

**45th & Sansom
Redevelopment Area Plan**

February 2002

PCPC

Philadelphia City Planning Commission

CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

John F. Street, *Mayor*

Philadelphia City Planning Commission



Gary Hack, *Chairman*

Jeffrey S. Batoff, *Vice Chair*

Lynette M. Brown-Sow

James J. Cuorato

Janice Davis

Edward C. Keenan

Gloria Levin

Marcia Moore Makadon

Estelle Richman

Maxine Griffith, AICP, *Executive Director*

Richard L. Lombardo, *Deputy Executive Director*

Community Planning Division

Joseph Leonardo, *Director*

Report by:

Richard Redding, *West Philadelphia Planner*

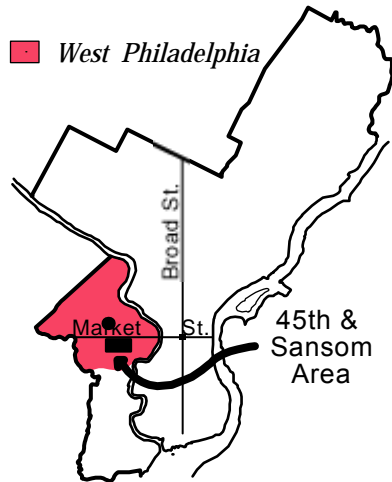
45th & Sansom Redevelopment Area Plan

Philadelphia City Planning Commission
February 2002

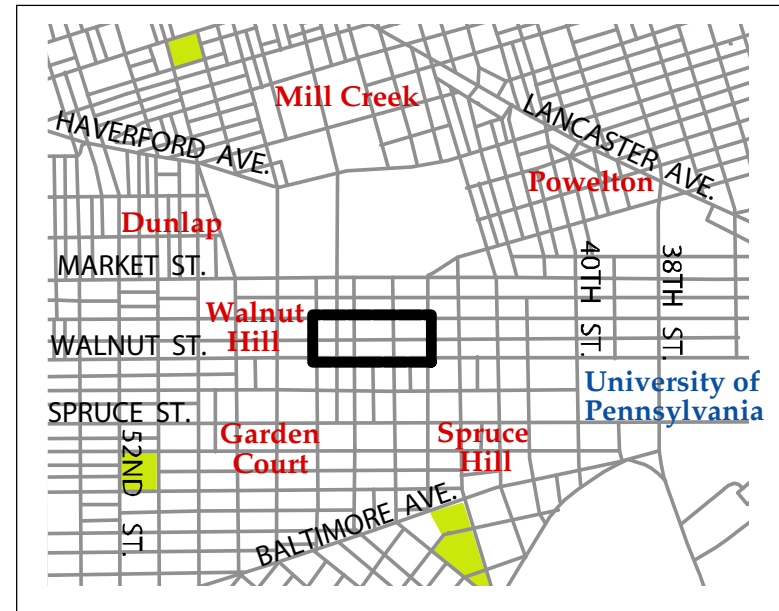
INTRODUCTION

The 45th & Sansom Redevelopment Area is a 15-acre section of West Philadelphia spanning portions of the Spruce Hill and Walnut Hill neighborhoods. The precise boundary of the Redevelopment Area is shown on the map on page 3: the boundaries are 44th Street on the east, Chestnut Street on the north, Farragut Street on the west and Walnut Street to the south.

This Redevelopment Area has been created to facilitate housing rehabilitation proposed by a local Community Development Corporation. Redevelopment Area status will also facilitate blight removal in an area that contains a significant concentration of vacant properties. There are 46 vacant buildings and 9 vacant lots in the area bounded by 44th Street, Chestnut Street, Farragut Street and Walnut Street.



The study area is located within the general University City area. The campus of the University of Pennsylvania is located several blocks to the east. University City contains college, hospital and research campuses and many residential neighborhoods. For the most part, the neighborhoods of University are in good condition and the private



housing market is strong. However within University City, the 45th & Sansom vicinity stands out as a pocket of deterioration, vacancy and blight.

Approximately 800 people live within the boundaries of the Redevelopment Area, while the population of the larger Spruce Hill and Walnut Hill neighborhoods is approximately 15,000 (based on the 2000 U.S. Census). The population of these neighborhoods is economically and racially diverse. Many of the households have located here for reasons that are unrelated to the universities; but the population also includes many people who depend on the nearby universities and hospitals for employment or education.

This is an area that has significant architectural and historical significance. A portion of the Redevelopment Area (4400 blocks of Chestnut, Sansom and Walnut Streets) is located within the West Philadelphia Streetcar Suburb Historic District.

The 45th & Sansom vicinity contains a mixture of housing types including 3-story row homes, 3-story storefront buildings with apartments, and larger apartment buildings. Homeownership rates are well below the norm for the City. This is because there are many apartment buildings providing rental housing for families, individuals and students; and even the smaller homes are sometimes occupied by unrelated individuals and/or students.

Despite relatively low rates of homeownership, the neighborhoods are well-organized. Neighborhood organizations are looking for ways to increase homeownership and improve the environment for



4400 block Sansom Street, south side

family living in this area. Local community groups have prepared neighborhood plans, and this redevelopment plan is consistent with those plans. The Walnut Hill community wants to have a senior citizens center developed in their area. Major efforts are underway to improve the quality of education in these neighborhoods. A community-based organization, The Partnership CDC is working to

rehabilitate homes in this area. At the same time, a Special Services District is working to keep University City clean and safe. The University City District provides services to the neighborhoods as well as campus areas, and its Board has representation from area universities, institutions and community groups. In the Spruce Hill and Walnut Hill neighborhoods, there are a number of partnerships working toward revitalization, and the proposals for the 45th & Sansom area are just one among many community-driven initiatives.

Among the various local partners there is consensus that problems near 45th & Sansom must be addressed. Community leaders have met with the City to discuss a proposal for rehabilitating homes in the 4400 and 4500 blocks of Sansom Street. The housing will be for affordable homeownership. Creation of this Redevelopment Area will allow the City to assist with acquisition if needed.

In reviewing the community's proposal, it was apparent that the housing rehabilitation would be undermined by severely blighted conditions between 46th Street and Farragut Street. Most of these buildings are vacant and exhibiting structural problems. Some of the homes are designated "imminently dangerous" by the Department of Licenses & Inspections. This area is in the path of the former Mill Creek (now in a sewer) and it is likely that the presence of the stream, combined with poor engineering in the original development, is contributing to the blight. These properties are not recommended for rehabilitation. Instead, demolition and redevelopment is needed to make the area safer and create a better environment for the rehabilitation proposed for adjacent blocks. Therefore the planning concept for the 45th & Sansom Redevelopment Area calls for housing rehabilitation to the east of 46th, and blight removal / redevelopment to the west of 46th Street. No changes are proposed for properties facing Chestnut or Walnut Streets.

The 45th & Sansom 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 uses and open space at appropriate locations. These proposals are in accordance with The Plan for West Philadelphia 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 three specific objectives:

- to encourage rehabilitation of vacant homes,
- to eliminate the blighting influence of undesirable land uses by encouraging the redevelopment of vacant land and buildings, and underutilized properties, and
- to replace substandard or economically obsolete buildings with open space or new housing where rehabilitation is impractical.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The subject properties were recertified as blighted on February 20, 2002 by the Philadelphia City Planning Commission. Designation for redevelopment is warranted by the following criteria having been



satisfied:

- Unsafe, unsanitary, inadequate conditions
- Economically undesirable land use

These conditions have a deteriorating effect on the neighborhood.

Of the 151 properties in this area, 55 are vacant. Many properties have unsafe and unsanitary conditions which are representative of economically undesirable land use. Tax delinquency is pervasive (38% of privately-owned properties are two or more years tax delinquent).

EXISTING LAND USE (see map on page 3)

Residential is the predominant land use. Sansom Street contains mostly 3-story homes with the exception of the newer mid-rise apartment building for senior citizens (4508 Sansom). On Chestnut and Walnut Streets, there are large commercial properties (gas stations, convenience store) responding to the higher traffic volume on those streets. A major institutional use is the Mercy Douglas Human Services Center in the 4500 block of Chestnut Street. There are several large apartment buildings on Chestnut and Walnut Streets.

PROPOSED LAND USE

The "Proposed Changes in Land Use" map on page 5 has been prepared to lay the groundwork for appropriate treatment following removal of blight. In this regard, there are three rows of deteriorated housing recommended for replacement with open space or new housing:

- 4611-21 Sansom St.
- 4610-20 Sansom St.
- 128-38 S. 46th St.





The Plan also proposes housing rehabilitation, and anticipates that the remaining vacant homes (not included in the preceding list of addresses) will be renovated and brought back into productive use.

ILLUSTRATIVE SITE PLAN

The Illustrative Site Plan (page 6) depicts the removal of blighted buildings to the west of 46th Street as listed above under “Proposed Land Use.” In place of the blighted buildings, open space is recommended as the new or interim use. The open space should be well maintained, preferably under the stewardship of a local community-based organization. If new housing is eventually built, it should be designed to fit in with the historic qualities of the area. New homes could be designed as attached or semi-detached units. The community needs to have input into any plan for new housing.

Also implicit in this Illustrative Site Plan is the rehabilitation of vacant homes on the 4400 and 4500 blocks of Sansom Street. Rehabilitation should also be designed in a manner that is sensitive to the existing architectural fabric.

Although not shown on the Illustrative Site Plan, site improvements are recommended to support the revitalization projects proposed in this plan. This will involve improvements to the streetscape, including new sidewalks, street trees, landscaping, and lighting. Care should be taken to ensure that these site improvements are in keeping with the architectural character of the area.

PROPOSED STREET CHANGES

No changes in street layout are proposed.

RELOCATION

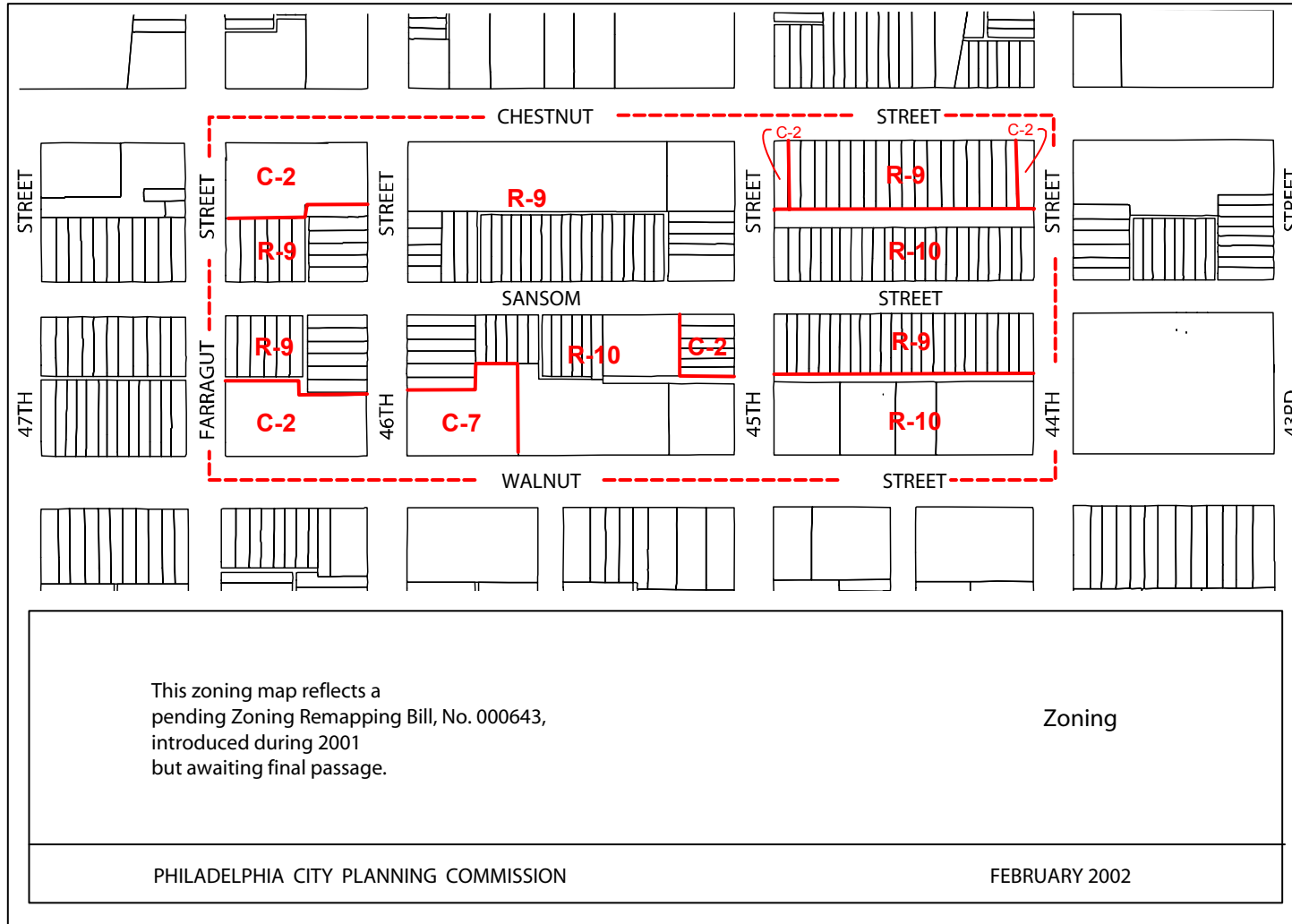
Residential relocations may be needed for five properties to accomplish blight removal west of 46th Street.

ESTIMATED COSTS OF REDEVELOPMENT

The total cost of redevelopment is estimated at \$7 million.



Entrance to the playground at NW corner 45th & Sansom



This zoning map reflects a pending Zoning Remapping Bill, No. 000643, introduced during 2001 but awaiting final passage.

Zoning

PROPOSED ZONING CHANGES

In much of this area, zoning is in the process of being remapped. A Zoning Bill (No. 000643) has been introduced into City Council and is awaiting final passage. The new zoning is shown on page 8. Aside from this remapping, no further changes in the zoning are proposed as part of this Redevelopment Plan. 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, a major goal of this plan, is generally allowed under existing zoning.

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 45th & Sansom 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.



4400 block Sansom Street, north side