



# WISSAHICKON GATEWAY PLAN

July 2018

PHILADELPHIA CITY PLANNING COMMISSION



**July 2018**

Philadelphia City Planning Commission

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**Project Consultants**

Michael Baker International  
Toole Design Group

**Inspired by**





# WISSAHICKON

# GATEWAY PLAN

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SYSTEM | PROTECT RATEPAYERS

UIL INVESTING IN PGW MEANS A BETTER PHILADELPHIA

SEPTA

65 64th STREET  
RANKIN CTN

THE PGW SALE DECISION

FIX THE SYSTEM  
CROSS YOUR FINGERS





# Introduction

In the 2014 *Lower Northwest District Plan*, the City of Philadelphia identified the Wissahickon Gateway as an area for growth and improvement. However, its potential is limited by traffic congestion, dangerous and uncomfortable conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists, a lack of public access to the Schuylkill River, and development that lacks “curb appeal.”

This plan charts a path forward for overcoming these barriers to growth. It imagines the gateway as a new neighborhood center for Northwest Philadelphia, focused on expanded public transportation and trail access.

The vision presented in this plan for the Wissahickon Gateway grew out of meetings and conversations with the public, local community representatives, elected officials, property owners, and government agencies.

This plan was funded with a \$100,000 grant from the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission’s Transportation and Community Development Initiative (TCDI). The goal of the TCDI program is to support smart growth initiatives that implement DVRPC’s *Connections 2045 Plan* for Greater Philadelphia. TCDI focuses on linking land use and transportation planning by:

- Improving the overall character and quality of life;
- Enhancing existing transportation infrastructure capacity;
- Promoting and encouraging the use of transit, bike, and pedestrian transportation modes;
- Building capacity in our older suburbs and neighborhoods;
- Reinforcing and implementing improvements in designated Centers; and
- Protecting our environment.

TCDI grants support early stage planning, design, feasibility studies, and capacity building activities that promote the efficiency of the transportation network and smart growth.

This plan is for use by elected officials, government agencies, residents of the surrounding community, SEPTA transit users, trail users, advocacy groups, business owners, and developers.



# Project Area

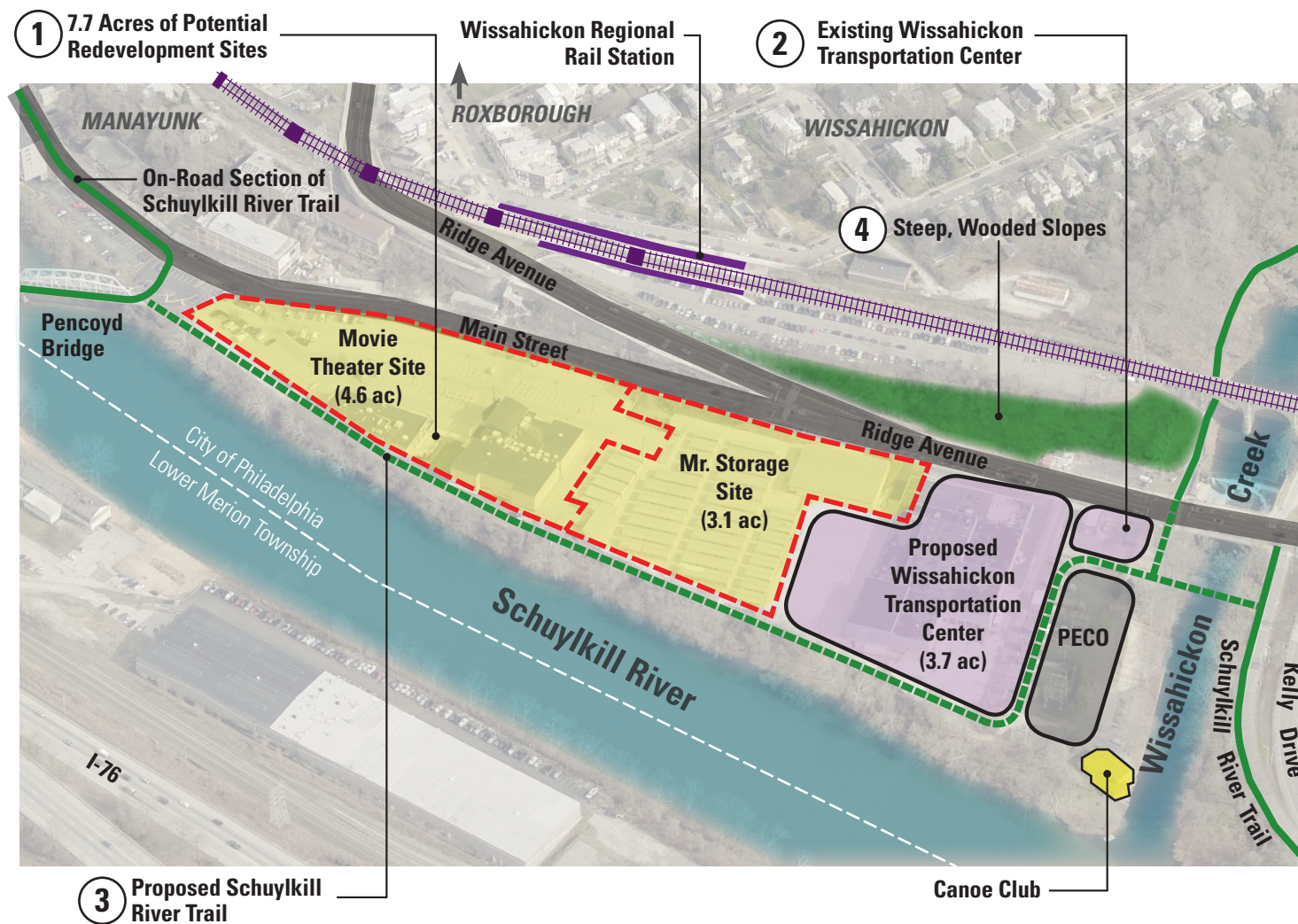
The Wissahickon Gateway is located at the confluence of Northwest Philadelphia's two main waterways – the Schuylkill River and Wissahickon Creek. The area spans roughly one mile along Ridge Avenue and connects the East Falls, Manayunk, Roxborough, and Wissahickon neighborhoods and Lower Merion Township, Montgomery County. Major landmarks include Wissahickon Valley Park, SEPTA's Wissahickon Transportation Center (WTC), Wissahickon Regional Rail Station, Cadence Cycling & Multisport Center, Mr. Storage, and United Artists movie theater.

The 3.7-acre site occupied by Cadence has been purchased by SEPTA for the expansion of the Wissahickon Transportation Center. The Mr. Storage (4.6 acres) and Movie Theater (3.1 acres) sites are each privately owned.

The WTC serves ten SEPTA bus routes and the Manayunk/Norristown Regional Rail Line. It has over 7,000 daily riders and about 875 bus trips a day. WTC ridership is comparable to Temple University Station and University City Station – the fourth and fifth highest ridership stations on SEPTA's Regional Rail lines.

This area links the Schuylkill River Trail with the Wissahickon Valley Park Trail (Forbidden Drive), both used by hundreds of thousands of pedestrians and bicyclists annually.

The Wissahickon Gateway also connects to the Schuylkill Expressway (I-76), City Avenue (US 1), Lincoln Drive, Kelly Drive, and Main Street in Manayunk.





# Plan Purpose

The purpose of this 12-month planning process was to coordinate and advance the following improvement projects:

- (1) Expansion of the Wissahickon Transportation Center,
- (2) Completion of the Schuylkill River Trail,
- (3) Road improvements on Ridge Avenue and Main Street,
- (4) New mixed-use development, and
- (5) Public space and aesthetic improvements.

This plan puts forth coordinated design considerations for these projects and an implementation strategy.

Specific planning goals include:

- Create safe and comprehensive bicycle, pedestrian, and road networks
- Improve regional transit service
- Address traffic issues, aesthetics, neighborhood needs, and environmental constraints as a part of new development
- Provide public access to the Schuylkill River



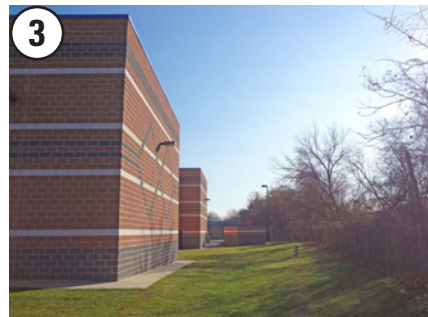
## Existing Condition Snapshots



Sites with low scale buildings and large parking lots have potential for mixed-use development



The existing Wissahickon Transportation Center building has potential for reuse



The area to the rear of the movie theater has space for a new riverfront trail



The exposed rock on this wooded hillside along Ridge Avenue could be a part of a welcoming gateway to the area



# The Vision

**The Wissahickon Gateway is an anchor for new shops, offices, housing, public transit service, riverfront green space, and recreation trails.**

The area is a **transit and trail-focused neighborhood center** that creates strong, safe connections between East Falls, Manayunk, Roxborough, Wissahickon, Lower Merion, Wissahickon Valley Park, and the Schuylkill River.

The **Wissahickon Transportation Center (WTC)** serves as a critical link in Philadelphia region's public transportation network. It provides a new terminal for SEPTA's expanding Direct Bus service, has a graceful presence along Ridge Avenue, and fits in well with surrounding uses.

The **Schuylkill River Trail (SRT)** provides a complete pedestrian and bicycle link between Philadelphia and Pottsville. It connects with the Wissahickon Valley Park Trail at a new trailhead and comfort station at the former location of the WTC. It gives new access to the Schuylkill River and provides an amenity for new mixed-use development.

Prime development sites become a new **destination center** with a **grocer and river-oriented shops**, which are not available in Manayunk, East Falls, Roxborough, and Wissahickon. **Offices, apartments, green space, and public river access** are also included to create a one-of-a-kind mixed-use, transit-oriented, trail-oriented development.

**Improvements to Ridge Avenue and Main Street** allow safe and comfortable travel for buses, cars, bicycles, and pedestrians. Visitors are welcomed to Northwest Philadelphia and Wissahickon Valley Park by attractive paving, lighting, and landscaping on the street; and a well-designed gateway that includes the WTC pedestrian plaza, SRT trailhead, and entrance to Wissahickon Valley Park.

## Development Inspiration

### Market Commons, Arlington, VA

- Mixed-use development with high-quality paving, lighting, and landscaping



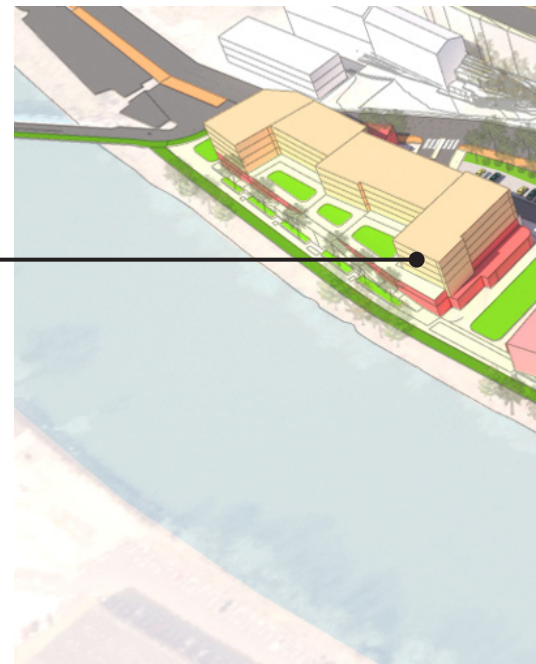
### Atlantic Station, Atlanta

- Mixed-use development with public open space and events



### Midtown Greenway, Minneapolis

- Trail is an anchor for new development



The vision for the Wissahickon Gateway has been crafted from public outreach and stakeholder meetings for this plan and the *Lower Northwest District Plan* of 2014.



## Public Transit & Gateway Inspiration

### 40th Street Portal, West Philadelphia

- Merging point of four trolley lines within a dense urban neighborhood
- Attractive café building
- High-quality landscape and paving materials



### East Liberty Bus Station, Pittsburgh

- Anchor for transit-oriented development
- Attractive canopy design
- Bright lighting
- Seating for transit users
- Clear signage

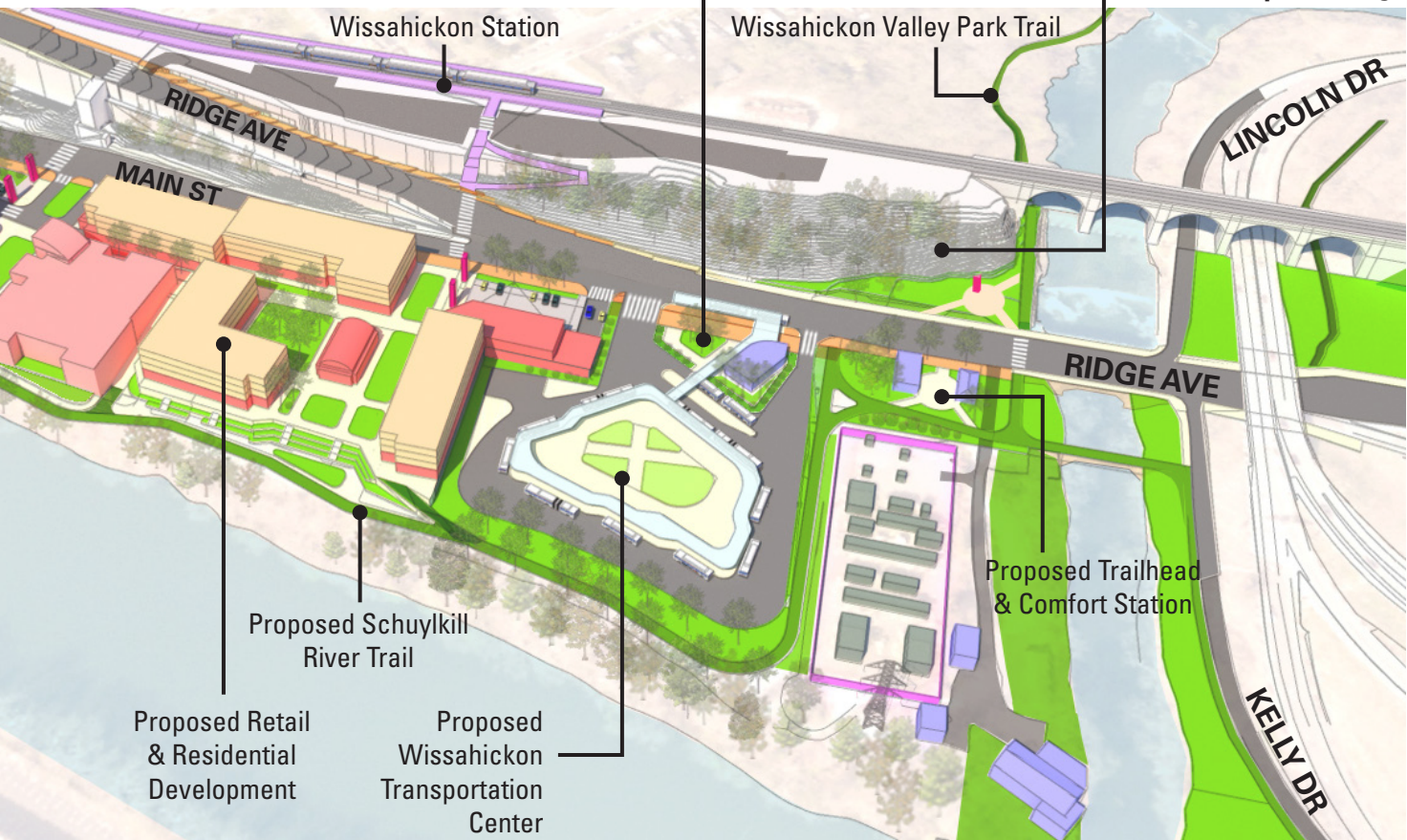


### Philadelphia Museum of Art

- Rock formation is a focal point of the museum landscape
- Large scale landscaping project mixes vegetation and rock formation



### Conceptual Design





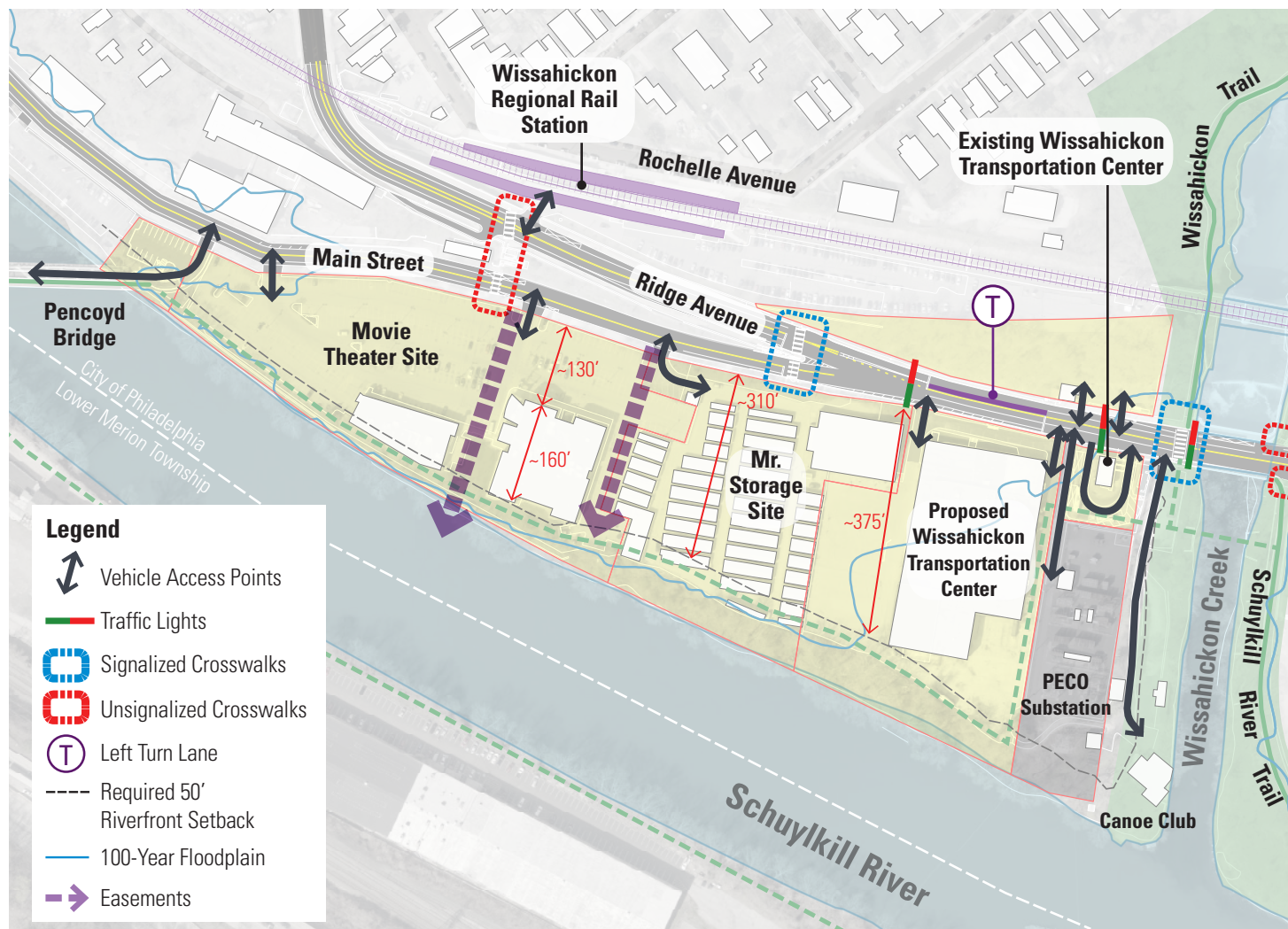
# Issues and Opportunities

The Wissahickon Gateway provides regional access to transit, highways, trails, and walkable commercial streets. However, its cramped layout limits safe and efficient travel. Foot traffic is discouraged by narrow sidewalks, heavy vehicle traffic, and a lack of pedestrian-scaled development. A significant gap in the Schuylkill River Trail forces bicyclists to travel in the roadway or on the sidewalk. SEPTA bus operations have outgrown the Wissahickon Transportation Center and need more space for expanded service. Traffic congestion limits opportunities for new development. The Schuylkill River is currently inaccessible, and existing trails need access improvements.

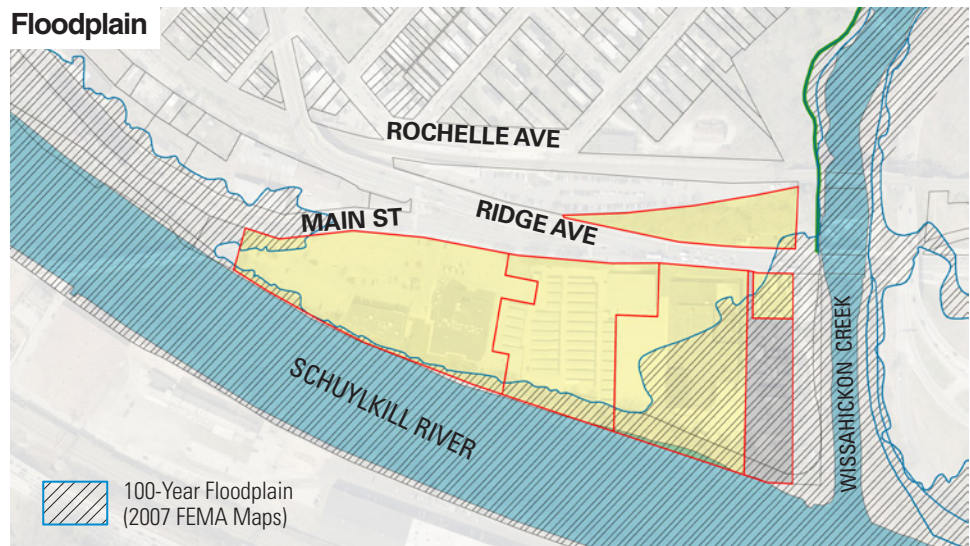
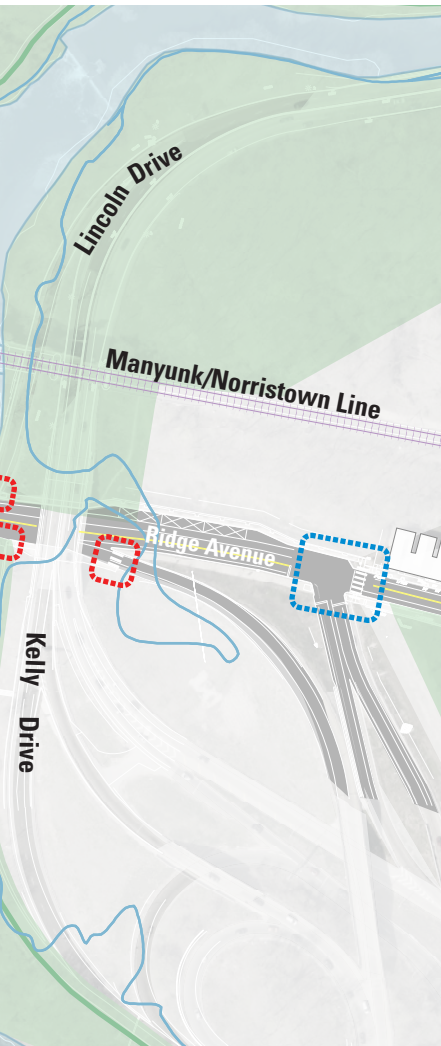
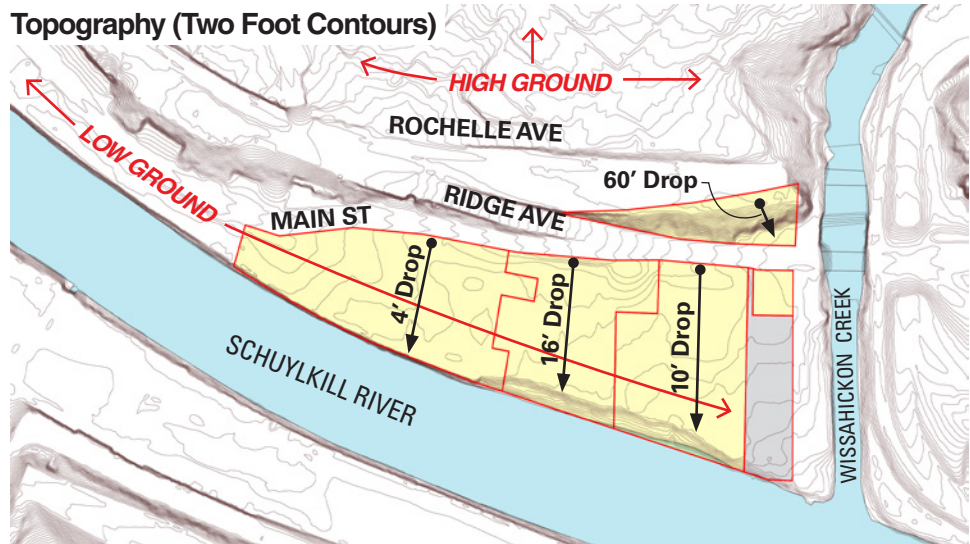
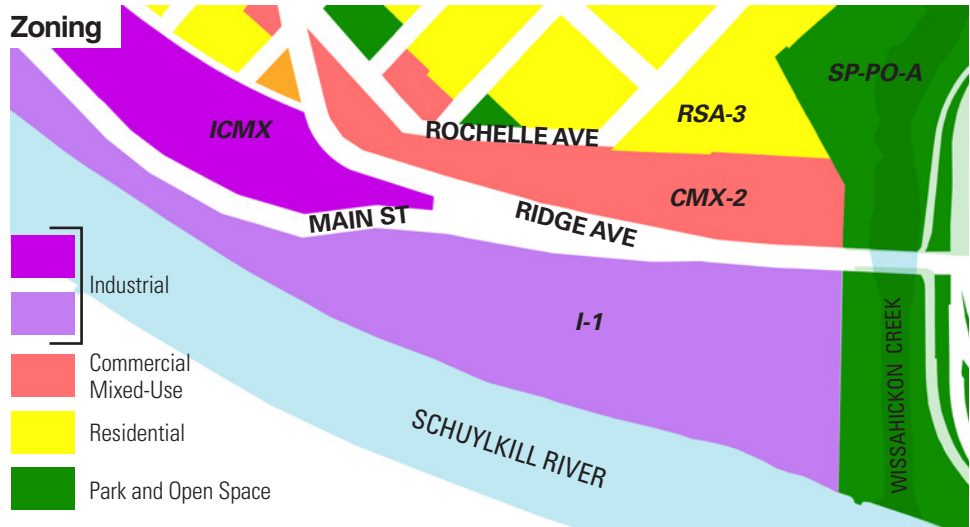
Current zoning designations do not permit mixed-use development. Steep slopes isolate the area and create construction challenges for transportation improvements and new development. The area is also subject to periodic flooding, and climate change could lead to further flooding from heavier rainfalls and storm surge.

If properly coordinated, expansion of the Wissahickon Transportation Center and new private development projects could correct many issues. Opportunities exist to improve traffic flow, capacity, and safety on Ridge Avenue and Main Street for pedestrians, bicycles, cars, trucks, and buses; and to dedicate land for the extension of the Schuylkill River Trail. With a plan, new investment can also be leveraged to create an aesthetically pleasing point of arrival to the area.

## Existing Conditions Map







The Wissahickon Gateway is partially within the existing 100-year floodplain. The map does not take into account risks of further flooding in the coming decades as projected in the Philadelphia Office of Sustainability's (OOS) Growing Stronger: Towards a Climate-Ready Philadelphia, 2015. OOS is planning further modeling to understand the risks of temporary and permanent water level rise across the City.

# Previous Plans

The City and community have been imagining “what could be” at the Wissahickon Gateway for a decade. Beginning in 2008, the East Falls, Manayunk, and Roxborough Development Corporations collaborated on the **Ridge Avenue Gateway Plan**. This plan was the first to explore the idea of improving the Wissahickon Gateway. Major recommendations include expansion of the Wissahickon Transportation Center to improve transit service, creation of safe routes for pedestrians and bicyclists through the area, improvement of traffic flow and safety, new development opportunities, and aesthetic improvements.

Philadelphia Parks & Recreation’s 2013 **Schuylkill River Trail Gap Analysis** resulted in a feasibility study for filling one of the most critical gaps in the Schuylkill River Trail. Plan recommendations highlighted two options for safe routes through the gap – a short-term option for a multi-use sidepath along Ridge Avenue and Main Street; and a long-term option for a multi-use trail along the Schuylkill.

In 2014, the Philadelphia City Planning Commission (PCPC) released the **Lower Northwest District Plan**, a component of the City’s Comprehensive Plan. PCPC identified the Wissahickon Gateway as a location where additional investment could benefit the entire City. Recommendations focused on public transit and trail improvements that connect the City and region, new commercial and residential buildings to relieve nearby residential neighborhoods of development pressure, and providing access to the riverfront. In total, these recommendations present a vision of the Wissahickon Gateway as a new neighborhood center that connects East Falls, Manayunk, Roxborough, and Wissahickon.

Other documents that support work in the Wissahickon Gateway include PCPC’s **Philadelphia Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan** (2012) and **Philadelphia Trail Master Plan** (2013).

## Previous Plans

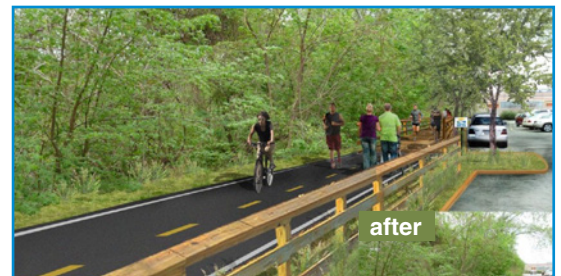
**2008 Ridge Avenue Gateway Plan**  
(Community Driven)



**2012 Philadelphia Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan**  
(Philadelphia City Planning Commission)

**2013 Philadelphia Trail Master Plan**  
(Philadelphia City Planning Commission)

**2013 Schuylkill River Trail Gap Analysis**  
(Philadelphia Parks and Recreation)



**2014 Lower Northwest District Plan**  
(Philadelphia City Planning Commission)



**2018 Wissahickon Gateway Plan**  
(Philadelphia City Planning Commission)



# Current Initiatives

## Wissahickon Transportation Center Expansion

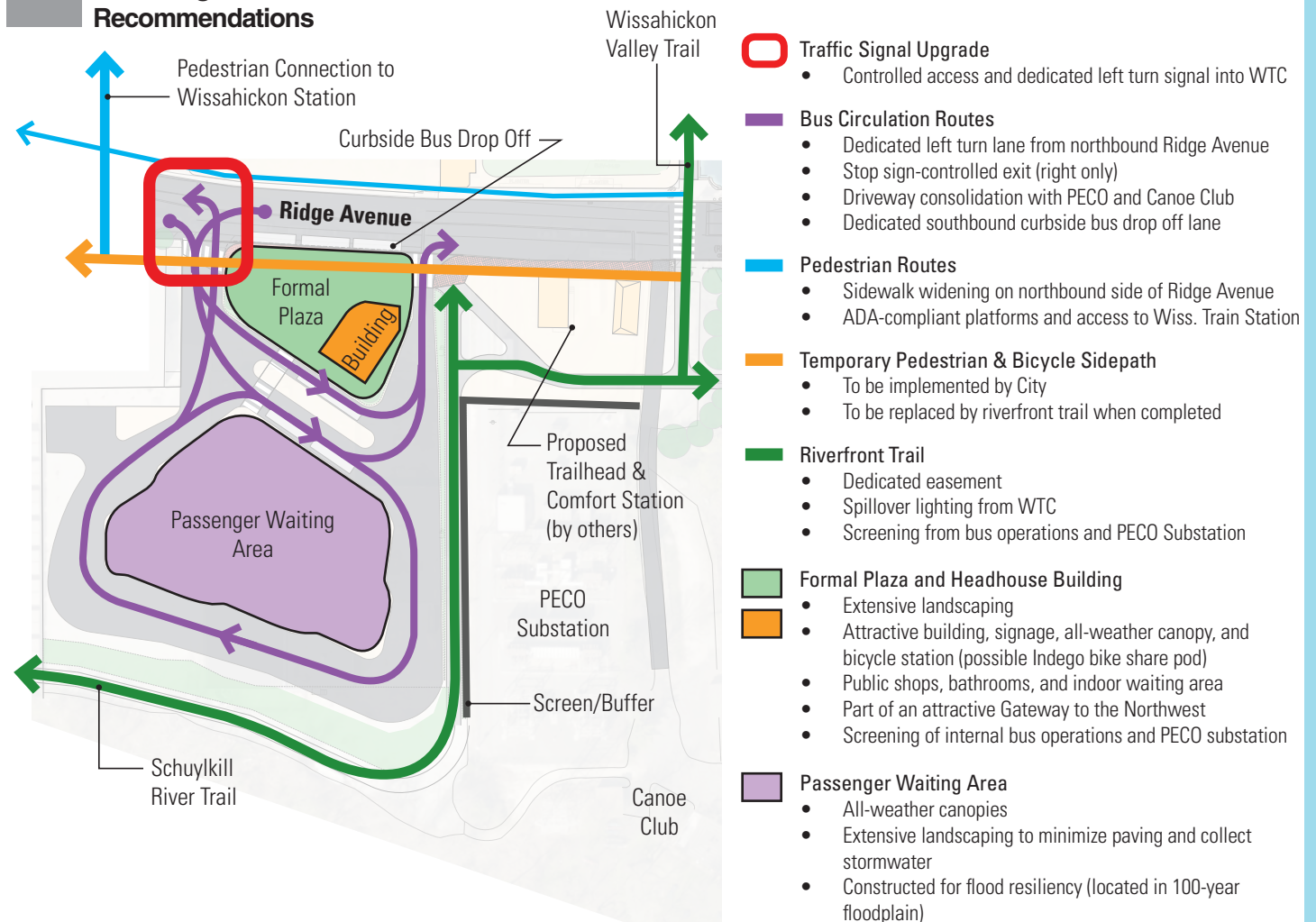
The Wissahickon Transportation Center (WTC) serves ten SEPTA bus routes and the Manayunk/Norristown Regional Rail Line. It has over 7,000 daily riders and about 875 bus trips a day. WTC ridership is comparable to Temple University Station and University City Station – the fourth and fifth highest ridership stations on SEPTA's Regional Rail lines. However, the small facility on Ridge Avenue cannot adequately handle the amount of service provided; and pedestrian connections to Wissahickon Station are very poor. This impacts the safety and traffic flow of the roadway and sidewalks, and prevents further expansion of service.

In September 2016, SEPTA was awarded \$4 million from the Federal Transit Administration for the expansion of the WTC. SEPTA recently purchased a 3.7-acre site next to the existing facility which will provide space for four new bus routes and 360 new trips. This includes extension of Routes K and 60 to the WTC, additional service on Routes 124 & 125, and a terminal for the second phase of the Direct Bus. The new WTC will also give SEPTA added flexibility as it reevaluates its regional bus network.

**Groundbreaking: 2019**

**Expected Completion: 2021**

### Site Design and Circulation Recommendations



## Schuylkill River Trail Extension

The Schuylkill River Trail (SRT) stretches through four counties and is the region's most popular recreation trail. It is increasingly used by commuters to get to and from work. However, gaps exist within the trail. One of the most challenging is through the Wissahickon Gateway, where the Kelly Drive section of the trail ends at Ridge Avenue. Bicyclists and pedestrians continuing along the trail must navigate a busy roadway, narrow sidewalks, buses, and bus riders. Filling this gap will better connect business districts, train stations, bus stops, parks, and neighborhoods within the City. It will increase recreation and bicycle commuting opportunities, which benefits public health and air quality.

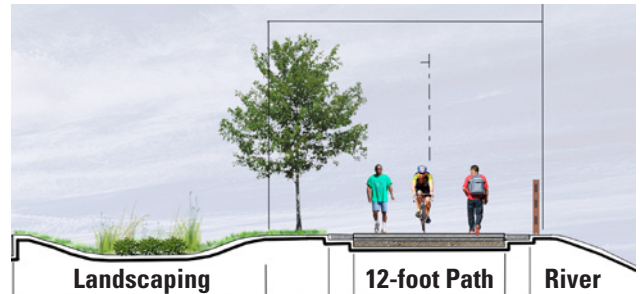
When vacated by SEPTA, the existing Wissahickon Transportation Center holds promise for use as a trailhead and comfort station. This facility can connect the SRT with the Wissahickon Valley Park Trail, and provide trail users with bathrooms, water fountains, wi-fi access, lighting, security, concessions, and/or Indego bike share pod.

**Groundbreaking: 2021**

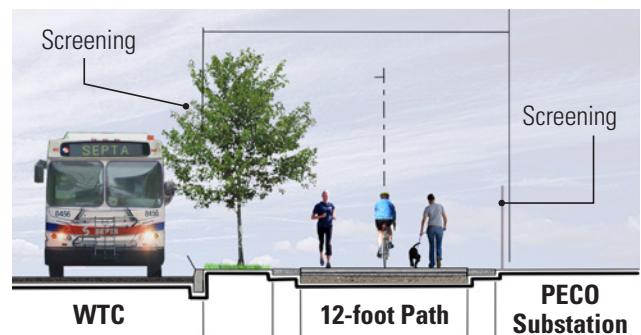
**Expected Completion: 2022**

### Typical Cross Section Concepts

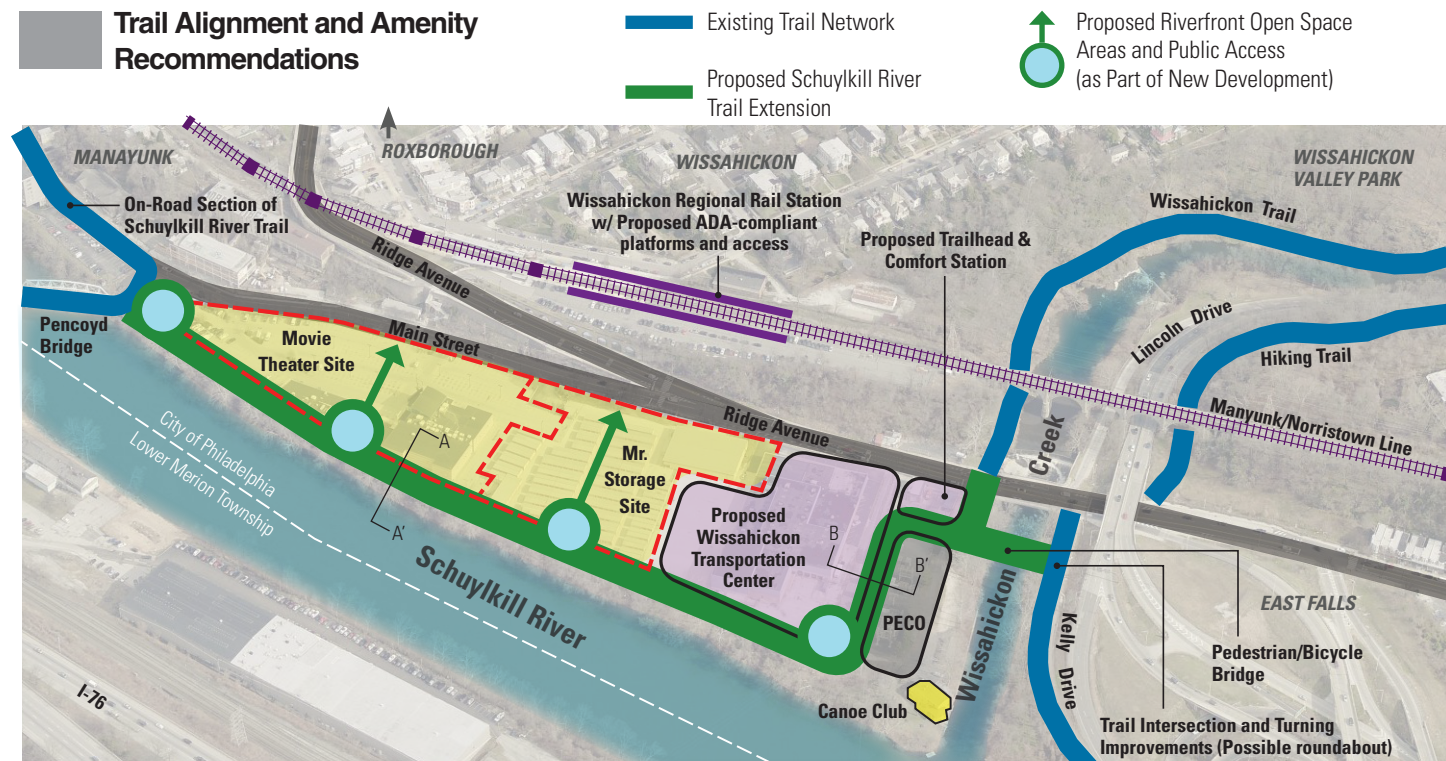
**A-A'** Riverside Section



**B-B'** Inland Section



### Trail Alignment and Amenity Recommendations





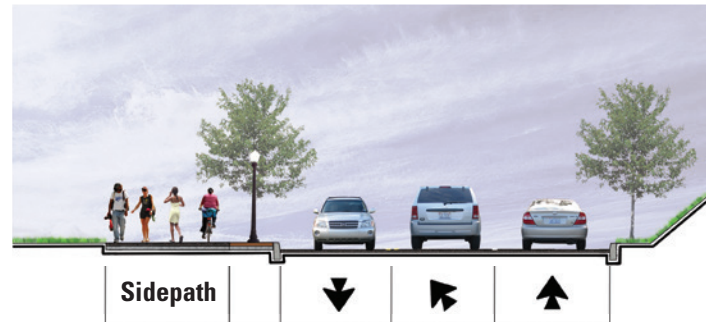
## Roadway Improvements

Safe and efficient movement on Ridge Avenue and Main Street is restricted by a mix of pedestrians, bicycles, cars, and buses within a tight space. Foot traffic is discouraged by narrow sidewalks, heavy vehicle traffic, and a lack of pedestrian-scaled development. A lack of trail and bike lanes forces bicyclists to mix with heavy traffic or ride on the sidewalk. Heavy traffic and poor directional signage also restricts access to the WTC, existing businesses, and potential development sites.

Without proper planning, more bus service and new development will only make conditions worse. Fortunately, expansion of the WTC and potential private development projects present an opportunity to create more space and separation for pedestrians, bicyclists, cars, and buses; coordinate site access and traffic flow; and create aesthetic guidelines. The following roadway improvements can be built incrementally – on their own, or as a part of larger development projects (see **Capital Project Plan** and **Critical Path Schedule**).

### Typical Cross Section Concepts

**A-A'** Main Street Widening at Movie Theater Site



**B-B'** Ridge Avenue Widening at WTC



### Roadway Improvement Recommendations

Proposed Traffic Control Upgrade

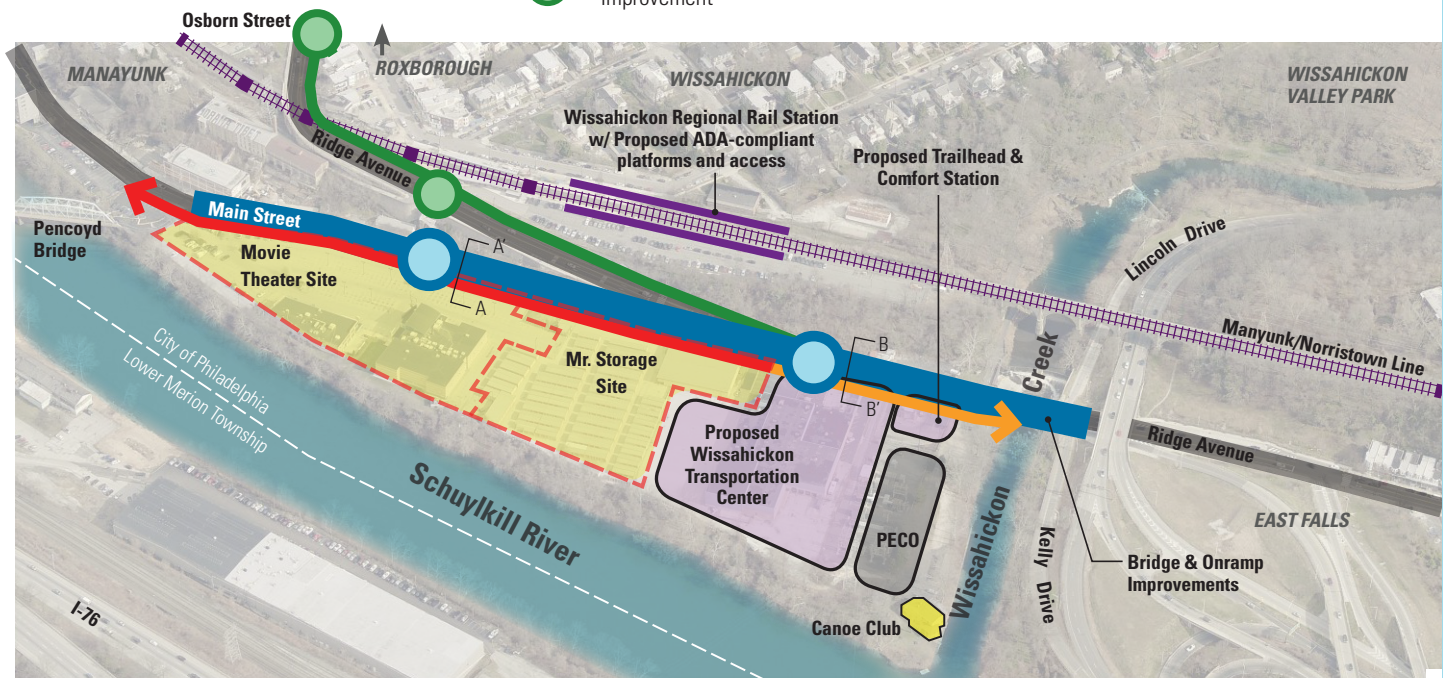
Proposed Pedestrian Crossing Improvement

Proposed Road Widening, Driveway Consolidation, & Streetscape and Signage Improvements

Proposed Temporary Sidewalk

Proposed Permanent Sidewalk

Proposed Protected Bike Lane



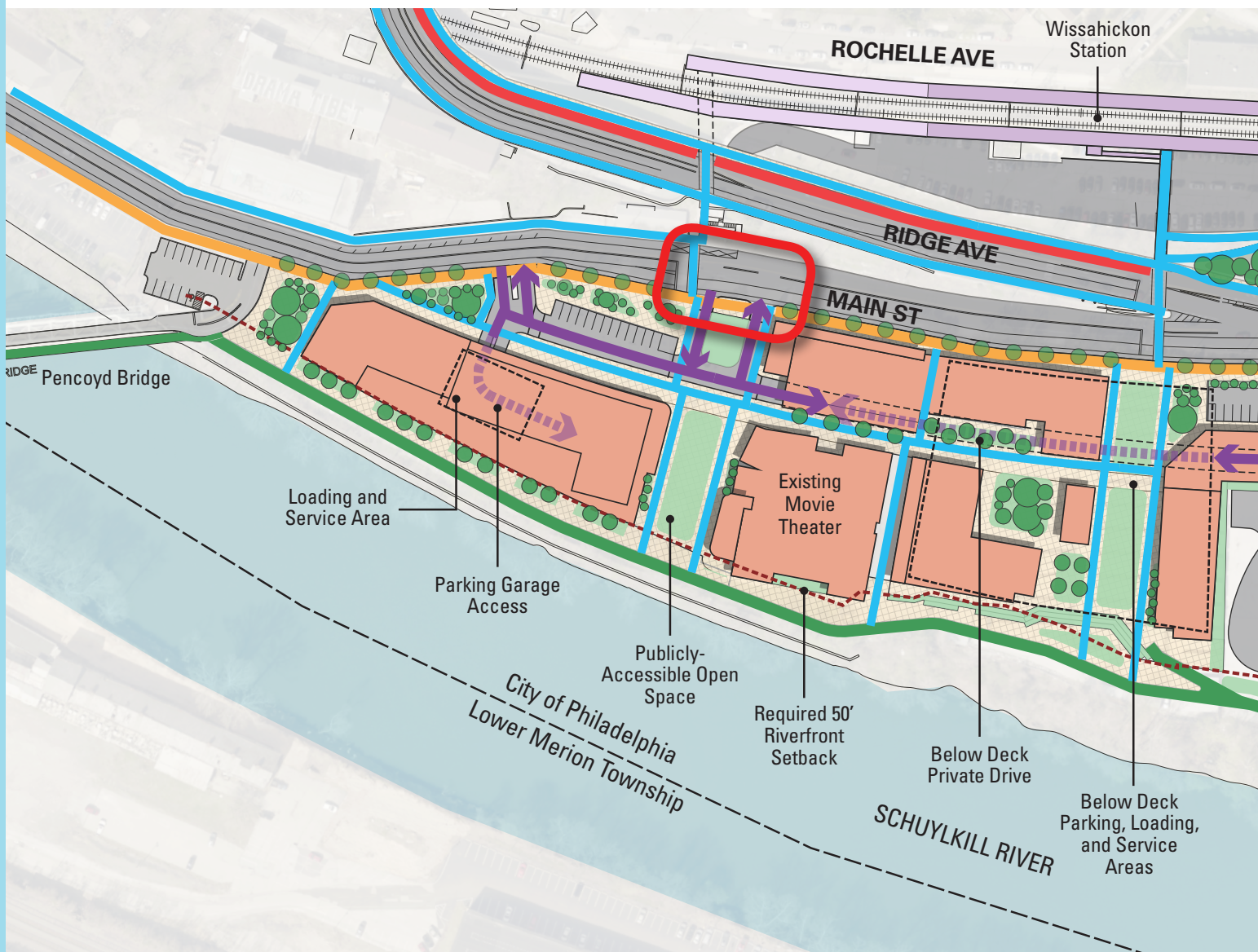
# Unified Site and Circulation Plan

This detailed site and circulation plan illustrates the vision of the Wissahickon Gateway. It is guided by the land use and transportation policy objectives described to the right.

It depicts how proposed development and public infrastructure improvements could be designed and coordinated; but is not intended as the only way to do so. Nonetheless, it should inform all planning and decision-making for the area.

## Land Use and Transportation Objectives

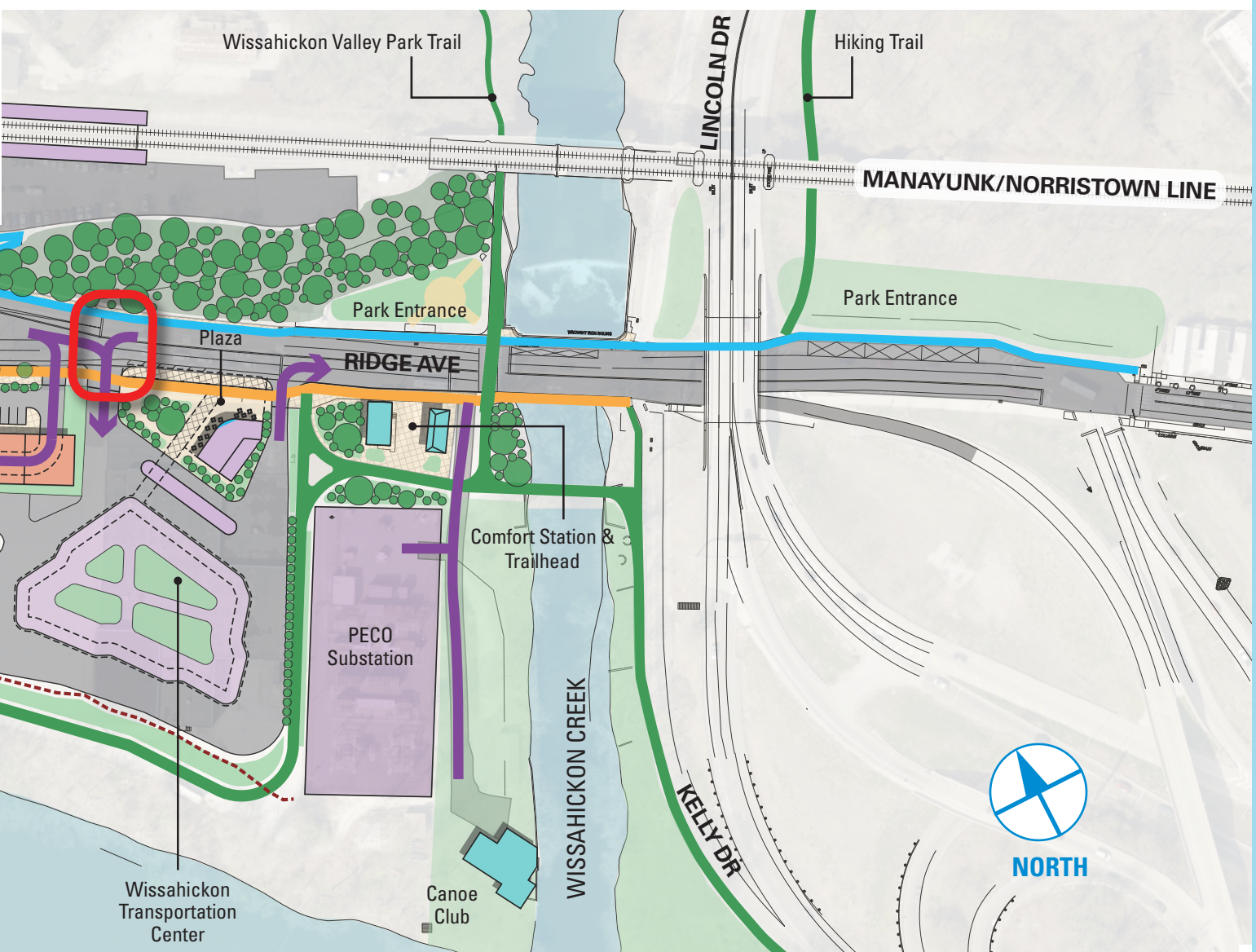
- **Dense Development Area**
  - Retail, office, and residential uses; 65' max. height
  - Buildings built to street and trail; buffered from transit uses
  - Structured parking
- **Open Space Area**
  - Wissahickon Valley Park gateway
  - Trailhead and comfort station
  - Public riverfront access
  - Open space areas as part of new development
  - Flood prone areas





- Transportation/Utility Area**
  - Expansion of bus operations
  - Pedestrian plaza with transit and bicycle amenities on Ridge Avenue
  - Full ADA-compliance of WTC and train station
  - PECO substation
  - Appropriate screening and buffers from adjacent uses
- Surface Parking Area**
  - Parking lots/valet with landscape and screening
  - Pylon signage
- Riverfront Trails**
  - Public access to and views of the Schuylkill River
  - Connections to the Wissahickon Transportation Center, Wissahickon Valley Park, Center City, and Lower Merion
  - Focal point for new development
- Controlled Access Points**
  - Traffic signal improvements and/or dedicated turn lanes

- Vehicle Routes**
  - Road widening on Ridge Avenue and Main Street for additional bus and vehicle capacity
  - Driveway consolidation on Ridge Avenue and Main Street
  - Internal driveways to connect development sites
  - Loading and service access
- Pedestrian Routes**
  - Safe, high-quality sidewalks and pedestrian crossings on Ridge Avenue and Main Street
  - Physical and visual connections to the river through development sites
- Pedestrian & Bicycle Sidepath Routes**
  - Temporary curb-protected sidepath in front of existing and proposed WTC on Ridge Avenue
  - Permanent curb-protected sidepath in front of new development on Main Street
- Protected Bicycle Routes**
  - Protected uphill bike lane on northbound Ridge Avenue



## A Point of Arrival

People traveling into the Wissahickon Gateway will soon be greeted by three distinct public spaces – **(1)** The Wissahickon Transportation Center (WTC) plaza, **(2)** A trailhead and comfort station at the former WTC, and **(3)** the entrance to Wissahickon Valley Park. They will be designed in coordination to create an attractive point of arrival for Northwest Philadelphia.

The WTC plaza will screen internal bus operations and be defined by an attractive headhouse building, signage, waiting area canopies, and lush landscaping. The trailhead and comfort station will provide bathrooms, water fountains, wi-fi, lighting, security, concessions and bike share for recreation users. The existing building was built by the Philadelphia Transportation Company (PTC) in 1948 and will be incorporated into the trailhead and comfort station.

The entry into Wissahickon Valley Park will be defined by an architectural gateway feature, exposed rock outcrop, and an ADA-compliant pedestrian connection that leads up to Wissahickon Regional Rail Station. Existing vegetation on the outcrop will be trimmed to expose the features of the rockface. New landscaping will be added, but sparingly.

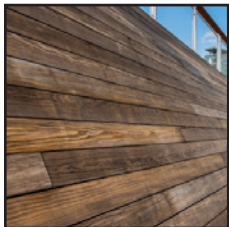
The design of each separate space will be coordinated so as to unify the Gateway. They will be woven together with consistent landscape, paving, and architectural themes. Architectural materials will speak to the histories of the area – the natural environment of Wissahickon Valley Park and the built industrial environment along the Schuylkill River in Manayunk.



Proposed Trailhead  
& Comfort Station

## Public Space Material Guidelines

### Buildings & Other Structures



Wood



Stone



Metal

### Street Furnishing Zone



Granite Block

### Street Lighting



Pedestrian Light Pole





View Along Ridge Avenue

Proposed Paving,  
Street Trees, and Street  
Lighting

Proposed Entrance to  
Wissahickon Valley Park

## Street Trees



*Celtis occidentalis*  
Common Hackberry



*Ginkgo biloba (male)*  
Maidenhair Tree



*Gleditsia tricanthos*  
Thornless Honeylocust



*Gymnocladus dioica (male)*  
Kentucky Coffeetree



*Platanus occidentalis*  
London Planetree



## New Development Opportunities

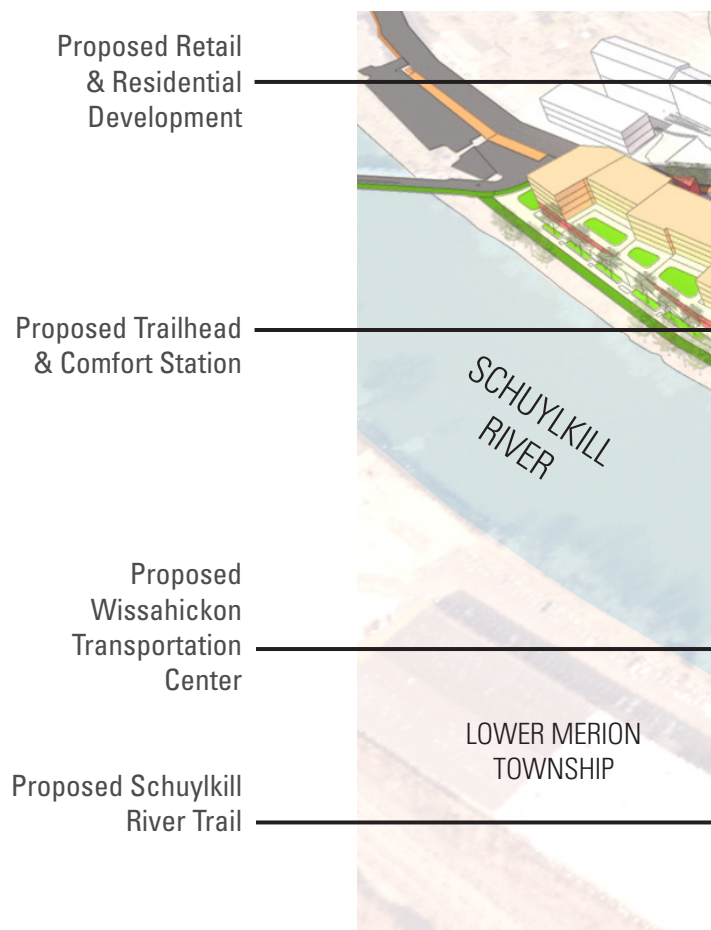
Over seven acres of private land in the Wissahickon Gateway hold great development potential. The real estate market of Northwest Philadelphia is pushing this area into transition from its current low density industrial and commercial uses into higher density residential and commercial uses. It is critical that commercial uses at the Gateway fill unmet consumer needs and do not compete with existing business districts in East Falls, Manayunk, and Roxborough.

This plan anticipates a maximum of 150,000 square feet of “destination” commercial space – including a grocer, trail-oriented shops, and offices – and 350 units of multi-family housing. Maximum building heights are anticipated to be 6 stories (approximately 65 feet). The following pages present various phasing and ownership scenarios.

New development will be built up to a sidepath on Main Street and Ridge Avenue. This will create a lively pedestrian environment that connects the Wissahickon Gateway with surrounding neighborhoods. Streetscape improvements on Main Street and Ridge Avenue will adhere to a consistent quality and theme of landscape, paving, and lighting. Strong connections will be made to the Wissahickon Transportation Center plaza and headhouse on Ridge Avenue, while creating necessary buffers to internal bus operations.

Moving away from Main Street and Ridge Avenue, pedestrians, bicycles, and vehicles will move comfortably into and through new development sites. A focus will be placed upon the quality of internal access routes and open space areas. Generous public walkways will draw pedestrians to the Schuylkill River. New retail and residential development will be oriented toward the river and trail. Large open spaces will be created along the trail, and can be used for outdoor dining and events.

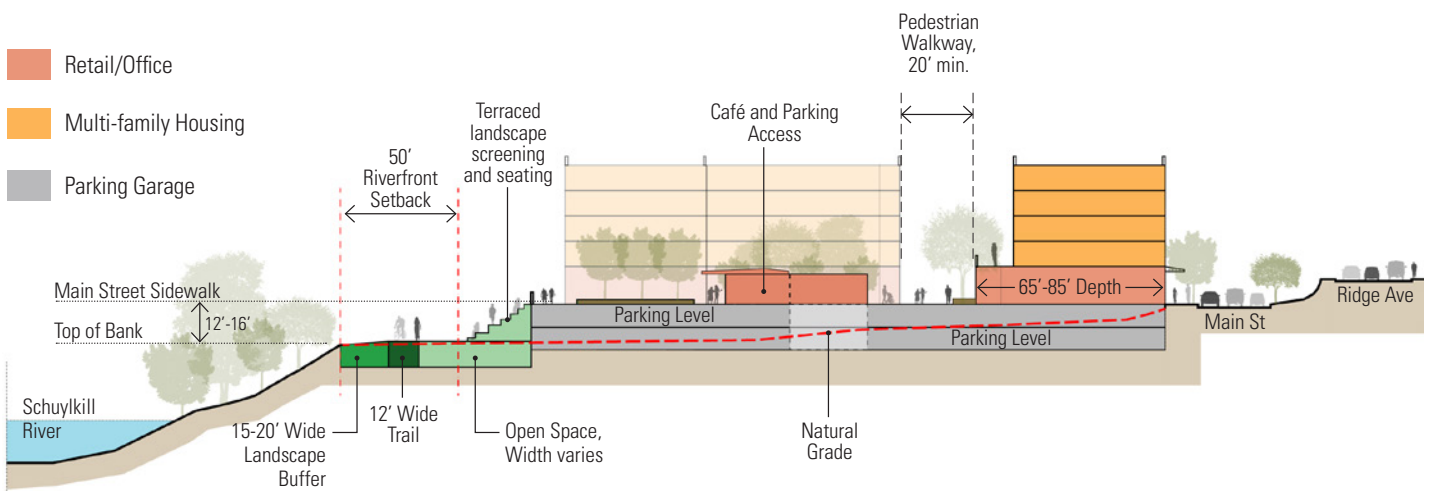
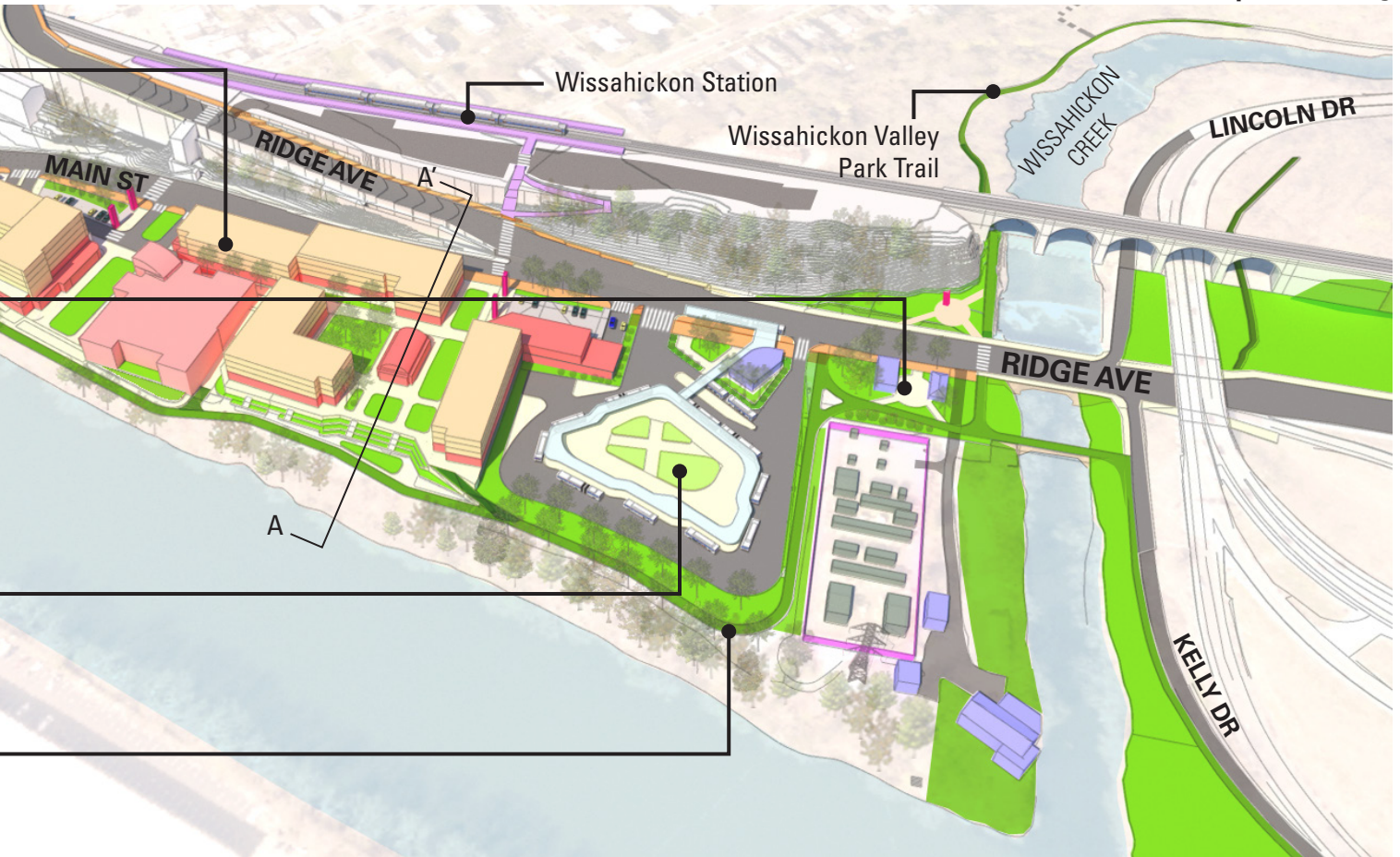
A large retail center will need a parking garage to support it. The topography of the Mr. Storage site allows for a garage to be “tucked” below new development. A parking garage can also be built above ground floor shops at the Movie Theater site. A shared parking strategy should be developed that considers the peak hours of retail and residential parking use, and acknowledges the high level of public transportation and trail access for these sites.



**Rendering of Trail-Oriented Development**



## Conceptual Massing



Site Section, Schuylkill River to Ridge Avenue (A-A')



# Development Scenarios

The phasing plan anticipates how private development sites will evolve over time along side public improvements. Development at the “Movie Theater site” will happen incrementally. In the short-term, new retail buildings, landscaping, and open space areas will be added (**Phase 1**). In the long-term, the “Mr. Storage site” will be redeveloped. Its use and design is dependent on whether ownership can be consolidated across both sites. If ownership across the two sites remains separate, it is likely that the “Mr. Storage site” will be redeveloped with multi-family residential housing and a small amount of retail (**Phase 2, Option A**). If ownership can be consolidated, an opportunity presents itself for a large, destination retail, office, and/or residential development (**Phase 2, Options B and C**). In the former scenario, it is essential to coordinate site design across both properties.

## Legend

- Retail/Office
- Self-Storage
- Transportation and Utilities
- Open Space
- Multi-family Housing
- Retail/Office/Residential Mixed-Use
- Trail
- Sidepath

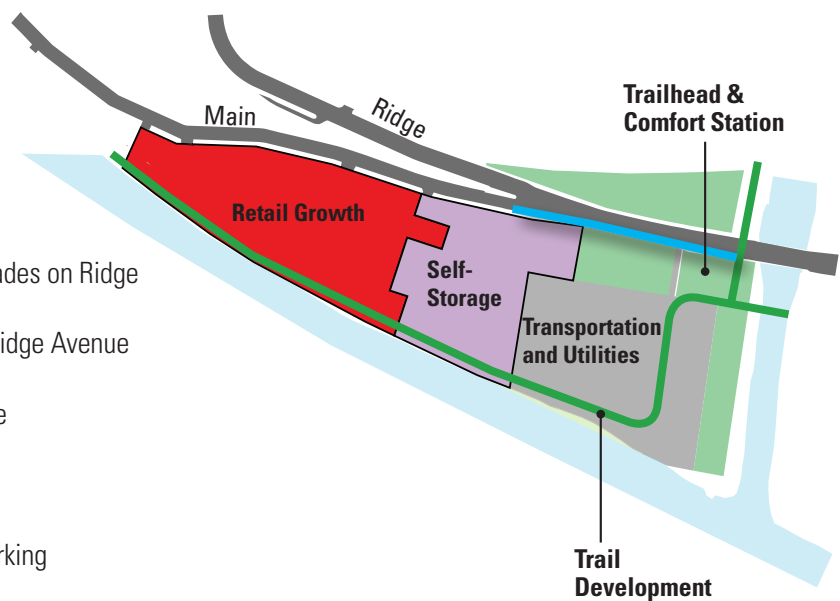
## Phase 1

### Public Improvements

- Transit Upgrades
- Trail Expansion
- Trailhead & Comfort Station
- Road Widening and Traffic Control Upgrades on Ridge Avenue
- Pedestrian & Bicycle Improvements on Ridge Avenue and Main Street
- Driveway Consolidation on Ridge Avenue

### Private Improvements

- Retail Buildings
- Internal Pedestrian, Open Space, and Parking Improvements





## Phase 2

### Public Improvements

- Wissahickon Park Entrance Improvements
- Pedestrian & Bicycle Improvements on Ridge Ave
- Wissahickon Station ADA Compliance Improvements
- Ridge Avenue Bridge and Onramp Improvements

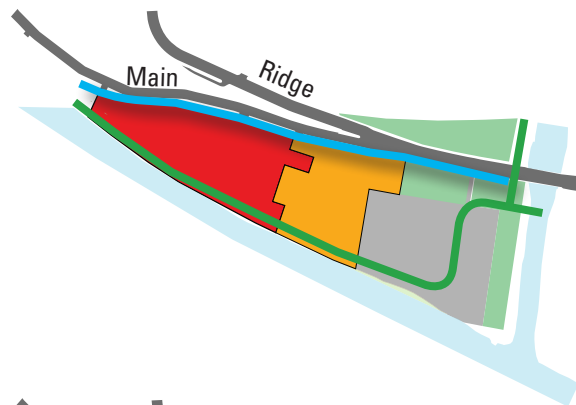
### Private Improvements

- Retail, Office, and Residential Build Out
- Structured Parking
- Road Widening and Traffic Control Upgrades on Main Street
- Pedestrian & Bicycle Improvements on Main Street
- Internal Pedestrian and Open Space Improvements

### Option A

#### Separate Ownership

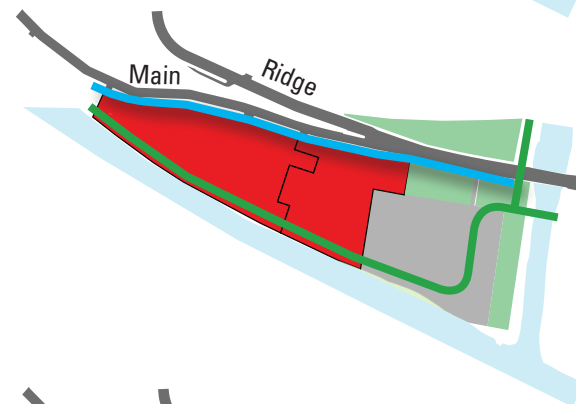
Retail Center and Multi-family Housing



### Option B

#### Single Ownership

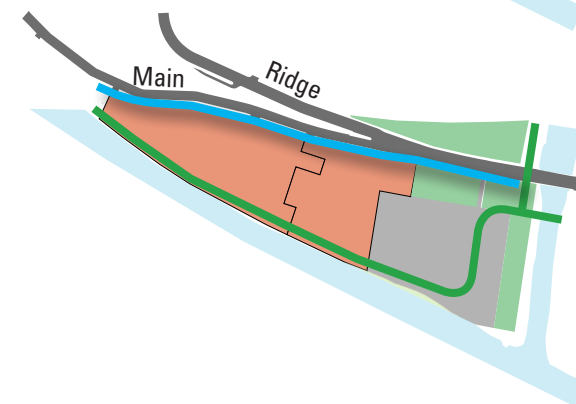
Destination Retail & Office Center



### Option C

#### Single Ownership

Destination Retail, Office, & Residential  
Mixed-Use Center

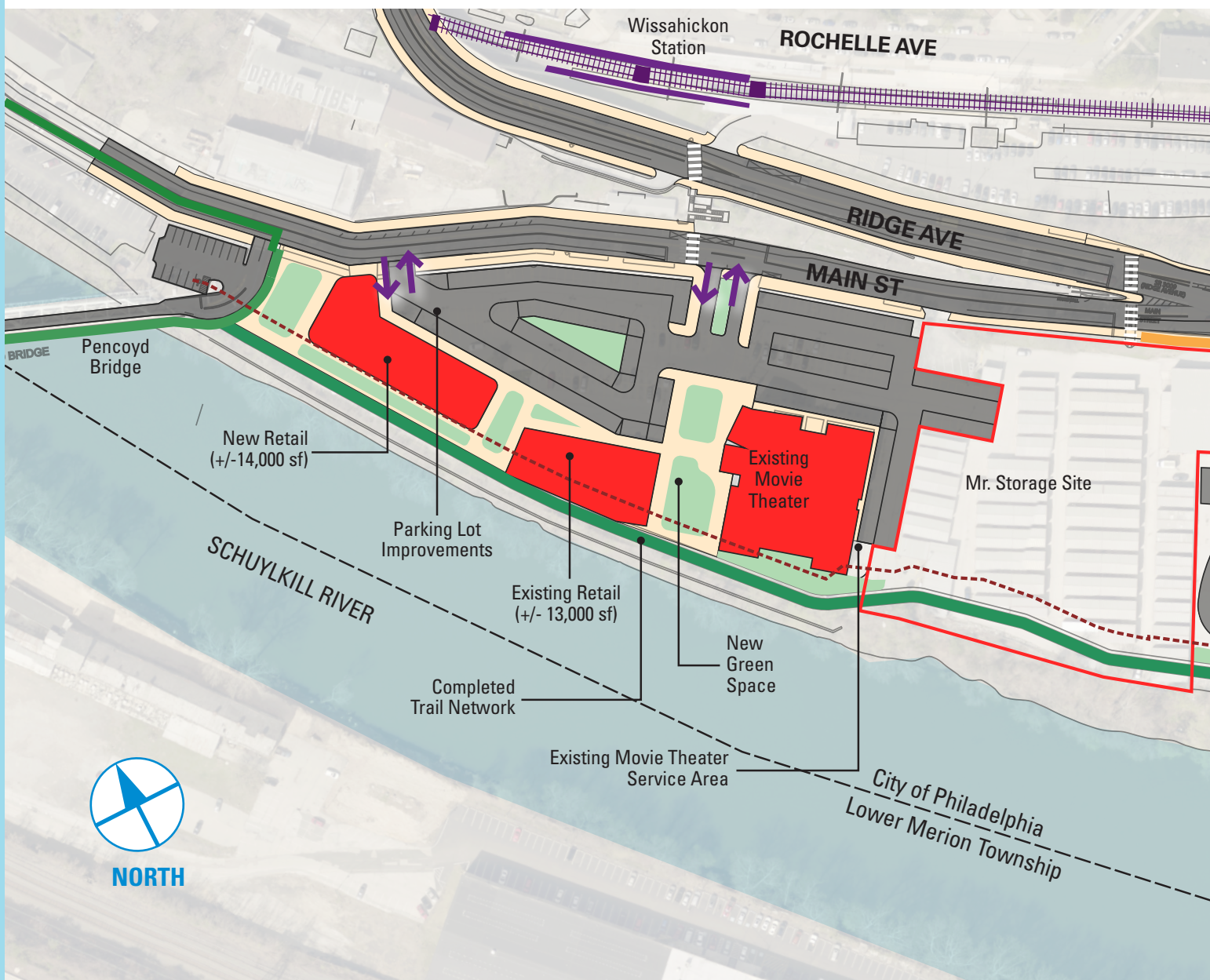


# Phase 1

The first big move of Phase 1 is the relocation and expansion of the Wissahickon Transportation Center (WTC), and with it, the widening of Ridge Avenue. This road widening allows for the construction of a dedicated left turn lane into the WTC, a temporary shared-use path and pedestrian plaza on Ridge Avenue in front of the WTC, and the consolidation of curb cuts. The WTC project provides land for the expansion of the Schuylkill River Trail and construction of a trailhead and comfort station. Flashing pedestrian crossing beacons will also be installed at unsignalized crosswalks.

Meanwhile, upgrades will continue at the Movie Theater site. This includes new retail “pad” buildings that are built up and open up to Main Street and the Schuylkill River Trail, internal pedestrian and parking improvements, landscaping, and a park space adjacent to the movie theater and trail.

**The anticipated timeframe for the completion of Phase 1 is 7 years.**





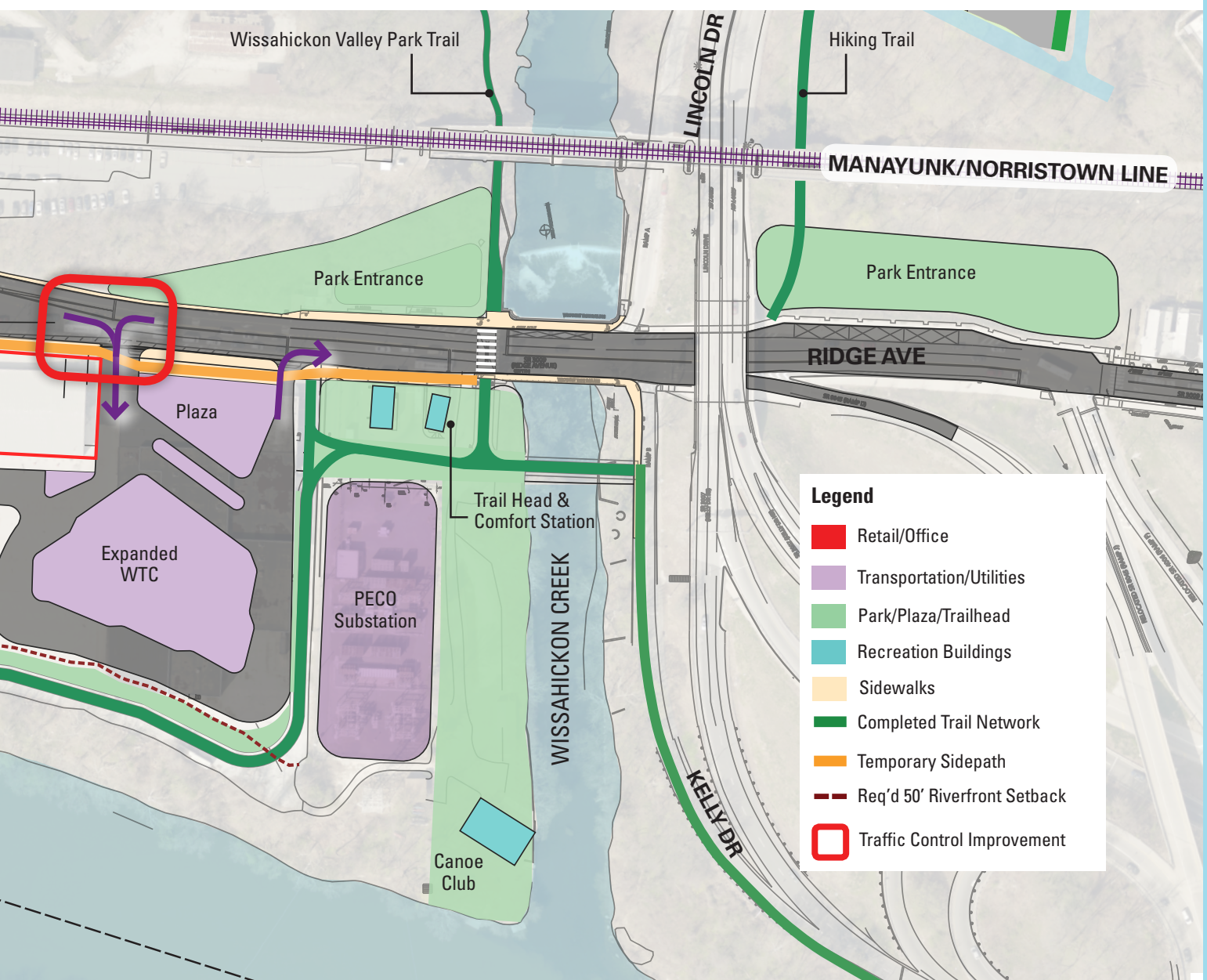
## Development Potential

### Movie Theater Site Totals

- 27,000 sf of Retail
- 22,000 sf Movie Theater
- 200+ Surface Parking Spaces

### Mr Storage Site Totals

- Undeveloped in Phase 1



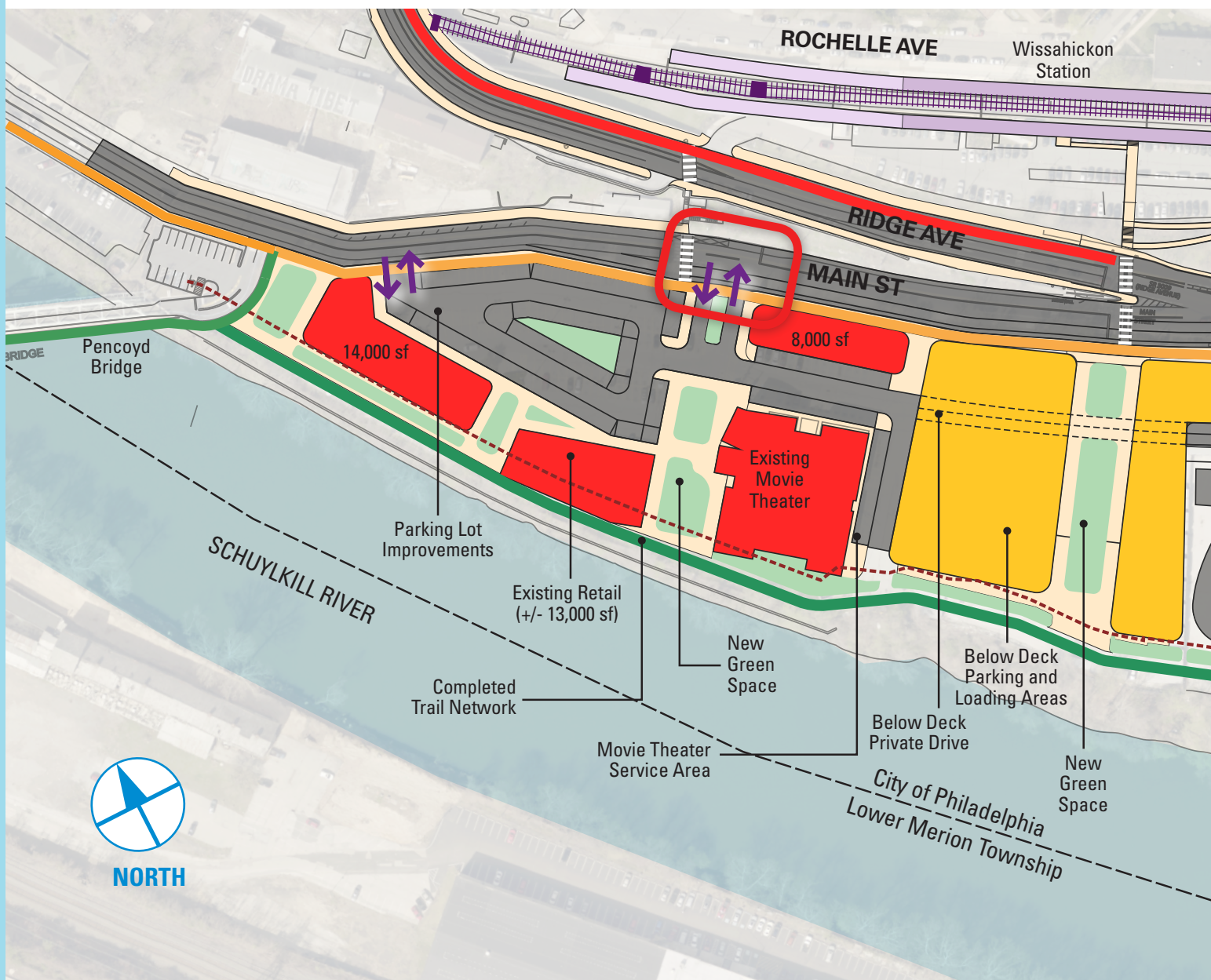
## Phase 2 | Option A

This option assumes a scenario in which the Movie Theater and Mr. Storage sites remain under separate ownership. The movie theater site will reach a critical point where continued retail development will not be possible because there is no room for additional parking to be provided. However, existing and new buildings will be designed for trail-oriented businesses that open up onto the river and street; and common spaces will be upgraded.

The Mr. Storage site will likely be redeveloped with multi-family housing, given the strong housing market in Northwest Philadelphia and location next to public transit

and trails. Parking will be contained in an underground garage that takes advantage of site topography. A one-way driveway will provide “right turn only” ingress to the garage from southbound Ridge Avenue and Main Street, and egress onto Main Street via the Movie Theater site. This access plan requires internal driveway coordination with the Movie Theater site and may require privately-funded road improvements for Main Street. A public pedestrian promenade will lead to an open space area at the river.

**The anticipated timeframe for the completion of Phase 2 is 8 to 15 years.**





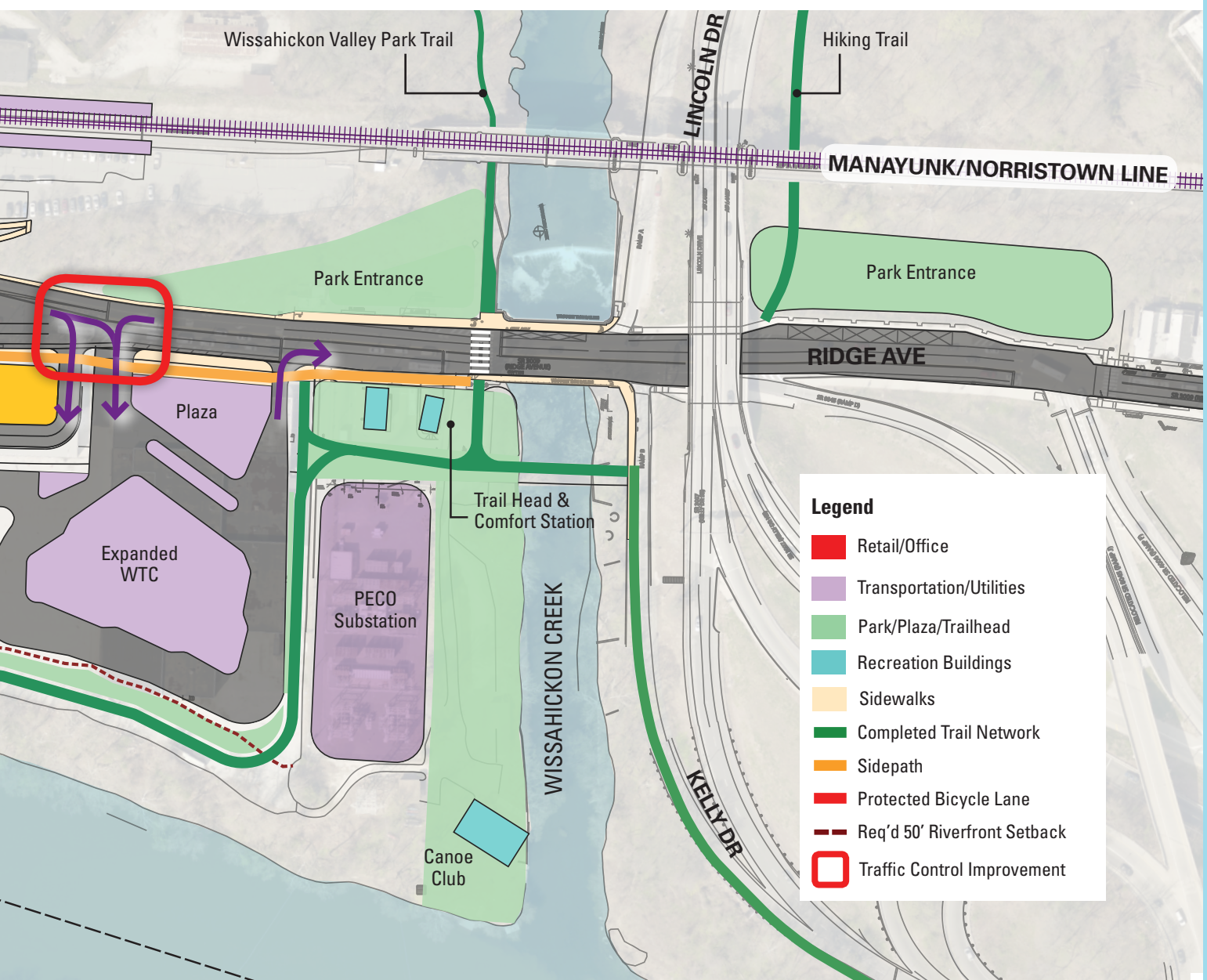
## Development Potential

### Movie Theater Site Totals

- 35,000 sf of Retail/Office
- 22,000 sf Movie Theater
- 150-200 Surface Parking Spaces

### Mr Storage Site Totals

- 250 Apartments
- 275 Garage Parking Spaces

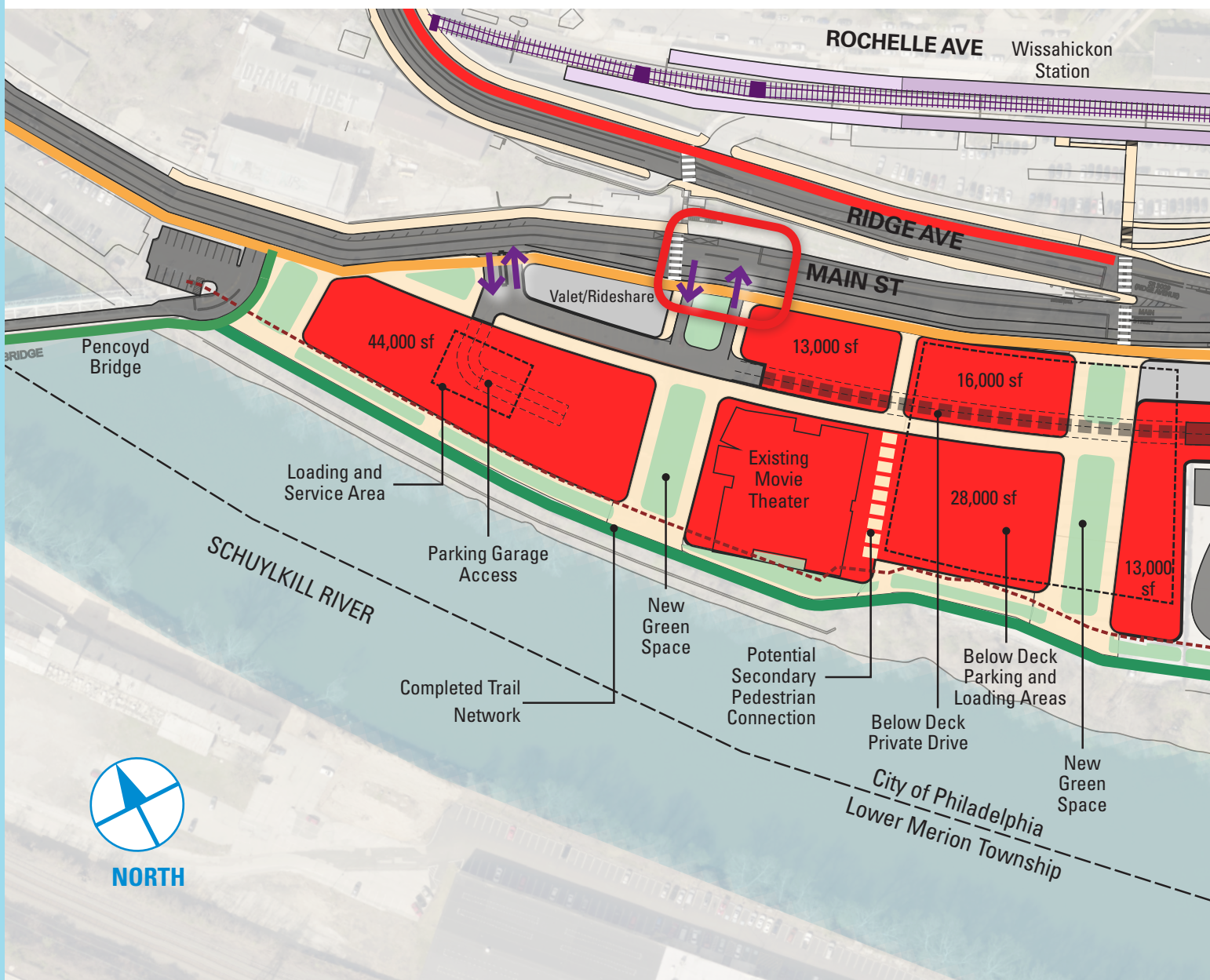


## Phase 2 | Option B

This option assumes a scenario in which the Movie Theater and Mr. Storage sites are consolidated under single ownership. A destination center will include a grocer, trail-oriented businesses, and offices. It will incorporate open space, event programming, and other placemaking features. New retail uses will open their doors and windows to the trail, river, and street. Parking lots may be replaced by additional open space or pad sites.

This transformation will require the construction of a parking garage, and the possibility of privately-funded road improvements for Main Street. Vehicle access from Ridge Avenue will only be provided via a one-way "right turn only" ingress from southbound Ridge Avenue and Main Street. All egress will occur on Main Street. The site design will allow for public pedestrian promenades that lead from Ridge Avenue and Main Street to open space areas at the river.

**The anticipated timeframe for the completion of Phase 2 is 8 to 15 years.**





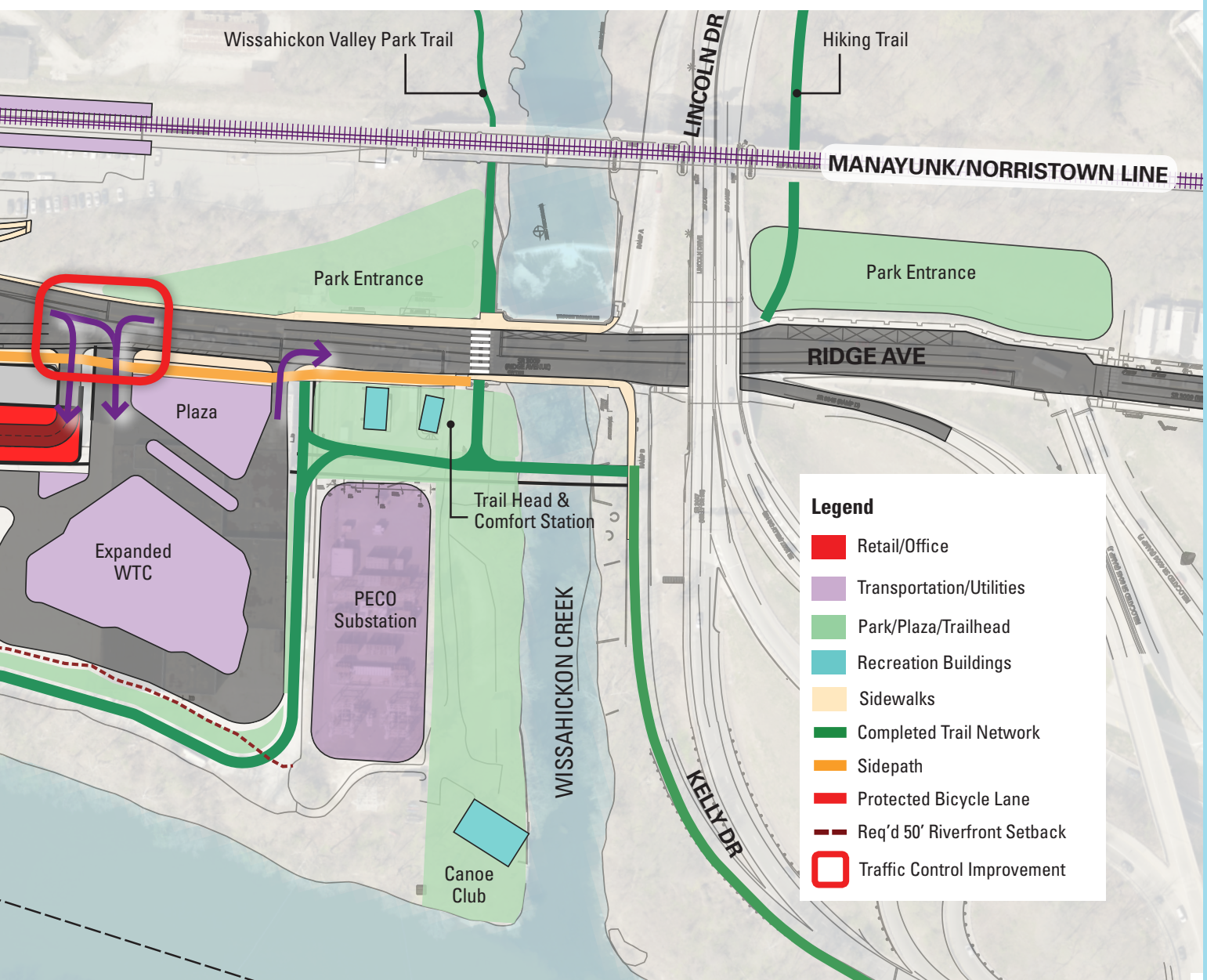
## Development Potential

### Consolidated Site Totals

- 125,000 sf of Retail/Office
- 22,000 sf Movie Theater

### Parking Totals

- 90 Parking Spaces on Second Level
- 30 Valet or Rideshare Spaces
- 275 Spaces Below Deck

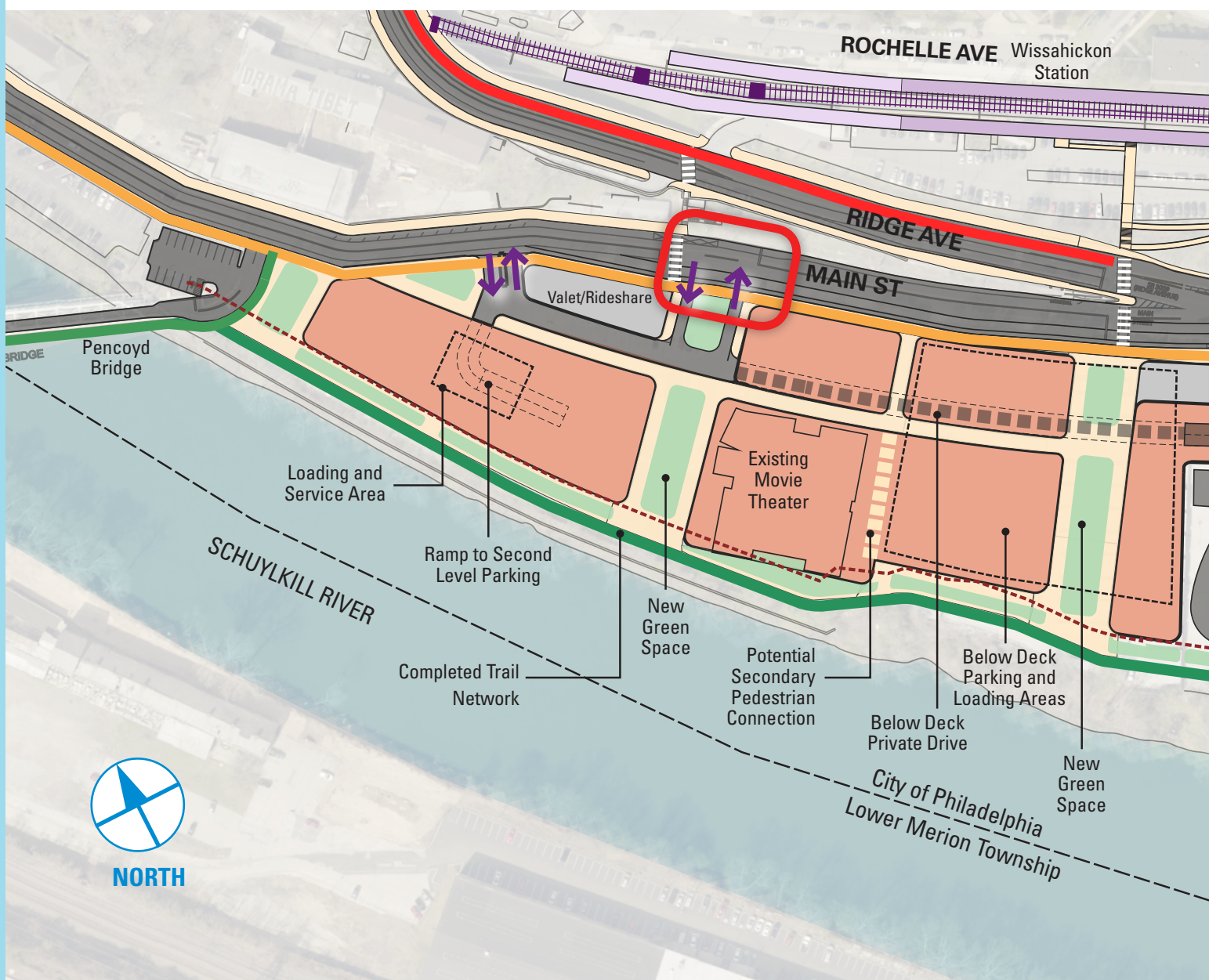


## Phase 2 | Option C

This option assumes a scenario in which the Movie Theater and Mr. Storage sites are consolidated under single ownership. A destination mixed-use center will include a grocer, trail-oriented businesses, offices, and apartments. It will incorporate open space, event programming, and other placemaking features. New retail uses will open their doors and windows to the trail, river, and street. Parking lots may be replaced by additional open space or pad sites.

This transformation will require the construction of a parking garage, and the possibility of privately-funded road improvements for Main Street. Vehicle access from Ridge Avenue will only be provided via a one-way "right turn only" ingress from southbound Ridge Avenue and Main Street. All egress will occur on Main Street. The site design will allow for public pedestrian promenades that lead from Ridge Avenue and Main Street to open space areas at the river.

**The anticipated timeframe for the completion of Phase 2 is 10 to 20 years.**





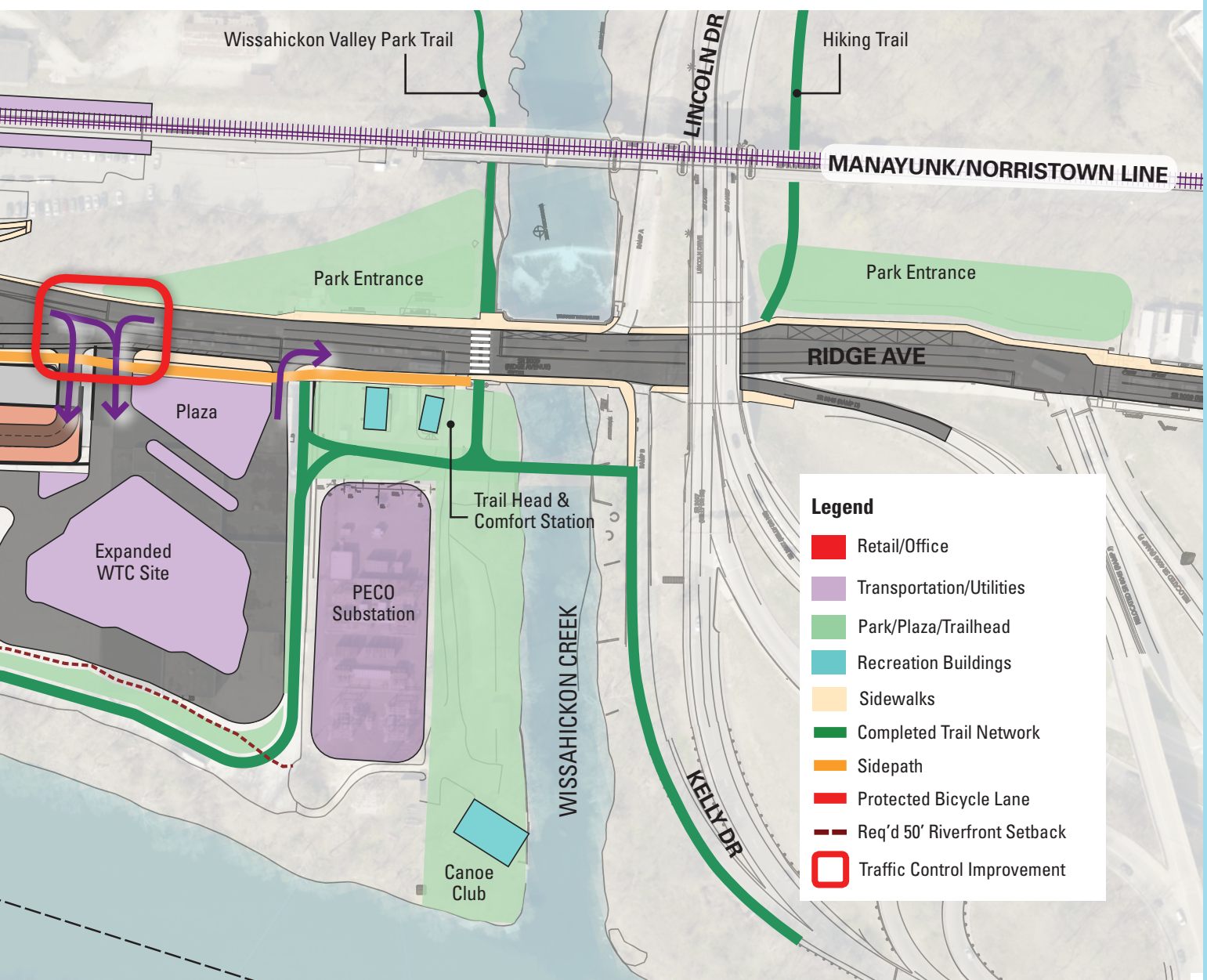
## Development Potential

### Consolidated Site Totals

- 125,000 sf of Retail/Office
- 22,000 sf Movie Theater
- 350 Apartments

### Parking Totals

- 90 Parking Spaces on Second Level
- 30 Valet or Rideshare Spaces
- 275 Spaces Below Deck

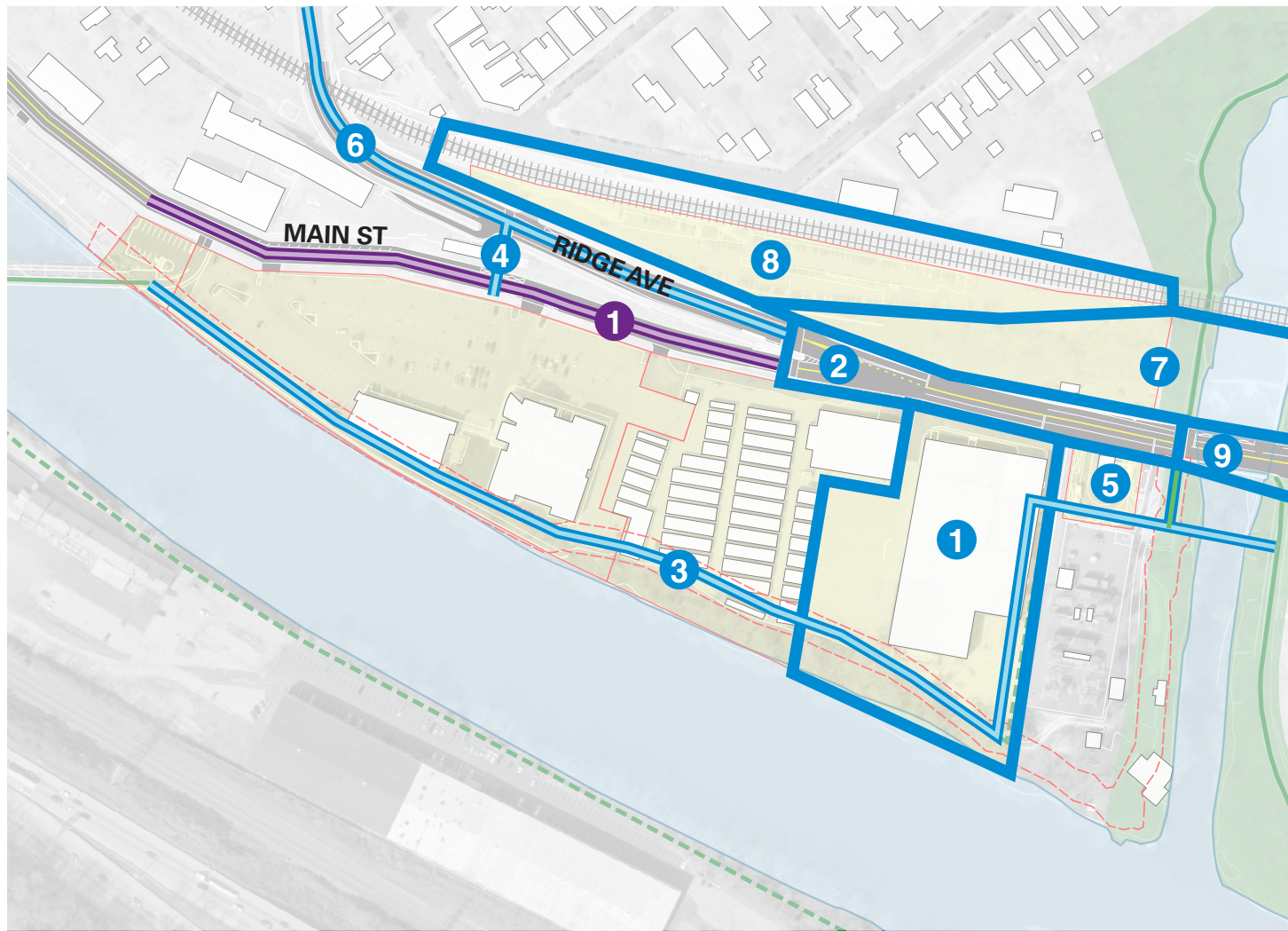


# Implementation

## Capital Project Plan

Support from the City, State, SEPTA, and private developers is necessary for realizing the vision at the Wissahickon Gateway. Various publicly- and privately-funded capital projects will need to be constructed in order to unlock the development potential of the area and to ensure traffic safety and efficient movement of people and vehicles. The following plan illustrates the individual capital projects necessary for the gateway to reach its full potential.

## Capital Project Locator Map





### Definition | Capital Project

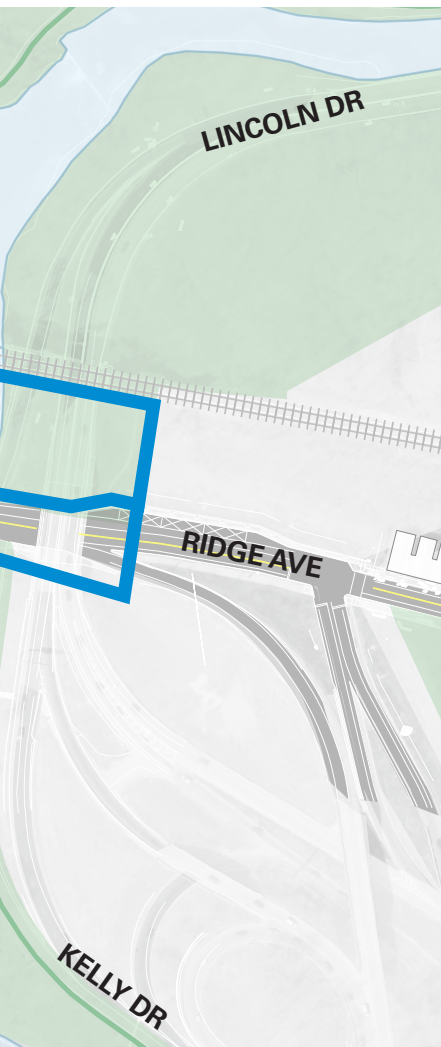
An investment to build or maintain public infrastructure, such as roads or public buildings. Capital projects are defined by their large scale and large cost relative to other investments that involve less planning and resources.

### Public Projects

- 1 Wissahickon Transportation Center Expansion
- 2 Ridge Avenue Widening & Temporary Sidepath
- 3 Schuylkill River Trail Extension
- 4 Ridge Avenue and Main Street Pedestrian Crossing Improvements
- 5 Schuylkill / Wissahickon Trailhead & Comfort Station
- 6 Ridge Avenue Protected Bike Lane
- 7 Wissahickon Valley Park Gateway Improvements
- 8 Wissahickon Station ADA Compliance Improvements:
  - Physical Connection to Wissahickon Transportation Center
  - Platform Relocation
- 9 Ridge Avenue Bridge & Onramp Access Improvements

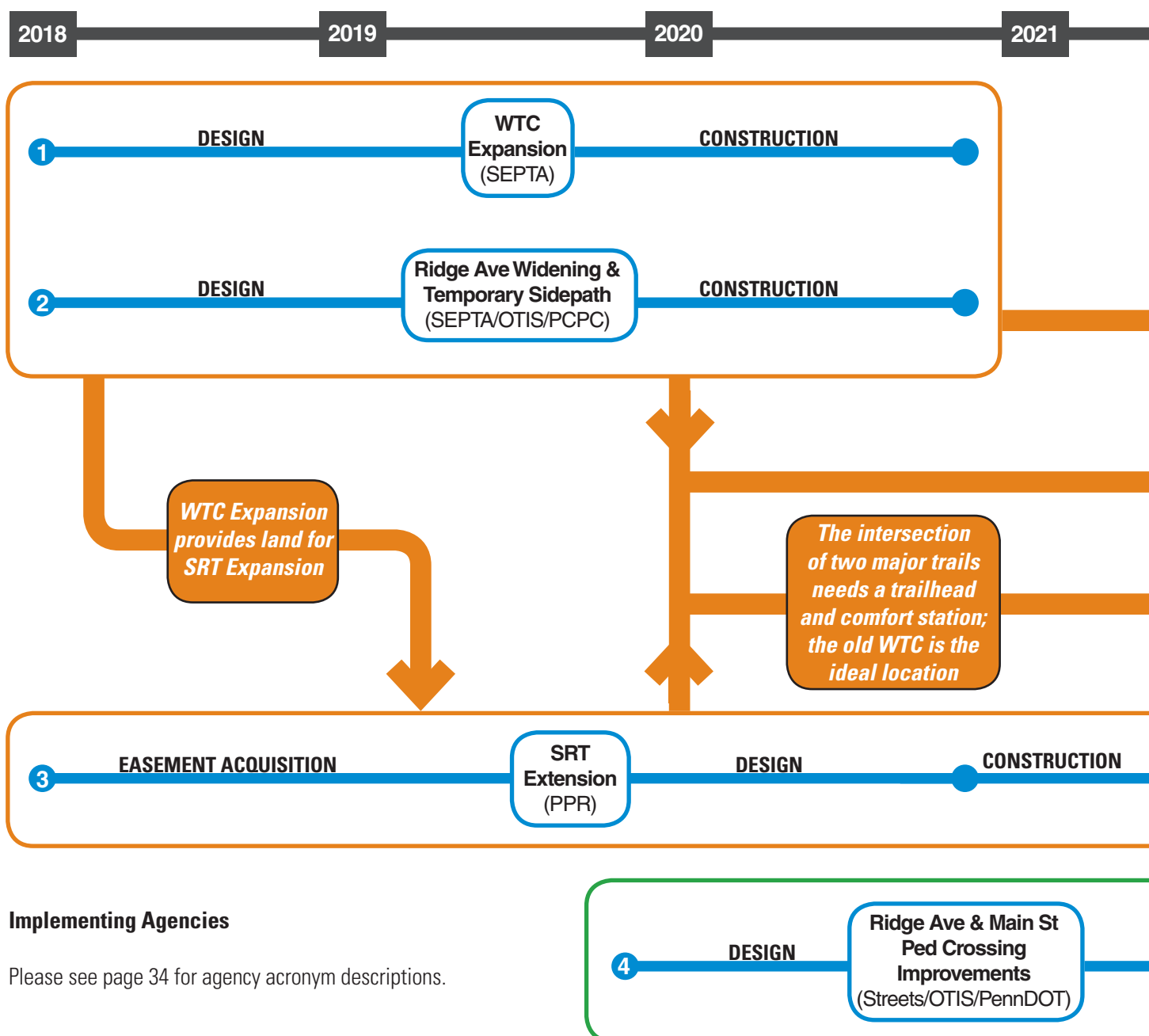
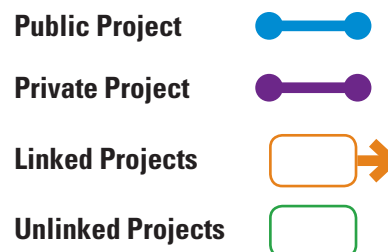
### Private Projects

- 1 Main Street Widening & Traffic Control Improvements
  - Pending full determination of need
  - Improvements to include pedestrian and bicycle sidepath



## Critical Path Schedule

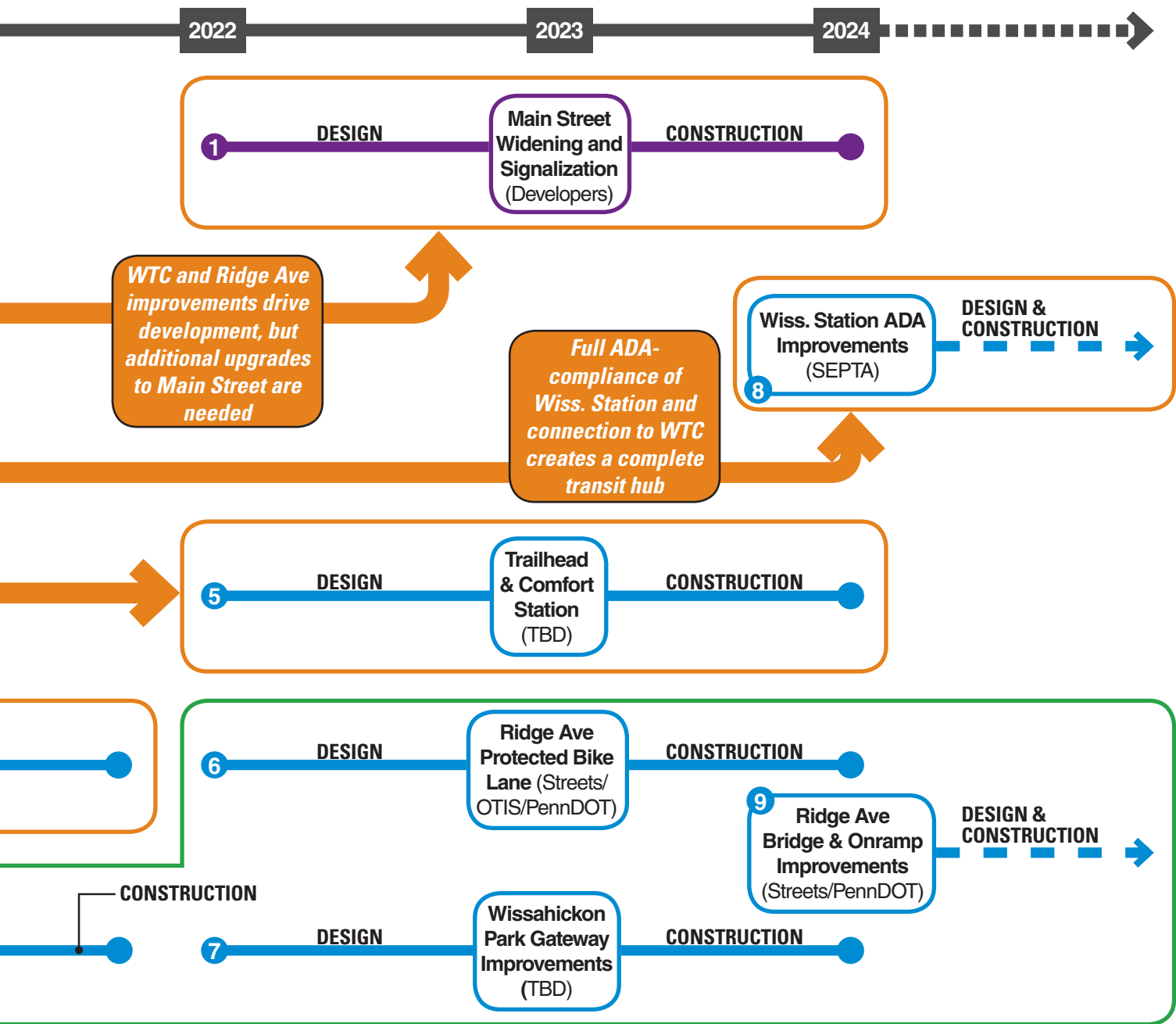
Full build out of the Wissahickon Gateway – according to the vision and goals established in this plan – requires a critical path schedule. The schedule is represented in the diagram below. Each project will require a mix of capital and grant funding. Specific funding sources will be identified on a project-by-project basis after the completion of this planning process.





**Definition |** Critical Path Schedule

A network of projects – each linked together – that will provide the City with the necessary sequence, timing, and resources for individual public and private projects.



# Outreach Process

The public outreach process for this plan included a user survey and two public meetings.

During the months of October and November 2017, Planning Commission staff administered a field survey to users of the Wissahickon Gateway. The survey was also available online. A total of 486 responses were collected.

The first public meeting was held on October 30, 2017 at the Gustine Recreation Center in East Falls. 85 people attended this meeting.

The second public meeting was held on May 23, 2018 at Jefferson University's East Falls Campus. 105 people attended this meeting.

PCPC also formed a steering committee for this plan, made up of representatives of community groups, city agencies, advocacy groups, and other interested parties. Many meetings were held regarding important decision points for the Gateway.

## Project Partners

Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia  
Cadence Cycling & Multisport Center  
Central Roxborough Civic Association  
Clean Air Council  
Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC)  
East Falls Community Council  
East Falls Development Corporation  
Friends of the Wissahickon  
Lower Merion Township Planning Department  
Manayunk Development Corporation  
Manayunk Neighborhood Council  
Michael Baker, International  
Office of Councilman Curtis Jones, Jr.

Office of State Representative Pamela A. DeLissio  
Penn Realty Group  
Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT)  
Philadelphia Office of Transportation & Infrastructure Systems (OTIS)  
Philadelphia Parks & Recreation (PPR)  
Philadelphia Streets Department (Streets)  
Ridge Park Civic Association  
Roxborough Development Corporation  
Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA)  
Wissahickon Interested Citizens Association  
Wissahickon Neighbors Civic Association  
Upper Roxborough Civic Association



## User Survey

During October and November 2017, staff from the Planning Commission, Michael Baker International, and the Clean Air Council surveyed rush hour users of the Wissahickon Transportation Center, Wissahickon Train Station, Schuylkill River Trail, and the Wissahickon Valley Park Trail. The survey asked people how they travel through the Wissahickon Gateway area, their opinion of its current conditions, and how the area could be improved. The survey was also available online. **A total of 486 responses were collected.**

### Who took the Survey?

25 percent of survey respondents live in the the Wissahickon Gateway's 19128 zip code (also includes the Roxborough, Wissahickon, and Andorra neighborhoods). Another 25 percent live in the adjoining zip codes of 19119, 19127, 19129, 19131, and 19144 (Germantown, Mt. Airy, Manayunk, East Falls, Wynnefield, Parkside). Only 10% of respondents' final destinations were in the 19128 zip code. This is most likely represents transit riders who were on their way to work, as 23 percent indicated that they were headed to Center City or University City. King of Prussia was the most common suburban destination.

Age and gender were similar across travel modes. Ethnicity and car ownership differed by travel mode. Black respondents made up 47 percent of transit users and only 8 percent non-transit users (pedestrian, bicycle, car). White respondents comprised 45 percent of transit users and 87 percent non-transit users. 58 percent of transit users surveyed did not own a car.

## Survey Results

### 1. What makes this area unsafe?

✓ Speeding vehicles	203
✓ Cyclists maneuvering through congested traffic	199
✓ Poor visibility from buses	187
✓ Not enough space	182

### 2. What improvements would make you feel safer?

✓ Protected bike lane	218
✓ Riverfront trail	196
Widened sidewalk	163
Lighting	160

### 3. What recreational amenities would you use?\*

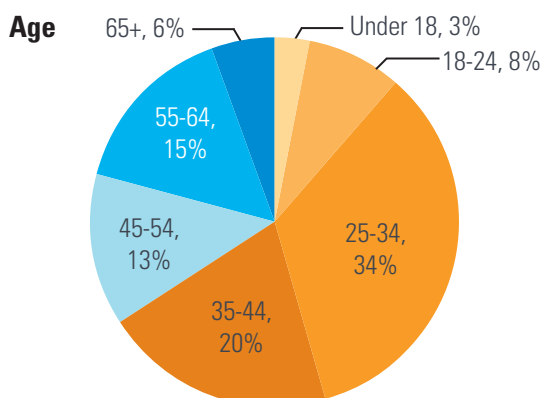
✓ Bathroom	91
✓ Water fountain	68
Rest area	17
Concession stand	12
None	30

### 4. What commercial amenities would you use?

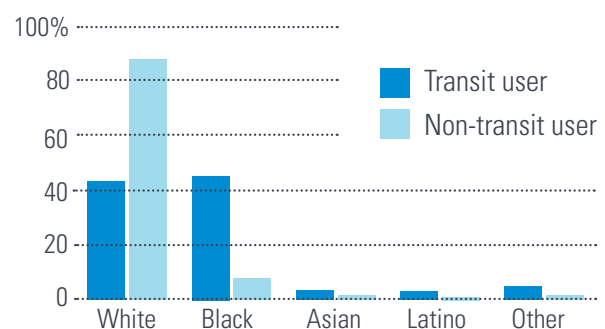
✓ Coffee/Beverage	299
Bathroom	159
Convenience food	201
Restaurant	190
None	58

\*This question was only posed to trail users

## Demographics of Survey Respondents



### Race/Ethnicity



## Public Meetings

The first of two public meetings for the Wissahickon Gateway Plan took place on October 30, 2017 at Gustine Recreation Center in East Falls. **The meeting attracted 85 participants** from throughout the City, with the majority coming from the nearby neighborhoods of Wissahickon, East Falls, Manayunk, and Roxborough.

Meeting participants gave input on how to improve the Wissahickon Gateway. Their thoughts helped to guide recommendations in the Wissahickon Gateway Plan. City Planning, SEPTA, Parks and Recreation, and Michael Baker, International staff obtained feedback during an open house style meeting. The results of that meeting are summarized below.

The second public meeting took place on May 23, 2018 at Jefferson University's East Falls Campus. **The meeting attracted 105 participants** from throughout the City, but again, the majority came from the nearby neighborhoods of Wissahickon, East Falls, Manayunk, and Roxborough. The purpose of the meeting was to present the draft plan recommendations and receive feedback from attendees. This feedback was used to refine the final plan recommendations.

### First Public Meeting Results

#### 1. What amenities should be part of the new Wissahickon Transportation Center?

✓ Pedestrian plaza along Ridge Avenue	52
Specialty lighting	28
Bike parking station	25
Shops	18
Iconic signage	6

#### 2. What type of new development do you prefer?

✓ Apartments with first floor retail	41
✓ Office/hotel	34
Townhouses	20
Retail	18
Warehouse	3
Self-storage facilities	3

#### 3. Prioritize investments for each of the following:

##### Reuse of existing Wissahickon Transportation Center

✓ Public restrooms and fountain	51
✓ Refreshments or cafe	35
✓ Bike share station	33
Information center	17

##### Trail Improvement Options

✓ River views	35
✓ Sitting areas	28
Storefronts along trail	13

##### Gateway Treatments

✓ Large scale landscaping	45
✓ Unique paving and lighting	41
✓ Public art installation	32
Iconic signage	16



# Next Steps

## Project Coordination

This planning process provided the opportunity for government agencies and key stakeholders to coordinate the design and implementation of some of the projects highlighted in the plan. Moving forward, coordination will continue on projects that are underway and those that have not yet begun. Government agencies and key stakeholders will continue to meet regularly to discuss and coordinate individual projects, evaluate and mitigate impacts to residents and businesses during construction, and measure progress towards the overall vision for the Wissahickon Gateway.

## Public Process

Successful implementation of this plan requires government agencies to include the general public and community representatives as active and engaged partners. Government transparency can be achieved by holding regular meetings with community representatives to discuss individual projects, ensure minimal disruption to residents and businesses during construction, and measure progress toward the overall vision for the Wissahickon Gateway. Each individual capital project will have its own public process that includes public meetings and a highly accessible project manager.

## Zoning

Private development sites in the Wissahickon Gateway are not currently zoned for the uses proposed in this plan. This plan does not propose any zoning changes at this time. The City expects developers to enter into a good-faith discussion with the public, community representatives, elected officials, and City agencies to produce a consensus-driven development plan. This plan should include privately-funded traffic improvements that alleviate the impact of new commercial and residential uses.

## Funding

As of July 2018, the expansion of the Wissahickon Transportation Center is the only project to have funding in place. Moving forward, individual capital projects identified in this plan will need to secure a mix of capital and grant funding. This plan helps prioritize these projects for the allocation of acquisition, design, and construction funds through capital budget and grant award processes.







# Acknowledgments



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*Mayor*

**Anne Fadullon**  
*Director of Planning and Development*

**Catherine Califano**  
*First Deputy Director*

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**Adopted July 2018**

