

EAST FRANKFORD

**REDEVELOPMENT AREA PLAN
2020**

PHILADELPHIA
2035

CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

Jim Kenney, Mayor



Philadelphia City Planning Commission

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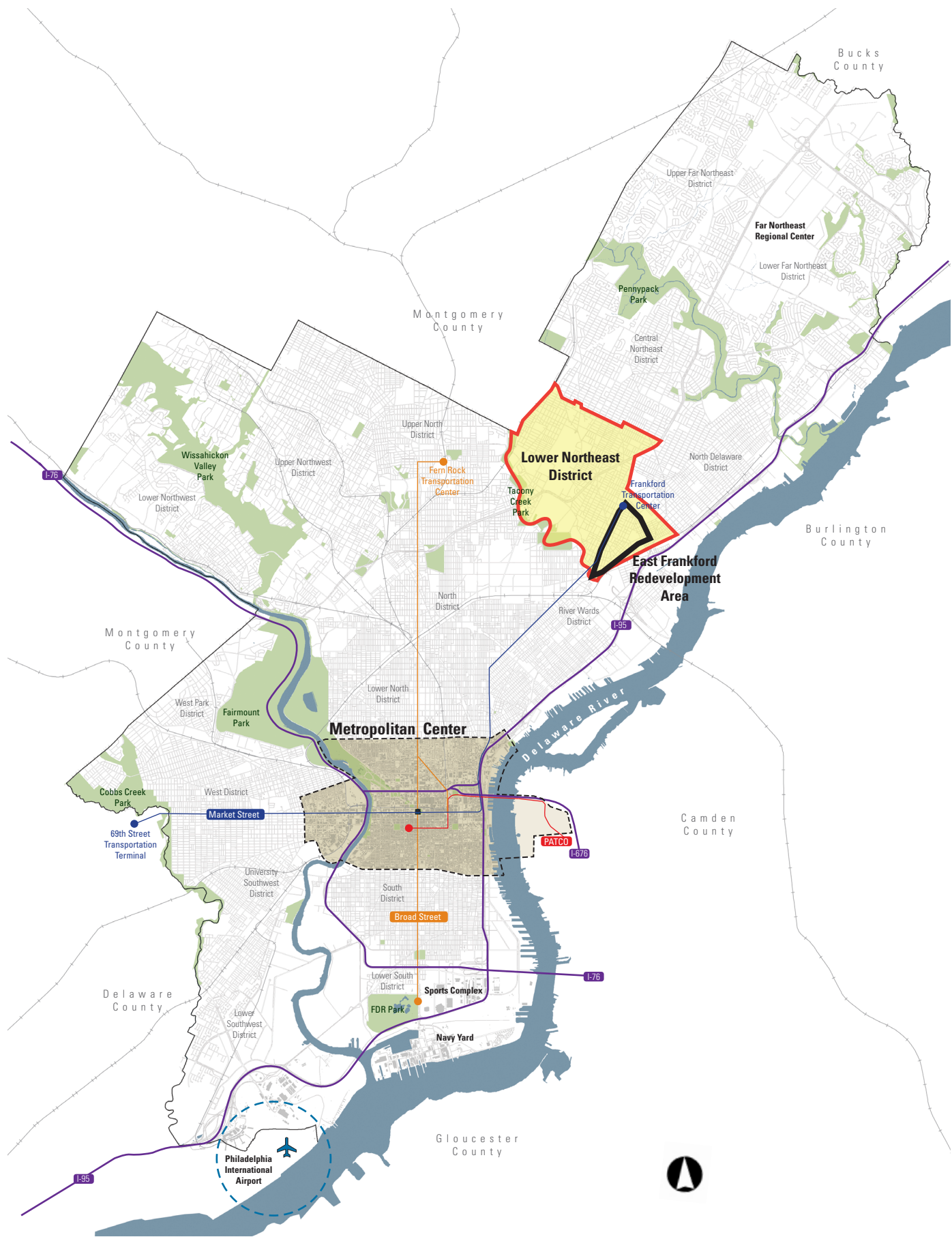
Director of Community Planning

Dave Munson, AICP

Lower Northeast District Planner

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January 21, 2020

Mr. Gregory Heller
Mr. Angel Rodriguez
Philadelphia Housing Development Corporation
1234 Market Street, 16th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19107

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RE: East Frankford Redevelopment Area Plan

Dear Messrs. Heller and Rodriguez:

Transmitted herewith is the East Frankford Redevelopment Area Plan which has been updated by the Philadelphia City Planning Commission in accordance with the provisions of the Urban Redevelopment Law of May 24, 1945, P.L. 991, as amended.

This Redevelopment Area Plan covers the area bounded by Frankford Avenue to the northwest, Bridge Street to the east, and Torresdale Avenue to the south.

It is in conformity with the recommendations of the City's comprehensive plan, Philadelphia2035: Citywide Vision (adopted June 2011) and Lower Northeast District Plan (October 2012). Therefore, the Planning Commission approved the East Frankford Redevelopment Area Plan at its meeting of January 21, 2020.

Sincerely,

Eleanor Sharpe
Executive Director

cc: John Haak, Director, Planning Policy and Analysis, PCPC
Laura Spina, Director, Community Planning, PCPC
Dave Munson, Community Planner, PCPC

Enclosure: East Frankford Redevelopment Area Plan

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Certification

WHEREAS Pennsylvania Urban Redevelopment Law, Act of May 24, 1945 (P.L. 991 as amended), authorizes the Philadelphia City Planning Commission to certify as blighted specific areas which may then, in whole or in part, be made the subject of redevelopment proposals formulated by the Redevelopment Authority in accordance with said Act, and

WHEREAS, in October 1969, the Philadelphia City Planning Commission certified certain areas as blighted, and

WHEREAS the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority holds land within the Redevelopment Area, which must be disposed of in accordance with an updated Redevelopment Area Plan, and

WHEREAS the Philadelphia City Planning Commission concurs with the findings and conclusions set forth in this staff report, and further recognizes this Redevelopment Area Plan to be in conformance with Philadelphia 2035, the City's Comprehensive Plan,

NOW THEREFORE, this 21st day of January 2020, the Philadelphia City Planning Commission hereby finds, based upon its staff report dated January 16, 2020, that the area bounded by Frankford Avenue, Bridge Street, and Torresdale Avenue exhibit the following characteristic of blight as established by Pennsylvania Urban Redevelopment Law:

- Economically or socially undesirable land uses.



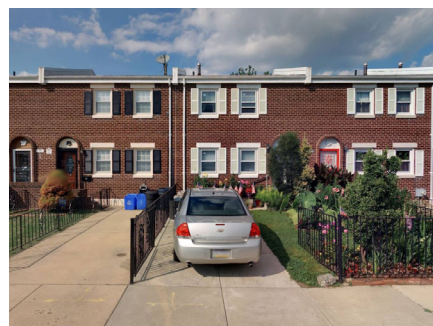
The properties above are both publicly-owned, but after being left vacant for years are being utilized by their neighbors. Many publicly-owned properties are being used for both residential and commercial purposes, as yards, gardens, and parking lots.

Introduction

The Philadelphia City Planning Commission (PCPC) created the *East Frankford Redevelopment Area* and the *Meadow Redevelopment Area Plan* in 1969. Their purpose was to facilitate the removal of blighted properties in the area bounded by Margaret Street, Ditman Street, Orthodox Street, Leshner Street, and Darrah Street; and the redevelopment of these properties and adjacent vacant lots as new housing. Forty houses were built in this redevelopment area in the mid-1970s.

The *East Frankford Redevelopment Area Plan* renames these redevelopment areas and this redevelopment area plan supersedes both previous plans.

The Redevelopment Area is bounded by Frankford Avenue to the northwest, Bridge Street to the east, and Torresdale Avenue to the south. It encompasses approximately 364 acres with a population of about 11,931 people and roughly 5,234 dwelling units, of which 80 percent are occupied, according to the 2017 American Community Survey. The Redevelopment Area exists within PCPC's Lower Northeast planning district.



Improvement in East Frankford is happening slowly. These include new stormwater infrastructure (top), PRA-developed housing built in the 70s (middle), and the most recently built house in the Area, built in 2009 (bottom).

Redevelopment Objectives

The *East Frankford Redevelopment Area Plan* is a statement of long-term community development intentions, and a means of advancing the implementation of project proposals that are ready to proceed. The principal purpose for establishing a redevelopment area is to allow selective public interventions that will promote the conservation of positive physical characteristics.

This plan's objective is to maintain an active Redevelopment Area Plan to enable the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority to dispose of property which it holds, in accord with state Redevelopment law. Further acquisitions could take place if the Commission recertified the area as blighted and if the Redevelopment Authority completed a blight determination.

Existing Conditions

The East Frankford Redevelopment Area was published in October 1969. The blight certification for the area was based on the following criteria:

- Inadequate planning of the area;
- Unsafe, unsanitary, and inadequate condition of certain buildings;
- Excessive land coverage;
- Lack of proper light, air and open space;
- Defective arrangement of buildings;
- Faulty street and lot layout;
- And economically and socially undesirable land uses.

At that time, the City Planning Commission also cited the following reasons to justify redevelopment: 530 deteriorating housing units; 66 dilapidated housing units; and 333 housing units with 1.01 or more persons per room, evidence of overcrowding.

Objectives included: the construction of new housing; correction of blighting land uses; improvements in the street layout; and additional recreational sites. While forty new housing units were built, few of the other objectives were met.

The criterion that still applies to this redevelopment area is economically and socially undesirable land uses, specifically vacant land. Approximately nine percent of the land in the redevelopment area is vacant. The City of Philadelphia owns 24 vacant parcels, the Philadelphia Land Bank owns 54, and the Redevelopment Authority owns seven. In addition, there are three parcels owned by the City of Philadelphia, three owned by the Philadelphia Land Bank, and three owned by the Redevelopment Authority that are currently being used as yards or gardens by neighboring property owners. One parcel owned by the Philadelphia Land Bank and one owned by the Redevelopment Authority are being used by neighboring property owners for commercial purposes (storing cars).



Vacancy in East Frankford takes many forms, including vacant buildings next to incompatible uses (top), next to the El (middle), or vacant lots being repurposed for neighbor's needs (bottom).



Public Improvements

Philadelphia 2035, the City's Comprehensive Plan, recommends:

- Targeting redevelopment projects around the Church Street, Arrott Transportation Center, and Frankford Transportation Center El stations;
- Developing the Frankford Creek Greenway;
- Improving lighting;
- More frequent street and sidewalk cleaning;
- Increasing the use of green stormwater management infrastructure;
- Increasing the tree canopy on major roads, public properties, and cemeteries;
- Completing a Mural Arts project and installing new pedestrian-scaled lighting along Frankford Avenue;
- Streetscape improvements along Church Street and Torresdale Avenue;
- Vacant lot improvements at Church Street and Tackawanna Street; and
- Developing a form-based zoning overlay for the Frankford Avenue corridor.

Housing of Displaced Families

No families are anticipated to be displaced by the redevelopment of currently vacant lots.

Estimated Cost of Acquisition

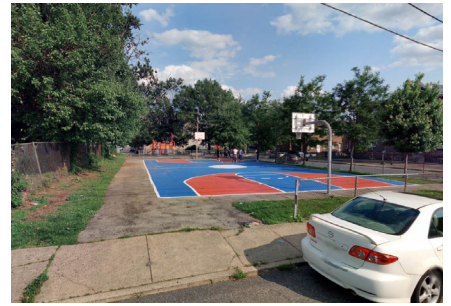
No acquisition through condemnation is anticipated at this time. However, some may occur at a later time through condemnation, land bank acquisitions, tax sale or other methods.

Proposed Standards and Controls

The Philadelphia Zoning Code shall continue to provide general regulation of permitted uses, development densities, parking and loading, and dimensional requirements. To ensure that development will complement existing uses, development controls may be established on a case by case basis as redevelopment proposals are submitted to the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority for approval.

Illustrative Site Plans

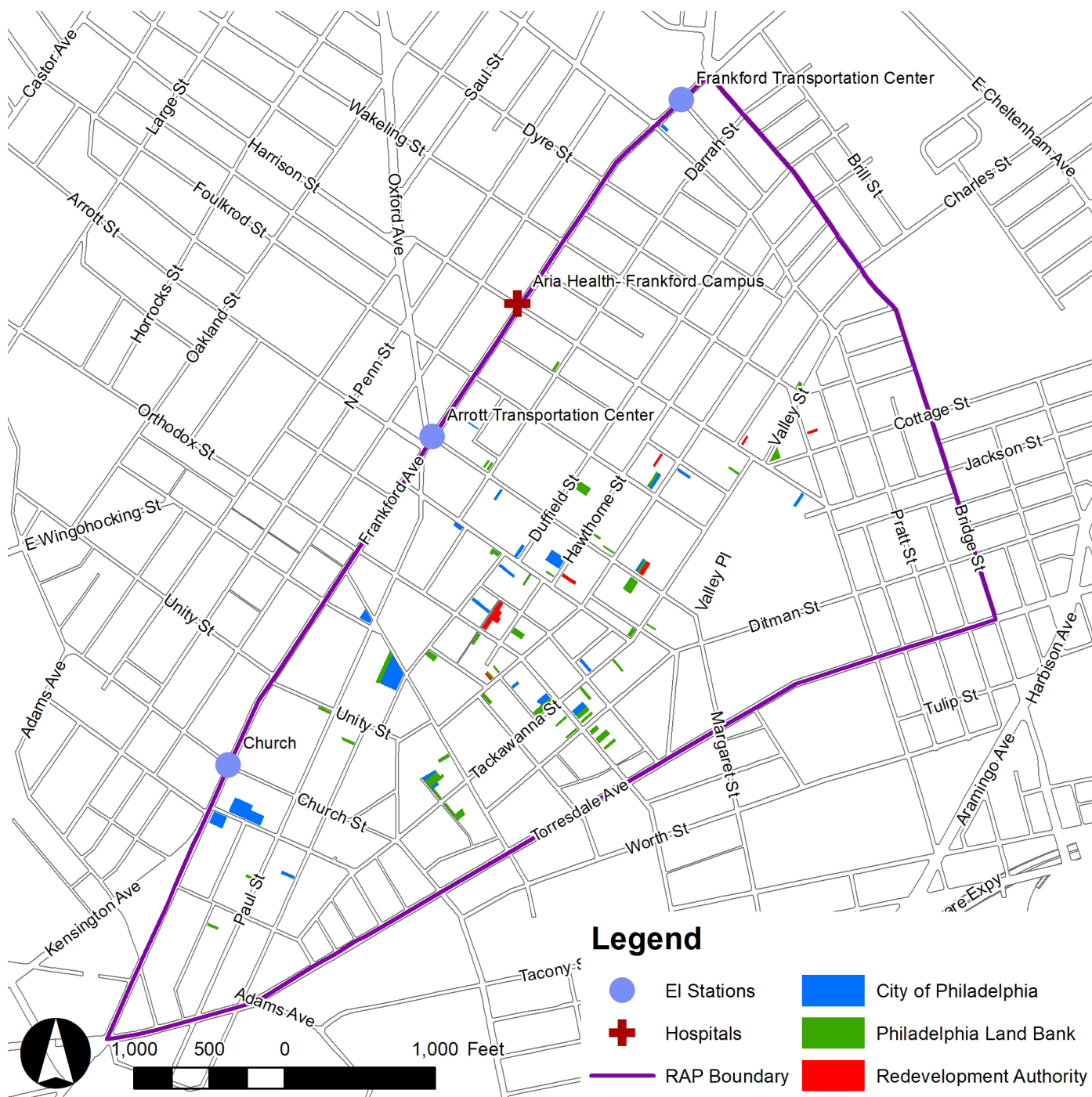
No illustrative site plan is included because no large-scale acquisitions are anticipated at this time.



Important civic institutional uses in East Frankford include parks and recreation centers, schools, and religious institutions, many of which are historic.

Publicly-Owned Surplus Property

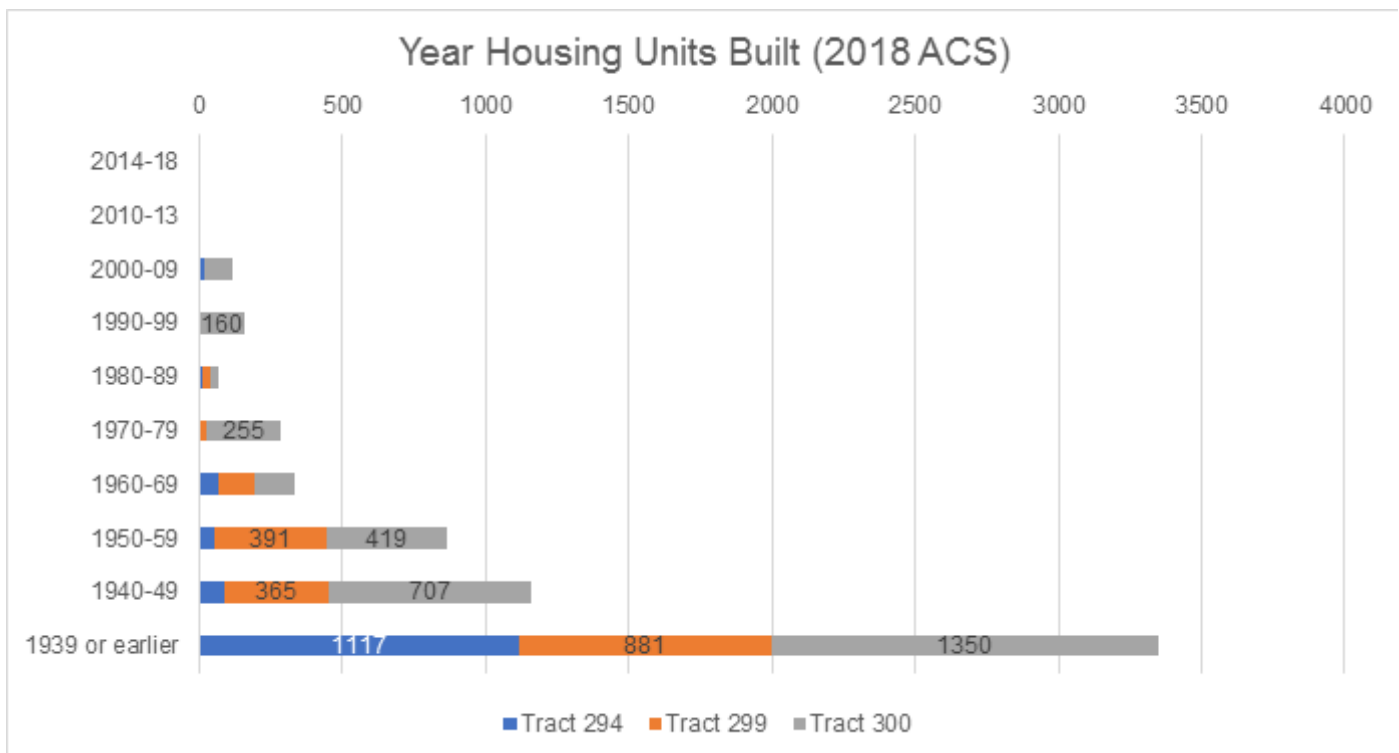
Approximately 102 parcels in this Redevelopment area are publicly owned and available for sale. That land is held by: the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority (12); Philadelphia Land Bank (62); and the Department of Public Property (28). The Redevelopment Area Plan is only needed to guide disposition of land held by the Redevelopment Authority and acquired through condemnation.



Source: Philadelphia City Planning Commission

Housing Units Built (2010-2018)

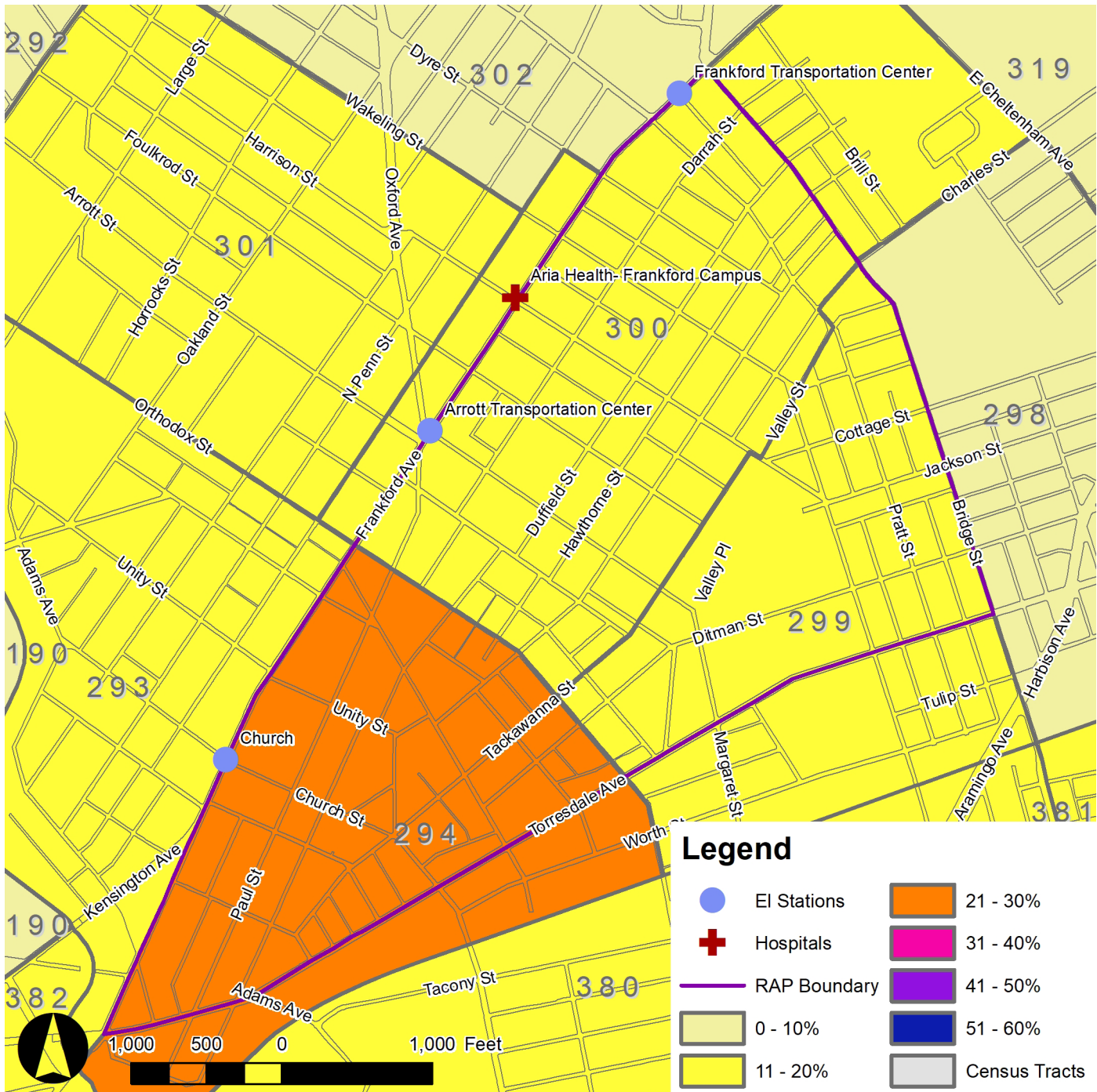
The 2018 American Community Survey (ACS) shows no new housing units built in the three tracts in the Redevelopment Area since 2010 (in the case of Tract 299, since 1990). The ACS is an estimate based on a survey and for most of these years has a margin of error of 10 to 15 units. Permit information from the Department of Licenses and Inspections (L&I) confirms that no new housing units have been built since 2010. One property applied for a zoning use permit in 2012 to build eight apartment units, but as of July 2019 no construction has happened on the site. The most recent new housing unit built in the Redevelopment area was one single-family detached house built at 1804 Pratt Street (formerly a vacant lot) in 2009 after it was acquired by a new property owner through a sheriff's sale. The L&I database goes back to 2007, and this is the only housing unit built in the redevelopment area in that time. In contrast, the 2018 ACS estimates that 21,044 housing units, or three percent of all housing units, were built in the City of Philadelphia since 2010.



Source: 2018 American Community Survey

Tax Delinquency (as of 2019) by Census Tract

Tax delinquency data represents a snapshot in time. This map shows the percentage of tax delinquent properties by Census Tract. Lighter colored tracts have the fewest delinquent parcels, while darker colored tracts have the most. In 2019, 25 percent of taxable properties in Tract 294, 16 percent in Tract 299, and 18 percent in Tract 300 were delinquent.



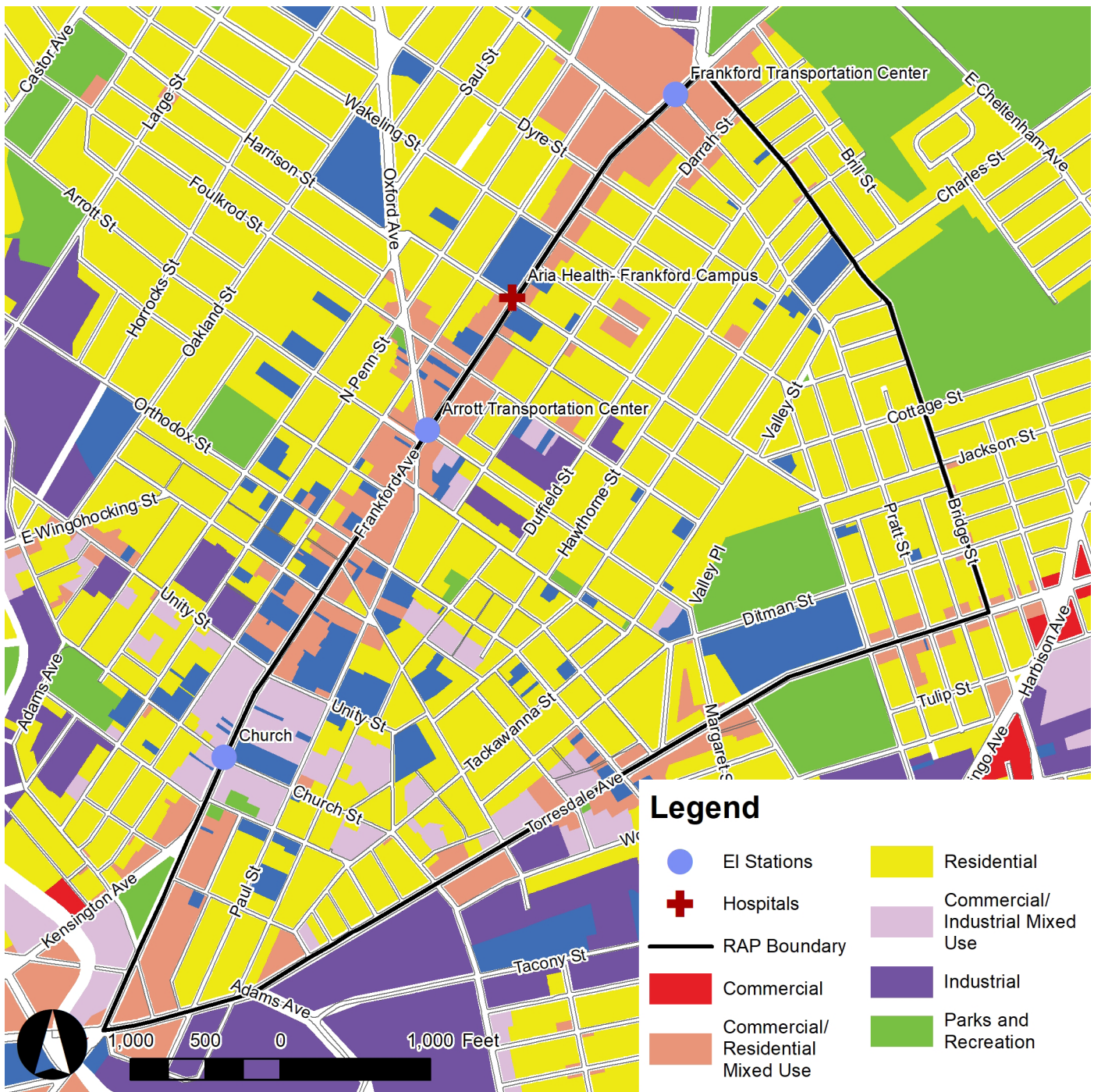
Source: Philadelphia Office of Property Assessment

Proposed Land Use

The proposed land use map illustrates desirable development patterns given the assumptions contained in the Comprehensive Plan's recommendations. Since vacancy is not a desirable condition, it is not shown. The proposed land uses accommodate all categories and subcategories allowed by right in the Philadelphia Zoning Code.

- Commercial: CA-1 and CA-2;
- Commercial/Residential Mixed Use: CMX-1, CMX-2, CMX-2.5, and CMX-3;
- Residential: RM-1, RM-2, RM-3, RM-4, RSA-1, RSA-2, RSA-3, RSA-5, and RSD-1;
- Commercial/Industrial Mixed Use: ICMX;
- Industrial: I-1, I-2, I-3, and IRMX; and
- Parks and Recreation: SP-PO-A.

Conforming with the land use recommendations in this document does not imply support of a proposal at the Zoning Board of Adjustment.



Source: Philadelphia City Planning Commission

Current Zoning

Zoning is the primary tool to regulate land use (use), where a building can locate on the property (area), and building size (bulk). The zoning of a parcel is analyzed to ensure that it can implement the desired future land use.

Large parts of the Redevelopment Area had the zoning updated in 2014, and reflect the zoning proposed in the Comprehensive Plan. No zoning changes are currently proposed.

