

JEFFERSON SQUARE  
REDEVELOPMENT AREA PLAN

Philadelphia City Planning Commission  
April 1999

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Jefferson Square Redevelopment Area is generally bounded by Washington Avenue, S. 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Dickinson Street, and S. 6<sup>th</sup> Street. Jefferson Square is primarily residential. Saks Playground and a vacant hospital complex, last occupied by Mt. Sinai Hospital of Allegheny Health Systems, are the major non-residential features of the Redevelopment Area. Saks Playground occupies an entire city block bounded by Washington Avenue, S. 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Federal Street, and S. 5<sup>th</sup> Street. The hospital complex occupies most of the city block bounded by Reed Street, S. 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Dickinson Street, and S. 5<sup>th</sup> Street. Jefferson Square, a passive park, is located just outside the Redevelopment Area.

Although the Redevelopment Area contains viable housing, it also contains residential blocks that are severely blighted. On these blocks, many homes have been demolished and some remaining residential structures are beyond repair. A field survey completed in March 1999 discovered approximately 56 vacant structures and 134 vacant lots within the Redevelopment Area. The deteriorated condition of these vacant properties discourages reinvestment by owners of occupied residential properties nearby. Adverse neighborhood conditions have also been an important factor in the lack of sustained or successful investment in the hospital complex at S. 4<sup>th</sup> and Dickinson Street. Allowing blighting conditions in this area to continue would leave Jefferson Square and abutting neighborhoods vulnerable to further deterioration and would diminish the prospects for the full redevelopment of the hospital site.

The Jefferson Square CDC was formed and received three million dollars in state funds to revitalize the Redevelopment Area. In addition, a substantial amount of public funding has been targeted to sites adjacent to this area. Fifty-eight million dollars has been allocated for the redevelopment of Southwark Plaza, located at S. 4<sup>th</sup> Street and Washington Avenue. The Southwark Plaza development will contain 305 new townhouses and 165 units of elderly housing in a renovated tower. Over one million five hundred thousand dollars of public funding has also been allocated for the rehabilitation of the North Building of the former Mt. Sinai Hospital into 37 apartments. New Tower Associates, a Philadelphia-based developer, will redevelop the main hospital building if sufficient off-street parking can be provided for prospective tenants.

The Redevelopment Authority on behalf of the Jefferson Square CDC requested the Redevelopment Area designation. The Certification of Jefferson Square as a Redevelopment Area by the Philadelphia City Planning Commission on April 15, 1999 is in accordance with the provisions of Pennsylvania Urban Redevelopment Law.

## II. REDEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

The Redevelopment Area Plan for Jefferson Square should be viewed as a statement of both long-term community development objectives and as a means to implement redevelopment proposals that will be ready to proceed in the near future. The principal

purpose for establishing the Redevelopment Area is a) to allow public interventions that promote the redevelopment of deteriorated portions of the Redevelopment Area and b) to promote the stability of the Redevelopment Area and the surrounding community. The plan sets the stage for the redevelopment of residential blocks and for the redevelopment of institutional properties to support neighborhood economic development.

The specific objectives are:

1. To eliminate the blighting influence of undesirable land uses throughout the neighborhood, thereby creating opportunities for new construction and rehabilitation.
2. To foster the productive reuse of abandoned lots and structures.
3. To encourage the full utilization of underutilized structures.

### III. BOUNDARIES AND EXISTING CONDITIONS

Jefferson Square was certified as a Redevelopment Area on April 15, 1999. The Redevelopment Area boundaries are Washington Avenue, S. 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Dickinson Street, and S. 6<sup>th</sup> Street.

The designation as a Redevelopment Area is based on existing conditions in these neighborhoods that are consistent with the following criteria:

- a. Unsafe, unsanitary, inadequate or overcrowded conditions.
- b. Faulty street and lot layout.
- c. Economically or socially undesirable land use.

In summary, this area contains approximately 56 vacant structures, many of which are in dangerously deteriorated condition. The area also contains approximately 134 vacant lots, many of which are covered with debris and overgrown with weeds. Almost half of all properties in the area were cited for violations of the Philadelphia Code over the past seven years. The owners of 140 properties are two or more years delinquent in the payment of real estate taxes. In two out of the three census block groups which comprise the area, the median value of owner-occupied properties was below the citywide median.

The worst areas of blight are located in the 400 blocks of Titan, Wharton, and Earp Streets and the 1200 and 1300 blocks of S. 5<sup>th</sup>, Lawrence, and Leithgow Streets. High concentrations of vacant structures and lots are located on these contiguous blocks.



WASHINGTON

AVE.

DICKINSON

ST.

S. 6th ST.

S. 4th ST.

S. BROAD STREET

LOCATION

Unsafe, unsanitary, and inadequate conditions...



430, 432, and 434 Wharton Street.



North side of the 400 block of Earp Street.

Economically and socially undesirable land uses...



Northeast corner of S. 5th Street and Earp Street.



1113 S. 5th Street.

## Faulty street and lot layout...



1300 block of Lawrence/Leithgow Street.



1200 block of Lawrence Street, between Titan and Wharton Streets.

#### IV. EXISTING LAND USE

The predominant land use in the Jefferson Square Redevelopment Area is residential. Most residential properties are single-family row houses of two and three stories. According to the 1990 Census, the owner occupancy rate in the area ranged from 55% to 81%. This compares unfavorably with a 1990 citywide owner occupancy rate of 89%. The statistics indicate the existence of vacant structures within the area. The statistics also reflect the fact that larger row houses within the neighborhood had been converted into multi-family rental apartments. The portion of the Redevelopment Area with the most marked degree of vacancy and demolition had a 55% owner occupancy rate in 1990.

While residential is the predominant land use, the Redevelopment Area also contains institutional, commercial, and public land uses. The principal institutional property located in the Redevelopment Area is a vacant hospital complex, last occupied by Mt. Sinai Hospital of Allegheny Health Systems. Commercial land uses include a small neighborhood commercial district on the 1400 block of S. 5<sup>th</sup> Street, opposite the hospital complex, and a supermarket located on the block bounded by Washington Avenue, Randolph Street, Federal Street, and S. 6<sup>th</sup> Street. Saks Playground, which occupies an entire city block bounded by Washington Avenue, S. 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Federal Street, and S. 5<sup>th</sup> Street, and the George Washington Elementary School, on the 1100 block of S. 5<sup>th</sup> Street, are the area's public land uses.

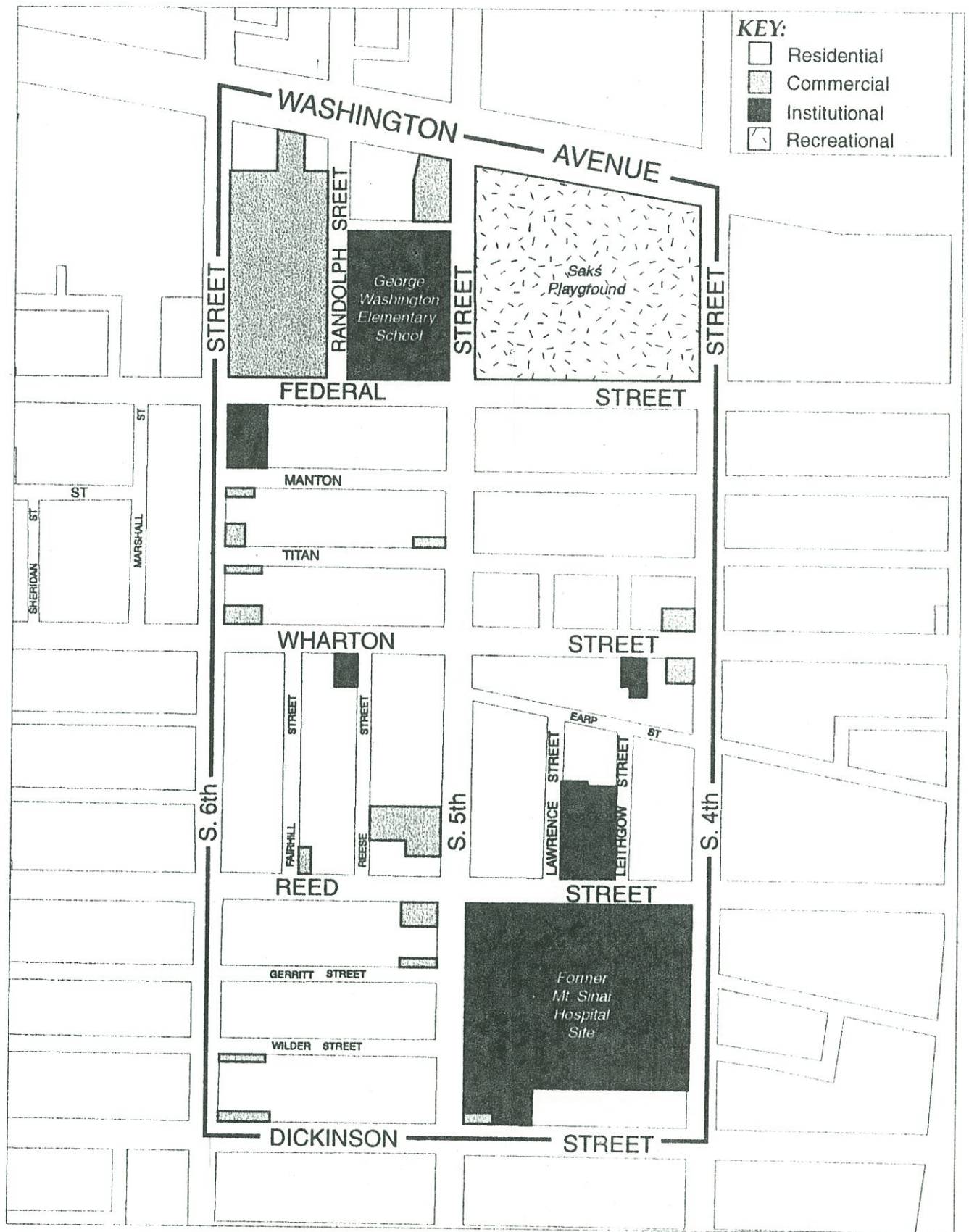
#### V. EXISTING ZONING

The current zoning of the Jefferson Square Redevelopment Area is a residential, commercial, and recreational categories. As shown on the Existing Zoning map, residential districts occupy the greatest amount of land area. Residential properties are zoned R-10, Residential and R-10A, Residential to permit attached single- and multi-family housing. This category also permits the churches, school, and hospital found in the Redevelopment Area. The existing zoning closely resembles present land uses as a result of a zoning remapping completed in 1979. The supermarket is zoned C-7, Commercial and neighborhood commercial is zoned C-2, Commercial. The playground is zoned Recreational.

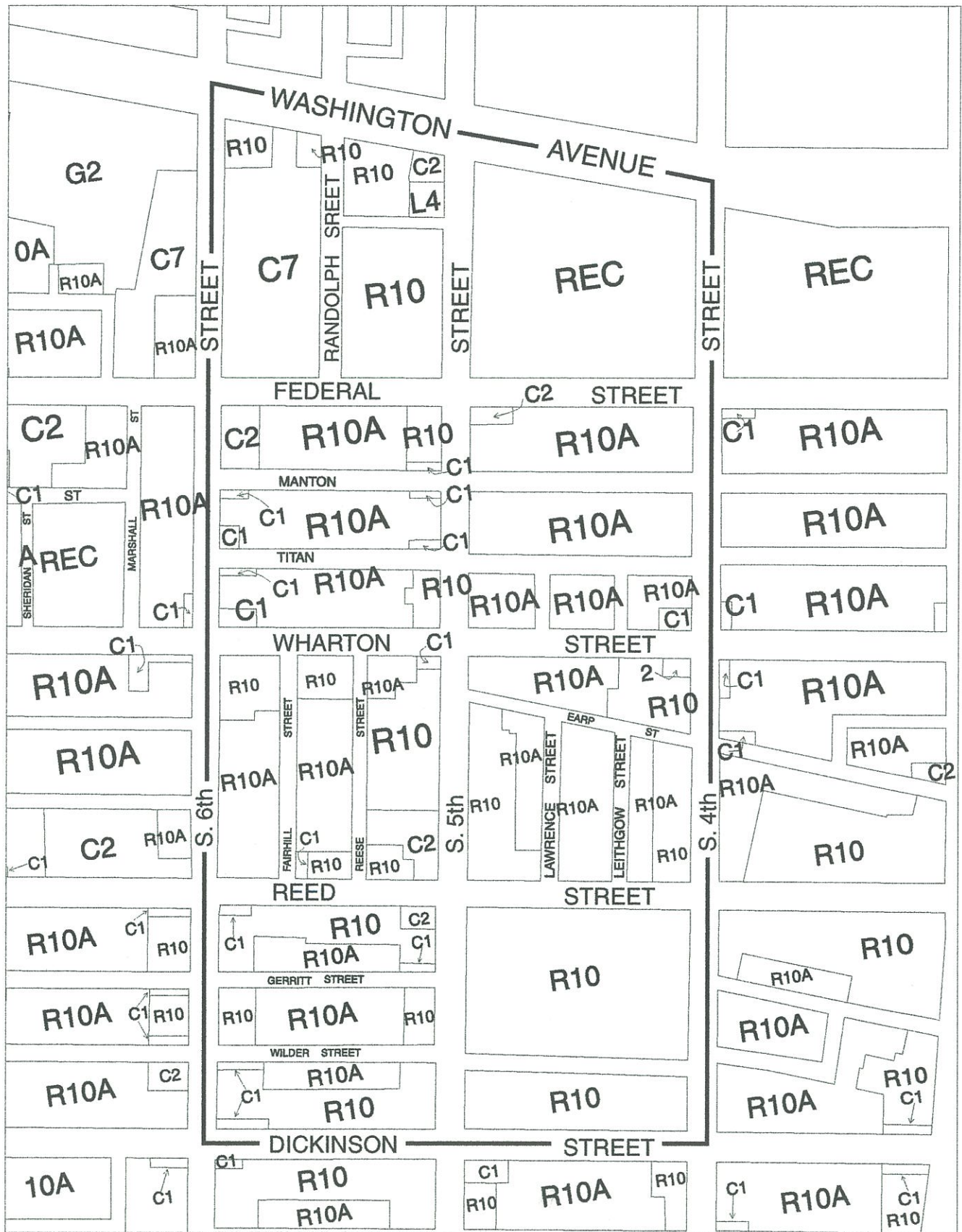
#### VI. PROPOSED LAND USE AND ZONING

As previously noted, the Jefferson Square Community Development Corporation was created to improve the housing available within the Redevelopment Area. The Jefferson Square CDC has developed a revitalization strategy for the area that requires the assemblage of property on blocks where vacant lots and structures are most concentrated. Utilizing the assembled vacant lots, the CDC will construct new market-rate housing to broaden housing alternatives available to middle-income households in South Philadelphia. The Jefferson Square CDC will also rehabilitate vacant homes to improve

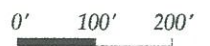


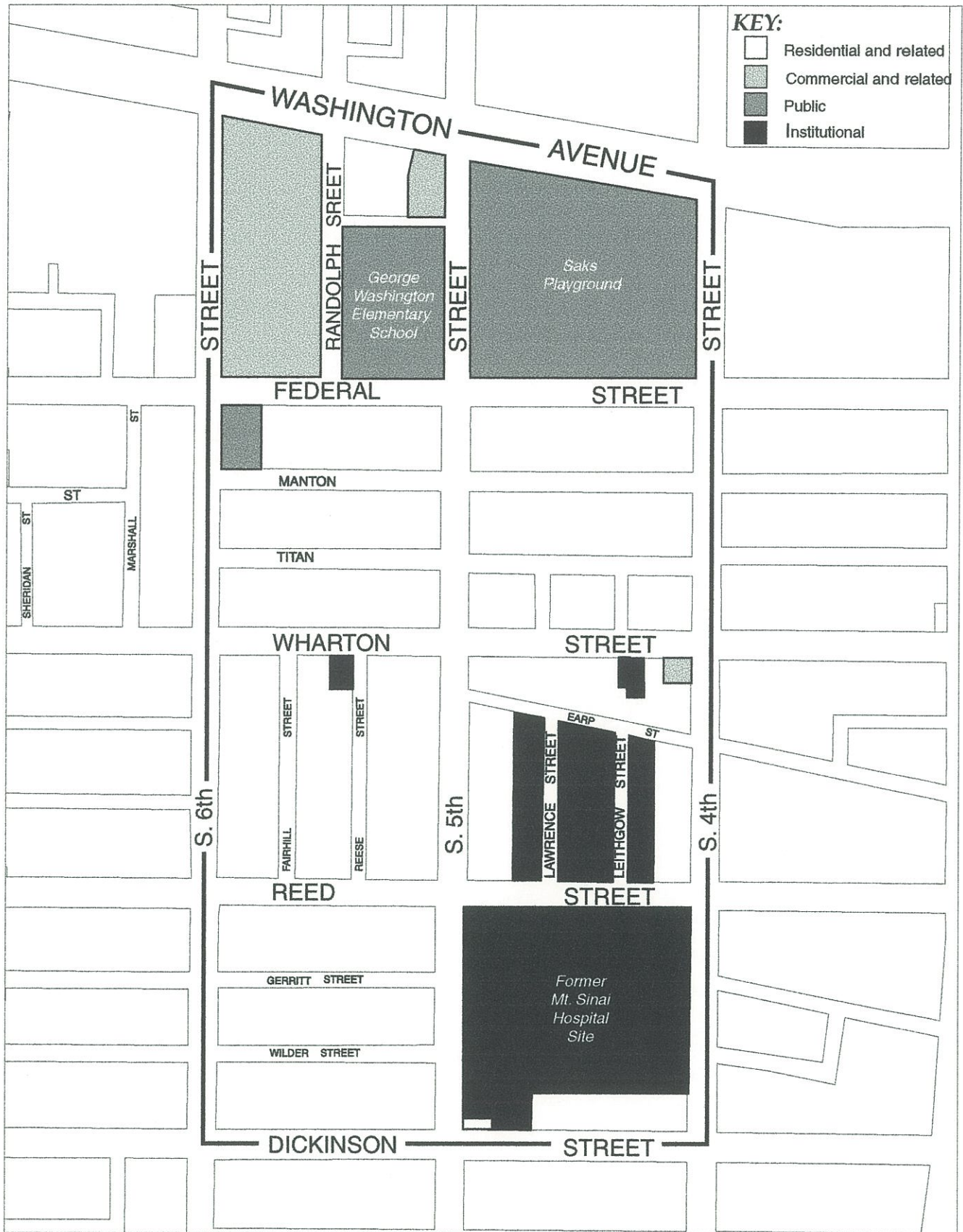


*Jefferson Square Urban Renewal Area*  
**EXISTING LAND USE**



*Jefferson Square Urban Renewal Area*  
**EXISTING ZONING**





*Jefferson Square Urban Renewal Area*  
**PROPOSED LAND USE**

0' 100' 200'

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the quality of housing available to moderate-income residents in the neighborhood. Housing development would primarily occur on Titan Street, Wharton Street, S. 4<sup>th</sup> Street, and S. 5<sup>th</sup> Street. The healthier flanking neighborhoods of Pennsport and the Italian Market will provide a supportive context for the new housing in the Redevelopment Area. In turn, housing improvements within the Redevelopment Area will keep these neighborhoods stable.

Off-street parking for the hospital complex has also been included in the revitalization strategy. The full redevelopment of the hospital complex will not be feasible without additional parking. The revitalization strategy calls for the creation of an accessory parking lot with 170 spaces for potential employees and visitors.

While project concepts are in place for the revitalization of Jefferson Square, they are not yet at the level of detail necessary to proceed to the construction phase. Accordingly, this Redevelopment Area Plan acknowledges the significance of the proposed redevelopment projects by incorporating them into the Proposed Land Use map. The Proposed Zoning map makes recommendations as to general, not specific, changes to the existing zoning to accommodate the proposed development projects. It should be noted that the planned accessory parking lot must adhere to screening, landscaping, and lighting standards for parking in residential districts set forth in the Philadelphia Zoning Code.

## VII. PROPOSED STREET CHANGES

Several changes will be made to the street layout in the Jefferson Square Redevelopment Area. Lawrence and Leithgow Streets between a) Titan and Wharton Streets and b) Earp and Reed Streets will be stricken and vacated. In addition, Earp Street between S. 4<sup>th</sup> and S. 5<sup>th</sup> Streets will be realigned and widened. No changes in street grades or traffic regulation are proposed.

## VIII. HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Redevelopment proposals requiring the demolition or alteration of locally designated historic structures, or structures deemed eligible for National Register Designation shall be reviewed by staff of the Philadelphia Historical Commission prior to receiving formal public agency approvals.

## IX. RELOCATION

Relocation of tenants or owners of occupied properties to advance specific redevelopment proposals will be kept to a minimum. All relocation activities will be conducted in accord with local, state, and federal procedures and standards.

## X. PROPOSED STANDARDS AND CONTROLS

Standards and controls for uses, density, land coverage, building area, parking, and off-street loading will be set by zoning code regulations. All impacts of redevelopment on the surrounding residential community will be minimized through development controls regulating site design, building materials, and landscaping. The Redevelopment Authority will establish these controls. Those restrictions will be reviewed and approved by the Planning Commission.

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

Redevelopment in the ~~Southwest Germantown~~ Redevelopment Area will be in conformity with the provisions of this Redevelopment Area Plan. It will be in accord 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.