

APRIL 21, 2016 | THURGOOD MARSHALL SCHOOL

The first of three public meetings for the Upper North District Plan took place on April 21, 2016 at the Thurgood Marshall School. The meeting attracted approximately 75 attendees to the school located at 5120 North 6th Street.

This meeting served a dual purpose. The first was to educate the public about the District Planning process and the existing conditions of the Upper North 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 Group Mapping Exercise enabled residents to identify the important physical attributes of their community. Groups identified strengths, weaknesses, barriers, and opportunity areas within the Upper North 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 Upper North 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 and revitalize specific intersections, corridors, or neighborhoods.

The results of the Group Mapping Exercise are summarized on the following pages. The feedback presented here will inform the prioritization of recommendations and selection of Focus Areas.

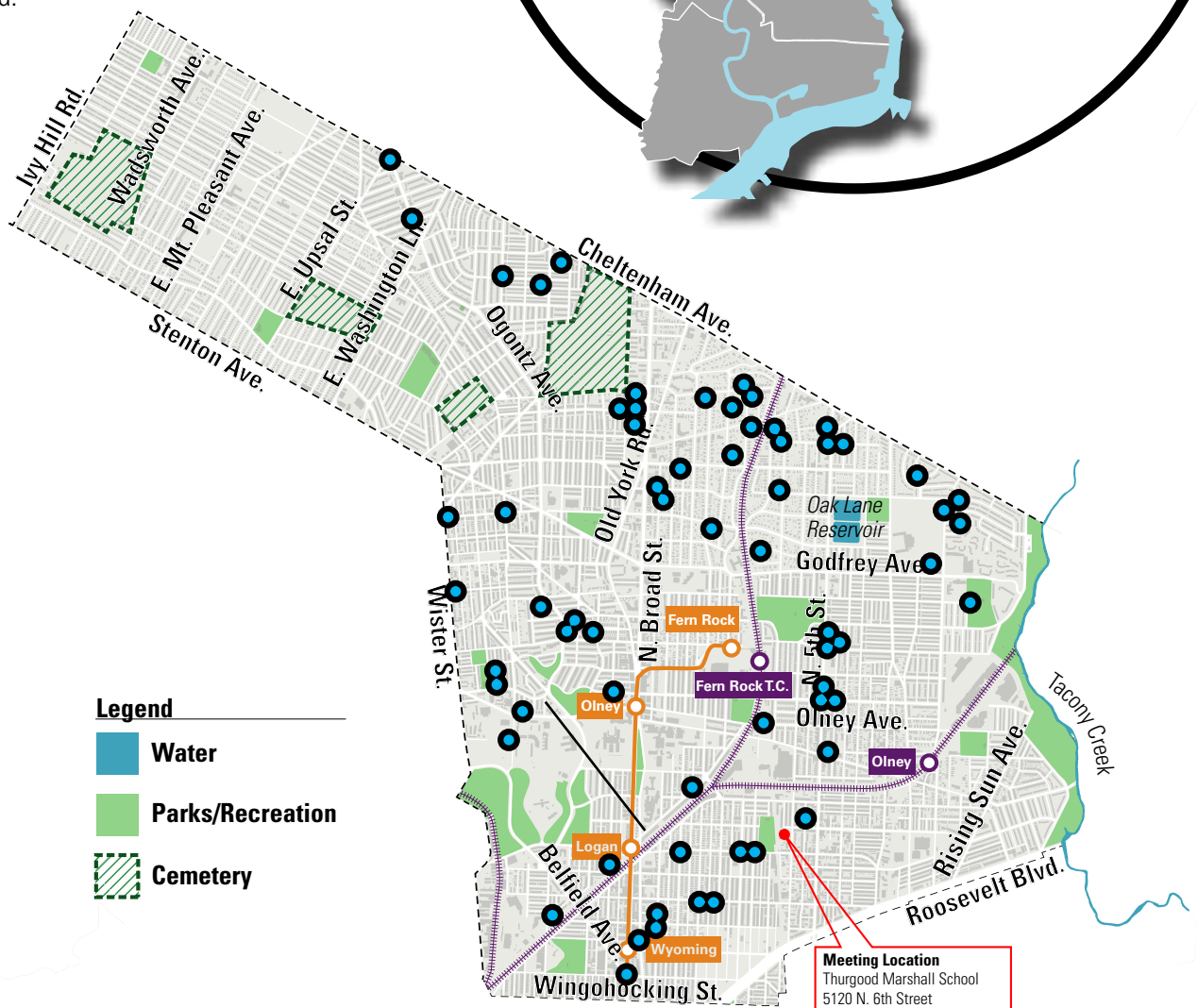
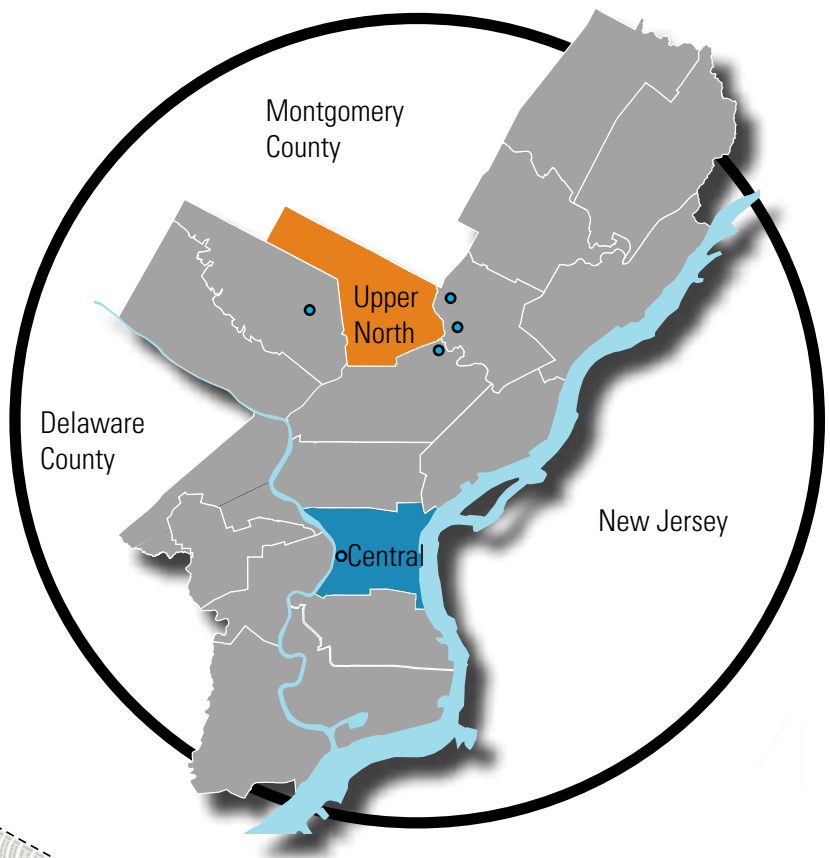
The second community meeting (in a series of three) will be held in June 2016.



WHERE DO YOU LIVE?

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

Meeting attendees represented many of the District’s neighborhoods. Representation was light from the Wadsworth Avenue section and from portions of Olney east of 5th Street. Logan, western portions of Olney, East Germantown, and East Oak Lane were particularly well-represented.



STRENGTHS

DISTRICT-WIDE STRENGTHS

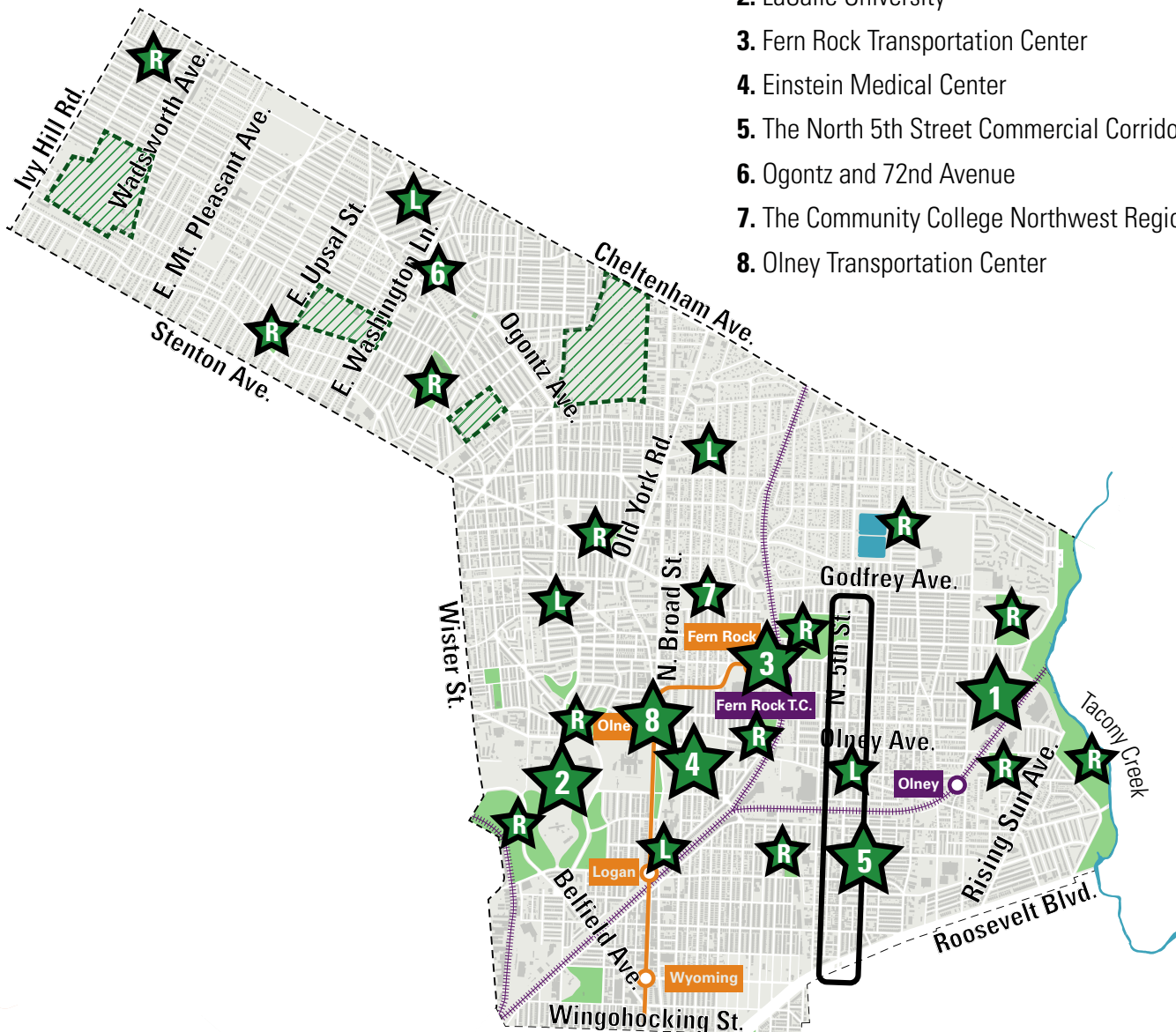
Houses of Worship
Historical Resources
Long-Term Homeowners
Ethnic Diversity
Senior Citizens

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 staff take the temperature of the district and understand local perspectives about recommendations that might emerge as part of the plan.

Thirteen parks/playgrounds/recreation centers (R) and four libraries (L) in the district were identified as strengths. In addition to recreation amenities and libraries, the following were the most commonly identified strengths:

1. One and Olney Plaza
2. LaSalle University
3. Fern Rock Transportation Center
4. Einstein Medical Center
5. The North 5th Street Commercial Corridor
6. Ogontz and 72nd Avenue
7. The Community College Northwest Regional Center
8. Olney Transportation Center



WEAKNESSES

DISTRICT-WIDE WEAKNESSES

Regional Rail Infrastructure
Neighborhood Schools
Access to Fresh Food

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 are the seven most commonly identified weaknesses:

1. Broad and Olney
2. Logan Triangle
3. Old York Road North of Oak Lane
4. Dumping & Lack of Maintenance at Tacony Creek Park
5. Abandoned Rail Corridor (Fern Rock to Logan Triangle)
6. Broad Street
7. Wakefield Park/Wister's Woods



BARRIERS

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 work on to improve over time through engineering interventions, better urban design, or other changes.

The ten most identified barriers are shown on the map below. The line thickness is roughly proportional to the frequency with which the barrier was mentioned (the thicker the line, the more mentions).



OPPORTUNITIES

DISTRICT-WIDE OPPORTUNITIES

Redevelopment of Vacant Buildings

Improved Lighting

Montgomery County Collaboration

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

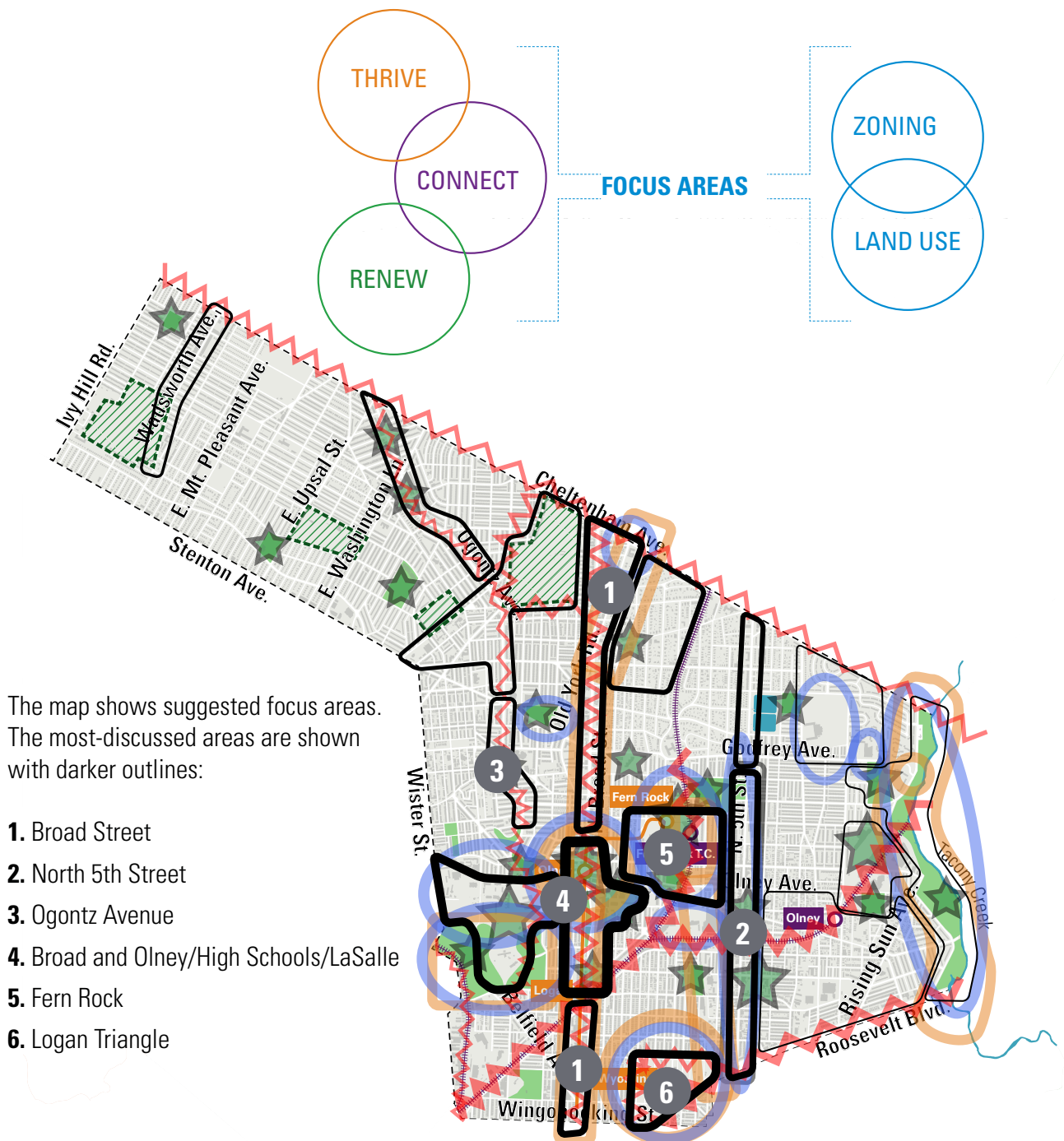
The following were the most commonly identified opportunity areas:

1. Logan Triangle Redevelopment
2. Broad and Olney/Taras Shevchenko Park
3. Fern Rock Transportation Center
4. Wister's Woods/Wakefield Park
5. North 5th Street
6. Tacony Creek Park Trail
7. LaSalle University
8. Cardinal Dougherty Campus
9. Old York Road Gateway at Cheltenham Avenue
10. Former Industrial Sites at 6th and Somerville
11. Vacant Shopping Center at Front and Godfrey



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 Upper North District Plan will have recommendations that address issues in each of these areas.



APPENDIX OF COMMENTS

In addition to feedback received through the map exercises, participants also shared their planning ideas about the Upper North District on a separate board. These included:

- Improve lighting west of Logan Station (BSL) and on Front Street between Godfrey and 65th
- Repair retaining wall at Front Street and Colonial Street
- Collaborate with Cheltenham Mall to minimize harm to businesses on commercial corridors
- Connect Fern Rock Transportation Center to North 5th Street
- Improve Ogontz Avenue
- Create community green space at Cardinal Dougherty
- Foster better collaboration and cooperation between LaSalle and surrounding neighborhood
- Place a historical marker to commemorate Elisha Kent Kane (Arctic Explorer from 10th and Godfrey)
- Better regulate conversions of large homes from residential to assisted living
- Encourage commercial redevelopment of shopping plaza at Front and Godfrey
- Logan is a beautiful neighborhood that just needs to be lifted back up
- Create an afterschool/PAL center
- Build a well-designed dog park

