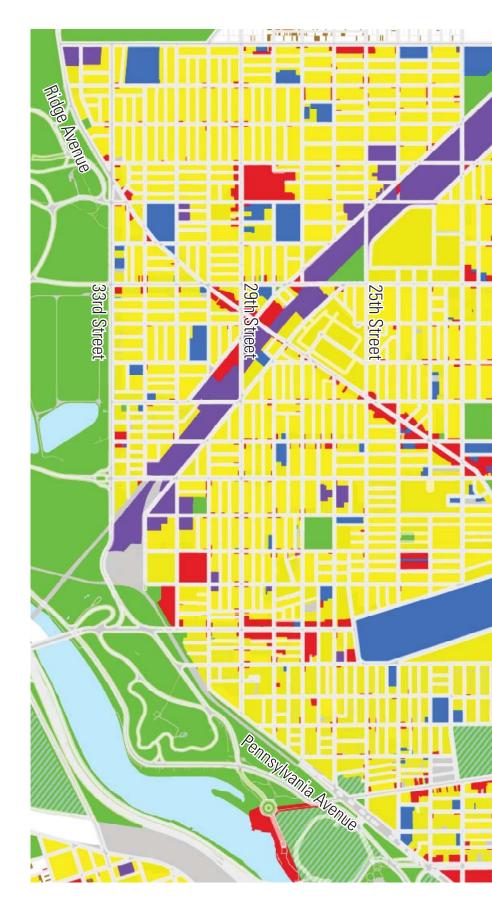
The proposed land use map illustrates desirable development patterns given the assumptions contained in the Comprehensive Plan's recommendations. Since vacancy is not a desirable condition, it is not shown. However, this plan acknowledges that vacant land and buildings will persist at least for the next 10 years.

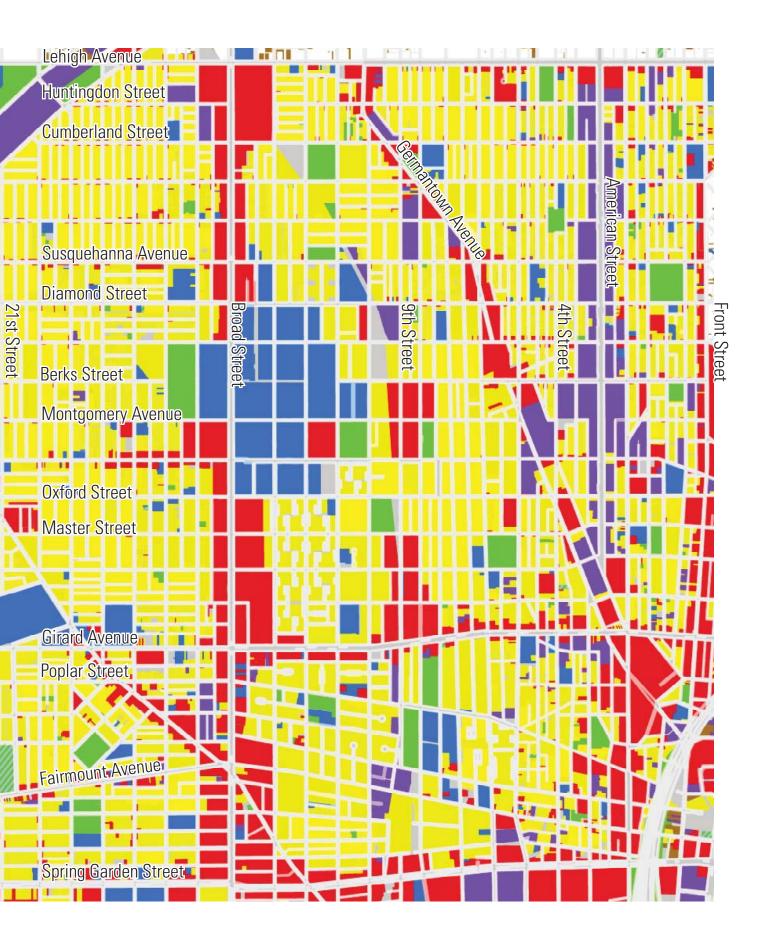
The proposed land uses accomodate all categories and subcategories allowed by right in the Philadelphia Zoning Code.

- Commercial and related: CMX-1, CMX-2, CMX-2.5, CMX-3 and CA-1:
- Residential and related: RSA-5, RM-1,RM-2 and RM-4, and RMX-2;
- Industrial and related: IRMX, ICMX, I-1 and I-2
- Institutional and related: SP-INS;
- Parks, Recreation and Related: SP-PO-A and SP-PO-P.

Conforming with the land use recommendations in this document does not imply support of a proposal at the Zoning Board of Adjustment.

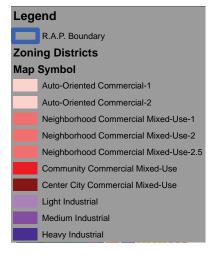


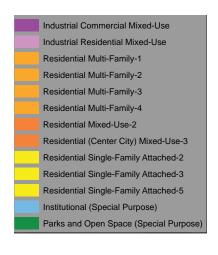


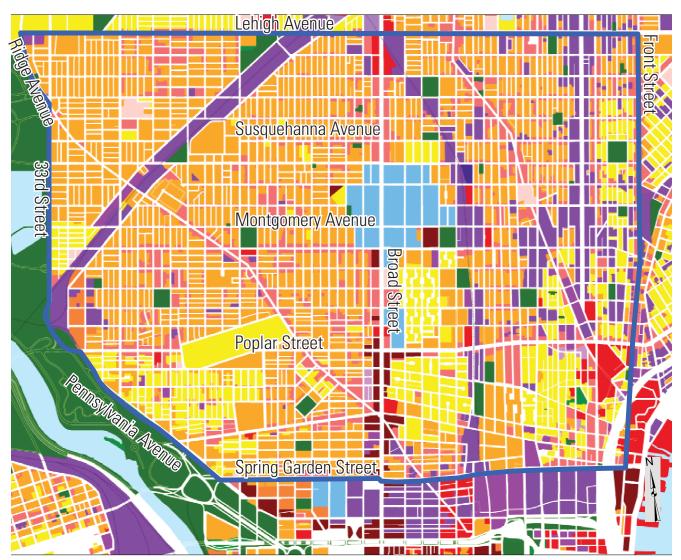


Current Zoning

Zoning is the primary tool to regulate land use (use), where a building can locate on the property (area), and building size (bulk). The zoning of a parcel is analyzed to ensure that it can implement the desired future land use.

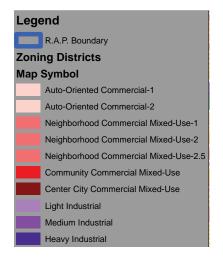




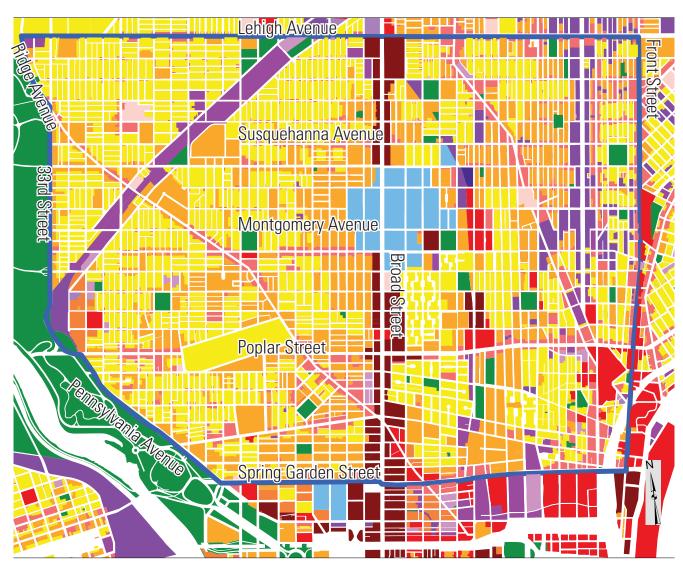


Proposed Zoning

The proposed zoning reflects recommendations from the Central District Plan and the Lower North District Plan. Some neighborhoods have already been rezoned while others have not. These recommendations that have been transmitted to City Council, the legislative body respondible for introducing zoning bills.







Public Improvements

Philadelphia 2035, the City's Comprehenisve Plan, recommends the following public improvements:

- A new senior citizen's center at 21st Street and Cecil B Moore Avenue, adjacent to the Stephen Klein Wellness Center;
- A new park in Sharswood as part of the Blubmerg redevelopment, but the location, size, function and funding source have not been deterimined;
- The expansion of Waterloo playground to parcels on Huntingdon Street;
- The expansion of Fire Engine 2/Ladder 3 onto adjacent vacant land.

The following street changes are expected:

- The reintroduction of 23rd Street and the introduction of Bucknell Street, through the site of the Norman Blumberg Apartments in Sharswood, as part of the redevelopment of the Blumberg site; and
- The vacation of N Woodstock Street and N Lambert Street, from Jefferson Street to Redner Street, in North Central to facilitate development of a retail complex that will include parking and may include housing.
- A realignment of Spring Garden Street at Broad Street to improve pedestrian safety.

In addition, the abandoned Reading Railroad viaduct will become a public park. The portion within the Redevelopment Area will run from Spring Garden Street to Fairmount Avenue. And the Reading Railroad City Branch tunnel may be repurposed as a bus right-of-way to accommodate busses currently serving North Philadelphia.

Housing of Displaced Families

The number of families displaced by redeveloping Norris Homes in North Central and the Norman Blumberg Apartments in Sharswood will be minimized. Initially, vacant properties will be redeveloped to provide replacement housing distributed within close proximity to the project sites. In cases where families are displaced, the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority or the Philadelphia Housing Authority will assist in their relocation.

Estimated Cost of Acquisition

Estimated acquisition costs for the two redevelopment subareas (see following page) have not been determined. Most of the redevelopment will take place on vacant land that has been transferred from the City to the Philadelphia Housing Authority.

Proposed Standards and Controls

The Philadelphia Zoning Code shall continue to provide gneral regulation of permitted uses, development densities, parking and loading, and dimensional requirements. To ensure that development will complement existing uses, development controls may be established on a case by case basis as redevelopment proposals are submitted to the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority for approval.

However, within the boundaries of the *Lower North District Plan*, generally Front Street to 33rd Street and Poplar Street/Girard Avenue to Lehigh Avenue, all redevelopment proposals shall be built at a minimum density of 20 dwelling units per acre to comply with the recommendations in that plan.

Redevelopment in the North Philadelphia Redevelopment Area will be in accordance with any rquirements established by the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority and will comply with the Code of General Ordinances of the City of Philadelphia. All plans and proposals prepared by the Redevelopment Authority will be subject to review, per state law, by the Philadelphia City Planning Commission.

Illustrative Site Plans

The layouts on the following pages show preliminary plans for two Choice Neighborhoods sites: North Central and Sharswood. These are the two priority redevelopment subareas within the North Philadelphia Redevelopment Area. Both are predicated on the redevelopment of former high-rise public housing sites. Other priority redevelopment and historic preservation sites, recommended in the *Philadelphia 2035: Lower North District Plan*, are shown on the last pages of this report.

SubArea A: Generally Cecil B Moore Avenue/ 20th Street/ Ridge Avenue/ College Avenue/ 27th Street

The Norris highrises have been demolished and 51 replacement units have been built. In all 147 replacement units and 150 new mixed-income units wil be built in phases, as funding becomes available, within the boundaries shown on the following page.

SubArea B: Generally York Street/6th Street/Germantown Avenue/Cecil B Moore Avenue/ Carlisle Street

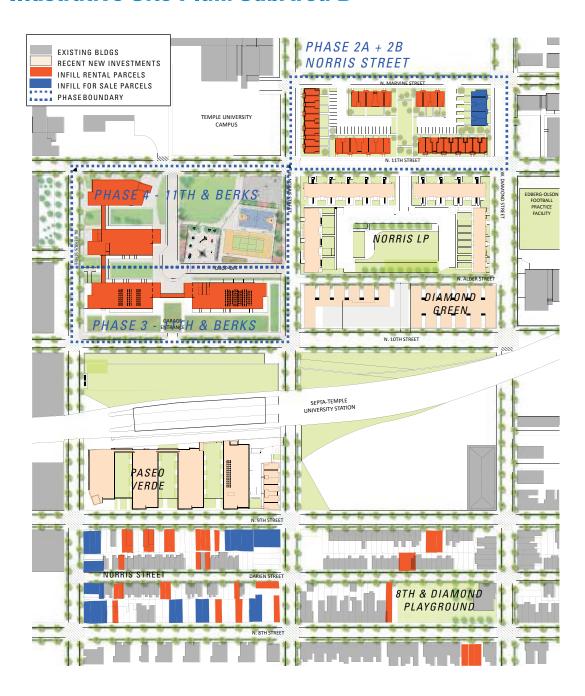
The Blumberg highrises will be redeveloped in phases as funding becomes available. A preliminary site plan has been included and will be updated once the a final neighborhood plan is produced. The goal for this redevelopment is to demolish all but one of the Blumberg highrises, renovate the remaining building into an age-restricted tower, then build one to one replacement houses for current high-rise tenants.

Vacant land on the east side of Ridge Avenue is slated to become new low-income houses, a headquarters for the Philadelphia Housing Authority, and a shopping plaza, which may contain a grocery store and/or a chain pharmacy.

Illustrative Site Plan: SubArea A



Illustrative Site Plan: SubArea B



Source: Philadelphia Housing Authority; Wallace Roberts and Todd

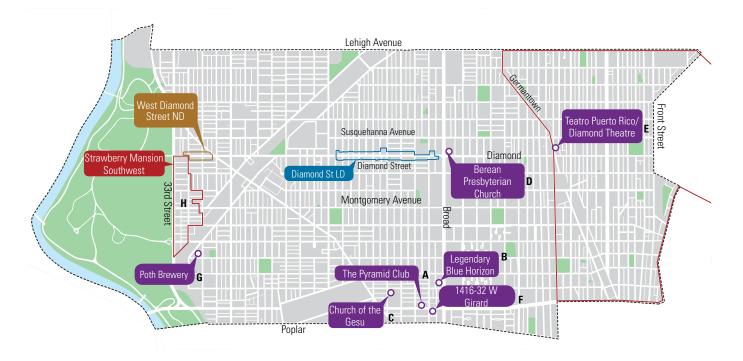
Illustrative Site Plan: Additional Redevelopment Priorities



Developable Lots Close to Parks and Recreational Facilities, Commercial Corridors, Shopping Centers and Historic Districts

Α	East Fairmount Park (along 33rd Street)	
В	Strawberry Mansion	Adjust zoning to allow higher densities. Direct development subsidies to these areas.
С	Athletic Square Recreation Center	
D	Martin Luther King Recreation Center and Ridge Avenue	
E	North Broad, Susquehanna to Lehigh Avenues	
F	North Broad, Girard to Cecil B. Moore Avenues	
G	5th Street from Cruz Recreation Center to Borinquen Plaza	
Н	York-Dauphin MFL Station	
I	Diamond Street Local Historic District	
J	West Diamond Street National Historic District	

Recommended Preservation Priorities



	Priority Sites to Preserve and Reuse			
A	The Pyramid Club (1517 W. Girard Avenue)			
В	Legendary Blue Horizon (1314 N. Broad Street)	Pursue nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places		
C	Church of the Gesu (1734–54 W. Thompson Street)			
D	Berean Presbyterian Church (2101 N. Broad Street)			
E	Teatro Puerto Rico/Diamond Theatre (2119 Germantown Avenue)			
F	The townhomes at 1416–32 W. Girard Avenue			
G	F.A. Poth Brewery (31st and Jefferson Streets)			
Н	Strawberry Mansion Southwest Historic District	Pursue nomination to the National Register of Historic Places		

