

**54th & Columbia
Redevelopment Area Plan**

Philadelphia City Planning Commission

JANUARY 2004

CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

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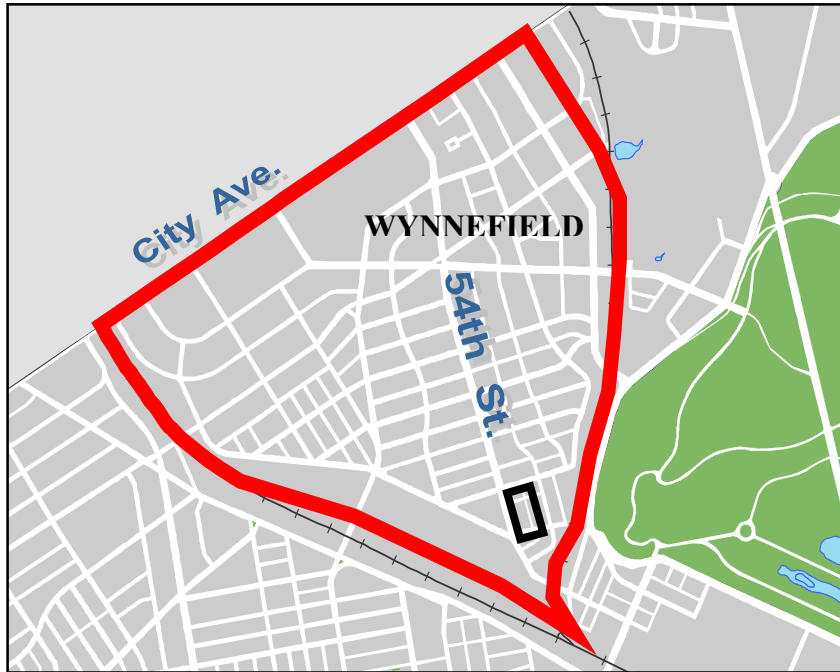
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54th & Columbia Redevelopment Area Plan

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The 54th & Columbia Redevelopment Area is bounded by N. 54th Street, Columbia Avenue, Ruby Street and Hazelhurst Street. The study area comprises one city block located in the Wynnefield neighborhood of West Philadelphia.

Wynnefield is situated along the city's border with Montgomery County. With a total population of approximately 16,000, it is one of the largest neighborhoods in West Philadelphia. The neighborhood contains many housing types and the housing is in generally good condition. However there is one large vacant property located on a major roadway in the community. The old fuel oil



The study area (black border) is located in the southern section of the Wynnefield neighborhood.

property at 1717-21 N. 54th Street has been vacant for many years and it is a blighting influence on the neighborhood.

The purpose of this redevelopment plan is to enable the City to acquire the vacant industrial property at 1717 N. 54th Street and make the land available for new residential or residential-related development.

The 54th & Columbia 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. A clear statement of land use policies and development priorities will permit the full potential of the study area to be realized.

The plan has four specific objectives:

- To enable publicly-assisted acquisition of vacant property where it is crucial for neighborhood stabilization and revitalization
- 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.
- to protect nearby housing from the negative effects of vacancy and blight

Existing Conditions

The block bounded by 54th, Columbia, Ruby and Hazelhurst has two non-residential properties fronting on 54th Street. The remainder of the study area contains row homes. The homes are predominantly single family in character and use.

Fifty-fourth Street is one of the main streets in the Wynnefield neighborhood. Properties on 54th Street have high visibility and prominence in the community.

Summary of Blight Certification of January 2004

A companion report entitled, “Blight Certification for the area bounded by N. 54th Street, Columbia Avenue, Ruby Street and Hazelhurst Street,” is being published concurrent with this Plan. The blight study covers the same study area and it concludes that a finding of blight is warranted because the property at 1717 N. 54th Street is vacant. The vacant site constitutes 27% of the land area within the blight certification boundary. It is “Unsafe,” according to the Department of Licenses and Inspections. It represents unsafe and inadequate conditions, and demonstrates economically and socially undesirable land use. Property values in the immediate vicinity are lower than the City norm, providing additional evidence of economically undesirable land use. The blight report finds that two of the criteria for blight are being met.

Existing Land Use

Single-family homes occupy a majority of the area. The two non-residential properties have frontage on 54th Street: a vacant industrial building and an occupied auto repair business. Therefore, existing

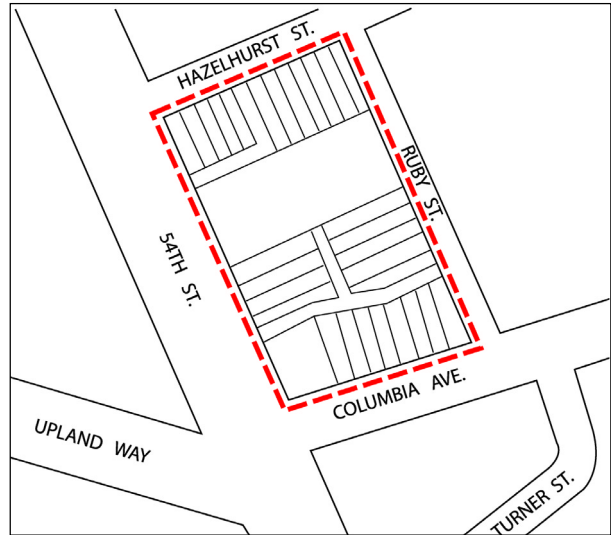


Aerial view of the study area and surroundings. The wide street bordering the left edge of the study area is S. 54th Street.

land use is predominantly residential with smaller amounts of vacant industrial and occupied industrial use.

Proposed Land Use

The entire block is proposed for “Residential” use. This land use category will generally allow for the development of new homes and residential-related open space or recreation uses. The property at 1717-21 N. 54th Street, a 19,250 sq. ft. vacant site extending through to Ruby Street, is currently being proposed for redevelopment with new housing. The same land use recommendation will pertain to the auto repair property at 54th & Columbia. While there is no current plan to redevelop the auto repair site, it is believed that from a planning perspective, residential is the ideal and best use at this location. It is also consistent with existing zoning.



The 54th & Columbia Redevelopment Area is also bordered by Ruby and Hazelhurst Streets. This view shows property lines within the block. The largest property, extending from 54th through to Ruby Street, is a vacant industrial site proposed for residential redevelopment.



Looking south along 54th Street. In the foreground is the side of a home fronting on Hazelhurst Street. In the background is the vacant industrial site at 1717-21 N. 54th Street.

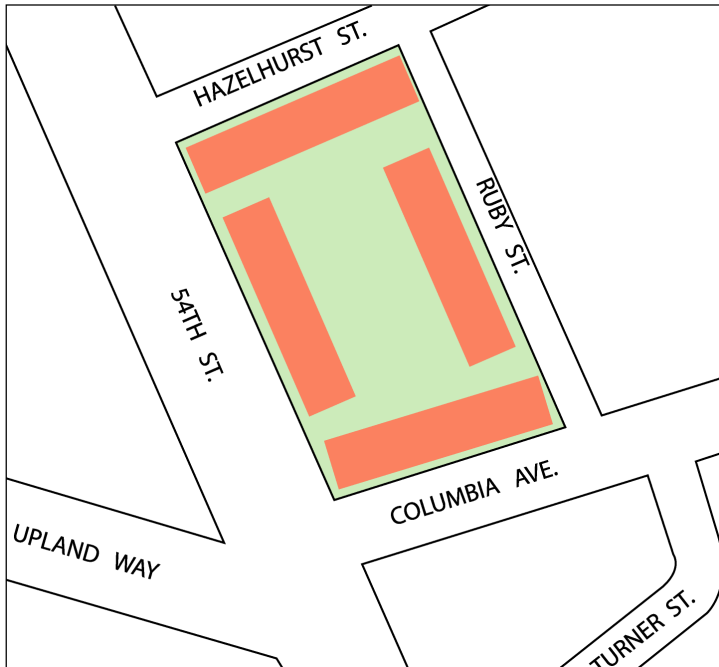
Existing and Proposed Zoning

The entire study area is currently zoned R-9A Residential, generally allowing row homes for single family occupancy. The proposed residential redevelopment is generally consistent with existing zoning, and therefore changes in the zoning are not proposed at this time. Proposed new development will require more planning and design work before any specific zoning strategies can be determined. 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.

Proposed Street Changes

No changes in the pattern of public streets are proposed at this time.



The Illustrative Site Plan shows housing and open space.

Estimated Cost of Redevelopment

Total development costs are estimated at \$1.5 million.

Illustrative Site Plan

The Illustrative Site Plan (left) is a long term, conceptual plan for the future. It shows residential development occupying the entire block, consistent with the general pattern of housing development in the area.

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 54th & Columbia 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. 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.



North side of Columbia Ave. between 54th and Ruby Streets.