

Strategies for Neighborhood Revitalization

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Philadelphia City Planning Commission

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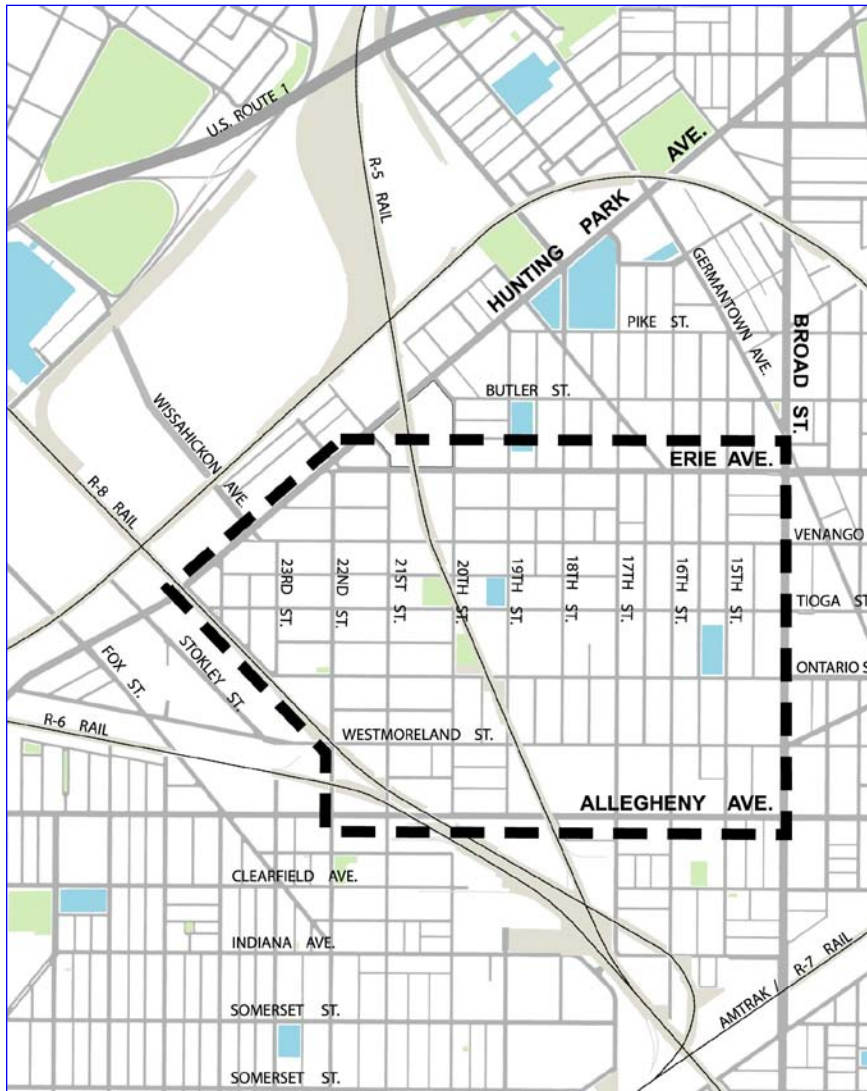
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Cover photos (clockwise from upper left):

- 1600 block Tioga St.
- Community clean-up
- Bouvier Street, 3300 block
- Smedley & Venango Streets

Study Area



Boundaries:

- Broad Street
- Erie Avenue
- Hunting Park Ave.
- R-8 Rail and 22nd St.
- Allegheny Avenue

History

“Tioga centers around 20th and Tioga Streets. The area was originally called Kenderton when it was subdivided around 1820 by Kenderton Smith. When the Reading Railroad station was built at Tioga Street in 1854, the neighborhood's name changed.” (from the website of the Nicetown-Tioga Branch, Free Library of Philadelphia)



1906 photo of the George H. Boker School, 22nd & Ontario

www.phillyhistory.org

George Henry Boker (1823-1890) was a poet, playwright, diplomat and prominent Philadelphian.

History

Tioga was home to various ethnic groups during the 1900s, including Irish, Polish and Jewish residents. Around 1960, larger numbers of African-Americans began to move into the neighborhood and today they comprise more than 90% of the population. Also during the 1960s, nearby manufacturing companies such as Budd Company and Midvale Steel started to reduce their workforce as industrial activity began a steep decline throughout the city. Tioga fell victim to urban decay and disinvestment, along with many other inner-city neighborhoods. The Tioga, Nicetown, and Westmoreland train stations were closed, trolleys were replaced by buses on Erie and Germantown Avenues, manufacturers disappeared and neighborhood population declined by an estimated 40% from 1950 through the 2000 Census.

Meanwhile another neighborhood employer, Temple University Health System, experienced tremendous growth in recent decades. Temple Health has more than 5,500 employees at this location.

Today, Tioga's community leaders are striving to keep the neighborhood stable so that revitalization can take hold in a neighborhood that boasts unparalleled transportation access within the region.



1925 photo of Great Northern Theatre
Broad St. below Erie Ave.
www.phillyhistory.org

Neighborhood Characteristics

Land Use

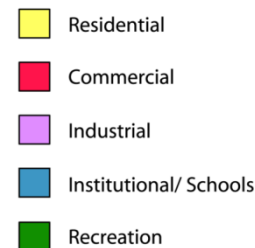
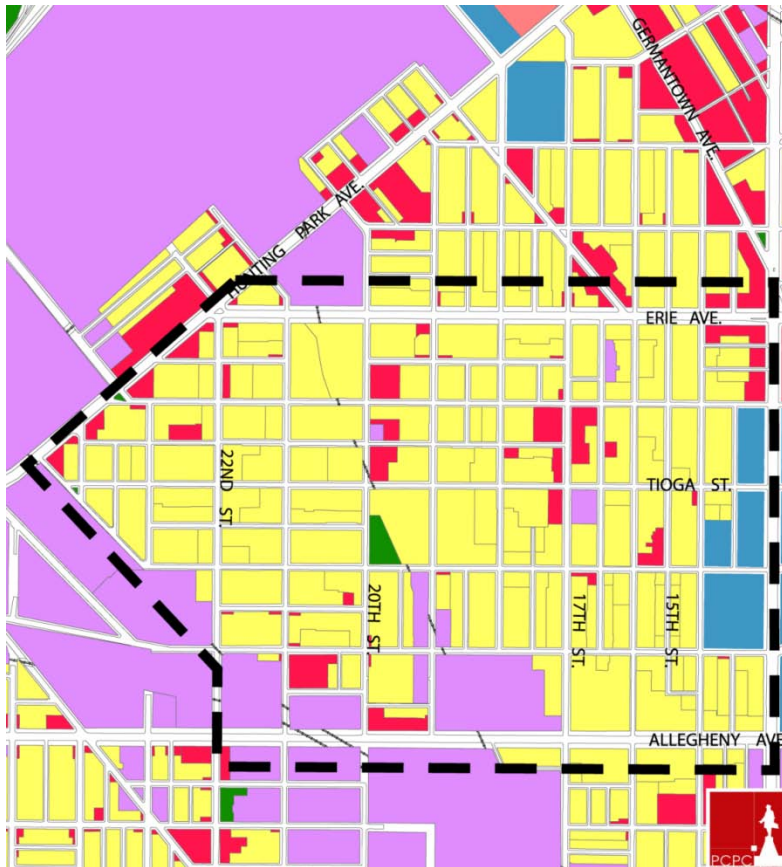
Tioga is a predominantly residential area. Neighborhood commercial areas are located on 17th, 20th, and 22nd Streets, but the number of stores has decreased over the years. Today there are only half as many stores compared to the situation in 1950.

To the east is the Broad & Erie transportation hub and the Temple University health complex. To the south is an industrial zone at Allegheny Avenue along the R-6 and R-8 rail lines.

To the west is the former industrial district known as Hunting Park West. To the north of Erie Avenue is a residential section with a relatively high rate of homeownership.

Zoning

This generalized land use map is based on existing zoning. Tioga's zoning was remapped in 2006 in a partnership between the Planning Commission and the community.



Neighborhood Characteristics

Demographic Profile



	Tioga	City
Total Population:	10,000	1,517,550
African American:	93.6%	43.2%
Under age 20:	31.0%	28.6%
Over age 64:	16.0%	14.1%
Homeownership:	53.0%	59.3%
Median Income:	\$20,000	\$30,746
% in Poverty:	32%	22%
Median Sale Price:*	\$48,000	\$95,000

Census data indicate that Tioga is economically distressed (based on income data, poverty rate and property values).

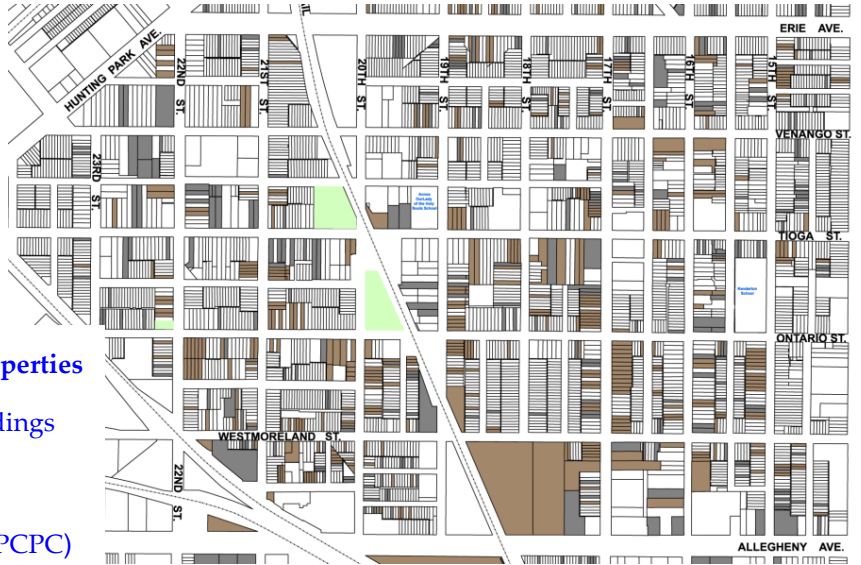
These figures are estimates based on the 2000 Census and the University of Pennsylvania Neighborhood Information System (NIS)

* Median Sale Price refers the the median price of single family homes in 2007 as determined by the Philadelphia Board of Revision of Taxes (reported by U.Penn NIS).

Neighborhood Characteristics

Vacant Properties

■ Buildings
■ Lots
(2008 Field
Survey by PCPC)

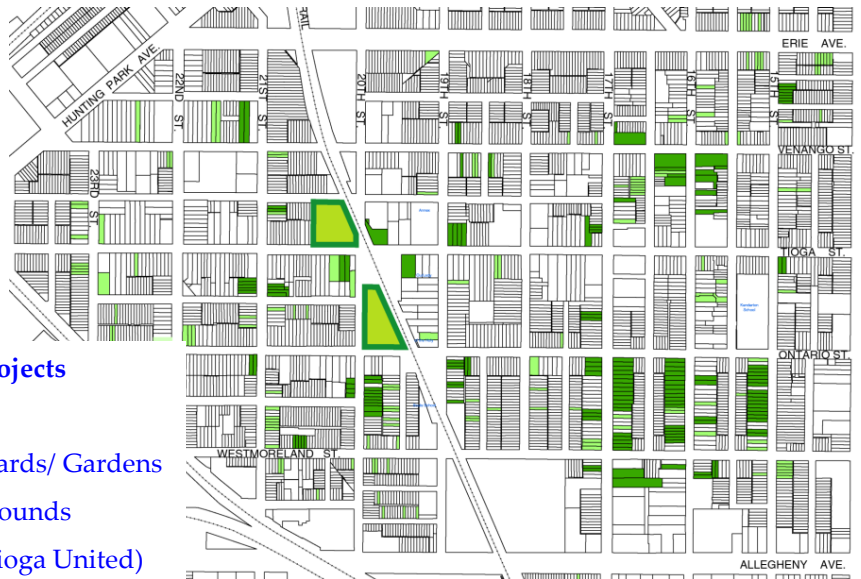


Vacant Properties

Tioga has a large number of vacant properties -- a major problem that the plan seeks to address. Vacant lots outnumber vacant buildings because a large number of buildings were demolished between 2000 and 2008. Most of the vacant properties were homes or apartment buildings, while vacant stores and other small businesses have also contributed to the pattern of vacancy. The largest vacant lot at 18th & Westmoreland / 18th & Allegheny was an industrial use.

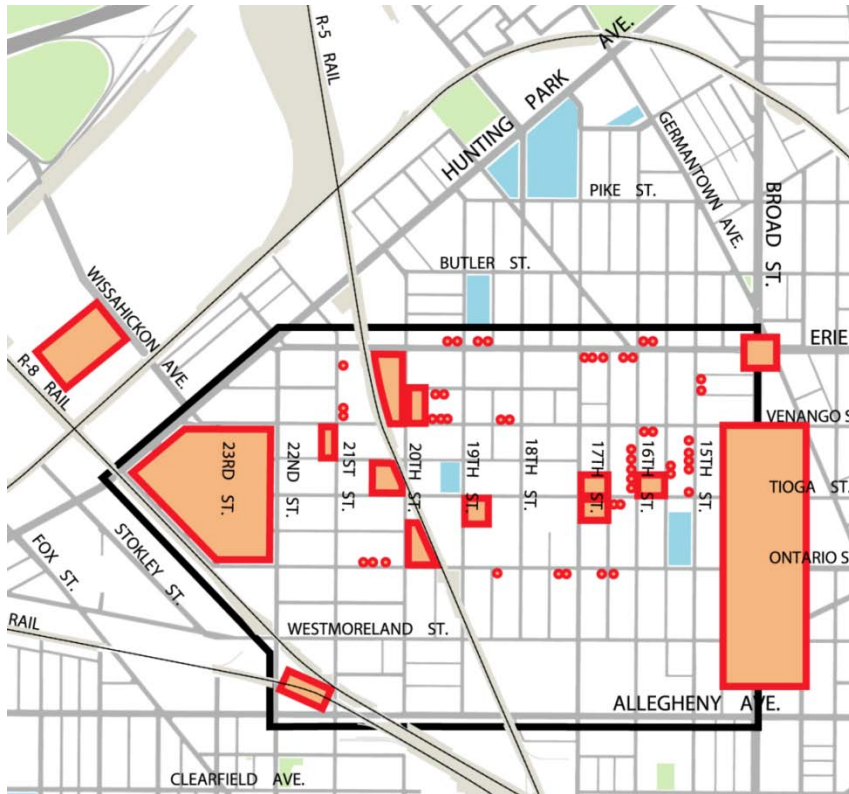
Greening Projects

■ P.H.S.
■ Side Yards/ Gardens
■ Playgrounds
(data from Tioga United)



The Greening of Vacant Lots

Vacancy has a blighting effect, but it is also an opportunity for community improvement. Greening, gardening and recreation sites are shown to the left, in green. The greening projects, accomplished through a combination of government and community action, are a strength in the neighborhood that can be built upon. The Tioga United community organization receives City funds to help maintain these properties.



- Institutions, community facilities, strong blocks
- New housing

Strengths

- Public transit stations
- Temple Hospital & Medical School
- Strong blocks in vicinity 23rd & Tioga
- Playgrounds at 20th & Tioga
- Gaudenzia: two new facilities
- Sisters of Mercy: new family center
- Places of Worship
- New Life Affordable Housing -New Homes
- HERO Community Center, 17th & Tioga
- Senior Center & Housing, 16th & Tioga
- Venango House Senior Housing, 22nd & Venango
- Kroc Community Center on Wissahickon Ave.
- Public schools: Kenderton, Cleveland, Gratz.

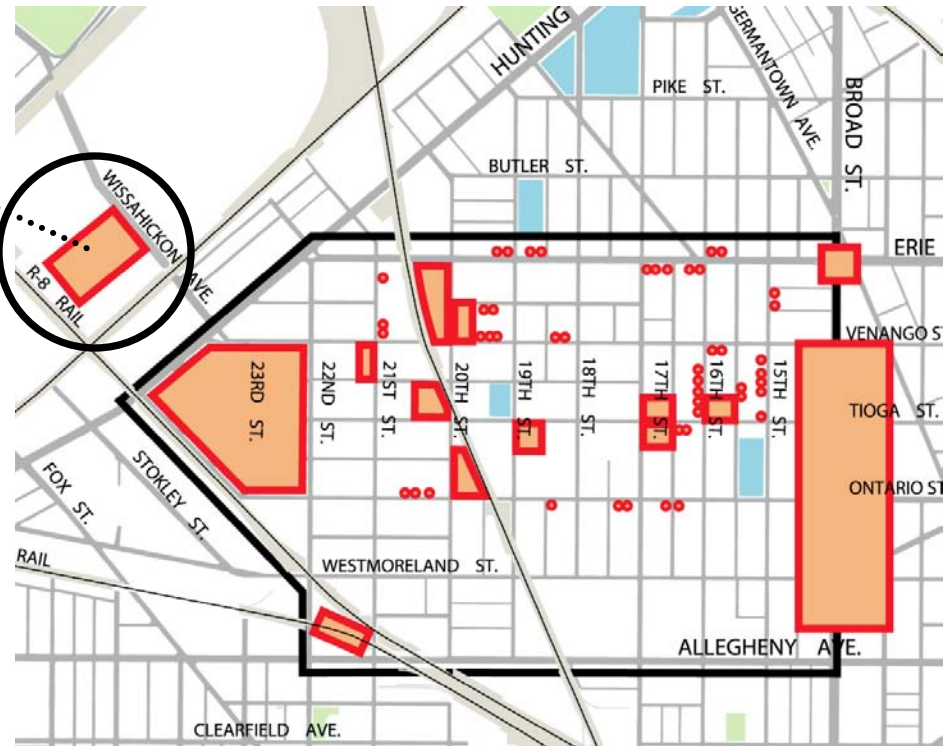
Major new investments are taking place in Tioga. On the east side of the neighborhood, the \$180 million Temple Medical School just opened. At 20th & Venango, the Sisters of Mercy have successfully renovated a large building. On the west side of Tioga, the \$67 million Salvation Army community center is under construction on Wissahickon Ave. The Salvation Army project is highlighted on the next page.

Strengths

Salvation Army Kroc Center

A \$67 million investment

Situated on a 12-acre site on Wissahickon Ave., this new 128,000 sq. ft. community center includes a dramatic indoor public space, two swimming pools, wellness center, gym, chapel, computer lab, day care, classrooms, dance studio, and outdoor athletic field. The Kroc Center is within walking distance of western Tioga.





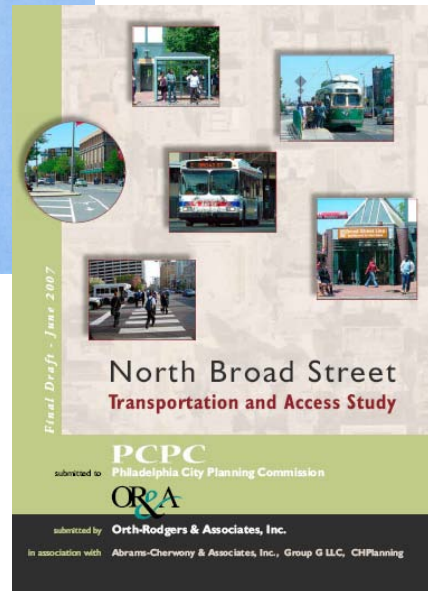
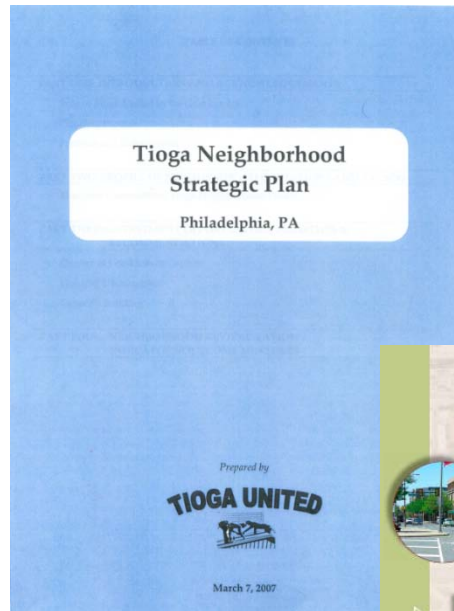
Strengths

Community Organizations

- Tioga United
- COLT Coalition
- Zion CDC



Tioga's community groups bring out volunteers to work on clean-ups, gardening, and housing. Community groups also monitor zoning variances to ensure that citizens have input in development decisions.



Recent Plans

- Broad & Erie Transportation & Community Development Plan, PCPC, 2010
- Tioga Neighborhood Strategic Plan, Tioga United community organization, 2007
- Extending the Vision for North Broad Street plan, PCPC, 2005
- North Broad Street Transportation and Access Study, PCPC, 2006
- Temple University Campus Plan, 2009
- Road Safety Audit of Erie Ave., DVRPC, 2008
- 22nd Street Transit-Oriented Development Plan, Allegheny West Foundation

This plan is informed by other planning efforts. There is no need to “start from scratch” when preparing a plan for the Tioga neighborhood.

Strategies for Neighborhood Revitalization

“Building On Strengths”

- Broad & Erie: Urban Center
- Primary Pathways and Nodes
- Housing Preservation Area
- Residential Design Guidelines
- Transit-Oriented Development at 22nd & Allegheny
- Green Community Strategy
- Restore Train Stations
- Curbs & sidewalks

The plan's major recommendations are listed above. The overall goal is to build from strengths. Recommendations range from larger organizing concepts (such as TOD, connecting paths and community nodes) to site-specific actions.

Restore Broad & Erie to its rightful place as an “urban center” in the Philadelphia area

Broad & Erie will be a significant urban center in Philadelphia and the region, on a par with Germantown, Kensington & Allegheny, and 52nd & Market. The public transit that converges on Broad & Erie reinforces this concept.

An urban center is a dense hub of activity outside of the central city. It is a destination for residents of surrounding neighborhoods and a jumping-off point for travelers.

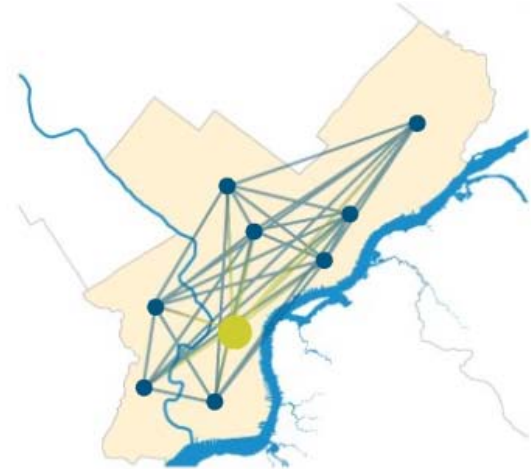
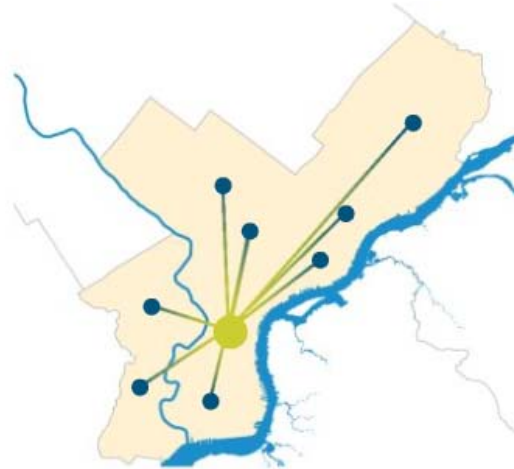
Restoring Broad & Erie as an urban center has been advocated by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission and a design studio at the University of Pennsylvania. The “urban center” concept establishes a starting point for community-wide revitalization.

Metro Centers

For part of the past 60 years, the national shift away from a manufacturing economy and the rise of auto-centric patterns have helped the suburbs outcompete cities all over the country. Since 1950, Philadelphia has lost thousands of jobs and even more people. Like many other cities, Philadelphia responded to suburbanization and its focus on preserving the vitality of its downtown. In some respects, this approach has been successful as centralized Center City is a regional attraction for culture, business, and entertainment. However, this Center City

Philadelphia 2040 The Green + Mobile City

University of Pennsylvania, 2009



Broad & Erie: A Renewed Urban Center

- Transit-Oriented Development
(dense, mixed-use development designed to benefit transit riders and pedestrians)
- New triangle plaza for buses and transit riders
- Rehabilitation of the Beury Building with additional parking
- New building for Community Legal Services on Erie Ave.



Community Pathways

- Erie Avenue
- 17th Street
- 22nd Street
- Tioga Street
- Wissahickon Avenue

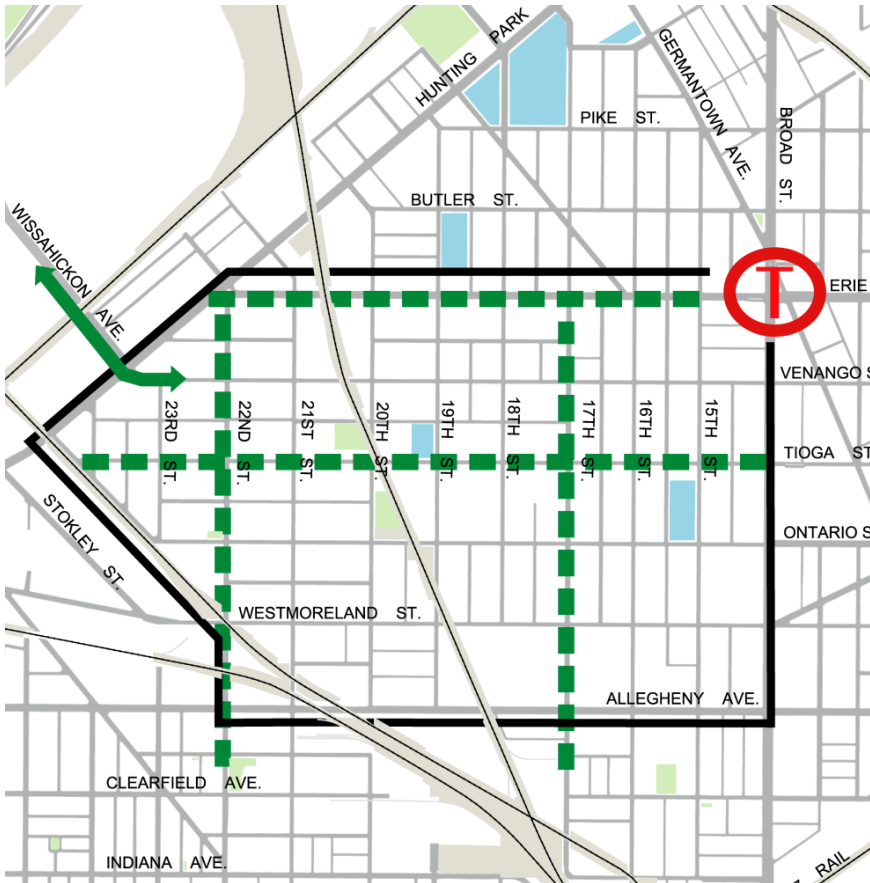
The major community pathways are:

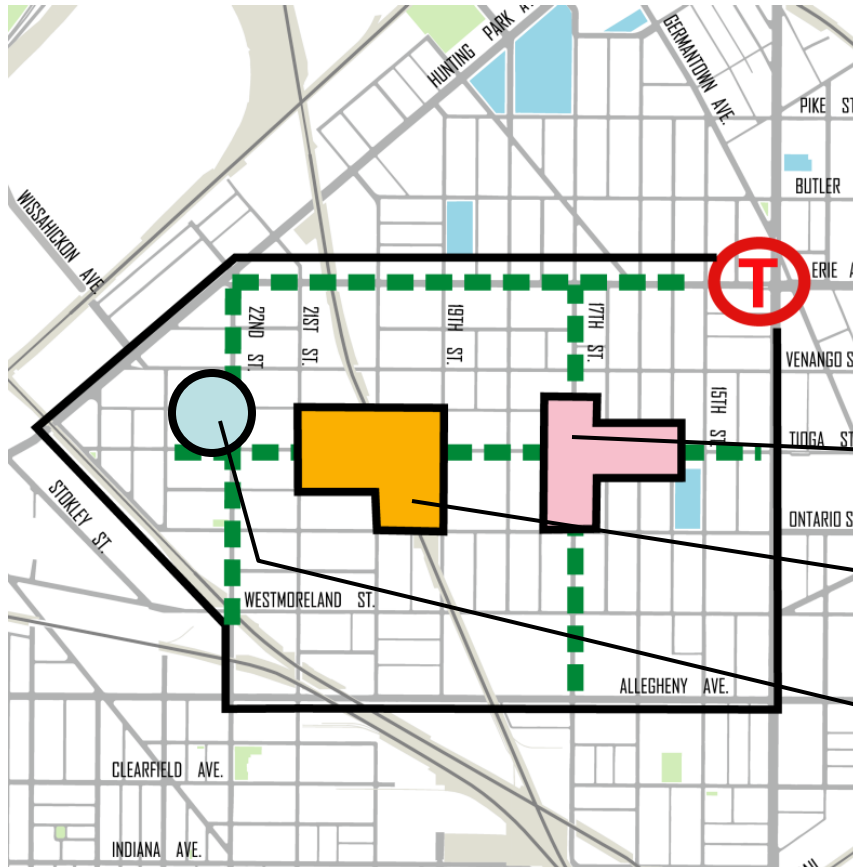
- Connective corridors
- Key streets that join the centers of activity
- Priority locations for streetscape improvements: curbs, sidewalks, street trees, lighting

Erie Avenue is recommended for improvement as a “Green Boulevard” with street trees and storm water retention features.

Intersection improvements are recommended at Wissahickon & Hunting Park Avenues, promoting safe passage to the new Kroc Community Center

More “pathways” information appears on pages 27 and 28.





Community Nodes

- Centers of activity
- Gathering places
- Priority areas for investment

17th & Tioga:

A node based on community institutions

20th & Tioga:

A node based on recreation and homeownership

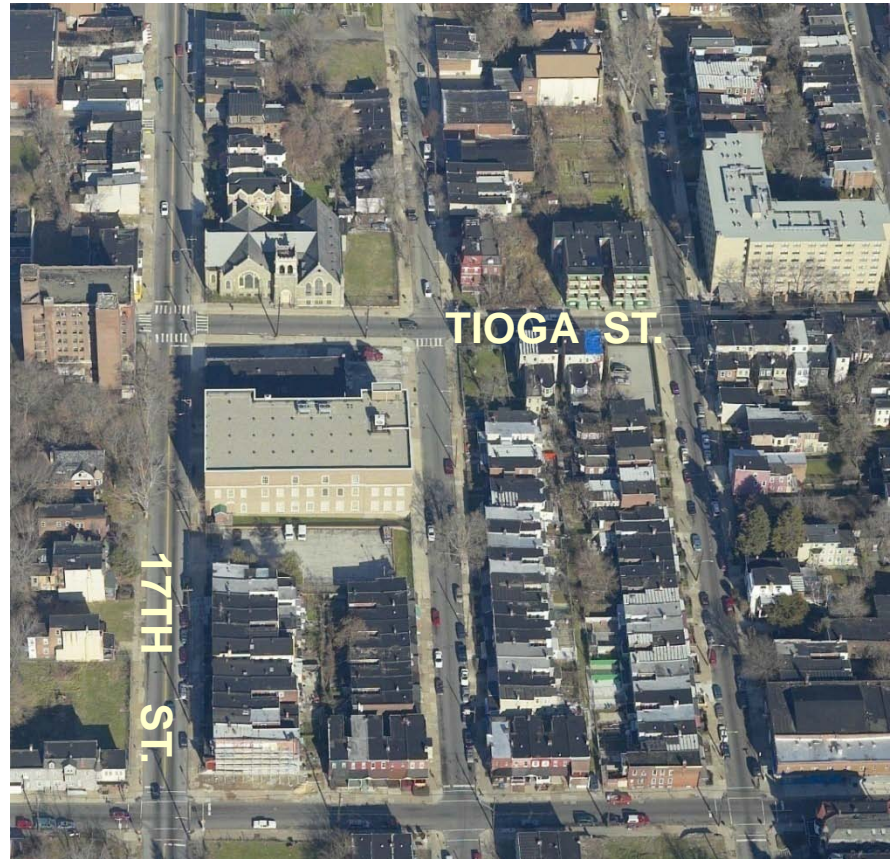
22nd & Venango:

A node with high-density housing, convenience commercial and a bus route.

17th & Tioga:

A node based on community institutions

- HERO Community Center
- Resurrection Life Church
- Senior center and senior housing
- Convenience commercial:
2 shops, laundromat, Chinese food
- Route “2” Bus on 17th St.
- New homes on Tioga St.



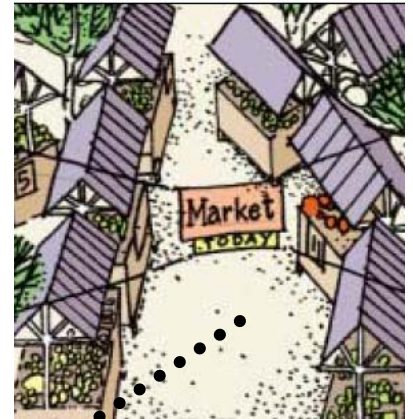
Tioga Presbyterian Apartments and
Philadelphia Senior Center/ Tioga Branch,
16th & Tioga

Recommendations

17th & Tioga: A node based on community institutions

Recommendations:

- Renovation of former hospital building
- Farm stand and mini-park, Tioga & Smedley
- Improved bus stops at 17th & Tioga
- Residential development along 17th St. (interim greening)
- Priority area for curbs & sidewalks



Former hospital
building, SW corner
17th & Tioga



Reuse options:

- Residential
- Charter School
- Job training
- Offices





20th & Tioga:

A node based on recreation and homeownership

- Jerome Brown Playground
- Gaudenzia: two new facilities
- Sisters of Mercy: new family center
- From the Heart Ministries: new investment

Recommendations:

- Rehabilitation of 6 structures for homeownership, as recommended in the [Tioga Neighborhood Strategic Plan](#) (Tioga United, 2007)
- Vacant apartment building at 21st & Tioga: rehabilitate or demolish
- Priority area for curbs and sidewalks



2000 block Ontario St.

- **Vacant apartment building: rehabilitate or demolish**

The apartment building at SW corner 21st & Tioga should be renovated or demolished. New windows were recently installed, but the building remains vacant. The building is not architecturally significant, making demolition an acceptable alternative. Demolition would result in green space as an interim use, and in the long run housing development is recommended at a scale and character that fits with the surroundings.



21st & Tioga

22nd & Venango:

A node with high-density housing, convenience commercial and a bus route

- Venango House senior housing
- Food market and pharmacy
- 33 bus on 22nd St.

Recommendations:

- The Housing Authority plans to rebuild the Plymouth Hall Apartments using stimulus funds
- Stores: façade improvements with City support
- Installation of bus shelters
- Priority area for curbs & sidewalks



Venango House, SE corner 22nd & Venango



Food store and pharmacy, NE corner



Plymouth Hall elderly housing, being rebuilt by PHA

Recommendations

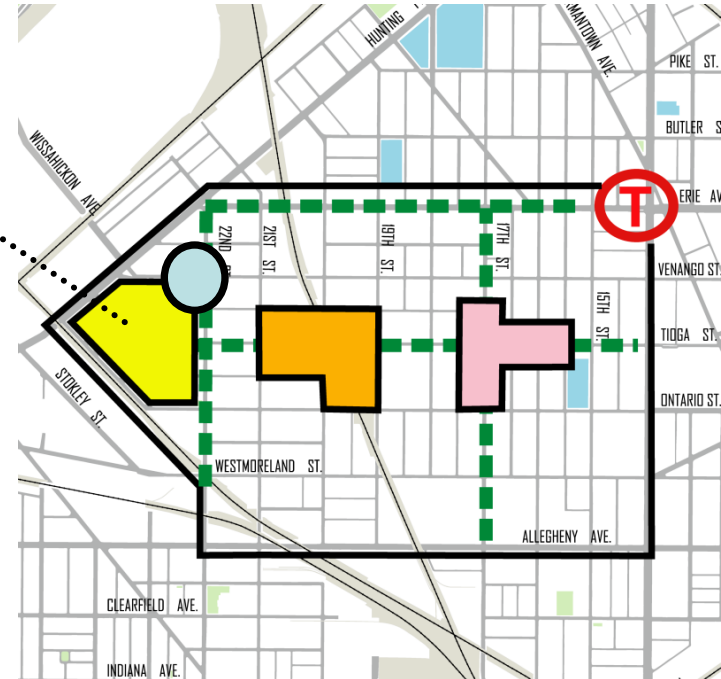
Housing Preservation Area

- Vicinity 22nd & Tioga

Protecting the strongest residential blocks with housing preservation programs

- HRP Program (Homeownership Rehabilitation)
- Phil Loans (Low-interest for home improvements)
- Down payment assistance
- Basic Systems Repair
- Weatherization
- Adaptive Modifications
- SHARP (Senior Hsng. Assistance Repair Program)

As recommended in the [Tioga Neighborhood Strategic Plan](#) (Tioga United, 2007)



Atlantic St.



Tioga St.

Residential Design Guidelines

Seeking the best possible design as infill housing construction continues in Tioga

Based on planning principles:

- Urban character
- Compatibility with neighborhood context
- Transit-Oriented Development with less parking
- Walkable communities

Guidelines:

- Parking in rear of homes
- Minimize curb cuts
- Match setbacks, building height and floor height established by existing homes
- Sustainable or “Green Design” (see page 38)
- See “Neighborhood Design Guidelines” (PCPC, 2003)



Left: photos of recent housing construction in Tioga.

Right: the Martin Luther King townhomes, developed by PHA at 13th & Fitzwater, exemplify good residential design for new construction.



Residential Design Guidelines



Continuous sidewalk (example)



Interrupted sidewalk: N. 16th St. above Tioga St.

- Issues:**
- Continuous vs. interrupted sidewalks
 - More parking vs. walkable, attractive communities

The design guidelines discourage curb cuts and front parking pads as shown on the right, because it interferes with pedestrians on the sidewalks and detracts from the appearance of the home. Front parking displaces curbside parking, creating little (if any) net increase in parking spaces. If parking cannot be placed to the rear of new homes, the City Planning Commission recommends that there be no off-street parking provided. The new residents would use parking spaces on the street.

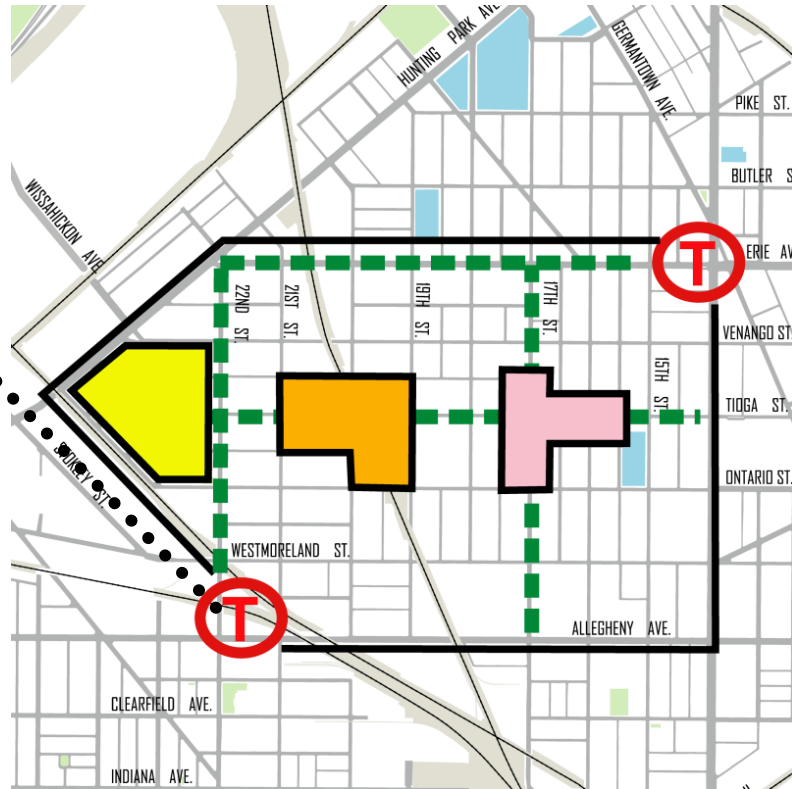
This raises an important issue. When new housing was proposed in Tioga, some neighbors demanded off-street parking because they often have difficulty finding a space (partly due to employees parking on neighborhood streets). Problems associated with employee parking can be addressed with a permit parking program on a block-by-block basis. The City Planning Commission strongly believes that having attractive new homes and a walkable community requires that neighbors be willing to accept less off-street parking compared to their normal expectations. This is especially true in transit-accessible areas such as Tioga.

T.O.D. at 22nd & Allegheny

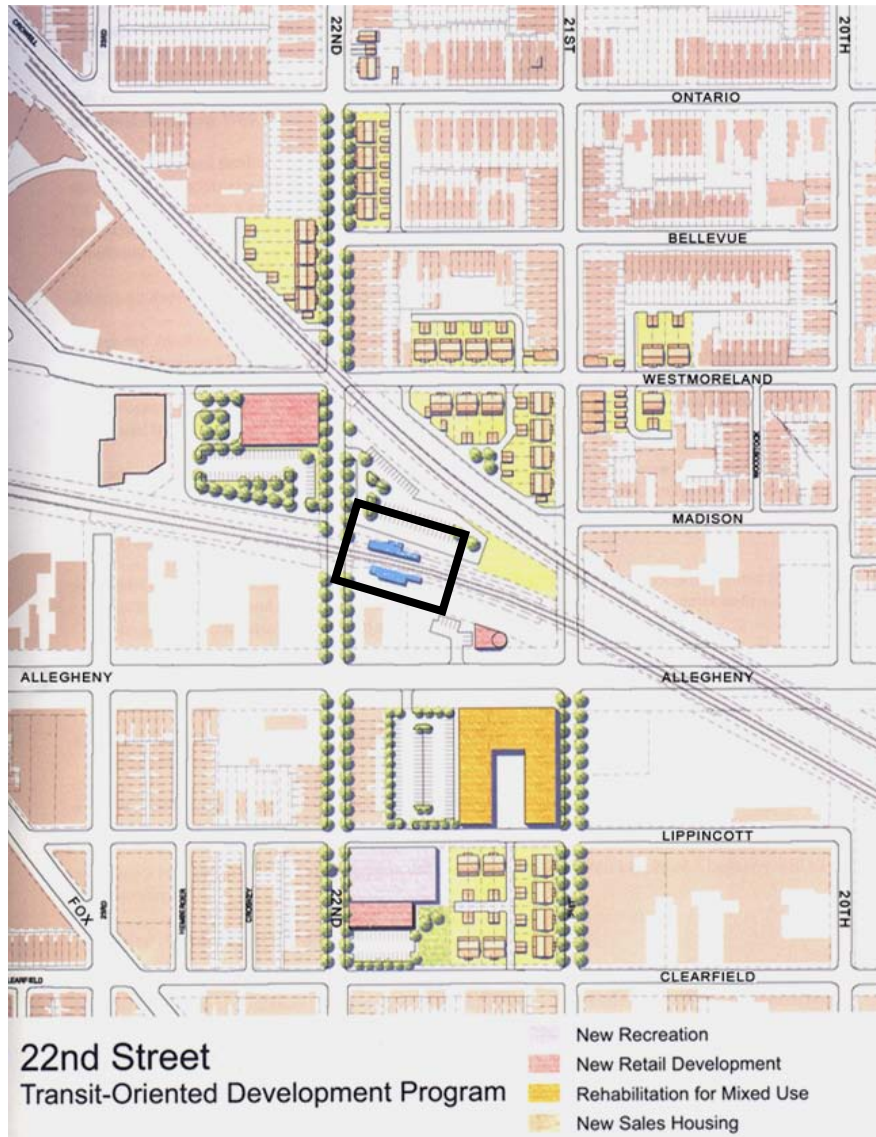
Transit-Oriented Development is recommended in the area surrounding the Allegheny Station of the R-6/ Norristown commuter rail line.

The train station serves more than Center City commuters. It facilitates reverse commuting to jobs in Manayunk, Conshohocken and Norristown.

Two vacant factories have been successfully reused on Allegheny Ave. near 22nd Street, contributing to revitalization and Transit-Oriented Development. In addition, the Allegheny West Foundation has prepared a T.O.D. plan for the area.



Recommendations



T.O.D. at 22nd & Allegheny

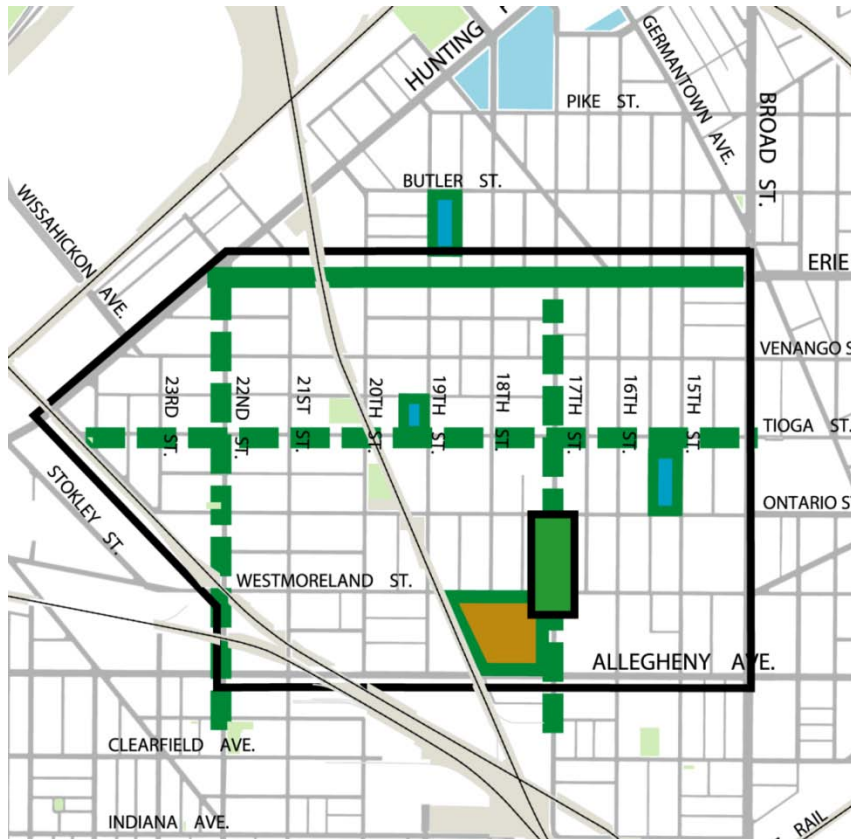
Transit-Oriented Development as proposed by Allegheny West Foundation

Transit-Oriented Development has these characteristics:

- Proximity to transit
- Density
- Mixed-use
- Oriented to pedestrians (not autos)
- Less parking (except for park-n-ride)








Allegheny Station on the R-6 Norristown Rail Line



Tioga has a large amount of undeveloped land, many tree-lined streets, and a greening initiative that is well underway. Therefore, greening should perform an important role in neighborhood stabilization and beautification. The Green Community Strategy brings together many specific actions.

Green Community Strategy

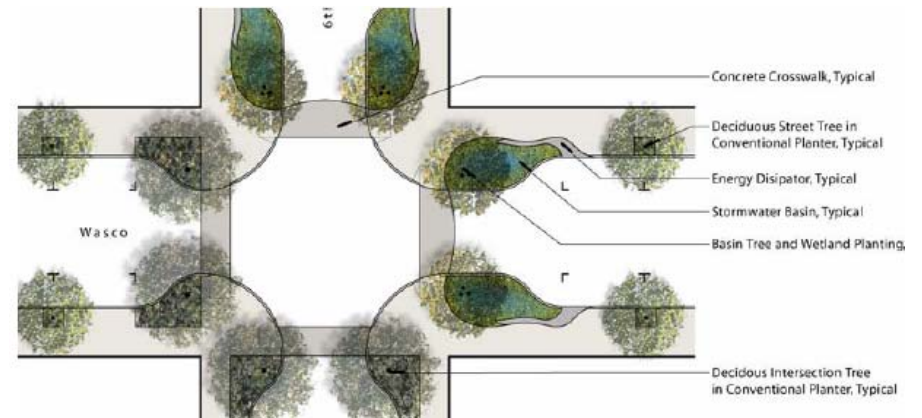
- Erie Avenue: “green boulevard”
- Community Pathways as green streets
- Greening as interim use of vacant land
- Tree planting based on tree inventory
- Maintenance of PHS greening sites
- Community gardens
- Gardening as intergenerational activity
- Urban agriculture
- Landscaping of parking lots
- Greening of schoolyards
- New housing with green design

-  Green Boulevard
-  Green Street
-  Greening of schoolyards
-  Open space (interim)
-  Alternative energy or urban agriculture

Recommendations



Erie Avenue looking east from 20th St. Currently the trees do not continue beyond the 1800 block.

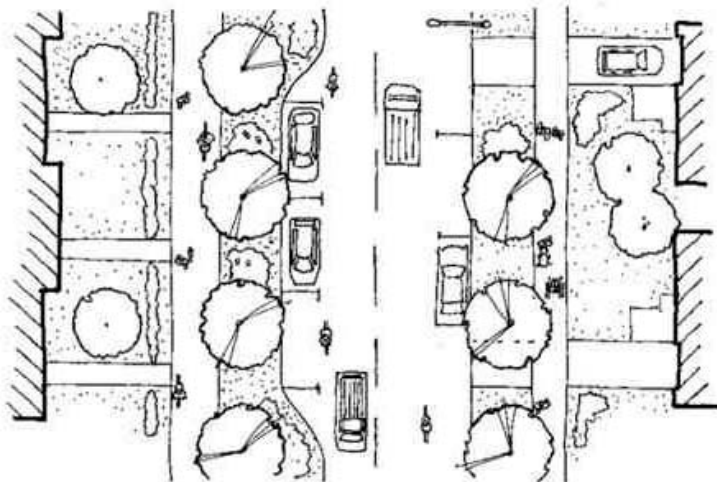
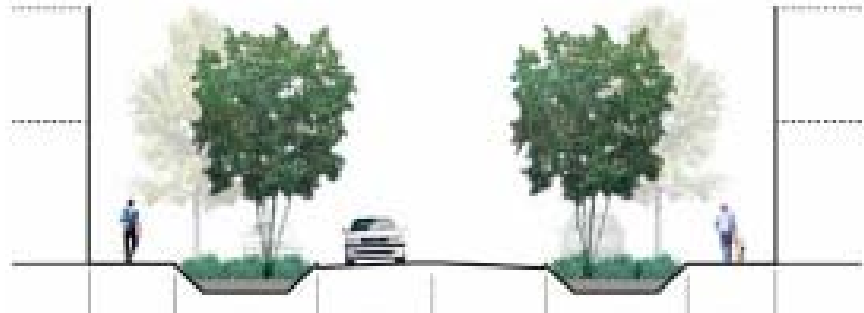


Erie Avenue is recommended to become a “Green Boulevard” with street trees and storm water retention features. There are many ways to design a green boulevard, as shown by these examples and best practices.

“Green Streets”

- Tioga St.
- 17th St.
- 22nd St.

The major community pathways will be enhanced with street trees and landscaping. This is consistent with GreenPlan Philadelphia which recommends a city-wide network of Green Streets.



Examples from Seattle and Ottawa



Greening as interim use of vacant land

Green spaces make Tioga more attractive and there are many benefits in terms of the environment and quality of life. However, green space is not necessarily a permanent use. In most cases it is hoped that more substantial development can eventually be attracted to undeveloped sites. This is why greening is described as an interim use.



Use vacant lots for side yards where appropriate

When a vacant lot exists as a gap between homes, it should be turned into a side yard for the neighbor(s). This is sometimes accomplished through the City's Vacant Property Review Committee (VPRC).

Issue: Maintenance of green spaces over the long term

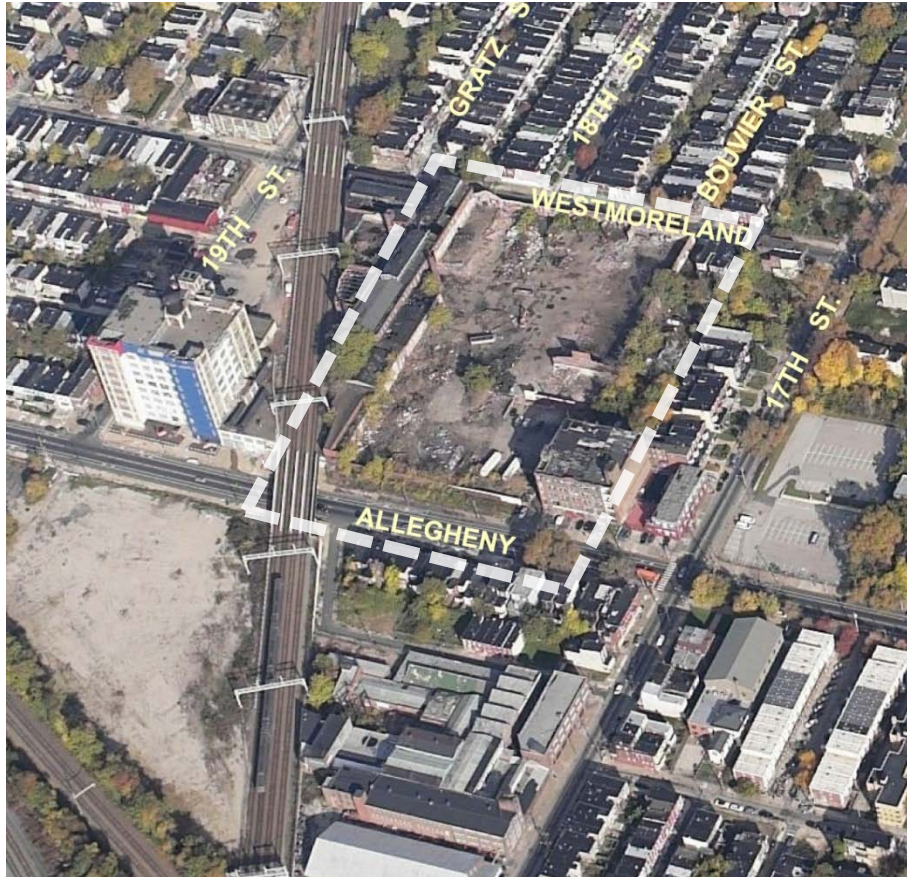
Many attractive green spaces have been created due to blight removal activities in Tioga. Keeping the green spaces free of trash and litter will be a challenge requiring a partnership between local government and community-based organizations. Such a partnership already exists due to City contracts with Pennsylvania Horticultural Society and the Tioga United community organization. Maintaining the open space is an essential element of this plan. If the green spaces are allowed to become fallow and littered, neighborhood revitalization will not succeed in Tioga.



Side yards

Increase Tree Cover in Tioga

Additional trees should be planted in the neighborhood based on a tree inventory and with priority given to the community pathways and nodes recommended herein. Increasing tree cover is a citywide recommendation found in the GreenWorks Philadelphia plan.



18th & Westmoreland

Reuse of vacant land

The 5-acre vacant tract above Allegheny Avenue was previously used by a rigging and hauling company. It is one of a series of vacant tracts along the railroads. The City is currently preparing an Industrial Land Use Study that may contain recommendations for this area.

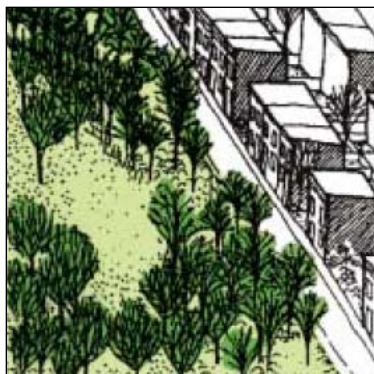
The recommendation for this site is for reuse as open space. Residential development can be considered as an alternative, at least for the northern part of the site, because adjacent housing on Bouvier and 18th Streets is in good condition (see cover photo, lower right). Commercial development should be focused at 22nd & Allegheny, four blocks to the west.



18th & Westmoreland: Reuse Options



Greensgrow



Tree nursery

One option for reuse is commercial farming similar to the non-profit Greensgrow facility in Kensington. Other options include:

- Tree nursery
- Alternative energy as recommended in Greenworks Philadelphia.



Alternative energy (solar farm)

Greening of parking lots and school yards

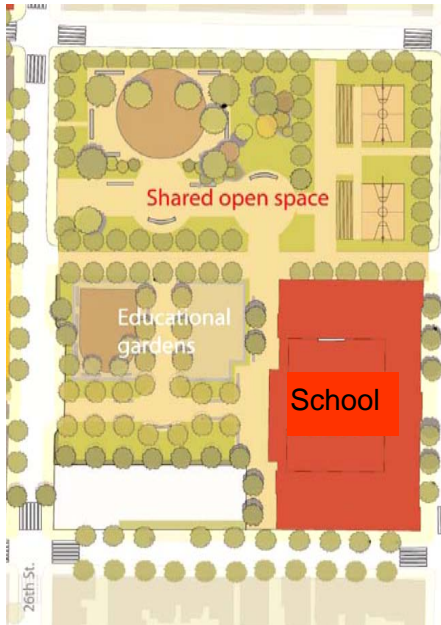
- From The Heart Ministries Church, 20th & Erie
- HERO Community Center, 17th & Tioga
- Kenderton School, 15th & Ontario

Landscaping the two parking lots at From The Heart Ministries, shown at upper right, will enhance the appearance of Erie Ave., 20th St. and Venango St. An improved parking lot at HERO Community Center will reinforce one of the key community nodes. Like many other schools in Philadelphia, Kenderton school's property (below right) should have less pavement and more landscaping.



Recommendations

Greening of parking lots and school yards

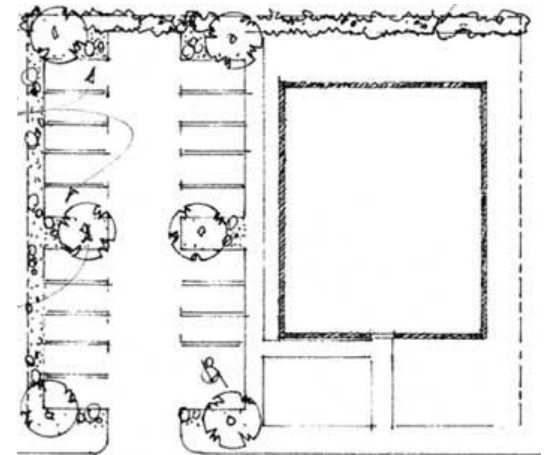


The greening of school properties is recommended in GreenPlan Philadelphia, and a case study for greening of Fitzsimon school (left) can be found in PCPC's community plan for Strawberry Mansion.

A well-landscaped parking lot can be a surprisingly strong neighborhood asset. A good example in Philadelphia is the parking lot on Fairmount Avenue adjacent to Eastern State Penitentiary, where extensive landscaping has beautified not only the parking lot, but the grounds of the former prison, as well.

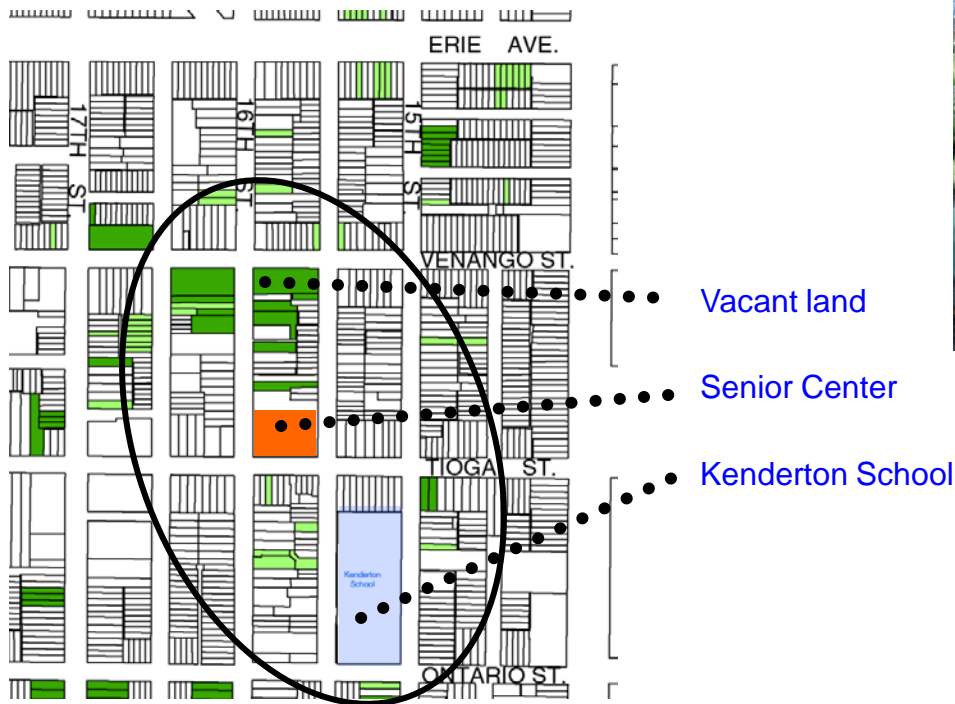


Examples and best practices



Gardening as intergenerational activity for senior citizens and schoolchildren

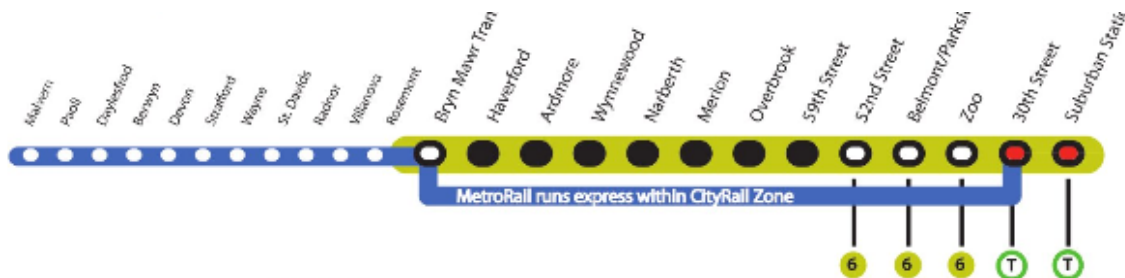
Vacant land is located close to the senior housing and senior center at 16th & Tioga. Kenderton School is also nearby. This is an opportunity for gardeners of all ages to come together and create pockets of beauty in Tioga. Gardening is recommended as an interim use. Vacant sites on Venango St. should eventually be developed with new homes.



Restore Train Station

Thirteen train stations have been closed in Philadelphia's neighborhoods. Three of the stations are in Tioga (shown with red rectangles). They are the Nicetown, Tioga and Westmoreland stations. The Allegheny Station on the Norristown line is shown in black; it is still operating.

Further Study: Reopening one of the train stations could be part of a revitalization strategy for Tioga. A University of Pennsylvania design studio proposes "CityRail," where the former stations would be restored. Within the city limits, trains would run every 15 minutes, creating a new rapid transit system serving Philadelphia neighborhoods. Trains headed to the suburbs ("MetroRail") would operate as express service within the city (see diagram below from the Philadelphia2040 student project).



Recommendations



New affordable housing with “Green Design”

As housing development continues in Tioga, energy-efficient “green” design and construction should be used more and more.

Examples:

Habitat For Humanity, 4200 block Stiles St.

- Finalist for Philadelphia Sustainability Award
- Insulated concrete forms
- R-40 roof insulation
- Tubular skylights bring natural light to interior
- Energy Star appliances
- Rain gardens
- Construction waste 85% recycled

Postgreen Co., 2100 E. Susquehanna Ave.

- LEED Platinum certification

Project H.O.M.E., 1800 and 1900 blocks N. 23rd St. (15 rehabs)

- Cool roof
- Energy Star appliances
- Vestibule to reduce air exchange
- Extra insulation



Improve Curbs & Sidewalks

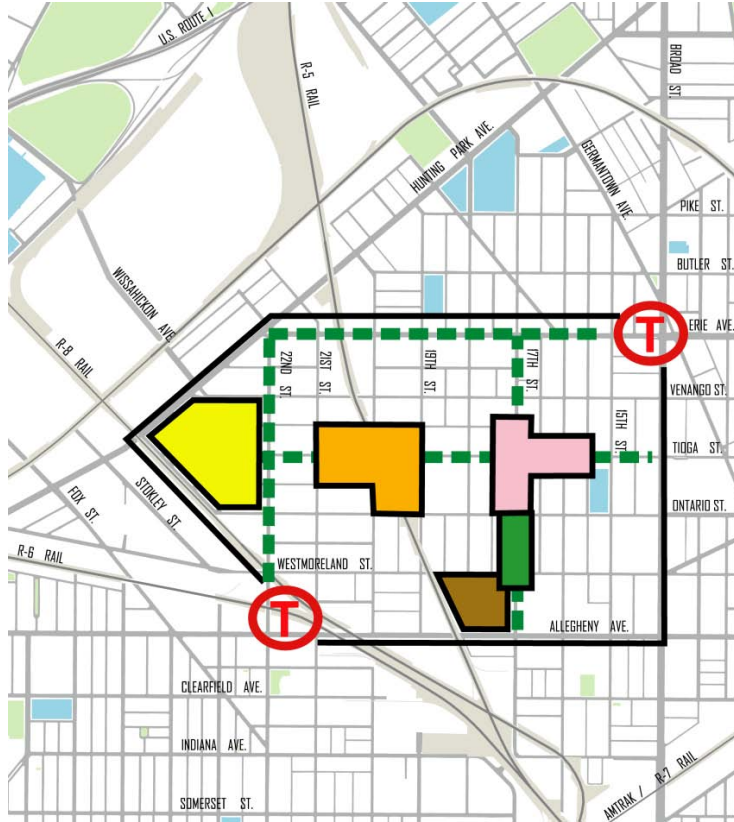
Further Study: As in many older urban communities, Tioga has curbs and sidewalks that are deteriorated and badly in need of replacement. Curbs, sidewalks, street trees, street lights, alleys and alley lighting are elements of “neighborhood infrastructure” that perform a major role in communities looking attractive or unattractive.

Replacing curbs, sidewalks and alley lighting is the responsibility of the property owner. However many low and moderate income homeowners have a difficult time affording the repairs, and even when repairs are made they are usually done for one property instead of being done in a concerted fashion throughout an area. New programs and incentives are needed to allow for the systematic replacement of neighborhood infrastructure in targeted areas. This is more than just a Tioga issue, involving city budget constraints and legal questions.

Priority Areas: If funds can be identified to assist with the replacement of curbs and sidewalks in Tioga, the priority locations will be the community pathways, community nodes and the housing preservation area recommended in this plan.



Summary of Recommendations



Summary of Recommendations

Strategies for Neighborhood Revitalization

“Building On Strengths”

- Broad & Erie: Urban Center
- Primary Pathways and Nodes
- Housing Preservation Area
- Residential Design Guidelines
- T.O.D. at 22nd & Allegheny
- Green Community Strategy
- Restore Train Stations
- Curbs & sidewalks

Strategies for Neighborhood Revitalization

June 2010



Philadelphia City Planning Commission

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Sources:

- Tioga Neighborhood Strategic Plan, Tioga United, 2007
- Broad & Erie Transportation and Community Development Plan, PCPC, 2010
- GreenWorks Philadelphia, 2009
- GreenPlan Philadelphia, 2010 (draft)
- Vision 2040 Plan, University of Pennsylvania Design Studio, 2009
- University of Pennsylvania Neighborhood Information System (NIS)
- Allegheny West Foundation
- Philadelphia Department of Records - www.phillyhistory.org