

## AUGUST 13, 2015 | HOLMESBURG RECREATION CENTER

The first of three public meetings for the North Delaware District Plan took place on August 13, 2015 at the Holmesburg Recreation Center at 4500 Rhawn Street. The meeting attracted 51 attendees.

This meeting served a dual purpose. The first was to educate the public about the District Planning process and the existing conditions of the North Delaware District. The second was to obtain community input on planning preferences and priorities to create a foundation for district plan content. After a presentation about the planning process and existing conditions, Planning Commission staff led small groups in a Group Mapping Exercise to garner community input.

The Mapping Group Exercise enabled residents to identify the important physical attributes of their community: strengths, weaknesses, barriers, and opportunity areas within the North Delaware District. After these four attributes were identified, trace paper was laid over the maps so that groups could identify potential planning Focus Areas for the North Delaware District Plan.

Planning Focus Areas are areas where multiple layers of public intervention (e.g. zoning changes, land sales or acquisition, infrastructure improvements, business incentives, etc.) can come together to create positive momentum; revitalize specific intersections, corridors, or neighborhoods; and impact the District as a whole.

The results of the Group Mapping Exercise are summarized on the following pages. The feedback obtained from this exercise will inform the recommendations for the North Delaware District Plan.

The second community meeting (in a series of three) will be held in October 2015.



## WHERE DO YOU LIVE?

Prior to the North Delaware District Plan presentation and the facilitated group exercises, residents were asked to participate in a “Where Do You Live” welcoming exercise. The purpose of this exercise was to assess what areas of the North Delaware District participants represented.

The meeting attracted participants from every corner of the district, with particularly good representation from Mayfair, Tacony, and East Torresdale. Residents of Holmesburg and Wissinoming were fewer in number. Residents from other sections of Philadelphia and the region also attended.



## STRENGTHS

### DISTRICT-WIDE STRENGTHS

Parks  
Highway Access  
Family-Friendly Feel

Participants were asked to share strengths within the District. These can be popular destinations, parks, transportation amenities, or frequently visited retail locations.

Identifying strengths helps the PCPC staff take the temperature of the District and understand local perspectives about recommendations that might emerge as part of the plan.

The following were the most commonly identified strengths:

1. Delaware Riverfront, including Pleasant Hill Park, Glenn Foerd, Lardner's Point, Pennypack on the Delaware, and existing and planned Greenway improvements
2. Parks, Playgrounds, and Recreation Centers, including Mayfair Park, Pennypack Park, and Disston Park
3. Regional Rail stations at Holmesburg Junction and Torresdale
4. Neighborhood commercial corridors and nodes, including Frankford Avenue and Torresdale Station



## WEAKNESSES

### DISTRICT-WIDE WEAKNESSES

Poorly Maintained Rental  
Properties

Lack of East-West Connections

Poor Pedestrian Environments  
at Major Intersections

Participants were asked to share weaknesses within District. These can be areas of concentrated vacancy, under-performing commercial centers, areas lacking in accessible public open space, or physical features that are unsafe.

Identified weaknesses may warrant additional public investment or other attention in order to negate their negative influence on the District.

The following were the most commonly identified weaknesses:

1. Vacant and underused buildings and land along the industrial waterfront
2. Absentee landlords and crime in the Tacony section
3. Traffic congestion and safety on major arteries, especially Frankford Avenue and State Road
4. Local impacts of existing and planned prison facilities
5. Weak commercial mix on Frankford and Torresdale Avenues
6. Underutilized properties, especially Liddonfield





## BARRIERS

### DISTRICT-WIDE BARRIERS

Interstate 95

Participants were asked to share the factors (environmental, physical, social) that create barriers within the District. Barriers might be physical attributes that the city could improve over time through engineering interventions, better urban design, or other changes.

The following were the most commonly identified barriers:

1. Waterfront access blocked by industries, municipal facilities (prisons, sanitation yard, water treatment plant), and private gated communities
2. Streets along Pennypack Park
3. Harbison Avenue
4. Roosevelt Boulevard
5. Linden and State Road



## OPPORTUNITIES

### DISTRICT-WIDE OPPORTUNITIES

Access to Waterfront Recreation

Redevelopment of Vacant and Underused Land

Commercial Development

Participants were asked to share areas of opportunity within the district where planning and design interventions can have a positive effect.

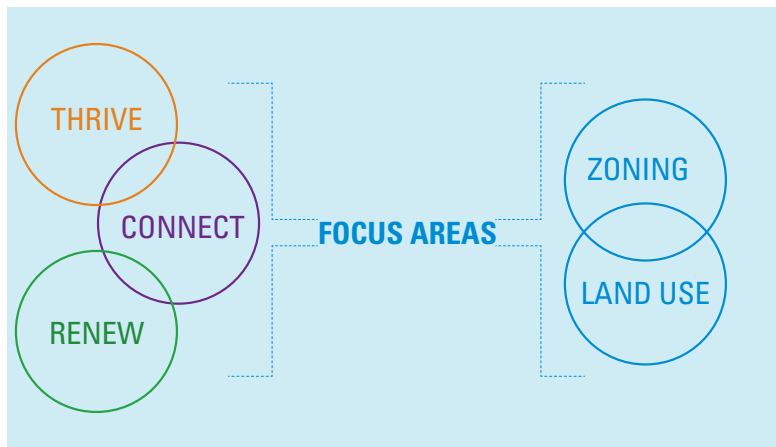
The following were the most commonly identified opportunities:

1. Adaptive reuse of the industrial waterfront
2. Active programming for education and entertainment at Pennypack Park
3. Redevelopment of the Liddonfield site and adjacent industrial/commercial land
4. Enhanced connections between Tacony and the waterfront
5. Improved retail mix on Frankford and Torresdale Avenues
6. Interconnection between Torresdale Station and Glenn Foerd
7. Redvelopment potential at Linden and State



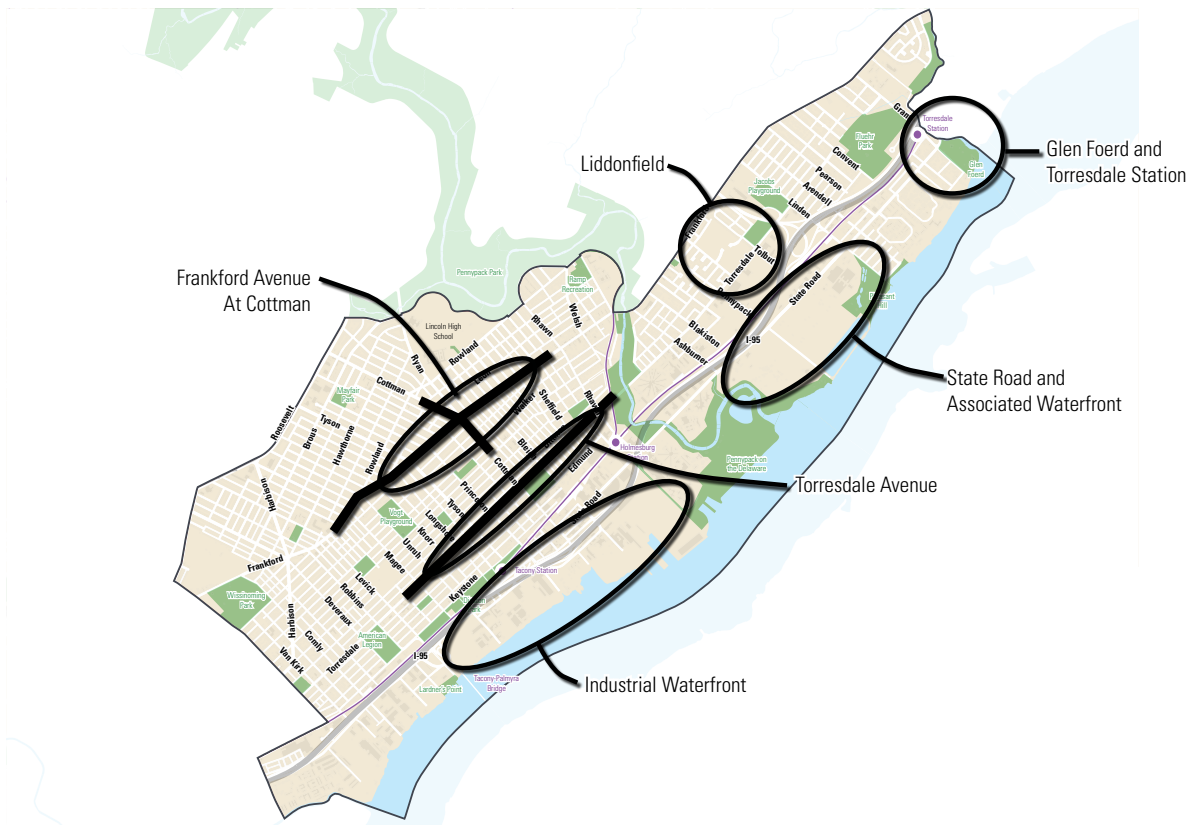
## PLANNING FOCUS AREAS

The Planning Focus Area exercise allowed residents to identify areas that are in need of public intervention (e.g. zoning changes, land sales or acquisition, infrastructure/capital improvements, business incentives), preservation (e.g. historic buildings, open space), or civic improvements on specific intersections, corridors, or neighborhoods. While not all of these may be focus areas in the final plan, the North Delaware District Plan will have recommendations that address issues in each of these areas.



The following were the six most discussed areas on which to focus planning efforts:

1. Torresdale Station/Glenn Foerd
2. State Road from Pennypack to Arrendell Street
3. Frankford and Cottman Avenues (Mayfair)
4. Torresdale Avenue (Tacony)
5. Waterfront from Pennypack to Lardner's Point
6. Liddonfield/Upper Frankford Avenue



## APPENDIX OF COMMENTS

Along with responses to the structured exercise, participants provided general comments about the North Delaware District that they would like to see addressed in the plan. These included:

- Frankford Avenue improvements: more parking, streetscape improvements
- Improve the fish hatchery
- Regional Rail stations need more parking
- Preserve the history of Disston Estate
- Street litter needs to be addressed
- Need more arts
- Street trees should be planted
- Build more dog parks
- Add activities to parks
- Support independent businesses on Frankford Avenue
- Many residents leave the District to shop
- Public transit access is limited

