

Cottman Riverview Redevelopment Area Plan

Tacony Extension



PCPC
Philadelphia City Planning Commission

September 2005

CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

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Introduction

The Cottman Riverview Redevelopment Area / Tacony Extension is an 111-acre section of Northeast Philadelphia located on the Delaware River waterfront. The neighborhood to the west is Tacony, and other nearby neighborhoods are Wissinoming, Mayfair and Holmesburg. The specific boundaries of the extended redevelopment area are: (1) Delaware River, (2) Cottman Avenue, (3) Milnor Street, (4) State Road, and (5) Unruh Avenue.



The original Cottman Riverview Redevelopment Area Plan was approved by the Planning Commission in May 2005. This report extends the area to the south and is known as the “Tacony Extension” of the Plan. The map on the cover of this report shows the boundaries: it shows the new extended area below the dotted red line at Cottman Avenue, and it shows the original Cottman Riverview Redevelopment Area to the north of Cottman Avenue.

Within the boundaries of the redevelopment area, riverfront properties may have ownership rights or development rights extending into the Delaware River. Those property extensions are included in this Redevelopment Area.

This Redevelopment Area has been created to facilitate the redevelopment of underutilized, formerly industrial properties along the riverfront. Philadelphia’s New River City initiative encourages the city to take advantage of the resources of its riverfronts as new places for living, recreation, working, and environmental enhancement. This Redevelopment Area Plan carries those goals forward for the redevelopment area while managing the transition of land from industrial use to the creation of vibrant new residential and mixed-use communities along the Delaware River.



New State Road & Unruh Street, looking down Unruh toward the Delaware River

Objectives

The general goal of this Redevelopment Area

Plan is to provide a framework for present and future redevelopment proposals. Clear development guidelines and planning policies for land use and zoning will permit the full potential of the study area to be realized.

The plan contains several objectives and development guidelines:

- Riverfront Revitalization: Revitalization through the creation of new residential and mixed use communities along the river
- Mix of Uses: To encourage the development of homes, stores, offices, restaurants, hotels, historically renovated buildings, marinas, public parks, riverfront and water-related recreation
- Public Accessibility: To provide public access to and along the river through the dedication of a public zone along the river's edge
- Connection to Nearby Communities: To reinforce and strengthen connections to Philadelphia's neighborhoods by providing pedestrian pathways, roadway links, public transportation access, transit shuttles to nearby transit hubs, and water-borne transportation
- Maintain Views: New development should be designed to maintain generous views of the riverfront from areas beyond the river's edge
- Blight Removal: Obsolete buildings, vacant properties and underutilized land should be redeveloped and brought into productive use

Summary of Blight Certification

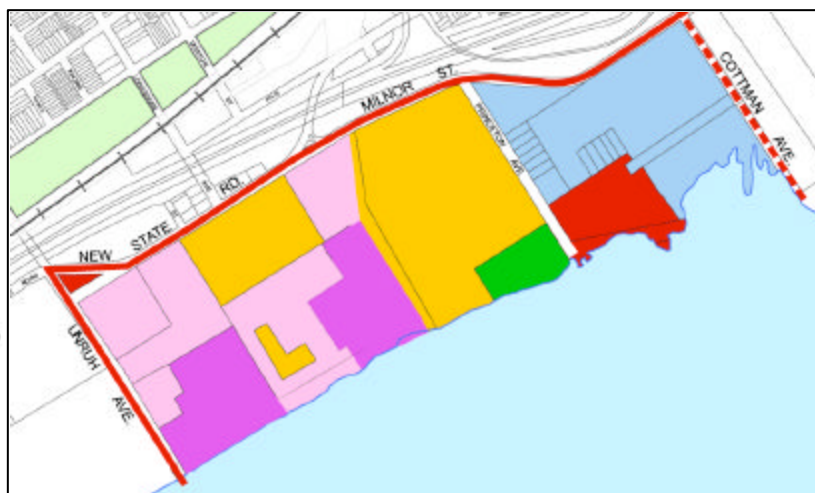
In a companion action, this area is being certified as blighted by the Philadelphia City Planning Commission. The blight certification for the Tacony Extension has an effective date of September 22, 2005. Designation for redevelopment is warranted by the following criteria having been satisfied:

- Unsafe, Unsanitary, Inadequate or Overcrowded Conditions;
- Faulty Street and Lot Layout
- Economically or Socially Undesirable Land Use

Specific documentation of blight included the following:

1. 31 acres of vacant land
2. Environmentally contaminated sites
3. Faulty lot layout
4. Outdoor storage of debris and short dumping
5. Dead-end streets
6. Parcels lacking in street frontage

EXISTING LAND USE



Existing Land Use

The major land use in the study area consists of industrial and related uses, vacant land and vacant buildings. The industrial uses include a junk yard, brake re-manufacturing, truck and bus repair, moving and building storage, and storage of abandon autos. Non-industrial uses, located in the

northeasterly quadrant of the redevelopment area include St. Vincent's Home and fields, the Quaker City Yacht club and the Pennsylvania Fish and Game Commission Tacony Boat Launch.

Proposed Land Use

"Residential and Mixed Use" is the proposed land use for the study area. This permits retail sales and services to the ultimate consumer. Also permitted are hotels, offices, restaurants, public parks and other similar uses that complement a full-service riverfront residential community. St. Vincent's Home is proposed to remain as a part of the new development scheme. A public zone (see diagram on page 6) shall be provided along the river's edge with connections to other riverfront properties and nearby communities. This public zone shall have a minimum dimension of 50 feet from the river's edge.



Historic buildings from the Disston Saw Works, fronting on Unruh St.

New uses can take advantage of important historic resources in the area. The proposed Disston Historic District contains buildings that can potentially become attractive elements in the new communities. Henry Disston developed the Disston Saw Works at this location in the 1870s. The company eventually became the world's largest manufacturer of saws and the Disston family had a major impact on community life in the larger Tacony area. The saw works was sold off in the 1950s and today the former Disston plant is divided among various owners and uses.

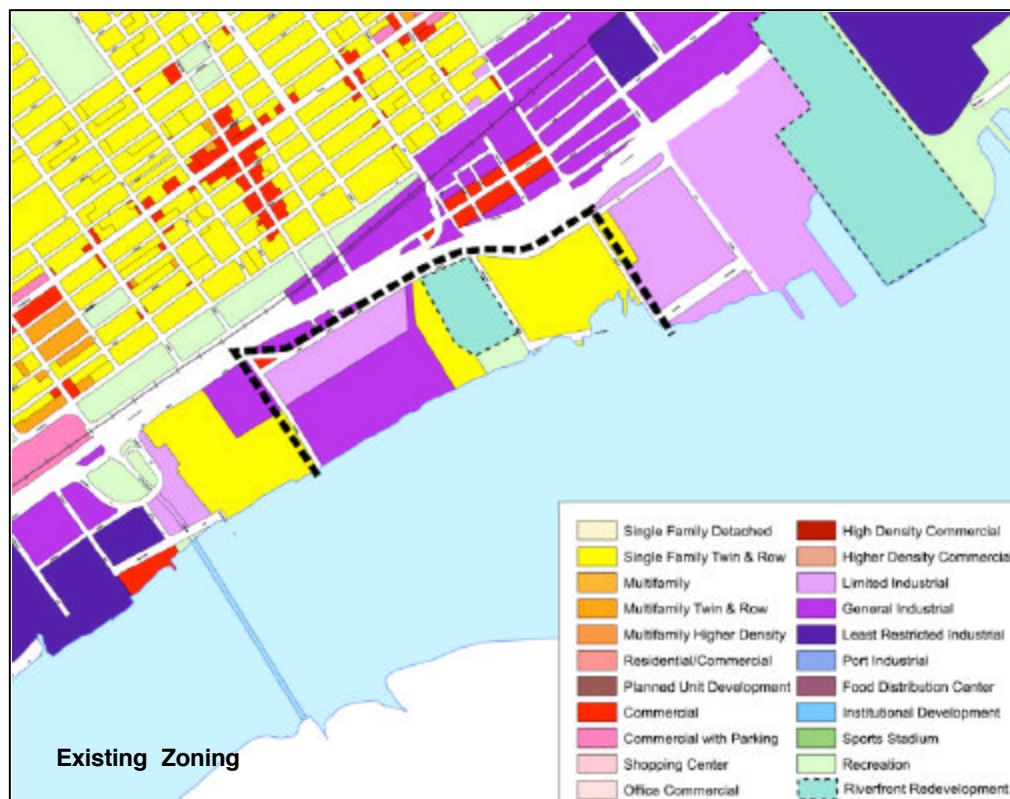
Zoning

The study area is currently zoned G-1 General Industrial, L-3 Limited Industrial, Recreational, and R-5 Residential. The residential zoning is comprised of the St. Vincent's Orphanage and fields at Cottman and State Road and the vacant lot at Princeton Avenue and State Road. No single-family residential homes exist on the site or anywhere in the study area.



Historic stone wall from the Disston plant, located on New State Road

Proposed zoning is "Waterfront Redevelopment District." This zoning district is intended to encourage orderly redevelopment of large parcels of formerly industrial land located along or near waterways into new mixed-use communities. Many types of residential and commercial uses are



permitted in accordance with an approved Master Plan of development.

Proposed Street Changes

Various street changes are expected to occur within the redevelopment area. New streets will align both parallel and perpendicular to the river, reconnect future and existing communities and enhance riverfront access. Specific plans for new public and private streets will be prepared as development plans move forward.

Relocation

Initial phases of redevelopment do not require relocation because proposed development will utilize vacant land. Later phases of redevelopment may require some relocation of businesses. All relocation will be accomplished in accordance with the terms and conditions of the federal Uniform Relocation Act.

Estimated Costs of Redevelopment

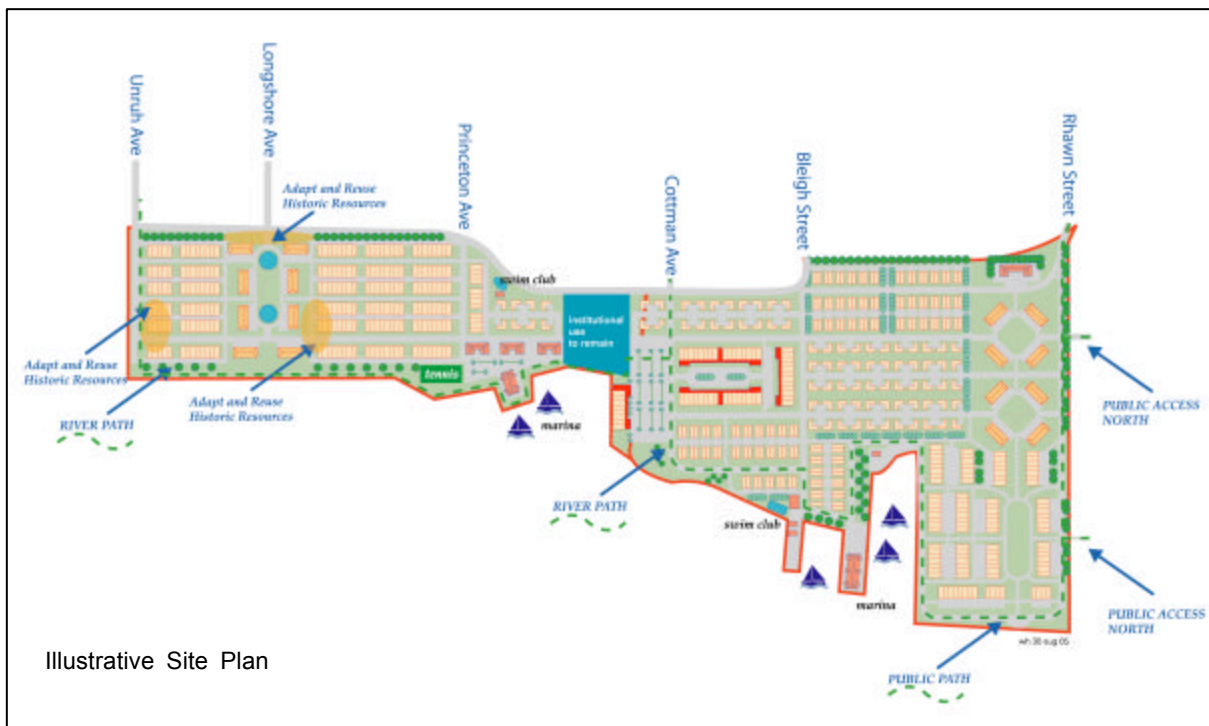
The estimated cost of phase one redevelopment is \$110 million.



St. Vincent's Home, between Princeton and Cottman Avenues

Illustrative Site Plan

The Illustrative site plan (below) is a conceptual scheme illustrating the objectives and guidelines of this Plan. It shows housing, commercial and related uses including retail, hotel and a marina. A public recreation path borders the river and connects to surrounding areas. Other areas are identified where historic resources can potentially be reused as part of the overall plan.



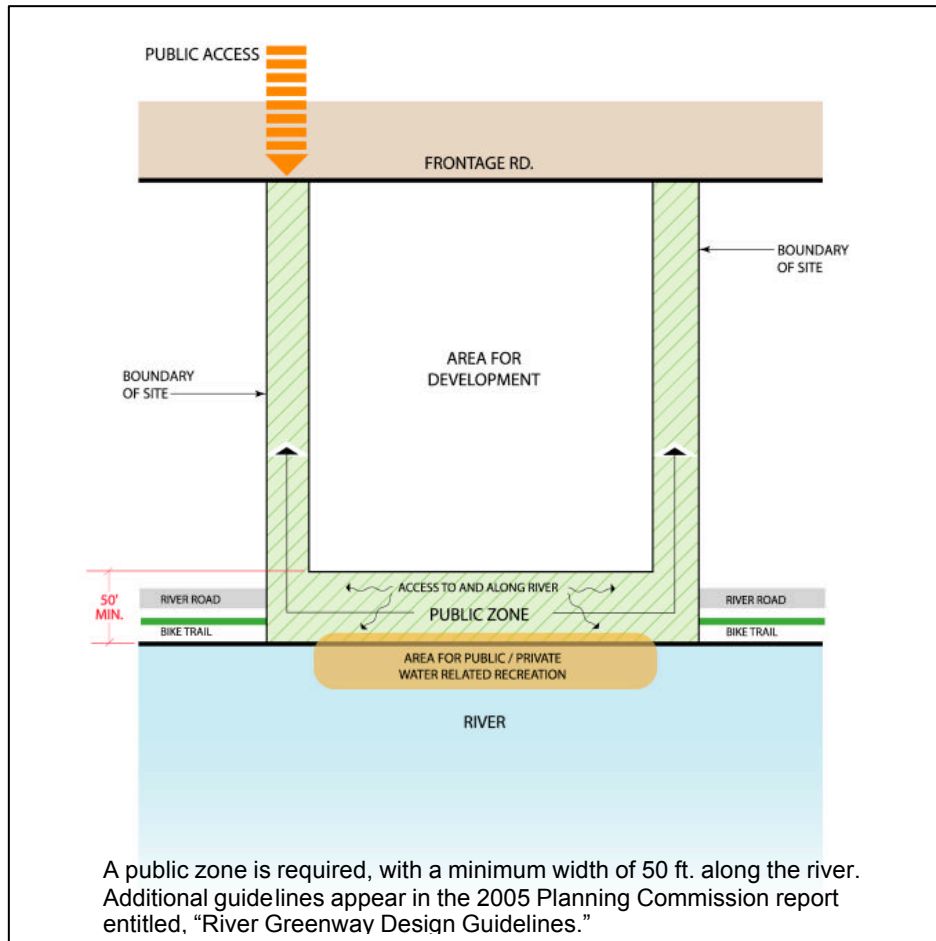
Proposed Standards and Controls

Standards and controls for this area will include the proposed Waterfront Redevelopment District zoning classification. Plans and proposals shall be subject to all appropriate environmental approvals relating to environmentally contaminated sites, including federal, state and local laws and regulations.

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 Cottman Riverview Redevelopment Area (including the Tacony Extension) will be in conformity with the provisions of this Redevelopment Area Plan and with the requirements of any Urban Renewal Plan prepared by 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 Council of the City of Philadelphia.



Industrial buildings along New State Road.