

Allegheny West Redevelopment Area Plan



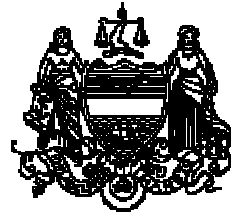
Philadelphia City Planning Commission
November 2003

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Cover photo: 2900 block Bailey Street

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INTRODUCTION

Allegheny West is one of the largest neighborhoods in Upper North Philadelphia west of Broad Street. It is located just west of Tioga and north Strawberry Mansion, two other well-known neighborhoods in North Philadelphia. The boundary of the Allegheny West Redevelopment Area is shown on the map below: the northern boundary is Hunting Park Avenue and the R-6 railroad line. The western boundary is Ridge Avenue. The southern boundary is Lehigh Avenue. The eastern boundary is 22nd Street.

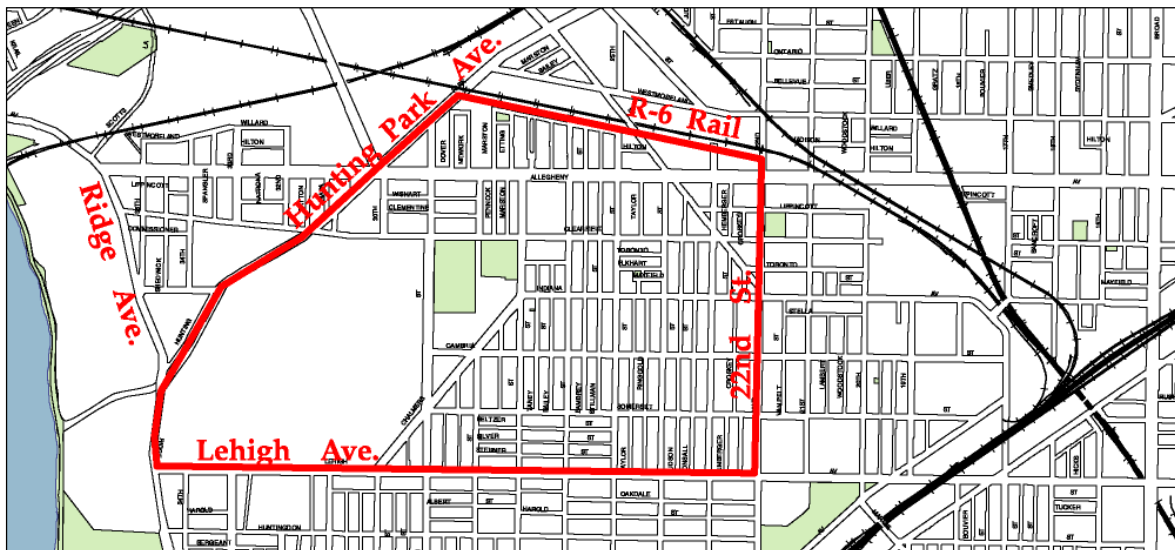


The purpose of this Plan is to facilitate property acquisition for rehabilitation of homes at scattered locations in the neighborhood. Despite the presence of some vacant homes, this is a stable and viable residential area. Allegheny West has numerous strengths including high homeownership, good highway access, bus and train service, and several recreation facilities. Total population is approximately 18,000 and the majority of residents are of African-American origin.

The majority of the area is occupied by single-family row homes developed in the early 1900's when factories were built along major streets or railroad tracks and worker housing was constructed on the narrower intermediate streets.

Neighborhood commercial use exists along major streets including Lehigh Avenue, Allegheny Avenue and North 22nd Street. The principal and traditional neighborhood commercial

district is the 22nd Street corridor. This corridor is adjacent to a new shopping center at 21st & Lehigh; and just to the east of the shopping center is a large new church situated on the site of the former Connie Mack Stadium. The shopping center and former stadium site are just outside the boundary of the Redevelopment Area.



At the opposite end of the neighborhood, Hunting Park Avenue forms the western boundary. This is a busy 4-lane highway with commercial and industrial properties. One of the industries nearby is the Tasty Baking Company, 2801 Hunting Park Avenue. Tasty Baking is the major employer in the area. The company has been involved in the development and stabilization of the Allegheny West neighborhood for more than three decades through its sponsorship of the Allegheny West Foundation (AWF). The Foundation was one of the first Community Development Corporations in Philadelphia and it has rehabilitated many neighborhood homes, primarily as affordable homeownership. The Foundation is also a model for employer-assisted housing, since some of the the homes have been occupied by employees and their families. As AWF continues its housing work, more homes will need to be acquired with City assistance; and this need for acquisition is the major reason for the redevelopment area plan. The Foundation's next project will be the rehabilitation of approximately 30 vacant residential structures for homeownership; and long term plans call for continued acquisitions and housing improvements.

Allegheny West has seen other important community investments in recent decades. It was chosen as one of the original target areas for Philadelphia Neighborhood Housing Services (PNHS), which provides mortgage loans and other housing programs supporting homeownership. PNHS worked in partnership with Allegheny West Foundation. The neighborhood has also received commercial revitalization programs, economic incentives for development of the new shopping center and church, and the construction of a modern SEPTA bus depot on Allegheny Avenue.

Another important community-based organization is the Hunting Park West Business Association, whose active membership comprises a list of over 150 local firms. It is involved in job training, economic and community development.



3100 Bambrey Street



Above: 22nd & Cambria commercial area



SEPTA bus depot at 27th & Allegheny; Tasty Baking Company nearby on Hunting Park Ave.

This neighborhood also has significant problems that need to be addressed. Vacant houses and lots are scattered throughout the area, and vacancy is especially problematic in the southern section of the area. Specifically, the area bounded by 25th, 28th, Somerset and Lehigh contains a concentration of vacant buildings and lots. There are no large vacant parcels (under single ownership) in Allegheny West.

Tax delinquency exists at a high level, and the 80-to-100-year-old housing stock is increasingly difficult to maintain. The 22nd Street commercial area appears to be healthy, but has some scattered vacancy and improvements to the corridor are needed.

The Allegheny West Redevelopment Area Plan contains reuse proposals that are intended to maintain the quality and character of the community and rehabilitate the housing while adding some new residential, social service, mixed-use and commercial uses at appropriate locations. These proposals are in accordance with The North Philadelphia Plan, which constitutes the City's Comprehensive Plan for this area.

OBJECTIVES

The general goal of this Redevelopment Area Plan is to provide a framework for present and future redevelopment proposals. Clear planning policies for land use, zoning and capital program investment will permit the full potential of the study area to be realized.

The plan has two specific objectives:

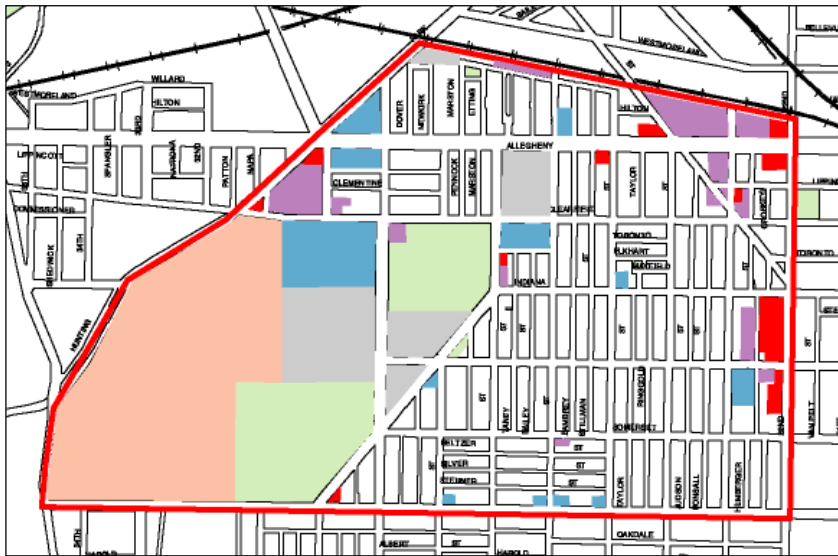
- to encourage rehabilitation of vacant homes,
- to encourage infill housing development, and
- to eliminate blighted conditions by encouraging the redevelopment of vacant land and buildings, and underutilized properties.

SUMMARY OF BLIGHT CERTIFICATION STUDY OF MARCH 2003

The Allegheny West area was included in a blight certification study prepared by the Planning Commission in March, 2003. The study area covered a larger boundary including the Tioga and Woodstock neighborhoods. The report concludes that blight does exist in the area. Designation for redevelopment is warranted by the following criteria having been satisfied:

- Unsafe, unsanitary, inadequate conditions
- Inadequate Planning
- Faulty Street and Lot Layout
- Economically undesirable land use

Of the almost 18,000 housing units in the larger study area, almost 3,000 units are vacant. There are over 1,000 vacant buildings, 588 of which have been deemed dangerous and almost 600 vacant lots in the larger study area. Many properties have unsafe and unsanitary conditions, which are representative of economically undesirable land use. Tax delinquency is pervasive. Property values are low: the value of single-family homes in the Redevelopment Area is less than one-half of the citywide median value. There are 4,228 properties in the larger study area with Code violations as determined by the Department of Licenses & Inspections in April of 2002. These conditions have a deteriorating effect on the neighborhood and the study's findings provide clear evidence of blight.



LAND USE

- Residential
- Commercial
- Institutional
- Industrial
- Transportation/ Utilities
- Recreation
- Cemetery

EXISTING LAND USE

Residential is the predominant land use. Commercial uses exist along North 22nd Street, Allegheny Avenue, Lehigh Avenue and Hunting Park Avenue. Industrial properties are located near the railroads at the edges of the neighborhood.

Public schools include Pierce and Whittier Elementary Schools, and Rhoads Middle School. Between 27th Street and Ridge Avenue, large properties are used for Water Department facilities, a school, playgrounds and a private cemetery.

PROPOSED LAND USE

The neighborhood does not contain major vacant sites or land use conflicts, and the purpose of the redevelopment area plan is to facilitate housing rehabilitation and infill development. Therefore, changes to the land use pattern are not proposed in this Plan.



EXISTING ZONING
(see map to the left)

Predominant zoning is R-9A Residential and R-10A Residential, generally permitting single family row homes. Allegheny West has participated in Zoning Remapping.

- Residential - low density
- Residential - medium density
- Residential - high density
- Commercial
- Light Industrial
- Industrial
- Recreation

PROPOSED ZONING CHANGES

No changes in the zoning are proposed at this time. Zoning changes by ordinance or use certificates or variances from the Zoning Board of Adjustment may be required depending on the specific development plans that are ultimately prepared. Housing rehabilitation, a major goal of this plan, is generally allowed under existing zoning.

PROPOSED STREET CHANGES

No changes in street layout are required at this time. Any street changes should await further planning and design work for specific development projects.

RELOCATION

No relocation is proposed at this time. The continuing housing initiative utilizes vacant homes for rehabilitation. However, some relocation may be necessary in the future. All relocation will be accomplished in accordance with the terms and conditions of the federal Uniform Relocation Act.

ESTIMATED COSTS OF REDEVELOPMENT

The first phase of housing rehabilitation will cost an estimated \$3 million. Cost estimates for future projects will be prepared by the Redevelopment Authority at a later time.

ILLUSTRATIVE SITE PLAN

The Illustrative Site Plan (below) shows the pattern of existing buildings. Because the objective of this Plan is for rehabilitation and infill development, the Illustrative Site Plan does not reflect plans for new structures. However in the event that large-scale new development does occur, all new

construction and rehabilitation in the Allegheny West Redevelopment Area should be designed to fit in with the existing qualities of the area. In general, new housing should be designed and constructed at lower densities than existed in the original development of the neighborhood.



PROPOSED STANDARDS AND CONTROLS

Standards and controls for uses, density, land coverage, building area, parking and off-street loading will be established by the Philadelphia Zoning Code. All impacts of redevelopment on the surrounding residential community will be minimized through development controls regulating site design, building materials and landscaping. These controls will be established by the Redevelopment Authority, and reviewed and approved by the City Planning Commission.

The Pennsylvania Urban Redevelopment Law of 1945, as amended, and the United States Housing Act of 1949, as amended, regulate Redevelopment and Urban Renewal in the City of Philadelphia.

Redevelopment in the Allegheny West Redevelopment Area will be in conformity with the provisions of this Redevelopment Area Plan and with the requirements of any Urban Renewal Plan prepared by

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the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Philadelphia for this area, 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 the recommendations of the City Planning Commission and the approval of the City Council of the City of Philadelphia.