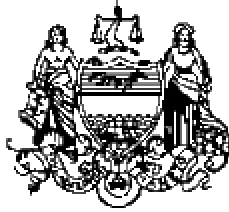


**Amendment to the
44th & Aspen Redevelopment Area Plan**



Philadelphia City Planning Commission
April 2005



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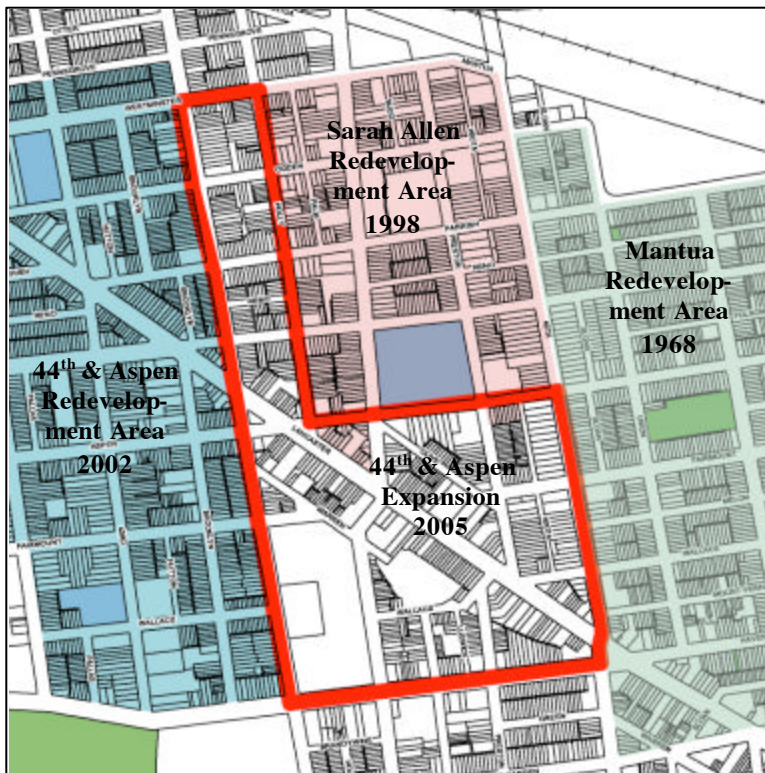
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INTRODUCTION

This plan expands the 44th & Aspen Redevelopment Area, approved in 2002. The original redevelopment area is located between 42nd and 48th Streets, and from Haverford Avenue on the south to Pennsgrove Street on the north. Its purpose was to enable property acquisitions for the rebuilding of the Mill Creek public housing. The first phase of that rebuilding effort is now complete, consisting of 80 rental homes and 40 homeownership units and named The Lucien E. Blackwell Homes. The new low-rise housing is shown on the cover of this report, and on page 2. Eventually this housing initiative, carried out by the Philadelphia Housing Authority (PHA) with a \$35 million HOPE VI grant from HUD, will produce 788 units covering 17 blocks in West Philadelphia.



This Amendment extends the redevelopment area from 42nd Street to the new eastern boundary at 40th Street. The purpose is to allow continued and expanded housing renewal by PHA, and to facilitate residential and commercial redevelopment by private developers, non-profits and CDCs. The study area covers approximately 40 acres in an area bounded by 42nd Street, Westminister Avenue, Holly Street, Aspen Street, 40th Street and Haverford Avenue. It joins the 44th & Aspen Redevelopment Area to with two other nearby redevelopment areas: the Sarah Allen and Mantua Redevelopment Areas (see map below).



NEIGHBORHOOD CONDITIONS

The expansion zone between 40th and 42nd Streets is located in the Belmont neighborhood. Belmont is a residential area bisected by historic Lancaster Avenue, a diagonal street that is the neighborhood commercial corridor serving several nearby neighborhoods including Mantua, West Powelton and Mill Creek. The Route 10 Subway Surface trolley is an important transit route on the Avenue. The Lancaster Avenue



commercial district has an active business association, and a commercial corridor market study was recently prepared with sponsorship from Peoples Emergency Center CDC (PECCDC). Commercial revitalization along the Avenue is a continuous process involving the programs of the Philadelphia Commercial Development Corp. (PCDC) and supported by the Lancaster Avenue Business Association and PECCDC.

The housing in Belmont dates back to the late 1800s and early 1900s. However, today's housing conditions are widely varied. In the southern section below Lancaster Avenue, vacant land is a predominant feature and the area is blighted by abandonment and disinvestment. One notable exception is Marshall Shephard Village, a modern 104-unit low rise apartment complex for senior citizens. Located at NW corner 41st & Haverford, these apartments were recently renovated by the Philadelphia Housing Authority (PHA). The housing was originally sponsored by Mt. Olivet Church, located on 42nd St. opposite Wallace St. Another church, the House of Prayer, was recently constructed at NWC Haverford & Preston Streets. Despite these strengths, the southern portion of Belmont is clearly blighted and in need



Top: Redevelopment Area boundary in red; the blue color signifies Belmont Elementary School.

Bottom: In the original 44th & Aspen Redevelopment Area, the Lucien E. Blackwell Homes are being constructed as a replacement for the former Mill Creek public housing. (Photo: 45th & Fairmount)

of improvement. PHA and other developers are interested in rebuilding the area, and this Redevelopment Area Plan will facilitate acquisitions to support those kinds of initiatives.

A community plan was recently prepared for an area that includes the Belmont neighborhood to the south of Lancaster Avenue. The West Powelton Saunders Park Neighborhood Plan was funded by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) and sponsored by PECCDC. The plan was prepared in 2004 by a consultant team led by Kise Straw & Kolodner, Inc. (KSK). The planning process had extensive input from community residents and the staff of the Philadelphia City Planning Commission. Several of the recommendations from the 2004 plan are reflected in this Redevelopment Area Plan.

To the north of Lancaster Ave., the Belmont neighborhood is more solidly residential and vacant lots are relatively few in number. The area is being revitalized because of housing investment by two developers: Friends Rehabilitation Program (FRP) and Belmont Affordable Housing. More than 200 new units were completed during the past 10 years. The local community group, Belmont Improvement Assn., had extensive input and involvement.

OBJECTIVES

The general goals of this Redevelopment Area Plan are to enable publicly-assisted acquisition in support of community development projects, and provide a framework for redevelopment proposals. Clear policies and priorities will permit the full potential of the study area to be realized. The plan has five specific objectives:

- Housing renewal and development on vacant tracts of land
- Commercial revitalization along Lancaster Avenue
- Rehabilitation of vacant homes and vacant commercial buildings



Top: Marshall Shephard Village with apartments for senior citizens, 41st & Haverford. The Mt. Olivet church is the larger structure in the background.

Middle: Typical neighborhood housing.
(Photo: 4100 block Brown St.)

Bottom: Lancaster Avenue commercial district

- Eliminate the blighting influence of undesirable land uses by encouraging the redevelopment of vacant land and buildings and underutilized properties
- Replace substandard or economically obsolete buildings with new construction where rehabilitation is impractical.

This 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, institutional, mixed-use and commercial uses at appropriate locations. These proposals are in accordance with The Plan for West Philadelphia, which constitutes the City's Comprehensive Plan for this area.

There are small geographic areas where this redevelopment area overlaps with a previously-approved redevelopment area. In these cases, the previous redevelopment areas are superseded by this Plan.

SUMMARY OF BLIGHT CERTIFICATION STUDY OF APRIL 2005

The same study area is being certified as blighted by the Planning Commission concurrent with the approval of this Redevelopment Area Plan. 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

Specific documentation of blight in this study area:

- 190 vacant properties
- 607 Code violations
- 196 properties are included in a tax delinquency lien sale
- Several instances of faulty street and lot layout.

These conditions have a deteriorating effect on the neighborhood. A finding of blight is warranted.

EXISTING LAND USE

Residential is the predominant land use. Commercial use exists along Lancaster Avenue, and a large shoppers' parking lot is situated to the south of Lancaster Avenue in the 4000 block (through to Wallace St. in the rear). There are five churches in the study area, and the Belmont Elementary School is just to the north of Aspen St. See map on page 5.

PROPOSED LAND USE

The "Proposed Changes in Land Use" map (page 5) reflects several development proposals and improvements:

Housing development in vicinity of Budd & Wallace Streets

This is a large area of vacant land comprising approximately 22 vacant lots. The new residential development will also include home sites fronting on Preston St. and 41st St. The new housing should extend onto a portion of the City-owned shoppers' parking lot on the



north side of the 4000 block of Wallace St. The parking lot will continue to serve the shopping area, but the parking area will be reduced in size and redesigned.

Mini-parks at three locations:

- 42nd St. & Lancaster Ave.
- 42nd & Warren Streets
- Preston & Wallace Streets

These triangular-shaped sites are recommended for public mini-parks. Nearby homes and businesses will benefit from landscaping, passive recreation, blight removal and reduced density.



Residential use at SW corner 40th & Aspen Streets

The existing commercial building is vacant and inadequately designed. The 40th Street corridor, the border between Belmont and Mantua, is planned for residential renewal; and this property is zoned residential. Accordingly, this corner site is recommended for residential use.

Housing Rehabilitation

The Plan also encourages housing rehabilitation. It is assumed that scattered vacant homes will be renovated and brought back into productive use, except in areas where larger-scale redevelopment is recommended.

PROPOSED ZONING CHANGES

No changes in zoning are proposed at this time. The projects that are envisioned will require more planning and design work before the appropriate zoning strategies can be determined. Therefore, 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, residential redevelopment and commercial revitalization, major goals of this plan, are generally allowed under existing zoning.

PROPOSED STREET CHANGES

No changes in street layout are required at this time. However in the long term, specific development proposals may involve striking of streets or a new street pattern, depending on final designs. Minor reconfiguration of streets will be beneficial for the new housing and mini-park in the vicinity of Budd, Wallace & Preston Streets; and the Warren Street dead-end (east of 41st St.) should be eliminated. However in general, street changes should await further planning and design work for specific development projects.

RELOCATION

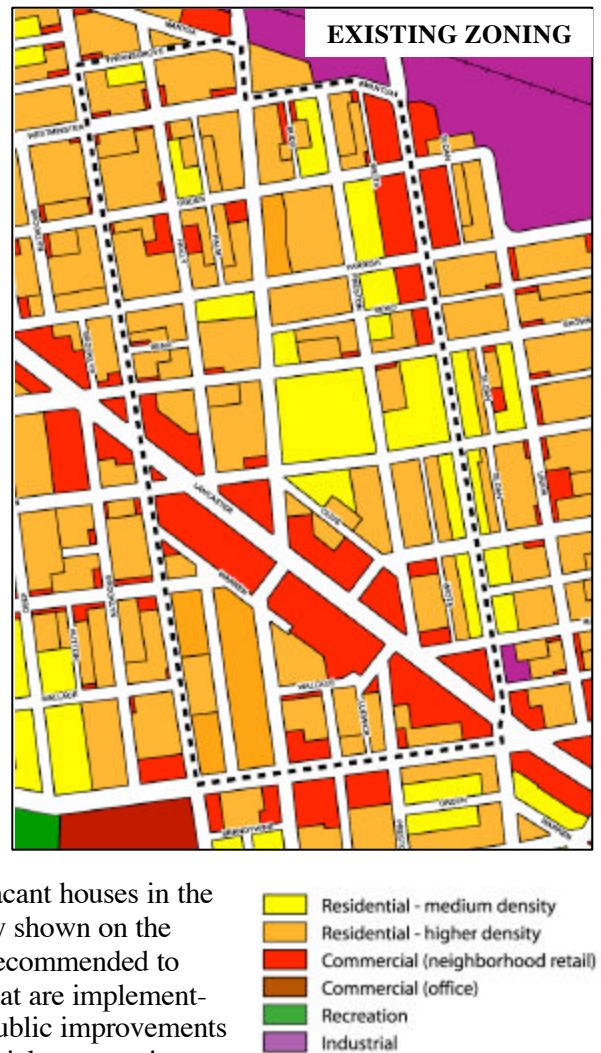
Relocation is not proposed at this time; however some may be necessary in the future. All relocation will be accomplished in accordance with the terms and conditions of the federal Uniform Relocation Act.

ESTIMATED COSTS OF REDEVELOPMENT

The Redevelopment Authority, in consultation with the developers, will prepare cost estimates when plans are more fully developed.

ILLUSTRATIVE SITE PLAN

The Illustrative Site Plan (next page) is a conceptual plan showing new buildings on important opportunity sites. The Plan shows many new homes near Budd & Wallace Streets, a row of homes on the 4100 block of Warren St., new homes on 40th St., and new stores in two sections of Lancaster Ave. The Illustrative Site Plan also assumes the rehabilitation of scattered vacant houses in the redevelopment area. Although not specifically shown on the Illustrative Site Plan, site improvements are recommended to support the various redevelopment projects that are implemented. New sidewalks, street trees and similar public improvements should accompany new housing and commercial construction.





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 community will be minimized through development controls regulating to 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 and the United States Housing Act of 1949, as amended, regulate redevelopment and urban renewal in the City of Philadelphia. Redevelopment in this area will be in conformity with the provisions of this Plan and with the requirements of any Urban Renewal Plan prepared by the Redevelopment Authority 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.

