

SOUTHWEST SCHUYLKILL

REDEVELOPMENT AREA PLAN

PHILADELPHIA CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

SOUTHWEST SCHUYLKILL REDEVELOPMENT AREA PLAN

PHILADELPHIA CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

SEPTEMBER 15, 1970

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CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

PHILADELPHIA CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

13th Floor, City Hall Annex
S. E. Cor., Juniper & Filbert Sts., Philadelphia, Pa. 19107
MU 6-9700

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September 15, 1970

Dr. F. Bruce Baldwin, Jr.
Chairman
Redevelopment Authority
of the City of Philadelphia
City Hall Annex
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19107

Dear Dr. Baldwin:

Transmitted herewith is the Certification and the Redevelopment Area Plan for the Southwest Schuylkill Area, as prepared by the City Planning Commission in accordance with the provisions of the Urban Redevelopment Law of May 24, 1945, P. L. 991, as amended.

This certified plan covers the area bounded by Chester Avenue, Woodland Avenue, 40th Street (extended), the Main Line of the Penn Central Railroad right-of-way line, and 52nd Street.

The Southwest Schuylkill Redevelopment Area Plan is in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan for the City of Philadelphia dated May 1960, as amended, and was approved by the City Planning Commission at its meeting of September 15, 1970.

Sincerely yours,

William B. Walker

William B. Walker
Chairman

C E R T I F I C A T I O N

Whereas, the Philadelphia City Planning Commission having examined and studied the area bounded by Chester Avenue, Woodland Avenue, 40th Street (extended), the Main Line of the Penn-Central Railroad right-of-way line, and 52nd Street, found that it contains the following characteristics which warrant its designation as a Redevelopment Area as defined in Section 3 (n) of the Urban Redevelopment Law of May 24, 1945, P. L. 991 as amended:

- a. Unsafe, unsanitary, inadequate or overcrowded conditions of certain buildings;
- b. Inadequate planning of the area;
- c. Excessive land coverage by buildings;
- d. Lack of proper light, air, and open space;
- e. Defective design or arrangement of buildings;
- f. Faulty street or lot layout;
- g. Economically or socially undesirable land uses.

Now, therefore, be it resolved by the Philadelphia City Planning Commission that the Southwest Schuylkill Redevelopment Area bounded by Chester Avenue, 40th Street (extended), Penn-Central Railroad right-of-way, and 52nd Street is a Redevelopment Area as defined in Section 3 (n) of the Urban Redevelopment Law of May 24, 1945, P. L. 991, as amended; and that this certification is in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan of the City of Philadelphia, approved May 1960, as amended.

Philadelphia City Planning Commission

By

William B. Walker

William B. Walker
Chairman
September 15, 1970

A M E N D M E N T T O T H E W E S T P H I L A D E L P H I A R E D E V E L O P M E N T
A R E A

Whereas, the Philadelphia City Planning Commission has certified on August 20, 1963, the West Philadelphia Redevelopment Area bounded by Girard Avenue, Parkside Avenue, Columbia Avenue (extended), the Manayunk Branch of the Penn-Central Railroad, 59th Street, Columbia Avenue, Lebanon Avenue, Cobbs Creek Park, the Media Branch of the Penn-Central Railroad, the line of 43rd Street extended to the Schuylkill River, and the Schuylkill River.

Whereas, the Philadelphia City Planning Commission on September 20, 1966 amended the West Philadelphia Redevelopment Area by excluding the University City Core Area bounded by Powelton Avenue, 38th Street, Lancaster Avenue, Powelton Avenue, 32nd Street, John F. Kennedy Boulevard, 32nd Street, Walnut Street, 33rd Street, Spruce Street, a line 294 feet west of 40th Street, Irving Street, a line 350 feet west of 40th Street, Locust Street, a line 376 feet west of 40th Street, Chancellor Street, a line 200 feet west of 40th Street, Walnut Street and 40th Street, and certifying it as a separate redevelopment area; and

Whereas, the Philadelphia City Planning Commission on September 26, 1967, amended the West Philadelphia Redevelopment Area by excluding the Preston Redevelopment Area bounded by 41st Street, Preston Street, Parrish Street, and Ogden Street and certifying it as a separate redevelopment area; and,

Whereas, the Philadelphia City Planning Commission on October 10, 1967 further amended the West Philadelphia Redevelopment Area by excluding the Walnut Forty-Two Redevelopment Area

bounded by 41st Street, Locust Street, 43rd Street, and Sansom Street and certifying it as a separate redevelopment area; and further amending the West Philadelphia Redevelopment Area on October 8, 1968 by rescinding certification of Walnut Forty-Two Redevelopment Area; and

Whereas, the Philadelphia City Planning Commission after further studies finds evidence that the area bounded by Girard Avenue, Parkside Avenue, Columbia Avenue (extended), the Manayunk Branch of the Penn-Central Railroad, the Main Line of the Penn-Central Railroad, 59th Street, Columbia Avenue, Lebanon Avenue, Cobbs Creek Park, Media Branch of the Penn-Central Railroad, the line of 43rd Street extended to the Schuylkill River, and the Schuylkill River still contains the following characteristics which warrant being considered a redevelopment area as defined in Section 3 (n) of the Urban Redevelopment Law P. L. 991 approved May 24, 1945 as amended:

- a. Unsafe, unsanitary, inadequate or overcrowded conditions of the buildings therein;
- b. Inadequate planning of the area;
- c. Excessive land coverage of the building thereon;
- d. Lack of proper light, air and open space;
- e. Faulty street or lot layout;
- f. Defective design arrangement of the buildings thereon;
- g. Economically or socially undesirable land uses.

Now therefore, be it resolved that the West Philadelphia Redevelopment Area is amended to exclude the area bounded by Chester Avenue, Woodland Avenue, 40th Street (extended), the Main Line of the Penn-Central Railroad right-of-way, and that the Philadelphia City Planning Commission certifies that the amended West Philadelphia Redevelopment Area now defined as the area bounded by Girard Avenue, Parkside Avenue, Columbia Avenue (extended), the Manayunk

Branch of the Penn-Central Railroad, the Main Line of the Penn-Central Railroad, 59th Street, Columbia Avenue, Lebanon Avenue, Cobbs Creek Park, Media Branch of the Penn-Central Railroad, Chester Avenue, Woodland Avenue, 40th Street (extended), the Main Line of the Penn-Central Railroad right-of-way, the line of 43rd Street extended to the Schuylkill River, and the Schuylkill River is a redevelopment area and is herewith so designated and that West Philadelphia Redevelopment Area is in conformity with the Comprehensive Plan for the City of Philadelphia dated May, 1960 as amended.

Aerial view of the Southwest Schuylkill Redevelopment Area and its environs; white line indicates the redevelopment area boundaries.



INTRODUCTION

The Southwest Schuylkill Redevelopment Area Plan covers that portion of Southwest Philadelphia bounded by Chester Avenue, Woodland Avenue, 40th Street extended through Woodlands Cemetery, the Main Line of the Penn-Central Railroad right-of-way line, and 52nd Street.

Except for Woodland Avenue, which is a commercial and industrial street, Southwest Schuylkill is predominately a single family, two and three story, row house residential community. Although the area remains predominately residential, and community participation in conservation activities is good, it is threatened by several concentrations of blight which have extended to adjacent residential blocks and may continue to spread if not checked.

Redevelopment activities in the Southwest Schuylkill Area will serve to eliminate or alleviate the conditions which have warranted its designation as a redevelopment area. The lack of usable recreation facilities will be overcome in part by the improvements of the current recreation facilities at Kingessing Recreation Center and the Woodland and 48th Streets Playfield.

A problem more serious than the inadequate recreation facilities, is the frequent vacant structures scattered throughout the neighborhood. Not only are these structures unsafe, unsanitary, and breeders of rats, but also are frequently the origin points of fires that threaten the safety and property of residents in adjoining homes.

The most serious problem in the area is that of inadequate and overcrowded schools. There are two lower schools serving in the area but no middle school, so great distances

must be traveled, usually by public transportation to attend middle school. The major emphasis of this redevelopment program will be the planning and construction of a middle school in the area which will not relocate Southwest Schuylkill residents.

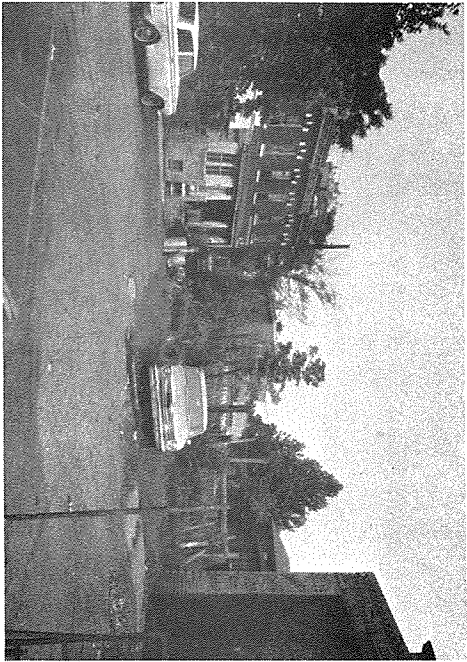
Even though the present overall planning for this area is inadequate, the existing land use pattern is generally sound and few land use changes will be made except in cases where particular non-conforming uses occur.

The Southwest Schuylkill Area is approximately 202 acres in size. The area includes parts of the 27th, 46th and 51st Wards, and parts of Census Tracts 27B, 27D, 27E, 46I and 51B.

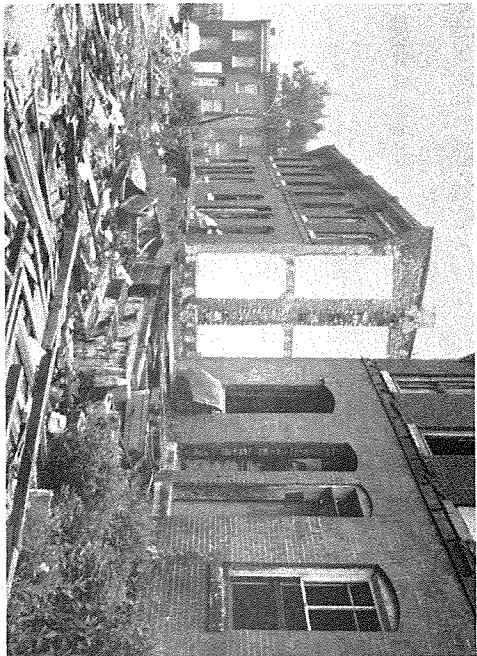
The 1960 Census data does reflect many of the problems of the area:

	<u>Area</u>	<u>City-Wide</u>
1. Population	9,150	1,998,798
2. No. of Housing Units	3,201	648,942
3. with all sound facilities	2,626 (82.0%)	84.9%
4. deteriorating	472 (14.7%)	10.6%
5. dilapidated	44 (1.4%)	2.1%
6. owner-occupied	1,347 (42.1%)	61.9%
7. Occupied units with more than one person per room (overcrowding)	344 (10.7%)	7.3%

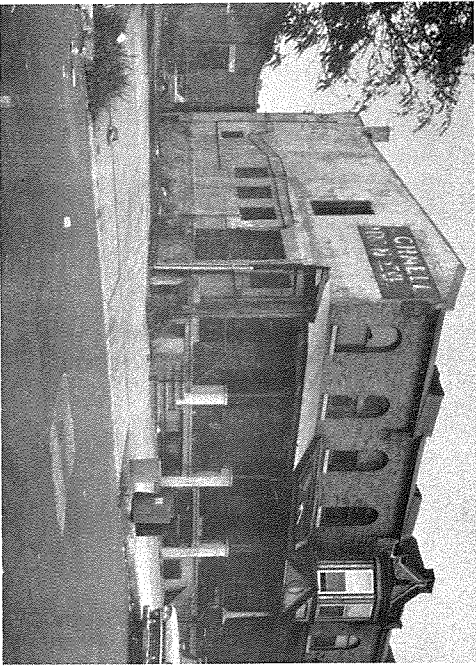
This plan has been developed in close cooperation with the Southwest Schuylkill Civic Association and the West Schuylkill Neighbors. These two citizen groups have contributed greatly in making decisions which reflect their interest in rebuilding and maintaining their community.



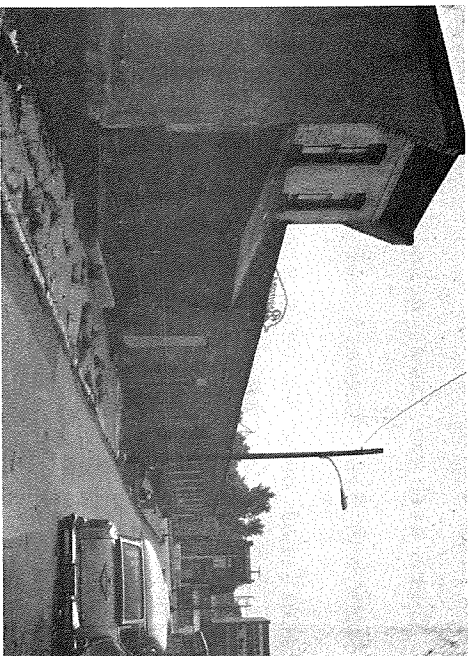
Faulty Street or Lot Layout...
Paschall Ave. & S. 48th Street



Unsafe, Unsanitary...Conditions
of Certain Buildings
1300 Block of S. 43rd Street



..Undesirable (Incompatible) Land Uses
4600 Block of Paschall Avenue



Inadequate Planning of the Area
1200 Block of S. Melville Street

EXISTING LAND USE AND BOUNDARIES

The area covered by the Southwest Schuylkill Redevelopment Area Plan is from Chester Avenue on the north to the Penn Central Railroad right-of-way on the south, 40th Street extended through Woodlands Cemetery on the east to 52nd Street on the west. The gross area within these boundaries is 202 acres.

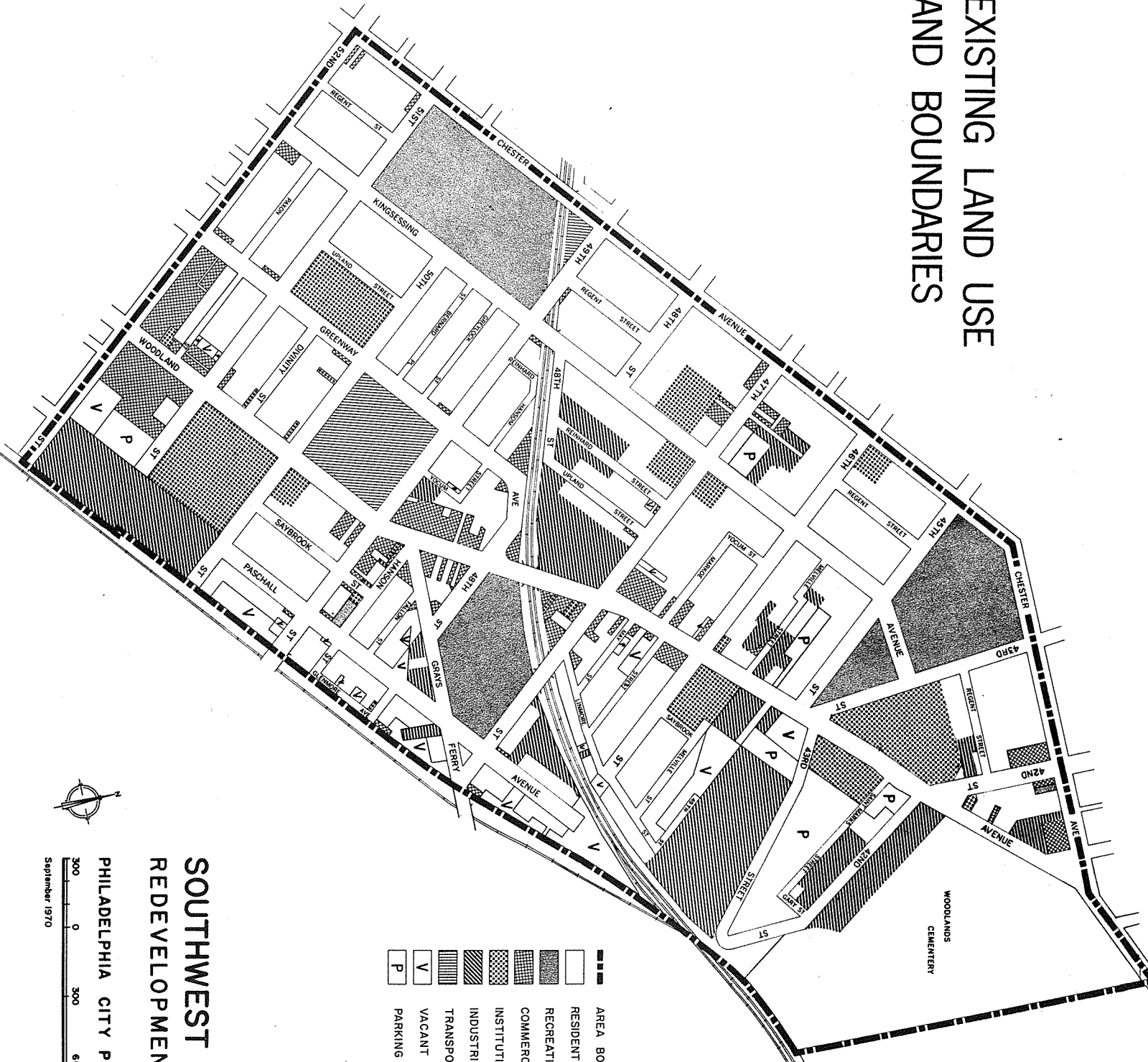
The Southwest Schuylkill Area is predominately two and three-story, single family, row houses with few conflicting land uses. Woodland Avenue is the major commercial street in the Southwest Schuylkill Area.

Scattered throughout the area are a number of auto repair shops and light manufacturing operations. One of the objectives of this plan is to remove those operations where they are blighting to adjacent residential properties.

There are two lower schools in the Southwest Schuylkill Area: Comegys Lower School at Greenway and 51st Streets and Wilson Lower School at Woodland and 46th Streets. Other institutional uses in this area include a branch of the Philadelphia Free Library, Mercy-Douglass Hospital, Philadelphia College of Pharmacy and Science and a number of churches.

The Southwest Schuylkill Area contains three recreational areas, Kingsessing Recreational Center, 48th and Woodland Avenue, and a portion of Clark Park. There also is an industrial parcel in the vicinity of Woodland and 42nd Streets.

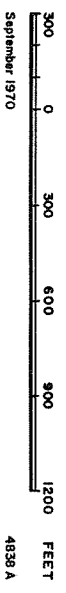
EXISTING LAND USE AND BOUNDARIES



- AREA BOUNDARY
- ▨ RESIDENTIAL
- ▩ RECREATIONAL
- ▧ COMMERCIAL
- ▦ INSTITUTIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICES
- ▤ INDUSTRIAL
- ▥ TRANSPORTATION AND UTILITIES
- VACANT
- P PARKING

SOUTHWEST SCHUYLKILL REDEVELOPMENT AREA PLAN

PHILADELPHIA CITY PLANNING COMMISSION



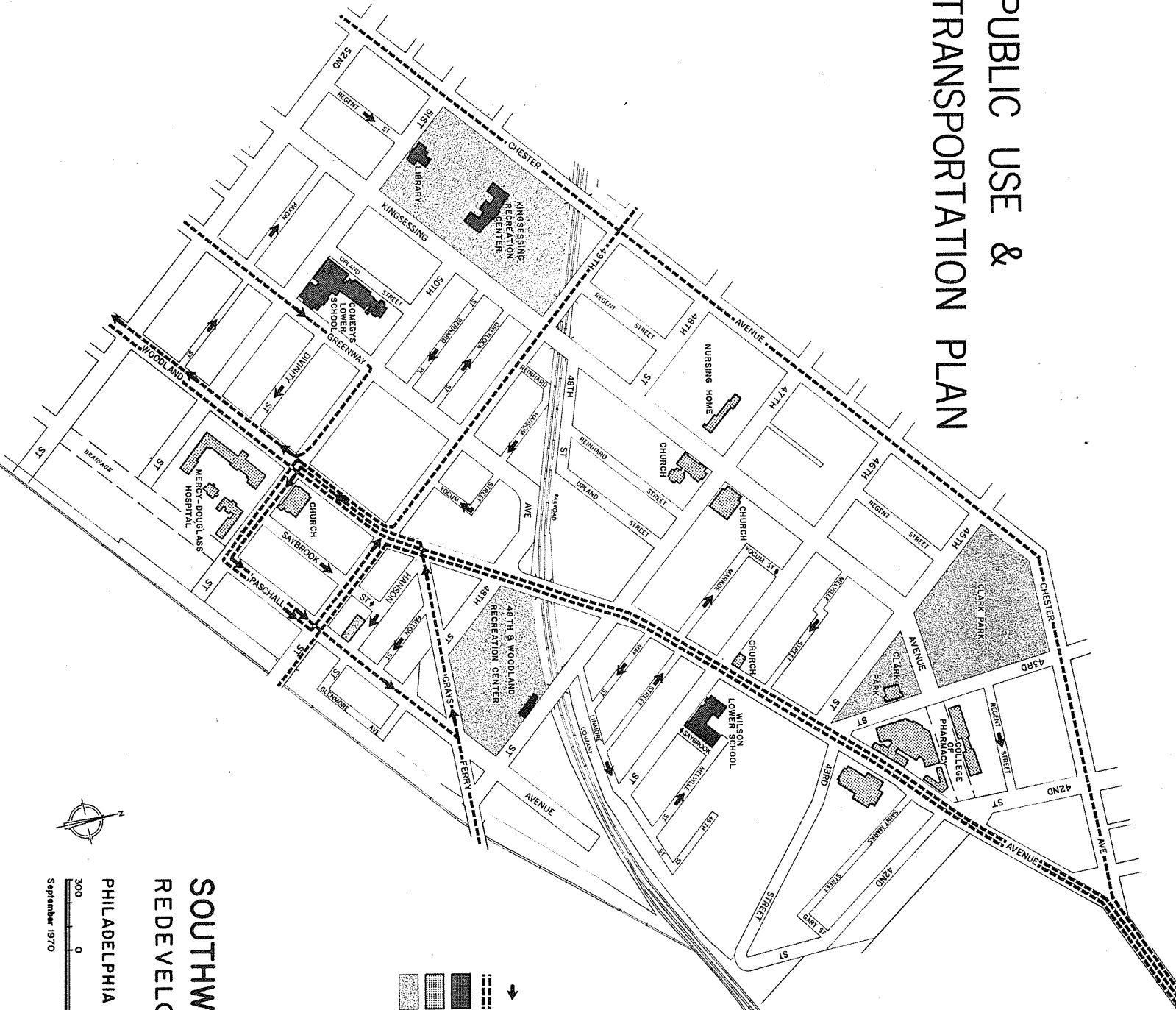
September 1970

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EXISTING PUBLIC USE AND TRANSPORTATION

The location of the existing public and semi-public institutions and all recreation facilities used for recreation are indicated on the map. In addition one-way streets and public transit routes are shown. The information on this map served primarily as a guide in preparing the illustrative site plan.

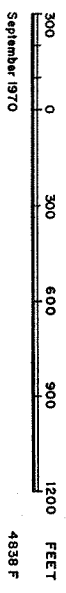
PUBLIC USE & TRANSPORTATION PLAN



- ONE WAY STREETS
- - - - PUBLIC TRANSIT ROUTES
- PUBLIC BUILDINGS
- SEMI-PUBLIC BUILDINGS
- RECREATION AREAS

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PROPOSED LAND USE

The primary objective of the Redevelopment Area Plan for Southwest Schuylkill is to retain, reinforce, and rehabilitate the residential environment of the community. The plans are designed to protect the many blocks of good housing that already exist and to improve the quality of the entire community.










New residential development is planned to take the place of some of the existing incompatible industrial and commercial land uses. In most instances new houses will be built on the vacant lots and vacant structures will either be rehabilitated for residential use or replaced by new housing. A variety of types and sizes of housing is planned in order to accommodate the varying needs of the Southwest Schuylkill residents.

Provisions of facilities necessary for the welfare and convenience of the community are also included in the Southwest Schuylkill Redevelopment Area Plan. Currently the city is rehabilitating the playground and swimming pool at Kingsessing Recreation Center. The playground at 48th Street and Woodland Avenue is scheduled for rehabilitation to permit more adequate facilities for a wide range of age groups within the next six years.

Three small sites for industrial use are shown, one at Woodland and 43rd Streets, another below Woodland on 51st Street, the third is at Upland and Reinhard Streets and the Media Line of the Penn-Central Railroad. These three sites are in close proximity to existing residential areas. Industrial activities that are not harmful to the residential

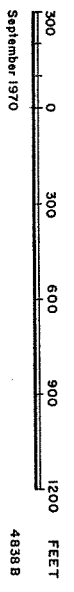
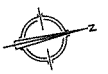
PROPOSED LAND USE & STREET CHANGES



-  RESIDENTIAL
-  RECREATIONAL
-  COMMERCIAL
-  INSTITUTIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICES
-  INDUSTRIAL
-  TRANSPORTATION AND UTILITIES
-  PARKING
-  STREETS TO BE CLOSED
-  STREETS TO BE ADDED OR WIDENED

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environment will be encouraged to locate in these areas, in which it should be planned to have off-street loading facilities and off-street parking.

Many of the existing stores will be encouraged to remain along Woodland Avenue to serve the local neighborhood needs. The strong asset provided to Southwest Schuylkill by the existing supermarket, speciality shops, and counseling center which serve within the community at the present time should remain. Indiscriminate penetration of commercial uses into residential neighborhoods and strip commercial activities on through streets will be discouraged.

About 7 acres on the western edge of Woodlands Cemetery is to become the site of the new Ellison Middle School.

PROPOSED STREET CHANGES

Under complete replanning, streets would be redesigned to discourage through traffic in residential neighborhoods. However, because of the need to serve the existing residential properties and the importance of the existing streets in serving the regional needs, there are no major street changes proposed at this time in the Southwest Schuylkill Redevelopment Area Plan. Any proposed street changes that may occur with future development will be designed with the agreement of the City Planning Commission and the Department of Streets.

The plan for transportation in the Comprehensive Plan proposes two expressways (52nd Street and the Cobbs Creek) in the general vicinity of the Southwest Schuylkill Redevelopment Area. However, neither of these expressway corridors have been finalized and every effort will be made, when these plans are implemented, to reduce to a minimum the impact of these expressways upon the community. The fullest community participation will be sought in the decision-making process.

In most of the sections of the Southwest Schuylkill Redevelopment Area, where the existing buildings are to be retained, the street pattern will remain virtually unchanged so that all properties will continue to have street frontage. Where clearance is proposed, it will become possible to close some of the minor streets in order to consolidate the land into larger parcels.

EXISTING ZONING

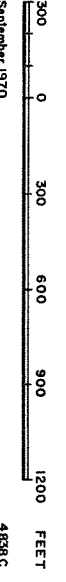


- 9 * RESIDENTIAL
 - 10 C2 COMMERCIAL
 - 4 G2 GENERAL INDUSTRIAL RECREATIONAL
- * number indicates district



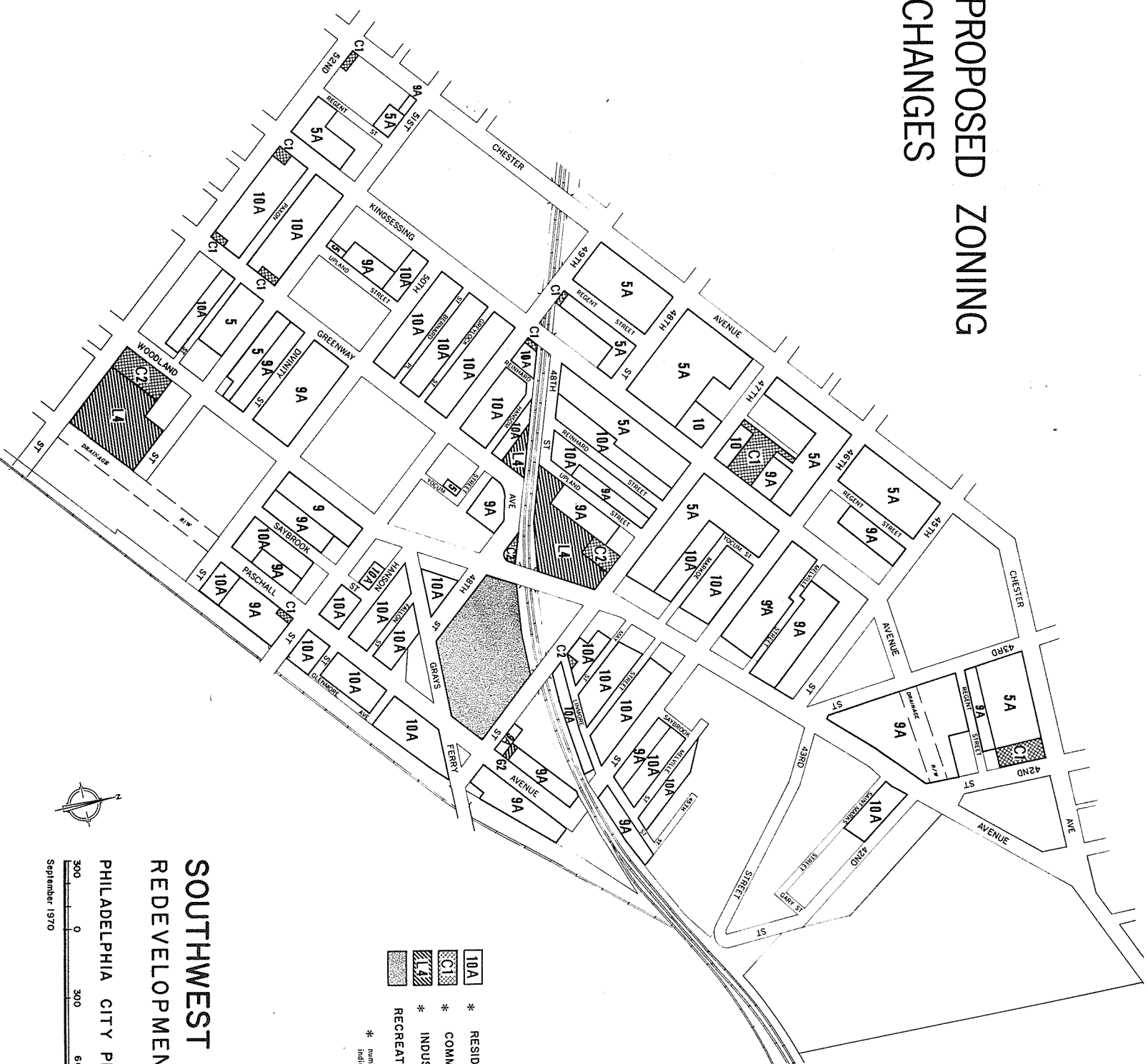
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

SOUTHWEST SCHUYLKILL REDEVELOPMENT AREA PLAN



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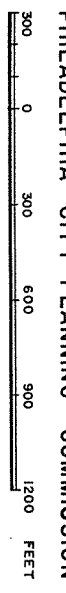
PROPOSED ZONING CHANGES



- | | | |
|---|-----|----------------|
|  | 10A | * RESIDENTIAL |
|  | C1 | * COMMERCIAL |
|  | * | * INDUSTRIAL |
|  | * | * RECREATIONAL |
- * number one/ or letter indicates district



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EXISTING ZONING

In Southwest Schuylkill, the existing zoning gives only a general indication of the present pattern of land usage. The residential district designations do not precisely conform to the actual house types already built. An extensive area is zoned for commercial development, but is used for recreation. In several blocks, boundaries between zoning districts do not follow the existing lot lines.

An unplanned mixture of uses is permitted by the zoning without adequate controls to insure that adjacent uses are compatible. Generally, the blocks in which conditions warrant clearance are those in which a mixture of industrial and residential uses have been permitted along the same street frontage.

PROPOSED ZONING CHANGES

The zoning regulations are the basic controls which govern the use of a property, limit the floor area of new construction, and determine the general location of new buildings on a lot.

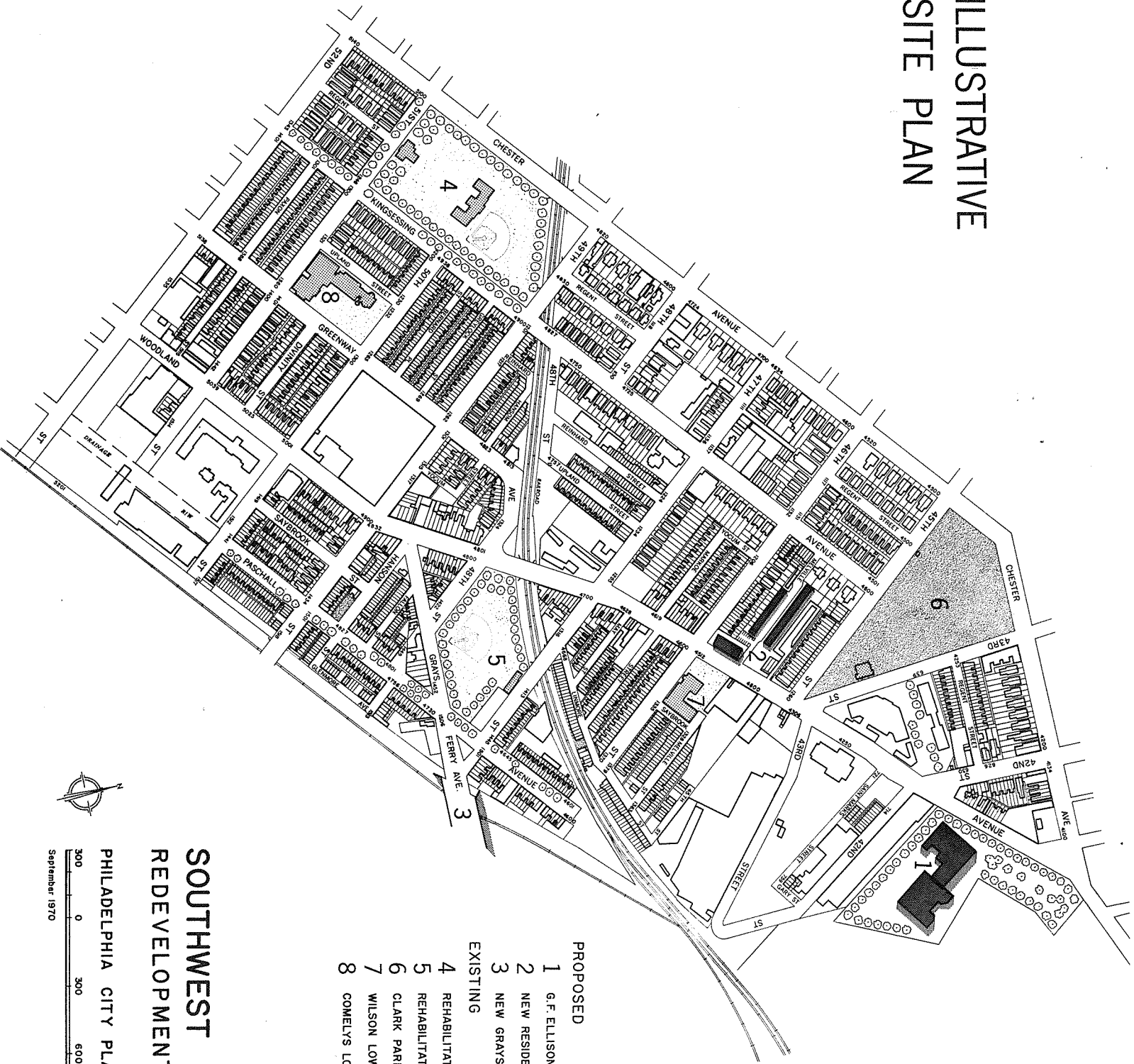
Zoning changes will be made to accommodate new developments as they are required. The R-9 and R-10 Residential category will be changed to R-9A and R-10A Residential for the bulk of the existing single-family, row house development. Any new residential construction will be intended to conform with proposed residential zoning. The actual proposals may dictate a different type of zoning depending on the types of ownership, set backs, rear yards or other determining characteristics. The C-2 Commercial zoning along Woodland Avenue will remain basically unchanged.

The proposed zoning remapping will correct many of the mixtures of land uses and district designation that are not compatible at the present time.

ILLUSTRATIVE SITE PLAN

The illustrative site plan indicates the range of possibilities that can be accomplished through the selective use of land acquisition and general encouragement of rehabilitation throughout the area. This site plan is intended to act as a guide for any new construction and rehabilitation, and will be refined as more definite proposals become available.

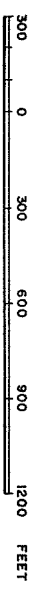
ILLUSTRATIVE SITE PLAN



- PROPOSED**
- 1 G. F. ELLISON MIDDLE SCHOOL
 - 2 NEW RESIDENTIAL HOUSING
 - 3 NEW GRAVS FERRY BRIDGE
- EXISTING**
- 4 REHABILITATED KINGSCESSING RECREATION CENTER
 - 5 REHABILITATED 48TH & WOODLAND PLAYGROUND
 - 6 CLARK PARK
 - 7 WILSON LOWER SCHOOL
 - 8 COMELY'S LOWER SCHOOL

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PROPOSED STANDARDS

The proposed standards for density, land coverage and building intensity will be controlled by the zoning district regulations.

Throughout the area, in connection with all the proposed development, street trees and appropriate landscaping should be provided to create attractive settings for new and existing buildings.

REHOUSING OF DISPLACED FAMILIES

The proposal as shown on the preliminary site plan indicates the need to relocate ten families. It is estimated that new residential construction and rehabilitation in the area will furnish opportunities for relocation within the area, if the families so desire. The Relocation Service in the Office of the Deputy Managing Director for Housing will assist in the relocation of these families. Any commercial and industrial relocation will be handled through the Department of Commerce in conjunction with the Redevelopment Authority. Those families relocated by the new Grays Ferry Avenue Bridge will be assisted by the State Department of Transportation.

ESTIMATED COST OF ACQUISITION

At present in the Southwest Schuylkill Redevelopment Area, the only active renewal project is the 1200 Melville Street site which is part of the City-State Renewal Program. The Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority estimates that \$400,000 is the cost of this project.

CONTROLS

The Pennsylvania Urban Redevelopment Law of 1945, as amended, and the United States Housing Act of 1949, as amended, regulate Philadelphia's redevelopment and urban renewal.

Redevelopment in the Southwest Schuylkill Redevelopment Area will be in conformity with the provisions of the Redevelopment Area Plan. It will be in accord with the requirements of any urban renewal plan prepared by the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Philadelphia for this area and will comply with the Code of General Ordinances of the City of Philadelphia. All plans and proposals prepared by the Redevelopment Authority will be subject to the recommendations of the City Planning Commission and the approval of the Council of the City of Philadelphia.

