

RIVER WARDS DISTRICT

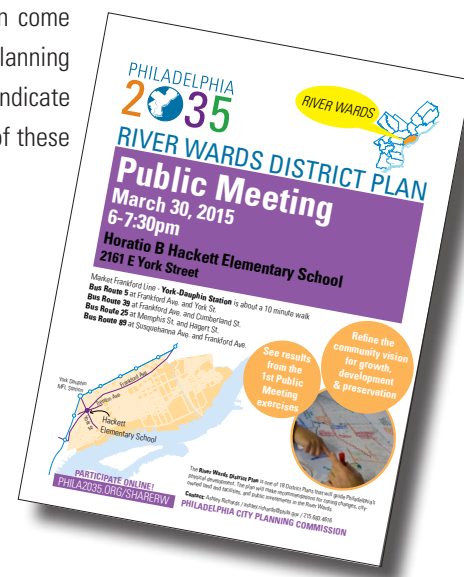
Second Public Meeting Summary

Over 80 residents attended the second of three public meetings for the River Wards District Plan. The meeting was held on March 30, 2015 at Horatio B. Hackett Elementary School, which is located at 2161 East York Street near the intersection of York Street, Trenton Avenue, and Frankford Avenue. This critical part of the planning process served two purposes: to provide an update on the planning process and to obtain community input on a variety of topics.

Arriving residents were greeted with two stations where they were asked to comment on topics of shared interest that relate to the entire District. At the first station, residents were asked to identify places worthy of preservation. The second station asked for input on the unique urban design challenges associated with the Market-Frankford elevated structure on Kensington Avenue and Front Street.

After an update on the River Wards planning process, participants broke into small groups for facilitated discussions on three Focus Areas. Focus Areas are locations where multiple layers of public intervention (e.g. zoning changes, land sales or acquisitions, infrastructure improvements, business incentives, etc.) can come together to create positive momentum and revitalize specific intersections, corridors, or neighborhoods. Planning Commission staff asked groups to identify their priorities with written comments and by using stickers to indicate preferences for various public realm improvements within three Focus Areas. A more detailed synopsis of these proceedings follows.

The final public meeting will be held on June 2, 2015 at Kensington High School for the Creative and Performing Arts, 1901 N. Front Street.



March 30, 2015

Horatio B. Hackett Elementary School



Station 1: Neighborhood Preservation

At this station, residents were asked to highlight places they thought were in need of preservation by placing sticky notes on a map of the District.

Maritime History and Access to the Waterfront: Several comments identified the strong connection between the River Wards District and the Delaware River. The River has been the industrial, port, and resource lifeline of the District for hundreds of years. Suggestions included:

- Preserve the Delaware Generating Station as a Waterfront Heritage and Archaeology Museum
- Increase public access to the river for recreation, including expanding Pulaski Park

Open Spaces: Residents also expressed a desire to preserve and expand open space in the District.

- Revitalize Harrowgate Park and Heitzman Playground to recognize their role as shared community space
- Preserve the railroad right-of-way along Lehigh Avenue for a recreational trail or park

Great Buildings: The District has an exceptional complement of historically significant buildings, including:

- Allegheny Avenue Churches
- Western Savings Fund building
- Saint Laurentius Church
- Lithuanian Music Hall



Station 2: Improving the Kensington Avenue MFL

The Market-Frankford Line (MFL) carries more passengers than any other transit line in Philadelphia. The MFL provides residents of the River Wards district fast, frequent service to the Metropolitan Center. While the benefits of such mobility are hard to overstate, the looming elevated structure can act as a physical and psychological barrier. At this board, residents were asked to make suggestions about how the City can help this vital neighborhood corridor realize its full potential.

Elevated Structure: Residents commented that physical changes to the elevated structure could improve the general feel of the corridor. Suggestions included:

- Make the structure more colorful
- Add brighter lighting
- Find opportunities for public art

Land Use: Participants also felt that proactive land use policies could improve conditions by encouraging better development of underutilized land.

- Find uses for empty lots near stations
- Pursue tax-delinquent owners and seize properties for redevelopment
- Broaden development options through zoning
- Add development potential at Erie Torresdale Station
- Support mixed-use zoning along elevated tracks

Public Realm: Finally, residents commented that physical improvements to areas adjacent to the corridor could help make the corridor itself more inviting.

- Establish safe pedestrian access to stations
- Improve safety at Harrowgate Park

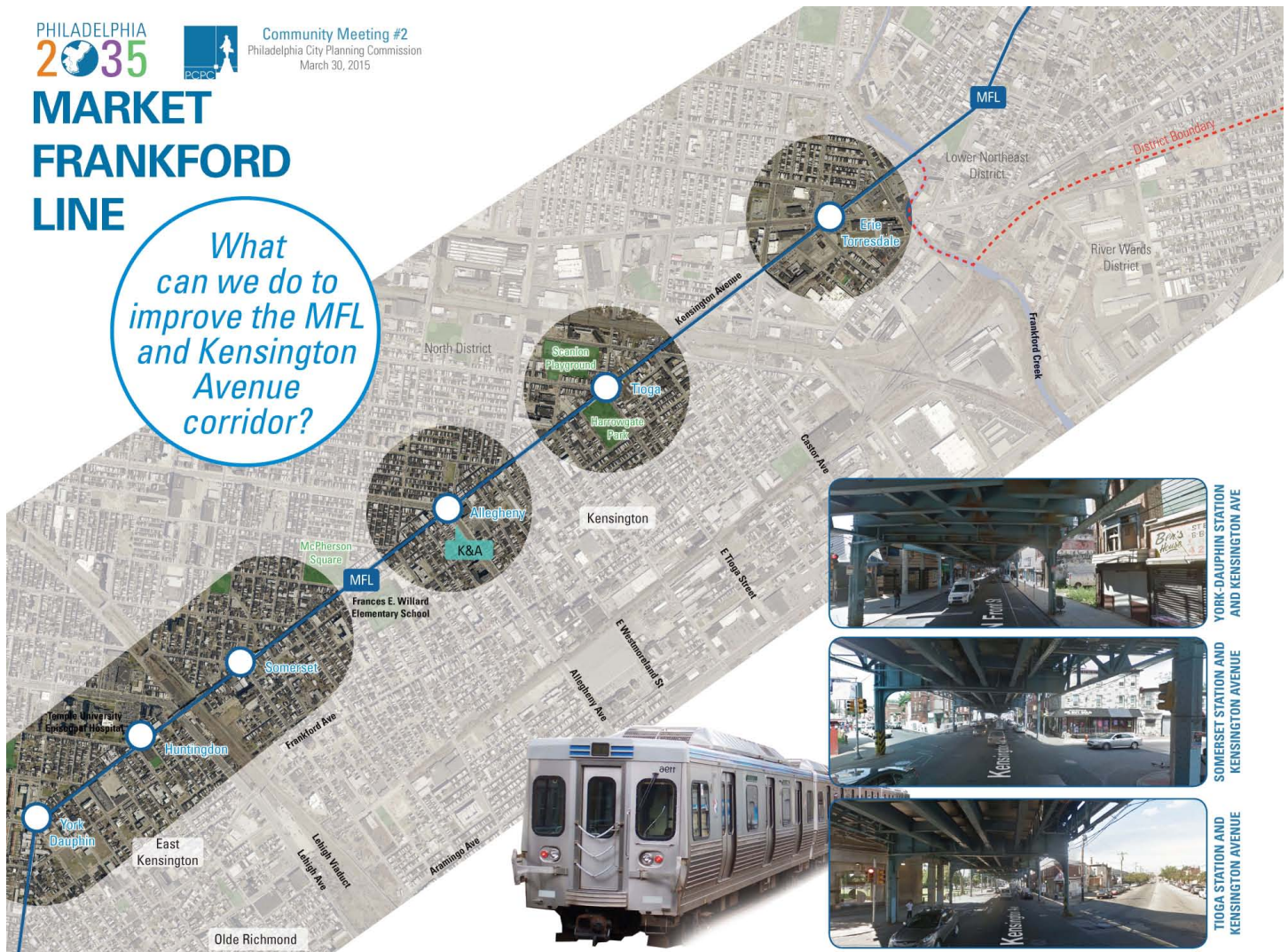
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Community Meeting #2
Philadelphia City Planning Commission
March 30, 2015

MARKET FRANKFORD LINE

*What
can we do to
improve the MFL
and Kensington
Avenue
corridor?*



A. Focus Area Exercise > Lehigh Avenue Corridor

In this exercise, citizens were presented with a menu of potential improvements to the Lehigh Avenue Corridor from Kensington Avenue to I-95. This corridor includes Lehigh Avenue, the railroad viaduct, and Somerset Street. The participants were each given two stickers that could be placed near their top two preferred improvements.

Viaduct Underpass Safety Improvements	27%
I-95 Underpass Improvements	8%
Buffered Bike Lanes on Lehigh Avenue	11%
Somerset Street Safety Improvements	21%
Improve Veteran's Memorial Triangle	5%
Improve the Block around Cione Recreation Center	4%
Improve Corridor Gateways at Lehigh Avenue	12%
Increase Commercial Zoning along Lehigh Avenue	12%

What is missing from this menu of options? The top answers were:

- Anti-litter and anti-dumping measures, including street cleaning, trash receptacles, and clean-ups of dump sites along the CSX viaduct
- Traffic Calming on Lehigh Avenue and Aramingo Avenue, including lane reduction, angled parking, greening, and curb extensions
- Public art, murals, or flags celebrating the corridor

Lehigh Avenue Corridor

Restoring neighborhood connections

1 Help us to prioritize improvements along the Lehigh Avenue corridor.

Pick two sets of improvements that you would like to see happen **THE MOST**. Place a dot by each choice.

Viaduct Underpass Safety Improvements



Underpass lighting and artistic signage, night view Underpass lighting and artistic signage, day view

Improve Veteran's Memorial Triangle



Memorial Triangle could become more welcoming, existing conditions Memorial, existing conditions

I-95 Underpass Improvements



Underpass public art Underpass public art

Improve the Block around Cione Rec Center



Sidewalk and landscaping at Aramingo Avenue Sidewalk and landscaping at Lehigh Avenue

Buffered Bike Lanes on Lehigh Avenue



Buffered bike lane example, green lane and striping Buffered bike lane example striping and hooded bollards

Improve Corridor Gateways at Lehigh Avenue



Aramingo Gateway, entrance traveling south Frankford Gateway, entrance traveling north

Somerset Street Safety Improvements



Somerset Street at Tully Street Somerset Street at Aramingo Avenue

Increase Commercial Zoning along Lehigh Ave



Commercial uses adjacent to bike facilities Existing zoning

2 What is missing from the previous options and where?



2nd Public Meeting March 30, 2015
Philadelphia City Planning Commission

RIVER WARDS DISTRICT



For the second Focus Area, participants were presented with the opportunity to share comments on Allegheny Avenue from Campbell Square to the Delaware River, the intersection of Allegheny Avenue and Richmond Street, and the area northeast of Allegheny Avenue along Richmond Street. The most popular comments are shown below each question.

- Pedestrian improvements
- Streetscape refinement
- Wayfinding
- A retail mix with more shopping and restaurants
- Celebration of Polish heritage

- Interpretive and wayfinding signs
- A more family-friendly retail mix
- Traffic calming and streetscape improvements

- Connect and improve Monkiewicz Recreation Center
- More commercial development
- Improve the streetscape: trees, street furnishings, etc.
- Improve the SEPTA terminal with physical improvements and staffing

Improving the convergence of recreational and commercial activities

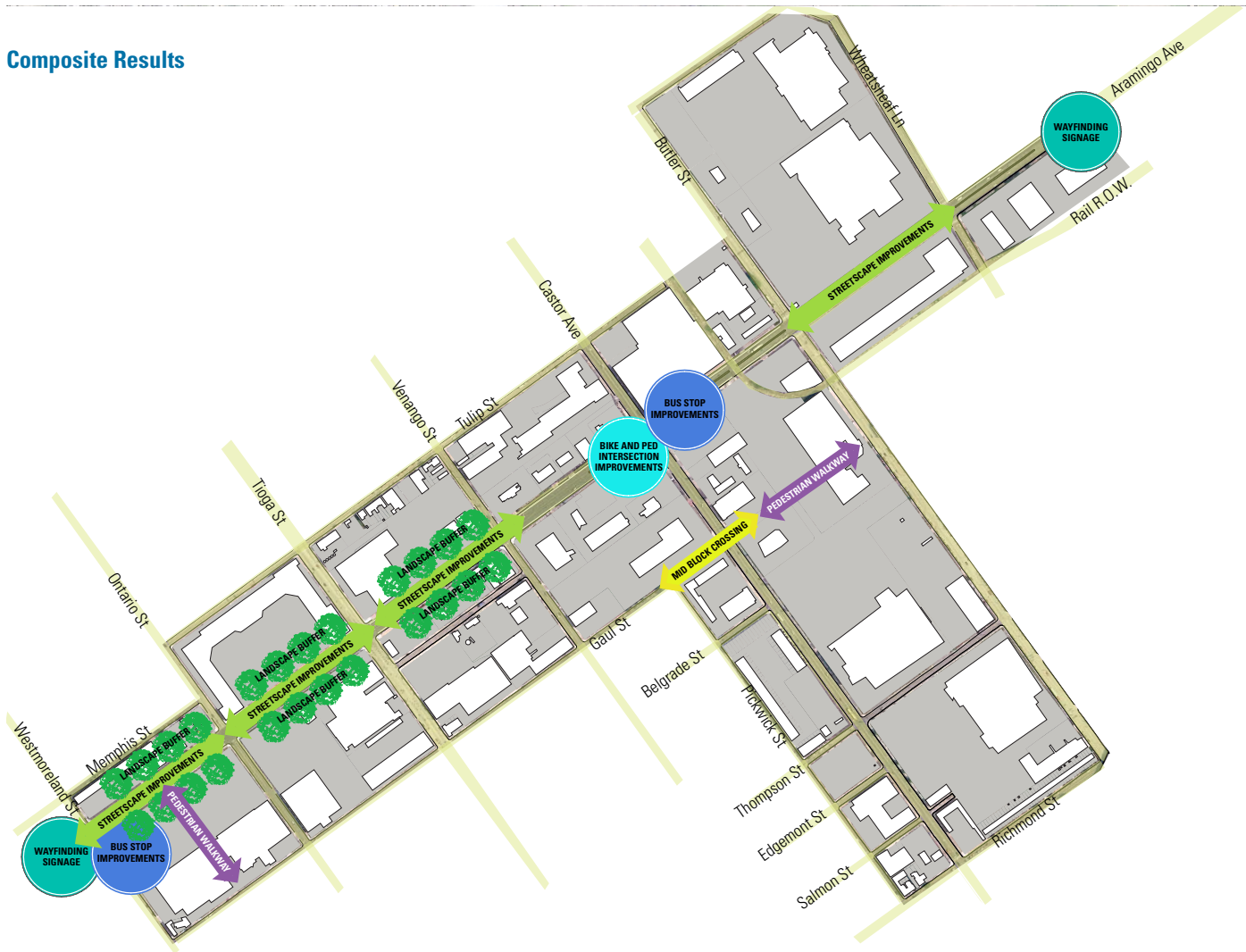


C. Focus Area Exercise > Aramingo Shopping District

The third Focus Area is the auto-oriented shopping district on Aramingo Avenue between East Westmoreland Street and the Frankford Creek. The area's large-format retail stores are a popular draw for shoppers both in and outside the River Wards. However, the Avenue presents a relatively unfriendly face to those arriving by bus, bike, or on foot. In this exercise, residents were asked to choose the best places to add public realm and safety improvements in this Focus Area. Participants were given stickers that identified various interventions. Each table was directed to agree on where each intervention should be occur on the corridor

The following image shows a composite of the exercise results with a written description below:

Composite Results



Streetscape Improvements: Aramingo Avenue between Westmoreland and Venango, and Aramingo Avenue between Butler and Wheatstheaf



Landscape Buffer: Aramingo Avenue between Westmoreland and Venango



Bike/Ped Intersection Improvements: Intersection of Aramingo and Castor



Wayfinding Signage: Two locations along Aramingo Avenue, at Frankford Creek and at Westmoreland Street



Pedestrian Walkways: Through K-Mart/Pathmark parking lot and ShopRite parking lot



Mid-block Crossing: Intersection of Castor and Gaul



Bus Stop Improvements: Intersection of Aramingo and Castor Avenues, and Intersection of Aramingo and Westmoreland



Appendix of General Comments:

General Comments from the District Preservation Station:

- Re-zone Huntington Station area
- Assure safety near Huntington Station
- More greenery and art and trash cans
- Kensington Avenue needs more lighting and beautifying
- Keep industrial zoning at Philadelphia Coke Co. site
- Recycle
- Take care of the environment and don't pollute

General Comments from the MFL Station:

- Address empty lots around York Station
- Put more trash cans under the EI
- Start a business association under the EI
- Make the area greener
- Need lighting under the EI
- Add pedestrian lighting
- Create a Vietnamese heritage night
- Consider downsizing the commercial corridor to broaden development options
- Hold tax delinquent property owners accountable
- More public art
- Rezone I-2 properties to IRMX or ICMX
- Make EI structure colorful
- Harrowgate Park is nice but not safe
- There is no safe pedestrian route to Tioga Station
- Encourage buildings to have ground floor retail uses with residential uses above
- Upzone properties around Erie-Torresdale Station

General Comments from the Focus Area Exercises:

A. Focus Area Exercise > Lehigh Avenue Corridor

- Tulip Street needs trash cans
- Release rail-controlled land from the railroad
- Integrate schools into public improvement projects
- Safety for all underpass walking spaces—rail and highway
- Extend Lehigh Avenue to the Delaware River
- Focus on “quick wins”
- New lighting should use LED bulbs
- Fixtures should be durable/low-maintenance
- A food co-op would do well in the corridor
- Focus on the streetscape improvements first, then shift to attracting more commercial uses
- Activate the space at Frankford Street and Lehigh Avenue to discourage illegal dumping
- Find a better use for the space under I-95
- Encourage the sale of empty lots on Lehigh Avenue
- Recreation Centers are unsafe, unkempt, and unstaffed
- Underpasses at Emerald, Belgrade, and Thomas could help inform new designs
- Partner with local schools
- Soften concrete walls

B. Focus Area Exercise > Port Richmond Gateway

Question 1: What would support Allegheny Avenue having a stronger identity?

- Repave Richmond Street
- Business associations could help with weird laws
- Make use of the Storefront Improvement Program
- Remove bike lane and restore two traffic lanes in each direction on Allegheny to mitigate construction traffic
- Accessibility to Delaware River
- More trash cans
- Less truck traffic
- Keep churches open
- Define space between Allegheny and gas stations with fences
- A café on Allegheny Avenue
- Pierogies are good!
- Slow down traffic on Allegheny
- A big welcome sign
- A cultural festival

Question 2: How can the intersection of Allegheny Avenue and Richmond Street become a gateway for the neighborhood?

- An electric billboard
- Remove chain link fences
- Enforce truck traffic rules on Richmond Street
- Add a boat launch to Pulaski Park
- Add more parking
- The neighborhood gateway is at Campbell Square
- A big sign
- Build a gateway arch at the intersection
- Add a turning lane during the street widening project
- Route traffic south near the Delaware Avenue extension to take traffic off of Richmond Street
- Screen industrial uses
- Add a buffered bike lane on Allegheny Avenue

Question 3: What is your long-term vision for the outlined area?

- Add a dog park to Monkiewicz Recreation Center
- Historic preservation of Churches
- Trash cans
- Industrial protection
- Relocate AMY/James Martin School
- Less isolation
- Allow turn-over of industrial sites to housing
- Keep factory sites, encourage gap training and job training facilities
- Want to feel welcome
- Add bike racks
- Build a longshoreman museum
- Make it more attractive

C. Focus Area Exercise > Aramingo Shopping District

- Build a green median down the center of Aramingo Avenue
- Connect Tioga Street to Samuels rec
- More trees
- Build Bioswales to manage stormwater
- Work with the BID

- Build solar lights to illuminate area
- More frequent trash pickup
- More trash cans
- Maintain existing green spaces better/more frequently
- Get private businesses to support maintenance
- Create a gateway at Aramingo and Castor Avenues
- Side streets need better lighting for safety
- Create a specialized safety district through the BID
- Use surveillance cameras to improve safety
- Connect to new recreation areas at the creek
- Great potential for development (housing, commercial)
- Improve turns on to Aramingo Avenue from cross streets.
- Retail is low-end, bring in some more upscale stores.
- Feels more low-rent than Columbus Boulevard
- Improve bus shelters
- Mixed-use zoning to spur inclusive development
- Zone for big apartments
- Reduce amount of paved land
- Use permeable blacktop and rain gardens
- Increase access to public transit
- Build a parking garage
- Build a performance venue
- Build offices
- Build a recreation center
- Transition away from heavy commercial
- Ease transitions between industrial and residential areas
- No more chain retail or parking
- Build more restaurants
- Pedestrian lighting is highway-looking
- Add bike racks
- At Westmoreland Street, orient shops towards Butler Street.
- Create public art
- Train tracks are an opportunity for reuse
- Neighborhood identity is parking lots, looks bland
- Industrial uses prevent development and growth
- Not many people walking
- Create a farmers market pop-up at an major connector street
- Add seating
- Create a town center with community education
- People don't shop at "big box" stores anymore