



**YORKTOWN COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

v. lamar wilson associates | interface studio llc

**YORKTOWN**  
**master plan 2015**

a blueprint for survival  
& sustainability

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**“When we moved in it was just built. The sidewalks were not yet completed, but we lived there, because it was my father’s dream for his family. And out of this dream, what happened for African-American individuals who were educated and wanted the very best, they all settled in this area. And, no, we don’t want to leave the area, because we have raised our children and our grandchildren here. We will continue to live here because we feel safe and connected.”**



This Yorktown 2015 Master Plan focuses on a small but important group of largely residential blocks and committed residents who are their “owners, caretakers and stakeholders.” It represents the product of intense work and creative ideas for both how to build on existing assets in order to realize new opportunities to grow and sustain a community spirit and attract investments from inside and outside the boundaries of Yorktown. It is a powerful narrative for 2015 describing “assets and opportunities” in Yorktown that suggest the community’s survival is not an issue. There are, however, some real threats and challenges that, if left unattended, will only constrain Yorktown’s ability to survive in the short-run and thrive over the long term. Underlying Yorktown CDC’s motivation for embarking on this neighborhood strategic plan at this stage of the community’s history were concerns of its board and staff that are reflected in the very title of the plan itself: survival and sustainability. Yorktown residents feel threatened by market forces and other circumstances including:

- > Increases in rental housing in and surrounding the community targeted to students attending Temple University
- > A growing senior population of homeowners challenged more and more with the upkeep of their homes and yards as they approach or are already in retirement
- > The prospects of higher density residential and commercial development within and on the edges of the neighborhood that could undermine their relative peace, quiet, safety and security

At the same time, the board, staff and residents in general are buoyed by the level and spirit of resident and institutional engagement that occurred over the past year to develop a strategy to secure the community’s long-term future. Over 260 Yorktown community residents participated in focus groups, surveys and community and coordinating committee meetings to help shape this plan and who are prepared to keep their sleeves rolled up to make it happen. The deep and rich history of Yorktown serves as a foundation upon which the community continues to grow, undergo





# YORKTOWN COMMUNITY MASTER PLAN STUDY AREA

— yorktown housing

200 400 800 FEET

revitalization, and be preserved all at the same time. The fact that these goals and objectives are neither conflicting nor mutually exclusive fueled a resolve among residents that the future of Yorktown is indeed a function of the same type of energy and capital that led to its development in 1960 and that give it renewed life and energy today, including:

- residents who are committed to investing their time, energy and money to maintains its vibrancy
- neighborhood-serving institutions including Bright Hope Baptist Church, Progress Plaza, Yorktown Community Organization, Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC), Progress Investments, Inc. and the Columbia North YMCA share a similar view and see their own survival and vibrancy inextricably linked with one another and with the community.

This plan is both visionary/forward thinking and practical/achievable as it offers: (a) ideas for investing in community assets; (b) strategies for preventing displacement of community residents; and (c) mechanisms that encourage community stakeholders to play an active role in the first two areas. Outlined in the full plan are narratives, statistics, charts, and graphics that illustrate a direction for Yorktown and the place it can evolve to as articulated by its residents and institutional stakeholders. This shorter piece serves as an “appetizer” to encourage a full reading of the plan to have a greater appreciation of Yorktown’s promise and potential, and Yorktown CDC’s commitment to secure resources to ensure the vitality of Yorktown through 2015 and beyond.

## PLANNING AREA

The core of the planning area, outlined in yellow in the study area map at left, is officially “Yorktown” and has an overwhelmingly single-family residential character. These blocks account for approximately half of the total 20 square-block planning area. The hard edges of Broad Street to the west and Girard Avenue to the south are dominated by commercial retail, institutional and mixed-use establishments, contrasted by the northern and eastern edges which are characterized more by student housing and institutional and recreational uses and multi-family residential, respectively.



Community engagement included meetings, focus groups, stakeholder interviews, and the fabrication and installation of an audio recording booth—the Yorktown Chatterbox—designed to capture residents’ stories about and visions for the future of the neighborhood.

## PLANNING PRINCIPLES

The neighborhood strategic planning process was guided by values and principles discussed and decided upon by the Yorktown Plan Coordinating Committee (YPCC) consisting of over 30 stakeholders empanelled by YCDC to help direct the activities and interact with the Wilson/Interface consultant team. These principals, used to help guide the work and inform specific priorities and recommended action steps outlined in the final plan, and the decision-making steps for endorsing the plan are as follows:

- Preserve and Advance Yorktown’s History and Legacy
- Invest in Current and Future Generations of Residents as Leaders of the Community
- Invite and Excite Resident to be “Architects of their Plan”
- Build on the Community’s Pride and Spirit

## 4 COMMUNITY ASSETS

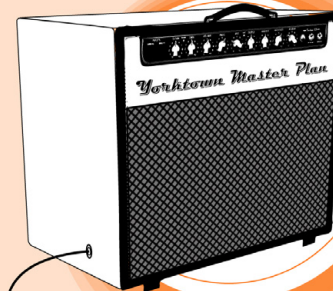
Yorktown features distinct housing types including rows of attached housing in a mixture of two- or three-story types. While each housing type has its own distinctive look, all are drawn from a common language of stylistic and architectural elements, including mansard roofs, shutters, covered porches, and awning. The occupancy rate of the buildings in Yorktown is estimated at 90%; and the vast majority of the vacant stock is attributable to the former William Penn High School at Master and Broad and an empty Temple building at Jefferson and Broad.

The Yorktown community is well-connected to a multitude of public transportation options. As revealed by the community survey, after personal car use and walking, riding the bus is the third most common primary means of transportation, and is most commonly used to make health and medical-related trips and to access shopping destinations.

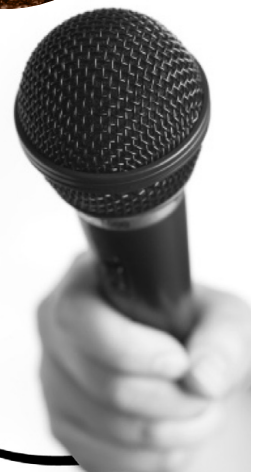
### MASTER PLAN GOALS

Five core goals emerged from the planning work completed over the past year as shown below and discussed in greater detail in the main body of this report. They are:

- 1 INVEST IN YORKTOWN'S DEEP HISTORY AND RICH LEGACY.**
- 2 ENHANCE YORKTOWN'S IMAGE THROUGH MARKETING AND PROMOTIONAL EVENTS.**
- 3 EMPOWER THE CURRENT AND NEXT GENERATIONS OF YORKTOWN RESIDENTS THROUGH ENGAGEMENT.**
- 4 ENCOURAGE THE PRESERVATION AND EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT YORKTOWN AND FACILITIES SERVING IT.**
- 5 REINVEST IN YORKTOWN'S PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMON SPACES.**



**YOUR  
TURN  
TO TALK**





## OUTLINE OF RECOMMENDATIONS

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### INVEST IN YORKTOWN'S HISTORY AND LEGACY

- > Archive And Share Neighborhood's History
- > Explore Historic Preservation Overlay
- > Establish Historic Markers To Increase Awareness Of Yorktown Story

### ENHANCE NEIGHBORHOOD

- > Promote Schools Serving Yorktown
- > Uplift Yorktown Community Standards
- > Make Improvements Neighborhood Gateways
- > Develop the Neighborhood's Online Presence

### EMPOWER CURRENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS

- > Team-Up for Greater Community Empowerment
- > Reinvigorate Block Captain System
- > Sponsor Events to Bridge the Generations of Yorktown

### PRESERVE AND REINVEST IN HOUSING AND COMMUNITY-SERVING FACILITIES

- > Encourage Preventive Maintenance and Upkeep Of Homes And Yards
- > Connect Residents to Financial Resources to Protect Local Equity
- > Manage Change in Yorktown Housing Market
- > Keep Tabs on Zoning Changes and Building Code Enforcement

### REINVEST IN PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMON SPACES

- > Ensure Neighborhood Safety and Security
- > Enhance Shared Spaces and the Public Realm
- > Reinvest in Streets and Public Infrastructure
- > Revitalize Parks, Play Spaces, and Community Facilities



Proposed historic murals...p 62.



Proposed "green strip" reconfiguration...p 79.

## NEXT STEPS TOWARD PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

YCDC will take this final plan “on the road” to start and complete three interrelated processes:

- > Telling, retelling and updating the story of Yorktown as the first step towards securing a broader appreciation of its assets and strengths among all stakeholders, internal and external
- > Making the case for Yorktown’s staying power and it being as much a community of choice now and into the next decade and beyond, as it was at its birth in the 1960s
- > Securing all varieties of capital—human, financial, and political—to ensure its survival and sustainability, starting with current residents and inviting all interests, industries and sectors to become partners with Yorktown



# 1

# INTRODUCTION





**“When we moved in it was just built. The sidewalks were not yet completed, but we lived there, because it was my father’s dream for his family. And out of this dream, what happened for African-American individuals who were educated and wanted the very best, they all settled in this area. And now we don’t want to leave the area, because we have raised our children and our grandchildren here. We will continue to live here because we feel safe and connected.”**

## A. BASIS FOR THE PLAN

### HISTORIC CONTEXT

In the spring of 2010, the Yorktown Community Development Corporation (YCDC), a community-based organization serving the historic Yorktown neighborhood in North Central Philadelphia, commissioned Lamar Wilson Associates, Inc. and Interface Studio, LLC to assist it in the preparation of a resident-driven neighborhood strategic plan. The planning area extends beyond the central core of the Yorktown community to encompass 20 square-blocks bounded by Cecil B. Moore Avenue on the north, Girard Avenue on the south, North 10th Street on the east, and North Broad Street on the west. The overarching objective of this plan, as refined over the course of a six month process, is to leverage new investments on the part of Yorktown residents—the principal stakeholder in the plan—and attract new investments from institutions, businesses and industries located in, adjacent to, or otherwise serving the Yorktown community.

The Yorktown community was constructed in 1960 by the Denny Corporation, a private entity, which acquired 153 acres of blighted blocks and abandoned buildings assembled by the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Philadelphia and produced 635 homes that were eventually sold to first-time and, on occasion, second-time homeowners. The “blueprints” for the creation of a totally new community featured and delivered multiple clusters of homes with garages on small blocks, off-street and visitor parking, lush lawns and back yards, tree-lined streets, neighborhood-oriented parks, and shared public spaces. Yorktown was then and is now conveniently located less than two miles from Center City, with immediate access to major public transportation and the expressways. The original plan called for and delivered modern and attractive 3- and 4-bedroom homes marketed to and purchased by African-American homebuyers with children. Since that time, Yorktown has served as a model in urban redevelopment and set a precedent for homeownership by African-American families in Philadelphia who were largely locked out of the real estate market in many segregated neighborhoods and by discriminatory real estate and lending practices at that time. It was the only community where the first owners were African-American, helping to demonstrate the economic power and home-buying potential of African-Americans and other minorities in the City.

**Now in its 50th year, Yorktown is thriving and still stands as a testament to the resilience of the original 635 homeowners** and the Yorktown Community Organization, formed in 1963 to serve as the collective voice of the community, advocating for the rights of the residents, reminding them of their responsibilities as homeowners in a unique community, providing programs and services and monitoring zoning changes, public policies and private development activities in Yorktown and the surrounding neighborhoods. The organization’s accomplishments include youth activities and athletic programs, cultural enrichment opportunities and neighborhood safety and beautification programs. In 1988, the Yorktown CDC was established to lead efforts to plan and develop new housing, housing preservation, and community economic development initiatives.

Yorktown CDC’s financing of this plan is particularly important and somewhat unique in that the organization provided the principal source of funding to underwrite its costs. In effect, their own “first dollars in” represent an early infusion of equity demonstrating an organizational commitment to the central theme of the plan, which is to create a blueprint for ensuring Yorktown’s survival as a neighborhood of homeowners and its sustainability as a community of stakeholders. Supplementing their own resources to make this plan possible, and to whom Yorktown CDC is immensely grateful, are three sources committed to the preservation of Yorktown: an institutional investor, Opportunities Industrialization Center of America (OICA), through its Strengthening Communities Fund; the Philadelphia office of the Local Initiatives Support Coalition (LISC); and an individual investor, Mr. Leroy Artison, a long-time Yorktown homeowner and resident. The only return each expects from their investment is the implementation of recommendations developed by the residents of Yorktown, as outlined in this report.



FIGURE 1: Yorktown 2015 Study Area

**YORKTOWN  
COMMUNITY  
MASTER PLAN  
STUDY AREA**

— yorktown housing



## PLANNING AREA

As depicted in Figure 1, the plan's study area is bounded by Girard Avenue, Cecil B. Moore, Broad Street, and 10th Street. The hard edges of Broad Street to the west and Girard Avenue to the south are dominated by commercial retail, institutional and mixed-use establishments, contrasted by the northern and eastern edges, which are characterized more by student housing and institutional uses; and recreational uses and multi-family residential, respectively.

Within these boundaries, the core of the planning area that is officially "Yorktown" [outlined in yellow in Figure 1] accounts for approximately half of the 20 square-block planning area and has an overwhelmingly single-family residential character. Yorktown housing is found within:

- > 11th to 13th Street from Oxford to Thompson, excluding the church on the southwest corner of Oxford and 11th
- > 10th to 11th Street from Oxford to Cecil B. Moore
- > 12th to 13th from Flora to Thompson
- > Jessup to 12th from Stiles to Thompson
- > The west side of 13th Street between Jefferson and Oxford

## PLANNING PRINCIPLES

The neighborhood strategic planning process was guided by values and principles discussed and decided upon by the Yorktown Plan Coordinating Committee (YPCC), consisting of approximately 30 stakeholders empanelled by YCDC to help direct the activities and interact with the Wilson/Interface consultant team. These principals, used to help guide the work and inform specific priorities and recommended action steps outlined in the final plan, and the decision-making steps for endorsing the plan are as follows:

- > **Preserve** and Advance Yorktown's History and Legacy
- > **Invest** in Current and Future Generations of Residents as Leaders of the Community
- > **Invite** and **Excite** Resident to be "Architects of their Plan"
- > **Build** on the Community's Pride and Spirit

These planning principles were considered by the Yorktown Plan Coordinating Committee to be critical for generating buy-in for and engagement in the planning process. As evidenced by the long list of residents and stakeholders acknowledged in this document, the community participated in the discussions and shared their ideas and visions for their Yorktown reflected in this plan for Yorktown.

## GOVERNANCE FOR SETTING PRIORITIES AND MAKING DECISIONS ABOUT YORKTOWN'S FUTURE

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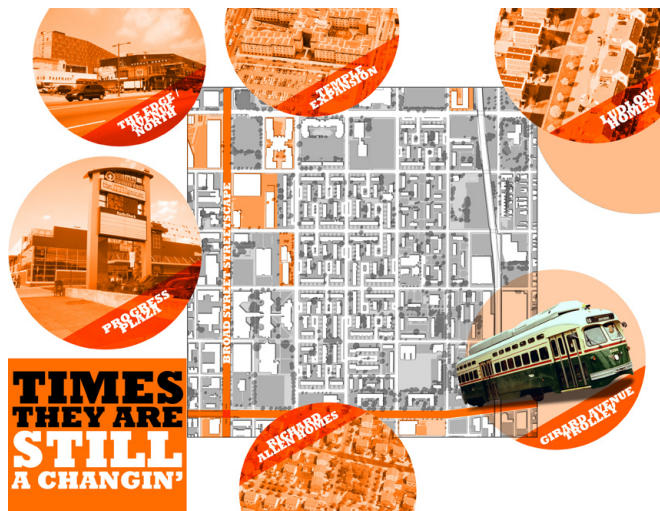
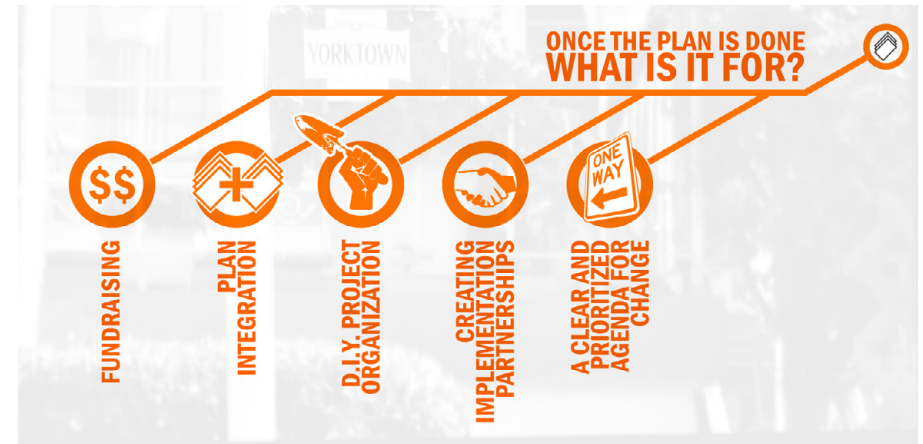
- > YPCC advised and made recommendations to Yorktown CDC Board of Directors based on:
  - The analyses developed by Wilson Associates & Interface Studio
  - The ideas and input from the community & stakeholders through committee meetings, community-wide meetings, focus group discussions, and interviews conducted
- > YCDC Board of Directors set planning priorities and made final decisions they based on:
  - The information and data as described above and presented at YCDC meetings
  - Formal votes by members of the board consistent with its corporate by-laws



## 12 ROLLOUT AND CAPITALIZATION GOALS

Going forward, YCDC, in collaboration with the leadership of its sister institutions, Bright Hope Baptist Church, the Yorktown Community Organization (YCO), Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC), Progress Investments, Inc., and the Columbia North YMCA, remains committed to the underlying values of the planning process and to the recommendations that emerged from it. As such, YCDC will lead the efforts to:

- > Aggressively promote the plan throughout Yorktown and the City among public and private sector policy makers and decision makers to leverage capital—human, financial and political
- > Build and sustain a solid constituency for the plan beyond those who helped develop it
- > Use the plan to produce an investment prospectus that invites individual and institutional investments from inside and outside the community



## B. COMMUNITY ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES DRIVING THE PLAN

As the details in this document and the process used to craft it attest, there are scores of assets and opportunities in Yorktown that suggest its survival is assured. However, and as also outlined in this document, there are real threats and challenges to those strengths that, if left unaddressed, will only constrain Yorktown's ability to both survive in the short-run and thrive over the long haul. Underlying the reason for embarking on this neighborhood strategic plan at this time are concerns of Yorktown CDC's board and staff that are reflected in the very title of the plan itself: survival and sustainability. Yorktown residents feel threatened by market forces and other circumstances including:

- > An increase over the years in rental housing in the community and surrounding it that is targeted to students attending Temple University to the north
- > A growing senior population of first and second-generation homeowners challenged more and more each day with the upkeep of their homes and yards
- > Rising property values in Yorktown—a good thing in general—are of concern to older residents who have built equity in their homes but whose incomes are fixed as they approach or are already in retirement
- > Potential for higher density residential and commercial development within and on the edges of the neighborhood that could undermine the neighborhood's relative peace and quiet, and safety and security

These concerns tracked closely with others as articulated by residents throughout the planning process, including:

- > Aging infrastructure and the high cost of capital improvements
- > Property conditions, interior and exterior, and the projected costs of improvements, including energy conservation challenges
- > Zoning to protect and preserve the single-family, low-density residential character

- > Tangled property titles that inhibit legal transfer of homeownership and undermine equity formation
- > Changing demographics, cultures and generations, within and around the community that requires understanding through communications and engagement
- > Public safety
- > The impact of public school closings and reconfigurations

On the other hand, YCDC and residents who participated in focus groups, surveys and community and coordinating committee meetings that helped shape the plan acknowledged the strong assets of Yorktown—its people, the homes and the relationships among residents—and its deep and rich history as foundations upon which the community can grow, undergo revitalization and be preserved all at the same time. The fact that these goals and objectives are neither conflicting nor mutually exclusive serve to fuel a resolve among residents that the future of Yorktown is a function of the same type of energy and capital that led to its development in 1960 and that help to give it life and energy today, including (a) residents who care for one another and are committed to investing their time, energy and money to maintain its vibrancy; and (b) neighborhood-serving institutions such as Bright Hope Baptist Church, Progress Plaza, YCO and others that share a similar view and see their own survival and vibrancy inextricably linked with one another.



## 14 C. ROLES OF YCDC AND THE YORKTOWN COMMUNITY

Throughout the development of the plan, YCDC and the YPCC, in conjunction with the Wilson/Interface planning team to helped guide the planning process, set goals, made recommendations based upon the results of the research work, and reviewed recommendations offered by Wilson/Interface. YCDC's goal, at the beginning of the plan process and at its conclusion, has been to use the plan to create closer working relationships between residents and institutions serving the community, including but not limited to:

- > Bright Hope Baptist Church, the institution most responsible for Yorktown's historic rise as Black, middle-class, homeownership community in the 1960s and the senior anchor-institution in the greater Yorktown area
- > Yorktown Community Organization, the civic organization for Yorktown
- > Progress Plaza, the commercial retail center that anchors Yorktown on its western edge
- > OIC of Philadelphia, an affiliate of OIC of America, which advances the importance of educational, vocational and personal development that is central to Yorktown's legacy

Externally, YCDC's strategy includes reaching out to and engaging public and private sector institutions—governmental, business, cultural and religious—that have a stake in the community's continued stability, growth, and development. In those ways, YCDC views the plan as a tool for generating capital investments needed to implement the plan's recommendations necessary to produce the outcomes and make the impact called for over the next five years.





## D. PLANNING PROCESS

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The six month long neighborhood strategic planning process involved several steps, actions, and activities, all designed to collect relevant information about the neighborhood. Data was collected from a variety of sources, ranging from Census data, field condition surveys, resident opinion surveys, focus group discussions, community-wide meetings, coordinating committee meetings, and stakeholder interviews. Key intervals of this process were carefully designed for the consultant team to share information, solicit feedback to test the accuracy and/or interpretation of information collected, and determine how and the extent to which such information reflects assets in the community; needs of the community; threats to the community; and priorities for the community.

### OVERALL SCHEDULE AND SEQUENCE

The general sequence of planning steps and activities were as follows:

#### June-July

- > Kick-off meeting to inform community of planning process and timeline and to solicit input
- > Begin research and data collection phase examining demographic, historic, land use, and physical conditions
- > Design resident survey instrument and distribute, collect, and analyze completed surveys

#### July-August

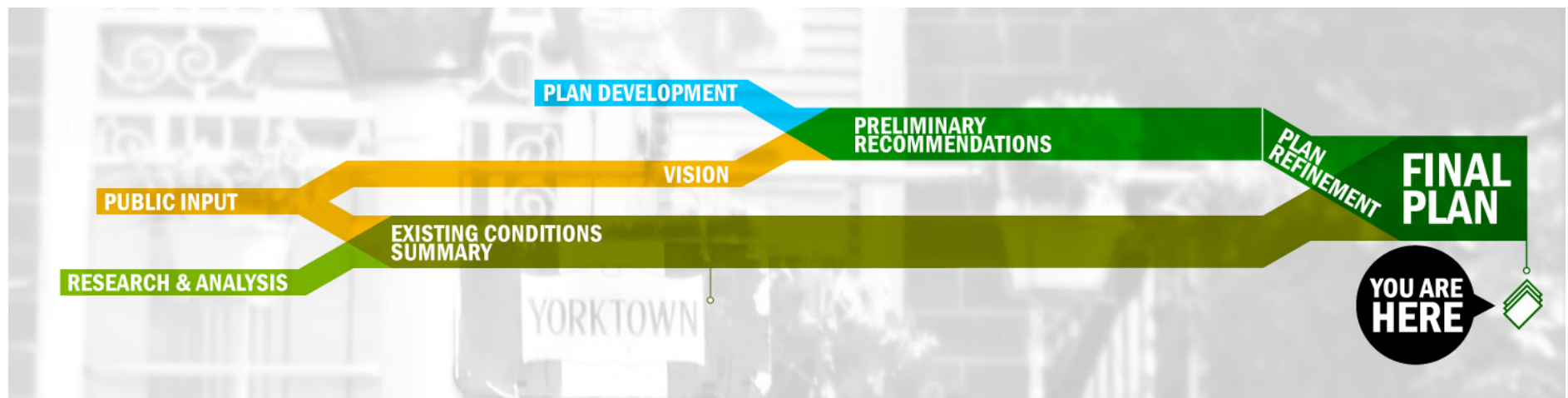
- > Summarize existing conditions based on the research
- > Develop vision and underlying planning principles to help guide plan recommendations
- > Present preliminary findings to the community through coordinating and community-wide meetings

#### September-October

- > Conduct focus group discussions
- > Prepare preliminary recommendations
- > Present preliminary recommendations to community for review and feedback
- > Refine recommendations

#### November

- > Meet with YCDC board to present final recommendations
- > Prepare draft plan
- > Submit draft plan to YCDC board for review, vetting, and approval
- > Prepare and distribute final plan to YCDC



## 16 COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

YCDC played an important role in coordinating outreach activities throughout the planning process, including inviting residents and other stakeholders to serve on the YPCC and organizing and hosting three community meetings, Coordinating Committee meetings and focus group discussions, all held in the Yorktown Arms community room, 1300 West Jefferson. In addition, YCDC coordinated distribution of the resident surveys, and collected and analyzed them using student interns from the community. Attendance at these sessions and participation on the resident survey are summarized below:

### **Communitywide Meetings (June, July, September)**

100 people averaging 33 per session

### **Coordinating Committee Meetings (June, August and October)**

61 people averaging 30 per session

### **Community Surveys (July)**

105 surveys were completed and returned from a community-wide distribution, a number that represents 14.7% of the 712 households in Yorktown (619 homes plus 93 residential units in the Yorktown Arms I and II rental housing developments)

### **Stakeholder/Institutional Interviews (September and October)**

Philadelphia Water Department  
Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (PHS)  
Bright Hope Baptist Church  
Temple University

### **Focus Group Discussions (September)**

43 people averaging 10 per sessions  
Building on Yorktown's History and Legacy (9)  
Courtyards, Public Places, Common Spaces (10)  
Housing Reinvestment (10)  
Education and Recreation (13)



The purpose of the focus group sessions was to discuss in greater detail issues, specific ideas, and concerns that emerged from communitywide and Coordinating Committee meetings and use them to identify priorities and inform recommendations made by both residents themselves and the planning consultants. The topics listed below each heading were developed to help frame the conversations at these meetings and subsequently served as the foundation on which the recommendations in this plan were built.

### **Courtyards, Public Places, Common Spaces**

- > Physical Infrastructure / General Improvement Needs
- > Streets, Lighting, Parking & Storm-water Management
- > Cleaning, Greening and Conservation
- > Available Resources and Resources Required

### **Building on Yorktown's History and Legacy**

- > Promoting the Community to the Community
  - Role of Families
  - Role of Community-based Groups
  - Role of Block Captains
- > Promoting the Community to Community institutions
  - South to Center City
  - North to Temple University
  - Available Resources and Resources Required

### **Housing Reinvestment**

- > Maintenance and Upkeep (house and yard)
- > Preservation and Affordability
- > Energy Conservation
- > Personal Safety and Financial Security (keys to health and well-being)
- > Available Resources and Resources Required

### **Education and Recreation**

- > William Penn High School Revitalization-Reuse
  - Physical Plant
  - Technical/Trades-Related Curriculum
  - Academic Curriculum
  - Community Engagement Process
  - Available Resources and Resources Required



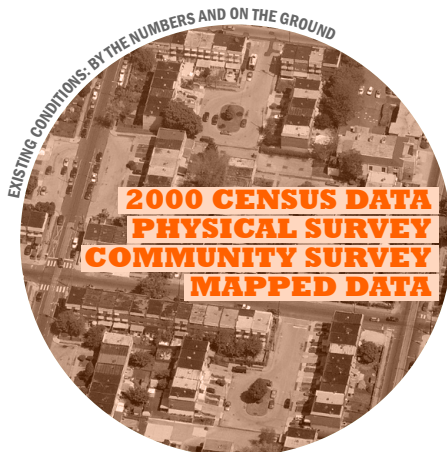


## 18 DEMOGRAPHIC, LAND USE AND PHYSICAL ANALYSES

Interface Studio's full analysis of the neighborhood's physical conditions, land use attributes, and population characteristics, as defined by observation, research, and outreach included:

- > Creation of a GIS basemap by combining an updated parcel database layer with aerial photography and updated data layers including curbs and buildings
- > A parcel-by-parcel survey of the study area to create an up-to-date land use map and determine building conditions
- > An in-depth examination of the physical environment to assess the existing commercial and retail mix, the quality of the natural environment, local traffic and circulation patterns, the transit system, parking resources, and pedestrian amenities, among many other elements in the neighborhood
- > Census research to evaluate demographic and socioeconomic changes within the City over time
- > A review of historic maps and photographs as well as past planning documents

This analysis served as the basis for the creation of informed recommendations through discussions with the community. A summary of the existing conditions analysis is found in the Community Conditions and Perceptions section of this plan document.



- > DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE
- > LAND USE AND ZONING
- > PUBLIC REALM
- > HOUSING
- > VACANCY
- > PARKS AND PLAY SPACE
- > GETTING AROUND
- > CRIME

## E. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

### TO OUR COMMUNITY

YCDC acknowledges and greatly appreciates the hard work, time invested, and ideas shared by the many individuals, organizations and institutions listed below (and others not listed who may have missed signing in at meetings or residents who completed surveys but whose names are kept confidential) who participated in this neighborhood strategic planning process, from community meetings, to coordinating sessions, special focus group conversations, and surveys. They were truly the “architects, planners and designers” of a vision for Yorktown and have demonstrated their preparation, willingness and ability to work alongside partners who we are confident will sign on to work with us in making this plan our reality over the coming days, weeks, months and years.

### YPCC Coordinating Committee Members

Robert Atkins  
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Larmeter Bivins  
John Bivins Sr.  
Alethea Carroll  
Florence Cunningham  
Alma R. Davis\*\*\*  
Johnathan Davis, Executive Director, Columbia North YMCA  
Patricia Deans  
Athena Dooley\*  
Renee Drayton  
Elouise Edmonds  
David Fecteau, AICP, Philadelphia City Planning Commission  
Veda Floyd\*\*  
Rochelle Johnson\*  
Anthony May  
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Charles Peoples Jr. VP Citizens Bank  
Margie A. Pierce, Executive Director, West Poplar NAC  
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## Focus Group Participants

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Larmeter Bivins	Barbara S. Ford	Anne Stone
Ruth Burchett	Vanessa Holland	Cheryl Taylor*
Florence Cunningham	Rochelle Johnson*	Martha Tisdale
Alma R. Davis***	David M. Kee*	Fred Tookes
Athena Dooley*	Michael Kingwood	Vivian VanStory
Renee Drayton	Pete May	Priscilla Woods
Ruth Dukes	Margie Pierce	

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Thomas C. Bacon	Barbara Ford	Mr. and Mrs. Lottie Perry
Barbara Bailey	Rosetta Forte	Marie Peterson
Mable Banks	Fozia Gerald	Wilson Pettus
Wimblett Barnett Sr.	Lil Gorns	Martha Capron Pasha
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Harold Bohler	Joanne Hall	J. Nathan Randolph
Marie Bostic	Hattie-Mae Harrell	Beverly Reid
Nate Braxton	Mary A. Harrison	Margo Robinson
Alfred Brown	Melva Herout	Michelle Rowe
Gerry Brinson	M. Ruth Heyward	Bunmi Samuel
Lucy V. Butler	Vanessa Holland	Bobby Scott
Manny Citron.	Shirley Horton	Eddie Shellman
Robert Cook	Annette James	Elaine Smith
Diane Coppedge-Anand	Mary Jones	Fred Snead-Ali
Hattie Crawford	Charles Jenifer	Ann Stone
Beatrice Crawley	James Johnson	Andrea Swan
Barbara Culmer	Juanita Johnson	Hattie Thelmon
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Alma R. Davis***	Percy Jones	Harriet Thompson
Pat Deans	David Kee*	William (Bill) Thornton
Willie DeShields**	Denise Key	Rose Thurmond
Mahinda de Lanerolle	Barbara King	Martha Tisdale
Ruth Dukes	Jerry Michael Kingwood	Brother Fred Tookes
Rev. Lee Duncan	Myron Kinsey	Shirley Turpin
Dara Easterling	Mildred McCollum	Vivian VanStory
Elouise Edmonds	Mary McCrea	Doris Washington
James Edwards	Elaine McIntyre	Janice Rogers Williams
Venessa Edwards	Priscilla Mclvor	Richard Rose
Mack El Benjamin	Robert McMichael	Eddie Shellman
Jereal Evans	Teena Mills	Eloise Young
Kate Evans	Cameron Milton	Mr. and Mrs. George Young
David Fecteau	Kathryn Outting	

## Resident Survey Reviewers/Q&A Participants

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Thomas C. Bacon	Reneé Graveley	Timothy Perry
Barbara Bailey	Joanne Hall	Wilson Pettus
Alfred Brown	Sally Harris	Martha Capron Pasha
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Larmeter Bivins	Shirley Horton	Margo Robinson
Eugene T. Bryson	Rochelle Johnson*	Kevin Russell
Johnnie Burton	Catherine King	Bobby Scott
Beatrice Crawley	Rosalind Lindsay	Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Stone
Virginia Davis	Robert F. McMichael	Hattie Thelmon
Willie J. DeShields**	Bertha Middleton	Zipporah Thelmon
Patricia Deans	Vanessa Miller	Martha Tisdale
Renee V. Drayton	Dan Moody	Charles Trulear
Lee Duncan	Joyce Moore	Valerie Waller
Ruth Dukes	Faith Pembleton	George A. Young

## Summer Interns

WorkReady Philadelphia's Philadelphia Youth Network  
People for People, Inc., Sponsoring Agency

## Addressed, Distributed Door-To-Door, and Tallied Resident Surveys & Envelopes, Telephone Follow-Up

Alynda Carasquillo  
Whitney Dunn  
Lasha Whiteside  
Emiliz Roman

## Prepared, Distributed Door-To-Door Surveys, Flyers & Meeting Notices

Angelo Chaney  
James Glisson  
Dominique Perry

## Recruited and Supervised Interns; Survey Data Entry

Erica Holden, Administrative Assistant

\* YCDC Board Members

\*\* YCO Board Members

\*\*\* Yorktown Arms Residents Council

## 20 TO OUR PLAN FUNDERS

Yorktown CDC is extremely grateful to the following sources whose financial resources made this planning process and product possible:

**Opportunities Industrialization Center of America** (OICA)

**Philadelphia Local Initiatives Support Coalition** (LISC)

**Mr. Leroy Artison** (long-time Yorktown homeowner and resident)

## TO OUR PLANNING CONSULTANTS

Yorktown CDC and our community had the benefit of a planning consultant team identified below who listened carefully, engaged seriously, and documented artfully our ideas, our hopes and our expectations for Yorktown 2015. Thank you for being partners with us.

**Wilson Associates, Inc.**

V. Lamar Wilson, Principal

**Interface Studio, LLC**

Scott Page, Principal

Leah Murphy, Associate Urban Designer

Ashley DiCaro, Urban Designer

## 2

## COMMUNITY CONDITIONS & PERCEPTIONS

Yorktown residents have a strong sense of community and its residents generally understand and value the history and legacy that began in the 1960s. The residents and institutions of Yorktown are keenly aware of Yorktown's strategic location, sitting between Center City to its south and Temple University and the string of strong institutions to the north—an advantage that attracted them to the community and which needs to be part and parcel of future marketing and promotional activities. Overall, the neighborhood is valued internally and regarded externally as a generally safe and protected community in the heart of North Philadelphia. As a community of professionals, leaders, and middle-class families, first, second, and even third generation homeowners, its assets include affordable homes and residents who care about, and are passionate towards and loyal to their community.

This section of the report summarizes Yorktown's assets and strengths, as well as its challenges and needs based on a variety of sources, including:

- > physical surveys of land use, building, and infrastructure conditions
- > results of written surveys completed by residents reflecting household characteristics as well as community perceptions and priorities
- > review of Census data and City records on zoning, land ownership and incidences of criminal activities, among many other neighborhood attributes
- > community meetings and focus group discussions with residents
- > interviews with community stakeholders.

The data, stories, and information collected and shared during the planning process serve as a foundation on which the recommendations and corresponding action plans found in sections three and four are based.



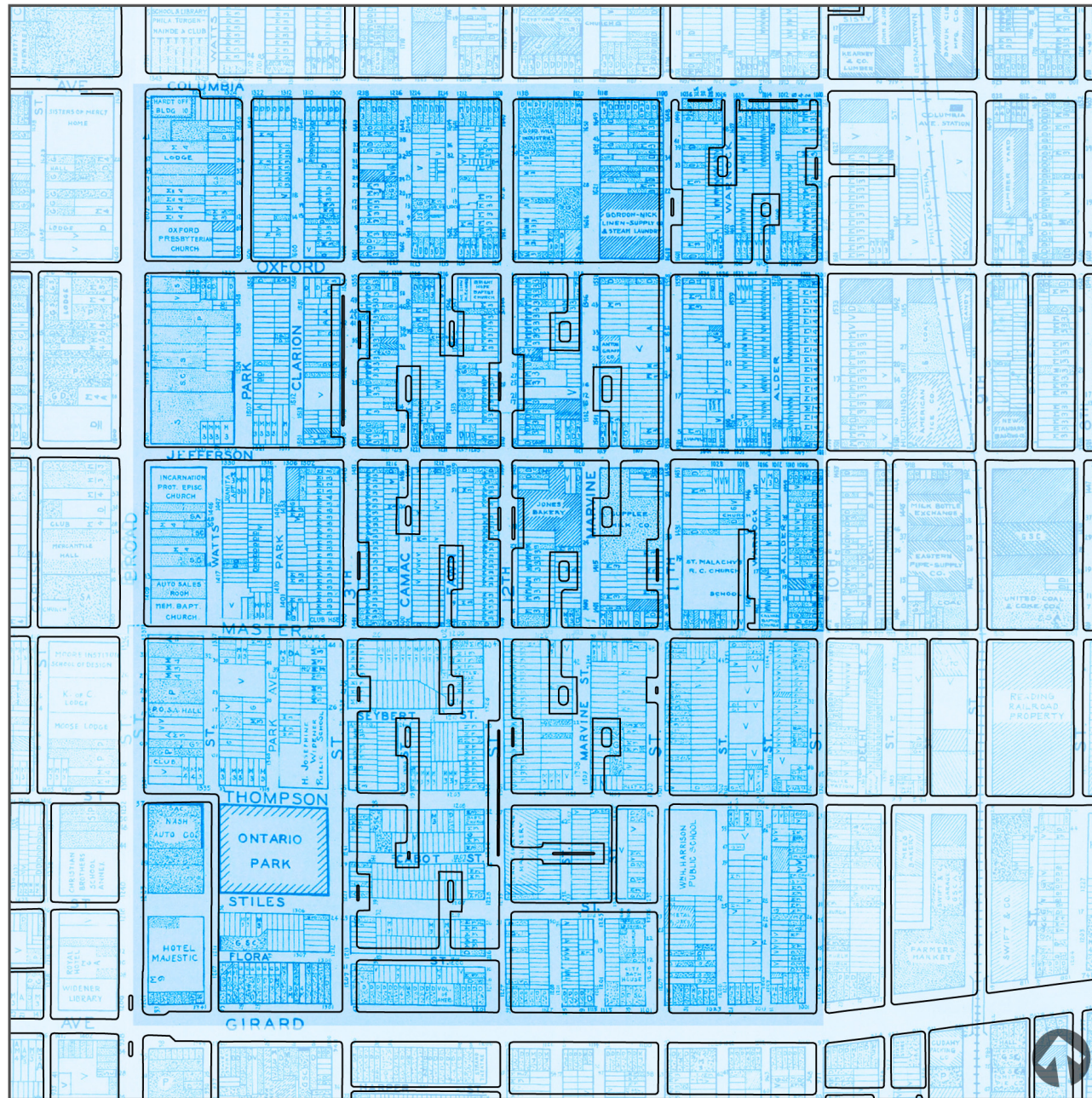


FIGURE 2: Change in Block Structure, 1942-2000

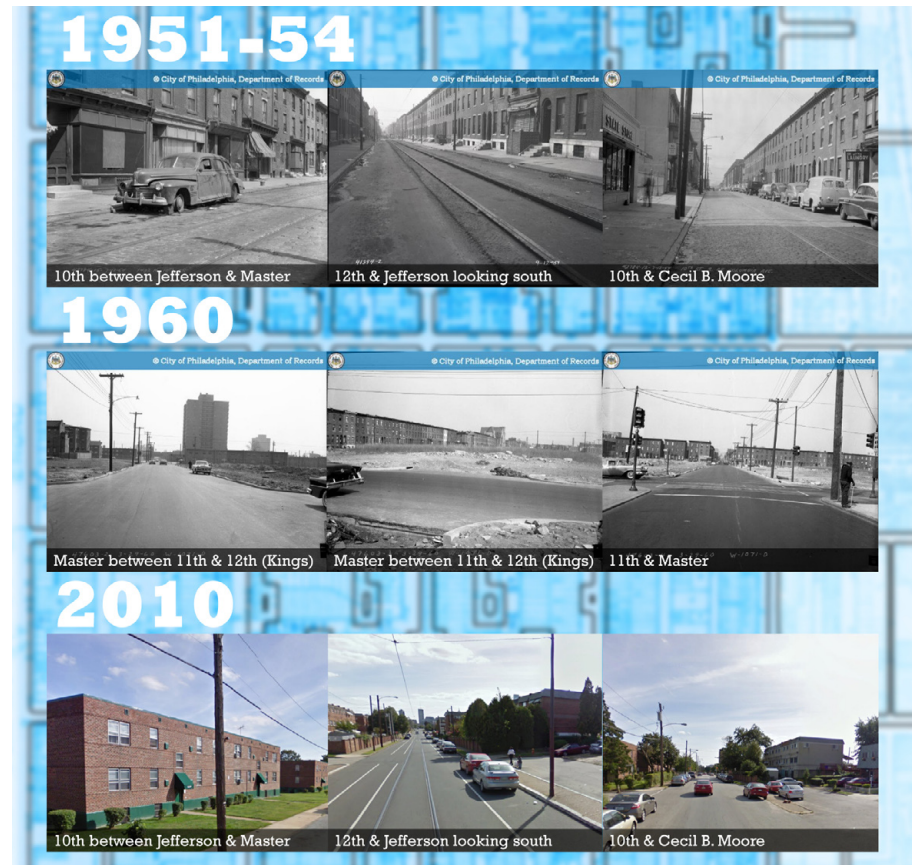
**CHANGE IN BLOCK  
STRUCTURE,  
1942 - 2010**



## A. YORKTOWN'S: HISTORY & LEGACY

A 1942 map of the area that is today Yorktown shows the neighborhood layout before it was redeveloped with a new block structure. Prior to its reconstruction, this area featured street and block pattern very familiar to Philadelphia neighborhoods, in which the long and narrow block shapes are formed by the parcel dimensions of traditional row homes with very little yard space, if any.

Overlaying today's curb lines on top of the 1942 street map reveals the distinct differences between the original block pattern and the block structure of the redevelopment in 1963. Today's Yorktown blocks were created by combining multiple narrow blocks to create larger square blocks and carving a pattern of cul-de-sacs and pull-ins into each block. This more suburban neighborhood layout was designed by Ed Bacon, who was the Executive Director of the City Planning Commission at the time of the Yorktown redevelopment.



# 1950 LAND USE



# 2010 LAND USE

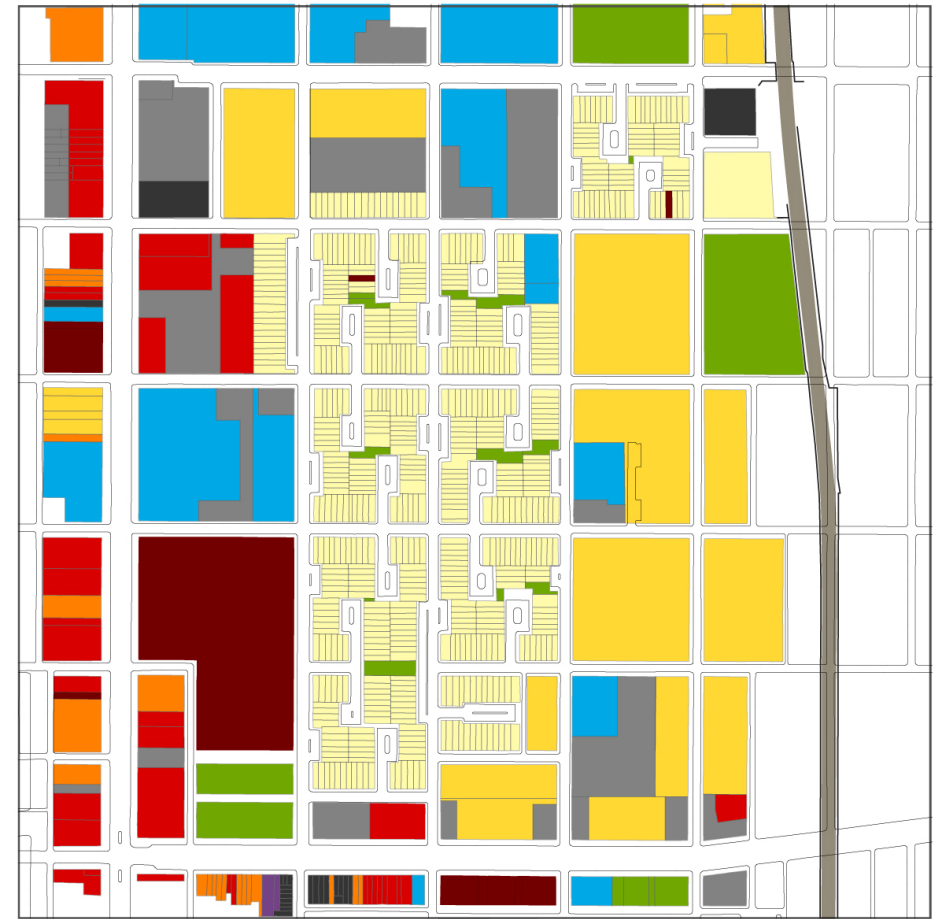


FIGURE 3: Change in Land Use, 1950-2010

## LAND USE

- |                           |                      |
|---------------------------|----------------------|
| single family residential | public/institutional |
| multi family residential  | park/recreation      |
| mixed use                 | parking              |
| commercial                | vacant lot           |
| industrial                | vacant building      |

**“I like that no businesses are in the neighborhood. Having businesses around the edges is fine.”**



Of course, the changes that occurred in the neighborhood as a result of the redevelopment extended beyond the block structure and neighborhood layout in a formal sense. Looking at the differences in land use between 1950 and 2010 [Figure 3], one of the immediately noticeable differences between the two is the distribution and grain of land uses: the 1950 land use map appears more scattered and mixed, while the 2010 land use map features larger contiguous areas with the same use. This is because in 1950, the neighborhood was more of a mix of uses, but the wholesale redevelopment of most of this area over time has resulted in large areas of single-use blocks and groups of blocks. For instance, Broad Street was and still is primarily a commercial corridor, but commercial services scattered throughout the rest of the neighborhood have disappeared entirely.

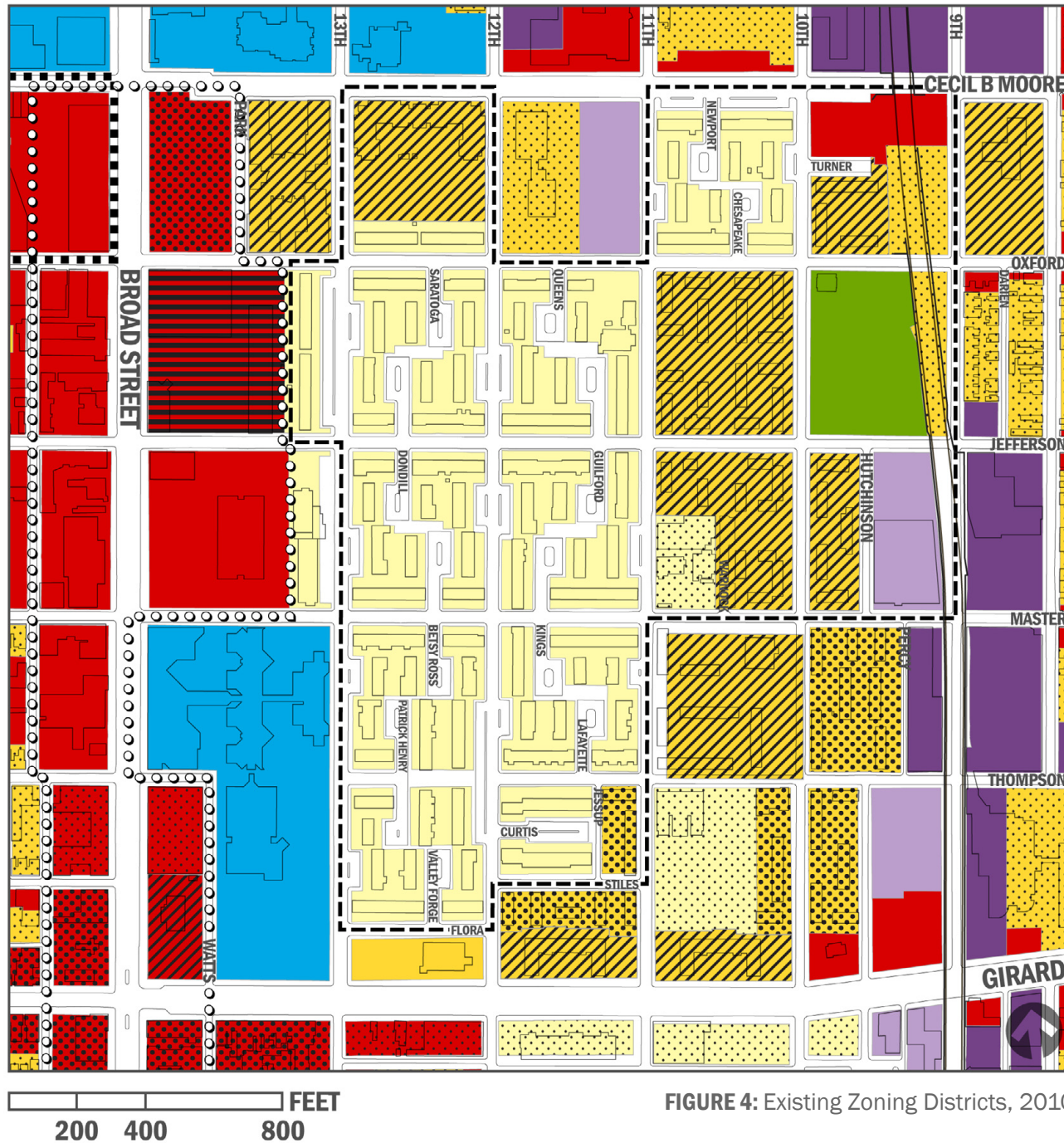
Along with the exclusion of commercial services in the neighborhood, another result of the homogenization of uses through large-scale redevelopment projects is the creation of harder boundaries within the neighborhood. Whereas the 1950 land use map shows a more “nebulous” neighborhood with few hard boundaries, today Yorktown is surrounded by other large single-use elements, such as the PHA housing that serves as a neighborhood boundary on the east side of Yorktown. Likewise, the expansion of Temple University over time has created a very large single-use district that now serves as the northern boundary of the Yorktown neighborhood. With Broad Street and the former William Penn High School and Progress Plaza forming a distinct neighborhood boundary on the west side, and with Girard Avenue to the south, Yorktown is more or less isolated, a condition that adds to the distinctiveness of the neighborhood.

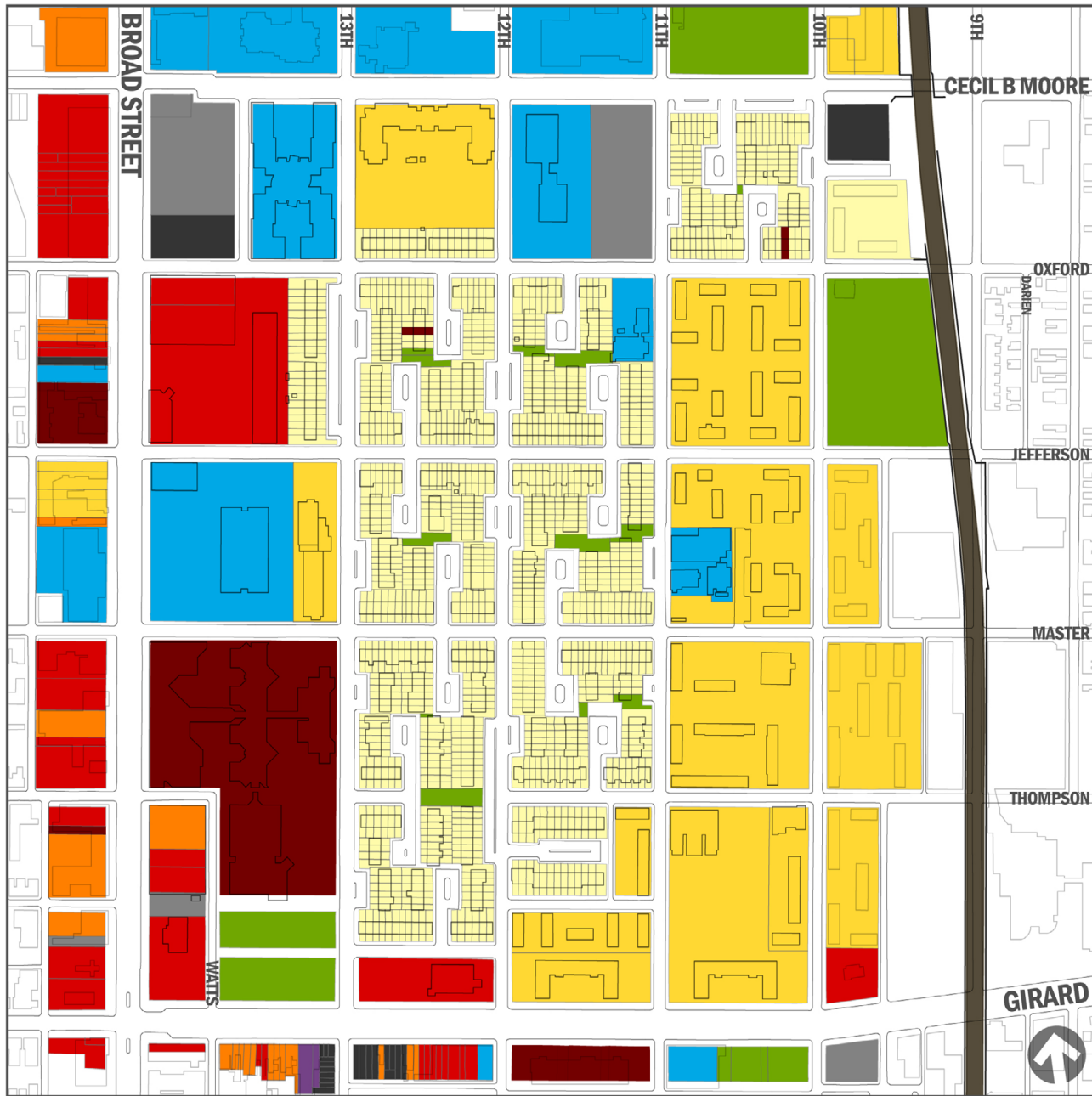
As it stands, the study area’s existing zoning districts [Figure 4] are more or less reflected in the existing land uses [Figure 5] found within each district. Of particular relevance to Yorktown is the existence of the North Central Philadelphia Community special district overlay, which intends to:

“protect this community from the conversions of houses into apartments, tenements, and multi-family dwellings which would destabilize the community by taking on the transient character inherent in apartment and tenement living, to sustain and promote single-family residential uses, to prevent declining property values, to discourage non-residential parking as main use in the community, and foster the preservation and development of this section of the City in accordance with its special character.”

However, the ongoing trend of conversions of owner-occupied units by non-resident, outside investors into rentals is of great concern to the community, and the efficacy and enforceability of this overlay is questionable.

The City of Philadelphia is currently completing the rewriting of its zoning code, as well as embarking upon a city-wide comprehensive planning process called Philadelphia 2035, which will set forth a vision for the future of all of Philadelphia, as well as zoom in on smaller areas of the City in a series of District Plans to be completed between 2010 and 2015. It is likely that these efforts by the Philadelphia City Planning Commission will result in some changes to the zoning in the study area, though it is not anticipated that the new zoning will be vastly different from the existing zoning.





## LAND USE

- single family residential
- multi family residential
- commercial
- industrial
- public/institutional
- park/recreation
- parking
- vacant lot
- vacant building

FIGURE 5: 2010 Land Use

## 28 B. YORKTOWN TODAY: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

### STUDY AREA CENSUS GEOGRAPHIES

The census demographic data analyzed for this study was pulled from the following block groups:

- > Census Tract **146**; Block Groups 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
- > Census Tract **141**; Block Groups 5, 6



FIGURE 6: Study Area Census Tracts

### POPULATION AND ETHNICITY

Between 1990 and 2000, the study area population grew 4%, while over the same period the City of Philadelphia's population shrank 4%. While the period saw a 7% increase in the white population, the Asian population decreased 7% and the percent black population, by far the most prominent race in the neighborhood, remained stable at 82%. The community survey completed in July 2010 also revealed a predominantly African-American population.

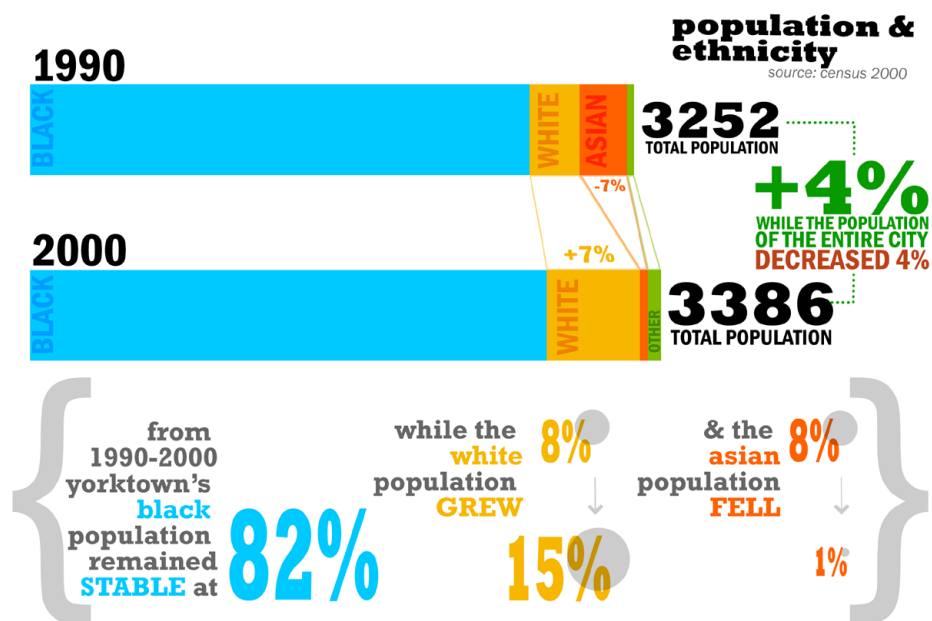


FIGURE 7: Census 2000: Population & Ethnicity



## AGE AND SEX

The age and sex pyramid reveals the influence of Temple University students living in the study area on the census data. The bulge in the 15 to 20 year-old cohort overwhelms the other age divisions, even though it is well known that a large percentage of residents living in the Yorktown neighborhood are senior citizens. The age characteristics of the residents who completed the community survey are more indicative of this, as 2/3 of them are over 65 years of age. Many of Yorktown's early residents

have aged in place; the Yorktown 2015 plan was privileged to have the participation of many lifelong residents, many of whom have lived in the neighborhood since it was first built. The neighborhood's distinct ability to retain residents is evidenced by the fact that 30% of the residents who participated in the community survey have lived in the neighborhood for at least 41 years. One-third of the surveyees are recent newcomers to the community.

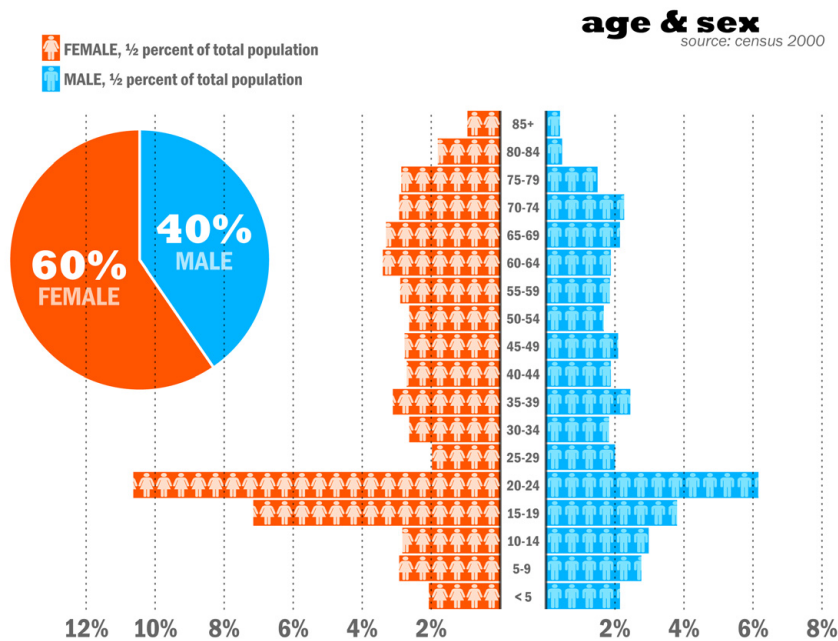


FIGURE 8: Census 2000: Population Age & Sex

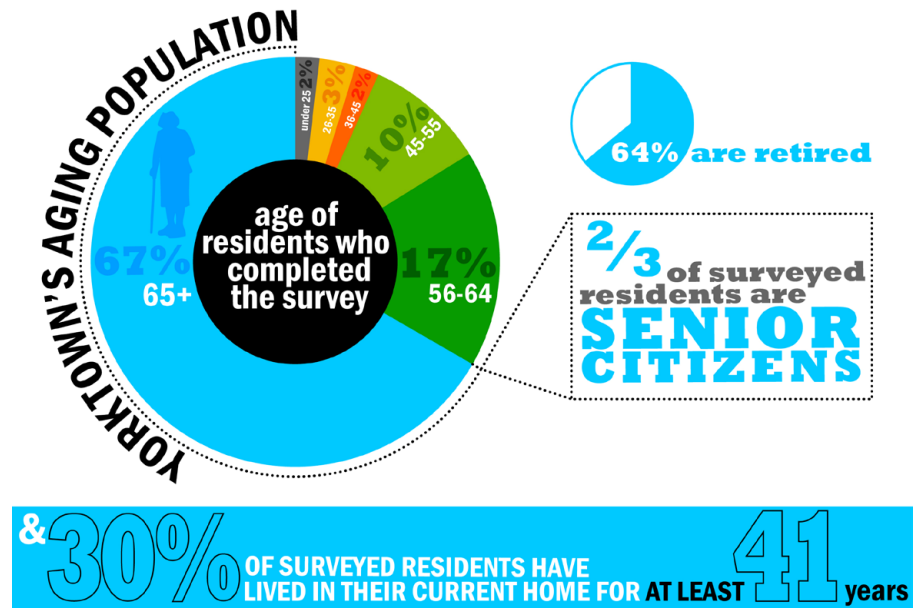


FIGURE 9: Community Survey Results: Age of Residents

## 30 HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

Participants in the community survey have predominantly small family sizes, 86% with 1-2 people per household. Very few of the surveyees have school-aged children living in the home.

### EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Compared to the education levels of the City of Philadelphia, residents of the study area have slightly lower high school completion rates, but slightly higher rates in college experience. The residents who completed the community survey were significantly more educated than the 2000 census educational attainment data shows.

### MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

While median household income for the City of Philadelphia grew 25% between 1990 and 2000, the percent increase over the same period in the Yorktown study area was nearly twice that, with a 49% increase. However, Yorktown's median household income in 2000 was still slightly below that of the City's.

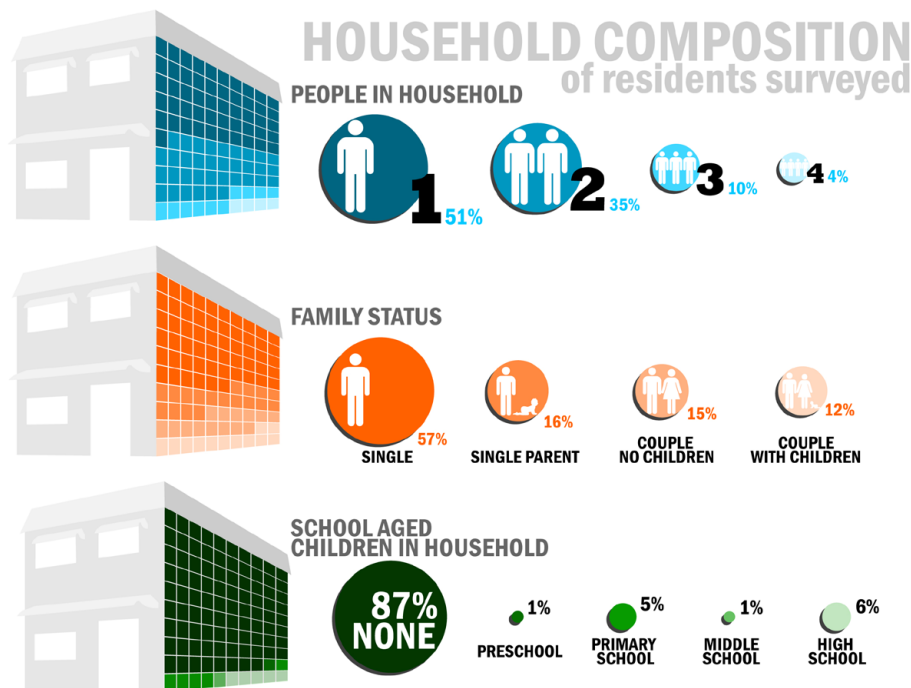
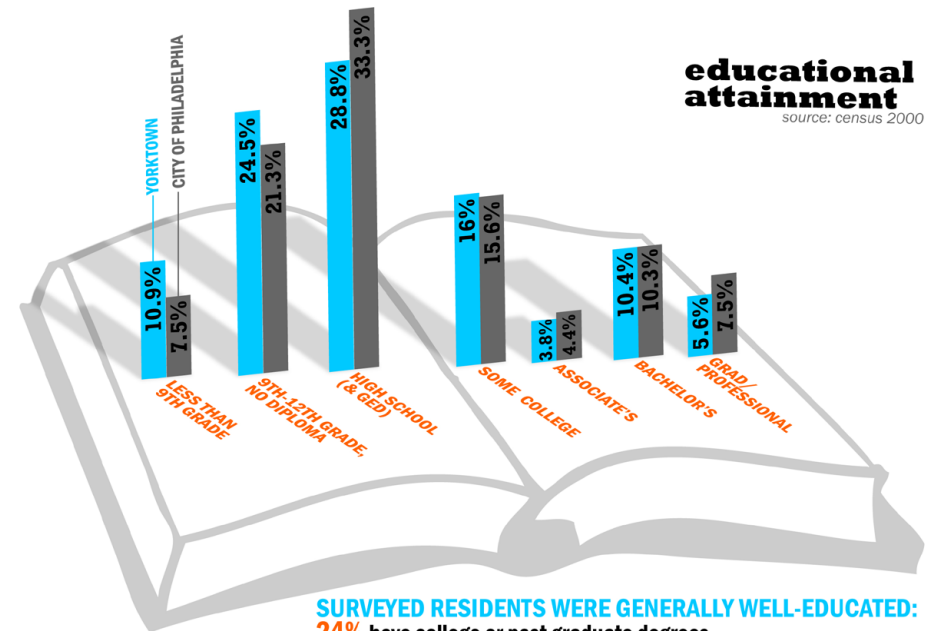


FIGURE 10: Community Survey Results: Household Composition



**SURVEYED RESIDENTS WERE GENERALLY WELL-EDUCATED:**

24% have college or post graduate degrees

35% have some college experience

36% earned high school diplomas or GED equivalents

FIGURE 11: Census 2000: Educational Attainment

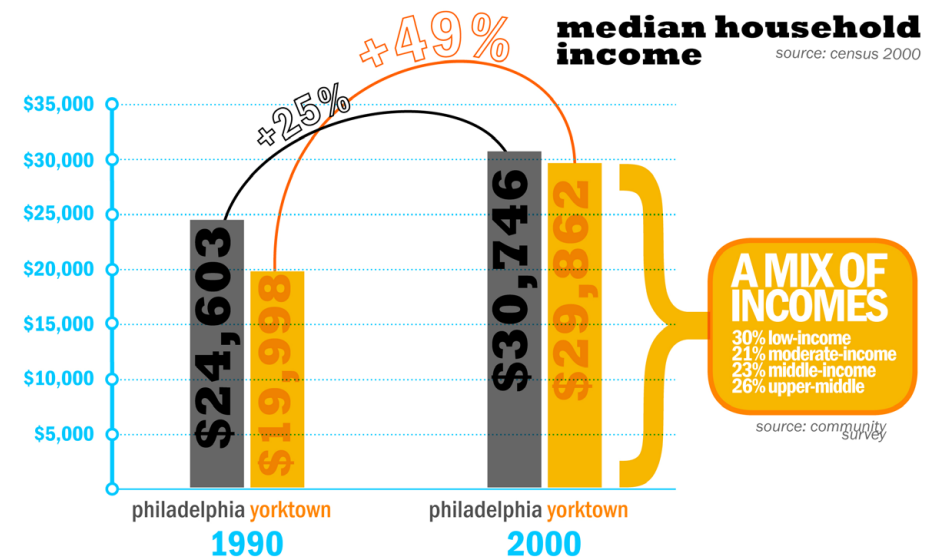


FIGURE 12: Census 2000: Median Household Income

## C. YORKTOWN TODAY: DEFINING NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTERISTICS

### YORKTOWN'S SOUNDSCAPE

In addition to the sense of seclusion in the Yorktown neighborhood created by its single-use districts and its distinctive block layout and housing styles, numerous residents pointed out another defining characteristic that sets it apart from areas just outside its boundaries: the sense of serenity and quiet in Yorktown stands in stark contrast to the high-volume bustle of Broad Street and Girard Avenue, the constant activity of the Temple campus, and the periodic clatter of SEPTA trains as they pass by on the elevated rail to the east of the neighborhood. This peaceful protection from high decibel generators was noted by community members as one of the neighborhood's greatest strengths.

### NEIGHBORHOOD SHARED SPACES

A number of shared spaces and streetscape features in Yorktown's block structure further distinguish this neighborhood from its context and most other neighborhoods in the City. The elements are classifiable into three typologies: cul-de-sacs/circles, courtyards, and what the community refers to as "green" strips. All of these elements exist in the public right-of-way.<sup>1</sup>

#### Cul-de-sacs/Circles

Most of Yorktown's blocks feature two block-interior cul-de-sacs, one with its entrance on the north side of the block, and the other connecting to the street on the south side. Houses to the east and west of each cul-de-sac face the block-interior cul-de-sac. At the center of each cul-de-sac is a central raised area the community refers to as a "Circle." Yorktown's sixteen Circles come in a variety of shapes and sizes, some of them paved, some planted. Many of the planted Circles create an impressive centerpiece to the cul-de-sac, showcasing the green thumbs of neighboring residents. Others, however, are more eyesores than assets to the neighbors, with undermaintained planted areas or broken concrete surfaces. Another issue residents identified is that many of them have large trees that have grown to a height that interferes with the overhead utility lines.

<sup>1</sup> A GIS parcel shapefile obtained from the Philadelphia Water Department indicates that the Kings/Lafayette courtyard crosses over two privately owned parcels on 11<sup>th</sup> Street, but the majority of the courtyard exists in an unparcelized right-of-way. The Chesapeake/Newport courtyard appears to have been infringed upon by neighboring residents. If the parcel file is correct, neighbors adjacent to this courtyard have annexed area outside their own properties, reducing the courtyard to the width of a sidewalk. Parcel boundaries should be verified with the City of Philadelphia for future reference, as occasionally data discrepancies are found to exist between the GIS parcel shapefiles in circulation among City agencies.

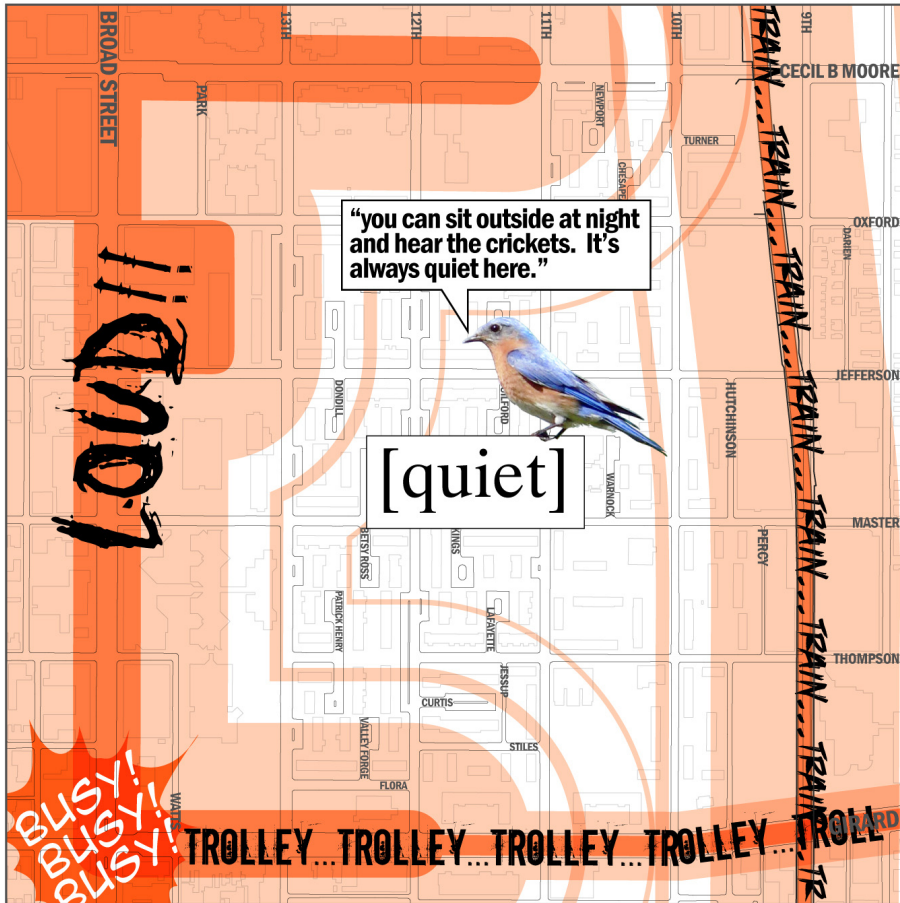
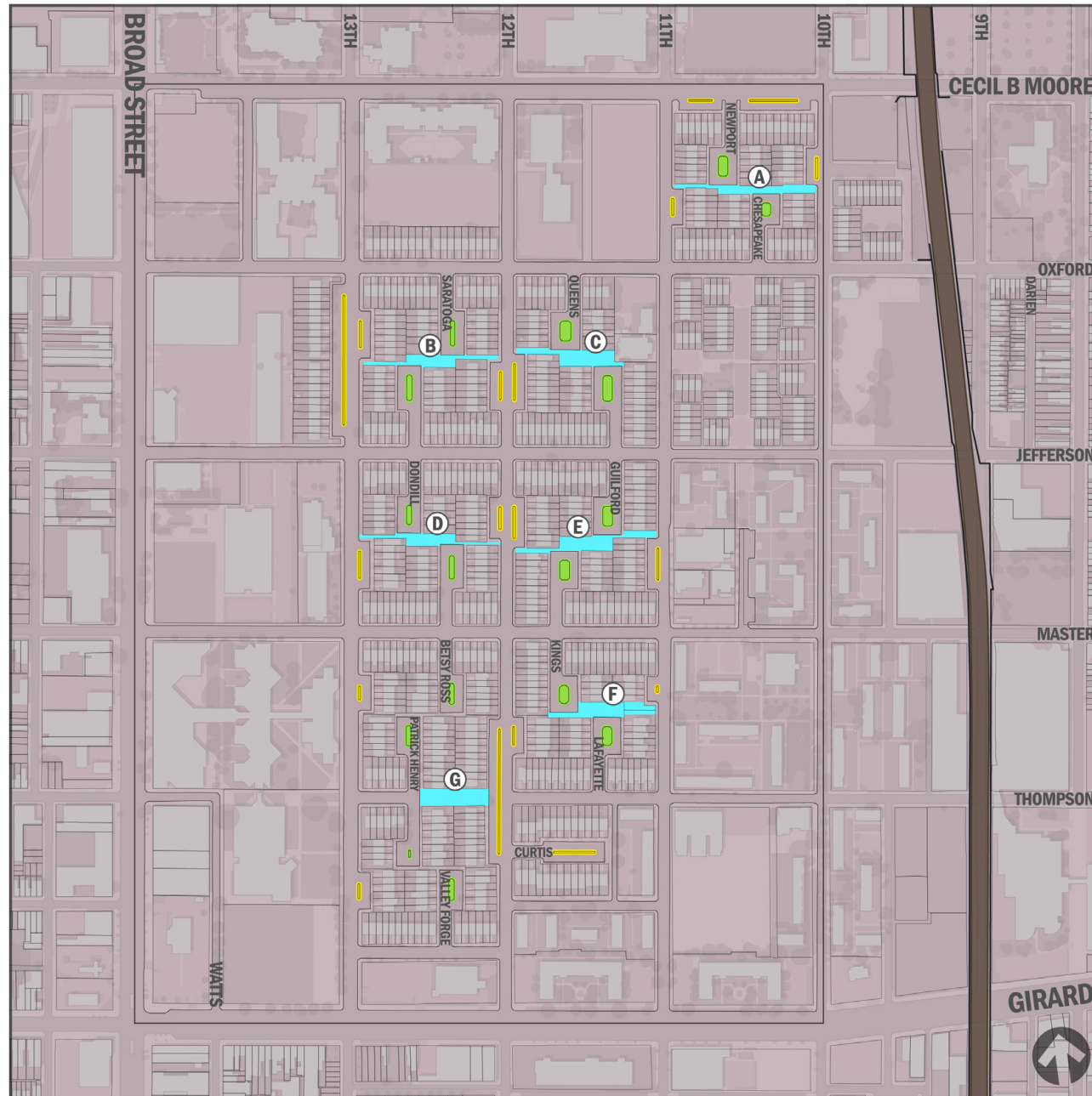


FIGURE 13: Yorktown's Soundscape

**“raising my sons in the cul-de-sac that we live in... in the beginning it was like a huge playpen, all of us watched out for everyone's kids, the children went out and played and had a good time, and they grew up with the squirrels and the crickets and all the birds.”**





## RIGHT OF WAY ELEMENTS



"green" strips



circles



courtyards

- Ⓐ chesapeake/newport
- Ⓑ saratoga/dondill
- Ⓒ queens/guilford
- Ⓓ dondill/betsy ross
- Ⓔ guilford/kings
- Ⓕ kings/lafayette
- Ⓖ patrick henry

FIGURE 14: Public Right of Way Elements



## Courtyards

Each of Yorktown's complete blocks features a central courtyard area, except for the double block between Master, Flora, 12th, and 13th, which shares the Patrick Henry courtyard between the two combined square blocks. Aside from the Chesapeake/Newport courtyard, which has been reduced to the width of a sidewalk, the courtyards range in size from approximately 5,200 square feet (the Betsy Ross/Dondill courtyard) to 10,000 square feet (the Lafayette/Kings courtyard). Extending east and west from the courtyards (except for the Patrick Henry courtyard) are narrow pathways, most with a few steps at the edge of the courtyard, connecting the courtyard area to the sidewalks of adjacent streets.

At one time, Yorktown's courtyards featured benches and other furnishings for casual recreation, but over the years these items have deteriorated and have been removed to ensure safety, some after having been damaged by acts of vandalism and others removed so as to avoid attracting vandals. Yorktown's courtyards are almost entirely paved, but some of them have partial tree cover. The concrete surfaces have degraded over time without necessary repairs being done by the City. Some residents have made efforts to improve the ground condition in attempts to remove dangerous tripping hazards, which are made even more perilous at night by the lack of lighting in Yorktown's courtyards. However, many of these

spaces are in need of attention beyond the "band aid approach," potentially requiring complete reconstruction in order to make them safe and usable shared spaces for residents. This will require outside resources beyond the means of the Yorktown community's volunteer upkeep efforts.

## "Green" Strips

A number of long and narrow raised curb areas along the sides of Yorktown's main streets separate driveway-like "pull-ins" from the adjacent street. These concrete strips are referred to as "green" strips by the community, despite the fact that none of them are planted. The "green" strips are aligned with the sidewalks on either end, but there are no curb ramps between the sidewalks and the green strips, which intends to divert users around the loop of the pull-in driveway area. Pedestrians who continue along the desire line alongside the street and onto the "green" strip find that it doesn't make a very good sidewalk, due to its narrow width and the presence of periodic street signs placed in the middle of the strip.

Discussions with the community revealed that most residents believe these neighborhood elements have the potential to become great assets to Yorktown, but at present most of them either do not contribute to or negatively impact the quality of the public realm.

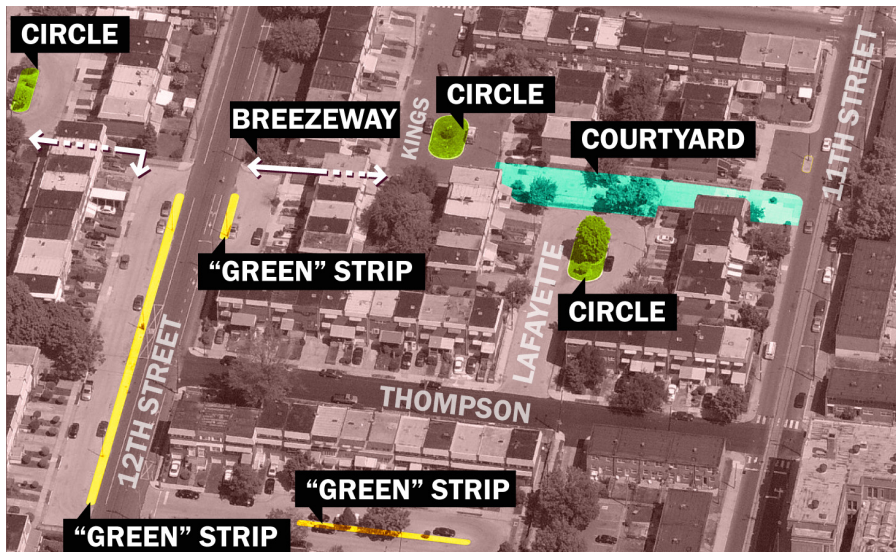


FIGURE 15: Public Right of Way Typologies



For decades, Yorktown residents have taken on the responsibilities of maintenance of and minor repairs to neighborhood public spaces.



FIGURE 16: Yorktown's Tree Canopy

**9%** of the study area has  
**TREE COVER**

**63%** of Yorktown's canopy  
contributes to the  
**PUBLIC REALM**

- > trees in front yards
- > street trees
- > trees in public spaces or visually accessible from the street

the city of Philadelphia's  
**GREENWORKS**  
plan aims to increase the city's  
tree coverage city-wide to  
**30% by 2025**



## TREE COVER

Yorktown's tree canopy covers only 9% of the study area, well below the City's tree cover percentage of 15.7%. 63% of the trees in the study area contribute to the public realm, meaning they are visible from Yorktown's streets and sidewalks, making them assets not only to individual homes, but to the neighborhood as a whole. Given the neighborhood's block structure and spacious street layouts, there is plenty of opportunity for planting of additional trees on Yorktown's sidewalks and shared spaces.

As an informal investigation of one of the many benefits of trees, the planning team measured sidewalk temperatures on a very hot summer day at three different locations in the neighborhood. A location under extensive tree cover at 10<sup>th</sup> and Thompson had a ground temperature that was more than 12 degrees cooler than the Kings and Lafayette courtyard just around the corner, which had a ground surface temperature of 104.7 degrees. Surprisingly, the Kings and Lafayette courtyard was even warmer than the Harrison School blacktop. Both of these areas suffer from a lack of tree shade, making them unpleasant socializing and play spaces on hot days.

Though there is a need for an expanded urban forest in the Yorktown, residents pointed out a number of issues with existing trees in the neighborhood, including root damage to sidewalks, the presence of "weed" trees (invasive voluntary growth trees), dead trees and trees in very poor health, tree branches interfering with overhead utility lines, and a general lack of maintenance of trees.

**“We have trees that are 50 years old that are uprooting the ground. I have roots coming in my basement and breaking up the sidewalk!”**

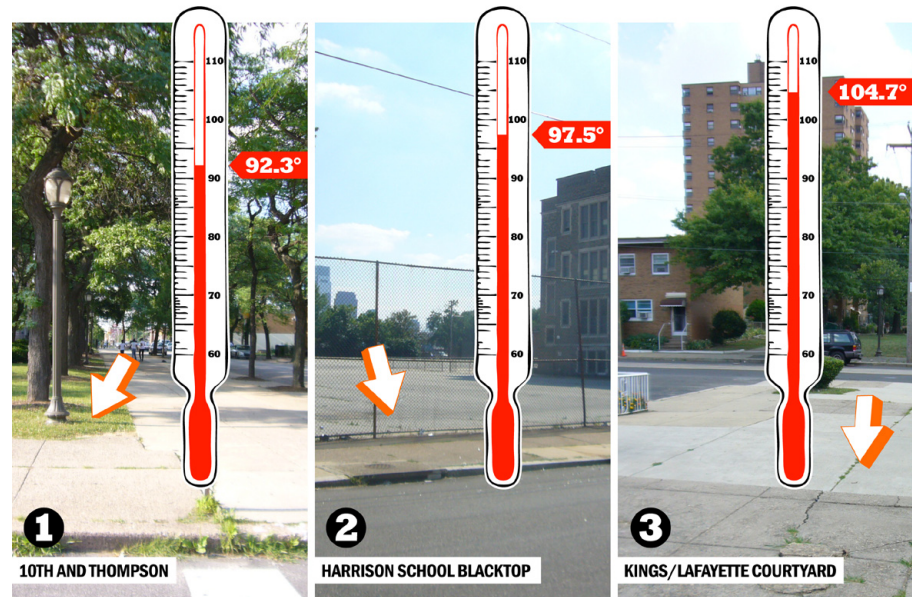


FIGURE 17: Measuring Ground Surface Temperature



## COMMUNITY CONDITIONS & PERCEPTIONS

## 36 COMMERCIAL SERVICES

The parcel land use survey included the gathering of data on the types of commercial services available in the study area. The mismatch between commercial services and resident demand appears to be the combined result of type and quality of commercial services. For instance, even though there are 11 restaurants in the study area, 46% of residents who participated in the community survey indicated that restaurants are a commercial service they would like to have closer or more accessible to Yorktown. In discussions with the community about this issue, it was discovered that most of the restaurants closest to Yorktown are fast food establishments, and community members expressed the desire for a more formal sit-down dining experience somewhere near the neighborhood. Other under-represented store types include: clothing stores, dry cleaners, florists, bakeries, hardware/gardening supply stores, and ice cream parlors.

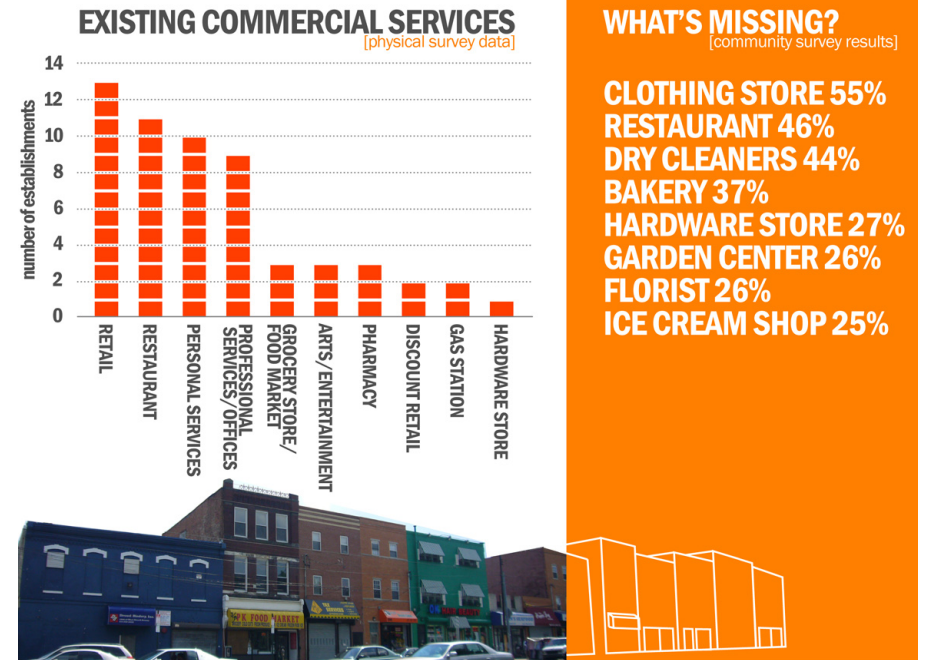


FIGURE 18: Community Survey Results: Commercial Services



## NEIGHBORHOOD CONDITIONS AND PERCEPTION

The planning process asked residents to characterize the neighborhood's assets and shortcomings in a variety of ways in order to form a picture of what Yorktown's strengths can be built upon and which needs in the neighborhood overall should be addressed. As a part of the community survey, residents were asked to rate the conditions of a variety of aspects of the neighborhood overall. While residents rated these conditions generally "good" to "excellent," "fair" to "poor" ratings were given to on-street parking, courtyards/community spaces, sidewalks, cleanliness, and street lighting.

When asked to identify what neighborhood characteristics they liked best and which they held as their biggest concerns about Yorktown, residents identified the neighborhood's location and ease of access to the city and region, its community pride and spirit, and cleanliness and safety as the neighborhood's best assets. Identified as the biggest concerns in the neighborhood were safety and cleanliness, followed by community pride and spirit and parks and open space. It was notable that some aspects were identified both as an asset and a concern by the community—most notably, cleanliness and safety. It was speculated that this is likely a function of both where people live within Yorktown and a possible desire on the part of many residents for even better conditions no matter where they live—simply a function of varying levels of standards.

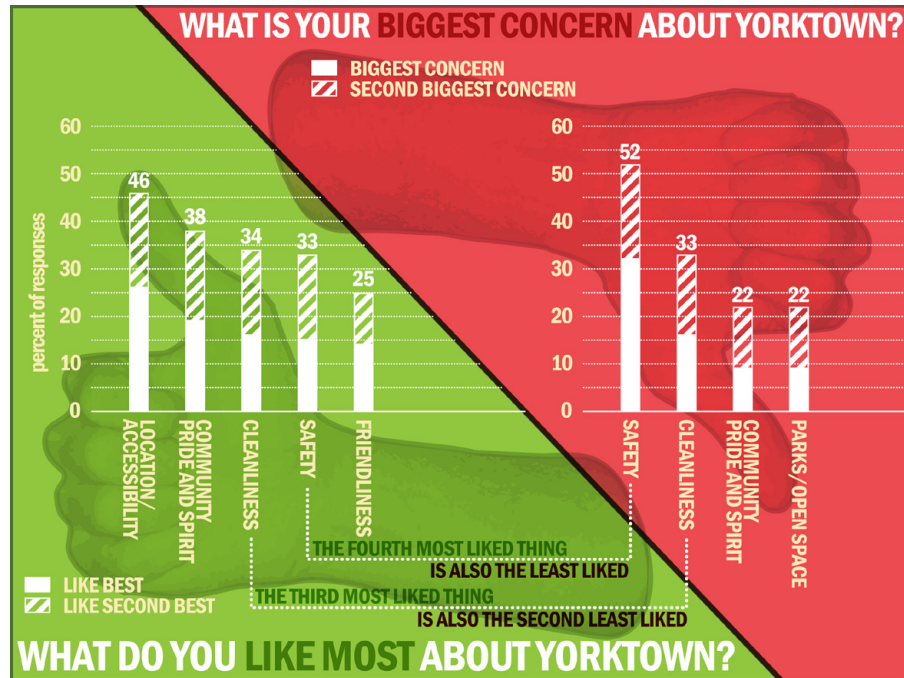


FIGURE 19: Community Survey Results: Likes & Concerns About Yorktown

## HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE OVERALL CONDITIONS IN YORKTOWN?

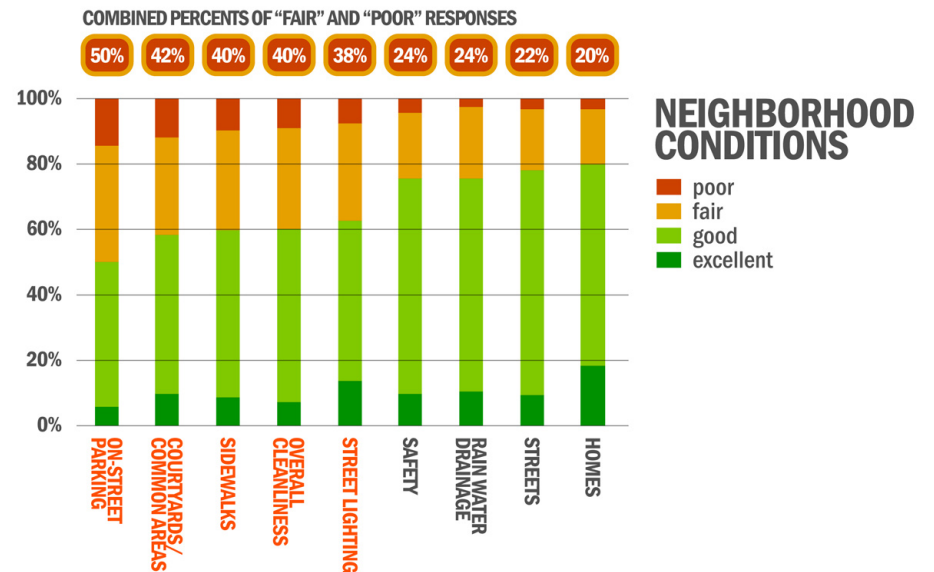


FIGURE 20: Community Survey Results: Neighborhood Conditions

## 38 D. HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

### HOMEOWNERSHIP

According to the Census, homeownership rates are slightly higher than the share of renters in Yorktown, which has been the trend since 1990. Higher homeownership rates were evident among those who participated in the community survey, at 68%. Among the homeowner surveyees, 40% have an outstanding mortgage or a home improvement loan obligation, 91% have homeowners insurance, and a very low proportion (4%, but still important) may be in jeopardy of losing their home due to tax or mortgage foreclosure.

Additionally, the following general observations about homeownership in Yorktown were drawn from the community survey results:

- > owners place a high intrinsic and market value on their homes
- > two-thirds of homeowners surveyed have been approached to sell their home or take-out an improvement loan
- > owner-occupants tend not to own other properties in Yorktown. 25% would consider buying another home here as an investment property but are unsure how to begin the process
- > seven of every 10 renters would like to become a homeowner, but many are unaware of how to begin such a process

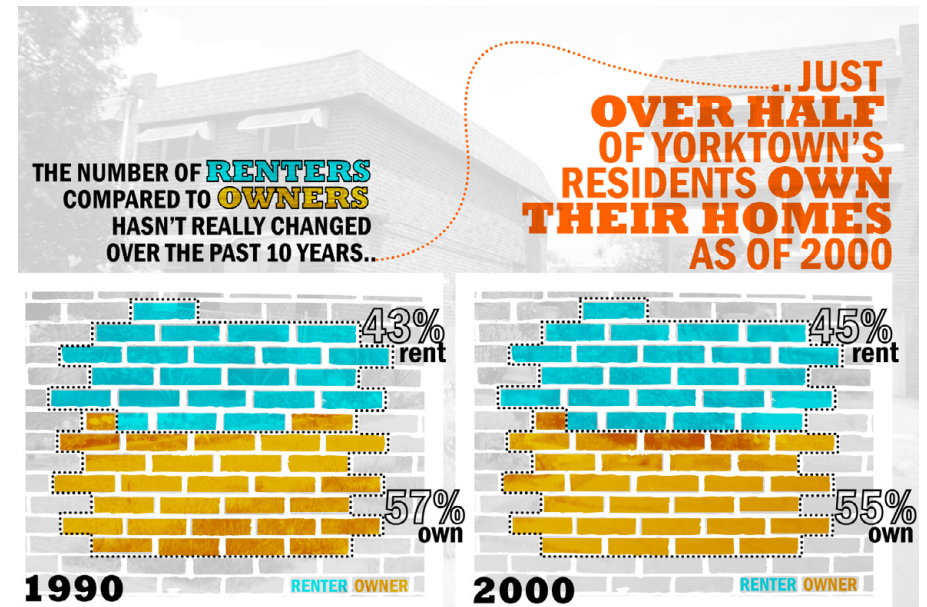


FIGURE 21: Census 2000: Home Ownership



FIGURE 22: Community Survey Results: Home Ownership

## HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

According to the 2000 Census, 20% of homeowners and 42% of renters face a housing burden, which means they spend more than 30% of their income on housing costs. Overall, 29% of households in Yorktown face a housing burden. However, the percentage of Yorktown homeowners spending less than 10% of their income on housing costs, 28.2%, is fairly remarkable compared to other neighborhoods in Philadelphia. This could be partially a result of many of Yorktown's homeowners having paid off their mortgage loans, although 40% of those who participated in the community survey reported that they still have an outstanding mortgage or home improvement loan.

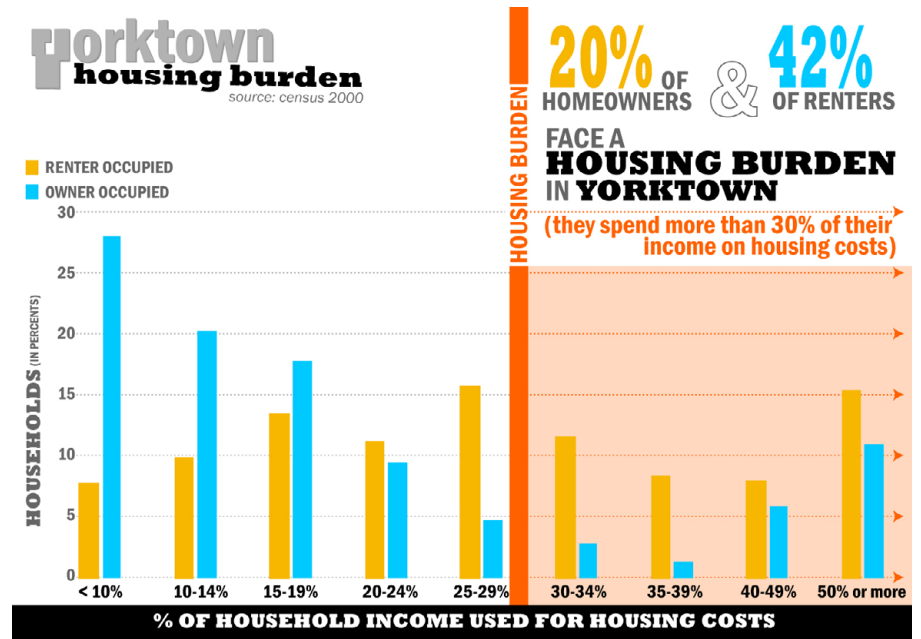


FIGURE 23: Census 2000: Housing Burden

## RESIDENTIAL TYPOLOGIES

The Yorktown development featured four distinct housing types, each row of attached housing featuring a mix of two-story types or a mix of three-story types. The smaller Adams and Jefferson types are two stories with three or four bedrooms. These smaller homes feature car pads in lieu of ground level garages, which are features of the larger two housing types. The three-story Lafayette and Cornwallis housing types have three and four bedrooms, respectively, and are further distinguished from the two-story types by the inclusion of front porches leading to the entry doors. Yorktown houses range from 900 to 1600 square feet in size.

While each housing type has its own distinct look, all of the types draw from a common language of stylistic and architectural elements, including mansard roofs (most with asphalt roofing tiles), shutters, covered porches, and awnings (most constructed of corrugated plexiglass).







## BUILDING CONDITION

percentages based on parcel area

### A - EXCELLENT [33%]

new construction / shows no signs of lack of maintenance or poor construction

### B - GOOD [56%]

some signs of wear are visible / indicators of insufficient maintenance are present / defects are minor and merely cosmetic

### C - FAIR [11%]

highly visible cosmetic defects as well as visible indicators of minor structural issues

### D - POOR [<1%]

significant structural issues may be present / building is danger of becoming hazardous

### F - VERY POOR [0%]

structurally unsound, hazardous, and is not or should not be occupied

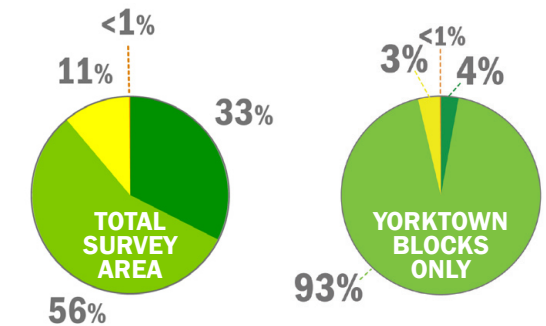


FIGURE 24: Building Condition, 2010

## NEIGHBORHOOD BUILDING CONDITIONS

During the parcel survey, building conditions were observed and recorded throughout the neighborhood according to the following scale and condition indicators:

### A: EXCELLENT

- > New construction
- > Building shows no signs of lack of maintenance or poor construction

### B: GOOD

- > Some signs of wear are visible
- > Indicators of insufficient maintenance are present
- > Defects are minor and merely cosmetic

### C: FAIR

- > Highly visible cosmetic defects
- > Visible indicators of minor structural issues

### D: POOR

- > Significant structural issues are apparent
- > Building's structural stability may be compromised
- > Building is in danger of becoming hazardous

### F: VERY POOR

- > Building is structurally unsound and hazardous
- > Building should not be occupied
- > Rehabilitation is unlikely and building should be torn down

As an inherent limitation of conducting a “windshield survey” (approximating building conditions through a car windshield) without the opportunity to closely inspect all sides of the building or the building’s interior, the resulting data is intended as an approximation of general building conditions in the neighborhood. Occasionally, a building’s exterior appearance belies other problems that may be present on the interior or other problems not immediately apparent on the outside of a building. For instance, the condition of a home on the northwest corner of 12th Street and Jefferson was rated “Good” at the time of the parcel survey. Weeks later, the mansard roof was found to have partially collapsed due to deterioration that was happening away from view at street level. The lesson learned is that although many of Yorktown’s houses appear to be in solid shape—93% were rated “Good” in the building condition survey—they are now over fifty years old and some issues are bound to emerge.

## HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE CURRENT CONDITIONS OF YOUR HOME?

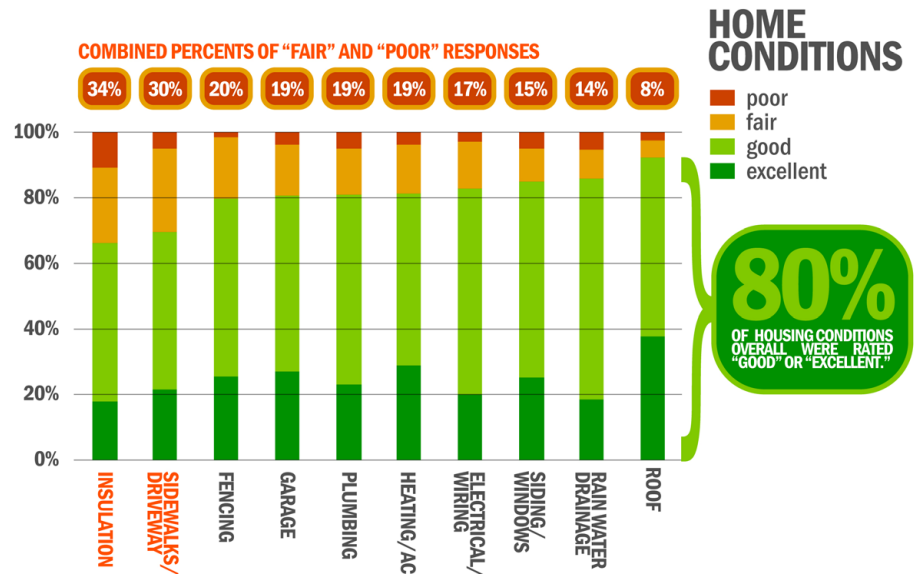


FIGURE 25: Community Survey Results: Home Conditions

It was learned during the planning process that some electrical problems had emerged in Yorktown houses. Almost one-third (31%) of surveyed home owners had not had their electrical systems upgraded and another 15% were not sure if such an upgrade had been done in their home. As all of these homes were built at the same time and using the same construction methods, it is likely that many of these homes will have electrical issues if preventative measures are not taken.

In order to form a more comprehensive understanding of the actual conditions of Yorktown homes, the community survey asked residents to rate the conditions of various elements of their homes. Overall, 80% of the housing conditions were rated “Good” or “Excellent” by residents, but two items stood out as housing elements that were rated “Fair” or “Poor” more than others: housing insulation and sidewalks/driveways.

- 42** Input from Yorktown residents determined the following high-priority housing needs with respect to preventive maintenance and upgrades:

### ENERGY CONSERVATION

- insulation
- windows
- heating, ventilation, air conditioning

### INTERIOR

- basic systems
- rewiring from aluminum to copper and to upgrade amperage to 100
- plumbing
- chimney cleaning

### EXTERIOR/YARDS

- sidewalks and driveways
- porches and fencing
- driveways and garages
- awnings, roofs and gutters
- siding/tuck-pointing brickwork
- tree trimming and removal of dead, diseased and “dirty/weed” trees
- siding and trim painting
- electrical power lines to handle higher amperage into homes

“ These houses are solid. But in the last two years, I’ve had to call the repair people a couple of times. ”



### NOT EVERYONE IS ON THE SAME PAGE WHEN IT COMES TO YARD MAINTENANCE...



“ Overgrown trees and undermaintained properties are a big problem. My neighbor’s yard is like a forest! ”

### RESIDENTIAL YARD CONDITIONS

Many of Yorktown’s residents take great pride in yard maintenance. Lush gardens and meticulously maintained planters dot the neighborhood’s streets, adding great value to the neighborhood character and image. However, some properties are not so well maintained, and the trend of Yorktown houses being bought by absentee landlords and used for income-producing rental properties has been accompanied by some undesirable yard maintenance practices, including the paving over of entire front yard areas to reduce yard maintenance loads on landlords and to accommodate additional parking for renters. Of additional particular concern with respect to the condition of residential yards in Yorktown is the degraded condition of the neighborhood’s many low brick retaining walls and brick fences. Many of these non-structural brick walls have suffered from a lack of maintenance over the years and some have fallen over, while others lean precariously, constituting a threat to public safety.

### VACANCY

Given the neighborhood’s history prior to Yorktown’s construction and the existing conditions of areas just outside of Yorktown, the fact that the study area’s vacancy rate is so low is quite remarkable. The occupancy rate of the buildings in the study area is estimated at 90%. 86% of the vacancy rate is attributable to two institutional vacancies: the former William Penn High School at Master and Broad, and an empty Temple building at Jefferson and Broad. The lack of vacant land is especially noteworthy, given the prevalence of vacant lots in other areas of North Philadelphia, including areas just across the 9<sup>th</sup> Street elevated rail line. It should be noted that the vacant lot at Oxford and Broad is now a construction site, slated for a new Temple student housing high rise building.



the YORKTOWN study area is  
**90% OCCUPIED**

86% of the **VACANCY**  
is attributable to underutilized  
**INSTITUTIONAL**  
spaces



FIGURE 26: Vacancy, 2010

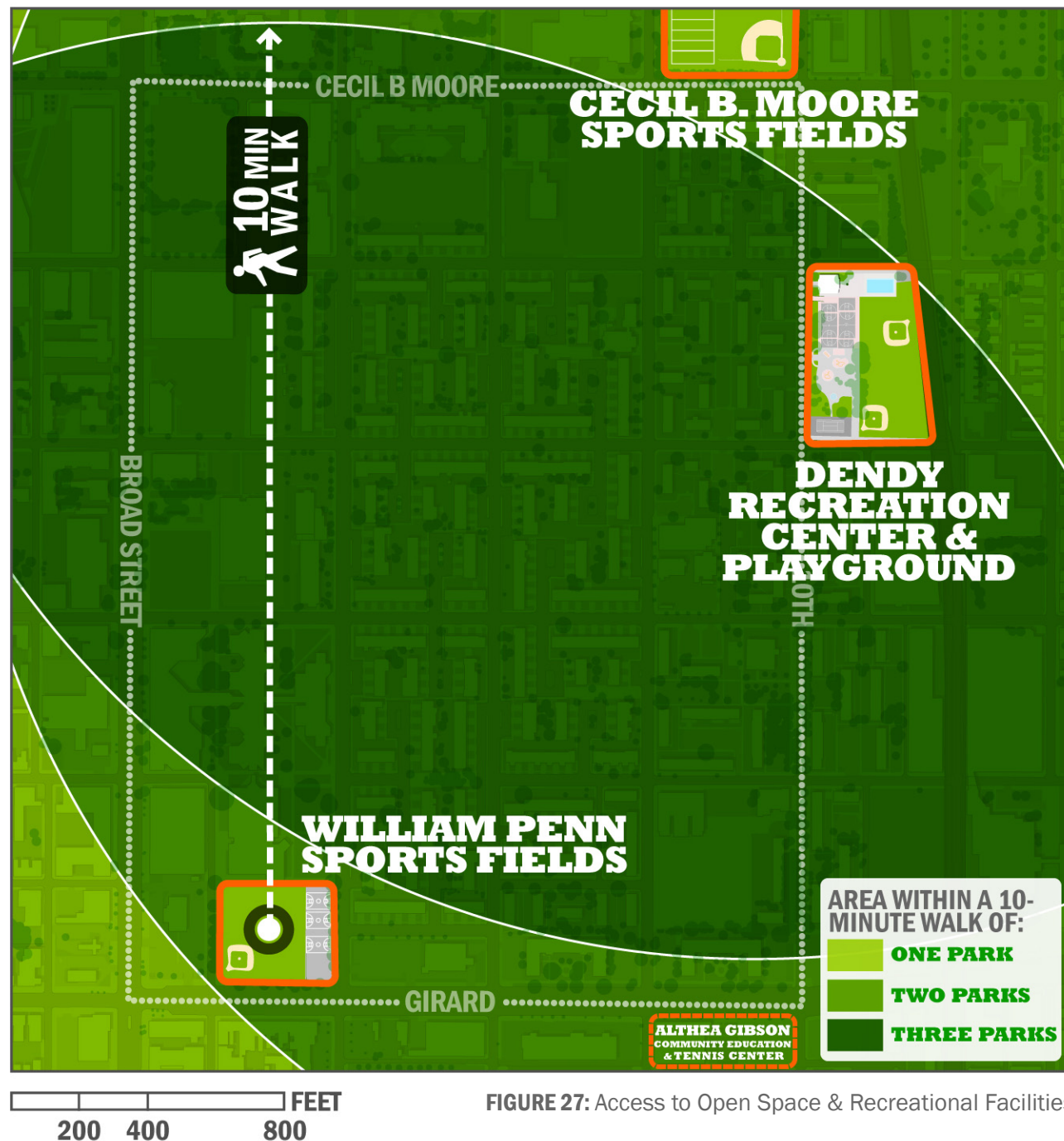


FIGURE 27: Access to Open Space &amp; Recreational Facilities

**ALL YORKTOWN RESIDENTS LIVE WITHIN A 10 MINUTE WALK OF A PARK!**

**IN FACT, 86%** of YORKTOWN is within a **10-MINUTE WALK** OF 3 GREEN OPEN SPACES

{ GREENWORKS Philadelphia calls for 100 percent of residents to live within a 10-minute walk of an open space by 2025. }



**BUT..** many of the park amenities aren't well suited to YORKTOWN'S **community members**



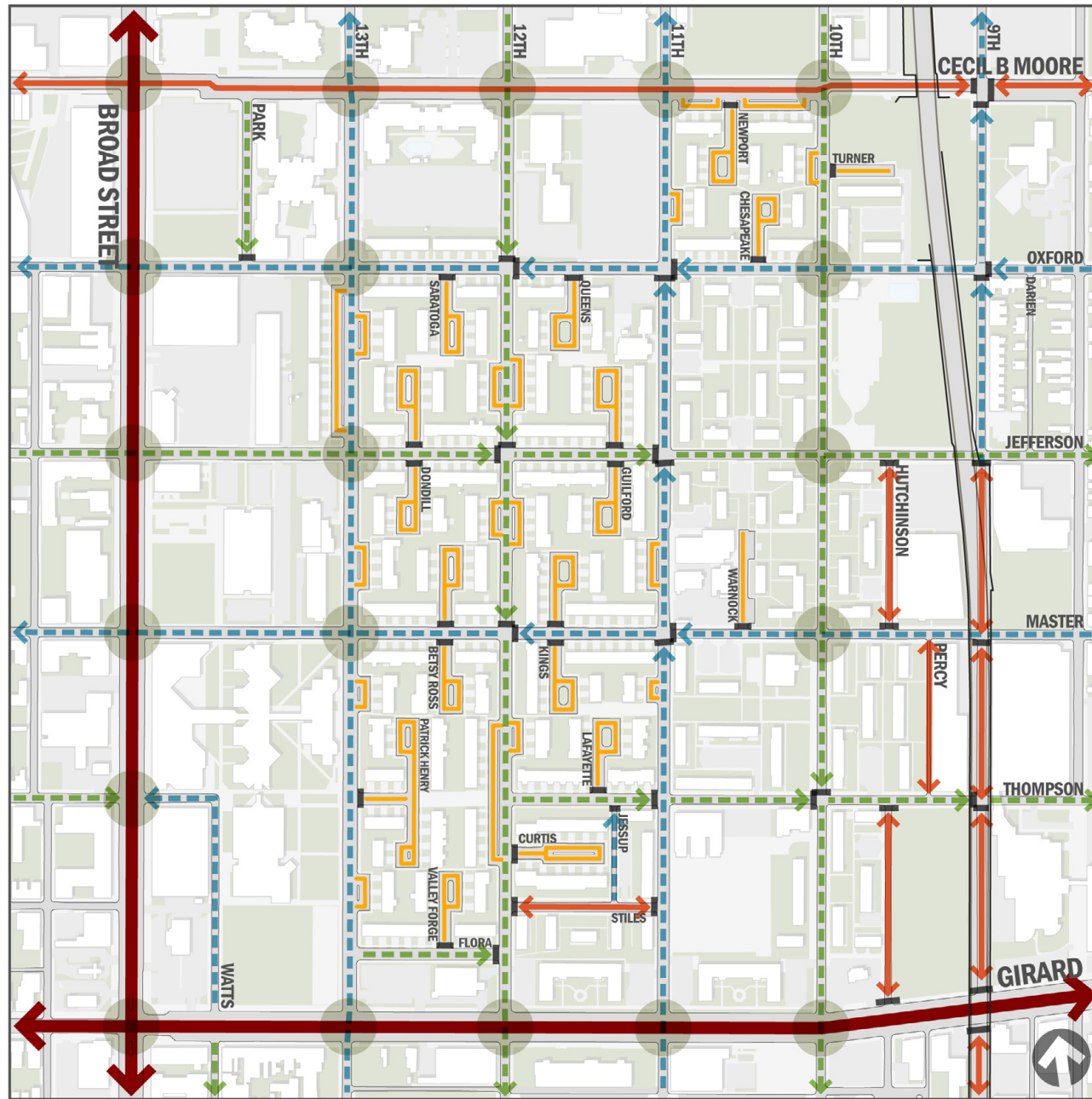
## E. PARKS AND PLAY SPACES

### ACCESS TO OPEN SPACE AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

There are three recreational facilities in the immediate area of Yorktown: the Cecil B. Moore Sports Fields, on Cecil B. Moore between 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>; the Dendy Recreation Center (formerly known as Schwartz Playground), on 10<sup>th</sup> Street between Oxford and Jefferson; and the William Penn High School Sports Fields, on the south side of the William Penn High School grounds, on Girard between 13<sup>th</sup> and Watts. The new Althea Gibson Community Education and Tennis Center provides another recreational option on Girard between 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>. With so many park spaces nearby, 86% of the study area lies within a 10-minute walk of three open spaces. While the quantity and proximity to parks and play spaces is excellent, the quality of these spaces is less than desirable in some areas. Furthermore, while these recreational facilities provide the opportunity for participating in organized sports and active recreation, the neighborhood is lacking in passive park spaces designed for casual recreating and socializing. In other words, the park spaces that are convenient to Yorktown's residents particularly well.







## STREET NETWORK

- major two-way street
- minor two-way street
- one-way street (west and north)
- one-way street (east and south)
- local access street
- signalized intersection
- stop sign

FIGURE 28: Yorktown Street Network

## F. GETTING AROUND IN YORKTOWN

### STREET NETWORK

The Yorktown area is bounded by two of Philadelphia's most prominent and well-traveled surface streets, Broad Street and Girard Avenue, which both accommodate bi-directional traffic. Aside from the bi-directional Cecil B. Moore to the north of the neighborhood, nearly all of the other streets in the study area are one-way streets that alternate direction from one street to the next. In addition to this grid of one-way streets, the neighborhood's distinct pattern of cul-de-sacs and pull-ins provide access to and parking for Yorktown homes. In the interior of the Yorktown blocks, traffic is regulated by stop signs, but there are traffic signals at several intersections at the edges and outside of Yorktown's boundaries.



## STREET CONDITION

- excellent
- good
- fair
- poor
- very poor

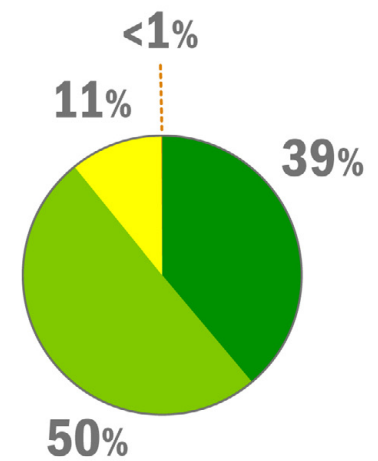


FIGURE 29: Yorktown Street Condition



## STREET CONDITION

A comprehensive analysis of street conditions was conducted by the planning team at the time of the parcel survey. Each street was given a condition rating on a scale ranging from “Excellent” to “Very Poor,” with the exception of Girard Avenue, which was given separate condition ratings for the center of the street as distinct from the outer travel lanes, given the degree of street condition degradation caused by the trolley tracks in the center of the street. Overall, 50% of the study area streets were determined to be in “Good” condition. The majority of streets in “Fair” condition are constituted by pull-ins along 13<sup>th</sup> Street, segments of 11<sup>th</sup> Street south of Jefferson, and the center trolley track area of Girard Avenue. It is notable that some degree of street degradation on 11<sup>th</sup> Street is attributable to potholes and asphalt damage along the (unused) trolley tracks on that street.



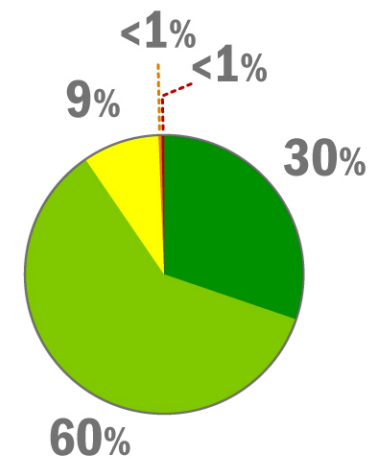


FIGURE 30: Sidewalk Condition

**40%** of surveyed residents  
rated Yorktown's sidewalks  
**"FAIR" or "POOR"**

### SIDEWALK CONDITION

- excellent
- good
- fair
- poor
- very poor



## SIDEWALK CONDITION

Pedestrian-friendliness and sidewalk accessibility is especially important in Yorktown as walking was identified as the second most common primary means of transit by residents who participated in the community survey. Major walking trips included accessing groceries, shopping, and going to church. However, ratings of “fair” or “poor” accounted for 40% of the responses of participants in the community survey when asked about the condition of Yorktown’s sidewalks. In addition to poor sidewalk conditions in some areas, the neighborhood has a few additional barriers to walkability and accessibility, including discontinuous sidewalks and missing curb ramps at the “green” strips, narrow sidewalks not easily traveled upon by wheelchair users, and further narrowing of already-narrow sidewalks by the intrusion of utility poles and other street infrastructure into the pedestrian zone.

**“it’s so convenient, I can get anywhere without driving...”**



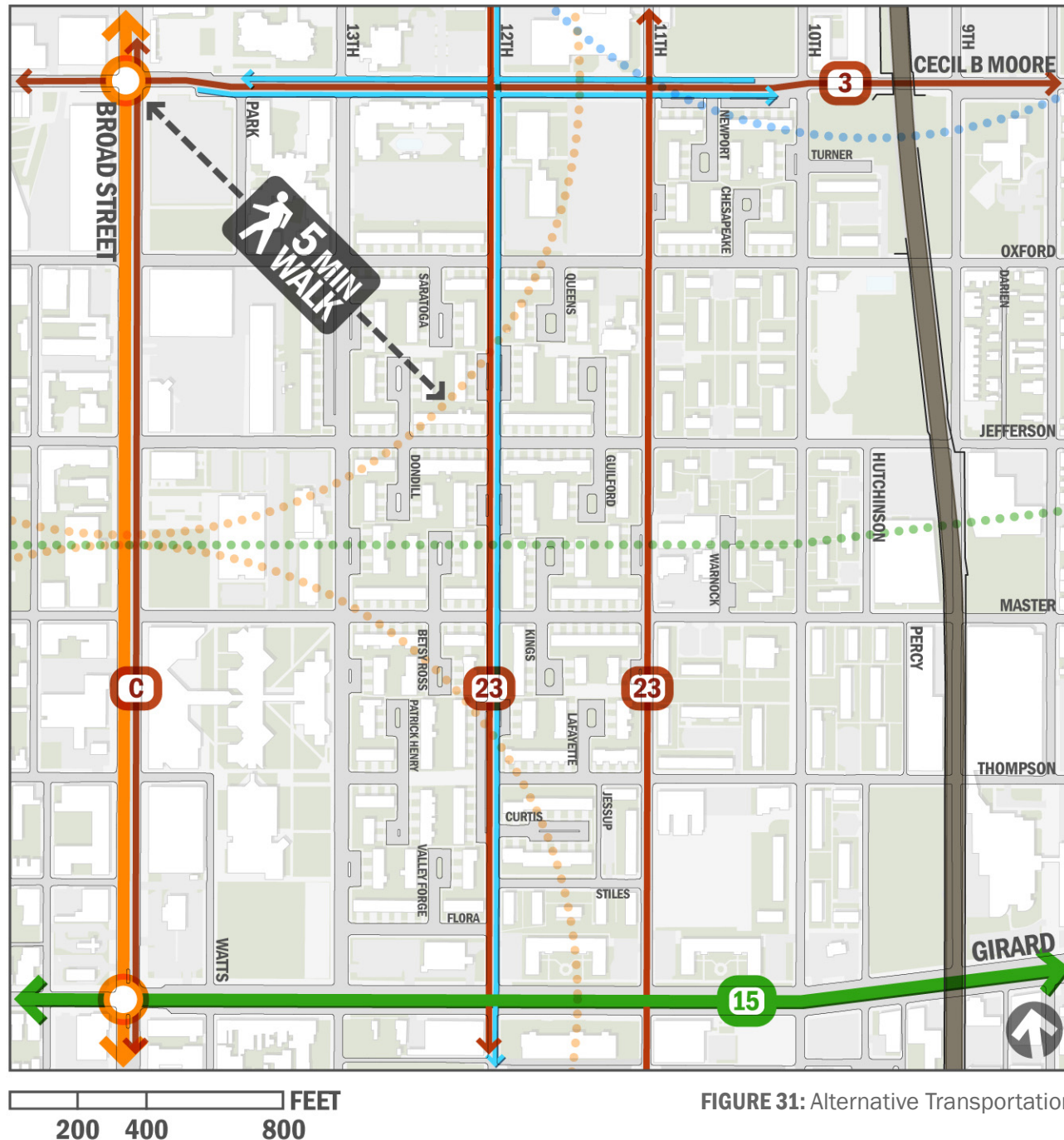


FIGURE 31: Alternative Transportation

## ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION

- broad street line subway
- ... 1/4 mile radius from subway
- ... 1/4 mile radius from temple regional rail station
- girard avenue trolley (route 15)
- ... 1/4 mile radius from trolley
- bus routes
- bike lanes

## ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

Yorktown is well-connected to a multitude of public transportation options. Two stops on the Broad Street subway line are within close walking distance of the neighborhood, while the Girard Avenue Route 15 Trolley provides additional rail connections in the neighborhood. The well-utilized Route 23 bus route on 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Streets is supplemented by bus routes on Broad Street and Cecil B. Moore. The community survey revealed that after personal car use and walking, riding the bus is the third most common primary means of transportation, and is most commonly used to make health and medical-related trips and to access shopping destinations.

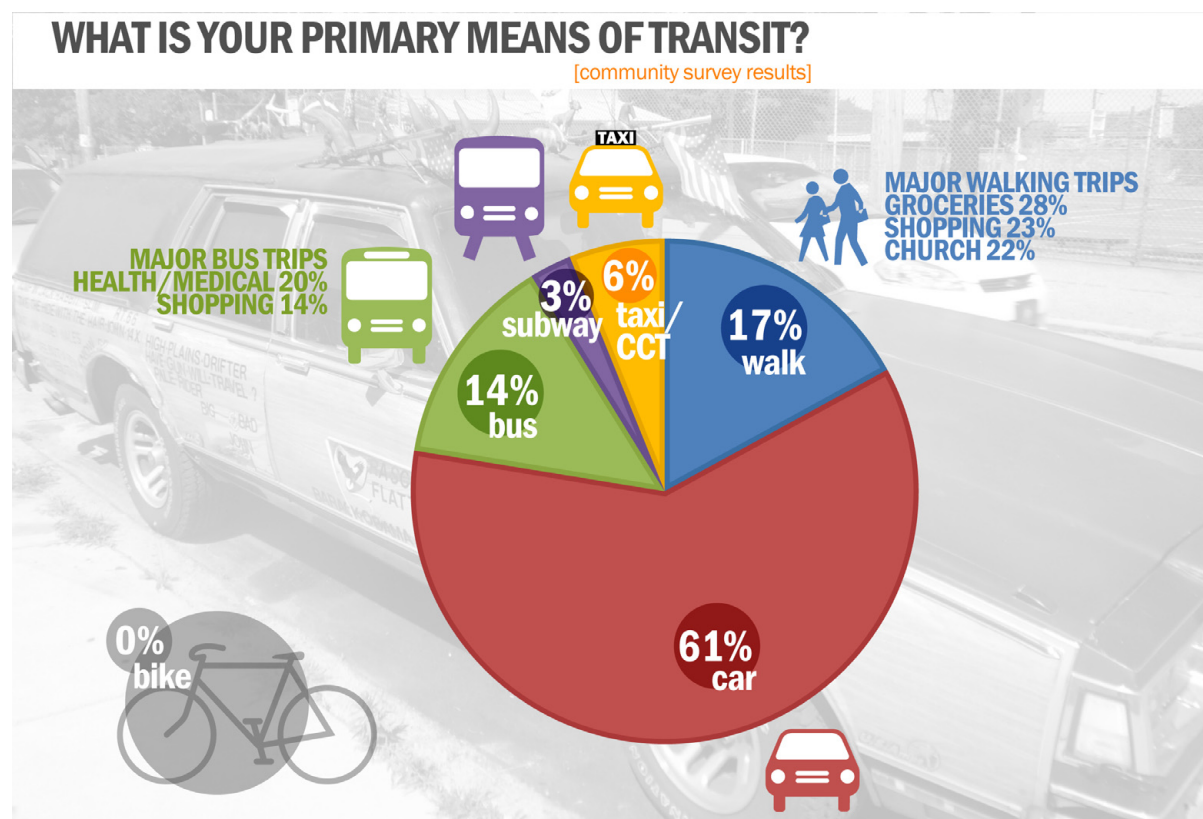


FIGURE 32: Community Survey Results: Alternative Transportation

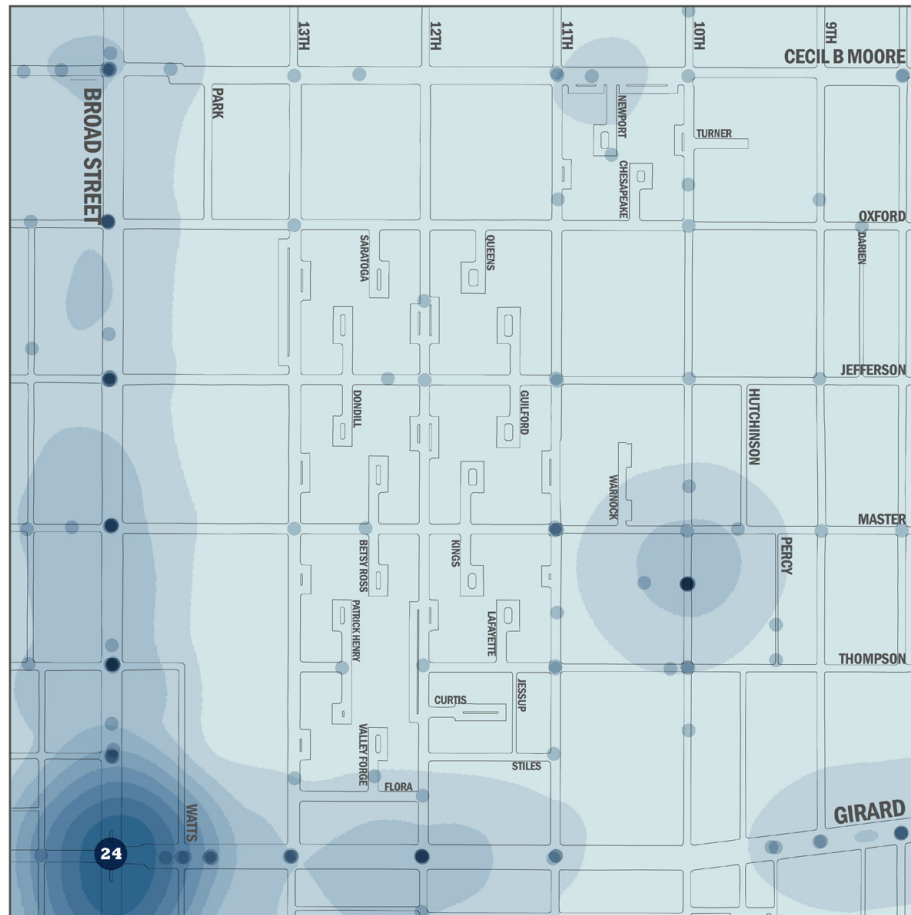


FIGURE 33: Serious Crime Against Persons, 2008

## SERIOUS CRIME AGAINST PERSONS 2008

incident intensity



low high

● single incident

● 19 number of incidents over 10

### CRIME BY TYPE

**ROBBERY 49%**  
**ASSAULT 43%**

**RAPE 7%**  
**HOMICIDE 1%**

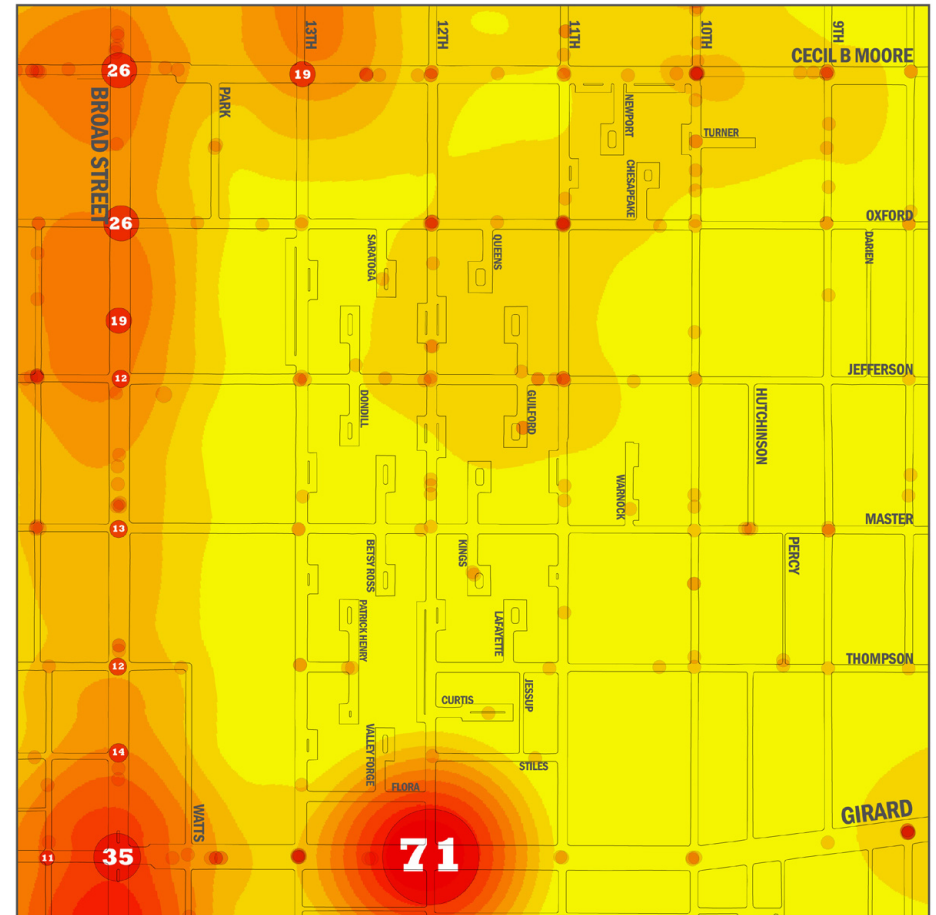


FIGURE 34: Serious Crime Against Property, 2008

## SERIOUS CRIME AGAINST PROPERTY 2008

incident intensity



low high

● single incident

● 19 number of incidents over 10

### CRIME BY TYPE

**THEFT 85%**

**AUTO THEFT 10%**

**BURGLARY 5%**



## G. CRIME AND THE PERCEPTION OF SAFETY

Residents who participated in the community survey identified safety as the biggest concern in the neighborhood, with 52% of the surveyees identifying it as either their biggest concern or second biggest concern.

### CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

A trend line analysis of serious crimes against persons and against properties in the study area census block groups reveals that the rate of crime incidents against properties has generally decreased between 1998 and 2006, the most prevalent incidents being theft, auto theft, and burglary. Over the eight-year period, 78% of all serious crimes were against property, while 22% were against persons. Serious crimes against persons remained more or less constant over the time period, with the major crimes against persons being robberies and aggravated assault.

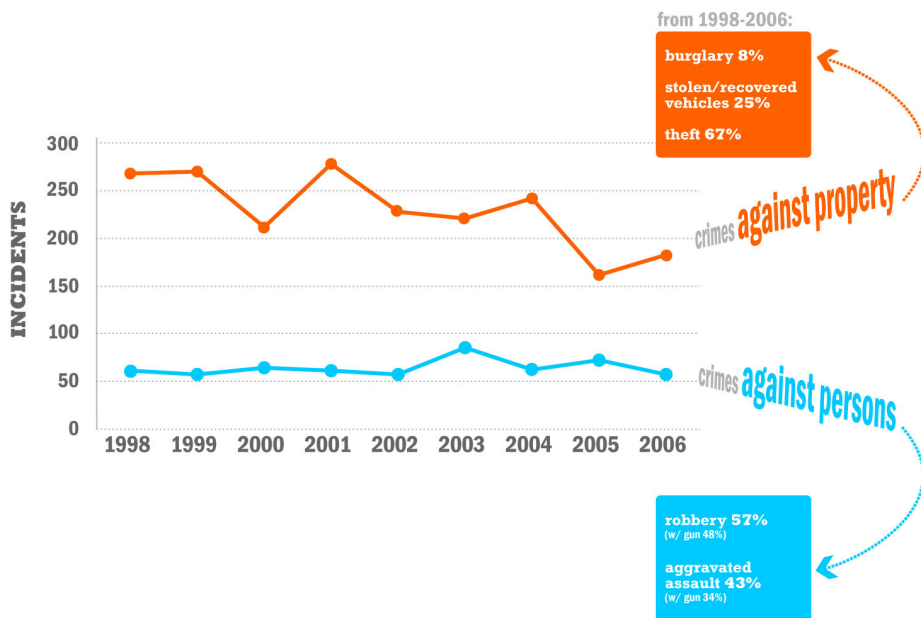


FIGURE 35: Serious Crime Trends: Yorktown

Crime maps generated from the data suggest that there are certain points in the Yorktown area that tend to attract more criminal incidents than others. In 2008, serious crimes against persons tended to occur much more frequently at the corner of Girard Avenue and Broad Street, and generally along Girard Avenue and Broad Street. A secondary focus point of these crimes is found on 10<sup>th</sup> Street between Master and Thompson. The map of serious crimes against property in 2008 also reveals a criminal activity hotspot at Broad and Girard, but the most prominent concentration of these incidents is located at 12<sup>th</sup> and Girard. Incident data suggests that many of these crimes are happening at the Rite Aid store at that intersection.

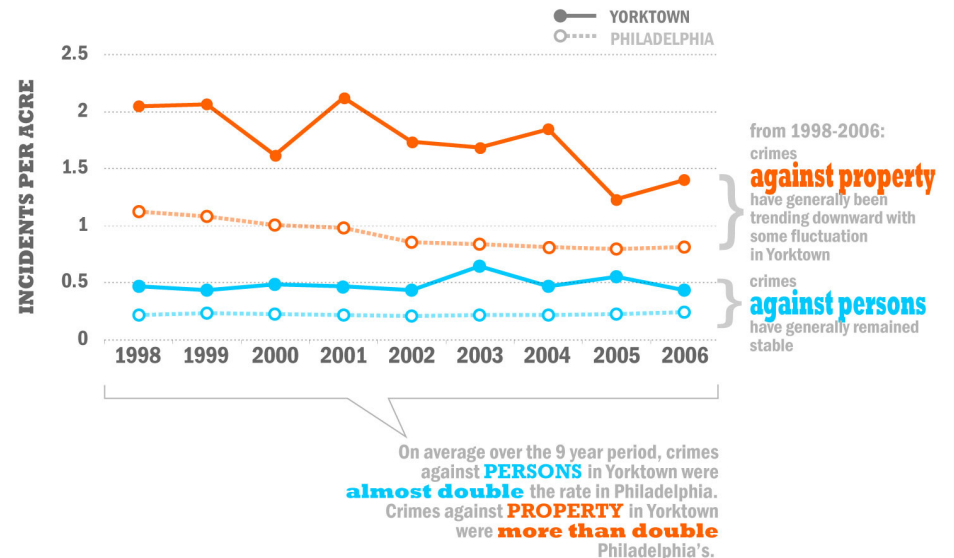


FIGURE 36: Serious Crime Trends: Yorktown vs. Philadelphia

## 56 NIGHTTIME VISIBILITY

With the majority of the night lighting being supplied by the brownish haze emitted from cobra-head style street lamps, night visibility in the majority of the study area is poor. The neighborhood stands in stark (or “dark”) contrast to the Temple campus, which glows like a beacon of light at the neighborhood’s edge, further emphasizing the lack of proper street lighting in Yorktown. A survey of Yorktown’s nightscape revealed several locations in the neighborhood that are particularly not well-lit, making them feel less safe after dark:

- > Though most of Yorktown’s houses have post lamps in front of them at the sidewalk’s edge, many of them were observed to be broken, not turned on, or otherwise not functioning, resulting in extremely dark conditions in many of the neighborhood’s cul-de-sacs.
- > The courtyards are not lit at all, and are completely dark at night.
- > The breezeways are especially dark, given that their narrow width blocks out any ambient light from adjacent areas
- > The block layout in Yorktown sometimes results in house orientation away from the north-south numbered streets. In some cases, both sides of a street are fronted by back yards or rear fences. These stretches of streets are particularly dark, as they are less likely to have a post lamp or other pedestrian-scale lighting to supplement the slight glow from the overhead street lamps.
- > Parks spaces in the Yorktown area are quite dark, especially Dendy Recreation Center

## STREET FRONTAGE

Unlike the typical rowhouse block layout typical of many Philadelphia neighborhoods, which very rarely results in the back of a house facing the street, Yorktown’s block layout orients many houses towards the block-interior cul-de-sacs, leaving the back of the house facing the street. This results in fewer “eyes on the street,” limiting opportunities for natural surveillance of the neighborhood in some cases. Other forms of “inactive frontage”—fences, vacant buildings, buildings that are set significantly back from the street, sides of buildings with no entrances or ground floor active uses—are found throughout the neighborhood, as shown in Figure 37. In some cases, both sides of a street are faced with inactive frontage, and therefore feel less monitored, and, to some, less safe. The street segments in Yorktown that have inactive frontage on both sides of



the street are shown in Figure 38. In some of these cases, the general level of activity on the street (depending on the time of day) may make up for some part of the lack of natural surveillance provided by adjacent buildings, as in the case of Cecil B Moore, Girard Avenue, and Broad Street. However, less active neighborhood streets with long stretches of inactive frontage, such as 12<sup>th</sup> Street and 13<sup>th</sup> Street, tend to feel unmonitored and “behind everything,” which has the potential to have negative impacts on the pedestrian experience, especially with respect to the perception of safety.

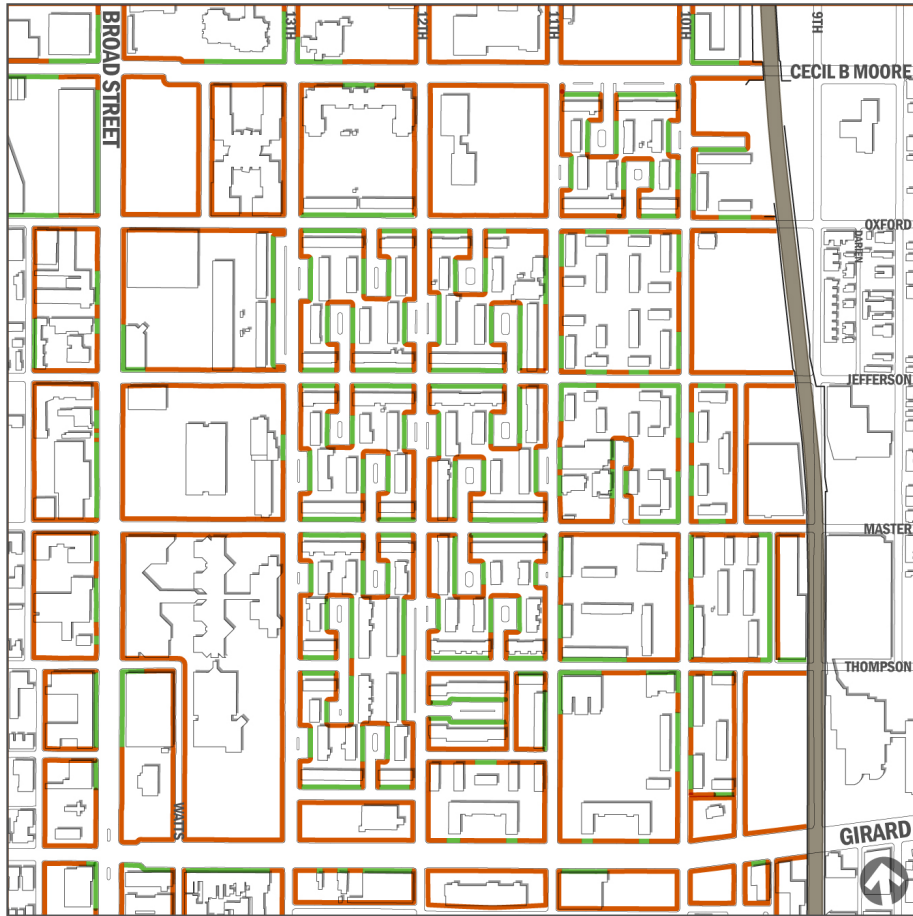


FIGURE 37: Frontage Activity



FIGURE 38: Inactive Street Frontage on Both Sides

## FRONTAGE ACTIVITY

- active frontage  
fronts of buildings at street edge;  
active ground floor uses with entry  
facing the street
- inactive frontage  
sides of buildings; buildings set back  
from street edge; vacant buildings;  
buildings with no active ground floor  
use; buildings with no views of the  
street; fences; parking or vacant lots

## INACTIVE STREET FRONTAGE

- inactive street frontage  
street segments with inactive  
frontage on both sides of the street



## 58 **H. MEETING AND STAKEHOLDER BASED PROFILE OF YORKTOWN**

Through the many meetings, large and small, that took place during the planning process, the direct engagement of residents, and at special events such as Yorktown Day on August 14<sup>th</sup>, other perspectives emerged about the status, needs and future of Yorktown. Many reinforced what had been conveyed or reflected in the data or the survey results, and are offered below.

### **COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS**

- > Strong community development and neighborhood-serving institutions in Yorktown
  - Bright Hope Baptist Church
  - Columbia North YMCA
  - OIC of Philadelphia
  - Progress Plaza
  - Yorktown Community Development Corporation
  - Yorktown Community Organization
  - Yorktown Arms Residents Council
  - William Penn Coalition
- > Closer coordination needed between these institutions to:
  - ensure resident interests are served
  - advocate as one voice for resources to help sustain Yorktown

### **STRENGTHS AND ASSETS**

- > YCDC executive director's vision, energy, and passion for Yorktown YCDC capacity to:
  - carry out community development work
  - passion for the work
  - resources to engage technical support to fill gaps
- > Yorktown Arms I and II, examples of YCDC's capacity to develop and manage a major real estate portfolio enabling seniors to "age-in-place" by transitioning to quality, affordable rental housing within the community

### **CHALLENGES AND NEEDS**

- > Uneven maintenance/upkeep of some homes and common areas
- > Better self-enforcement of covenants that govern residents' roles in maintenance of common spaces (courtyards and circles)
- > Proliferation of illegal multi-family/student rental units
- > Underutilized/less effective block captain system for facilitating access to news/information and resident interactions
- > Unfulfilled community agreements/commitments by Temple University
- > Identification of resources – particularly financial – that are available to Yorktown in general and to Yorktown residents whose incomes may preclude them from government-funded programs that tend to target low- to moderate-income households compared to a neighborhood whose incomes tend to exceed those income levels.

## 3

## RECOMMENDATIONS &amp; PRIORITIES

At the final communitywide meeting held October 21st and YCDC Board meeting held November 4th, draft recommendations based on the research, analysis, and discussions that took place during the preceding months were presented and finalized. Outlined below are the neighborhood strategic plan goals and action steps that were agreed upon at each level. It is YCDC's intention to take this final plan "on the road" to start and complete three interrelated processes:

- > Telling, retelling and updating the story of Yorktown as the first step towards securing a broader appreciation of its assets and strengths among all stakeholders, both internal and external.
- > Making the case for Yorktown's staying power and it being as much a community of choice now and into the next decade and beyond, as it was at its birth in the 1960s.
- > Securing all varieties of capital – human, financial, and political – required to ensure its survival and sustainability, starting with current residents and inviting all interests, industries and sectors to become partners **with** Yorktown and earn an economic and social return on their investment **in** Yorktown

The Yorktown Master Plan for 2015, a "blueprint for survival and sustainability" is viewed as and will be used as a tool to encourage, leverage and channel resources to priorities that residents have not only agreed to but, just as YCDC, have agreed to invest in themselves: be the "first dollars in." That means being as active, energized and committed to implementing their plan as they were in designing it. Four themes emerged from the planning work and are laid out in a series of goals and corresponding objectives that serve as tasks the community will use to guide their work through 2015.

# Yorktown CHATTER BOX

## YORKTOWN CDC IS LISTENING!

We are working on a neighborhood plan and oral history project to tell the story of Yorktown's past, present, and future through the voices of community members.

Come inside the *Yorktown CHATTER BOX* to tell your stories about the neighborhood and share your ideas for the future of Yorktown.





# ONE INVESTMENTS IN YORKTOWN'S HISTORY AND LEGACY

The “Chatterbox”—a story telling booth created by Interface Studio for use during Yorktown Day—gathered a wealth of rich anecdotes and memories from residents in Yorktown. One of the most common themes that emerged from those stories was the role history plays in Yorktown. As we’ve reached the 50 year anniversary of the community, this is a good time to look back and reflect on where Yorktown has been, is today and is potentially going.

## 1.1 ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY IN ARCHIVING AND SHARING THE NEIGHBORHOOD'S HISTORY

There is a lot of rich information about Yorktown in the form of maps, articles, photographs and, more recently, audio stories. All of this should be collected, organized and made widely available to document Yorktown’s evolution and further enhance community pride. Specifically, YCDC and their partners should:

- > Complete and promote the Yorktown oral history project. Yorktown CDC already has it underway; ensure that its products are accessible to the public.
- > Archive all of the historical information/materials/photos/oral histories so they are preserved in perpetuity.
- > Invite residents to share their old photographs of the neighborhood for use in newsletters and other promotional materials for Yorktown.
- > Coordinate with neighborhood-serving schools to include Yorktown history in school’s curriculum/assignments.

**“...if it just keeps improving on what it has, just keep enriching what we have, if homes are kept up, would be great—doing what we’re doing now, but doing more of it, more unified, more than just a few homes, but the whole community.”**

- > Develop and distribute pamphlets, use videos and social media to convey the:
  - History and phased development of Yorktown to new residents
  - Connections between the Yorktown name and the “Battle of Yorktown” from which the name was derived
  - Development goals and philosophy of the developer—Norman Denny—and the principals responsible for its financing (Alan Harberg).

## 62 1.2 CONTINUE TO EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING A HISTORIC PRESERVATION OVERLAY

- > Continue the dialogue with Preservation Alliance of Greater Philadelphia about a potential historic district overlay in Yorktown
- > Engage community to discuss relevant impacts on home maintenance issues and renovation constraints

“I pray that it’ll stay like it was, and won’t change. Very nice neighborhood for our residents, and for families...”

## 1.3 ESTABLISH HISTORIC MARKERS TO INCREASE AWARENESS OF THE YORKTOWN STORY

At a minimum, YCDC should seek to install flags and/or banners along utility poles and, free standing signs at major community gateways. The opportunity, however, is to expand these basic signage improvements and install historic markers that physically express the community’s history. This could include:

- > Permanent public installations with images and information (audio) about Yorktown’s history at a major gateways
- > Murals that create a public realm component of the oral history project and historic photo archives, potentially making public art opportunities out of the concrete grid walls found throughout the neighborhood. There is also an opportunity to recreate the neighborhood billboard-sign from the past that read: “If you lived in Yorktown you’d be home now”

“we need people to learn about the essence of Yorktown”



FIGURE 39: Mural Opportunities to Promote Yorktown’s History

## TWO NEIGHBORHOOD IMAGE, MARKETING, AND PROMOTION

For many living in Yorktown, the community is rich with history, a unique legacy and characteristics unlike any other Philadelphia neighborhood. For those outside of Yorktown, there is often confusion about what the community stands for, how it came about and what it is today. This plan will help to shed some light on the community for outsiders but Yorktown needs stronger cues, both physical and on-line, to improve its image, attract attention and encourage investment in line with the resident's objectives.

### 2.1 PROMOTE SCHOOLS SERVING YORKTOWN

Although there are no public, private, or charter schools that lie within Yorktown, the community has access to 15 elementary, middle, and high schools that have played important roles in educating and preparing its citizens—children, youth, and adults—for citizenship. The relatively close proximity of these and other educational resources to the community, including Temple University to the north, enhances Yorktown's attractiveness to families: young, older, and in-between. To keep that advantage, Yorktown CDC and its community partners must take it upon themselves to make that advantage more widely-known, using it to help attract new homeowners and investments to sustain its high quality of life. Among the critical action steps needed in this area are the following:

- > Market the variety of public, private and charter schools serving Yorktown as another asset and advantage of living here
- > Form special task force to assess the performance of all schools in partnership with the School District of Philadelphia to advance the theme: "investments in schools are investments in the community they serve"
- > Develop an effective working relationship with Temple University and its affiliates to enhance access by residents to the educational resources at that institution

### 2.2 UPLIFT YORKTOWN COMMUNITY STANDARDS AND RULES FOR ENGAGEMENT

Reconnecting the community to its own values of self-help and self-reliance was a theme that repeated itself from community meeting to coordinating committee meeting to focus group discussion. This sense of community was grounded in a publication developed by the pioneers of Yorktown called the Yorktown Handbook, a "covenant among neighbors to insure the future Yorktown's brightness." For current, new, and future generations of residents, it is imperative that Yorktown revisit the spirit and letter of the Covenant and use it to compliment the Master Plan and Blue Print going forward to 2015. The goals and objectives of which are to:

- > Memorialize standards and rules in the covenants homeowners originally developed
- > Use community building activities to reinforce those standards and "rules to live by"

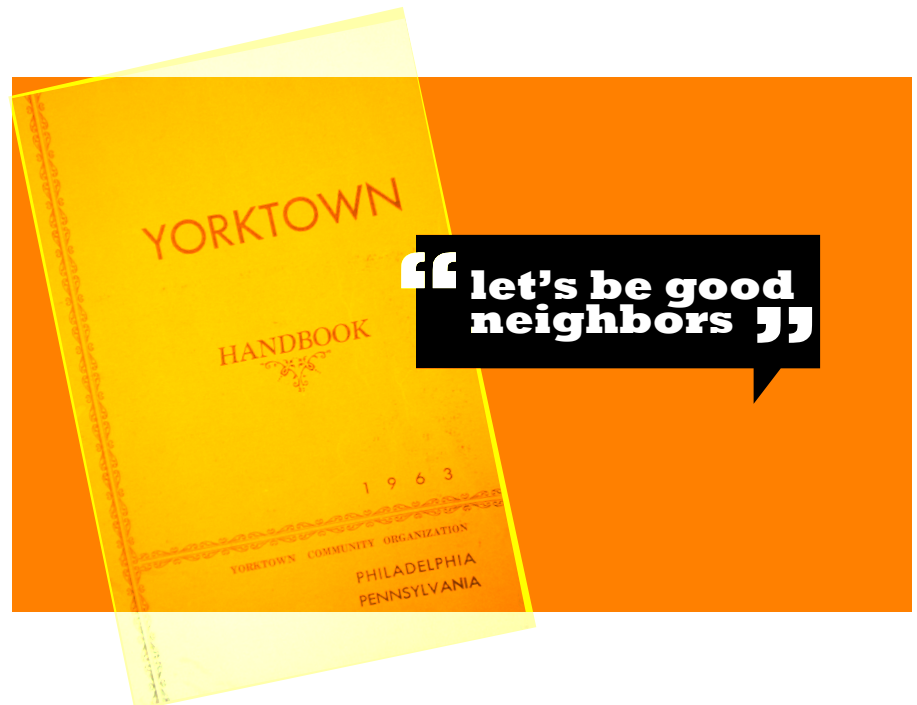






FIGURE 40: Gateway Opportunities

## YORKTOWN GATEWAYS

- approach from major streets\*
- gateways
- elevated rail underpass

\* arrows do not indicate traffic direction.

## 2.3 MAKE IMPROVEMENTS TO ENHANCE NEIGHBORHOOD GATEWAYS

Although the community's housing and block structure is unique, many of the entrances to Yorktown are underwhelming and don't convey the spirit of the neighborhood. These entrances should reflect the pride that residents have in the community. The community should prioritize gateway locations and develop plans to improve them with a range of tree plantings, gardens, signage, murals and historic markers. The primary entrances to the community include:

- > 11th and Master
- > 11th between Girard and Thompson
- > 11th and Oxford
- > 10th and Oxford
- > 10th and Cecil B. Moore
- > 12th and Oxford
- > 13th and Jefferson
- > 13th and Master
- > 13th between Girard and Thompson

While working to improve these entrances, the Yorktown CDC should also form a plan to reduce the negative visual impacts of the elevated railway east of 10th Street by improve lighting and using surface treatments to improve the transition into the neighborhood from the east.

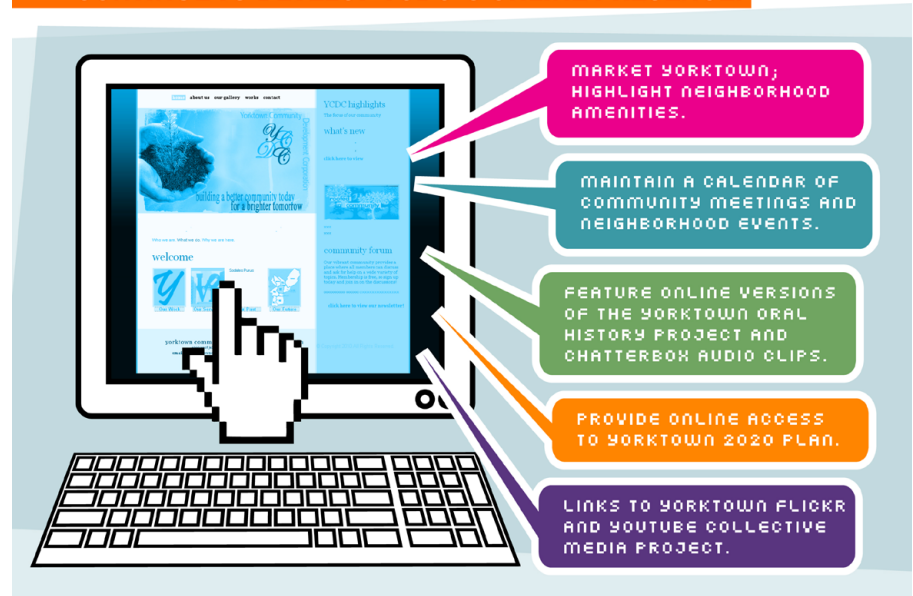
## 2.4 CONTINUE TO DEVELOP THE NEIGHBORHOOD'S ONLINE PRESENCE

65

The YCDC website was launched to help raise the awareness of CDC activities and communicate issues of concern to local residents. The YCDC should continue to expand the website's function to include:

- > Marketing Yorktown by highlighting neighborhood amenities and neighborhood improvement initiatives
- > Maintaining a calendar of community meetings and neighborhood events
- > Featuring online versions of the Yorktown Oral History Project and Chatterbox audio clips
- > Increasing awareness of Yorktown's history and importance
- > Providing online access to Yorktown 2015 Plan
- > Establishing a Yorktown Flickr and YouTube collective media project, by which residents and former residents can contribute their photos and video clips from the neighborhood throughout the years.

### > CONTINUE TO DEVELOP YCDC'S ONLINE PRESENCE.



## 66 **THREE COMMUNITY BUILDING AND EMPOWERMENT**

Yorktown has capable community organizations, active churches and involved residents. To undertake implementation of this plan and reach a lot of the goals expressed by residents, the community will need to maintain a focus on community outreach and organizing.

### **3.1 TEAM-UP FOR GREATER COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT**

Different organizations often have different roles. But there are many issues that are of concern to the YCDC, YCO, as well as local churches and other organizations. Yorktown will have more influence with one voice.

Yorktown should seek to establish a roundtable comprised of the executive officers of Yorktown-based community institutions to coordinate their organizations' priorities and serve as one unifying voice to:

- > Enhance Yorktown's image and presence
- > Encourage new investments in and adjacent to Yorktown that are equitable for community residents
- > Engage Yorktown residents and institutions to advance community values and goals

### **3.2 REINVIGORATE YORKTOWN'S BLOCK CAPTAIN SYSTEM**

To support the activities of the roundtable and ensure regular communication between residents and community leadership, the block captain system needs to be reinvigorated. The community should support YCO activities to:

- > Reaffirm all the block captains and those interested in continuing in that role
- > Organize Yorktown blocks into quadrants and designating/recruiting "captains" for each
- > Organize youth volunteers to service as captains working with adult leaders

### **3.3 SPONSOR EVENTS THAT CAN HELP BRIDGE THE GENERATIONS OF YORKTOWN**

Yorktown Day is already a very successful event that builds community pride among residents. In addition, a series of other events and activities are needed to ensure that established and new residents alike are aware of the community's history and people. Above all, all generations of the community should be encouraged to work together for the future of Yorktown.

**“There is a chasm between the older and younger generations.”**

#### **3.3.1 FORM OUTREACH TEAMS**

Effective community building comes from knowing your neighbors. “Outreach teams” should be formed to identify and recognize newer residents as well as identify who is willing to participate in community events. The idea is to extend “outreach” to “engagement”, establishing and maintaining a rapport with:

- > Newcomers through adult block captains
- > Youth through youth block captains
- > Students based on mutual respect and inviting them to be a part of versus apart from Yorktown
- > Students who may be future homeowners after they finish their degree programs

As a part of this initiative, an executive summary of the 2015 master plan should be created for inclusion in “welcome baskets” for new residents. Area businesses and merchants should also be invited to offer store discounts/coupons as part of the “welcome kits” to promote the neighborhood and their businesses.

**“It's a stable community, it's a community of people who have long-standing relationships, and because it's such a cohesive community, it's easy for them to welcome newcomers.”**



### 3.3.2 RESTORE THE BEAUTIFICATION COMMITTEE

Restore the former beautification committee by recruiting newer and older residents to work together on projects/activities such as:

- The traditional August “Yorktown Day” festival
- Seasonal holiday activities
- Annual banquets to acknowledge, recognize, and bestow awards for extraordinary service and stewardship of shared public spaces

**“I would like to see the islands become a community thing.”**

### 3.3.3 SPONSOR INTERACTIVE ACTIVITIES

Sponsor interactive activities involving newer residents, students and long-timers to:

- Design welcome baskets/kits
- Beautify courtyards
- Update historical information
- Develop board games based on Yorktown history (Yorktown version of Monopoly or Trivial Pursuit).



## WHAT UPGRADES DOES *Yorktown's* HOUSING NEED?

### EXTERIOR

- > Pent-vents located under soffits
- > Awnings
- > Siding and trim painting
- > Roofs and gutters
- > Tuck-pointing brickwork
- > Driveways and garages
- > Exterior rear and side walls
- > Front steps and foundation walls
- > Porches
- > Windows
- > Electrical power line from pole to meter to handle higher amperage into house

### YARDS

- > Tree trimming
- > Removal of dead, diseased, and “dirty/weed” trees in private yards and common spaces
- > Tuck-pointing brickwork
- > Driveways and garages

### INTERIOR

- > Basic systems
  - electrical rewiring from aluminum to copper
  - increase amperage to at least 100 from 60
  - plumbing and heating upgrades
- > Chimney cleaning
- > Insulation



## FOUR HOUSING PRESERVATION AND REINVESTMENT

“I just hope that the neighbors maintain their homes as well as we’ve done for the first 50 years.”

Yorktown is a strong community with a history of strong civic pride, ownership, and participation. From research on existing vacant properties and the conditions of local homes, this plan identifies a number of actions specific to preserving and enhancing Yorktown’s homes.

An integral aspect to sustainable housing in the community is the resources available to local residents. As such, this plan addresses the need to encourage a new generation of owner-occupants as well as ‘resident-investors’ to facilitate residents’ ability to acquire, improve, rent and manage properties that come on the market to keep ownership in Yorktown to the extent feasible and possible.

### 4.1 ENCOURAGE PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE AND UPKEEP (HOUSE AND YARD)

Surveys and community meetings revealed resident concerns about the conditions of the housing stock and homeowners’ ability to maintain their aging structures. The following recommendations are intended to establish a baseline of preventive maintenance for homeowners and property owners.

#### 4.1.1 MAINTAIN EXTERIORS AND YARDS

YCDC should assist property owners to attend to exterior improvements to demonstrate renewed pride, including repairing, replacing, or upgrading:

- > pent-vents underneath soffits for improved ventilation
- > porches, awnings, siding and trim
- > windows, roofs and gutters
- > tuck-pointing brickwork
- > driveways and garages

- > cracked and crumbling walls, front steps and foundation walls due to settling on, with focus on:
  - 1300 block of 12th street (east side of block has 7+/- homes with this problem)
  - 1000 block of Oxford
- > heavier power lines from pole to meter to handle higher amperage into house
- > dead, diseased, and “dirty/weed” trees in yards and common spaces

YCDC should reach out to three organizations that may provide examples of how to coordinate and organize in some of these areas of work:

- > YouthBuild Charter School, located at Broad and Thompson, to explore the possibility of involving youth working with the community and making this part of the school curriculum by serving Yorktown as part of the nation’s Make a Difference Day and potentially on an ongoing basis. This relationship could be a way to involve Yorktown youth and City Year of Philadelphia which has partnered with other Philadelphia communities to neighborhood projects.
- > ACE Mentor Program introduces high school students to careers in architecture, construction, and engineering in a program that trains youth in home repairs and construction.
- > Francisville Neighborhood Development Corporation may have a business model addressing landscaping that should also be looked into to help with home maintenance.

#### 4.1.2 MAINTAIN INTERIORS

Attend to basic systems and upgrades for:

- > electrical rewiring from aluminum to copper and increases to 100 amperage from 60
- > plumbing and heating upgrades
- > chimney cleaning
- > insulation/weatherization/energy conservation



## 70 4.1.3 ENCOURAGE COORDINATION IN IDENTIFYING REPUTABLE CONTRACTORS

Residents wanting to make repairs/improvements will need help identifying reputable contractors in Yorktown and surrounding communities and soliciting bids as part of a larger package of potential jobs to obtain lower costs based on contractors winning multiple versus single jobs. This will require organization and coordination to facilitate competitive bids for different types of work and training and helping residents to work together and solicit contractors.

- > Form resident “collaborative” to solicit bids as part of a larger package of potential jobs to obtain lower costs.
- > Link with the Youth Build Charter School at Broad and Thompson to involve youth in making this part of the school curriculum and serving the community.

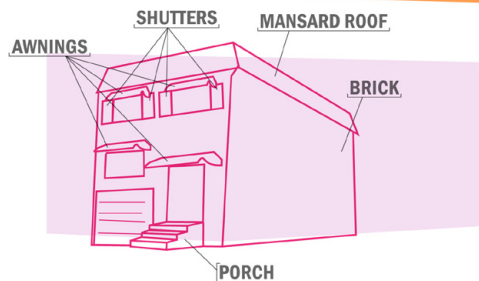
### WHAT MAKES A Yorktown HOUSE A Yorktown HOUSE?



TYPICAL YORKTOWN CORRUGATED PLEXIGLASS AWNINGS



TYPICAL YORKTOWN MANSARD ASPHALT SHINGLE ROOF



HOW CAN WE PRESERVE THE DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS OF YORKTOWN HOUSING WHILE MAKING RESIDENCES GREENER?

MORE ACCESSIBLE?



## 4.1.4 ESTABLISH HOUSING IMPROVEMENT DESIGN GUIDELINES

All repairs should be made to respect the character of the local community. At the same time, there are opportunities to update Yorktown’s homes to be greener thus saving resident’s money on their utility bills and home improvement costs. A simple, one page graphic of a Yorktown home should be created that illustrates the range of materials and improvements that would add value to the community. YCDC should also contract with an architect to evaluate the feasibility of adapting Yorktown homes to enable seniors to age in place and live independently longer. As bedrooms are typically on the upper floors of Yorktown homes, reconfiguring first floor space for living or motorized lifts would be needed.

## 4.2 CONNECT RESIDENTS TO FINANCIAL RESOURCES AND PROTECT LOCAL EQUITY

Many residents require assistance to maintain their properties going forward. At the same time, there are many potential resources available that may be of help to the community. YCDC can play a key role in connecting resident needs with potential funding assistance.

### 4.2.1 TARGET HOUSING PROGRAMS WITH BROADER INCOME ELIGIBILITY

Access City’s housing programs that have broader income-eligibility requirements to support from residents with incomes at or below 80% of area median income to those with incomes from 80% up to 120% or higher depending on the program:

- > Philadelphia Home Improvement Loan Program whose maximum income guidelines are approximately \$63,000 for a one-person household up to \$90,000 for a four-person household (for a 3% interest rate loan); there are no income limits for the 5% interest rate loan). More information is available at: [www.philaloan.com](http://www.philaloan.com)
- > PHDC’s Adaptive Modifications Program provides free adaptations to homes for residents with permanent disabilities enabling them to live more independently; maximum incomes for eligibility are from \$27,800 for one-person up to \$39,000 for a four-person household. PHDC’s Weatherization and Basic Systems Programs can be reached at 215.448.2160.
- > City’s Mini-PHIL Home Improvement Loan program helps homeowners make energy conservation improvements, emergency repairs or to do small projects; terms include:
  - borrow up to \$10,000

- terms up to 10 years and fixed interest rate
- no bank fees and free inspection of completed work
- > City's PHIL-Plus Home Improvement Loan program helps homeowners obtain the money needed to do large repairs or to make big improvements; terms include:
  - borrow up to \$25,000
  - terms up to 20 years
  - no bank fees and free inspection of completed work
- > Mini- and Plus loan provided by Citizens Bank, TD Commerce Bank, PNC Bank and United Bank of Philadelphia.

In addition to these programs, the YCDC should use this strategic plan to solicit funds from private institutions that may serve as a match for home improvement loans or direct out-of-pocket expenditures by households unable to qualify for government-sponsored programs.

#### **4.2.2 CONNECT RESIDENTS WITH FINANCIAL AND ASSISTANCE AND GUIDANCE FOR WEATHERIZATION AND EFFICIENCY UPGRADES**

YCDC should coordinate with organizations like PGW and the Energy Coordinating Agency to ensure that Yorktown residents are aware of, and can potentially access, these programs. Programs include:

- > PGW's Low-Income Residential Retrofit Program (starting in 2011) for air-sealing; attic/wall insulation; high-efficiency windows; high-efficiency furnaces.  
www.pgworks.com
- > PGW's Premium Efficiency Gas Appliances Rebates (starting 2011) for high-efficiency clothes washers, space- and water-heating equipment.  
www.pgworks.com
- > Energy Coordinating Agency's Energy Works Program for weatherization workshops which can be co-sponsored by YCDC and for facilitate rebates, low interest loans and referrals to certified energy auditors.  
www.ecasavesenergy.org

#### **4.2.3 PROTECT THE VALUE OF YORKTOWN HOMES**

Launch a "Protect Your Equity/Grow Your Equity" community service campaign enlisting support from agencies providing technical support in the areas of:

- > Untangling tangled titles (Regional Housing Legal Services)

- > Estate planning (Community Legal Services)
- > Financial and foreclosure prevention counseling (City's Housing Counseling Agencies)

YCDC should supplement this campaign with reference materials and workshops for residents.

### **4.3 MANAGE CHANGE IN YORKTOWN'S HOUSING MARKET**

#### **4.3.1 ESTABLISH GUIDELINES FOR A HARMONIOUS RENTAL/HOME OWNERSHIP RELATIONSHIP**

YCDC and their partners should reach out to landlords and students renting units to encourage:

- > Code of conduct, ethics and care in keeping their property in good repair
- > Respectful and courteous behavior as neighbors
- > Participation in community building activities that contribute to Yorktown's stability

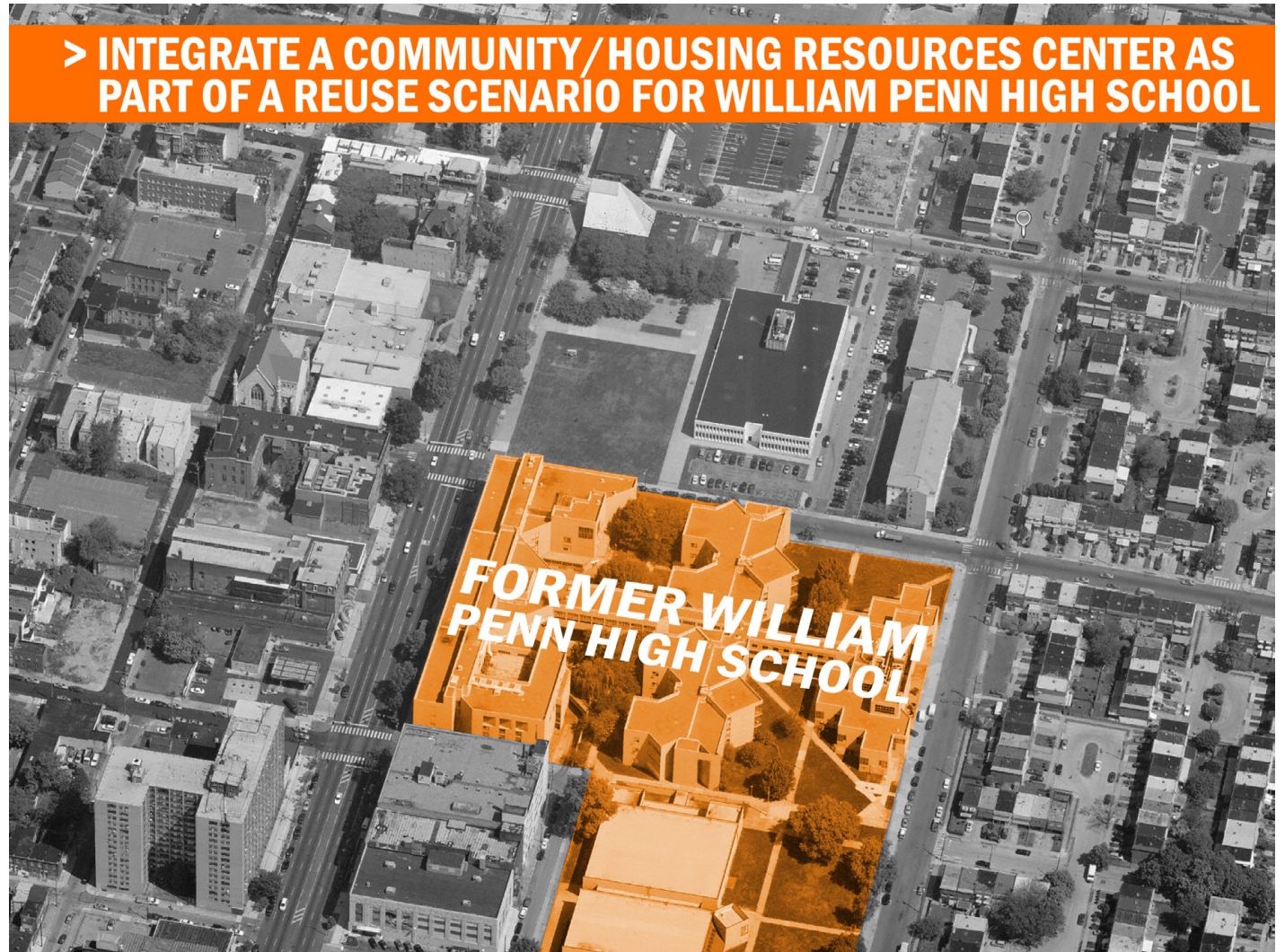
For those landlords who are not reinvesting in their Yorktown properties and whose tenants are disruptive, YCDC should work with L&I and the City to enforce health, safety, building and behavior codes to ensure compliance.

#### **4.3.2 PROMOTE LOCAL REAL ESTATE TO LOCAL RESIDENTS**

The community should recognize that some realtors representing homes for sale in Yorktown market them as investment properties for rent to students. This should be counteracted by ratcheting-up the promotion of homes within Yorktown to encourage doubled-up families to consider buying homes before or when they come on the open market.

**“We have to make sure that landlords are held accountable for their properties.”**

**> INTEGRATE A COMMUNITY/HOUSING RESOURCES CENTER AS  
PART OF A REUSE SCENARIO FOR WILLIAM PENN HIGH SCHOOL**



Yorktown community members are advocating that the reuse of the former William Penn High School facility include space dedicated to community-oriented services, programs, and priorities as part of the overall program.



### 4.3.3 WORK TO CREATE A COMMUNITY AND HOUSING RESOURCE CENTER

To complement the adaptive reuse of the now shuttered William Penn High School facility, YCDC should advocate for a community and housing resource center within this larger space (or within a new facility if the existing one is slated to be demolished) to house community-oriented services and programs for the Yorktown community and the surrounding neighborhoods. These programs should include:

- > Homebuyer training, home repair, finance and foreclosure prevention programs
- > Budgeting, financial literacy, estate planning, and tangled-title services
- > Community meeting space and office space for YCDC, YCO and other organizations in and adjacent to Yorktown
- > Recreation and open space for all residents

### 4.3.4 CO-SPONSOR FINANCIAL SEMINARS

Sponsor educational workshops for homeowners and renters on housing finance. Based on the results of resident surveys, Yorktown homeowners would consider buying properties that come on the market in Yorktown as non-absentee-owned investment properties; some are not sure how to begin such a process and others had not considered but might. Yorktown renters surveyed would consider buying a home in Yorktown but are also unsure about how to begin such a process or had not considered but might.

Approach local banks already vested in Yorktown and participating in the Philadelphia Home Improvement Loan and PHIL-Loan Programs to co-sponsor financing seminars for:

- > Homeowners who would consider buying other properties that come on the market in Yorktown as non-absent-owned investments.
- > Renters surveyed who would consider buying a home in Yorktown.
- > Reach out to Citizens Bank, TD Commerce Bank, PNC Bank and United Bank of Philadelphia, and Bank of America to discuss what role they can play in providing credit.

### 4.4 KEEP TABS ON ZONING CHANGES AND BUILDING CODE ENFORCEMENT

73

Zoning and code enforcement are regular issues that community groups typically play a strong role in guiding. Given recent changes in and around the community, it is important for the YCDC and the YCO to together play an active and coordinated role in local zoning issues.

- > Provide a public forum for an ongoing dialogue about public realm issues, concerns regarding development, and other issues relevant to urban planning and design and zoning.
- > Create a Task Force Group that can represent Yorktown in the Philadelphia 2035 Planning Process and its Citizens Planning Institute, as well as participate in the City's Strategic District Plan Process.
- > Continue to monitor the impact of institutional planning, institutional and private housing, commercial and retail development plans for the neighborhood.
- > Consider forming a zoning variance approvals process committee to review proposed developments in the neighborhood that do not conform with the zoning. NOTE: the role of community organizations in the ZBA's process will likely change in the next few years as a part of the PCPC's zoning reform process.
- > Act as a community liaison to City 3-1-1 reporting; follow up on code violation and public realm issues and health, safety, building and behavior codes and zoning ordinances to ensure compliance.

## 74 **FIVE ENVIRONMENTAL & QUALITY OF LIFE IMPROVEMENTS**

### 5.1 ENSURE NEIGHBORHOOD SAFETY AND SECURITY

“Safety” was the fourth most liked thing and the least liked thing identified in the community survey. While many believe the community is an oasis in North Philadelphia, others feel it could be safer and have concerns about nearby activities. These recommendations are targeted toward improving the real and perceived safety in and around the community.

#### 5.1.1 IMPROVE NIGHT VISIBILITY

Improving lighting on Yorktown’s streets and in its shared spaces will make the neighborhood feel safer. The following strategies to improve night visibility should be considered.

##### > RESIDENT-ASSISTED PORCH LIGHT INITIATIVE

Most Yorktown houses have pedestrian scale lamps in the front yard or at the sidewalk edge, but many of them are broken or otherwise not lit at night. The CDC should undertake an awareness campaign to get residents to keep the lamps on, whether that means repairing or replacing the lamps themselves, or is simply just a matter of replacing bulbs when necessary. Other community-based non-profits in Philadelphia have secured grant funding to assist residents in paying for lighting upgrades, which is another potential solution the CDC should also consider.

##### > TARGETED STREET LIGHTING UPGRADES

The CDC should work with the City, Temple University, and other partners to install pedestrian-scale lighting in underserved target areas including courtyards and breezeways, street areas that have no active frontage from adjacent homes or other uses, schools, and park spaces. The existing City street lights require frequent maintenance but also do not provide optimal light levels for streets and sidewalks. As wholesale replacement of these lights is cost prohibitive, options for incrementally upgrading fixtures with Light-Emitting Diode (LED) street lamps should be evaluated. This improvement would reduce the frequency with which bulbs would need to be replaced. The advantage of LED bulbs is that they typically last up to 15 years—about five times longer than standard high pressure sodium bulbs. LED lighting is also a brighter alternative; can be engineered to highlight the sidewalk, thus reducing light pollution in the sky; and greatly reduces maintenance costs. While upgrading fixtures to LED will require an upfront investment, those costs can be recouped from energy savings alone well within the life span of an LED fixture.

#### 5.1.2 TAKE ACTION ON NEIGHBORHOOD CRIME ISSUES

##### > ADDRESS TROUBLE SPOTS

The crime maps generated in the existing conditions analysis phase of the neighborhood plan revealed a few concentrations of criminal activity. Working with local law enforcement officers, the CDC should ensure that these areas are monitored more closely.

#### UC BRITE

The UC BRITE program provided matching funds for property owners around the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia to purchase and install exterior lighting. The popular program offered assistance to 114 property owners on 58 blocks in the University City area contributing to a significant improvement in street lighting. The program was started in the late 1990s as a collaboration between the energy company and the University of Pennsylvania to improve safety in the neighborhood, and later handed over to the University City District, the area’s special services district.

[http://www.universitycity.org/ucd\\_programs/neighborhood\\_initiatives/planning](http://www.universitycity.org/ucd_programs/neighborhood_initiatives/planning)

#### SAN ANTONIO PLUG PROGRAM

The City of San Antonio introduced the Place Light Upon Graffiti [PLUG] program in early 2010. The anti-graffiti program allowed residents and business owners in heavily-tagged areas to apply for solar-powered, motion-activated lights that would likely scare away vandals. The program was administered through the City’s Housing and Neighborhood Services Graffiti Abatement Program with national anti-graffiti grant funding and additional funds from the City and utility and transit agencies.

<http://www.sanantonio.gov/news/NewsReleases/nrPLUG.asp>



- > **MOBILIZE RESIDENTS TO KEEP AN EYE ON THE NEIGHBORHOOD**  
A local block watch is a common tool utilized by neighborhoods to significantly help deter crime and foster community involvement. The YCDC can play a role in helping to get these block watch groups started. Of immediate importance is to help organize block watches where there are interested and engaged residents as well as where crime, both real and perceived, is an issue. The analysis of crime data indicated that hotspots for major crimes coincide fairly closely to the intersections where residents indicated there are continual problems often tied to business along Girard Avenue or Broad Street. Block watch groups should target these intersections. YCDC and its partners should reach out to nearby residents, explain the concept, enlist support and connect interested block watch participants with the local police who patrol the area. T-shirts, window signs and flyers should be created to raise the awareness of block watch groups.



## 5.2 ENHANCE SHARED SPACES AND THE PUBLIC REALM

75

One of Yorktown's most unique features is its public space. Unlike other Philadelphia neighborhoods, Yorktown is fitted with an array of small open spaces and greenery that should be protected and enhanced.

### 5.2.1 MAKE A CLEAN SWEEP OF YORKTOWN'S STREETS

- > **AFFIRM THE CITY'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR MAINTENANCE AND UPKEEP OF YORKTOWN COMMON AREAS**  
Due to the unique public spaces in Yorktown, there has been some confusion as to who is responsible for maintenance and what is in the public right-of-way. The Yorktown CDC and their partners should work to negotiate a joint operating agreement/memoranda of understanding between the City and Yorktown for:
- Maintenance and upkeep (mow/snow, tree trimming/removal)
  - Routine and non-routine repairs
  - Plantings and cultivating and
  - Legal liabilities.
- > **ADVOCATE FOR SOLAR TRASH CANS AND RECYCLING BINS**  
Some neighborhood locations are likely to accumulate more trash than others. Bus stops and areas with higher pedestrian traffic, for instance, tend to fall victim to much more frequent littering than other areas. The CDC should work with the community to identify priority locations that would benefit from solar trash cans. While a greater initial expense, solar self-compacting trash cans would reduce maintenance costs over time and should be considered for major streets and high foot traffic areas in Yorktown. An additional benefit of solar trash cans is the positive impact they have on the image of the neighborhood. With target areas identified, the CDC should create partnerships with the City and Temple University to secure funding for increasing the number of City-managed trash receptacles at priority locations.
- > **ENCOURAGE RESIDENTS TO ADOPT A BASKET**  
The Philadelphia Streets Department allows individuals to request public trash cans, provided they are willing to take care of it by ensuring that trash bags are removed on trash day and placed on the curb for pick-up. Trash can adopters would also be responsible for re-lining the cans with plastic bags after trash pick-up. Though it places a small cost and labor burden on community members, the benefit of having cleaner sidewalks in Yorktown brings with it many other benefits, including improved neighborhood image and greater community pride.



**76 >** INCREASE RESIDENT AWARENESS OF THE RECYCLEBANK PROGRAM  
In early 2010, the City of Philadelphia began phasing in the RecycleBank Program in the city's neighborhoods. RecycleBank is a weekly residential recycling service that is not only free, it gives customers incentives for recycling, including coupons for local retailers and commercial services. The CDC should launch an awareness campaign to ensure that Yorktown residents are taking advantage of this new service.

- > LAUNCH A NEIGHBORHOOD CLEAN-UP CAMPAIGN**  
A number of initiatives could be taken on as components of a neighborhood clean-up campaign, including:
- Discouraging residents from keeping their trash cans on the front porch and fronts yards
  - Restoring “self-governance” as a mechanism for reestablishing neighborhood pride in home maintenance and in stewardship of the community as a whole
  - Using internal media to press the issue
  - Engaging Temple Volunteers through Temple University’s Office of Community Service, as well as Temple students living in the neighborhood, to work with/on the Beautification Committee



## 5.2.2 TRANSFORM NEIGHBORHOOD SHARED SPACES

Yorktown’s network of cul-de-sacs, courtyards, breezeways, and “green” strips are great assets to the community but many have fallen into disrepair. Central to the idea of improving the neighborhood by strengthening its unique characteristics, revitalizing Yorktown’s shared spaces will also be a critical component of attracting young families to buy homes in the neighborhood. These defining elements of the public realm have great potential as spaces for young children to play within earshot of home, as spaces for passive recreation and neighborly socialization, and as major opportunities to improve stormwater management in Yorktown by diverting runoff from storm drains into rain gardens and tree trenches. Yorktown 2015 provided a timely opportunity to engage the community in discussions about the future of these spaces and, with the community’s support and guidance, some initial conceptual groundwork was laid for the revitalization of these spaces. The planning team shared conceptual renderings and general redesign principles regarding the reconfiguration of these spaces with the community in an open and productive communication that the CDC and its eventual implementation partners are expected to continue by keeping residents involved throughout the design process.

### > REVITALIZE YORKTOWN’S COURTYARDS

Long-time Yorktown residents remember the neighborhood’s six courtyards as pleasant neighborhood gathering spaces with benches, maintained planted areas, trees, and other amenities that were integral to the social landscape of Yorktown. Sadly, residents who have moved more recently to Yorktown don’t share these memories of the courtyards and may think of them as nothing more than slabs of crumbled and cracked concrete as children and neighbors no longer use them for playing or socializing. Discussions with the community as a part of the Yorktown 2015 public engagement process revealed the community’s profound sense of loss over the deterioration of these public spaces, as well as its deep hope and optimism that these spaces can be reclaimed as assets to the neighborhood, restoring them as contributing elements of the pride of place that persists in Yorktown.

Many residents have taken some burden of courtyard upkeep upon themselves, but many of the courtyards have eroded to such a degree that their needs surpass the resources and capacity of neighbors’ do-it-yourself improvements. It was decided as a part of the Yorktown 2015 neighborhood plan that the time has come for the community to take action on the issue of the courtyards by pursuing resources

Guilford/Kings Courtyard



Dondill/Betsy Ross Courtyard



Kings/Lafayette Courtyard



Patrick Henry Courtyard



for revitalization and forming implementation partnerships with other entities who have an interest in preserving the value of Yorktown as a strong neighborhood. This will require not only outside resources, but will require the productive coordination and cooperation of leadership within the neighborhood to see the initiative through.

The idea of restoring Yorktown's courtyards isn't a new one. Many neighbors brought their many ideas for improving these spaces to public meetings held as a part of the Yorktown 2015 planning process and others recorded their thoughts about the courtyards' potential in the Chatterbox audio recording booth. As passive recreation spaces serving the current majority demographic, the discussions centered on replacing the broken concrete surfaces, removing problem trees, increasing tree shade and planted areas, adding benches, and installing pedestrian-scale lighting. Some of the courtyard transformations could also include tot lots and spaces designed for play, which would help attract more families with young children to the neighborhood.

At present, most of the courtyards are entirely impervious, generating additional stormwater runoff instead of acting as opportunities to absorb runoff. Yorktown's courtyards present great opportunity sites for the Philadelphia Water Department's Green City, Clean Waters program (in partnership with Fairmount Park, PennFuture, and the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society). While the initiative's main purpose is to upgrade stormwater management infrastructure, the objectives of "greening the City as a means to provide specific benefits to the residents of the City of Philadelphia while meeting ecological restoration goals" are on equal footing. The idea of creating natural stormwater management infrastructure while restoring the neighborhood's neglected public spaces as urban pocket parks fits both the PWD's and the Yorktown community's purposes in a seemingly mutually beneficial match between implementation resources and community

needs. The Yorktown community's leadership should continue to work with the PWD in securing the necessary implementation resources and partnerships and in developing detailed plans for the revitalization of these spaces with the continued involvement of Yorktown residents.

While the courtyards are currently elevated from the street level by the height of the curb, the possibility of lowering the courtyard surface to make it contiguous with the street surface would allow runoff from the uphill cul-de-sac to flow into the courtyard area. Creating tree pits and infiltration beds tied to the adjacent cul-de-sac storm drains both in the courtyard areas and along the edges of the cul-de-sacs would establish an integrated block-interior system of stormwater management. Bollards, street trees, pedestrian-scale lighting, and site furnishings such as benches could be used to distinguish the cul-de-sac driveway from the courtyard, and to keep cars out.

All six of Yorktown's courtyards are in need of revitalization, but in light of the reality of limited resources for investments, residents were asked which courtyards should be considered priorities for improvement. Residents identified the Betsy Ross and Dondill courtyard as the top priority, given the extremely deteriorated condition of the concrete surface, which poses a public safety hazard and limits its utility as a public space. The Patrick Henry courtyard was identified because of the presence of very large trees whose branches are interfering with overhead utility lines, an issue that could be addressed immediately as a short-term action separate from any potential comprehensive revitalization effort. Additionally, the community noted frequent flooding at the intersection of 11th and Jefferson during rains. It is quite possible that this is partially the result of large volumes of runoff generated by the three expansive parking lots located uphill from that intersection, located between Oxford and Cecil B. Moore and 11th and 13th Streets. Creating a block-interior system of stormwater





**FIGURE 41:** Proposed Improvements to cul-de-sacs



Stormwater runoff commonly pools around the edges of cul-de-sac circles after a rain. Properly reconfigured, the circles could become an integral part of a natural stormwater management system in Yorktown.

management at the Queens and Guilford courtyard and cul-de-sacs could help mitigate stormwater flows and prevent intersection flooding.

#### > RETROFIT CUL-DE-SACS AND CIRCLES

At the center of each cul-de-sac in Yorktown is a raised area the neighborhood calls a “circle.” The circles come in a variety of shapes and sizes; some paved, some planted. Likewise, some circles have been exquisitely maintained by neighboring residents, creating an attractive centerpiece to the ring of houses fronting on it, while others have been allowed to deteriorate, imposing an eyesore of dead trees and cracked and warped pavement on the viewshed of houses nearby. While some of these circles are living up to the visual and aesthetic potential that they bring to Yorktown’s cul-de-sacs, none of them are living up to their potential as opportunities for natural infiltration of stormwater and diversion of street runoff back into the natural water cycle. As a part of a design reconfiguration coordinated with the revitalization of Yorktown’s courtyards, the Circles can be part of a block-interior stormwater management system.



Similar to the idea of bringing the courtyard down to street level to allow stormwater flows into the courtyard area, removing the curb of each circle and re-establishing a central planted area slightly below grade instead of above grade would allow stormwater to flow into the circle. Using the circle as an opportunity to create a rain garden would allow them to become a part of the proposed stormwater management system. In some cases, the cul-de-sac surface is already naturally slopes inward, toward the central circle, but in others, the street rises slightly as it approaches the center. Targeting a 2% grade decline toward the center circle would ensure that stormwater flows inward instead of outward.

Proposed improvements to the cul-de-sac entrances include creating a continuous sidewalk surface across the street with a speed table/raised crosswalk both to improve pedestrian accessibility and discourage non-residents from parking in the cul-de-sacs, which are intended for use as residential parking areas. For cul-de-sacs with entrances located on the north side, these raised crosswalks can be designed to allow stormwater runoff from the adjacent cross street

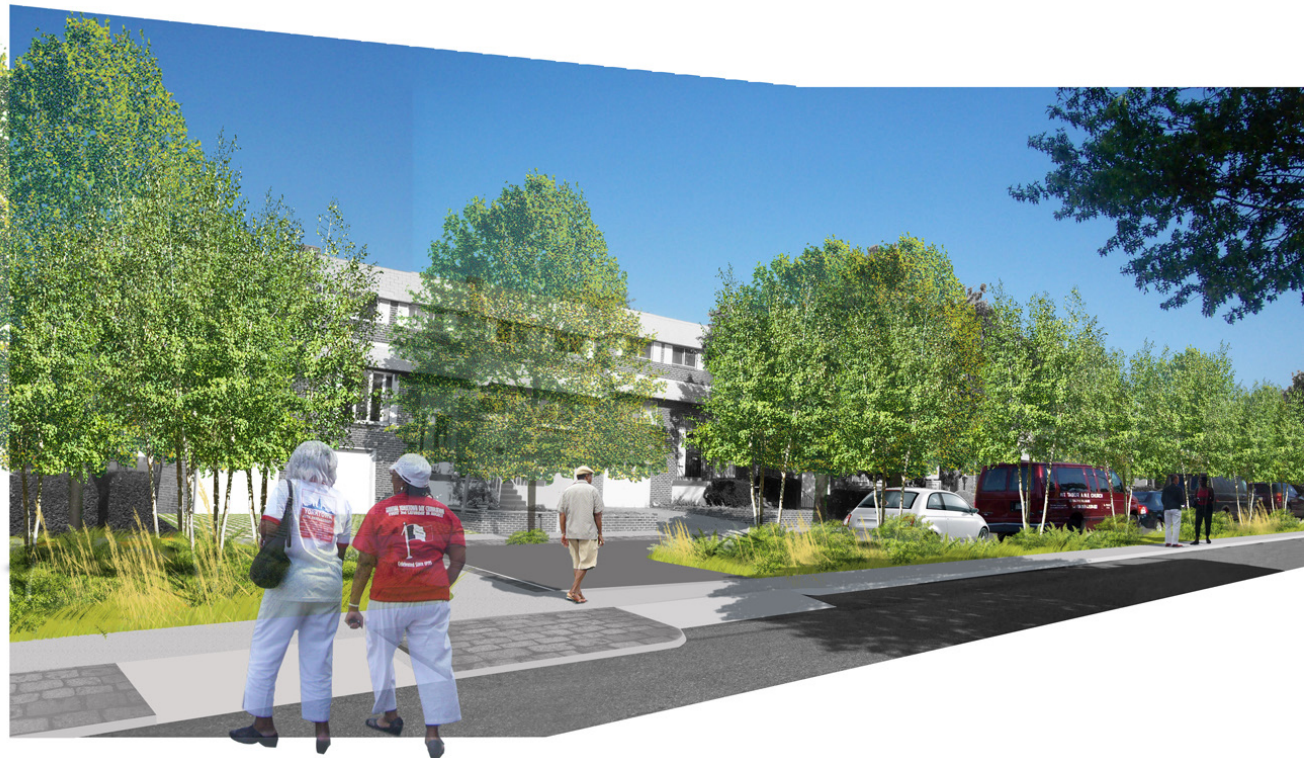
to flow under the sidewalk, allowing the block-interior system of stormwater management to absorb runoff from adjacent streets.

Further design development should be coordinated with the PWD and other implementation partners. In the meantime, short-term concerns regarding the circles should be addressed, including the removal of hazardous trees and the proper pruning of trees whose branches are interfering with overhead utility lines. Ideally, the reconfigured circles would allow for new tree plantings, but with design considerations made to avoid conflicts with utility lines.

#### > GREEN THE “GREEN” STRIPS

The Yorktown community’s nickname for the long raised curb areas found throughout the neighborhood are a bit of a misnomer. There isn’t much “green” to be found on them, aside from weeds growing up through the cracks. At present, most of these long concrete strips aren’t quite wide enough for plantings, let alone a legitimate sidewalk. However, in some places the adjacent roadways are wide enough to accommodate a slight widening of the “green” strips. This would allow

**FIGURE 42:** Proposed Improvements to ‘Green’ Strips



the provision of a sidewalk as well as opportunities for adjacent tree pits and planted areas. Similar to the cul-de-sac entrances, the entrances to the driveways adjacent to these “green” strips could be fitted with raised crosswalks to improve pedestrian accessibility, as further described in section 5.3.2. The “green” strips and adjacent areas are also opportunities for stormwater management improvements including tree trenches, infiltration beds, and rain gardens.

> **CREATE A PLAN FOR SHARED SPACE MAINTENANCE**

During the Yorktown 2015 planning process, neighbors expressed some concern over the question of ongoing maintenance of these shared spaces, specifically, who will take responsibility over the maintenance of the trees and planted areas in the revitalized courtyards, cul-de-sacs, and “green” strips. While many of Yorktown’s residents have demonstrated great capacity to care for and improve many of these spaces, a shared responsibility arrangement is desired by the community and would likely prove to be more sustainable and effective in the long run. As these spaces are owned by the City, it should follow that the City can be expected to play some role in their upkeep. Yorktown leadership should pursue resources and maintenance support from the City to ensure they are maintained. In addition to leveraging available City resources for ongoing maintenance, a number of additional approaches should be considered:

- Link with the Youth Build Charter School at Broad and Thompson to involve youth in making this part of the school curriculum and serving the community. The ACE program trains youth in area of home repairs/construction and the Francisville Neighborhood Development Corporation may have a business model around landscaping that should be looked into that might provide some examples of how to coordinate/organize in this area of work.
- Approach Temple University’s Office of Community Service to discuss the possibility of engaging Temple Volunteers in some part of ongoing maintenance of Yorktown’s shared spaces.
- Discuss the concern of ongoing maintenance with PWD (if they become an implementation partner) to make sure involved parties have an understanding of expected roles.
- The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society’s Tree Tenders program and other initiatives may be able to provide volunteer resources and training for the ongoing maintenance of trees.



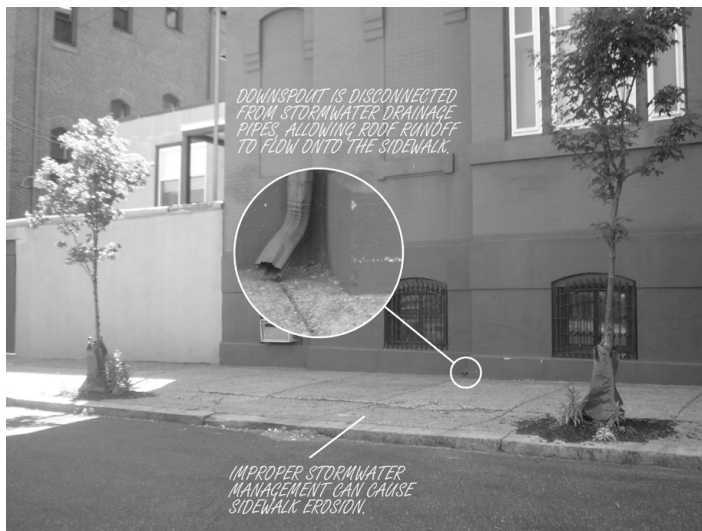


### 5.2.3 IMPROVE STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

Yorktown community members identified street flooding problem areas at Guilford Place on Jefferson Street, between 11th and 12th Streets and the northwest corner of 13th and Master. Flooding was additionally observed in many of Yorktown's cul-de-sacs and the northwest corner of 13th and Jefferson. If implemented, the proposed reconfigurations of Yorktown's shared spaces have the potential to greatly improve stormwater management in the neighborhood. However, if other solutions must be found, the CDC should advocate and pursue other resources to address these problems. In addition to rallying for longer-term reconstruction projects, there are a few short-term initiatives CDC can take on to work towards the goal of improved stormwater management in Yorktown:

- > Set up workshops to educate residents about why stormwater management should be important to them and about D.I.Y. methods of improving stormwater at home

- > Distribute the Office of Watersheds' pamphlet, "A Homeowner's Guide to Stormwater Management"
- > Partner with the Philadelphia Water Department's Office of Watersheds to hold a rain barrel workshop in Yorktown.
- > Make highly visible small-scale demonstration projects in the neighborhood to inspire the community. For instance, some homes and other buildings were observed to have downspouts that are disconnected from drain pipes, allowing rain water to flow freely out onto the sidewalk, creating flooding issues and limiting sidewalk accessibility, as well as causing damage to sidewalks over time. Buildings with downspouts in front can direct stormwater down driveways or sidewalks along narrow runnels into rain gardens at the edge of sidewalk.



**FIGURE 43:** Sidewalk Stormwater Collection





**LARGE TREES****WHITE ASH***Fraxinus americana***GREEN ASH***Fraxinus pennsylvanica***KATSURATREE***Cercidiphyllum japonicum***HARDY RUBBER TREE***Eucommia ulmoides***GREEN MOUNTAIN SUGAR MAPLE**  
*Acer saccharum "Green Mountain"***SWEET GUM***Liquidambar styraciflua***RED MAPLE***Acer rubrum***LACEBARK ELM***Ulmus parvifolia***THORNLESS HONEYLOCUST***Gleditsia triacanthos var. inermis***AMERICAN HOPHORNBEAM***Ostrya virginiana***SMALL TREES****EASTERN REDBUD***Cercis canadensis***SHADBLOW SERVICEBERRY***Amelanchier canadensis***FLOWERING DOGWOOD***Cornus florida***KOUSA DOGWOOD***Cornus kousa***COMMON SMOKETREE***Cotinus coggygria***PANICLED GOLDENRAINTREE***Koelreuteria paniculata***SAUCER MAGNOLIA***Magnolia x soulangiana***STAR MAGNOLIA***Magnolia stellata***AMERICAN HORNBEAM***Carpinus caroliniana***PAPERBARK MAPLE***Acer griseum***FIGURE 44:** Yorktown Tree Planting Palette

### 5.2.4 INCREASE YORKTOWN'S TREE COVER

Taking action to increase Yorktown's tree cover would bring a number of quality of life, public realm, and environmental benefits, not to mention that planting street trees is known to have a significantly positive impact on home values, a fact that homeowners should be made aware of in order to counteract anti-tree sentiments heard during the planning process. An expanded urban forest has the potential to improve stormwater management, helping to mitigate flooding on neighborhood streets, sidewalks, and public spaces. Getting a little more green on the streets would also help to reduce the urban heat island effect, significantly reducing costs of cooling buildings throughout the neighborhood and making Yorktown's shared spaces more enjoyable on hot days.

Yorktown's tree cover percentage, 9%, falls short of the City-wide percentage of 15.7%. However, the layout of Yorktown's streets and shared spaces leaves plenty of opportunity for improvement, making the neighborhood one of the few in Philadelphia that could conceivably come close to reaching the 30% tree cover goal of the City's GreenWorks Plan. The following strategies to increase the Yorktown's tree canopy should be taken into consideration:

#### > LINK UP WITH TREETENDERS

The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's TreeTenders program offers resident training on proper tree planting and maintenance. PHS has recently been working with members of the Yorktown community, and it is hoped that a productive partnership will continue as the community makes efforts to establish a healthy urban forest in Yorktown.

#### > UNDERTAKE A TREE SURVEY

Many trees in the neighborhood were found to be in very poor health or dead, creating the threat of dangerous falling branches. Also, Yorktown residents complain of invasive "weed trees" that should be kept at bay to improve the neighborhood's tree population. The CDC should consider hiring a professional arborist to conduct a tree inventory, including a survey of tree health, and identify priority removals and maintenance issues that should be dealt with in the short term.

#### > IDENTIFY THE RIGHT TREE SPECIES

Residents expressed concern over destruction to sidewalks caused by tree roots. In an effort to avoid this problem in the future, issues with existing trees such as this should be taken into consideration when street tree species are selected and tree pits are being cut into the sidewalk. Not all tree species have root structures that are

well-suited for sidewalk tree pits. Likewise, choosing street trees that are too big for the amount of space available will cause problems. At the same time, street trees with extensive canopies bring the most environmental and image-making benefits. It's important that the neighborhood find a palette of street trees that serves its purposes. The neighborhood should work with PHS and/or a professional arborist to come up with a list of acceptable street tree species, given these important considerations. Also, tree plantings efforts in the neighborhood should explore the possibility of taking advantage of modern tree pit design elements such as tree root barriers to prevent undesirable root spread.

#### > FOLLOW A TREE PLANTING SCENARIO

The Yorktown 2015 plan provided the opportunity to determine a tree planting scenario that represents the estimated maximum capacity of Yorktown's streets, as well as identify short-term and priority planting areas.

In the tree planting scenario, smaller trees (such as Serviceberry, Eastern Redbud, Star Magnolia, Flowering Dogwood, Kousa Dogwood, and Smoketree) with a maximum height of 20 feet were planned for planting locations under utility lines. For potential tree planting locations that do not have utility lines or other obstacles constraining growth, larger shade trees with more expansive canopies can be planted with less demand for ongoing maintenance.

The tree planting scenario for Yorktown includes two phases. Phase One of the scenario includes opportunities for planting in existing opportunity areas, such as existing lawn strips, empty tree pits, and replacement of existing trees that appear to be in poor health. Taking advantage of these short-term opportunities, 330 large trees and 297 small trees could be planted in Yorktown right now. Phase Two of the planting scenario includes planting trees in opportunity locations that require cutting tree pits, removing existing excess concrete, and plantings coordinated with proposed cul-de-sac, courtyard, and "green" strip reconstruction projects. Taking advantage of these longer-term tree planting opportunities would establish an additional estimated 270 large trees and 230 small trees. There are also a number of street tree planting opportunities that are not in the public realm, but provide a great opportunity for additional tree coverage. Planting those areas could provide 135 large trees to the strategy, with an overall total of an estimated additional 1265 trees to the



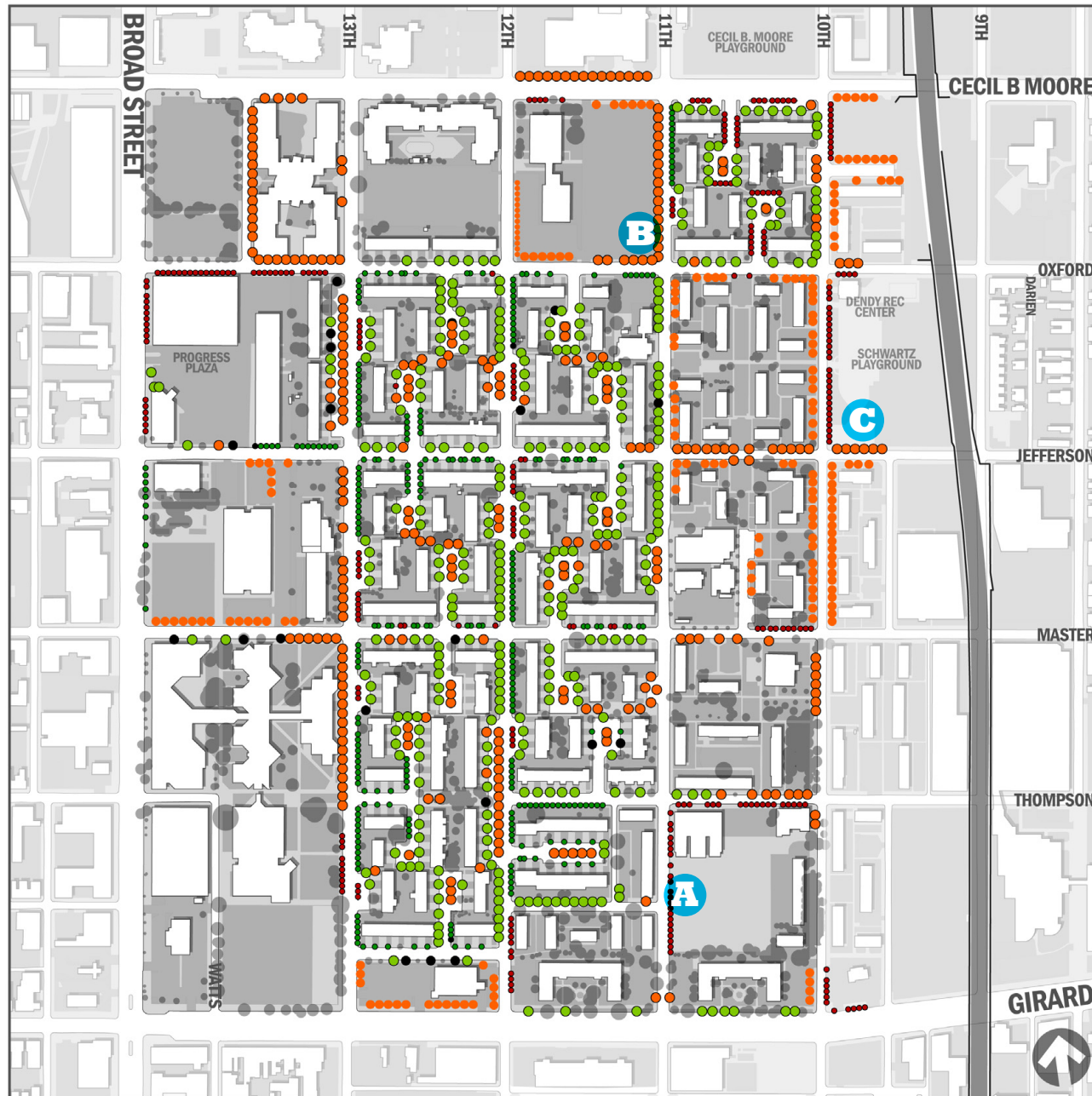


FIGURE 45: Tree Planting Plan

YORKTOWN has enough  
empty planting strips to plant  
**330 large &  
297 small TREES**  
**RIGHT NOW**



down the road  
yorktown can plant  
**AN ADDITIONAL  
272 large &  
230 small TREES**



## TREE PLANTING PLAN

- EXISTING TREE
- phase 1**
  - LARGE TREE
  - SMALL TREE
  - REPLACE EXISTING TREE
- phase 2**
  - LARGE TREE
  - SMALL TREE
  - LARGE TREE [potential for an additional 135 trees on privately owned property]



neighborhood, bringing Yorktown's estimated tree coverage capacity to an impressive 28%.

Within this tree planting scenario, certain high-visibility locations should be considered priorities, including:

**A** 11th between Girard and Thompson: a highly visible gateway to the neighborhood highly lacking in tree cover where street trees could not only enhance this entrance to Yorktown, but would also improve the Harrison Elementary School grounds.

**B** 11th between Oxford and Cecil B Moore; Oxford between 11th and 12th; and 12th between Oxford and Cecil B Moore: street trees could help manage stormwater runoff from these expansive parking lots as well as screen the negative visual impact of this hardscape from the views of adjacent homes.



**C** The southern edge of Dendy Recreation Center and Playground, on Jefferson between 10th and the elevated rail line: also a neighborhood gateway.

## 5.3 REINVEST IN STREETS AND PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

The strategic plan for Yorktown provides an excellent opportunity to lay the groundwork for livable and balanced streets that place an emphasis on restoring space and priority to pedestrians and bicyclists, slow vehicular traffic down to the extent that is a problem as it is most inner-city urban communities, and ensure that the neighborhood's streets make a positive contribution to the quality of the public realm. Strategic investments to make walking and biking safer for residents and to improve the experience of using public transit options will bring many benefits to the neighborhood.

### 5.3.1 IMPROVE STREET CONDITION AND TRAFFIC SAFETY

Some of Yorktown's right-of-ways appear as if they are relics from the neighborhood's construction nearly 50 years ago. The importance of keeping Yorktown's streets in good shape isn't limited to the safety and utility of the surface where rubber meets road. A neighborhood's streets are an integral part of its "curb appeal" in a literal and figurative sense. Potential homebuyers take notice when streets are cracked and curbs have eroded, which has the potential to have negative impacts on the marketability of the neighborhood. The CDC should coordinate with the City and neighborhood improvement partners in advocating for roadway and traffic safety improvement projects including:

- > General resurfacing is needed on streets throughout the neighborhood. The existing conditions analysis provides an evaluation of street conditions to help guide investments and set priorities for street reconstruction projects.
- > Residents expressed the need for regular street cleaning throughout the neighborhood, a concern that should be discussed with the Streets Department to explore possible street maintenance solutions.
- > The community's concern over speeding traffic on 13th Street between Girard and Master elicited the suggestion that a stop sign be installed at 13th and Thompson. This would help to calm high-speed traffic on this street, as it is currently unimpeded for two straight blocks.

### 5.3.2 ADDRESS WALKABILITY AND SIDEWALK ACCESSIBILITY ISSUES

For many of Yorktown's long-time residents who have aged in place, getting around the neighborhood on sidewalks and walkways has become more difficult, not just as a result of the mobility challenges of aging, but because the neighborhood presents a number of walkability and sidewalk

**86** accessibility issues inherent in its design and because many sidewalks have eroded over time without necessary repairs being made. These issues are problematic not only for Yorktown's significant older population, but also have implications for other users, including injured and physically challenged individuals, and pedestrians pushing a stroller or a shopping caddy.

The neighborhood's distinctive shared spaces and the network of pedestrian paths linking them all together have great potential to be an important asset to the community as well as a major selling point for potential homebuyers, but only if they are safe and usable. Finally, improving Yorktown's sidewalks is integral to the success of the neighborhood as an environment that supports a strong sense of community and pride of place. The following considerations should be made in meeting this objective:

**> RE-DESIGN THE GREEN STRIPS TO ACCOMMODATE SIDEWALKS**

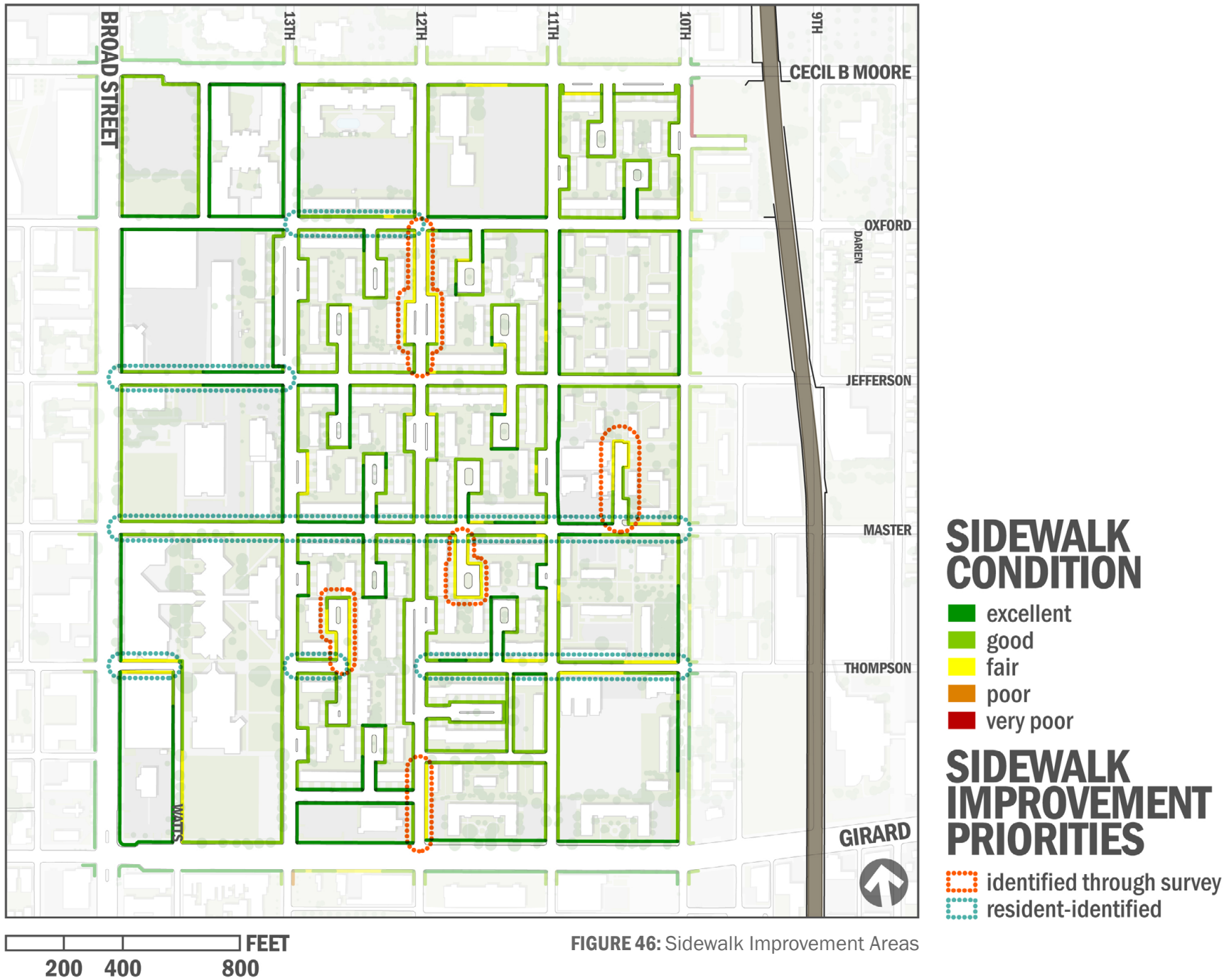
There are several locations in the neighborhood where the sidewalk is discontinuous where it meets a "green" strip. Instead of the sidewalk continuing alongside the street, they were designed to divert users around the perimeter of the driveway, along a much narrower sidewalk surface that constantly undulates as it meets the curb cuts for residential driveways. This presents a few barriers to pedestrian accessibility: the natural desire line of pedestrians walking up the street is not respected; many of the sidewalks these pedestrians are diverted onto are in unsatisfactory condition and are inherently challenging to wheelchair users because of the uneven surface caused by frequent curb cuts and improperly planted street trees; and, finally, should sidewalk users choose to continue alongside the street and onto the green strip, there are no curb ramps to accommodate this and the green strip itself is a poor walking surface. The combined effect of these issues is particularly inconvenient for electric wheelchair users, who were frequently observed to travel in the roadway itself in order to avoid Yorktown's discontinuous and uneven sidewalks. A potential solution to this problem would be to take advantage of excessively wide streets and pull-in areas to widen the "green" strips, making them wide enough to accommodate a legitimate sidewalk. Providing a raised crosswalk linking the "green" strip to the adjacent sidewalk would create a continuous sidewalk surface that would vastly improve pedestrian circulation, as well as act to discourage non-residents from utilizing the residential parking spaces between the housing and the "green" strips.

**> IDENTIFY PRIORITY SIDEWALK REPAIRS**

Residents who participated in the Yorktown 2015 plan identified sidewalks they felt should be considered priorities for repair due to their poor condition and/or frequent use as pedestrian routes. Additional recommended sidewalk improvement priorities are based on the survey of sidewalk conditions in the neighborhood. These priorities, as well as resident-identified priorities are shown in Figure 46.

The CDC should coordinate with property owners and encourage them to make sidewalk improvements, as well as consider pursuing funds to offer property owners financial assistance for the repairs.

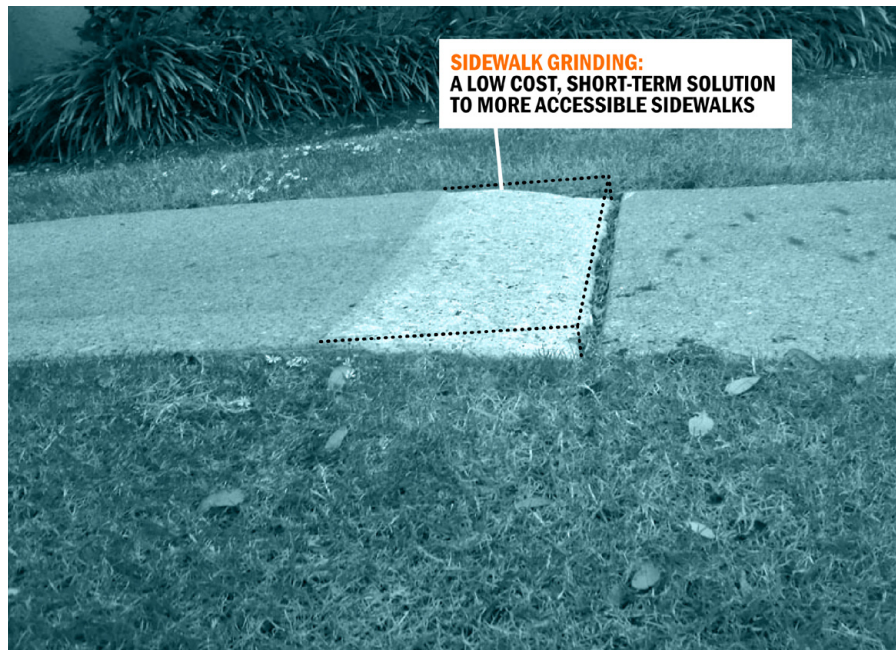






## 88 > CONSIDER SIDEWALK GRINDING AS A SHORT-TERM FIX

A short term solution to making Yorktown's sidewalk surfaces more continuous and removing small problems that create tripping hazards throughout the neighborhood is sidewalk grinding. Many edges of sidewalk segments that are jutting up from the ground can be scraped down to create a continuous sidewalk surface. This low-cost technique has recently been used in areas neighboring Yorktown and could go a long way in improving Yorktown's sidewalks in the immediate term. The CDC could look into contracting sidewalk grinding surfaces throughout the neighborhood with several homeowners chipping in to foot the bill, which would likely be a much more efficient and cost-effective strategy than hiring contractors to address individual trouble spots would be.



## 5.3.3 ADVOCATE FOR A MORE BIKEABLE NEIGHBORHOOD

North Philadelphia neighborhoods, including Yorktown, were within the scope of Phase One of the Philadelphia Bicycle and Pedestrian plan, completed in Fall 2010. The plan recommends establishing a number of additional bike routes to complement the few that already exist in the neighborhood, as shown in Figure 47. The proposed additions include making 13th Street a "Bicycle Friendly Street" and creating a north-bound bike lane on 11th Street and bidirectional shared lanes on Cecil B Moore, connecting to the existing bike lane there to accommodate bike traffic in both directions. Yorktown leadership should support the implementation of these bike network improvements, both to establish a more bikeable neighborhood for existing residents and to make the neighborhood more marketable to bike enthusiasts who may be looking to buy a home in Yorktown.

Several locations in the neighborhood would benefit from additional bike parking facilities. Schools, parks, and play space should offer plenty of bike parking, and additional bike parking locations are recommended for both Girard Avenue and Broad Street.



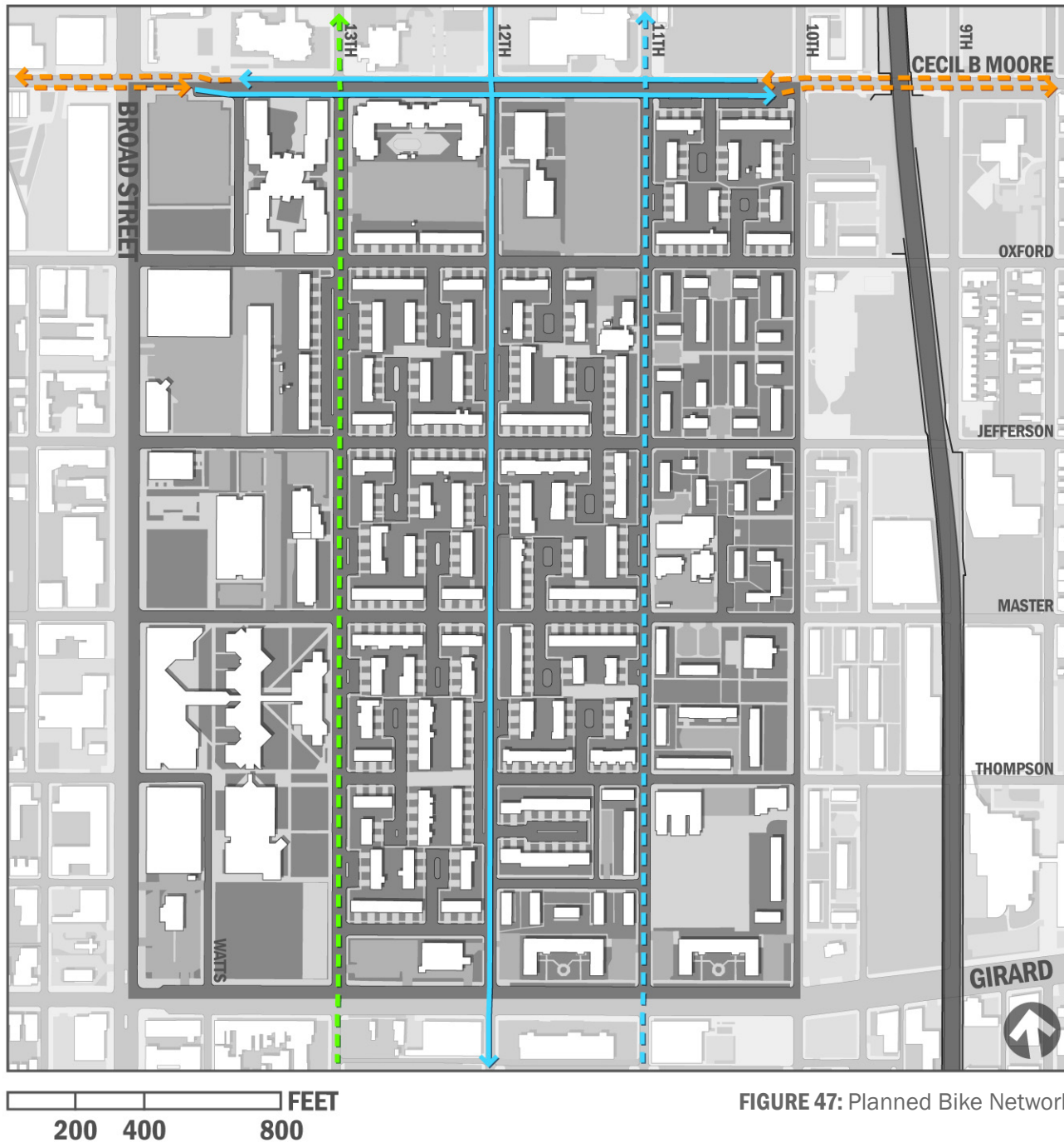


FIGURE 47: Planned Bike Network

## PLANNED BIKE NETWORK

- existing bike lanes
- planned bike lanes
- planned shared lanes
- planned "bicycle friendly" lanes



## 90 5.3.4 EXPLORE SOLUTIONS TO PARKING PROBLEMS

Yorktown's on-street parking is often overwhelmed with cars that residents don't recognize as belonging to their neighbors. There is great concern in the community over the frequency and volume of Temple students, faculty, and staff members parking in areas that are felt to belong to Yorktown residents. The issue is amplified at certain times of day and days of the week, to the point where residents often find it difficult not only to park their own car in front of their own homes, but even anywhere close to home. This is especially problematic for Yorktown's older residents and residents with disabilities. Yorktown's leadership should explore methods of preserving on-street parking for Yorktown residents, including:

### ➤ FORM A TASK-FORCE ON PERMIT PARKING

Form a task force to explore the costs and feasibility of establishing permit-parking to resolve the problem of limited parking for residents and their guest due to commuters and students taking spaces during the day and evening hours. The task force should study the pros and cons based on a specific percentage of residents of the petitioning blocks having to approve of such a measure.

### ➤ COORDINATE WITH TEMPLE

Approach Temple about providing free or reduced parking for their students in hopes that this would reduce on-street parking demand from non-residents in Yorktown. Among other potential sites for student and non-resident parking, the large parking lot on 11th Street between Cecil B. Moore and Oxford (which is currently underutilized) should be considered. Establishing shared parking arrangements with the owners of existing parking lots in the area should also be explored, as many of the area's parking lots are being used only at certain times and could be more regularly utilized if opened up to Temple students.



## 5.3.5 REPLACE FADED TRAFFIC SIGNS

Yorktown's faded traffic and street signs are both a traffic safety liability and an inconvenience to residents and visitors to the neighborhood. Stop signs, street name signs, and other traffic signs that have faded or are otherwise no longer legible should be replaced immediately. The CDC should form a task force to survey street and traffic signage and create a list of signs that need to be replaced. The CDC should coordinate with the Streets Department to facilitate sign replacement.

## 5.3.6 ADVOCATE FOR BUS STOP IMPROVEMENTS

With the somewhat recent re-establishment of the Route 15 trolley line on Girard Avenue and more recent renovations to Broad Street line stations near Yorktown, the experience of getting around by rail has been greatly improved. Yorktown also has convenient connections to other parts of Philadelphia via bus lines on 12th and 11th Streets, Cecil B. Moore, and Broad Street. But this isn't news to Yorktown—residents who participated in the community survey identified SEPTA busses as the third most common means of transit, after personal vehicles and walking. It was learned that the community uses the bus to get to health and medical appointments as well as shopping destinations outside the neighborhood. Given the community's relatively frequent use of busses, as well as the potential for greater utilization, the neighborhood should advocate for improvements to Yorktown's bus stops. Most of Yorktown's bus stops are currently furnished with no more than an informational sign indicating the bus route number. Potential bus stop enhancements include high-efficiency pedestrian-scale lighting, benches or other seating and bus shelters. Improving the neighborhood's bus stops will make them more visible to the community, which will promote greater use of buses as a public transportation option.



Installing improved lighting is especially important for bus stops located on 11th and 12th Streets, as the dim yellow glow provided by overhead cobra-style lights does little to improve nighttime visibility and because visually impermeable backyard fences occupy the majority of street frontage on these streets. On the few segments where houses do face these streets, they are set far back from the street, on the opposite side of a “green” strip, so their porch and lawn lights do little to brighten the street for those using the bus after hours.

### 5.3.7 REPLACE WORN OUT UTILITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Outdated relay boxes; knotted masses of overhead wires; and electric, cable, and phone wires entangled in trees were identified by the community as issues of great concern. The neighborhood’s utility infrastructure needs to be better maintained and updated, not only because of the safety hazards these problems may pose, but also for the negative visual impacts they have on the image of the neighborhood. The CDC should work with community members in identifying trouble spots and follow up with utility and service companies responsible for resolving these issues.

## 5.4 REVITALIZE PARKS, PLAY SPACES, AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Beyond Yorktown’s courtyards, local children need access to safe recreation opportunities and programs. The following recommendations are oriented toward helping Yorktown advocate for improvements to nearby parks for the benefit of its residents.

### 5.4.1 REUSE THE FORMER WILLIAM PENN HIGH SCHOOL FACILITY

The former William Penn High School presents a number of opportunities to bring new assets to the Yorktown community and beyond. While the future of the site is still in discussion, YCDC should take on the following roles in support of the community’s hopes for the site:

- > Support Coalition for the Revitalization of William Penn School Reuse Coalition efforts to broaden and strengthen residents’ roles in determining future of site
- > Participate in School Reform Commission discussions to ensure facility, programs and capital generated for its return to productive use benefits Yorktown and the surrounding community of residents
- > Advocate for its redevelopment as an example of equitable development

**“If we do get a new community center, it should also be programmed with activities for elderly people to stay active, like cooking classes, and ceramics. We need to also engage the middle generation.”**

- > Recruit professionals to assist Coalition in interpreting technical information and presenting community views
- > Discussions with the Yorktown community about unmet neighborhood needs that could be fulfilled in reuse scenarios for the site revealed the following programmatic priorities:
  - High school education in subject areas of science and engineering, technology and mathematics, and career development/vocational skills development
  - Community Center facilities and programming in support of continuing education, cooking classes, health care, etc.; community meeting and performing and graphic arts space; outdoor and indoor recreation activities; and arts, crafts and culture activities.

### 5.4.2 RE-ESTABLISH SHARED USE ARRANGEMENT WITH TEMPLE FOR ACCESS TO LIBRARIES AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES FOR YORKTOWN RESIDENTS

Residents who participated in Yorktown 2015 community meetings recalled memories of the days when Temple University not only welcomed Yorktown residents to use its libraries and recreational facilities, but also organized community events such as weekend movie screenings. It is the community’s hope that shared use arrangements can be re-established with Temple University in an effort to increase access to community and recreational facilities for Yorktown residents. Yorktown leadership should begin discussions with Temple about the feasibility of doing this.

**“We had a very close-knit community—we need to build up the block captain structure. We used to partner with Temple and they opened some of their facilities to the neighborhood, such as the pool and the library. On Saturday mornings, there were film screenings for the community on the Temple campus.”**



### DENDY RECREATION CENTER & PLAYGROUND IMPROVEMENT PRIORITIES



**REPLACE  
DILAPIDATED BENCHES + PLAY STRUCTURES**



**PLANT TREES  
ON PERIMETER SIDEWALKS**



**IMPROVE  
FENCE AND ENTRANCES**

### 5.4.3 CONSIDER THE POSSIBILITIES OF A YORKTOWN ARMS “FRONT PORCH”

The benches under the awning at the entrance to Yorktown Arms are always full of folks socializing, waiting for shuttle rides, or just enjoying the fresh air. The Yorktown CDC should consider expanding outdoor seating areas with the addition of a “front porch” along 13th Street. This area is currently landscaped and well-maintained, but is not designed to accommodate users. A number of programmatic and site improvement possibilities that would make it more of an asset to the neighborhood and a gateway element at the edge of Yorktown neighborhood, including furnishings for casual socializing and passive recreation such as benches, chairs, umbrellas, and picnic tables; demonstration rain gardens to improve stormwater management at the 13th and Master frequent flooding hotspot, as well as provide physical examples for neighborhood residents who may be interested in making similar improvements to their homes; and community gardening spaces to provide an engaging outdoor activity for the residents of Yorktown Arms, among many other possibilities.

### 5.4.4 ADVOCATE FOR ENHANCEMENTS TO DENDY RECREATION CENTER

Yorktown leadership should approach the Philadelphia Parks and Recreation Department about available resources and opportunities to make improvements to Dendy Recreation Center. Though it lies just beyond the threshold of the Yorktown neighborhood, Dendy Recreation Center is just a few minutes’ walk away from all of the homes in Yorktown and has the potential to be an even greater asset to the neighborhood if the following improvements were made to its perimeter and play spaces:

- > The fence around the perimeter of the park is in very poor condition. In some places, the fence is quite rusted; in others, it leans precariously to one side. The fence is an eyesore that has impacts on the greater neighborhood and should be replaced. Upgrading to a wrought iron fence would be a bigger cost up front, but would likely be a much more durable investment than chain link, not to mention the positive visual impact an improved perimeter treatment would have.
- > The retaining wall along the elevated rail line constitutes the eastern boundary of the park. The retaining wall’s expansive surface is a regular target of graffiti, but could be an excellent opportunity site for a large mural.
- > The tennis court at the corner of 10th and Jefferson is missing a net and the surface is in need of maintenance. The taller fence around the tennis court is in especially bad shape. Given the recent addition

of the Althea Gibson Tennis Center on Girard Avenue at 10th Street, which offers three brand new outdoor tennis courts, reprogramming this underutilized and highly visible corner of Dendy Recreation Center should be discussed as a possibility.

- > Dilapidated benches and play structures should be repaired or replaced, including the fountain on the south side of the park, some of the basketball hoops, and the swingset, which no longer has swings attached to it
- > Large canopy tree plantings on Jefferson Street edge of the park, as well as street tree plantings on the sidewalk itself would create a much greener and more welcoming edge to the park; smaller trees should be planted on the 10th Street side, given the presence of utility lines above.
- > At present, the park's interior lights are not strong enough to properly light the park and the cobra-style street lights around the perimeter do very little to improve nighttime visibility on the sidewalks around Dendi Recreation Center. Better lighting on the park's interior would be a great improvement, but the addition of pedestrian-scale lighting along the edge of the park should be considered a priority as a matter of public safety.

#### **5.4.5 ESTABLISH A IMPROVED NEIGHBORHOOD INTERFACE WITH THE CECIL B MOORE SPORTS FIELDS**

The fencing, trees, and edge plantings along the Cecil B. Moore edge of the Cecil B. Moore Sports Fields are in need of maintenance and investment. The overgrown plants and undermaintained trees, in combination with the poor condition of the chain link fence, create a very prominent eyesore at this highly visible location. The park's edge has the potential to bring value to the neighborhood if simple short-term improvements are made along this edge and if the park's condition were better maintained.

#### **5.4.6 SOFTEN THE HARRISON SCHOOL PLAYGROUND**

The Harrison School playground has been identified as a priority location for street tree plantings to soften the edge of this expansive hardscape, as well as improve it as a play space on hot days. In addition to perimeter tree plantings, other improvements to the school grounds should be considered, including planted areas, benches, educational gardens, and pedestrian-scale lighting. Public investments in such improvements would not only benefit the students, faculty, and staff of the school, but would also enhance this highly visible gateway to Yorktown.







## 4

## MODEL BLOCK CONCEPT &amp; DEVELOPMENT

Implementing Yorktown's "Blue Print for Survival and Sustainability" requires organizing the community around a comprehensive housing preservation, open space beautification, community building and infrastructure upgrading strategy in which resources are concentrated in a series of connected "model blocks." Use of this strategy as a real opportunity to develop or extend leadership at the block level where blocks captains, recent to long-term residents, children, youth, adults and families discuss and play an active part in improving all aspects of their blocks, from homes to yards to courtyards, and working with City agencies, institutions, and utility companies to address inadequate lighting, trees issues, rain water flooding, and damaged streets, curbs, sidewalks, signage, and lighting.

YCDC will identify the financial resources and partners that may be needed to acquire, rehabilitate, and convert vacant rental properties for resale as owner-occupied homes, for rental to families under option-to-buy agreements, or for longer-term rentals to ensure such properties are well-managed and remain financially viable over time. In those circumstances where acquisition of absentee-owned and unmaintained properties is not possible or financially infeasible, YCDC, in coordination with the round-table of peer organizations of Yorktown, will continue to collaborate with City agencies to ensure enforcement of building, safety and zoning codes.

The costs associated with implementation of Yorktown's Model Block concept are outlined in the following charts. These costs are not inexpensive for the community reinvestment identified above, but are substantially more expensive to defer or neglect them altogether, given the high levels of financial equity held by Yorktown community residents and homeowners, institutions, businesses and industry, and the City's reliance on a tax base and infrastructure that is irreplaceable. To the extent new investments are made strategically by all of these interests and to the extent such investments are equitable for and respectful of a unique and extremely stable community, the return will be guaranteed. Project scopes and schedules should be coordinated and sequenced to create cost-economies of scale and produce larger-scale impact which is likely to attract more and larger funders to become "investors" **with** Yorktown, not just **in** Yorktown.

## 96 COST PROJECTIONS

MODEL BLOCK DEVELOPMENT CATEGORIES	#	UNITS COSTS	TOTAL COSTS	ANNUAL COSTS
HOUSING PRESERVATION				
Home Repairs	22	\$25,000	\$550,000	\$110,000
Home Improvements	569	\$12,500	\$7,112,500	\$1,422,500
Total	591	\$12,965	\$7,662,500	\$1,532,500

Potential Sources				
Homeowner Equity @ 20%		\$2,593	\$1,532,500	\$306,500
Bank Debt @ 30%		\$3,890	\$2,298,750	\$459,750
Matching Grants @ 50%		\$6,482	\$3,831,250	\$766,250
		\$12,965	\$7,662,500	\$1,532,500

MODEL BLOCK DEVELOPMENT CATEGORIES	#	UNITS COSTS	TOTAL COSTS	ANNUAL COSTS
RENTAL PROPERTY INTERVENTION				
Acquisition	35	\$ 115,000	\$4,025,000	\$805,000
Rehabilitation	35	\$ 30,000	\$1,050,000	\$210,000
Total	35	\$145,000	\$5,075,000	\$1,015,000

Potential Sources				
Equity @ 20%		\$29,000	\$1,015,000	\$230,000
Bank Debt @ 80%		\$116,000	\$4,060,000	\$812,000
		\$145,000	\$5,075,000	\$1,015,000

COURTYARD & INFRASTRUCTURE BEAUTIFICATION	TOTAL COSTS		ANNUAL COSTS
Stormwater Improvements	\$ 1,188,015		\$237,603
Street Lighting	\$ 269,500		\$ 53,500
Tree Planting	\$ 168,000		\$ 33,600
Plantings/Benches	\$ 390,123		\$ 78,025
Labor	\$ 377,094		\$ 75,419
Sub-Total	\$ 2,091,160		\$418,232

**TOTAL W/ 15% CONTINGENCY** **\$ 2,404,834** **\$480,967**

### POTENTIAL SOURCES

PHS  
Water Department  
City  
Matching Grants



## HOUSING PRESERVATION BY BLOCK AREA

Based on exterior building condition surveys, land use, and general physical condition ratings of streets, sidewalks and open spaces.

BLOCK AREA	UNITS	COSTS @ \$25,000 PER UNIT
CBM - OXFORD/ 10TH - 11TH	5	\$125,000
THOMPSON-GIRARD/ 12TH - 13TH	4	\$100,000
MASTER - THOMPSON/ 11TH - 12TH	3	\$75,000
OXFORD - JEFFERSON/ 12TH - 13TH*	5	\$125,000
MASTER - THOMPSON/ 12TH - 13TH	2	\$50,000
JEFFERSON - MASTER/ 11TH - 12TH	2	\$50,000
OXFORD - JEFFERSON/ 11TH - 12TH	1	\$25,000
JEFFERSON - MASTER/ 12TH - 13TH	0	0
THOMPSON - GIRARD/ 11TH - 12TH	0	0
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>\$550,000</b>
PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE/BASIC SYSTEMS/WEATHERIZATION		
GENERAL HOME IMPROVEMENTS	569	\$7,112,500
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>591</b>	<b>\$7,662,500</b>
<b>ANNUAL AVERAGE</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>\$1,532,500</b>

\* Includes north side of 1200 block of W. Oxford and west side of 1500 of 13th Street.

## INTRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS BY BLOCK AREA

	COURTYARDS	GROUND SURFACE	POLE LIGHTING	TREES W/ > 50 FT CANOPIES	PLANTED AREAS	SEATING	CONTRACTOR BURDEN	SUBTOTAL	TOTAL INCLUDING 15% CONTINGENCY
GIRARD - THOMPSON/ 12TH - 13TH STREET	PATRICK HENRY/ THOMPSON	\$235,980	\$56,000	\$33,000	\$9,358	\$8,942	\$75,522	\$418,802	\$481,622
OXFORD-JEFFERSON/ 12TH - 13TH STREET	SARATOGA/ DONDILL	\$159,060	\$35,000	\$24,000	\$6,038	\$5,769	\$50,571	\$280,437	\$322,503
MASTER - THOMPSON/ 12TH - 13TH STREET	LAFAYETTE/ KINGS	\$268,670	\$59,500	\$36,000	\$10,063	\$9,615	\$84,447	\$4,682,942	\$538,539
JEFFERSON - MASTER/ 11TH - 12TH STREET	GUILFORD/ KINGS	\$185,675	\$42,000	\$27,000	\$7,044	\$6,731	\$59,059	\$327,508	\$376,635
OXFORD - JEFFERSON/ 11TH - 12TH STREET	QUEENS/ GUILFORD	\$198,825	\$45,500	\$27,000	\$7,547	\$7,212	\$62,938	\$349,022	\$401,375
JEFFERSON - MASTER/ 12TH - 13TH STREET	DONDILL/ BETSY ROSS	\$139,805	\$31,500	\$21,000	\$5,233	\$5,000	\$44,558	\$247,096	\$284,160
GRAND TOTAL		\$1,188,015	\$269,500	\$168,000	\$45,281	\$43,269	\$377,094	\$2,091,160	\$2,404,834
ANNUAL AVERAGE		\$237,603	\$53,900	\$33,600	\$9,056.25	\$8,653.85	\$75,419	\$418,232	\$480,967

● Ground Surface Reconstruction-related costs include demolition, pavers and concrete work, but exclude storm drain inlets or potential subgrade infrastructure replacement and design.

# APPENDIX

## **YORKTOWN RESIDENT SURVEY SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESULTS AND INTERPRETATIONS (08.25.10)**

### **SURVEY PERIOD**

Week of July 9th through week of July 26th, 2010

### **SURVEY METHODOLOGY/ANALYSIS**

Written survey forms designed by Wilson/Interface and reviewed and approved by the Yorktown Plan Coordinating Committee were distributed to all homes by Yorktown CDC staff and volunteers throughout the Yorktown Community as defined by Girard to Cecil B. Moore, from North 10th to North Broad Street.

Residents returned completed surveys to a secured drop-box located on the premises of Yorktown CDC, 1300 West Jefferson Street.

Responses to questions from all surveys were entered in and totals tallied by student interns of Yorktown CDC into a survey analysis tool designed by Wilson/Interface; sub-totals from each intern were entered onto a separate survey analysis tool by Eric Holden of Yorktown CDC staff.

Data from this analysis tool were submitted to Wilson/Interface for analysis and interpretation as shown in the following sections of this report.

### **SURVEY FINDINGS/RESULTS**

The final survey sample size of 101 to 105 to 108 varied, we believe, because of possible discrepancies in transferring/transcribing results from the completed survey forms to the survey analysis tool. For purposes of this analysis, 105 will serve as the official sample size, a number that represents 14.7% of the 712 households in Yorktown according to Yorktown CDC's recent count (619 homes plus 93 residential units in the Yorktown Arms I and II rental housing developments).



## 100 DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

### POPULATION

- > Predominantly seniors (67% are 65 years of age or older) and Black/African-American (98%)
- > Nearly two in three heads of household are retirees (64%) and approximately one in three is gainfully employed (28%)
- > Generally well-educated
  - 24% have college or post graduate degrees
  - 36% have some college experience
  - 36% earned high school diplomas or GED equivalents
- > Small family sizes
  - 86% contain 1-2 people
  - 88% have no school-aged children in the home
  - 72% headed by singles (57%) or couples (15%) with no children living in the home
  - 31% headed by single parents (16%) or couples (15%) with children living in the home
- > Yorktown has:
  - almost half are long-term residents (48% living in community for over 20 years) with many recent newcomers to the community (37% have been residents for 10 years or less)
  - a mix of incomes (30% low-income, 21% moderate-income, 23% middle-income, and 26% upper-middle)
- > a little more one-third of all residents (36%) do not have estate plans directing the distribution of their assets.

### RESIDENTS' HOMES

#### HOMEOWNERS

- > High rate of homeownership (68%), of which:
  - 41% have an outstanding mortgage or a home improvement loan obligation
  - 91% have homeowners insurance
  - a relatively low proportion (4%, but still important) are in jeopardy of losing their home due to tax or mortgage foreclosure

> Over half believe the current market value of their homes to be \$175,000 or more.

> Approximately two-thirds of homeowners surveyed have been approached within the past five years to sell their home and half were approached within the same time period to take-out a home improvement loan.

> While owner-occupants do not tend to own other properties in Yorktown, about 25% of them would consider buying another home here as an investment property; of the 75% who would not consider such an investment, the predominant reasons for not doing so are:

- unsure how to begin such a process (48%) and
- just had not considered it (18%)

#### RENTERS

> Approximately 7 in 10 renters would like to become a homeowner, of the 30% who would not consider buying a home, the predominant reasons for not doing are:

- unsure how to begin such a process (41%)
- insufficient income (14%)
- just had not considered it (13%)

#### HOUSING CONDITIONS

> 80% of residents surveyed rated the conditions of their own homes to be "good to excellent" based on 10 core categories given to them that ranged from interior mechanical features – plumbing, heating, electrical – to exterior factors – roofing, siding, garages, driveways and rain water drainage.

> Fair to poor condition ratings were given, predominately, for categories pertaining to:

- insulation (34%)
- sidewalks and driveways (30%)
- fencing (20%)
- garages (19%)
- plumbing/HVAC (19% each)

> Almost one-third (31%) of home had not had their electrical systems upgraded with another 15% not sure if such an upgrade had been done in their home.

### PHYSICAL CONDITIONS

- > Two of every three residents surveyed rated the conditions of Yorktown as “good to excellent” based on 9 core categories given to them that included homes, streets and sidewalks, courtyards/community space, cleanliness, safety, parking and rain water drainage.
- > Fair to poor condition ratings were given, predominantly, for categories pertaining to:
  - on-street parking (50%)
  - courtyards/community space (42%)
  - sidewalks (40%)
  - cleanliness (40%)
  - street lighting (37%)

### STORES

- > The types of stores residents want to be more accessible/located closer to the community include:
  - clothing (55% of those surveyed)
  - restaurant (46%)
  - dry cleaners (44%)
  - bakery (37%)
  - hardware (27%)
  - florist (26%)
  - ice cream parlor (25%)

### TRANSPORTATION

- > Overall, 61% of residents surveyed use/have access to an automobile as their primary means of transit, followed by walking and public transit (34% , evenly split between the two), and taxi or specialized paratransit service through SEPTA's Customized Community Transportation (6%).

### MOST- AND SECOND- MOST LIKED FEATURES

- > Location and accessibility (66% and 34%)
- > Community pride and spirit (59% and 32%)
- > Cleanliness (49% and 30%)
- > Safety (47% and 30%)
- > Friendliness (45% and 18%)

### BIGGEST AND SECOND-BIGGEST CONCERNS

- > Safety (43% and 25%)
- > Cleanliness (21% and 21%)
- > Community pride and spirit (12% and 15%)
- > Parks/Open Space (11% and 15%)