

MOORE

MIEFLIN

SWANSON

SNYDER

WATER

FRONT

WOLF

RITNER

PORTER

SHUNK

OREGON

DILWORTH

WECCAOE

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

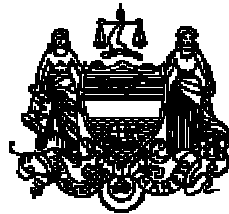
DELAWARE RIVER

95

CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

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Report by:
Brian Forschner, *South Philadelphia Community Planner*

INTRODUCTION

The South Delaware Redevelopment Area is a 191-acre section of South Philadelphia. The boundaries of the Redevelopment Area, shown in the map to the right, are as follows: Christopher Columbus Boulevard on the east, Oregon Avenue on the south, Interstate 95 on the west, and Moore Street on the north.

This Redevelopment Area contains industrial and commercial establishments and is separated from residential neighborhoods to the west by I-95, which is an elevated highway. The area has historically included industrial uses related to ports along the nearby Delaware River. Many industrial properties have become vacant and some have been redeveloped for retail purposes.

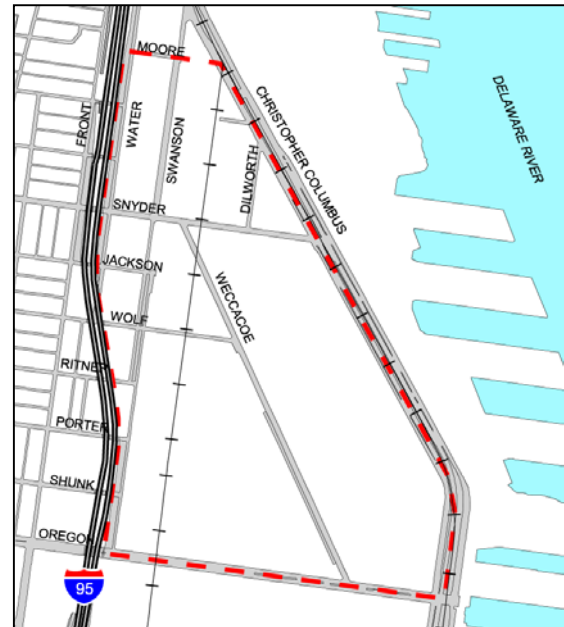
The impetus for this plan follows a major proposal to redevelop a 43-acre site south of Snyder Avenue, to construct a new shopping center. This and future redevelopment proposals will likely require City assistance in completing land assembly. A blight certification for the area was approved in April 2003.

Neighborhood context

The Redevelopment Area is entirely nonresidential and separated from residential areas, though several east-west streets extend under the I-95 viaduct and connect this area to nearby neighborhoods. The neighborhoods that border the Redevelopment Area are Whitman and Pennsport, both of which are relatively stable, dense rowhouse communities to the west of I-95. Snyder Avenue functions as the border between these neighborhoods and is a gateway to residential portions of South Philadelphia for traffic arriving from I-95 exit ramps and Christopher Columbus Boulevard. Oregon Avenue similarly serves as a gateway to South Philadelphia neighborhoods.

The general South Delaware waterfront area, including the Redevelopment Area, is undergoing a critical change in land use. As the demand for port-related industrial uses has

decreased over time, many large industrial parcels have become vacant. Due to the size of these parcels and their proximity to highways and a dense urban population, they have become attractive sites for large, auto-oriented retail centers. Several large retail centers such as Pier 70, which is east of Christopher Columbus Boulevard, have already emerged in this area.



Redevelopment Area Boundaries



Pier 70 Shopping Center, on east side of Christopher Columbus Blvd. near Swanson St.



Piers 78-80: wood products storage, on east side of Columbus Blvd. at Snyder Ave.

The port remains an important resource, however, and many viable maritime uses remain. An example is the major receiving and storage facility for wood products east of Christopher Columbus Boulevard on Piers 78-80, near Snyder Avenue.

OBJECTIVES

The general goal of this Redevelopment Area Plan is to establish a framework for future redevelopment proposals in this area. Policies for land use and zoning changes will direct the orderly development of the area and provide interested developers with a roadmap. The following are principle objectives of this plan:

- To eliminate the blighting influence of vacant and underutilized properties.
- To encourage the redevelopment of vacant and underutilized properties in a way that most benefits surrounding communities and the city.
- To facilitate ongoing redevelopment efforts in the area.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

A blight certification for this area was approved by the Planning Commission in April 2003. The Redevelopment Area qualifies for blight certification because it meets the following criteria:

1. Unsafe, unsanitary, inadequate or overcrowded conditions
2. Faulty street and lot layout
3. Economically or socially undesirable land use

Summary of Blight Certification

The area contains 17 vacant parcels that comprise approximately 35% of the total parcel area. These vacant properties contain vacant buildings and lots that are overgrown and trash-strewn, creating unsafe, unsanitary, inadequate or overcrowded conditions. Tax delinquency exists in 10 properties, or 16% of total properties, contributing to economically or socially undesirable land use. Additionally, many of the streets in this area are poorly

designed for modern auto and truck traffic and contribute to faulty street and lot layout.

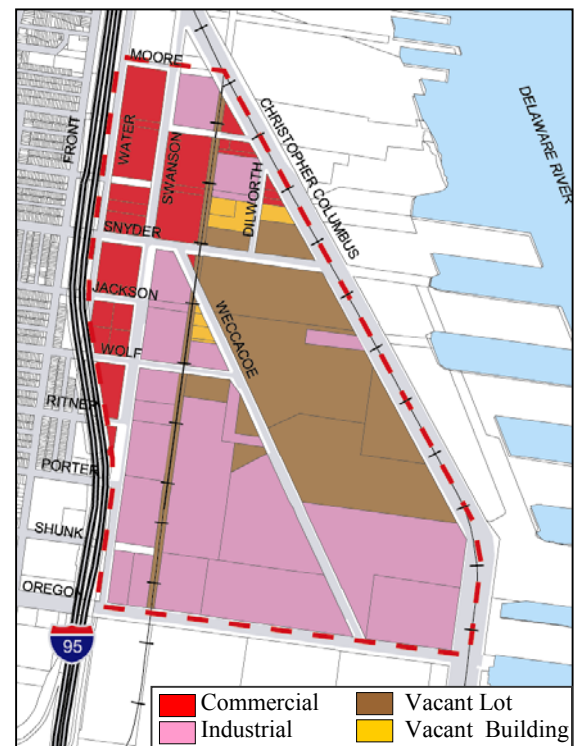
EXISTING LAND USE

The South Delaware Redevelopment Area contains a mix of industrial and commercial uses. The northern end of the Redevelopment Area is generally more commercial, while the southern end is more industrial. A concentration of vacant properties can be found in the area east of Weccacoe Street and in the vicinity of Dilworth Street.

The commercial uses, generally located along Swanson Street from Wolf Street to Moore Street, include large, auto-oriented retail



Vacant Building at Dilworth St. and Snyder Ave.



Existing Land Use

centers and some wholesale establishments. The retail generally serves nearby neighborhoods, although a recently renovated Target department store draws customers from the broader South Philadelphia community, Center City, and North Philadelphia.

The industrial uses include distribution, storage, light manufacturing and utility establishments, such as a large UPS facility on Oregon Avenue, an impoundment lot for the Philadelphia Parking Authority on Weccacoe Street, and a PECO/Exelon service facility at Oregon Avenue and Christopher Columbus Boulevard. Many of these uses are transportation-related and benefit not from proximity to Delaware River ports but from proximity a major highway interchange (I-76 and I-95) and the Walt Whitman Bridge, which provide excellent truck access.

The vacant properties in the Redevelopment Area are former industrial sites, the largest of which is a 43-acre vacant lot between Weccacoe Street and Christopher Columbus Boulevard, south of Snyder Avenue. This site was once occupied by an active railyard, until its functions were relocated to a larger facility to the south of this Redevelopment Area, closer to the Packer Avenue Terminal. The former railyard is currently the subject of a redevelopment proposal for a major shopping center.

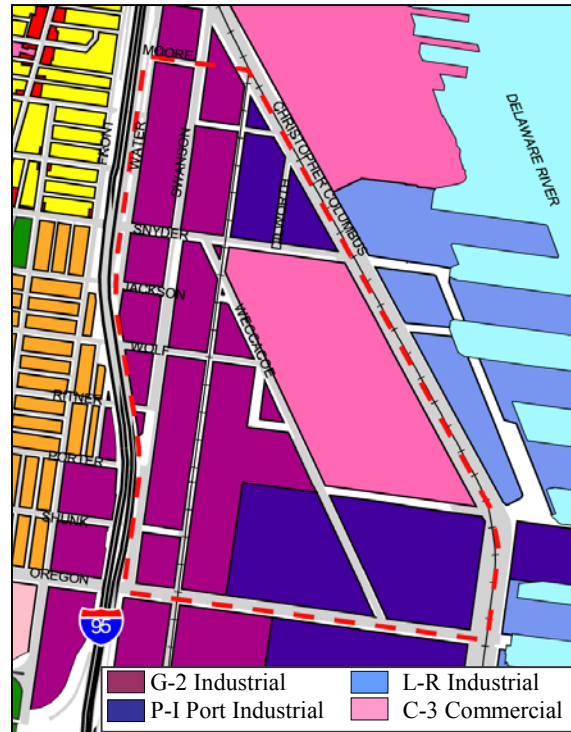
EXISTING ZONING

The area is mostly zoned industrial, though a recent rezoning has introduced a large area of commercial-zoned land between Weccacoe Street and Christopher Columbus Boulevard, in order to permit the proposed shopping center. Industrial classifications include G-2, General Industrial and LR, Least-Restricted Industrial. The commercial classification found in this area is C-3, which allows large-format shopping centers.

PROPOSED LAND USE

The South Delaware waterfront area is clearly in the midst of a land use transition. Several

properties formerly used for port-related industry have become vacant and some have been redeveloped for retail uses, demonstrating the decline in demand for port-related industry and the increased demand for retail. The continuation of this trend is illustrated in this



Existing Zoning



UPS Facility at Oregon Ave. and Weccacoe St.



Recent retail development on Swanson St. north of Snyder Ave.

Redevelopment Area, as a private developer has proposed a large-format shopping center to occupy the former railyard south of Snyder Avenue. This proposal will create over 600,000 square feet of retail that will serve a local and regional market. This developer also intends to redevelop vacant properties north of Snyder Avenue for retail uses. The same developer is responsible for the Snyder Plaza and Target shopping centers that are located near the intersection of Swanson Street and Snyder Avenue.

This Redevelopment Plan recognizes and supports this land use transition. New retail uses can benefit the city by improving services available to local neighborhoods and retaining residents' spending in the city. To the extent that the proposed goods and services are not already available in suburban communities, new retail uses can also help in attracting shoppers from outside the city.

This plan also recognizes the importance, however, of retaining viable existing and potential industrial properties. Though the importance of proximity to water-based transportation in the area has declined, it remains an important city and regional asset. The area's superior truck access and distance from residential uses are additional characteristics that make portions of the area appropriate for industrial uses.

PROPOSED ZONING CHANGES

The zoning for the new shopping center site has been changed from G-2 Industrial to C-3 Commercial to accommodate the new development. If further retail development is to occur north of Snyder Avenue, as the developer has proposed, additional rezonings will be considered as part of a review of specific development plans.

PROPOSED STREET CHANGES

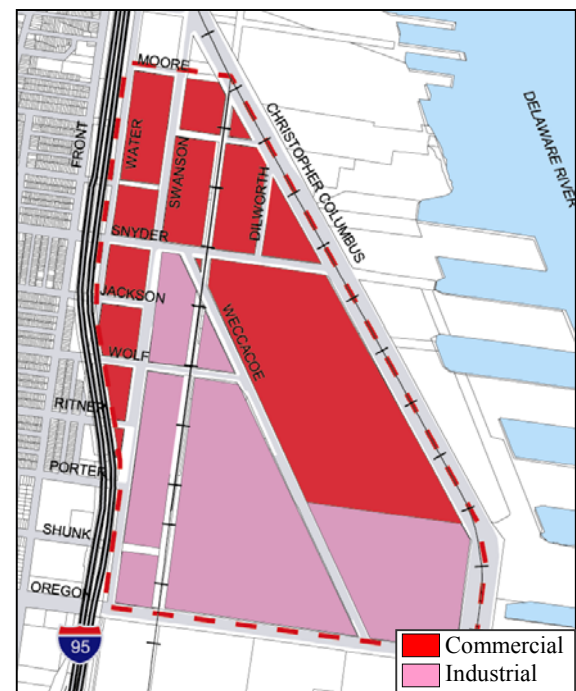
Many transportation changes have been proposed in the face of changing land uses in the area. As indicated earlier, the developer of the new shopping center intends to build a

future phase of retail north of Snyder Avenue, on the mostly vacant properties on either side of Dilworth Street. If this development moves forward, it would require the striking of Dilworth Street between Snyder Avenue and Christopher Columbus Boulevard. The City will evaluate this street change when development plans are finalized.

The developer is also proposing streetscape improvements throughout the retail portions of the area. Such improvements could complement the existing and proposed retail development in the area and enhance connections with nearby South Philadelphia neighborhoods. The Planning Commission supports the concept of these improvements and will work with private and public entities to clarify funding and implementation.

The Planning Commission has approved an ordinance to strike the 2200 block of Water Street, allowing for the expansion of a wholesale retail establishment located at Swanson and Jackson Streets.

Additionally, SEPTA intends to re-align several bus routes in the area, including 7, 25, 64, 29, and 79 so as to better serve future retail



Proposed Land Use

uses in the area.

RELOCATION

There are no anticipated residential relocations expected for this area, although relocation of a business may be necessary in the development of the new shopping center. In the event that relocation is necessary, all relocation will be accomplished in accordance with the terms and conditions of the federal Uniform Relocation Act.

ESTIMATED COSTS OF REDEVELOPMENT

Estimated costs will be provided by the Redevelopment Authority as project proposals become better defined.

ILLUSTRATIVE SITE PLAN

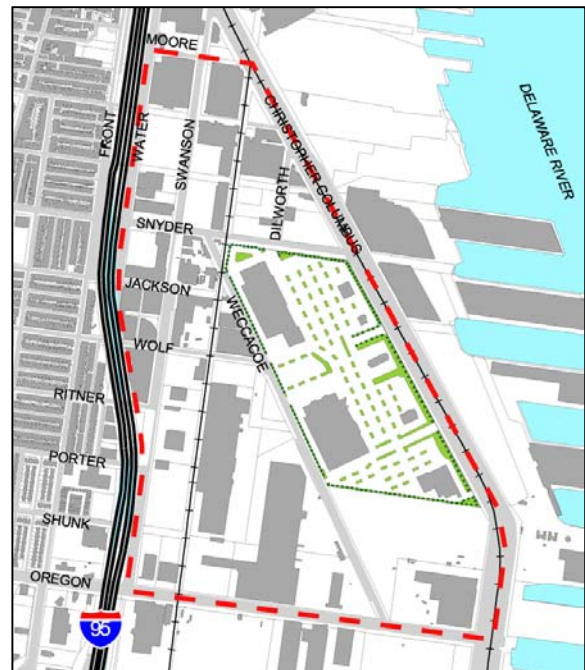
The illustrative site plan on this page includes the proposed shopping center between Christopher Columbus Boulevard and Weccacoe Street south of Snyder Avenue. The development will include two large anchor tenants and several smaller stores, with ample off-street parking. Landscaping and trees will be provided along the edges and throughout the development. Entrances to the center will be placed on Christopher Columbus Boulevard, Snyder Avenue and Weccacoe Street.

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 South Delaware 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 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.



Illustrative Site Plan