

## DEMOGRAPHICS

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### SUMMARY

The West District is the fifth most populous of the City's 18 planning districts with a total population of 105,642 residents. However, over the past few decades, the West District's total population has steadily declined. The largest population loss occurred between 1980 and 1990 when the total population declined 8.64 percent (-11,642 people). In recent years, the population loss has slowed. Between 2000 and 2010 population declined 5.64 percent (- 6,331 people).

While the West District has historically been a predominantly Black community, in recent years the area has become more racially and ethnically diverse with an increase in Asian, Latino and White population. The decline in total population has largely been a result of the steady loss of Black and White population. In 1980, there were 119,352 Black people in the district, comprising 89 percent of the district's total population. As of 2010, there were 97,985 Black people in the West District, comprising 93 percent of the total population. White population now accounts for about 3 percent of the district's total population, down from 10 percent in 1980. While Black population continues to decline throughout the district, White population loss, has slowed and in many areas of the district is actually increasing, although not yet at a significant enough rate to stem the overall net loss of White population.

Although Asian, Latino and Other Race Population comprise a much smaller percentage of the West District total population, between 1980 and 2010 population in all these groups experienced a small net increase. The Asian population in the West District increased between 1980 and 1990, and decreased between 1990 and 2000, and then increased again between 2000 and 2010. While Latino population is the most rapidly growing population in the district, it declined slightly between 1980 and 1990, and then increased in the following decades. Other Race\* population in the district increased between 1980 and 2000, but declined between 2000 and 2010.

Between 1980 and 2010, population declined in almost every census tract in the West District, with the exceptions of census tracts 100, 105 and 115. While some of the West District's population decline can be attributed to attrition, other population loss is most likely related to age and deteriorating condition of the district housing and infrastructure. More than eighty percent of the District's housing stock was built fifty or more years ago and is in need of extensive repairs.

#### \*Some Other Race

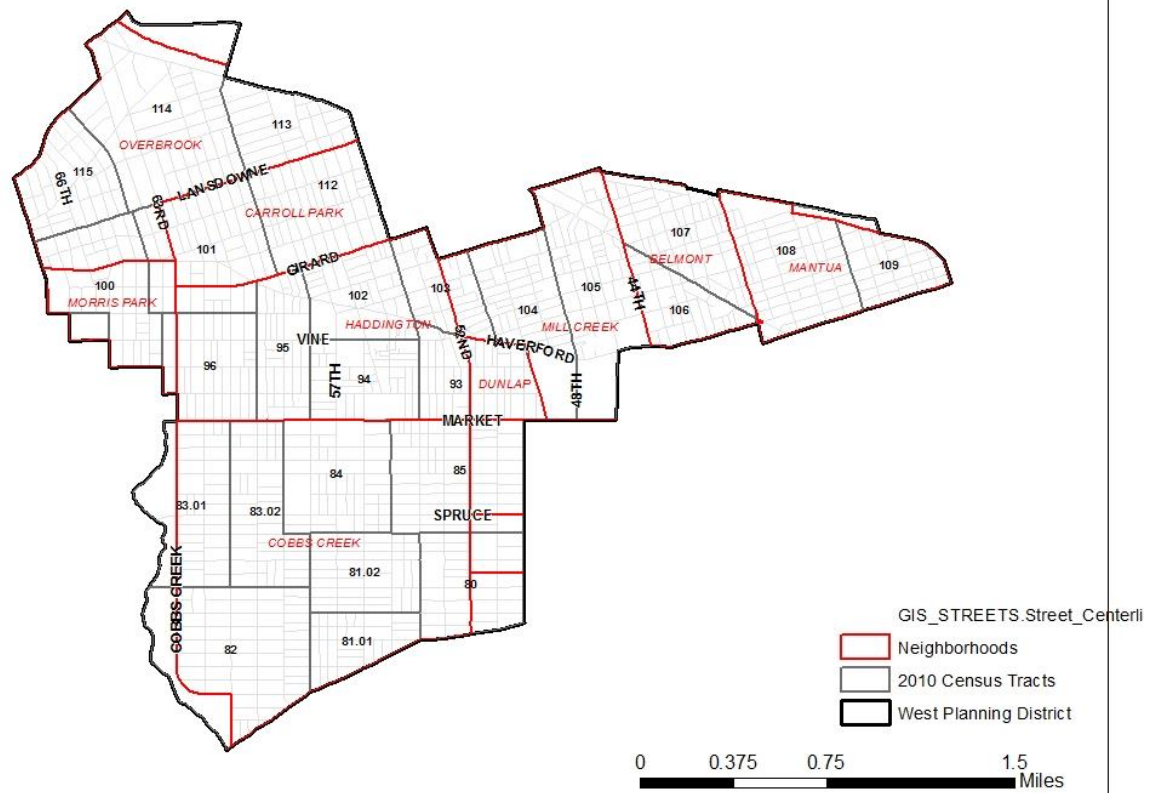
Includes all other responses not included in the "White," "Black or African American," "American Indian or Alaska Native," "Asian," and "Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander" race categories. Respondents reporting entries such as multiracial, mixed, interracial, or a Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish group (for example, Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, or Spanish) in response to the race question are included in this category.  
<https://factfinder.census.gov/help/en/index.htm#glossary.htm>

## DISTRICT BOUNDARIES FOR ANALYSIS

The West District demographic analysis is based on data from the Decennial Census (1980-2010) and American Community Survey five-year data (2011-2015).. As of 2010, the Census Tracts in the West District include: 80, 81, 81.01, 81.02, 82, 83, 83.01, 83.02, 84, 85, 93, 94, 95, 96, 100, 101, 102, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 112, 113, 114, and 115. Between Censuses, district population increased in certain areas of the district that exceeded Census maximum population standards and led to splits in the tracts. Tract 83 was split into tracts 83.01 and 83.02 between 1990 and 2000. Tract 81 was split into tract 81.01 and 81.02 and 83 between 2000 and 2010. These tracts are generally fall into the following West District neighborhoods:

- **Cobbs Creek:** 80, 81, 81.01, 81.02, 82, 83, 83.01, 83.02, 84, 85
- **Haddington-Dunlap:** 93, 94, 95, 96
- **Overbrook:** 100, 115
- **Carroll Park-Overbrook:** 101, 102, 112, 113, 114
- **Cathedral Park-Carroll Park:** 103
- **Mill Creek-Cathedral Park:** 104, 105
- **Belmont -Mantua:** 106, 107, 108
- **Mantua:** 109

## West District 2010 Census Tracts



**Table 1. Major Demographic Indicators –West District**

Trend Data West District	1980		1990		2000		2010		2010	
Total Population	134,669		123,027		111,973		105,642	6.92% of Citywide		
White	13,955	10.36%	9,802	7.97%	3,967	3.54%	3,404	3.2%	626,221	41%
Black	119,352	88.63%	111,543	90.67%	104,727	93.53%	97,985	92.75%	661,839	43%
Asian	499	0.37%	950	0.77%	658	0.59%	807	0.76%	96,405	6%
Other Race	649	0.48%	732	0.59%	827	0.74%	706	0.67%	90,731	6%
Latino (any Race)	1,144	0.85%	1,134	0.92%	1,390	1.24%	2,391	2.26%	187,611	12%
HH Population	133,282	98.97%	121,473	98.74%	110,202	98.42%	103,779	98.24%	1,468,623	96%
GQ Population	1,387	1.03%	1,554	1.26%	1,771	1.58%	1,863	1.76%	57,383	4%
Total HUs	54,083		51,268		49,867		49,299	7.3% of Citywide	670,171	
Vacant HUs	6,159	11.39%	6,153	12.00%	7,250	14.54%	7,721	15.66%	70,435	11%
Occupied HUs	47,924	88.61%	45,115	88%	42,617	85.46%	41,578	84.34%	599,736	89%
Owner Occupy	30,674	64.01%	29,688	65.81%	26,658	62.55%	22,463	54.03%	324,536	54.11%
Renter Occupy	17,250	35.99%	15,427	34.19%	15,959	37.45%	19,115	45.97%	275,200	45.89%
Avg. HH Size	2.78		2.69		2.59		2.50		2.45	
Median Age	35.1		N/A		34.8		34.8		33.5yrs	
Age <20	39,879	29.61%	34,106	27.72%	35,447	31.66%	31,279	29.61%	400,817	26.27%
20 to 44	41,592	30.88%	44,123	35.86%	36,240	32.36%	32,820	31.07%	581,102	38.08%
45 to 64	33,350	24.76%	24,088	19.58%	21,995	19.64%	27,031	25.57%	358,778	23.51%
65+	19,848	14.74%	20,710	16.83%	18,291	16.34%	14,530	13.75%	185,309	12.14%
Median HH	Census 1980		Census 1990		Census 2000		ACS 11_15		ACS 11_15	
% 4yrs+College	5.50%		8.13%		9.21%		12.66%		25.41%	
%Unemployed	16.17%		13.46%		14.60%		19.22%		13.91%	
%Poverty	26.49%		23.70%		27.75%		34.88%		26.41%	
%HH No Car	N/A		50.28%		46.98%		46.87%		32.09%	



## POPULATION

In 2010, the West District was the City's fifth most populous planning district, with a total population of 105,642 people, or seven percent of the City's total population (**1,526,006**). The District's total population saw an approximately 22 percent decrease between 1980 and 2010s, a loss of 29,027 residents..

This population loss varied by race and by neighborhood in the District. In 1980, the West District's Total Population was 89 percent Black, 10 percent White, 0.4 percent Asian, 0.5 percent Other Race, and 1 percent Latino. As of 2010, the district's Total Population was 93 percent Black, 3 percent White, 0.8 percent Asian, 0.7 percent Other Race, and 2 percent Latino (of any race).

Despite the increase in percentage of Black population as a percentage as a district's total population, the total number of Black residents decreased during this period. The largest loss of Black population in the West District occurred between 1980 and 1990, when it decreased 6.54 percent or by 7,809 people. The largest loss of Black population in the West District occurred between 1980 and 1990, when the decreased 6.54 percent, or by 7,809 people. This decline impacted every neighborhood in the district, except the Overbrook neighborhood (census tracts: 100, 114, and 115), where Black population actually increased. From 1990 to 2000, Black population in the district decreased 5.93 percent, or by 6,625 people. Black population continued to decline throughout the district, except in census tracts: 100 and 115, both in the Overbrook neighborhood. Between 2000 and 2010, Black population decreased 6.43 percent or by 6,742 people. Once again Black population decreased throughout the district except in census tracts: 100, and 115, both in the Overbrook neighborhood, and census tract 105 in the Millcreek-Cathedral Park. From 1980 to 2010, the district's black population decreased by 18 percent, or 21,367 residents.

From 1980 to 2010, the district's white population also saw steady decline. From 1980 to 1990 it decreased by 29.7 percent or 4,153 people; from 1990 to 2000 by 59.5 percent or 5,855 people; and from 2000 to 2010 by 14.2 percent or 563 people. Over this total period, the district's white population decreased by 76 percent, or 10,551 residents. From 1980 to 1990, White population in the district decreased district-wide except in census tracts: 93 and 95 in the Haddington neighborhood; census tracts: 104 and 105 in the Millcreek-Cathedral Park neighborhood; and 108 and 109 in the Mantua neighborhood. From 1980 to 1990, the largest decrease in White population occurred. This decline in population was district-wide except in census tracts 83.01 and 83.02 in the Cobbs Creek neighborhood. . Between 2000 and 2010, the loss of White population slowed and only occurred in census tracts 82, 83.02, 84 in the Cobbs Creek neighborhood; census tract 103 in the Cathedral Park-Carroll Park neighborhood; and census tracts 114 and 115 in the Overbrook neighborhood. White population increased in all the other census tract in the district during this time.

With a total of just 807 people, the district's Asian population comprises only a very small percentage- 0.37 percent-of the district's total population. Asian population in the West District fluctuated from 1980 to 2010. The largest increase in Asian population occurred between 1980 and 1990, when Asian population nearly doubled, increasing by 451 people (90 percent). During this time, Asian population increased in every census tract and neighborhood throughout the district, except in census tract 80 in Cobbs Creek; census tract 95 in Haddington; census tract 106 in Belmont-Mantua; and 114 in Carroll Park-Overbrook. Between 1990 and 2000, Asian population decreased 31 percent (292 people), impacting every census

tract in the West District, except census tract 100 in the Overbrook neighborhood; census tract 105 in the Millcreek-Cathedral Park neighborhood; census tracts 108 and 109 in Mantua; and census tract 112 in the Carroll Park-Overbrook neighborhood. Between 2000 and 2010, Asian population in the West District increased 28 percent (142 people). This increase was dispersed throughout the district, except in census tracts: 81 and 83.01 in Cobbs Creek; census tracts: 95 and 96 in Haddington; census tract 100 in Overbrook; and census tract 102 in the Carroll Park-Overbrook neighborhood. From 1980 to 2010 Asian population increased by a net of 6.2 percent, or 308 people.

As of 2010, Other Race population comprised 0.67 percent (706 people) of the West District's total population. Between 1980 and 1990, Other Race population increased 13 percent (83 people). From 1990 to 2000, Other Race population increased another 13 percent (95 people). Between 2000 and 2010, Other Race population decreased 15 percent (121 people). Other Race population gains and losses were dispersed throughout the district. From 1980 to 2010 the Other Race population increased by a net of 109 percent, or 1,247 people.

After a small population decrease of 0.87% (10 people), between 1980 and 1990, Latino population in the district has steadily increased. The largest numeric increase in Latino population occurred between 2000 and 2010, when the district's Latino population increased 72 percent (1,001 people). Between 1990 and 2000, the district's Latino population increased 23 percent (256 people). Between 2000 and 2010, Latino population increased in almost every census tract in the district, except census tracts: 100 and 102, in the Overbrook neighborhood.

ACS population numbers suggest that this trend of population decline may reverse by the 2020 decennial Census. Between 2000 and 2010, population in the Overbrook neighborhood increased (census tracts: 100, 115), as did population in the Millcreek-Cathedral Park neighborhood (census tract 105). Current population estimates for 2015 indicate that population in the West District has increased about three percent, and total population is forecasted to increase a total seven percent by the year 2035. Based on recent trends, population in all racial and ethnic groups are likely to increase.

#### *Group Quarters Population*

Total Population includes population living in households and population living in group quarters. Group Quarters include dormitories, correctional facilities, nursing homes, and group homes. In 2010, 98 percent (103,779 people) of the population in the West District lived in Households and two percent (1,863 people) lived in Group Quarters. This number remains below the citywide average of four percent of individuals living in Group Quarters. Between 1980 and 2010, the number of people living in Group Quarters in the district steadily increased each decade. Over this period, this population increased by 34.3 percent, or 476 individuals. Group Quarter population in the district peaked in 2010. .

The 1,863 individuals living in Group Quarters in the West District are dispersed throughout the district with larger clusters of group quarter population in census tracts 83.01 in the Cobbs Creek neighborhood, and census tracts 104 and 105 in the Mill Creek- Cathedral Park neighborhood. This may reflect group quarters population living in smaller group home facilities, halfway houses, or correctional facilities.

## Population by Age

In 2010, population under 20 years of age comprised 30 percent of the West District's total population; 20-to-44 comprised 31 percent; 45 to 64 comprised 25 percent; and population 65 years and older comprised 14 percent.. Over the past 30 years, the West District's population under 20 years of age has steadily declined. Population in the 20-44 age cohort increased between 1980 and 1990, and then decreased between 1990 and 2000, and 2000 and 2010. Between 1980 and 1990, and 1990 and 2000, the population 45 to 64 declined. It then increased 2000 to 2010, the only age cohort to increase during this period. Population in the West District 65 years and older increased between 1980 and 1990, and then decreased in the following decades.

As of 2010, the West District's population's median age of 35 years was slightly higher than the citywide median of approximately 34 years. The median age in the West District decreased from 35.1 years in 1980, to 34.8 years in 2000 and 2010. In 2010, the median age for population by census tract ranged from a low of 26 years old in census tract 109 (Mantua) to a high of 46 years old in census tract 83.02 (Cobbs Creek).

Population in the West District in the under 20 years of age group is higher than the citywide average. . The neighborhoods with the highest number of children under the age of 20 are Cobbs Creek (census tracts: 81.02, 82 and 85), and Carroll Park-Overbrook (census tracts: 101, 112 and 114) The population in the 45 to 64 and 65 and older age groups is also higher than the citywide average, while the population in the 20-to 44 age cohort is lower than the citywide average. In 2010, the combined working-age population of the district, which includes the 20 to 44 and the 45 to 64 age cohorts, comprised 57 percent of the district's population compared to the citywide total of 62 percent.

The West District's low percentage of working age population and high percentage of dependent population contribute to the district's challenging socio-economic conditions. In order to maintain the district's vitality and to fill housing units once occupied by older residents, the West District will need to retain its younger population as it ages, and attract new, working-age households from outside the district.. To improve economic conditions in the district efforts should be made to ensure the district's large youth population is enrolled in college preparatory classes and other vocational training programs that will enable them to be gainfully employed, thereby reducing poverty and unemployment rates in the district and increasing educational attainment levels.

### *Foreign-Born Population*

Based on American Community Survey (ACS) Five Year estimate data (2011-2015), 5.3 percent (5,614 people) of the district 's total population is foreign-born, compared to 13 percent citywide. Though a small portion of the districts' total population, this group is increasing and has contributed to recent population growth in the district. The 2007-2011 ACS estimated 4.91 percent (5,323 people) of the district's population was foreign born at that time. Foreign-born population in the West District increased 5.5 percent between the two ACS estimates periods. The majority of the West District's foreign-born population is from Southeast Asia, Africa, and Latin America, including the Caribbean, and Central America.

The West District has the highest number of foreign born population from Panama of any district in the City, and some of the highest number of foreign born population from Jamaica and South Africa of any district in the City. Of the West District's total foreign-born population, 61 percent are from Latin America (31 percent citywide); 26 percent are from Africa, (nine percent citywide); 11 percent are from Asia (40 percent citywide); and one percent are from Europe (18 percent citywide).

The foreign-born population in the West District is not particularly visible and appears to be fairly dispersed throughout the district. Jamaica continues to be the primary country from which the district's foreign born population emigrates, followed by Trinidad and Tobago, Panama, Liberia, Haiti and China.

In recent years, the population from Haiti, Barbados, and Nigeria.. The most rapidly growing foreign born populations in the West District is from Vietnam, Panama, South Africa and Ethiopia. The top ten origin countries for West District's foreign-born are listed below in Table #2.

Table 2. West District Foreign Born Population	2011-2015	2011-2015	2007-2011	2007-2011	Numeric Change	Percent Change
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent		
Foreign Born as % of Total Population	5,614	5.31 %	5,323	4.91 %	291	5.46%
Source Country						
Jamaica	1,301	23.17%	1,174	22.06%	127	10.81%
Trinidad and Tobago*	774	13.79%	487	9.15%	287	58.93%
Panama*	465	8.28%	0	0%	465	100%
Liberia	301	5.36%	225	4.23%	76	33.77%
Haiti	183	3.26%	291	5.47%	-108	-61.74%
China	181	3.22%	95	1.78%	86	47.51%
Vietnam*	136	2.42%	17	0.32%	119	700%
Ethiopia*	136	2.42%	39	0.73%	97	71.32%
Barbados	132	2.35%	296	5.56%	-164	-55.40%
South Africa*	122	2.17%	0	0%	122	100%
Nigeria	114	2.03%	189	3.55%	-75	-39.68

\*Rapidly Growing Population

## HOUSING

Between 2000 and 2010, the West District's Household Population decreased six percent (6,331 people). During this time, the number of occupied housing units decreased 2.4 percent (1,039 units). With fewer people living in fewer number of housing units, average household size decreased from 2.6 persons per household in 2000 to 2.5 persons per household in 2010. (*See also: Housing section of Neighborhoods memo*).

As of 2010, the West District's vacancy rate was 15.7 percent compared to the citywide average of 7.3 percent. The percentage of owner-occupied housing units in the district has declined while the percentage of renter occupied housing units has increased. This is consistent with citywide and national trends. The West District Homeowner and Renter Occupancy rates are comparable to the Citywide rates.

### *Housing Units and Occupancy*

Between 2000 and 2010, the total number of housing units in the West District decreased one percent or by 568 units. This decrease probably reflects the demolition of obsolete, deteriorated and structurally unsound units. Over this period, the number of vacant housing units in the district increased 6.5 percent from 7,250 vacant units (14.5 percent of total) in 2000, to 7,721 vacant units (15.6 percent of total) in 2010. Housing vacancies increased in every census tract in the district except census tracts: 83.02 in Cobbs Creek; 94, 95, and 96 in Haddington; 105 in Mill Creek-Cathedral Park; 113 in Carroll Park-Overbrook; and 115 in Overbrook.

In 2010, the West District's homeowner occupancy rate was 54 percent, with a renter occupancy rate of 46 percent, with citywide rates at the same percentages.. In 2010, the census tracts with the highest percentage or number of owner-occupied housing units were in Overbrook (100 and 115), Carroll Park - Overbrook (112, 113, 114), and Cobbs Creek (81.01, 81.02, 82).

Between 2000 and 2010, renter occupancy rates in the West District increased by 20 percent, resulting in an increased number of renter-occupied units throughout the district. In 2010, the census tracts with the highest percentage or number of renter-occupied housing units were in Cobbs Creek (85), Haddington (94) Carroll Park-Overbrook (114), Millcreek-Cathedral Park (104, 105), Cathedral Park-Carroll Park (103,) and Mantua (107, 108, 109).

Senior population in the West District declined 21 percent between 2000 and 2010, and the number of senior homeowners in the district declined 31 percent. Between 2000 and 2010, the number of homeowner units in the West District occupied by senior citizens declined from 10,931 units (41 percent), to 7,561 units (34 percent). Citywide Seniors occupy 27 percent of owner occupied housing units. In 2010, the census tracts with the highest percentage or number of senior homeowner units were located in Cobbs Creek (82, 83.01) and Carroll Park-Overbrook (101, 112, 114).

The number of senior renters in the West District increased. As of 2010, 2,929 rental-housing units (15 percent) were occupied by senior citizens, up from 2,573 rental units (16 percent) in 2000. Citywide 14 percent of rental housing units were occupied by seniors. In 2010, the census tracts with the highest percentage or number of senior - occupied rental housing units were in Haddington (94), Cobbs Creek (84), Cathedral Park-Overbrook (102), and Belmont-Mantua(106,107).

### *Housing Costs*

Research indicates that renters generally bear a higher housing cost burden than owners. Housing costs in excess of 30 percent or more of household income are considered a “burden.” Consistent with citywide and national trends, renters in the West District are much more burdened by housing costs than owners according to 2011-2015 ACS 5-Year estimates.

Based on 2011-2015 ACS 5-Year estimates, 62.3 percent of all renter occupied households in the district pay 30 have rent “burden” compared to 35 percent of owner- occupied. Citywide, 57 percent of renter occupied households are rent burdened compared to 32 percent of owner-occupied households.

Renter households in the West District paying the highest percentage of their household income for gross rent are in census tracts in Belmont-Mantua (106, 107,108), Overbrook (115), Cobbs Creek (85), Haddington (94,96), Carroll Park-Overbrook (114).

Homeowners with mortgages are more burdened than homeowners without mortgages. In the West District 45 percent of owner-occupied housing units with mortgage are burdened compared to just 25 percent of owner-occupied housing units without mortgages. Citywide 38 percent of owner-occupied housing units with mortgage are burdened, while 22 percent of owner- occupied housing units without mortgages are burdened.

According to 2011-2015 ACS data, census tracts in the district with the highest percentage or number of owner-occupied households paying 30 percent or more of their household income for monthly housing costs are in census tracts in Cobbs Creek (82,85), Haddington (95), Overbrook (100, 115), Carroll Park-Overbrook (102, 112, 114), and Belmont-Mantua (106,107).

### *Household Size and Composition*

Household sizes in the West District are on par with the citywide average. In 2010, the average household size in the district was 2.5 persons per household, which is the same as the citywide average household size. With a growing immigrant population, household sizes in the district could be expected to increase over time, contributing to an overall population increases.

Household sizes in the district range from a low of 2.1 persons per household in census tract 106 (Belmont-Mantua) to a high of 2.7 persons per household in census tract 115 (Overbrook). Based on Census Data in 2010, 35 percent of all households in the West District were one-person households compared to 39 percent citywide. In 1980, 27 percent of all households in the district were one-person households compared to 29 percent citywide.

The West District has a slightly higher than average percentage of family households.<sup>3</sup> Based on 2011-2015 ACS 5- Year Estimates, 55 percent of all households in the West District were family households and 45 percent were non-family households. Citywide, 53 percent of all households were family households and 47 percent were non-family households. The tracts in the district with the highest percentage or number of family households were in Cobbs Creek (82, 85), Carroll Park-Overbrook (101, 114), and Overbrook (115). Based on 2011-2015 ACS 5-Year estimates, 91 percent of the non-family households in the West District were one-person households (or householders living alone). This is considerably higher than the citywide average of 83 percent. Based on the 2011-2015 ACS data, census tracts in the district with the highest percentage or number of non-family/one-person households, or householders living alone, are in Cobbs Creek (81.01 82, 85), Haddington (94) and Carroll Park-Overbrook (101, 102, 112, 114).

Between 2000 and 2010, the number of female-headed households in the West District declined drastically. As of 2010, 35 percent of all households in the district were female-headed households, down from a peak of 56 percent in 2000. In 2010, 23 percent of all citywide households were female-headed compared to 22 percent in 2000. The West District's share of female-headed households was 52 percent in 1990 and 47 percent in 1980. In 2010, census tracts in the district with a high number of female-headed households were located in Cobbs Creek (82, 85) and Carroll Park-Overbrook (101, 112, 114).

Based on 2011-2015 ACS 5 Year Estimate data, 24 percent of the population in the West District are considered long-term residents who have resided in the District since 1989 or earlier. The West District has the second highest percentage of long-term residents of any district in the City, behind only the Lower Northeast (26 percent). Citywide, 18 percent of the population have resided in Philadelphia since 1989 or earlier. The census tracts in the district with above-average percentages of population who are long-term residents are in Cobbs Creek (81.02 ,82, 85), Mill Creek-Cathedral Park (104) and Carroll Park-Overbrook (101, 112, 113, 114).

<sup>3</sup> A family or family household is defined by the United States Census Bureau for statistical purposes as "a householder and one or more other people related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption."

Based on 2011-2015 ACS data, 31 percent of the population in households moved to the West District in 2010 or later, compared to 32 percent citywide. The census tracts in the district with the highest percentage of households who moved to the district in 2010 or later are in Cobbs Creek (83.02 ,84, 85), Belmont-Mantua (106), Haddington (96), and Carroll Park-Overbrook (101, 114). 31 percent of households

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moved to the District between 2000 and 2009 , compared to 35 percent citywide.

### *Age of Housing*

The West District has an older than average housing stock. Based on 2011-2015 ACS data 5-Year estimates, 52 percent of the housing units were built before 1939, compared to 40 percent of citywide housing units.

- 20 percent of the units were built between 1940 and 1949, compared to 15 percent citywide.
- 10 percent of the units were built between 1950 and 1959, compared to 16 percent citywide.
- 5 percent of the units were built between 1960 and 1969, compared to 11 percent citywide
- 4 percent of the units were built between 1970 and 1979, compared to 7 percent citywide.
- 2 percent of the units were built between 1980 and 1989, compared to 4 percent citywide.
- 4 percent of the units were built between 1990 and 1999, compared to 3 percent citywide.
- 2.57 percent of the units were built between 2000 and 2009, compared 3.4 percent citywide.
- 0.7 percent of the units were built between 2010 and 2013, compared to 0.6 percent citywide.
- 0.04 percent of the units were built in 2014, compared to 0.06 percent citywide.

## **EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT**

Despite steady increases in educational attainment levels, the West District still has a substantially lower than average percentage of population 25 years and older with four years or more of college. In 1980, five percent of the total population 25 years and older had four years or more of college, compared to 11 percent citywide. In 1990, the figure increased to eight percent in the district, and 15 percent citywide. In 2000, the figure increased to nine percent in the district, with a citywide figure of 18 percent. Based on the most recent 2011-2015 ACS estimates, educational attainment levels in the district increased to thirteen percent of the population 25 years and older reporting four years or more of college, and 25 percent citywide.

## **UNEMPLOYMENT**

In 1980 the West District's unemployment rate was 16 percent, and in 1990, it was 13 percent.<sup>4</sup> These were higher than citywide averages of 10 percent and 11 percent. In 2000, the district's unemployment rate increased to 15 percent, which was still above the citywide average of 11 percent. Between the 2000 Census and the 2011-2015 ACS estimates, the unemployment rate in the West District peaked at 19 percent, while the reported citywide unemployment rate was 14 percent. According to 2011-2015 ACS estimates, the census tracts with the highest unemployment rates or the most unemployed people were in Cobbs Creek (80), Haddington (94, 96), Cathedral Park-Carroll Park(103) and Belmont-Mantua (106, 107, 108).

## **POVERTY**

Historically, the West District poverty rates have far exceeded citywide averages. Based on 2011- 2015 ACS estimates, the West District's current poverty rate is 35 percent, which is still considerably higher than citywide poverty rate of 26 percent. Poverty rates in the district range from a low of 17.5 percent in census tract 115 (Overbrook), to a high of 60 percent in census tract 108 (Belmont-Mantua), with the majority of census tracts in the district having poverty rates of 30 percent or higher.

## **VEHICLE AVAILABILITY**

According to 2011-2015 ACS estimates, 47 percent of all households in the West District did not have a vehicle available to their household, compared with 32 percent Citywide.

\* Note that data is not available for earlier years.

## **MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME**

Median household incomes in the West District have steadily increased but are still well below the citywide median. According to 2011-2015 ACS estimates, the median annual household income in the West District was \$26,779 dollars, compared to the citywide median of \$36,754. Median household incomes in the district currently range from a low of \$13,482 in census tract 106 (Belmont-Mantua) to a high of \$46,288 in census tract 115 (Overbrook).

<sup>4</sup> The ACS estimate from the U.S. Census Bureau varies from other sources of data, such as the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). The unemployment rate is calculated based on population over the age of 16 years old in the labor force

Table 19. Median Household Income by Census Tract, 1979-2015 (not inflation-adjusted)				
Census Tracts	Median HH Income 1979	Median HH Income 1989	Median HH Income 1999	Median HH Income ACS 2011- 2015
80	\$12,500	\$21,840	\$28,336	\$31,311
81	\$14,808	\$24,339	\$24,455	
81.01				\$22,652
81.02				\$28,361
82	\$15,606	\$24,953	\$29,041	\$35,778
83	\$13,298	\$20,453		
83.01			\$24,800	\$27,957
83.02			\$24,567	\$30,019
84	\$11,925	\$20,043	\$26,431	\$29,904
85	\$11,115	\$20,897	\$22,077	\$29,297
93	\$8,161	\$16,679	\$21,503	\$25,591
94	\$7,921	\$15,758	\$17,743	\$16,496
95	\$8,347	\$19,306	\$21,058	\$21,000
96	\$10,007	\$18,071	\$23,171	\$23,528
100	\$11,449	\$25,069	\$31,415	\$31,836
101	\$12,018	\$24,504	\$28,811	\$31,149
102	\$9,206	\$17,823	\$20,634	\$15,357
103	\$8,786	\$19,481	\$24,405	\$28,486
104	\$9,550	\$16,832	\$21,772	\$32,703
105	\$5,349	\$9,918	\$12,794	\$14,659
106	\$6,195	\$11,986	\$15,952	\$13,482
107	\$8,136	\$12,003	\$15,417	\$14,836
108	\$5,672	\$15,132	\$17,310	\$14,328
109	\$7,646	\$12,632	\$13,367	\$19,152
112	\$10,590	\$21,060	\$24,521	\$24,575
113	\$13,418	\$23,832	\$34,353	\$25,581
114	\$14,095	\$26,102	\$28,012	\$37,963
115	\$14,362	\$25,206	\$39,473	\$46,288
Districtwide	\$10,299	\$19,394	\$24,405	\$26,774
Citywide	\$16,388	\$30,140	\$29,839	\$36,754

*Note: The historic data has not been adjusted for inflation.*

## ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Recent population estimates for 2015 indicate that population in the West District has increased about three percent, and is forecasted (<http://www.dvrpc.org/Reports/ADR022.pdf>) to increase more than seven percent by Year 2045. As previously mentioned, population declined throughout the West District, with the exceptions of small population increases in census tract 100 and 115 (Overbrook), census tract 105 (Millcreek-Cathedral Park). The population increase in the Millcreek-Cathedral Park area (census tract 105) was more substantial and most likely the result of new people moving into the recently developed subsidized housing in the area. Only Black population increased in census tract 100 between 2000 and 2010. Population in all racial and ethnic groups increased in census tract 105, between 2000 and 2010, while Black, Other Race and Latino population increased in census tract 115.

Although the West District has an above-City average percentage of children under 20 years of age, population in that age cohort continues to decline, as does population in the 20 to 44 years and 65 years and older age cohorts. In fact, the only population to increase between 2000 and 2010, was population in the 45 to 64 years age cohort. The West District also has an owner-occupancy rate, comparable to the citywide rate, and higher than average number of family households,<sup>2</sup> and long-term homeowners. Housing vacancy rates are also higher than average, and poverty and unemployment rates in the West District are among the highest in the City. The West District's median household income is substantially lower than the citywide median, and although educational attainment levels in the district have steadily increased they still remain substantially lower than average.

Not surprisingly, with such high poverty and unemployment rates and lower than average median household incomes, a large percentage of owners and renters are burdened by housing costs, with 35 percent of homeowners paying 30 percent or more of their household income for housing costs, and 62 percent of renters paying 30 percent or more of their household income for rental costs. With 52 percent of the housing units in the West District being built prior to 1939, owners and renters are further burdened with maintaining an aging and severely deteriorated housing stock.

In the coming years, significant new development and reinvestment in the existing housing stock and infrastructure will be needed to maintain the existing population, as well as attract new population to the West District. Increased educational attainment, employment and income gains for both new and existing households will be needed to reduce housing costs burdens and increase employment opportunities and resources for housing maintenance and modernization. This may be a particular issue for the high percentage of family households in the district saddled with the high expenses generally associated with maintaining an older housing stock, raising children on limited incomes, and lacking the time and resources to pursue job training and further education needed to increase their income and employment opportunities. Housing maintenance and modernization may also pose a problem for the above average percentage of elderly households living on fixed incomes, as well as the rapidly increasing older population in the 45 to 65 year old age cohort. Increased services such as, daycare, schools, libraries, recreational and health centers are also needed to support low-income children, and elderly and family households living in the district.

<sup>2</sup> A family or family household is defined by the United States Census Bureau for statistical purposes as "a householder and one or more other people related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption."

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

*Philadelphia2035 Citywide Vision Goal:* Make Philadelphia more competitive in the metropolitan region

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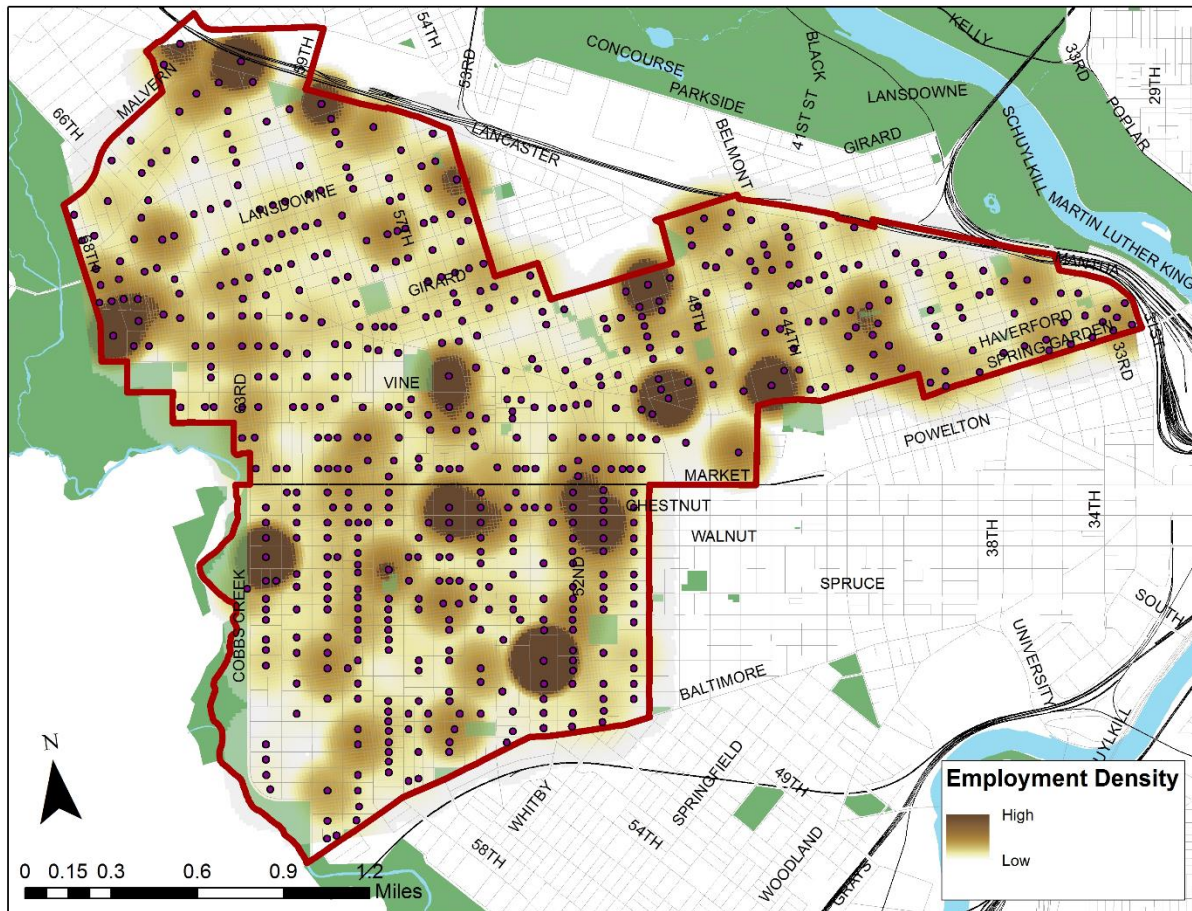
### **SUMMARY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS**

Home to the smallest number of jobs of any of Philadelphia's 18 planning districts, the West District's primary role in the city's economy is providing housing for nearby employment centers, such as University City and Center City. In addition to their close physical proximity, District residents are well-connected to these employment centers by the Market-Frankford elevated train, two subway surface trolley lines, and several high-frequency bus lines. The district is also linked to employment centers elsewhere in the region by the Schuylkill Expressway and via the suburban trolley lines to which the Market-Frankford Line connects at 69<sup>th</sup> Street Station.

While the number of jobs in the West District remains small, the employment base has grown significantly in recent years, with Healthcare and Social Assistance, Education, and Retail sectors responsible for both the largest increases and total number of jobs. The largest employer in the district is Mercy Philadelphia Hospital, with employment otherwise clustered along commercial corridors (especially 52<sup>nd</sup> Street and Chestnut Street), and among the district's many smaller social services, healthcare, and educational facilities.

- A primarily residential area, the West District has the fewest number of jobs of any of the City's 18 planning districts. No single employer in the district includes more than 1,000 jobs in the district; the largest employer, Mercy Philadelphia Hospital had approximately 800 full-time positions as of 2013.
- Forty-four (44) percent of jobs (4,100) in the District are in the Health Care and Social Assistance industrial sector, with the number of jobs in this sector growing by 34 percent 2002-2014 (from 3,100 jobs). Educational Services account for the next largest concentration of jobs (20 percent of the total) and the number of jobs in that sector grew substantially from 2002-2014 (from 1,600 jobs to 1,800 jobs).
- Combined, retail and food services and accommodations were a source of economic strength in the West District, growing 22 percent from 1,600 in 2002 to 1,900 in 2014. These jobs are primarily contained within the District's many commercial corridors such as 52<sup>nd</sup> Street, 60<sup>th</sup> Street, Chestnut Street, Market Street, and Lancaster Avenue.
- Production, distribution, and repair industries have historically played a minor role in the West District's employment base, combining for only 380 jobs (4 percent of total) in 2014, having declined by 26 percent from 2002.

**Figure 1: Employment Density in the West District, 2014**



(Source: US Census, Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics)

- While the number of jobs located in the District from 2002 to 2014 grew by 1,400 (18 percent), the number of employed residents fell by 1,800 (5 percent).
- The number of residents who work within the district grew by 20 percent from 2002 to 2014.

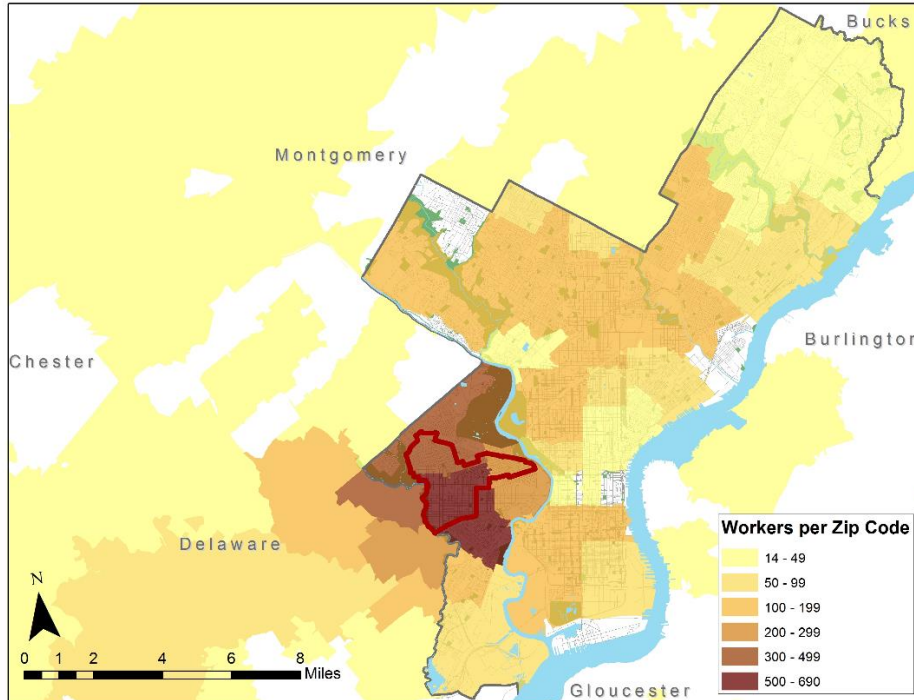
**Table 1: West District: Number of Employed Residents and District Jobs, 2002-2014**

	2002	2014	Change	% Change
Employed Residents	38,700	35,900	-1,800	-4.9%
District Jobs	8,000	9,400	1,400	17.6%
Residents Employed within District	1,290	1,550	260	20.2%

(Source: US Census, Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics)

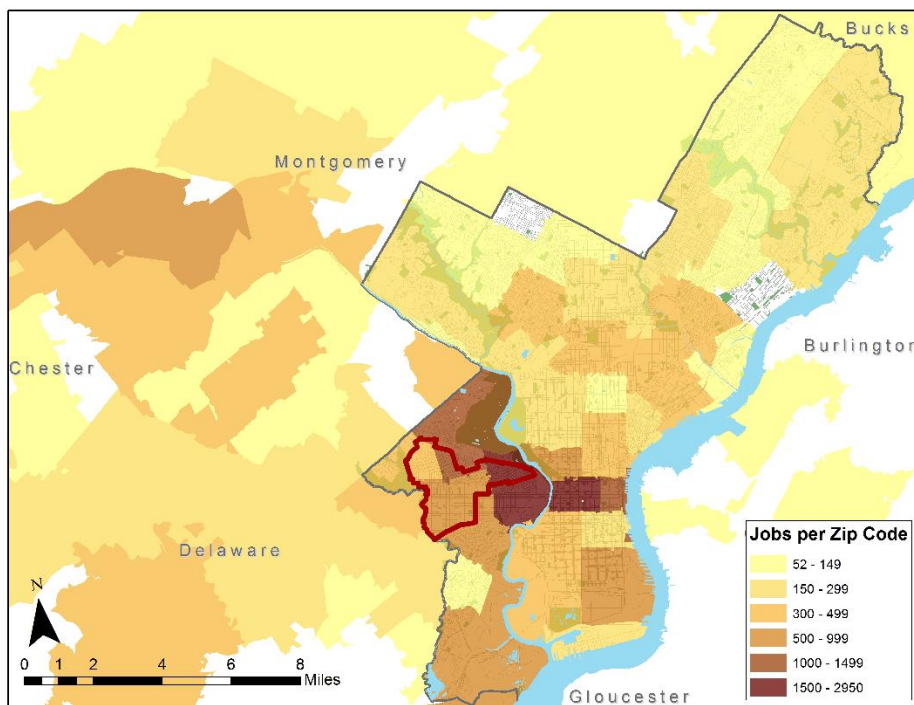


**Figure 2: Home Locations of Workers Employed in the West District, 2014**



(Source: US Census, Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics)

**Figure 3: Employment Locations of West District Residents, 2014**



(Source: US Census, Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics)

- Fifty-eight (58) percent of jobs in the West District are held by Philadelphia residents. The West District itself is home to the largest concentration of workforce, but there are also large concentrations of workers commuting from the adjacent University Southwest and West Park Districts, as well as from nearby Upper Darby and Yeadon.
- Conversely, 62 percent of workers residing in the District are employed in Philadelphia. Connected by several modes of transit, the plurality (33 percent) of West District residents commute to the Metropolitan Center. Twenty-eight percent of residents commute to the nearby Pennsylvania suburbs, especially those along the I-76 corridor and around Philadelphia International Airport.
- Forty-seven (47) percent of households in the West District (including 63 percent of renter-occupied households) do not own a personal vehicle. This is significantly greater than the average for the city (32 percent) and region (14 percent) and limits access to employment opportunities to those within walking or biking distance or accessible by transit or carpool.
- Relative to the City and region<sup>1</sup>, a higher share of West District workers is employed in service occupations, such as building services and maintenance and food preparation and serving (34 percent for the District compared to 24 percent in the city and 17 percent region). This difference is due largely to the disproportionately high share of workers employed in healthcare support, protective services, building and grounds cleaning and maintenance, and personal care and services occupations.
- Relative to these comparison regions, a lower share of the District's workers is employed in management, business, science, and arts occupations (26 percent for the District compared to 36 percent in the city and 42 percent in the region).
- The unemployment rate in the District is 19.2 percent, higher than that of the city (13.9 percent) and much higher than that of the region (9.1 percent).
- Overall, District residents have significantly lower levels of educational attainment than those of the city or region.
  - Only 13 percent have a bachelor's degree or greater (compared to 25 percent and 35 percent citywide and region-wide, respectively). An additional 30 percent have some college and/or an associate's degree.
  - Five-seven percent have a high school diploma or less (compared to 52 percent and 41 percent citywide and region-wide, respectively). This includes the 18 percent of West District residents who lack a high school diploma or GED.

## KEY ISSUES

The following are important economic development challenges facing the West District:

- The small number of jobs located within the District limits access to both employment and services, especially to the large number of households that lack access to a private automobile.

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this document, "region" refers to the 11-county Philadelphia–Camden–Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD Metropolitan Statistical Area, unless otherwise stated



- The jobs that are located within the district are highly concentrated among a small number of industrial sectors, with almost two-thirds of jobs in either health care and social assistance or education. This lack of diversification makes the economy vulnerable if there are structural changes to these sectors.
- Close proximity and strong transit access to the densest employment centers in the region (Center City and University City) substantially mitigate the lack of employment opportunities within the District. However, jobs in these areas are disproportionately white collar, requiring post-secondary education and/or advanced training; many of these are not accessible to workers in the West District, who have significantly lower levels of educational attainment than the average for the city or region.
- Many of the commercial corridors in the district suffer from high rates of vacancy and disinvestment.

## **MAJOR OPPORTUNITIES**

Economic development opportunities in the West District include:

- There is a significant amount of vacant and underutilized land around the Market-Frankford Line stations within the district. These represent major opportunities for investments in transit-oriented development.
- The City of Philadelphia is currently renovating the Provident Mutual Life Insurance building and campus at 46<sup>th</sup> and Market. While the end-user has not been identified, this will almost certainly involve the relocation of several hundred jobs to the West District. This will not only bring more employment opportunities in close proximity to West District residents, but will boost retail spending potential and make the rental or purchase of homes in the district more attractive to employees relocated to this site.
- As housing prices rise and development pressures rise in University City, there is opportunity to leverage additional economic development elsewhere in the district. In particular, the 52<sup>nd</sup> Street commercial corridor is poised to capture additional retail spending and support new small businesses.
- Working with the major institutions in the nearby University City Southwest District can be used to craft workforce development programs that link West District workers to employment opportunities.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (SPECIFIC TOPICS)**

### **Metropolitan and Regional Centers**

*Goal: Support the growth of economic centers*

The district is well linked to the Metropolitan Center through public transit, including five Market-Frankford Line stations, three trolley lines (the 10 on Lancaster Avenue, Lansdowne Avenue, and 63<sup>rd</sup> Street; the 34 on Baltimore Avenue; and the 15 on Girard Avenue). There are no limited access highways within the district, but State Route 3 (Chestnut and Walnut Street), US 13 (Baltimore Avenue), and US 30 (Lancaster Avenue) provide direct roadway connections from the West District to the Metropolitan Center. The Schuylkill Expressway, which is just outside of the District provides access to the region's

largest employment centers, include those in Montgomery County and near Philadelphia International Airport.

Close in proximity and with high quality transit connections, 33 percent of West District workers commute to jobs in the Metropolitan Center, including 25 percent to the Central District and 9 percent to the adjacent University Southwest District. In total, 62 percent of workers living in the district commute to jobs within Philadelphia, including within West District itself (4 percent), the North District (4 percent), and the West Park District (3 percent). Twenty-eight (28) percent of residents commute to the nearby Pennsylvania suburbs, especially those along the I-76 corridor and around Philadelphia International Airport.

Only a small share of workers employed in the West District (four percent) commute from locations within the Metropolitan Center. The West District itself is home to the largest concentration of workforce, with 14 percent of district jobs held by district residents. Fifty-eight (58) percent of jobs in the West District are held by Philadelphia residents, including large concentrations of workers commuting from the adjacent University Southwest and the Upper North District. The vast majority of those who are not Philadelphia residents reside in the Pennsylvania suburbs (29 percent of all workers), especially from nearby Upper Darby and Yeadon.

- Forty-four (44) percent of jobs (4,100) in the District are in the Health Care and Social Assistance industrial sector, more than double the concentration in the region overall (18 percent) and significantly greater than of the city of Philadelphia as a whole (23 percent). In addition, the number of jobs in this sector growing by 34 percent 2002-2014 (from 3,100 jobs). A plurality of the jobs in this sector (880) are located at Mercy Philadelphia Hospital, but there are also significant concentrations at the Karabot and Cobbs Creek primary care centers of Children's Hospital, the HELP USA campus, and the St. Ignatius Nursing Home. While these institutions offer a broad range of employment opportunities, West District residents are more likely to occupy healthcare support occupations than health diagnosing and treating practitioners, which are offer much higher wages, but also have much higher educational requirements.
- Educational Services account for the next largest concentration of jobs in the West District (20 percent of the total). These 1,840 jobs are primarily associated with the School District of Philadelphia (1,480 jobs) as well as those affiliated with the and several charter and private educational institutions. The number of jobs in Educational Services increased by 17 percent 2002-2014 (from 1,580 jobs) and represents a significantly greater concentration of such jobs than in Philadelphia (13 percent) and the Philadelphia Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) as a whole (10 percent).

**Table 2: Employment in the West District, 2002-2014**

	2002		West 2014		% growth
	#	%	#	%	
Health Care and Social Assistance	3,098	38.7%	4,150	44.1%	34.0%
Educational Services	1,581	19.8%	1,845	19.6%	16.7%
Retail Trade	931	11.6%	1,315	14.0%	41.2%
Accommodation and Food Services	639	8.0%	605	6.4%	-5.3%
Other Services (excluding Public Administration)	384	4.8%	361	3.8%	-6.0%
Wholesale Trade	354	4.4%	317	3.4%	-10.5%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	121	1.5%	177	1.9%	46.3%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	104	1.3%	165	1.8%	58.7%
Administration & Support, Waste Management and Remediation	175	2.2%	155	1.6%	-11.4%
Finance and Insurance	262	3.3%	97	1.0%	-63.0%
Construction	136	1.7%	91	1.0%	-33.1%
Manufacturing	116	1.4%	42	0.4%	-63.8%
Information	29	0.4%	24	0.3%	-17.2%
Public Administration	4	0.0%	21	0.2%	425.0%
Transportation and Warehousing	37	0.5%	17	0.2%	-54.1%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	4	0.0%	16	0.2%	300.0%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	23	0.3%	13	0.1%	-43.5%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	-	0.0%	1	0.0%	0.0%
Utilities	2	0.0%	1	0.0%	-50.0%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	4	0.0%	-	0.0%	-100.0%
Total	8,004	100.0%	9,413	100.0%	17.6%

(Source: US Census, Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics)

- In 2014, the third and fourth largest sectors in the District were Retail Trade and Accommodation and Food Services, which constitute the majority of the employment opportunities within the District's many commercial corridors. Combined, these sectors were a source of economic strength in the West District, growing 22 percent from 1,600 in 2002 to 1,900 in 2014. These jobs are primarily contained within the District's many commercial corridors such as 52nd Street, 60th Street, Chestnut Street, Market Street, and Lancaster Avenue. **[overall assessment of commercial corridors from neighborhoods memo]**
- Production, distribution, and repair industries play a minor role in the West District's employment base, combining for only 380 jobs (4 percent of total) in 2014, compared to 10 percent of all jobs in Philadelphia and 14 percent of all jobs in the region. While these industries have never been a source of economic strength for the region, this represents a continued decline, falling from 510 jobs in 2002.
- There are several major industrial sectors that play a major role in the city's and region's economies, but which have only a minimal presence in the West District. In 2014, Finance and Insurance and Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services together represented 13 percent of jobs in the City and 14 percent of jobs in the region, but combined for only 260 jobs total (less than 3 percent of all jobs), District-wide.

**Table 3: Employment in the West District, Philadelphia, and the Philadelphia Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), 2014**

	West		Philadelphia		Philadelphia MSA	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Health Care and Social Assistance	4,150	44.1%	154,854	23.3%	482,194	17.7%
Educational Services	1,845	19.6%	83,462	12.6%	267,268	9.8%
Retail Trade	1,315	14.0%	53,421	8.0%	303,390	11.1%
Accommodation and Food Services	605	6.4%	56,612	8.5%	200,220	7.4%
Other Services (excluding Public Administration)	361	3.8%	23,612	3.6%	93,860	3.4%
Wholesale Trade	317	3.4%	17,209	2.6%	120,265	4.4%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	177	1.9%	8,940	1.3%	36,840	1.4%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	165	1.8%	50,948	7.7%	221,885	8.2%
Administration & Support, Waste Management and Remediation	155	1.6%	30,707	4.6%	169,316	6.2%
Finance and Insurance	97	1.0%	35,529	5.4%	167,330	6.1%
Construction	91	1.0%	13,733	2.1%	108,870	4.0%
Manufacturing	42	0.4%	21,943	3.3%	182,139	6.7%
Information	24	0.3%	14,206	2.1%	51,342	1.9%
Public Administration	21	0.2%	43,839	6.6%	96,136	3.5%
Transportation and Warehousing	17	0.2%	25,053	3.8%	91,129	3.3%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	16	0.2%	12,977	2.0%	58,977	2.2%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	13	0.1%	11,791	1.8%	44,769	1.6%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	1	0.0%	24	0.0%	950	0.0%
Utilities	1	0.0%	4,720	0.7%	15,238	0.6%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	0	0.0%	83	0.0%	9,503	0.3%
All Workers	9,413	100.0%	663,663	100.0%	2,721,621	100.0%

(Source: US Census, Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics)

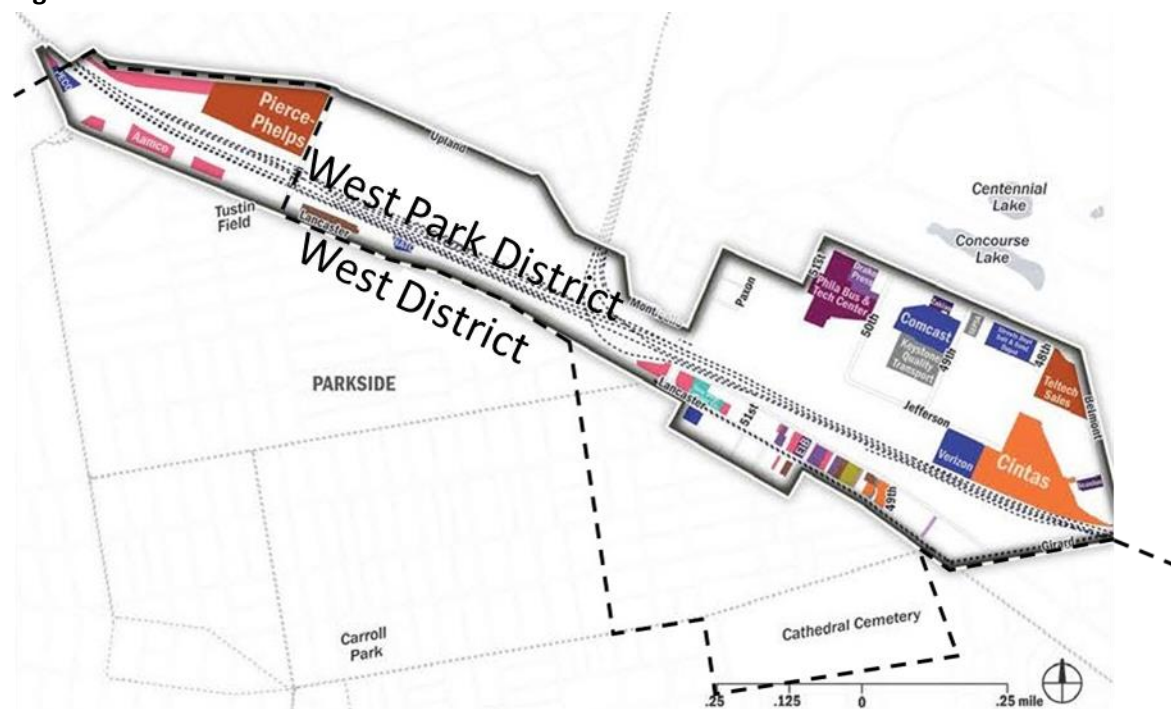
## Industrial Land

*Goal: Target industrial lands for continued growth and development*

Production, distribution, and repair jobs constitute a very small share of employment in the West District and there are no such businesses among the District's top employers. Relatedly, there is very little industrial land in the District, either in active or inactive use. PIDC's Philadelphia Industrial Land and Market Strategy (PIDC, 2010) highlights only one industrial district that lies partly within the West District: Parkside Industrial District.

The only portion of the Parkside Industrial District that lies within the West District is the portion that lies to the northwest of 59<sup>th</sup> Street, between Lancaster Avenue, Upland Way, Woodbine Avenue, and 62<sup>nd</sup> Street. By far the largest industrial user in this area is Peirce-Phelps, an HVAC equipment distributor with approximately 80 employees. While Peirce-Phelps is directly adjacent to a residential area, a significant grade change serves as a buffer between the two land uses. The majority of the remaining land is devoted to auto-oriented commercial and light industrial, such as personal auto repair, a car wash, truck rental, and take-out restaurants. This area is not marked in the Philadelphia Industrial Land and Market Strategy for industrial preservation or intensification and the areas facing Lancaster Avenue, south of the Amtrak right of way, have already transitioned away from industrial uses. As such, a focused approach to industrial lands is not likely to play a significant role in planning for economic development in the West District.

**Figure 4: Parkside Industrial District**



Source: PIDC. Philadelphia Industrial Land and Market Strategy

## **Institutions**

*Goal: Grow Philadelphia's strong institutional job sector*

As a primarily residential area, the West District is not home to any major educational or medical institutions of citywide, regional, or national scale. The District is home to one community hospital, Mercy Philadelphia Hospital, which is its largest employer, with approximately 800 jobs. The institutions that have the greatest impact on the District, however, are located just outside its boundaries in the University Southwest District. The three major universities and three major hospitals located in this adjacent district not only provide valuable services, but also provide a critical source of employment to residents; in 2014, 3,200 (9 percent) of West District workers were employed in the University Southwest District.

Serving as both invaluable community resources and some of the most important employers in the West District, there are 25 School District of Philadelphia-affiliated primary and middle schools in the district. In addition, there are six such schools that are located outside the West District, but whose catchments include residences within the district. Of the three School District of Philadelphia-affiliated high schools located within the District, two are neighborhood schools (William Sayre High School and Overbrook High School) and one draws students from across the city (Parkway West High School). A significant share of the West District is within the catchment of West Philadelphia High School, which is located just outside the District boundaries.

Non-neighborhood based charter schools in the district include West Philadelphia Achievement Charter Elementary School (K-5), Ad Prima Charter School (K-8), Harambee Institute of Science and Technology Charter School (K-8), Mastery Charter School at Shoemaker (7-12), and Boys Latin of Philadelphia Charter

School (9-12). Archdiocese of Philadelphia-affiliated schools include the St. Rose of Lima School (PreK-8), St. Frances Cabrini Regional Catholic School (PreK-8), and Our Mother of Sorrows/St. Ignatius of Loyola School (K-8).

### **Cultural Resources**

*Goal: Develop tourism and the creative economy into a leading economic sector*

Free Library and City Recreation Centers constitute critical cultural institutions that bind neighborhoods, and the West District hosts an abundance of each. There are five Free Library locations in the District: Blanche A. Nixon/Cobbs Creek (located at 59th Street and Baltimore Avenue), Charles L. Durham (located at 34th Street and Haverford Avenue), Haddington (located at 65th Street and Girard Avenue), Haverford (located at 56th Street and Haverford Avenue), and the Lucien E. Blackwell West Philadelphia Regional Library (located at 52nd Street and Sansom Street). There is a dense concentration of recreation centers within the West District, including Baker, Christy, Cobbs Creek, Granahan, Miles Mack, Mill Creek, Sayre-Morris, Shepard, Tustin, West Mill Creek, and Wright, most of which have a wide array of athletic and cultural programming. In addition, there are three other recreation centers (Conestoga, Lee Cultural Center, and Papa) just outside the district boundaries.

Activity related to culture, arts, and entertainment in the West District is somewhat limited compared to many of the other Districts outside of the Metropolitan Center. In total, according to the Reinvestment Fund's CultureBlocks application, the West District is home to 60 non-profit organizations that focus partly or entirely on the support of cultural institutions and the arts. These include an extensive network of community development and civic associations, as well as "Friends of..." groups for the District's libraries and recreation centers and organizations devoted to the support of music and dance. These neighborhood, educational, ethnic, and religious institutions play an important role in the cultural resources of the West District. In addition to these non-profits, there are also 71 cultural businesses in the District (including eight art galleries, five recording studios, and three schools for dance).

### **Recommended Follow-Up**

- Work with major institutions in the nearby University Southwest, the Office of Community Empowerment and Opportunity, and Philadelphia Works to craft workforce development programs and to help link District residents to employment opportunities and provide ladders for advancement beyond the lowest wage/skill occupations.
- Work with neighborhood businesses and plan for expanded retail and commercial opportunities near the Provident Mutual Life Insurance building to ensure the expanded daytime population benefits West District businesses and residents.
- Work with PIDC and the Commerce Department to determine the most appropriate use and zoning for properties within the Parkside Industrial District, especially those facing the Lancaster Avenue commercial corridor and are no longer in industrial use.
- Work with commercial corridor managers to diversify businesses and services and support the efforts of small, local businesses. This should include outreach and education on the Commerce Department's existing programs that could provide financial assistance.
- Work with the District's many community development corporations and civic associations to help link residents and business owners with the City's economic development and assistance programs.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

*Philadelphia2035 Citywide Vision Goal:* Improve transportation safety, efficiency, and convenience.

### **SUMMARY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS**

The West District has developed into an area of the city that is predominantly residential in character and these residential neighborhoods have excellent transit access to Center City and University City jobs. While more than 60% of residents are employed in Philadelphia, residents find employment opportunities outside of the city in neighboring Montgomery and Delaware counties. Of the residents who commute by car, most drive alone.

There is a higher than City-wide average number of households in the West District with zero-vehicle ownership (46.7% compared to 33%), which correlates with the transit ridership being one of the highest districts in the city. For other transportation alternatives, the bicycle network in this district has some strong corridors but lacks connectivity throughout. Considering its proximity to both University City and Center City employment centers, the West District has a lower than expected bicycle commute mode share. The percentage of residents who walk to work is about average for districts outside of Center City, and this relates to the limited number of employment opportunities within the district. To address this, studies have identified potential mixed use transit-oriented development opportunities along the Market Frankford Line.

There are needs for renovation or replacement of some transportation infrastructure in West including the 59<sup>th</sup> St Bridge and two trolley routes that are part of a larger trolley modernization effort for both trolley cars and trolley stops. The existing transit network will benefit from trolley modernization assuming any consolidation of stops retain the direct transfer connections between trolley and other transit routes in an effort to expand the high frequency transit network. Opportunities exist to integrate Indego bike share and car share stations into the overall network to provide additional transportation solutions to residents and visitors to the West District without dependence on private vehicles.

### **KEY ISSUES AND MAJOR OPPURTUNITIES**

Many of the key transportation issues for the West District may also be considered as major opportunities. Following each of these topics is a discussion of items or concepts for follow-up.

- **Transit-Oriented Development at Market-Frankford Line Stations**
  - Vacant or underutilized properties could accommodate higher density, mixed-use development around MFL stations, including the adaptive reuse of historic buildings.
  - Traditional commercial corridors have capacity to increase vitality by increasing multi-family use of upper floors and achieving infill development.
  - Stations can provide multi-modal access for pedestrians, bicyclists, and bus passengers.

- North-south bus service allows neighborhood residents to connect easily to high-speed service to Center City and University City job centers.
- **Trolley Modernization** - The purchase of new, modern light rail vehicles will improve reliability and efficiency of service, provide accessible service and increase ridership on Routes 10, 15, and 34 within the district.
  - Community outreach is planned on new vehicle procurement and the streetscape changes necessary to make service ADA accessible.
  - Updated understanding is needed of contextual service patterns and operational needs within the West District.
- **Transit First**
  - Due to its high transit-usage and intersections with other transit services, including the Market-Frankford Line and Route 10 and 34 trolleys, 60<sup>th</sup> Street has the need and potential to be a transit first corridor to improve efficiency and ridership on Route 46.
- **Bicycle Network**
  - The bicycle network in the West District has east-west connections along Haverford Ave, Race St, Arch St, Market St, Walnut St, and Spruce St as well as along trolley routes on Baltimore Ave. and Lancaster Ave. However, there are few north-south connections, currently only on 33<sup>rd</sup>/34<sup>th</sup>, 48<sup>th</sup>, and 57<sup>th</sup> Streets. The limited bicycle network as well as the distance from the Central Business District result in many fewer bicycle commute users than nearby University/Southwest.
  - Protected bicycle lane projects in the West District would provide additional safety measures for bicyclists and encourage increased bicycle commute mode share. Typical protected bike lane projects provide the following:
    - Vertical protection, such as flexible delineator posts, between the bicycle lane and vehicular traveling lane. A parking protected bicycle lane uses the parking lane as an additional buffer.
    - Shorter pedestrian crossing distances with painted pedestrian islands.
  - There are currently no Indego bike share stations in the district. With its close proximity to University City, West District could benefit from Indego stations, especially located in tandem with SEPTA transit facilities.

## DATA

Key Census data related to auto ownership and work commute modes in the West District are summarized in the following table, and are compared to citywide averages. Auto ownership in the West District and commute to work via car are lower than the city average. While use of public transportation is significantly higher, walking and biking are significantly lower.



	Citywide	West District
<b>Percent of Households without Vehicles</b>	33%	46.7%
<b>No. of Vehicles Available per Household</b>	0.97	0.67 (total cars: 26,866; total households 39,886)
<b>Means of Transportation to Work</b>		
Automobile	59%	43.86%  88% of those drove alone
Public Transportation	26.5%	47.47%  76.3% bus or trolley 4.3% Regional Rail 16.9% MFL/BSL (Subway)
Bicycle	2%	1.07%
Walk	8.5%	4.67%
All Other	4%	0.70%

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey*

Almost half of all West District's resident commuters take transit to work. This is higher than the city-wide average. The West District is well-served by multiple SEPTA routes including the Market-Frankford Line (MFL), which is elevated throughout this district, three trolley routes, and several bus routes. The MFL provides direct, frequent service to University City and Center City, the two largest job centers in Philadelphia. All MFL stations in the West District are fully ADA accessible and are served by connecting bus routes. The transit commute share is comparable to the percentage of West District households without vehicle access.

Transit commute mode share is high throughout the district with several tracts with transit commute rates over 60 percent. These tracts are south of Market Street and west of 54<sup>th</sup> Street. The majority of transit commuters (as is typical for Philadelphia) take the bus as their primary mode.<sup>1</sup>

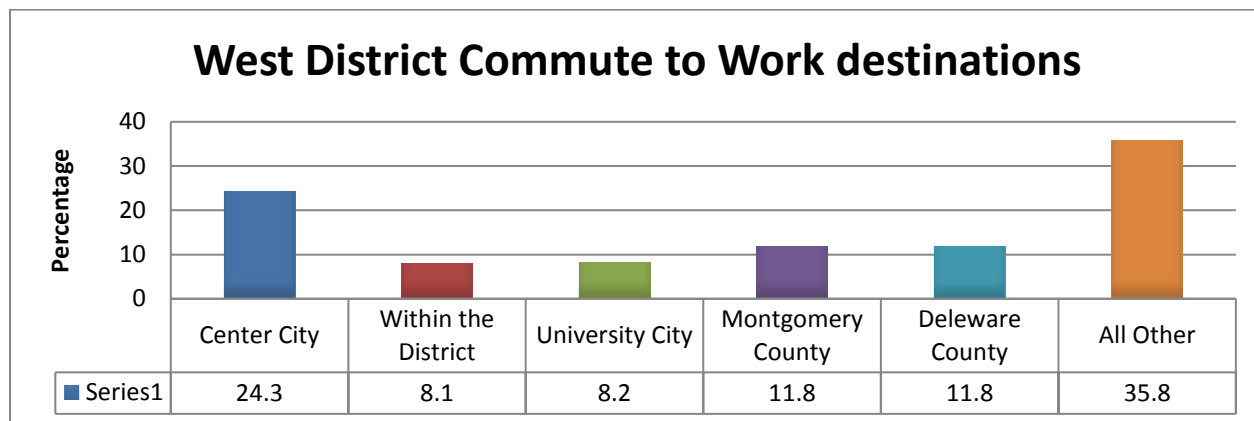
Bicycling mode share is highest in tracts near University City, an area of the City where bicycling is more common, bicycle facilities are more abundant, and bike commutes to jobs are shorter. Walking to work is also more common in tracts near University City; this pattern is clear since proximity to jobs is

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<sup>1</sup> While the American Community Survey (ACS) does provide streetcar/trolley car as a possible commute mode response, some tracts adjacent to trolley route service report no commuters using trolleys. There are multiple possible reasons for this misleading response: the ACS question phrasing is confusing; trolleys operate very similarly to buses on-street; trolleys go underground like a subway to Center City; or people chose another answer because they use multiple modes to commute (for example: bus to trolley to MFL).

important for this mode choice. However, there is one Overbrook neighborhood census tract (114) where there is also a higher than average percentage of pedestrian commuters. This may be influenced by employment destinations on Lansdowne Avenue, Lancaster, Avenue, and City Avenue.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics' "On the Map" application shows workers living within the West District traveling to jobs in Center City (24.3%), Montgomery and Delaware Counties (23.6%), within the West District (8.1%), and in University City (8.2%). More than half, 62.1 percent of West District workers are employed in Philadelphia.



*Center City (19107, 19103, 19102, 19106, 19130, 19123), University City (19140), Within the District (19131, 19139, 19143, 19151), Delaware County (all ZIPs), Montgomery County (all ZIPs)*

## TRANSIT

*Goal: Increase the use of transit to reduce environmental impacts and travel time*

### Market-Frankford Line

There are five Market-Frankford Line (MFL) stations in the West District Plan Study Area: 46<sup>th</sup> Street, 52<sup>nd</sup> Street, 56<sup>th</sup> Street, 60<sup>th</sup> Street, and 63<sup>rd</sup> Street. The stations and the elevated structure between 69<sup>th</sup> Street Transportation Center and 44<sup>th</sup> Street were completely reconstructed from 1999 to 2009. All stations are therefore fully ADA accessible and no major station improvements are necessary for the foreseeable future. The stations intersect with many SEPTA bus routes, facilitating easy transfers between modes.

The five stations in the West District account for 23,860 daily passengers. The MFL is SEPTA's highest ridership route and has the most frequent service of all the Authority's fixed-rail routes. Service frequency, or headways, is every 4 minutes during rush hour weekdays, every 6 minutes off-peak weekdays, 10 minutes on Saturdays and Sundays, and 20 minutes during 24 hour service on Fridays and Saturdays. There is no true express service on the MFL as it does not have multiple tracks like the BSL; however, there is "skip-stop" service. During rush hour, some lower ridership stations are not served by every train. These stations have "A" or "B" stop designations.

The MFL enables residents to live in densely developed neighborhoods without significant need for personal automobile ownership. Employment centers such as Center City, University City can be quickly reached in approximately 10 minutes or less from stations with the district.

All demographic numbers for the Market Frankford Line are from 2010. There may be double counts in the census information because ½ mile radii for the stations overlap.

#### **46<sup>th</sup> Street Station**

- Ridership:
  - 2012 Weekday Turnstile counts: 3,875
  - 2014 Weekday Turnstile counts: 4,207
  - 2016 Weekday Turnstile counts: 4,513
- Skip Stop Service: No
- Demographics:
  - Residents within a ½ mile: 16,466
  - Workers over age 16: 6,112
  - Jobs within a ½ mile: 3,226
  - Percentage of residents within a ½ mile that use transit/bike/walk: 63.58%
- ADA Access: Yes
- Bus Connections: Bus routes 31, 64
- Bike Parking: Yes
- Planned Improvements: Additional bike parking.
- Land Use: This station is surrounded by large properties that are mainly institutional or commercial. Many of these uses have large surface parking lots, are vacant, or are generally underdeveloped. Institutions include the CHOP Karabotos Pediatric Center, West Philadelphia Catholic High School, the Juvenile Justice Center, Gaudenzia House, and the former Provident Mutual Life Insurance building/4601 Market Street.

#### **52<sup>nd</sup> Street Station**

- Ridership:
  - 2012 Weekday Turnstile counts: 7,398
  - 2014 Weekday Turnstile counts: 6,875
  - 2016 Weekday Turnstile counts: 6,889
- Skip Stop Service: No
- Demographics:
  - Residents within a ½ mile: 18,893
  - Workers over age 16: 5,723
  - Jobs within a ½ mile: 2,373
  - Percentage of residents within a ½ mile that use transit/bike/walk: 55.69%
- ADA Access: Yes
- Bus Connections: Bus routes 31, 52
- Bike Parking: Yes.

- Planned Improvements: Additional bike parking.
- Land Use: 52<sup>nd</sup> Street is a major commercial corridor that is zoned CMX-4 (medium-high density commercial mixed use), but is not developed to that scale. The corridor is mostly one- to three-story narrow mixed-use properties with upstairs vacancy. The surrounding area is dense single-family row house residential.

### **56<sup>th</sup> Street Station**

- Ridership:
  - 2012 Weekday Turnstile counts: 5,480
  - 2014 Weekday Turnstile counts: 5,413
  - 2016 Weekday Turnstile counts: 5,494
- Skip Stop Service: No
- Demographics:
  - Residents within a ½ mile: 19,353
  - Workers over age 16: 6,081
  - Jobs within a ½ mile: 1,887
  - Percentage of residents within a ½ mile that use transit/bike/walk: 58.81%
- ADA Access: Yes
- Bus Connections: Bus routes 31, G
- Bike Parking: Yes
- Planned Improvements: None at this time.
- Land Use: Directly southeast of the station is an auto-oriented retail center with a Fresh Grocer supermarket and a Rite-Aid. There is also some neighborhood row house commercial more typical of West Philadelphia near the station. To the northwest is an area with institutional uses, multi-family residential, and vacancy. The remainder of the station area is dense row house residential.

### **60<sup>th</sup> Street Station**

- Ridership:
  - 2012 Weekday Turnstile counts: 4,867
  - 2014 Weekday Turnstile counts: 4,790
  - 2016 Weekday Turnstile counts: 4,899
- Skip Stop Service: No
- Demographics:
  - Residents within a ½ mile: 18,477
  - Workers over age 16: 5,428
  - Jobs within a ½ mile: 1,730
  - Percentage of residents within a ½ mile that use transit/bike/walk: 64.2%
- ADA Access: Yes
- Bus Connections: Bus routes 31, 46
- Bike Parking: Yes

- Planned Improvements: None at this time.
- Land Use: 60<sup>th</sup> Street is a major neighborhood commercial corridor mostly south of the station, although there are retail shops on N. 60th and Market Street as well. A transit-oriented development is proposed at 59<sup>th</sup> Street and Market Street where a large free parking lot currently exists. The majority of the surrounding area is dense row house residential.

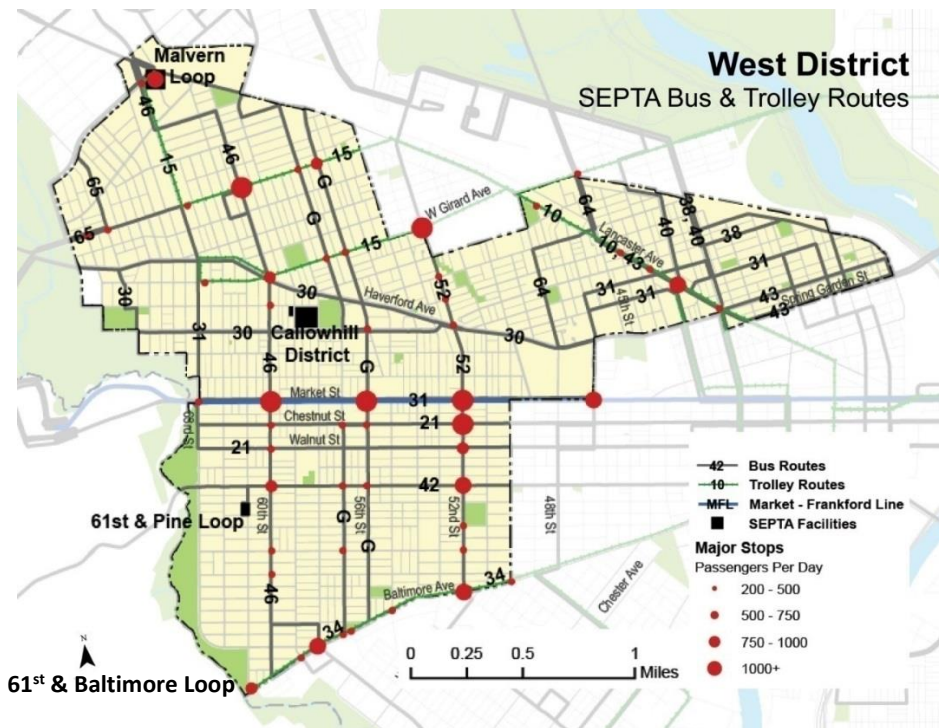
### **63<sup>rd</sup> Street Station**

- Ridership:
  - 2012 Weekday Turnstile counts: 2,067
  - 2014 Weekday Turnstile counts: 2,036
  - 2016 Weekday Turnstile counts: 2,065
- Skip Stop Service: Yes, “A” Station
- Demographics:
  - Residents within a ½ mile: 15,906
  - Workers over age 16: 4,742
  - Jobs within a ½ mile: 1,230
  - Percentage of residents within a ½ mile that use transit/bike/walk: 53.41%
- ADA Access: Yes
- Bus Connections: Bus routes 2,131
- Bike Parking: Yes
- Planned Improvements: None at this time.
- Land Use: West of the station lies Cobbs Creek Park, and to the east is a dense row house neighborhood. Neighborhood commercial uses are clustered near the station.

### **Bus & Trolley Service**

Fourteen SEPTA bus and trolley routes operate in the West District. Trolley Routes 10, 15, and 34 operate in the District, as do bus routes 21, 30, 31, 38, 40, 42, 43, 46, 52, 64, 65, and G.

Many of these routes intersect with the Market Frankford Line or provide a direct one seat ride to University City and Center City. Overall, there are almost 50,000 combined boards and alights within the district. The busiest route in the district is the Route 52 bus, which travels along 52<sup>nd</sup> Street, connecting residents to MFL service at 52<sup>nd</sup> Street Station and all three trolley lines which serve the district. The three trolley lines 10, 15, and 34 are all high-ridership routes within the district, as are bus routes 42 and G.



Bus & Trolley Routes: West District				
Route	Type	From/To	Avg Daily Ridership Full Route (2016)	Avg Daily Boards, West District ONLY
10	Trolley	13 <sup>th</sup> & Market to Malvern Loop	14,271	4,068
15	Trolley	63 <sup>rd</sup> & Girard to Westmoreland Loop	9,320	2,981
21	Bus	Penn's Landing to 69th St	9,291	2,512
30	Bus	Amtrak 30th St Station to 69th St	1,546	981
31	Bus	City Hall to 76 <sup>th</sup> & City Ave	4,838	4,363
34	Trolley	13 <sup>th</sup> & Market to 61 <sup>st</sup> & Baltimore	14,062	326
38	Bus	5 <sup>th</sup> & Market to Wissahickon T.C.	3,179	511
40	Bus	2 <sup>nd</sup> & Lombard to Conshohocken & Monument	7,187	751
42	Bus	Penn's Landing to Wycombe or 61 <sup>st</sup> & Pine	12,316	2,169
43	Bus	Richmond & Cumberland to 50 <sup>th</sup> & Parkside	3,379	2,672
46	Bus	58 <sup>th</sup> & Baltimore to Malvern Loop	5,820	8,945
52	Bus	49 <sup>th</sup> & Woodland to 54 <sup>th</sup> & City Ave	15,370	8,877
64	Bus	50th & Parkside to Pier 70	6,159	1,257
65	Bus	Germantown & Cheltenham to 69th St	8,434	1,722
G	Bus	Overbrook/Lankenau Medical Ctr to Columbus Commons/Food Distribution Ctr	14,107	7,043
Total Bus Activity within the District				50,861

### High Ridership Bus & Trolley Stops: West District

Stop Location	Routes	Average Daily Boards (Weekday)
52nd & Market	31, 52, MFL	3,812
56th & Market	31, G, MFL	2,535
60th & Market	31, 46, MFL	2,080
52nd & Girard	15, 52	1,511
60th & Lansdowne	10, 46	1,331
52nd & Chestnut	21, 52	1,010
Malvern Loop	10, 46	981
52nd & Spruce	42, 52	925
46th & Market	31, 64, MFL	837
52nd & Baltimore	34, 52	798

### Bus/Trolley Facilities

There are two bus loops and one bus district/depot in the West District:

- Callowhill Depot - Callowhill Depot / District, one of SEPTA's five bus districts, consists of two buildings. The bus/trolley "barn" occupies one city block between Callowhill and Vine Streets between 58<sup>th</sup> and 59<sup>th</sup> Streets. The building covers the full square block and is fully utilized without room to accommodate additional buses or routes. The nature of the full lot coverage of the depot has led to employee parking issues in the neighborhood, which is primarily single-family rowhouses. SEPTA, with the cooperation of the City's Streets and Water Departments, installed back-in angle parking and corner curb extensions along the 5800 and 5700 blocks of Vine Street (north side only) to help alleviate the parking crunch. The other building is administrative only with employee break rooms and classroom space. It is a large brick two-story building located on the southwest corner of 59<sup>th</sup> and Callowhill Streets. It is directly across the street from the "barn" building. Trolley Routes 10 and 15, and Bus Routes 21, 30, 31, 38, 40, 42, 43, 44, 46, 52, and 65 all operate out of Callowhill District.
- Malvern Loop - Malvern Loop is located at 63<sup>rd</sup> Street and Malvern Avenue, and is the western terminus of Trolley Route 10. Bus Route 46 also lays over within the loop, while bus routes 65, 105, and G all make stops outside the loop. This loop will need to be made ADA compliant with the implementation of Trolley Modernization.
- 61<sup>st</sup> and Pine Loop - The 61<sup>st</sup> and Pine Street Loop is located at the southwest corner of 61<sup>st</sup> and Pine Streets and is the western terminus of Route 42. The loop is currently being renovated, and the improvements include the installation of a new passenger shelter, upgraded lighting, and new paving.
- 61<sup>st</sup> & Baltimore Loop - This loop will need to be made ADA compliant with the implementation of Trolley Modernization for Route 34.

## COMPLETE STREETS

*Goal: Balance us of roadways to ensure safe and efficient travel by all modes*

### Transit First

Two transit routes have received some Transit First treatments: Route 52 bus corridor and Route 34 trolley have receivers for signal prioritization. Some stops have been placed far-side to expedite passenger boarding and improve rider safety. However, stop consolidation, stormwater bumpouts and the elimination of mid-block stops have not been incorporated into these routes.

### Pedestrian Safety

- The 53<sup>rd</sup> & Baltimore pedestrian safety improvement project, funded by the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), will remove slip ramps for eastbound and westbound Baltimore Avenue, which is the school crossing guard location for Avery D Harrington School. The project will also include green infrastructure with a subsurface stormwater retention system, signal upgrades and bump-outs.
- The Mantua Greenway is a proposed shared-use path on Mantua Avenue along the AMTRAK rail corridor, which would improve pedestrian and bicycle connections and lighting in the Mantua neighborhood. More information is included in the Open Space memo.
- Pedestrian safety under the MFL is a priority and efforts to improve conditions include installation of LED lighting and sightline improvements.

### Sidewalk conditions

Throughout the district, there are 2.52 miles of missing sidewalks and 2.66 miles of sidewalks in very poor condition. These conditions are dispersed throughout the district neighborhoods but pedestrians in Mantua, Belmont, and Mill Creek are most impacted by the adverse sidewalk conditions.

### Vision Zero

The Vision Zero task force is currently working on a number of metrics to identify streets throughout the City for improvements based on crash data. A high-injury street network is currently in the pipeline and will help identify priorities for infrastructure investment.

Year	Crashes	People involved	Deaths	Serious Injuries	Pedestrian Deaths
2011	502	1340	3	13	2
2012	566	1516	3	19	2
2013	565	1484	2	13	0
2014	562	1559	4	17	1
2015	633	1692	5	15	2
Total	2828	7591	17	77	7



**Streets with a high number of crashes:**

Market St, Walnut St, Chestnut St, Lancaster Ave, Cobbs Creek Parkway, Haverford Ave, Belmont Ave, Master St, Sansom St, 52<sup>nd</sup> St, 60<sup>th</sup> St, 61<sup>st</sup> St, 63<sup>rd</sup> St

**Intersections with a high number of crashes:**

52<sup>nd</sup> & Market, 57<sup>th</sup> & Market, 53<sup>rd</sup> & Spruce, 61<sup>st</sup> & Market, 62<sup>nd</sup> & Market, 42<sup>nd</sup> & Westminister, 49<sup>th</sup> & Fairmount, 63<sup>rd</sup> & Lancaster, 60<sup>th</sup> & Lancaster, 63<sup>rd</sup> & Market, 48<sup>th</sup> & Haverford, Cobbs Creek Parkway & Marshall Road, 40<sup>th</sup> & Haverford

**Bicycle Network**

The following bicycle facility projects are planned or proposed for the West District:

**Planned (within the next 2 years)**

- 40<sup>th</sup> Street bicycle facility to be installed in 2018 from Girard to 40<sup>th</sup> St Bridge.
- 34<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge protected bicycle lane to be installed in 2017

**Proposed**

- 40<sup>th</sup> Street bicycle facility from 40<sup>th</sup> St Bridge to Lancaster Avenue
- 53<sup>rd</sup> and 54<sup>th</sup> Street bicycle facility connecting Lancaster Avenue to Walnut St
- Bicycle connections on Spring Garden St from Spring Garden St Bridge to Lancaster Ave
- Protected bicycle lane on Walnut Street
- Protected bicycle lane on Chestnut Street from 50<sup>th</sup> St to 63<sup>rd</sup> St

**Trails – see Open Space memo****Car Share**

There are nine car sharing pods in West District, almost all located within direct proximity of a transit stop, especially along the MFL and Trolley lines.

**STREETS AND HIGHWAYS**

*Goal: Provide a safe and efficient road network that supports planned land uses.*

There are three PennDOT projects currently listed on the Transportation Improvement Program:

- The replacement of the 59<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge over the SEPTA/Amtrak rail corridor is estimated to cost \$20 million and design will begin in 2017. This is an important connection for the West District because there are only three crossings of the Philadelphia to Harrisburg Main Line rail corridor and the replacement of this bridge will result in a twelve-month closure during replacement, which will impact congestion, transit operations and pedestrian connections between neighborhoods in West and West Park districts.
- Chestnut St / Walnut St Fiber Optic Network – this is a \$700,000 project that is scheduled for installation in 2017 that will improve the operations for traffic signals on these corridors.

- The Spruce Street corridor has funding for design and construction for resurfacing beginning with design in 2017-2018 and construction in 2021-2024. This is a combined \$13.1 million project.

Chestnut/Walnut Fiber	2017	\$700,000
Spruce Street resurfacing	Design in 2017-2018	\$1,100,000
	Construction in 2021-2024	\$12,000,000
59th Street bridge replacement	Design beginning in 2017	\$20,000,000

Additional streets and highways projects in the West District include City-wide projects such as ADA ramp replacements, resurfacing, and street lighting upgrades to LED lighting.

## FREIGHT

Due to its predominant residential character, Philadelphia's West District freight activity is primarily generated by commercial, office, and residential land uses. Commercial districts are sprinkled throughout the District (e.g., 52<sup>nd</sup> Street).

In 2017, the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) published a Philadelphia Delivery Handbook which contains concepts and programs to better accommodate deliveries in Philadelphia. Three of the Best Practices identified in the Handbook are particularly germane to the study area:

- **Consolidated deliveries and pick-ups** whereby stores may act on their own or in a collaborative manner to manage and effectively reduce deliveries
- **Alternate delivery sites** which provide an option to direct home deliveries
- **Making safety a top priority** that recognizes the diverse set of City street users

DVRPC is also working with the City of Philadelphia to address the availability of overnight truck parking facilities and spaces in the City. To meet the demands and needs of long-haul truck drivers and Philadelphia residents who drive for a living, this effort will help identify both existing and potential overnight parking locations.

The District does not host any of the designated DVRPC Freight Centers (i.e., large, identified concentrations of freight/industrial activity which are 250 contiguous acres in size or larger). Major freight rail lines, for the most part, elude the District. CSX's Philadelphia Subdivision is located just south of the District. Norfolk Southern's Harrisburg Line and CSX's Trenton Subdivision are largely located just beyond the northeastern corner of the District (near Mantua).

Car dealerships on the Main Line outside of Philadelphia's boundaries have storage capacity in Philadelphia across the 59<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge, just outside of the district. Therefore, this bridge and Lancaster Ave has active truck activity for the transport of these vehicles as well as distribution of other goods.

## **RECOMMENDED FOLLOW UP**

### **Trolley Modernization**

Additional information about the design and timing of trolley modernization is recommended to inform the West District plan. The SEPTA light rail vehicles that operate in Philadelphia will be replaced in the next five to seven years. This includes both the single ended Kawasaki LRVs and the single ended PCC vehicles. Only the Kawasaki vehicles operate within the West District on the Routes 10 and 34. The PCC cars operate on the Route 15. SEPTA will purchase new, modern light rail vehicles that will be longer in length (approximately 80 ft) and low-floor to provide ADA accessibility. SEPTA is currently beginning the procurement process for these vehicles and has completed a feasibility study that analyzed all the impacts of trolley modernization including signals, track, power, bridge capacity, and SEPTA depot facilities. Trolley Modernization will not only replace aging vehicles but address other issues:

- Ridership growth
- Tunnel capacity
- ADA accessibility
- On-time performance
- Bunching of vehicles
- Standees
- Dwell Time

The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) is nearing completion of its Modern Trolley Station Design Guidelines, which look at the impacts of low-floor ADA accessible vehicles to the street. Changes to the street will be the most noticeable difference for both SEPTA customers and non-customers caused by the purchase of new light rail vehicles. The Modern Trolley Station Design Guidelines looks at:

- Pedestrian and ADA improvements
- Curb extensions
- Platform length and siting
- Bike lane accommodations
- Lane widths and clearances
- Green stormwater infrastructure
- Passenger amenities (shelters)
- Parking impacts

### **Candidate Traffic Calming Studies**

- A ½ mile segment of 34<sup>th</sup> Street just north of the district from the I-76 interchange at Girard Avenue to Mantua Ave carries a large volume of vehicles travelling south without a traffic control, such as a signal or stop sign. The two-lane one-direction nature of 34<sup>th</sup> Street southbound from Mantua Avenue carries approximately 9,000 vehicles daily. The speed limit is listed at 25 mph but the actual speed is perceived to be higher than this.
- Vehicles travelling above the 30 mph speed limit along 63<sup>rd</sup> Street north of Market Street, a 4 lane bi-directional arterial, have led to numerous crashes and two fatalities in the last two years.

## **SUMMARY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS**

### **Current Historic Preservation Activities in the West Planning District**

#### **PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

Created by City Council ordinance in 1955, reorganized in 1985, and reorganized again under Section 14-1000 of the Philadelphia Code in 2012, the Philadelphia Historical Commission is responsible for ensuring the preservation of historically significant buildings, structures, sites, objects, interiors, and districts in the city. The Commission identifies and designates historic resources, listing them on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, and then regulates those resources for preservation through the City's building and other permitting processes.

Within the West Planning District, only 8 properties (excluding condominium units) are currently listed on the Philadelphia Register, with an additional 5 properties falling within the pending Overbrook Farms Historic District. Two properties are pending individual designation and are currently under the Historical Commission's jurisdiction. There are approximately 12,000 properties (23,000 if condominium units are included) in total on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The following properties are listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places:

- 3509 Spring Garden Street, Archbishop Academy for the Deaf (1860), designated 4/30/1963;
- 3701-03 Spring Garden Street, designated 4/30/1963;
- 838-1/2 N. 42<sup>nd</sup> Street, St. Petri Evangelical German Lutheran Church (1872), designated 6/14/2013;
- 1026-28 Belmont Avenue, Engine Co. No. 16 Firehouse (1896), designated 7/8/2016;
- 4865 Market Street, Pennsylvania Hospital for the Insane, Kirkbride Center (1841; 1854), designated 1/14/2005;
- 917-31 N. 63<sup>rd</sup> Street, Monte Vista (1910-21), designated 1/5/1984;
- 446-64 N. 65<sup>th</sup> Street, Haddington Branch of the Free Library (1915), designated 6/12/2009; and
- 15 S. 52<sup>nd</sup> Street, Philadelphia Saving Fund Society, West Philadelphia Branch (1926), designated 5/13/2011.

The two properties pending individual designation include 600-608 N. 40<sup>th</sup> Street, West Philadelphia Title & Trust Company (c. 1897), and 862-72 N. 41<sup>st</sup> Street, Franklin M. Rorke Mansion (1899).

#### **KEY ISSUES**

The following are important historic preservation challenges facing the West District:

- **Properties in poor condition**
  - The West Planning District is defined by its many residential properties, most of which were constructed in rows between the 1870s and 1920s. The aging building stock presents a challenge to the many owners who have limited funds for rehabilitation.

While income-producing property owners may take advantage of historic preservation tax credits for substantial renovation projects, residential property owners do not have comparable incentives and may seek to complete projects in the least costly way possible, if at all. As a result, many repairs may not comply with historic preservation standards.

- The district generally lacks large commercial and industrial buildings and instead favors rows of smaller, often mixed-use buildings within its commercial corridors. These properties, located along S. 52<sup>nd</sup> Street, S. 60<sup>th</sup> Street, parts of Lancaster Avenue, and Market Street, exhibit issues similar to the district's residential properties. Prolonged vacancies and underutilization of historic properties have significantly contributed to advanced deterioration in parts of these corridors. This decline and lack of maintenance is especially prevalent at properties flanking the El on Market Street.
- As the district's commercial, residential, and institutional buildings have aged, they have been adapted to meet the evolving needs and requirements of a particular owner. Alterations, such as the installation of cladding or substitute materials and the construction of front-façade additions, may result in irreversible change and loss of integrity.
- **Declining church membership**
  - Many religious institutions flourished in the densely residential neighborhoods of West Philadelphia in the years following their development. In response to rapid growth, Catholic and Protestant congregations erected large and imposing church buildings, often coupled with parish houses, schools, or other supporting facilities. More recently, with waning membership and costly structures to maintain, some congregations have sold their properties or allowed the buildings to languish, leaving the structures susceptible to future deterioration, instability, or demolition.
- **Vacant properties and vacant lots**
  - In addition to occupied properties in poor condition, there are many areas in the district where individual or multiple rowhouses have been demolished or are vacant, producing an inconsistent appearance among some blocks in the district.
- **Limited locally-designated resources (PHC)**
  - The Philadelphia Historical Commission currently has only fifteen properties within the West Planning District under its jurisdiction, though significant, potentially eligible resources exist within the district's boundaries.

## **MAJOR OPPORTUNITIES**

Historic preservation opportunities in the West Planning District include:

- **Numerous intact blocks of homes**
  - The West Planning District is rich with unique historic properties with great character. Of particular note are the intricately-detailed rowhouses and twin residences throughout many neighborhoods, in addition to large apartment complexes located along arterial routes. Despite disinvestment over the past several decades, there are a

number of remarkably well-preserved residential blocks that maintain integrity and represent the history of the district. Fortunately, the lack of development pressure has further contributed to the general preservation of these resources.

- **Many significant institutional, commercial, religious, and residential sites**
  - The staff of the Historical Commission has preliminarily surveyed the Planning District and finds that there are many sites that likely satisfy one or more Criteria for Designation to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places as outlined in the historic preservation ordinance, Section 14-1000 of the Philadelphia Code. Given the cursory nature of this survey, priorities for consideration for designation have not been assigned to the potential historic resources. Additional survey work is recommended within the West Planning District to fully assess the extant historic resources in the district; areas of particular interest are described below.

## **HISTORIC PRESERVATION (SPECIFIC TOPICS)**

### **Historic Districts**

*Goal: Evaluate eligibility of local historic or conservation districts in the Cobbs Creek neighborhood and other neighborhoods within the West Planning district boundaries*

- Cobbs Creek Historic District<sup>1</sup>: The proposed historic district roughly stretches from Larchwood Avenue to the Pennsylvania Railroad and extends along Cobbs Creek Parkway and 62<sup>nd</sup> Street. The boundary continues east at Carpenter Street, terminating at 58<sup>th</sup> Street.

The area now comprising the Cobbs Creek neighborhood, located at the city's western border with Delaware County, originally served as the site of several nineteenth-century water- and steam-powered mills in addition to workers housing. In the early years of the twentieth century, modern modes of power production contributed to the mills' obsolescence, and the historic structures along Cobbs Creek were eventually demolished, leaving behind traces of their existence in the creek bed and archaeological remains underground. Some of the millworkers' 1880s housing stock, however, survives interspersed throughout the later community.

The neighborhood that succeeded the mill properties emerged as an auto-centric suburb with buildings designed specifically to house personal automobiles. Early in the neighborhood's conception, individual developers contributed differing strategies to resolve the need to protect the automobiles of the period, which were vulnerable to the elements and required indoor storage. Initial attempts included constructing blocks of houses with courts of individual garages; erecting pairs of rear garages accessed through a small shared driveway on the property line; and installing a shared rear drive that extended the length of the block to provide access to basement garages. The latter scheme became the ubiquitous design for Cobbs Creek

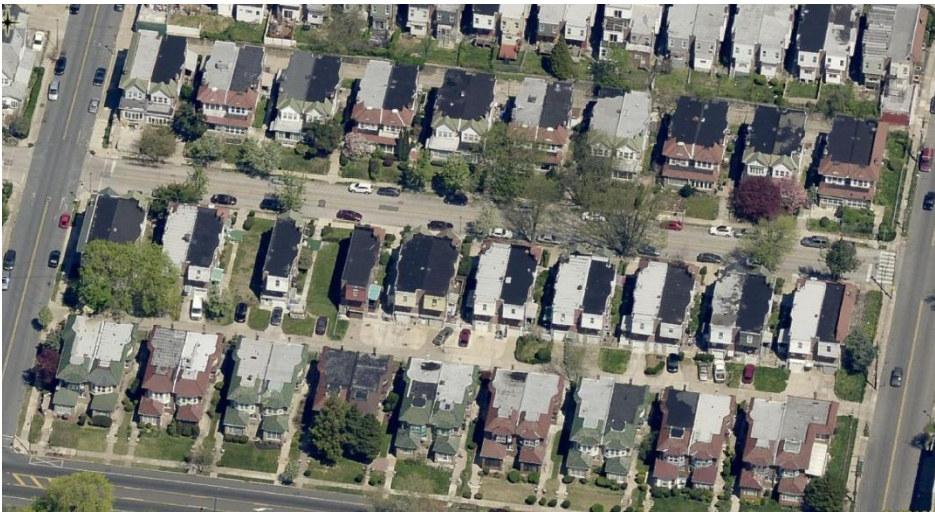
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<sup>1</sup> The information presented on the potential Cobbs Creek Historic District was adapted from: George Thomas, "Cobbs Creek Automobile Suburb Historic District," National Register of Historic Places, 1998.

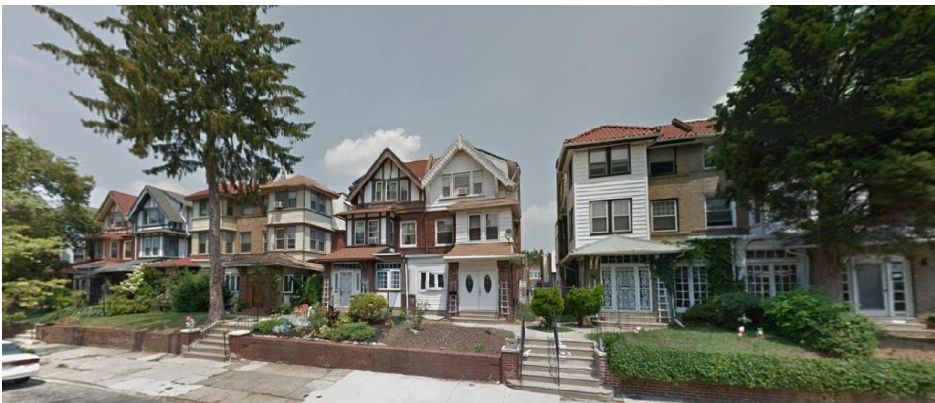
houses.

As developers funded the construction of these suburban blocks, they adopted the popular Arts and Crafts vocabulary that incorporated half-timber English medieval design and merged it with simpler finishes advocated by Gustav Stickley's Craftsman movement. The buildings that comprised the new, unified blocks of housing exhibited character-defining features that included tan, sand-textured brick walls with tile ornament below brightly colored Spanish tile roofs that alternated between red and green. Developers of other buildings within the neighborhood drew on styles that included Colonial Revival and Tudor Revival.

Though many properties within the Cobbs Creek neighborhood have accrued additional layers of cladding and substitute materials over time, the houses generally retain a high degree of integrity with little demolition, which attests to the stability of the community and the success of its design.



*Aerial view of the potential Cobbs Creek Historic District. Source: Pictometry.*



*The 6200 block of Carpenter Street. Source: Google StreetView.*



- Overbrook Heights Historic District: The proposed historic district includes the 800 block of N. 63<sup>rd</sup> Street and Wynnewood Road.

Situated just south of Overbrook Farms' western boundary, this small two-block development was planned and executed between 1897 and 1901, while ongoing construction of the larger but separate development continued to the north. The arrival of the 63<sup>rd</sup> Street trolley line galvanized development in areas adjacent to the new transit system. Along N. 63<sup>rd</sup> Street, single-family and twin residences, and even large apartment complexes, emerged at the turn of the century at the city's western extents. These buildings provided housing for Philadelphia's expanding middle class.

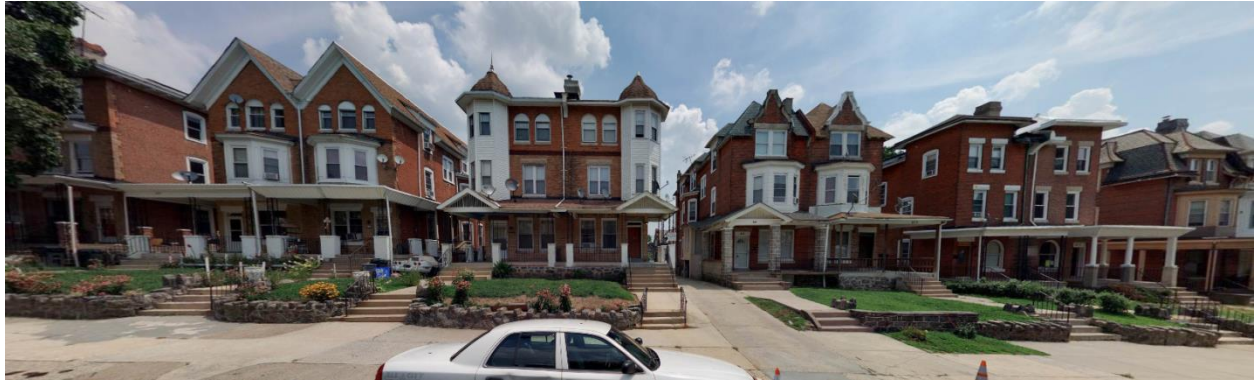
Architect and speculative developer Henry E. Flower formulated plans for the 800 block of N. 63<sup>rd</sup> Street and Wynnewood Road that were to include approximately one hundred single and twin residences. Flower commissioned prominent Philadelphia architect Willis Hale, whose eccentric style is infused into the buildings' designs. Hale employed Flemish Gothic, German Renaissance, and Colonial Revival styles to offer a unified but diverse appearance to the two blocks. The Wynnewood Road properties display more Colonial Revival detailing at the first story and transition to eclectic features above, with many residences containing three-sided bays, steep, overhanging gables, Romanesque-style tripartite windows, and polygonal corner towers that terminate in domed roofs. Properties on N. 63<sup>rd</sup> Street exhibit alternating styles that include conservative Colonial Revival designs with straight gables and no bays; Flemish Gothic designs featuring stepped gables and clustered windows; and German Renaissance designs featuring shaped gables, ogee-headed dormers, peaked bays, and roof cresting. All the properties in the proposed district are set back from the street behind low stone walls.

The properties on both blocks are distinguished for their architectural significance and retain a high degree of integrity. Where change has occurred, it typically appears through the limited application of alternative materials, particularly the addition of vinyl siding to projecting bays. Major alteration, such as enclosing the front porch or constructing an addition, has found limited practice on the two blocks.



*800 block of N. 63<sup>rd</sup> Street. Source: Cyclomedia.*





*800 block of Wynnewood Road. Source: Cyclomedia.*

### **Commercial Buildings**

*Goal: Consider nomination of the following potentially-eligible commercial buildings to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places*

#### **Banks**

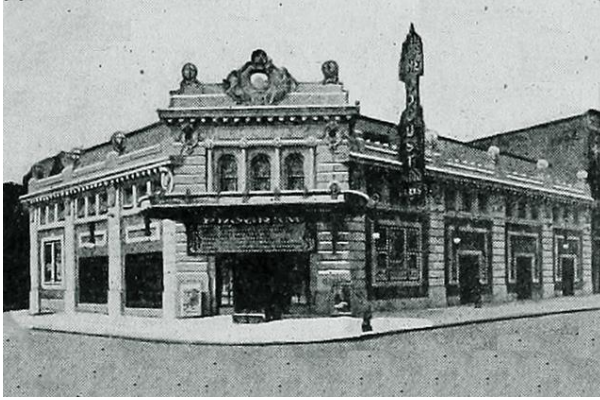
- **17-23 S. 52<sup>nd</sup> Street, Parke Bank Building (1910-13):** The Beaux Arts building at 17-23 S. 52<sup>nd</sup> Street stands as the most imposing structure along the 52<sup>nd</sup> Street commercial corridor. Constructed by George F. Pawling & Co. three years after the completion of the El, the building currently retains much of its original appearance, which consists of a limestone, granite, and terra cotta exterior. Over the years following construction, numerous banks came and went through the first floor space, changing the building's name each time.



*The Parke Bank Building. Source: Cyclomedia.*

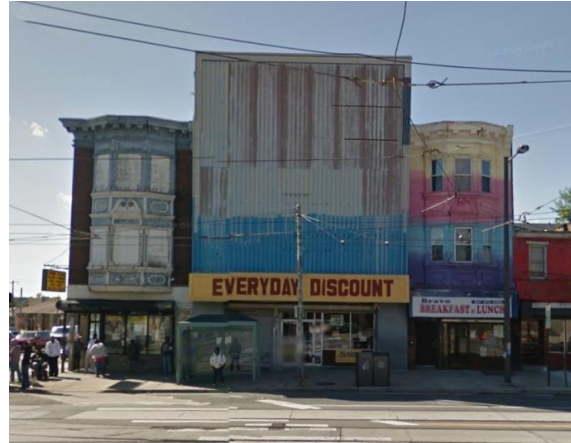
#### **Theaters**

- **228-36 S. 52<sup>nd</sup> Street, Locust Theatre (c. 1914):** Upon opening in 1914, the building functioned as a vaudeville and motion picture house with a seating capacity of 1,400. The ornate Beaux Arts building, West Philadelphia's most distinguished and intact theater, was originally designed by Stuckert & Sloan with alterations/additions completed in 1922 by Hoffman-Henon Co.



*Hoffman-Henon Co. sketch of the Locust Theatre's exterior, undated (left), and as it appears today. Source: cinematreasures.org and Cyclomedia.*

- 4102-04 Lancaster Avenue, Leader Theatre (1912):** Theater architect John D. Allen designed the Leader Theatre in 1912. With a seating capacity of 1,000, the building consisted of a commanding, central pedimented, three-bay structure flanked by two smaller wings with projecting bays. The building underwent several remodeling campaigns in the 1920s and '30s and ceased functioning as a theater in 1968. The building's condition has declined in recent decades, and corrugated aluminum cladding obscures the central pavilion's façade, though the theater's original detailing likely exists beneath.



*Leader Theatre, c. 1945 (left) and 2014. Source: Athenaeum of Philadelphia and Google StreetView.*

### **Other Commercial Buildings**

- 4601 Market Street, Provident Life and Trust Company (1926; subsequent alterations in 1962):** For its West Philadelphia building, the Provident Mutual Life Insurance Company hired one of America's most important and successful twentieth-century firms, Cram & Ferguson of Boston. The firm designed the massive English Georgian structure in 1926, using limestone and terra cotta to merge classical forms with a Moderne vocabulary. The project included Turner Construction Company as the builder and renowned metal worker Samuel Yellin, who designed wrought iron radiator grilles. In 1962, Hoyle, Doran, Berry completed a series of

additions/alterations. Provident Mutual Life Insurance Company moved out of the structure in 1983, and the City of Philadelphia has since acquired it and completed significant renovations.



*The Provident Life and Trust Company. Source: Hidden City Philadelphia.*

- **5131-37 Walnut Street (1928):** With a Spanish Art Deco commercial storefront, the H. McMurtrie-designed building features slender terra cotta piers that frame the glass curtain wall system. Bronze spandrel covers decorate the façade between the first and second stories, and the parapet is accented with glazed rosettes and punctuated by crenellated piers. Though one of the strongest commercial designs in the district, the building has been languishing in recent years.

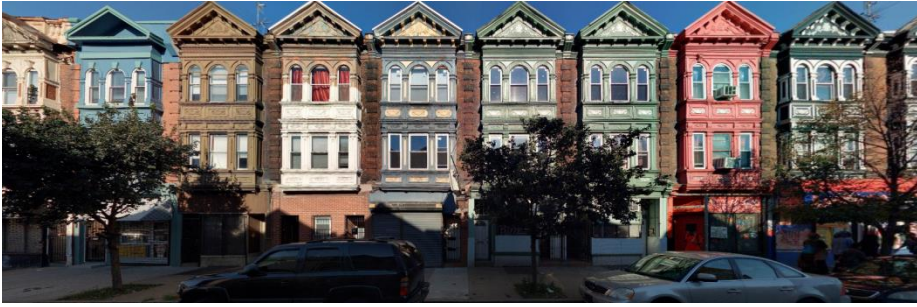


*The Spanish Art Deco façade of 5131-37 Walnut Street. Source: Cyclomedia.*

- **S. 60<sup>th</sup> Street between Walnut and Chancellor Streets, Commercial/Residential Buildings and Imperial Theatre (c. 1911-14):** The uniform appearance of the block's mixed-use buildings is owed to the architecture firm of Andersen & Haupt. The firm received many commissions in West Philadelphia, including the La Blanche Apartments located at 5100-5108 Walnut Street and several theaters. At the end of the row stands the Imperial Theatre, a terra cotta-clad Beaux Arts



structure designed by J. Frank Bradley and constructed in 1912-13.



*The mixed-use buildings along the 200 block of S. 60<sup>th</sup> Street. Source: Cyclomedia.*

### **Institutional Buildings**

*Goal: Consider nomination of the following potentially-eligible institutional buildings to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places*

#### **Schools**

- **5429-55 Chestnut Street, Oliver Wendell Holmes Public School (1916):** One of several early-twentieth-century schools by the Board of Education's architect, J. Horace Cook, the building represents the Beaux Arts Institutional style. Though no longer used as a school, an organization adaptively reused the structure by converting it into forty-two units of senior housing in 2001.



*Oliver Wendell Holmes Public School. Source: Cyclomedia.*

- **6523-43 Lansdowne Avenue, Lewis C. Cassidy School (1922):** The Georgian Revival structure, designed by J. Horace Cook, is highly detailed with Flemish bond patterning at its walls and decorative stone window surrounds and moldings. The large, repeating windows originally contained fanlights and featured a nine-over-nine sash configuration.



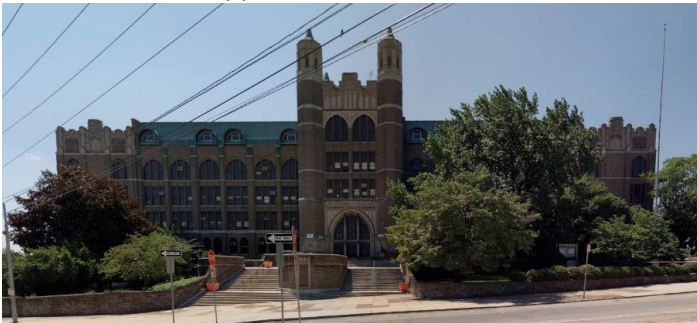
*Lewis C. Cassidy School. Source: Cyclomedia.*

- **4612-72 W. Girard Avenue, Blankenburg Elementary School (1924):** Designed by prolific Philadelphia school architect Irwin T. Catharine in 1924 and built by Michael Melody & Son, the Georgian Revival structure is sited at an angle to face the intersection of W. Girard and Merion Avenues and to also relate to Lancaster Avenue just beyond.



*Blankenburg Elementary School. Source: Cyclomedia.*

- **5700 Lancaster Avenue, Overbrook High School (1924-26):** The landmark high school, designed by Irwin T. Catharine, stands as one of the largest public schools in the city. Aside from its impressive Gothic façade, the school boasts numerous distinguished alumni, such as NBA basketball legend Wilt Chamberlin, R&B singer Dee Dee Sharp, Olympic track gold medalist Jon Drummond, and rapper and actor Will Smith.



*Overbrook High School. Source: Cyclomedia.*

- **728-62 N. 44<sup>th</sup> Street, Martha Washington Public School (1929-30):** Architect Irwin T. Catharine designed the building in a Gothic and Art Deco vocabulary. The building's rectilinear form is balanced by the verticality of the piers. A Gothic portal demarcates the Aspen Street entrance. The building continues to operate as a school.



*Martha Washington Public School. Source: Cyclomedia.*

### **Hospitals**

- **836 N. Preston Street and 4035 Parrish Street, West Philadelphia Hospital for Women (c. 1890; 1915; and 1931):** The West Philadelphia Hospital for Women began as a female-led grass-roots effort in 1889 to establish a hospital and dispensary for women who would be under the care of women. The hospital first opened at the northeast corner of N. 41<sup>st</sup> and Ogden Streets and expanded through the block to Parrish Street with a training school for nursing. By 1916, the hospital further expanded to include a Walter Smedley-designed Georgian-Revival building, centrally positioned within the complex. In 1931, the hospital underwent one last expansion that included the construction of a seven-story building fronting Parrish Street.



*West Philadelphia Hospital for Women. Source: Pictometry and Google StreetView.*

- **5301 Cedar Avenue, Misericordia Hospital (c. 1915):** A major work by preeminent late-nineteenth-century architect Edwin Forrest Durang, the massive H-shaped Georgian Revival structure was commissioned by the Sisters of Mercy to provide much-needed hospital care to West Philadelphia's growing population.





*Misericordia Hospital. Source: Cyclomedia.*

### ***Other Institutional Buildings***

- **4807-61 Westminster Avenue, Saint John's Orphan Asylum (1893):** Saint John's Orphan Asylum consists of several historic structures, with the main Gothic Revival stone building having been designed by Frank Watson in 1893. Though numerous additions have been constructed over the years, the original building's central and side pavilions with connecting wings remain legible. Supporting structures were constructed between 1903 and 1927 by Henon & Boyle, J. Phelan, George Lovett, and P. Getz.



*Saint John's Orphan Asylum. Source: Pictometry.*

- **4025-69 Westminster Avenue, Y.M.C.A. Pennsylvania Railroad Branch (c. 1892):** Thomas Lonsdale designed the Pennsylvania Railroad YMCA building in 1892, and enlarged the building in 1896, just a few years after its construction. The Gothic-style building contained a large auditorium with a stage, gymnasium, library, reading rooms, baths, dining rooms, social parlors, porches, and classrooms. The 40<sup>th</sup> Street train station was also located on the building's grounds. At one time, several hundred men used the facility on a daily basis. By the 1940s, the building was abandoned and derelict. In 1943 Father Divine's Peace Mission purchased the property and restored it as the Unity Mission Church, again making it available for use by

neighborhood children.



*Y.M.C.A. Pennsylvania Railroad Branch. Source: Cyclomedia.*

- **4111 Mantua Avenue, National Guard Patrol, Battery A (c. 1892; altered 1913, 1914, and 1923):** The castellated structure was erected in 1892 from the designs of A. Green for Battery A of the National Guard Patrol. Tucked into a small-scale residential street, the armory breaks the rhythm of the surrounding rowhouses with its two broad, engaged, octagonal towers.



*National Guard Patrol, Battery A. Source: Cyclomedia.*

- **5331-41 Haverford Avenue, Haddington Fire House (c. 1924):** Architect John Molitor designed the red brick Romanesque firehouse in 1924 while serving as the architect of the City of Philadelphia. No longer used for its original purpose, the fire house had been sensitively adapted into a community senior center in recent years. The adaptation included a small addition at the Parrish Street façade and other minor alterations, but the building largely retains its historic appearance.



*Haddington Fire House. Source: Cyclomedia.*



## Religious Buildings

*Goal: Consider nomination of the Following potentially-eligible religious buildings to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places*

- **814-22 N. 41st Street, Calvary Protestant Episcopal Church (Constructed 1851-52; moved to current location 1882):** One of the earliest extant churches in the district, Calvary Protestant Episcopal Church was designed by architect John M. Gries and constructed in 1851-52. The stained glass was completed by Ellwood Potts and the studio of John & George H. Gibson. The Gothic structure was moved to its current site, stone by stone, in 1882.<sup>2</sup>

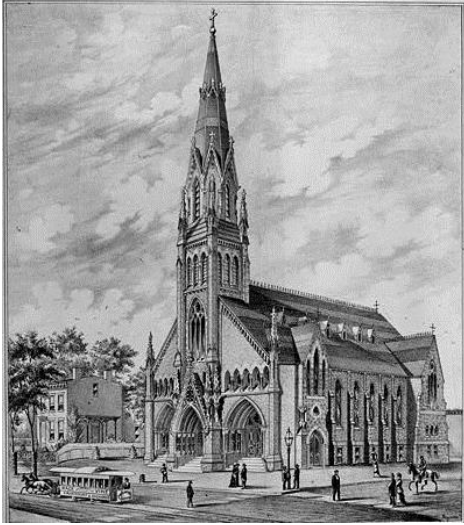


*Calvary Protestant Episcopal Church. Source: Cyclomedia.*

- **3801-3807 Spring Garden Street, Saint Agatha Roman Catholic Church (1874-78; subsequent work 1912; rectory built 1892; chapel built 1901; school built 1917):** West Philadelphia experienced continuing residential development at the end of the Civil War, and in 1865 the parish of Saint Agatha was founded in the Mantua section. The cornerstone for the church at 38<sup>th</sup> and Spring Garden Streets was laid in 1874 and the church was dedicated in 1878.

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<sup>2</sup> Philadelphia Architects and Buildings, Athenaeum of Philadelphia, accessed April 11, 2017, [www.philadelphiabuildings.org](http://www.philadelphiabuildings.org).



*Lithograph, 1885, American Catholic Historical Society, Philadelphia, Pa. Source: HABS and Google StreetView.*



*Aerial of the Saint Agatha Church complex. Source: Pictometry.*

- **339 N. 63<sup>rd</sup> Street, Our Lady of the Rosary Roman Catholic Church (Church built 1887; parish school built 1901):** Serving the Haddington neighborhood, a new parish, Our Lady of the Rosary, was established in 1886. Architect Frank. R. Watson was commissioned for the design, while

Ferdinand Baraldi was listed as the decorator and Charles Hall & Co. as the sculptor.



*Our Lady of the Rosary Church complex. Source: Cyclomedia (left) and Pictometry.*



*Our Lady of the Rosary Church complex. Source: Google StreetView.*

- **4007-11 Aspen Street, New Bethlehem Baptist Church, formerly Second Presbyterian Church (1892-93):** The building, dominated by an octagonal entrance tower at the corner of Aspen and Preston Streets, was designed by architect T. Frank Miller and features stained glass by artist William Reith. Flying buttresses support the tower at the second story, and an onion-domed cupola tops the steeply sloped roof of the exotic style building. Several years after its construction, architect Robert Kennedy completed alterations to the church that included remodeling the main structure and designing a two-story brick and stone addition.





*New Bethlehem Baptist Church. Source: Cyclomedia.*

- **224-50 N. 54<sup>th</sup> Street, formerly Our Lady of Victory Roman Catholic Church (1903):** In 1899, a parish was founded at 54<sup>th</sup> and Vine Streets, and Mass was celebrated in a makeshift chapel on the second floor of an old saw mill. The church's construction was begun a decade later, in 1909. Prior to that date, Sisters of Saint Joseph founded Our Lady of Victory School in 1903 and commissioned architect Rowland W. Boyle to design the building.



*The former Our Lady of Victory church (left) and school. Source: Cyclomedia.*

- **5923 Walnut Street, Richardson Presbyterian Church (1911):** Charles W. Bolton & Son designed the Gothic Revival church complex in 1911. Bolton, who designed many Protestant churches in Philadelphia and across the nation, served as a counterpart to preeminent Catholic church architects E. F. Durang and Henry Dagit. At Richardson Presbyterian Church, the firm invoked a High-Gothic vocabulary for the massive church and balanced the oversized building with lower supporting structures that were recessed from the street to provide an open courtyard.



*Richardson Presbyterian Church. Source: Cyclomedia.*

- **6213-35 Cedar Avenue, St. Cyprian, formerly St. Carthage Roman Catholic Church and School (Designed 1915; constructed 1925):** The original plan for the complex was developed in 1915, when the first of the new suburban houses were being constructed in the Cobbs Creek neighborhood. Designed by the firm Henon and Boyle, who designed the parish school, rectory, and convent buildings, the parish buildings were constructed in the gray granite and limestone trim of much of the Philadelphia archdiocese and recall the Victorian roots of Boyle's training in the 1880s.



*St. Cyprian Church and School. Source: Cyclomedia, top, and Pictometry.*

- **5701 Washington Avenue, Ninth Presbyterian Church (c. 1916):** Constructed diagonally on the lot, the Gothic structure extends to the intersection of Washington Avenue and 57<sup>th</sup> Street where its entrance overlooks Sherwood Park. The imposing Ninth Presbyterian Church was built in 1916 from designs by architect George Savage.



*Ninth Presbyterian Church. Source: Google StreetView.*

## **Residential Buildings**

*Goal: Consider nomination of the following potentially-eligible individual residential buildings and blocks of buildings to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places*

### ***Individual Residences***

- **5427 and 5429 Hunter Street, Hunter Residences (possibly c. 1764):** Contained within the area north of Blockley and south of Lancaster Turnpike (now Avenue), Hestonville consisted substantially of land owned by Thomas Hunter, who founded the Conestoga Print Works in 1829. Early maps identify the buildings at 5427 and 5429 Hunter Street as being owned by the Hunter family. These buildings may date to as early as the mid- to late-eighteenth century and are among the oldest extant structures in the district.



*Hunter Residences. Source: Google StreetView.*

- **613-15 N. 43<sup>rd</sup> Street, John Price Funeral Home (c. 1860; altered 1920):** This three-story Italianate villa, likely built as a private residence, consists of a center block flanked by wings that project at the rear. The building was constructed in the mid-nineteenth century, and major interior alterations were completed in 1920 when the property served as the St. Michael's and All Angels Home for Children. Several further alterations have occurred over time, including a side addition and the enclosing of the wrap-around porch.



*John Price Funeral Home. Source: Cyclomedia.*

### ***Blocks/Rows***

*The following blocks and rows of residences should be considered for nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places:*

- **3305-35 Spring Garden Street (c. 1875)**





*The row of houses at 3305-35 Spring Garden Street. Source: Cyclomedia.*

- **3613-31 Spring Garden Street (c. 1875)**



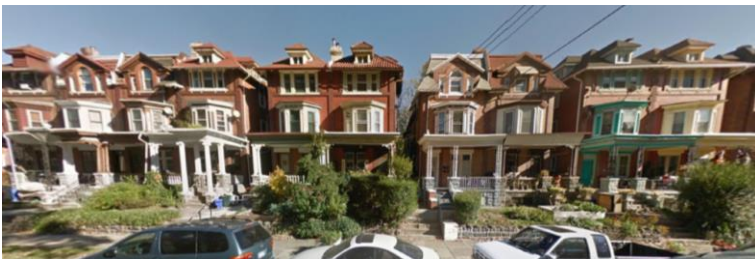
*The row of houses at 3613-31 Spring Garden Street. Source: Cyclomedia.*

- **6153-6231 Jefferson Street (c. 1895)**



*The block of houses at 6153-6231 Jefferson Street. Source: Cyclomedia.*

- **401-51 S. 51<sup>st</sup> Street**



*The block of houses at 401-51 S. 51<sup>st</sup> Street. Source: Google StreetView.*

### ***Apartment Complexes***

- **5100-5108 Walnut Street, La Blanche Apartments (1910):** The La Blanche apartment complex, designed by the firm of Anderson & Haupt for Barnett Cohen, represents the second wave of

housing construction in West Philadelphia in the early twentieth-century initiated by the completion of the El. The building provided respectable housing for the new middle classes. La Blanche Apartments is listed on the National Register.



*La Blanche Apartments. Source: Cyclomedia.*

- **15-25 S. 61<sup>st</sup> Street, Von Louhr Apartments (c. 1912):** One of the early apartment complexes in West Philadelphia, the Von Louhr building was conceived by developer William C. Smith, who commissioned architect E. Allen Wilson to design the four-story California Mission style structure. Smith founded the Haddington Title and Trust Company bank that later funded the construction of Haddington, the neighborhood in which the Von Louhr building stands.



*Von Louhr Apartments. Source: Cyclomedia.*

- **900-904 N. 63<sup>rd</sup> Street, Overbrook Gardens Court (1927):** Designed by Morris Fruchtbaum, the Spanish/Mission style apartment complex represents a departure from the architect's typical commissions that included manufacturing buildings such as packing plants. The structure stands at four-and-a-half stories, and its U-shaped layout allows for a central courtyard that opens onto Jefferson Street.



*900-904 N. 63<sup>rd</sup> Street. Source: Google StreetView.*



- **6232-50 Walnut Street, Walnut Park Plaza Hotel (1928):** The sprawling Walnut Park Plaza Hotel was constructed in 1928 as an apartment hotel in response to exploding nineteenth-century populations and rising land costs. Its purpose was to provide living space for those residents who could not afford single-family houses. The general contractor selected for the project was Frederick Massiah, one of the first successful African American building contractors in Philadelphia, who pioneered the use of reinforced concrete construction. The Walnut Park Plaza Hotel is listed on the National Register.



*Walnut Park Plaza Hotel. Source: Cyclomedia.*

## **Sites & Structures**

*Goal: Consider nomination of the following potentially eligible sites and structures to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places*

- **N. 42<sup>nd</sup> Street at Mantua Avenue, N. 42<sup>nd</sup> Street Bridge (1909):** The 250-foot long bridge is an example of a historic metal through-arch bridge and is the oldest of its type in the state. Constructed in 1909, the bridge was engineered by the Philadelphia Department of Public Works and built by the Owego Bridge Company of Owego, New York. In 2006, the bridge underwent an extensive rehabilitation to eliminate structural concerns.



*N. 42<sup>nd</sup> Street Bridge. Source: Pictometry.*

- **Cobbs Creek Park (mid-seventeenth century to 1904):** Prior to functioning as the green space that separates Philadelphia from its western neighbor, Cobbs Creek supported numerous steam- and water-powered mills established by early Dutch, Swedish, and English Quaker immigrants. Over time, as the mills grew obsolete from the introduction of modern energy sources,

abandoned buildings began to dot the watershed. With residential development spreading quickly to the city's western extents in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, private land along the creek was donated to the city in an attempt to prevent water pollution and maintain the wooded landscape. After several years of discussing the possibility of Cobbs Creek Park, City Council passed a bill in 1904 to create the park, identifying its boundaries according to the natural curves of the creek. In 1937, a guardhouse designed by Herman Miller was constructed within the park; it currently serves as the Cobbs Creek Community Environmental Center. While Cobbs Creek Park could be considered for inclusion in the potential Cobbs Creek Historic District, the creek likely contains archaeological artifacts accumulated from centuries of industrial use and may warrant individual listing on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.



*Cobbs Creek Park, showing the Cobbs Creek Community Environmental Center at center. Source: Pictometry.*

### **Recommended Follow-Up**

- **Perform additional survey and research (PHC, PHMC, community organizations)**

While this survey was based on extensive research by the staff of the Historical Commission, exclusion from this document is by no means an indication that a property lacks historical significance. Many properties that could be considered for the National Register of Historic Places may not warrant the restrictions imposed by Philadelphia Register listing.

- **Evaluate or Resurvey/Reevaluate Eligible Properties (PHMC)**

Properties that were determined eligible for the National Register more than five years ago should be resurveyed and evaluated by SHPO to confirm their eligibility status. The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission should also evaluate the Philadelphia Historical Commission's list of potentially-eligible resources in this document to determine if they are eligible for the National Register. This would be particularly useful for commercial and other income-producing properties as it would qualify them for tax credits.

- **Prepare survey documentation for Undetermined Resources (PHMC)**

There are 252 previously identified but unevaluated resources in the planning district.  
These resources should be surveyed and submitted to PHMC for evaluation.

- **Consider nomination of the most important historic sites to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places (PHC, PCPC, community organizations).**
- **Encourage sensitive renovations and adaptive reuse of existing historically significant and potentially significant buildings (PHC, PCPC, community organizations)**

## **ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES**

*Philadelphia2035 Citywide Vision* Goal: Fulfill city obligations to meet ambitious federal standards.

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### **SUMMARY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS**

The West District shares with other districts the same, citywide obligation to make improvements to the city and region's air and water quality, yet the West District also has a unique set of long-standing environmental challenges that require further understanding and action.

The West District is adjacent to high-volume highways, near industrial properties both active and vacant, and home to developed areas that are nearly completely impervious. The district is also bounded by waterways and contains large parks, open spaces, and green stormwater infrastructure facilities.

### **KEY ISSUES**

The following are important environmental issues facing the West District:

- The West District is in close proximity to both mobile and stationary sources of air contamination. Changes in land use patterns, industrial practices, and transportation options can help improve local air quality, but improvements also continue to be needed on a broader, regional scale.
- Water quality is affected by the district's combined sewer system, large percentage of impervious surface, and historic disruption of the natural drainage system through conversion of streams to sewers.
- The minimal tree cover in parts of the West District provides few benefits for air quality, stormwater management, or summer cooling.

### **MAJOR OPPORTUNITIES**

Opportunities to improve environmental outcomes in the West District include:

- The completion of trails along the Cobbs Creek Greenway as well as increased bike facilities in the West District can reduce air emissions by expanding non-motorized transportation options connecting residents to essential services and commercial corridors.
- Ongoing monitoring, compliance and partnership efforts, and management and technological innovations can continue to reduce air contamination in the West District.
- Individual development projects can help enhance air quality by incorporating energy-efficient building strategies and increasing tree cover. Projects can also reduce per-capita contributions to air pollution from transportation by creating greater intensity of uses around walkable, bikeable, and transit-served centers.
- Continued cooperation among agencies and property owners can enhance stormwater management planning and resources, spur riparian restoration, and provide storm flood relief in areas susceptible to flooding now and in the future.
- Public facilities, public streets, and parking lots offer near-term opportunities to increase tree cover.

## ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

### Air Quality

*Citywide Goal: Improve air quality within the city and region*

The 2015 Philadelphia Air Quality Report (most recently available as of February 2017) (Philadelphia Department of Public Health, Air Management Services Division) indicates that Citywide, overall air quality is improving and many air pollutants in the City are decreasing. There were 177 good days, 172 moderate days, and 16 unhealthy days in Philadelphia in 2014. However, the Philadelphia region remains non-compliant with Federal standards for ground level ozone (O<sub>3</sub>), which caused 14 of the unhealthy days. Although Philadelphia was found to be in attainment for fine particle pollution (PM<sub>2.5</sub>), two of the unhealthy days were due to PM<sub>2.5</sub>. Ground level ozone, aka, smog, is formed by volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and nitrogen oxides (NOx) reacting in the presence of heat and sunlight. Ozone is particularly detrimental to the young, old, and infirmed. PM<sub>2.5</sub>, or 'fine' particulate matter, is responsible for short term respiratory irritation, and long term respiratory and cardio-vascular disease illness. Fine particles in the air may result from fuel combustion from vehicles, power generators, and industry.

Vitally-needed federal transportation funds can be withheld from the Philadelphia region if progress towards air quality compliance is not demonstrated. Land use changes and transportation investments within the West District can help continue progress toward compliance by reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and reducing emissions from industries and vehicles.

### Fixed Point Sources of Air Pollution

The Philadelphia Department of Public Health's Air Management Services division regulates facility emissions through the issuance of permits and licenses that allow facilities to operate equipment that emits or controls air pollution. Within the West District, 2 facilities in 2015 held the 'Title V' licenses for relatively heavy emissions, both of which are hospital facilities and have low levels of emissions relative to other facilities in the City.

### Air Emission Facilities, 2015

CO: Carbon Monoxide, NOX: Nitrogen Oxide, PM10: Particulate Matter less than 10 microns, PM2.5: Particulate Matter less than 2.5 microns, SO2: Sulfur Dioxide, VOC: Volatile Organic Compound						
Facility Name	Emissions in Tons					
	CO	NOX	PM10	PM2.5	SO2	VOC
KIRKBRIDE CTR/PSYCHIATRIC HOSP	0.0277	0.231	0.017	0.017	0.0056	0.0116
MERCY HOSP OF PHILA/54TH ST	0.1592	0.7962	0.1657	0.1656	0.0304	0.1286

Source: Philadelphia Department of Public Health, 2016

### Non-Point Sources of Air Pollution

Highway vehicle sources refer to emissions from cars, trucks, motorcycles, and buses. The Schuylkill Expressway to the east of the district carries approximately 80,000 vehicles daily.

Although accessed by the highway system, residents of the West District are less auto-dependent than those in other parts of the city. In the West District, 44 percent of residents who commute to work do so in automobiles, which are a major contributor to CO<sub>2</sub> and VOCs, compared to 59 percent citywide (2011-15 US Census). About 47 percent of West District households have no vehicle access, compared to just 33 percent citywide.

About 30 percent of workers in the District commute to work via public transportation. In addition to numerous bus routes, the Market-Frankford Line and a number of Trolley Routes cross through the district. The Market-Frankford 46<sup>th</sup>, 52<sup>nd</sup>, 56<sup>th</sup>, 60<sup>th</sup>, and 63<sup>rd</sup> Stations are located in the West District.

Several railroad lines border the West District, including the SEPTA Regional Rail Thorndale Line, Cynwyd Line, and Elwyn Line. Although there are no Amtrak or SEPTA Stations located within the district, the 30<sup>th</sup> Street, University City, Angora, 49<sup>th</sup> Street, and Overbrook stations are located nearby. These rail stations offer an alternative to driving for those employees originating in or destined for locations near regional rail stops. However, high cost, low frequency, limited parking and transit/bike/pedestrian transfers present barriers to increased use of regional rail.

### **Indoor Air Quality**

Indoor air quality refers to the air quality within and around buildings and structures. Common indoor air pollutants include mold, formaldehyde, asbestos, carbon monoxide, radon, and volatile organic compounds. One source of poor indoor air quality may be asbestos, which was commonly included in many building materials prior to 1981. Another common indoor environmental pollutant is lead, which was commonly included in paint prior to 1978 and in plumbing components prior to 1986. Indoor mold growth is caused by uncontrolled moisture, such as from leaking roofs, windows, or flooded basements.

Causes of poor indoor air quality may include poor ventilation, problems controlling temperature, high or low humidity, and recent remodeling. Contaminants including dust from construction or renovation, mold, cleaning supplies, pesticides, or other airborne chemicals may cause poor IAQ. Poor indoor air quality has been tied to symptoms including headaches, dizziness, fatigue, trouble concentrating, and irritation of the eyes, nose, throat and lungs. Damp indoor environments has also been linked to asthma. The exposure to some pollutants, such as asbestos and radon, do not cause immediate symptoms but can lead to cancer after many years.

### **Brownfields**

*Citywide Goal: Reposition former industrial sites for new users.*

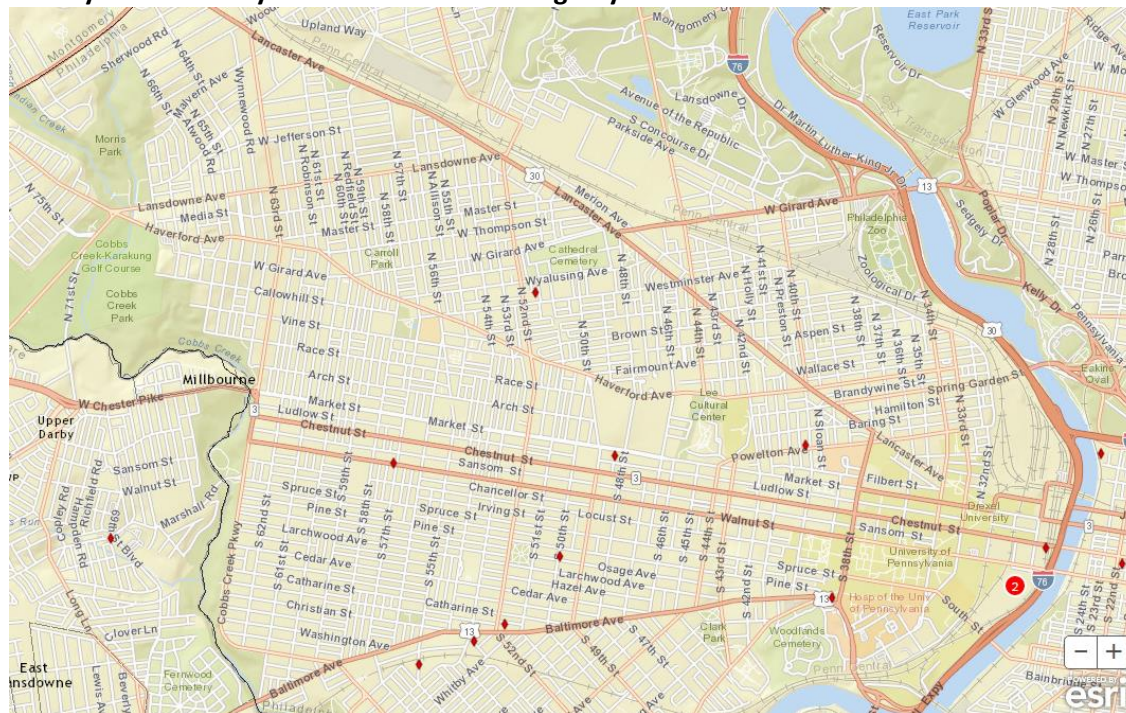
The West District has very limited areas of industrial, primarily confined to some areas adjacent to the rail corridor next to Lancaster Avenue. Due to historic uses in these areas, some properties have potential contamination that may constrain future uses. There are no sites in the West District that participate in the Hazardous Sites Cleanup or Superfund Program, although there are six properties in the Pennsylvania Activity and Use Limitations (AUL) Registry maintained by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP). The AUL Registry contains those properties required to establish and maintain an Environmental Covenant, Administrative Order, Consent Order and Agreement, Deed Restriction, Post-Remediation Care Plan or other AUL document.



**Activity and Use Limitations Registry Sites in North District**

AUL Registry ID	Primary Facility ID	Primary Facility Name	Other Facility ID	Address	Contaminants
133	619196	PHILA BUS & TECH CTR	1-51-0-19565	5070 Parkside Ave	Gasoline
1916	750196	FORMAN MILLS	750196	4806 Market St	Gasoline, fuel oil
171	711899	4950 PINE ST PROP	711899	4950 Pine St	Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs)
1789	619115	ORFA OF AMER SITE	1-51-0-17757	1620 S 49 <sup>th</sup> St	Unknown
1522	687878	RITE AID 2451	687878	5214-30 Baltimore Ave	Lubricating and motor oil
889	608625	AMOCO STA PHILA WAL-NUT ST	51-29727	5657 Walnut St	Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) and Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAH)

Source: PADEP

**Pennsylvania Activity and Use Limitations Registry**

Source: PADEP

## Water Quality

*Citywide Goal: Improve the quality and management of our water and wetland resources*

### Drinking Water

Drinking water in the West District is provided by the Philadelphia Water Department (PWD) and is drawn from the Schuylkill River at the Belmont Intake.

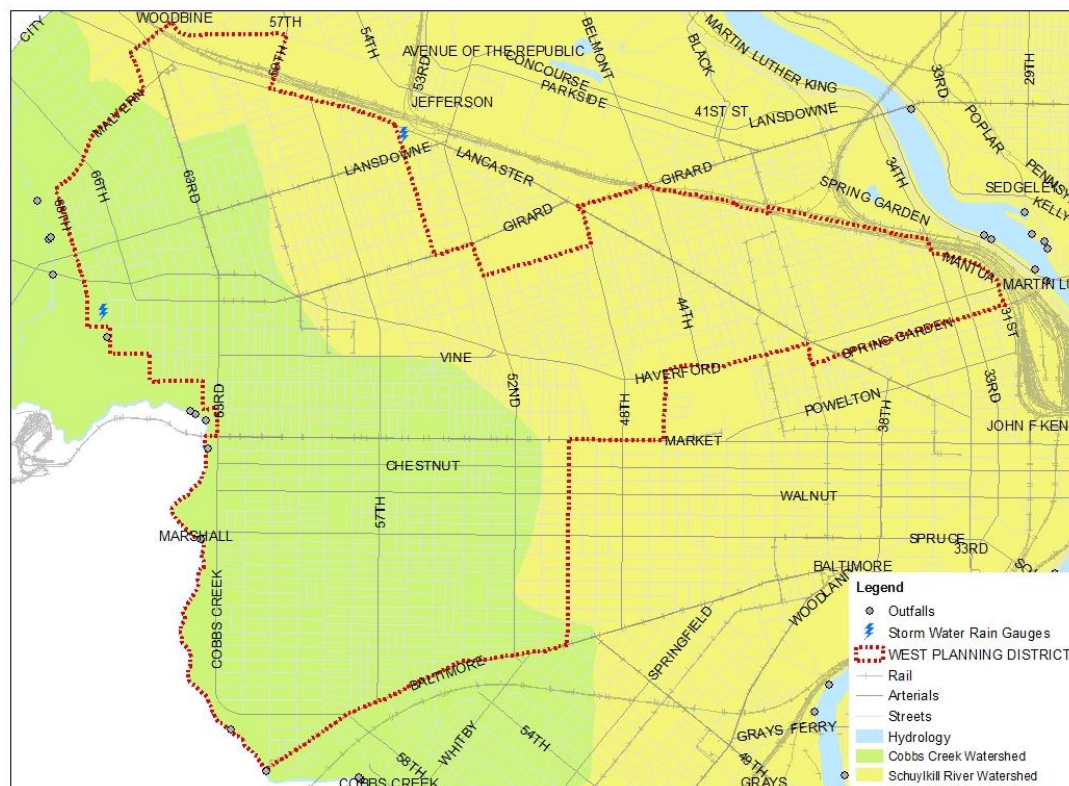
EPA, PADEP and Safe Drinking Water Regulations require drinking water providers to monitor for about 100 regulatory parameters, including inorganic chemicals, synthetic organic chemicals, total organic carbon, disinfection byproducts, volatile organic compounds, bacteria, radiological contaminants, and other parameters. These regulatory parameters are defined with their maximum contaminant level (MCL) and maximum contaminant level goal (MCLG) under Federal rules. Sodium hypochlorite, a form of chlorine, is used to disinfect the drinking water as required by state and Federal laws.

One measure of drinking water quality is turbidity (water clarity), which is an indicator for treatment plant performance. The average turbidity level of PWD drinking water has been at or below 0.06 nephelometric turbidity units (NTU) since 1998. The turbidity of Philadelphia's water in 2014 was 85 percent below the maximum level of 0.3 NTU allowed by the State and Federal Regulations and was more than 50 percent below the Partnership for Safe Water turbidity goal of 0.10 NTU ("Philadelphia Water Department 2015 Annual Drinking Water Quality Report". [www.phila.gov/water](http://www.phila.gov/water)).

### Surface Water

The West District falls within two watersheds: the Schuylkill River and Cobbs Creek.

### Watersheds





All watersheds in Philadelphia eventually drain to the Delaware River.

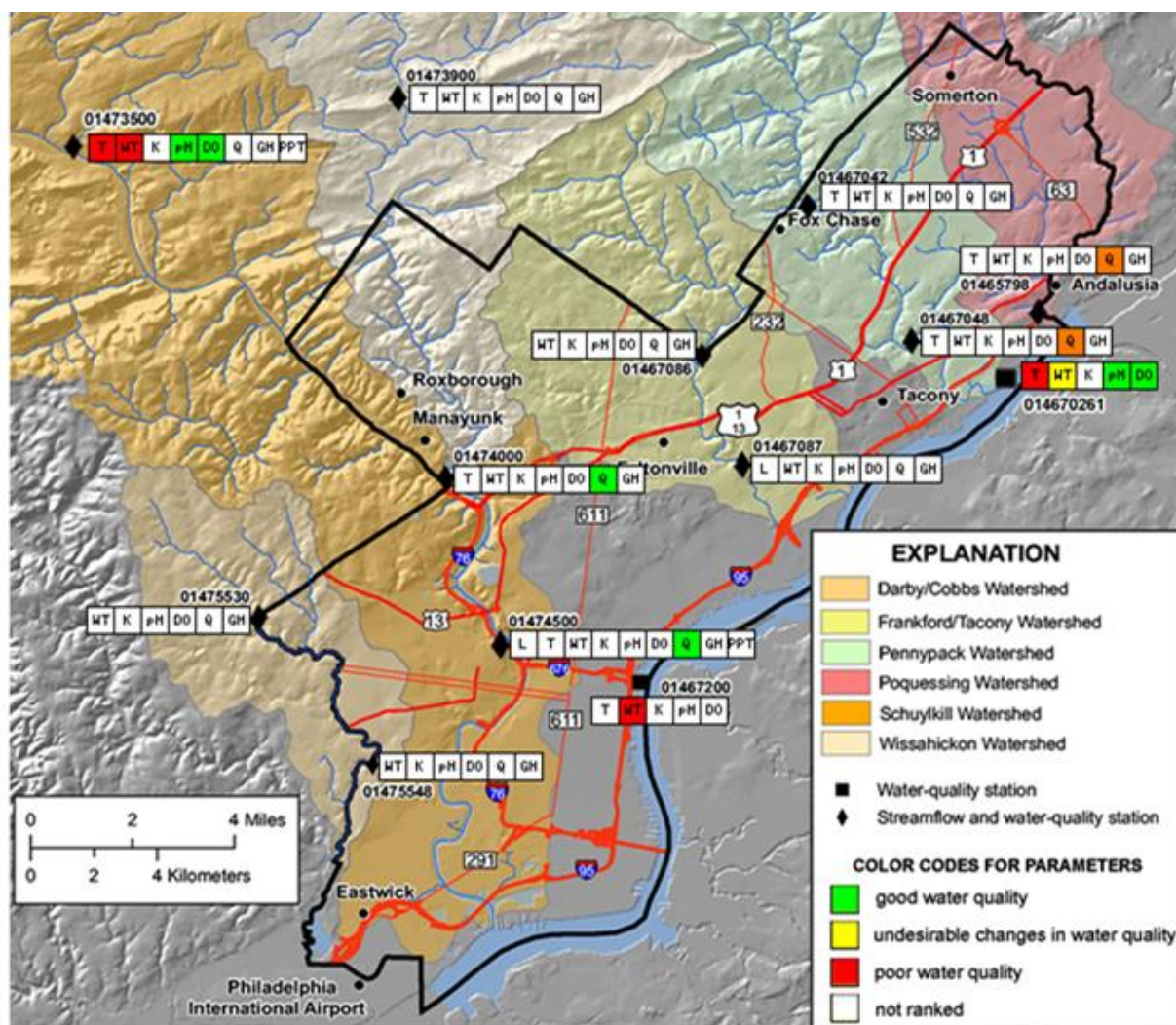
The eastern section of the West District is part of the Schuylkill River Watershed, which drains a total of about 2,000 square miles before emptying into the Delaware River. A *Schuylkill River Conservation Plan* was completed in 2001, followed by a *Source Water Assessment* completed in 2002 and a *Source Water Protection Plan* completed in 2006.

The western section of the West District is part of the Cobbs Creek Watershed, which drains a total of 22 square miles before emptying into the Delaware River. The *Darby-Cobbs Watershed Comprehensive Characterization Report* was completed in 2004, followed by the *Cobbs Creek Integrated Watershed Management Plan* that same year. An *Act 167 Stormwater Management Plan* was completed for the Darby-Cobbs Watershed in 2004. A wetlands assessment was conducted by PWD in 2006, which documented the presence of existing wetlands and identified wetland creation opportunities.

Water quality and streamflow data representing the water quality of Philadelphia's watersheds is monitored at 11 stream gaging stations in the city, which are maintained by PWD staff using streamflow monitoring equipment maintained by the USGS. There are two such water quality monitoring stations on the Schuylkill River just to the east of the West Planning District. USGS Station **01474500** by the Fairmount Waterworks monitors water quality and discharge (streamflow). USGS Station **01474501** by 30<sup>th</sup> Street Station monitors gage height (water level).

There are two USGS water quality monitoring stations along Cobbs Creek to the north and south of the West Planning District. USGS Station **01475530** near City Avenue and USGS Station **01475548** by Mount Moriah Cemetery both monitor discharge. Data is provided in near real-time at <https://pa.water.usgs.gov/pwd/>:

Since the most recent studies for these watersheds are more than 10 years old, and the nearby water monitoring stations do not measure water quality, it would be worthwhile to complete updated studies of the health and quality of these water bodies.



[Image dated March 2, 2017.]

### Waterway Restoration

The Philadelphia Water Department is working to restore and stabilize waterways throughout the city, the effect of which is to reduce erosion and sediment pollution, control floodwaters, protect habitat, and enhance the natural beauty and functions of streams. Within the West District, there was a waterway restoration project completed along Cobbs Creek at Marshall Road. This project removed stream impairments and helped restore natural habitat. The project helped mitigate impacts of urban runoff and non-point source pollution, while also restoring native vegetation to the riparian corridor to enhance bank stability.

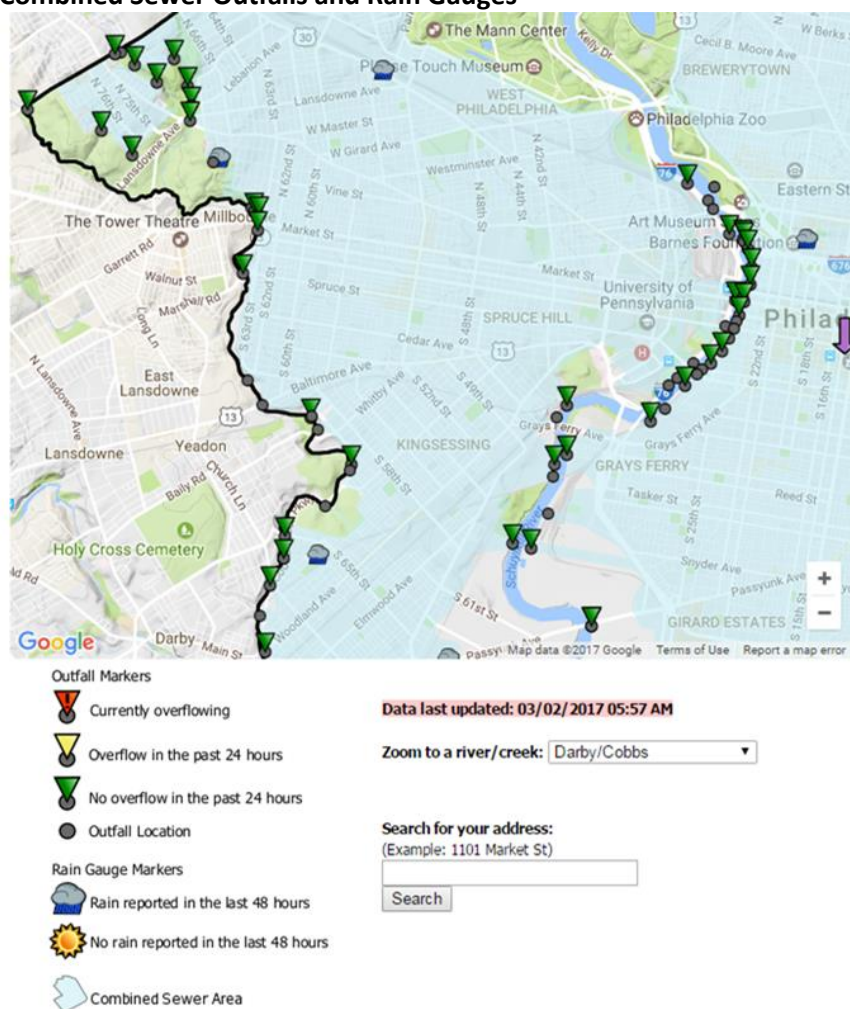
### Stormwater

Pollution derived from stormwater runoff is one of the most significant threats to the water quality of the two watersheds of the West District, but one that can be remediated through public and private investment. The City of Philadelphia is mandated by the EPA to reduce its Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) discharges, which is when excess stormwater runoff during wet weather events exceeds the ca-

capacity of the combined stormwater/sewer systems and causes raw sewage to discharge into surface waters. Most of the West District is within the CSO area, with the exception of some land adjacent to Cobbs Creek.

PWD maintains a network of 24 stormwater rain gauges in the city, which collect real-time rainfall data. Two of these are found within the West District at Heston Middle School and St. Francis Cabrini Retirement Home. The monitoring conducted through these gauges informs a public notification system used to determine the likelihood of CSO occurring, available through the CSOcast web application. There are 11 combined sewer outfalls located within the stretch of Cobbs Creek to the west of the district, and another three combined sewer outfalls on the west bank of the Schuylkill River just to the east of the district. PWD's CSOcast web application shows the likelihood of overflows occurring at these combined sewer outfalls.

### Combined Sewer Outfalls and Rain Gauges



Source: [http://www.phillywatersheds.org/what\\_were\\_doing/documents\\_and\\_data/live\\_data/csocast](http://www.phillywatersheds.org/what_were_doing/documents_and_data/live_data/csocast)

There is an additional separate sewer outfall within this stretch of Cobbs Creek, as well as one separate sewer outfall on the west bank of the Schuylkill River to the east of the district. Although separate sewer outfalls do not face the risk of sending untreated sewage into the water system they do contribute



stormwater runoff into the streams which may carry pollutants drained from buildings, paved surfaces, and streets.

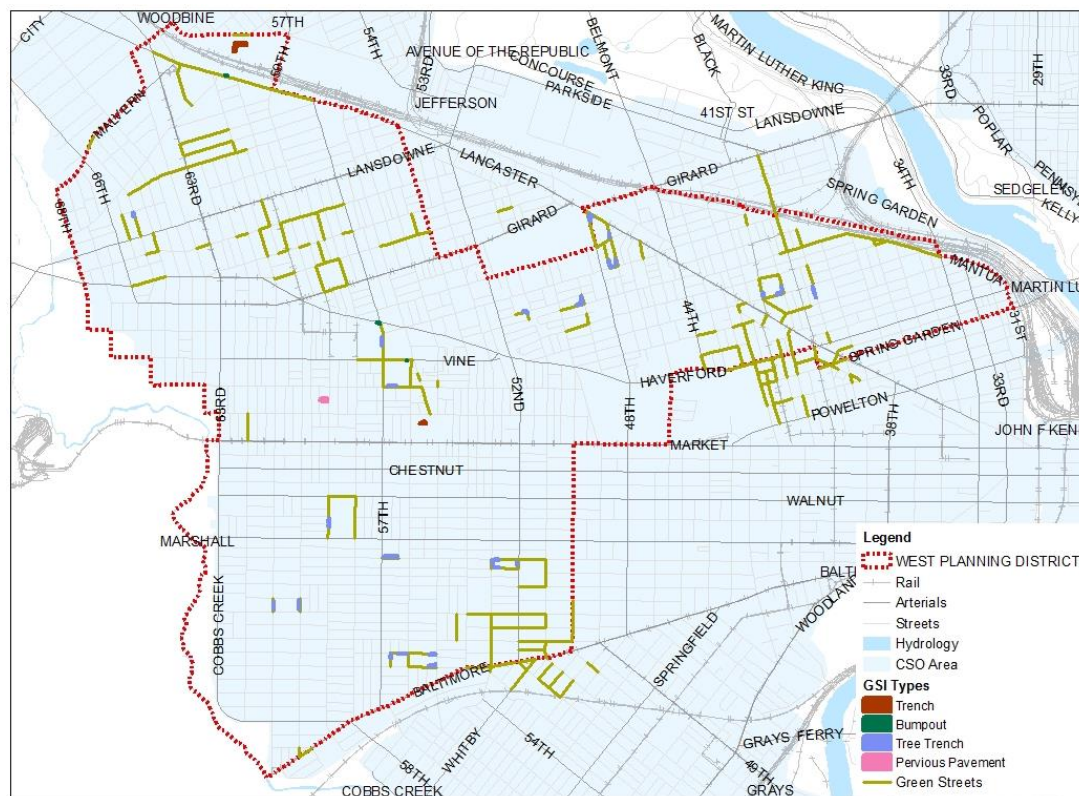
To better manage stormwater runoff and reduce CSO discharges, PWD is implementing a green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) program to install facilities including infiltration trenches, rain gardens, stormwater planters, stormwater tree trenches, and other practices to capture rainfall before it enters the sewer system. Within the West District, there are a great number of GSI features that have already been installed:

GSI Feature	# in West District
Tree Trench	28
Bumpout	3
Trench	2
Pervious Pavement	1

Source: PWD, 2015

Additionally, there are 41 GSI Green Streets Projects totaling 78,611 linear feet within the West District, of which 19 have been constructed as of March 2016. Additional opportunities for GSI exist throughout the CSO area of the district, particularly within parks and playgrounds, schoolyards, and other public sites.

### Green Stormwater Infrastructure Tools



### Environmentally Sensitive Areas

Per the most recent data from the National Wetlands Inventory of the National Fish & Wildlife Service, there are no wetlands located within the West District, although wetlands are located in some areas on the Delaware County side of Cobbs Creek. However, there are areas within the Steep Slopes Protection Area regulated through the zoning code. These areas are found west of 63<sup>rd</sup> Street and south of Market Street adjacent to Cobbs Creek and are part of the public park system.

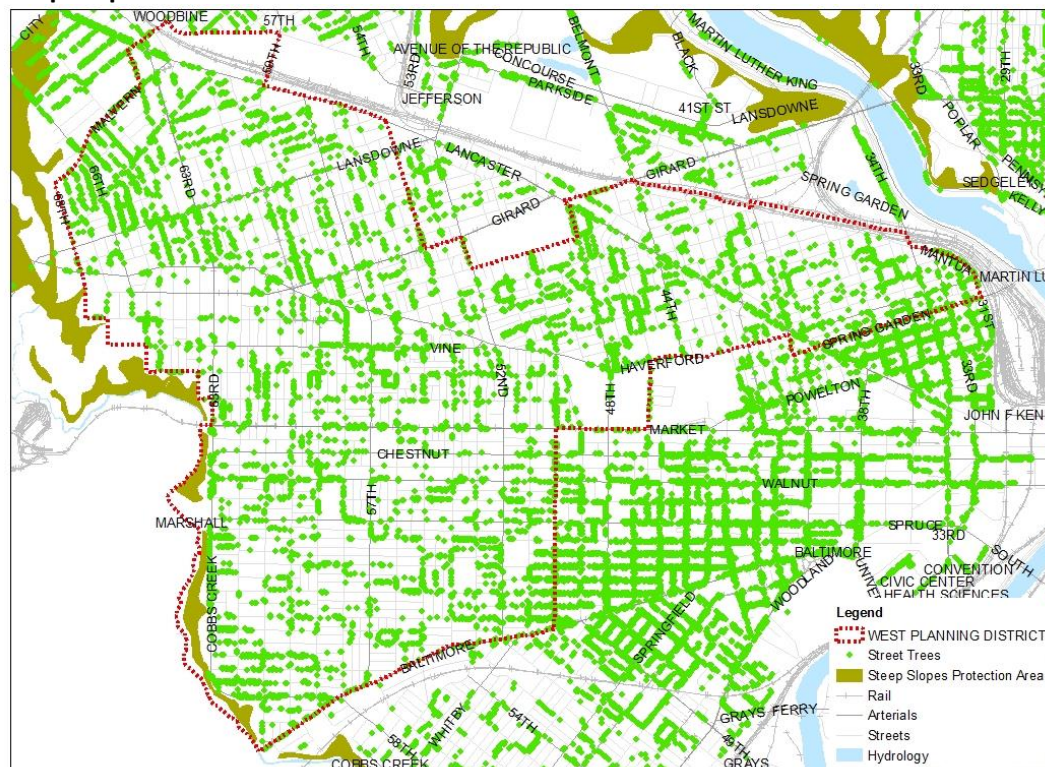
### Tree Cover

*Goal: Increase tree coverage equitably throughout the city*

Trees have the ability to improve air quality, reduce ambient air temperatures during heat waves, and absorb stormwater. Certain developments are now required by City ordinance to use cool roofing materials as well as to plant trees.

Based on 2008 LIDAR data, the amount of tree canopy cover in the West District ranges from seven to twelve percent, roughly half the rate of the city overall (20 percent). The City's *Greenworks2015* goal is a tree cover of at least 30 percent in all neighborhoods. A 2011 study found that the possible tree canopy in the West District could be 37-40 percent, and the city as a whole could possibly have 69 percent tree canopy. ("A Report on the City of Philadelphia's Existing and Possible Tree Canopy", [http://www.fs.fed.us/nrs/utc/reports/UTC\\_Report\\_Philadelphia.pdf](http://www.fs.fed.us/nrs/utc/reports/UTC_Report_Philadelphia.pdf)). The amount of possible tree canopy was calculated for each individual parcel based on the existing land use and zoning, with recreation parcels having the most potential for tree canopy and parking as having among the least potential.

### Steep Slopes and Trees



**Recommended Follow-Up**

- Identify land use and zoning strategies to reduce automobile dependence, including strengthening neighborhood-serving commercial services near housing concentrations and transit nodes.
- Identify areas with significant traffic congestion and vehicle idling.
- Work with PWD and partners to identify high priority stormwater management projects in the West District and identify potential co-benefits and partners.
- Encourage large commercial and institutional property owners who face higher PWD stormwater fees to consider strategies that improve stormwater management and lower stormwater costs.
- Conduct water quality sampling.
- Continue work on waterway and wetlands restoration along Cobbs Creek.
- Document initiatives by public and private tree planting programs and work with tree advocates to address potential barriers to increased tree cover in the West District.

## HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

*Philadelphia2035 Citywide Vision Goal:* Improve neighborhood livability.

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### SUMMARY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

The built environment influences health in many direct and indirect ways. Planning can influence everything from the quality of the air we breathe to our likelihood of being injured in a traffic crash to our physical activity level to how likely we are to eat a healthy diet and abstain from smoking. These environmental factors in turn influence the prevalence of a myriad of medical conditions, including diabetes, heart disease, cancer, asthma, and even depression.

The West District faces some significant health challenges, but is also home to some innovative programs to help resolve these issues. Key assets include the Promise Zone initiative, the Mill Creek Farm, and community-serving programs hosted at the CHOP Karabots Pediatric Care Center. The district's environmental resources, strong community organizations, grid street network, and public transportation access provide opportunities for economic development, increasing healthy food access and consumption, and improvements to the pedestrian realm to solidify walking and biking as preferred modes of transportation.

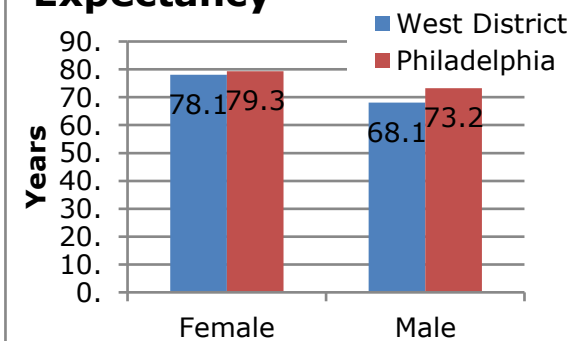
#### General Health

Life expectancy in the West District is slightly lower for women and significantly lower for men than the city average. In the 2014-15 Public Health Management Corporation Household Health Survey, district residents were slightly more likely than city average to describe their health as fair or poor, 27.3 percent to 23.6 percent. These numbers reflect generally high levels of chronic disease as well as mental health conditions and demonstrate that the built, social, and economic environment of the district exposes residents to high levels of a number of physical and psychological stressors.

#### Chronic Disease

Chronic diseases are the leading cause of death and disability in the United States and disproportionately affect residents of lower income communities and people of color. City planners now recognize that the built environment has been a significant factor in the rapid increase in obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease that has affected the US population since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century. Growing reliance on the automobile for transportation has greatly reduced the incidental physical activity in Americans' daily lives, while economic segregation and changes in food distribution and marketing have led to fewer opportunities

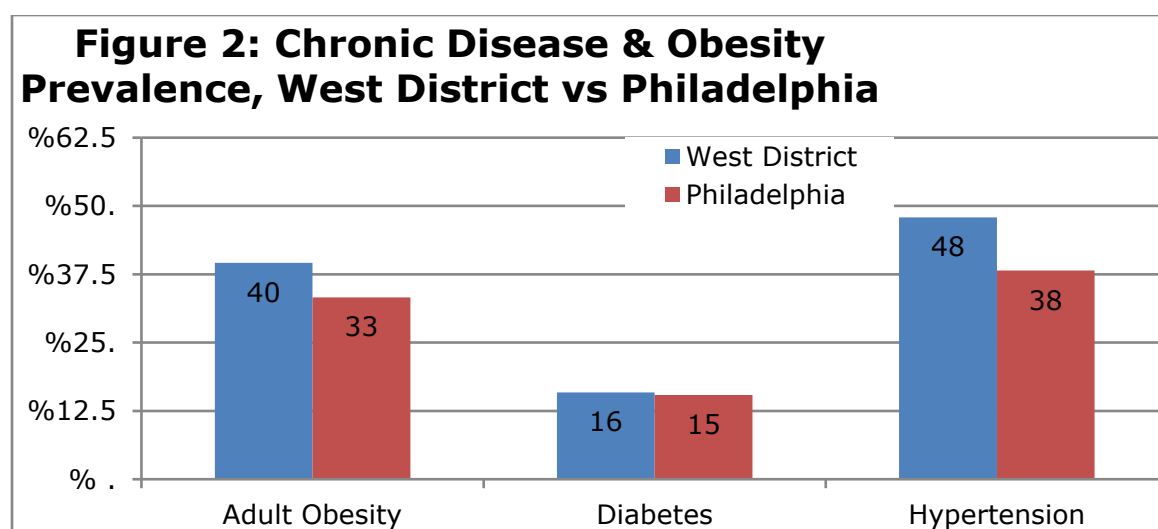
**Figure 1: Life Expectancy**



Source: Vital Statistics for Philadelphia, PA DOH 2013

for residents of lower income communities to access and consume fresh foods. Public health research has also found a higher concentration of retailers marketing tobacco, alcohol, and unhealthy food in low income neighborhoods, which makes it more difficult for residents to choose the healthy options that are present. While many factors contribute to a person's weight and overall health, planning intervention can greatly increase the likelihood of residents being able to meet physical activity and dietary guidelines and therefore reduce their chances of developing health conditions or having complications if they are already living with the conditions.

Residents of the West District have higher rates of hypertension, obesity, and diabetes than the city average, and Philadelphia has the highest rates of these conditions of the largest US cities. Hypertension affects nearly half of adults in the West District, the highest rate in the city. District adults are also significantly more likely to be obese and slightly more likely to have diabetes. District children, however, have slightly lower rates of obesity than their citywide peers, according to the School District of Philadelphia. While the childhood obesity rate for the city in 2012-2013 was 20.3 percent, zip codes that are partially within the West District had rates ranging from 17.7 percent to 22.9 percent, with all zip codes except 19151 being below the city average.



Source: PHMC Household Health Survey, 2014-15

In addition to diet and exercise, there are some specific key risk factors that affect an individual's likelihood of chronic disease, and which are also affected by the built and social environment one inhabits. The biggest single behavioral risk factor for premature mortality is smoking. Adults in Philadelphia have the highest smoking rate of residents of the largest US cities, and West District residents' smoking levels are even higher, 31.7 percent compared to 22.4 percent citywide. This contributes to health problems including lung cancer and cardiovascular disease for the smokers themselves as well as dangers to children and others through second hand smoke. Another specific behavioral factor that is particularly relevant to obesity and diabetes is consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages. Adults in the West District were more likely than city average to report consuming at least one sugary drink daily, with 38.9 percent saying that they did, compared to 31.6 percent citywide.



Consumption of unhealthy substances including tobacco and sugary drinks is influenced by their availability in one's neighborhood, as well as the availability of healthier alternatives (in the case of beverages), cultural norms, and the presence of psychological stressors in the environment. Healthy public spaces should encourage exercise and provide shade, smoke-free air, and plentiful access to fresh tap water.

### Access to Healthy Foods

Good nutrition helps prevent and manage chronic conditions like obesity, diabetes, and heart disease. Convenient access to fresh, healthy food choices is one

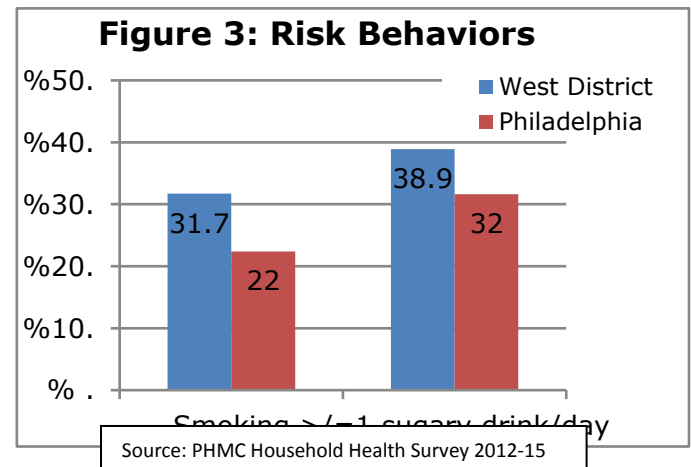
important element of promoting a healthy diet. The West District contains some notable healthy food resources, including the Mill Creek Farm which provides fresh produce and environmental and nutritional education to neighborhood residents. Many households in the West District do not have access to cars to drive to more distant grocery stores, and for those who do, being able to walk to a store or farmers' market for fresh produce also helps meet physical activity needs, save money on gas, and protect local air quality from automobile emissions.

In 2014, 27.5 percent of West District residents lived in areas with high poverty and low or no walkable access to healthy foods, compared to 22.4 percent of residents Citywide. Areas with limited access to healthy food include Mantua, where two small supermarkets in the 4000 block of Lancaster Avenue closed between 2012 and 2014, and the 63<sup>rd</sup> Street corridor along the western edge of the district, although a ShopRite at 6710 Haverford Avenue provides access to the far western part of the district. Walkable access to healthy food is discussed in detail in the Neighborhoods memo.

### Physical Activity

While the West District has a predominantly walkable grid street network, is well-served by transit, and offers access to several parks and recreation centers, residents face a number of obstacles to achieving recommended levels of regular physical activity. These include pre-existing health complications, danger from traffic and crime, sidewalks and other facilities that don't meet the needs of individuals with disabilities, and competing demands on their time. Environmental hazards such as excessive heat, air pollution, and problems associated with vacant properties also contribute to poor health.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend adults get two and a half hours of moderate physical activity per week. Parks, recreation centers, and the active transportation network have a substantial influence on how much exercise the average resident of a neighborhood gets. Seventy percent of residents in the West District reported in Public Health Management Corporation surveys from 2012-2015 that they had access to parks or outdoor space in their neighborhood. This was slightly lower than the city average of 73 percent. In addition to physical proximity, it is important to assess physical and social barriers to use of recreation facilities – which can include streets that are

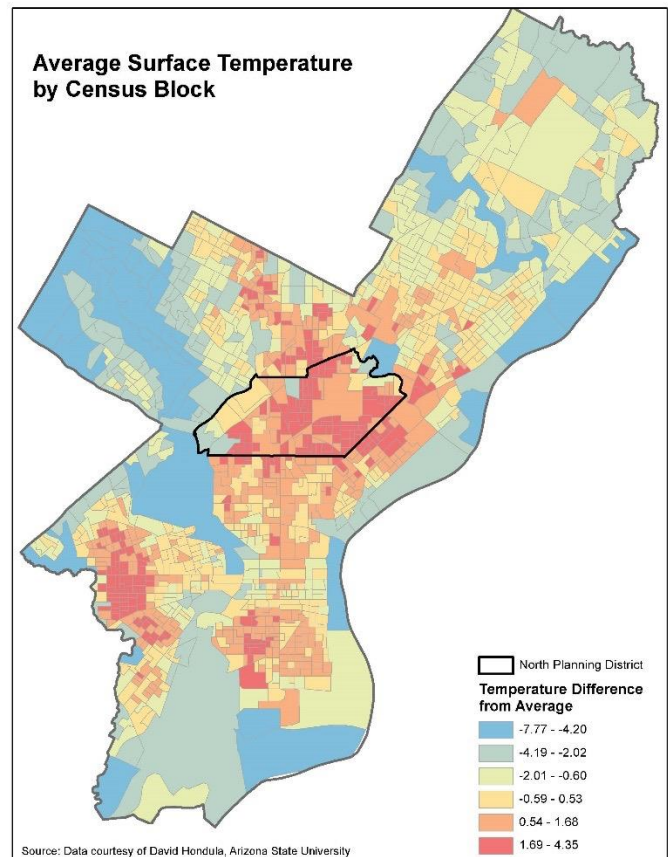


difficult or unsafe to cross, condition of facilities, air or noise pollution, criminal activity, street harassment, and cultural norms that may particularly limit women's and girls' access to physical activity.

Traffic safety is a major public health issue, with 369 deaths or serious injuries from traffic crashes in Philadelphia in 2016 and a driver hitting a pedestrian in the city approximately every five hours. In addition to the unacceptable cost of fatalities and injuries, residents' level of comfort crossing streets as a pedestrian and traveling by bicycle in their neighborhood has a profound impact on their ability to be active both for transportation and recreational purposes. Traffic safety concerns were brought to the forefront in the West District in November, 2016 when a hit and run driver struck and killed an 8-year-old at the intersection of 63<sup>rd</sup> St and Malvern Avenue as she was walking home from school. Just weeks before this high profile incident, Mayor James Kenney formally announced the city's commitment to eliminating traffic fatalities by 2030 through the development of a Vision Zero Action Plan to build safer streets and change the city's culture around traffic safety.

### Environmental Health

Asthma is a chronic condition related to poor air quality. In 2014, children from zip codes all or partially within the West District were admitted to hospitals for asthma symptoms at slightly higher rates than the citywide average of 71 per 10,000 children, with rates ranging from 75 to 115. Asthma hospitalizations can be triggered by second hand smoke, indoor air quality (particularly in older residences), and ambient air quality issues such as regional air pollution and exhaust from cars and trucks. The lack of major highways or industrial areas in the district probably accounts for the lower rate of asthma than in other districts with similar rates of poverty, smoking and older housing. There are substantial ethnic and racial disparities in childhood asthma hospitalizations citywide, with Black children suffering by far the highest number of serious attacks resulting in 87 hospitalizations per 10,000 children compared to 70 for Hispanic children, 27 for Asian children, and 14 for White children. Improving air quality, reducing tobacco exposure, assisting more families in making healthy renovations to older homes, and improving access to care and prevention resources such as those provided by CHOP's Community Asthma Prevention Program for childhood asthma patients can have a substantial impact on these disparities.



In addition to air quality, the built environment of the West District contributes to a number of other concerns. The West District experiences some of the hottest temperatures in the city, despite being located between Cobbs Creek and the Schuylkill River and having slightly higher levels of tree canopy within neighborhoods than sections of Center City, North, and South Philadelphia. This should be explored further, but one likely contributor includes the number of black roofs. Strategic addition of street trees can also help reduce ambient air pollution, provide shade for pedestrians, reduce surface temperatures in hot weather, and support mental health, reduced crime, and even safer driving.

Childhood lead paint exposure is also a significant concern given the age and condition of the housing stock. West District children were slightly more likely than the city average to test positive for lead exposure at either moderate or very high levels. The district also had a higher than average rate of Building Construction Code violations per 1,000 occupied housing units, with 243 violations per 1,000 units in 2015 compared to 185 citywide.

### **Access to Care**

The West District has two Federally Qualified Health Centers (community-based, non-profit healthcare providers that serve individuals in need, including Medicaid recipients and uninsured patients), the Sayre Health Center and Spectrum Health Services. There is one city health center, Health Center #4, located adjacent to the district at 44<sup>th</sup> Street and Haverford Avenue. There is one full-service hospital, Mercy Philadelphia Hospital. Mercy has a community outreach center across the street from the hospital that offers smoking cessation classes and other education and screening programs related to diabetes, hypertension, stroke, and other chronic health concerns. Another significant facility within the district is Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP)'s Karabots Pediatric Care Center, which houses several community-serving programs including Early Head Start, domestic violence education, and the Community Asthma Prevention Program. Other key facilities near the district include Health Center #3, Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, Penn Presbyterian Medical Center, and CHOP.

As of the 2014-15 PHMC Household Health Survey, district residents faced significant obstacles to accessing care, despite progress made in insurance coverage under the Affordable Care Act. Although sample sizes for the West District were small on this question, 19 percent of adults reported having no health insurance and 18 percent reported foregoing treatment for an illness or injury due to cost. Thirty-one percent of district adults had Medicaid coverage, compared to 22 percent of all city residents.

### **Violence**

Violence is not only a direct threat against health and well-being, but indirectly, violence and the threat of violence raises stress levels and can limit physical activity, social interaction, and ability to pursue educational and career opportunities. According to the Medical Examiner's Office, the West District had the third highest rate of homicide in the city in 2015 at 32.9 per 100,000 residents. Other violent crimes including robbery, sexual assault, and other violent assault also reduce health for both the victim and members of the surrounding community. Senior adults and children are particularly likely to have reduced activity due to existing or perceived violence in the community and, while men are more often

the direct victims of violence by strangers, women are more likely than men to forego or modify exercise and other needed daily activities due to concerns about safety.

### **Mental Health and Substance Abuse**

According to PHMC surveys from 2012 to 2015, residents of the West District are slightly more likely than city average to have been diagnosed with a mental health condition, at 22.4 percent in the district compared to 20.8 percent citywide. Reducing stress and increasing access to nature and physical activity can improve sense of well-being and help to reduce the impact of many mental health issues.

According to 2015 data from the Medical Examiner's Office, West District residents were slightly less likely than city average to die from overdoses of opioids (29.2 deaths per 100,000 people), but more likely to die from overall drug overdoses, including drugs like benzodiazapenes and cocaine in addition to opioids (50.3 total overdose deaths per 100,000 people). Citywide, there has been a dramatic increase in overdose deaths since 2013 with the majority of the increase coming from opioids. For each fatal overdose reported, there are approximately 12 overdoses requiring emergency room visits.

### **KEY ISSUES**

#### **Increasing Active Living**

Environments that promote active travel to destinations – whether by walking, bicycling, or combining one of those with public transportation - help integrate physical activity into residents' daily routine and build fitness incrementally. It is important for walking and biking to be highly accessible, safe, and attractive for people of all ages and abilities, including those with pre-existing health conditions that may make even moderate physical activity seem like a daunting task. While the district features many dense neighborhoods with commercial corridors, transit, and community facilities distributed throughout, there are some significant barriers to active transportation. The district is well served by the Market-Frankford Line, trolleys, and buses, but in some places traffic and personal safety concerns hinder walking and biking access to transit and other destinations. Many residents use active transportation out of necessity, but others could substitute car trips with active travel or increase distances walked or biked with improvements to traffic safety, sidewalk accessibility, bicycle facilities, and transit connections. Both traffic and crime are significant deterrents to active travel that can be addressed through the district plan and related initiatives.

Accessibility and safety for walking and bicycling should be addressed through engineering along with culturally appropriate public education about the dangers of speeding and aggressive, distracted, impaired or otherwise unsafe driving. Enhancing community facilities and the quality and mix of retail options available in commercial corridors and near transit nodes can also help make walking in the district more attractive.

## Environmental Health

Nearly one-third of adults in the West District smoke, in addition to the ambient air quality issues and higher than average surface temperatures. This contributes to asthma and other respiratory conditions, increases residents' vulnerability to excessive heat events, and reduces opportunities to be more physically active. The plan should take structural sources of exposure to pollution into account and work to improve air quality through community greening, low-carbon transportation, renovation of older buildings, and encouraging smoke-free spaces. The West District has the second highest concentration of tobacco outlets in the city, with 3.66 per 1,000 daytime residents.

## Crime-related Trauma and Stress

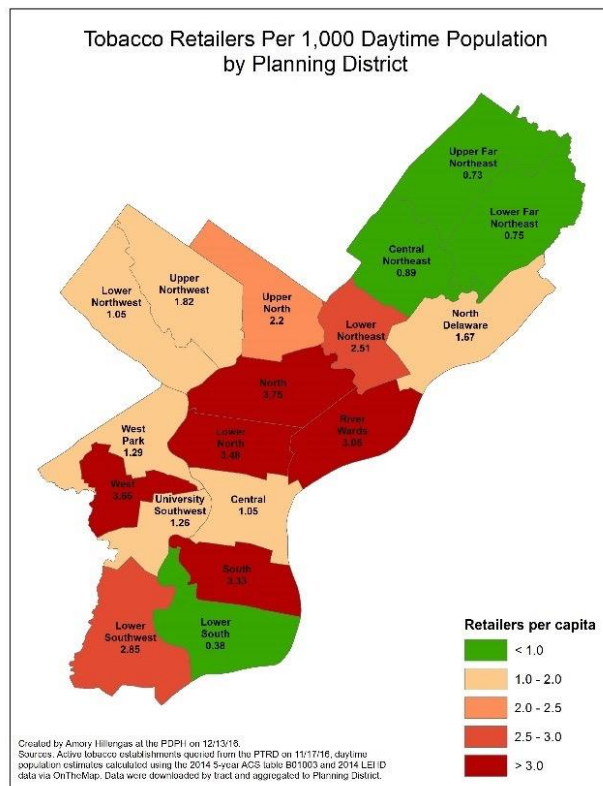
The West District is disproportionately affected by violent crime, which causes ripple effects throughout population health. Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles, such as providing interactive public spaces, pedestrian scale lighting, landscaping, and encouraging active uses and building designs, can be incorporated in redevelopment plans. Additionally, economic and community development efforts can help reduce stressors that can contribute to mental illness, drug abuse, and various types of violent behavior.

## Access to Health Care

Many West District residents have difficulty accessing and affording the health care they need. Resources and innovative programs to address both health determinants and treatment exist within the district, but residents will continue to need support in this area. Some existing programs in the district may be at risk of closing if access to Medicaid and other health care programs is reduced in the future due to federal policies.

## MAJOR OPPORTUNITIES

**Health-Related Economic and Community Development.** The West Philadelphia Promise Zone is a federal place-based initiative that helps attract public and private investments to revitalize areas of high poverty. The designation covers about 2 square miles of West Philly, about half of which falls within the eastern portion of the West District. The Promise Zone Health and Wellness Committee has three focus areas: access to care, behavioral health, and chronic disease prevention, which is focused on providing links to services within the community via green and healthy spaces such as the Mantua Greenway.



**Greening Underutilized Properties to Increase Urban Agriculture and Tree Canopy** The West District has already developed several urban gardens that provide food, recreation, and environmental and health education to the community. Establishing additional gardens and community green spaces and formalizing land ownership/use agreements to provide stability for existing gardens can help improve air quality and mitigate many of the district's other quality of life and health challenges.

**TOD and Transportation Improvements.** With strong access to job centers in University City, Center City, and the suburbs via the Market-Frankford line and trolley and bus routes, there are many opportunities for transit-oriented development in the district, particularly near MFL stations. This must be coupled with systematic engineering improvements to reduce vehicular speeds on neighborhood streets and commercial corridors to help meet the city's Vision Zero goal of no traffic fatalities by 2030 and increase the number of trips (to transit or other destinations) that residents take by active transportation.

#### **RECOMMENDED FOLLOW-UP**

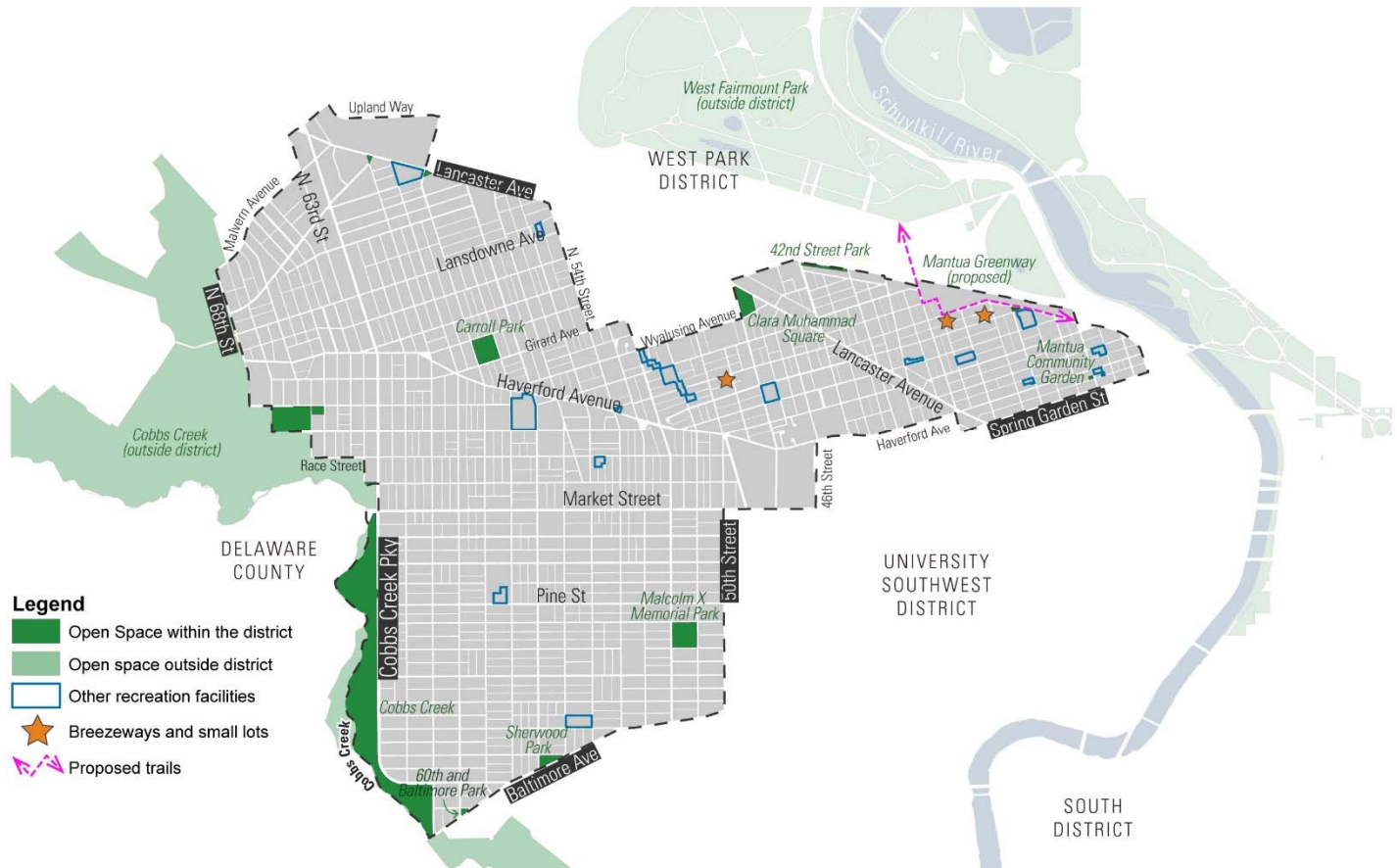
- Involve community members in assessing and addressing environmental barriers to active transportation and other outdoor physical activity
- Continue to work with the Department of Commerce and others to replace vacated supermarkets in the district and promote varied sources of culturally appropriate healthy food within commercial corridors and neighborhoods
- Investigate ways to strategically increase tree canopy to the district's potential, including Philadelphia Parks and Recreation's TreePhilly program
- Assess district residents' awareness of health-related resources available in the district, including but not limited to physical activity opportunities, affordable healthy food sources, early childhood programs, healthy and sustainable home renovation programs, basic health care, and community support for individuals with specific chronic illnesses.
- Explore ways to mitigate the impact of excessive sales and advertising of tobacco and unhealthy foods and beverages, particularly in areas where large numbers of children are present such as surrounding schools and recreation centers
- Work to incorporate understanding of residents' experiences with poverty, crime, trauma, and feelings of disenfranchisement into plan recommendations that support a mentally and physically healthier environment
- Find ways to increase public water access, which can support physical activity, reduce heat-related health complications, and provide a healthier alternative to sugary drinks



- Explore the difference between childhood and adult obesity in the district to try to understand if this is a meaningful trend toward lower body weight and if so, if it is the result of successful school programming or other intervention

## OPEN SPACE

*Philadelphia2035 Citywide Vision Goal:* Increase equitable access to our open space resources



## SUMMARY

The West District is home to several open space areas of varying size and characteristics. At the far western edge of the district between Market Street and Baltimore Avenue, the district hosts a portion of the Cobbs Creek Park and trail, including the Cobbs Creek Recreation Center and Environmental Education Center. This natural watershed park is the largest open space inside the district boundaries at 79 acres. There are also three large public squares in the district including Malcom X Memorial Park in the south, Carroll Park in the north central area and Clara Muhammad Square at the northern edge of the district. Together, these three parks comprise a total of 90 acres of open space. Sherwood Park, and 60<sup>th</sup> and Baltimore Park are both smaller triangular shaped open spaces formed by the angle of Baltimore Avenue. Along with these parks, several other district resources contribute additional open space, including the Mantua Community Garden and several small lots and traffic islands which are managed by the city. The northeastern portion of the district will soon be home to a greenway ringing the northern edge of the Mantua neighborhood that will serve as a route to connect neighborhood residents safely to West Fairmount Park, University City campuses, Center City, and the regional bike trail network.

In addition to these open spaces, the district is home to several recreation facilities that are reviewed in the neighborhoods memo.

While the district itself is not generally characterized by large, natural open spaces, it does lie near some of the city's largest natural resources. Immediately to the west of the district, both north of Market Street and south of Baltimore Avenue lie additional sections of Cobbs Creek Park. West Fairmount Park also sits nearby over the northern boundary of the district, though the accessibility of Fairmount Park by the West District is limited by rail infrastructure and the availability of bridges crossing the right-of-way.

The following covers the history, existing conditions, and opportunities to improve the open spaces located within the West District.

### **COBBS CREEK PARK (79 ACRES in the district of 866 acres, total)**

Boundaries: Market Street, 63<sup>rd</sup> Street/Cobbs Creek Parkway, 61<sup>st</sup> Street. The border on the western edge of the park is the city border with Delaware County.

#### *EXISTING CONDITIONS*

Cobbs Creek Park between Market Street and Baltimore Avenue is one section of a larger park network following Cobbs Creek which stretches from the city line at Route 1 near Overbrook Park and follows the creek roughly southward towards the airport and the Heinz Wildlife Refuge. The portion within the West District hosts soft surface trails closer to the creek bed and a multi-use trail near the eastern edge of the park along 63<sup>rd</sup> Street (the Cobbs Creek Parkway). The park is largely wooded in this section but is home to the Cobbs Creek Recreation Center (see Neighborhoods Memo) and the Cobbs Creek Environmental Education Center which bolsters the community through environmental education, training, and hands-on activities. The West District park and trail section is included as part of a larger regional effort to connect the Heinz Wildlife Refuge to Valley Forge Park with a multi-use trail.

#### *HISTORY*

Cobbs Creek has a history dating back to its first human inhabitants, the Lenni Lenape Native Americans, who used the creek and surrounding areas primarily for fishing, hunting, and transportation. By the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century, the first European settlers built mills along the Creek for industrial purposes. Near the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Philadelphia began to make a concerted effort to develop a system of "outer parks" following the creek beds of Cobbs Creek as well as the Pennypack and Tacony Creeks. The first concrete step in achieving this goal was the introduction of a bill in 1902 for the creation of a "park driveway" on the east side of Cobbs Creek from Market Street to Woodland Avenue, laying the initial groundwork for the creation of natural open space in the valley of Cobbs Creek. The Park was officially added to the city plan in 1904 and after some political turmoil, legislation to formally establish the park and acquire necessary properties for the outer park system was passed in 1907.

The construction of the Market Frankford El train increased the pace of residential development in West Philadelphia and Delaware County. The city's expanding street grid did not always respect local topography or land features, so several tributaries to the creek were buried in sewers and for some time at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, sewage flowed directly into the creek from surrounding neighborhoods. Fortunately, a diverter sewer was installed later and the park was formally established in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The 19<sup>th</sup> Century development of cemeteries near the creek bed including Mt. Moriah, Fernwood, Holy Cross, and Arlington Cemeteries also helped preserve open space around the creek, protecting it from further development intrusion and easing the creation of the preserved natural open space we have today.

## ISSUES

The Cobbs Creek Trail along the Cobbs Creek Parkway is one of the least used trails in the city network according to pedestrian and bicycle counts by DVRPC.

Soft surface trails also exist within the park closer to the actual waterway but suffer from a lack of programming and wayfinding.

The connection to Delaware County through the park via Spruce Street/Marshall Road is not adequately maintained or safely designed for pedestrians.

Some amount of short dumping is occurring on the site and there is a litter issue around picnic areas and at the curb.

Some trees have fallen or died in the wooded area of the park and could present a safety risk. They should be evaluated individually to determine any risk.

There are some drainage issues at the playground surface with heavy puddling in several locations.

## **MALCOLM X MEMORIAL PARK (6 ACRES), CARROLL PARK (5 ACRES), AND CLARA MUHAMMAD SQUARE (3 ACRES)**

Malcolm X Memorial Park boundaries: 52<sup>nd</sup> Street, Pine Street, 51<sup>st</sup> Street, and Larchwood Avenue

Carroll Park boundaries: 59<sup>th</sup> Street, Thompson Street, 58<sup>th</sup> Street, and Girard Avenue

Clara Muhammad Square boundaries: 48<sup>th</sup> Street, Lancaster Avenue, 47<sup>th</sup> Street, and Wyalusing Avenue.

### *EXISTING CONDITIONS*

Malcolm X Memorial Park is a public square bounded by mostly residential buildings on the northern, eastern, and southern portions and by a commercial corridor on the west. Overall, the park is in excellent condition and is well-used. The park boasts mature trees, and well maintained furniture including playground equipment, lighting, and benches. The park is surrounded by a concrete and metal fence. Malcolm X Memorial Park is currently scheduled to receive minor site improvements.

Carroll Park is bounded almost entirely by residential buildings. Overall, the park is in fair to good condition but benches, exercise and playground equipment need to be replaced. The park contains mature plantings and is well used by the surrounding neighborhood. The park is currently in the design phase for site improvements, including new playground equipment, improvements to the spray ground, new benches and trash cans.

Clara Muhammad Park is bounded by several religious institutions including parochial schools on three sides, a cemetery, gas station and a few residential properties. The overall condition of the park is good, but some play equipment is outdated and may need to be replaced.

### *HISTORY*

Malcolm X Memorial Park was incorporated into the city plan by ordinance of City Council in 1902. The city condemned and purchased the property for \$70,000, naming the park Black Oak Park in 1903 after a grove of that type of tree which was occupying the land at the time. The park was formally designed in 1904 and little has changed since that time. In 1995, the park was extensively renovated, playgrounds and a gazebo were added and the name was changed officially to Malcolm X Memorial Park.

Carroll Park was established in 1907 when City Council passed an ordinance authorizing the purchase of land from the Carroll Brothers. The following year, Council passed another ordinance formally naming the park after its former owners. The park was laid out in 1909 with a radial pattern connected by curving intermediate pathways that gives it a web-like appearance in plan. That design largely survives to this day. In 1954, Carroll Park was one of 13 city park

recipients to receive a share of a \$1 million improvement budget which enabled the re-design of the park's central hub and the installation of a splash yard, flagpole, and maintenance building. The city later added play equipment to the park in the late 1990s.

Clara Muhammad Square was established by city ordinance in 1909 as Thomas Durham Park. The park comprises the entirety of an irregular shaped block which is rationalized by a central hub and a series of pathways radiating outward to the corners that are bisected by intermediate paths in a similar web-like fashion as Carroll Park. Mayor Frank Rizzo dedicated funds to improve the park through cleaning and the addition of play equipment in the 1970s as part of a response to public outrage over teenage violence at the time. In 1983, the park was renamed after Sister Clara Muhammad.

## *ISSUES*

A fence surrounding Malcolm X Memorial Park, and a fence/raised curb design around the perimeter of Clara Muhammad Square serve to limit points of access and increase effort required to enter the park.  
Carroll Park needs new play equipment and other site furnishings.  
Malcolm X Park needs new rubber surfacing

## **SHERWOOD PARK (1.25 ACRES) AND 60<sup>TH</sup> AND BALTIMORE PARK (0.15 ACRES)**

Sherwood Park boundaries: 57th Street, Washington Avenue, and Baltimore Avenue.  
60<sup>th</sup> and Baltimore Park boundaries: 60<sup>th</sup> Street, Wharton Street, and Baltimore Avenue.

## *EXISTING CONDITIONS*

Sherwood Park is a triangular shaped green space formed by the angle of Baltimore Avenue against the city grid. It is home to a small playground area, concrete paths, grassy areas and mature plantings. It is surrounded by predominantly residential buildings and a few commercial buildings along the Baltimore Avenue corridor. It is well used by the surrounding community.

60<sup>th</sup> and Baltimore Park is a much smaller triangular parcel bounded by Baltimore Avenue on its angled side. The park is home to benches, a sitting area, and green space with mature plantings. Its small size limits the activities that can take place there to mostly informal seating and socializing. The park is maintained adequately but some elements are old or in varying states of needing repairs or replacement.

## *HISTORY*

Sherwood Park was established by a city ordinance in 1911. Today, it retains most of its original design of five intersecting pathways bordered by trees. A playground was added to the park in 2005.

60<sup>th</sup> and Baltimore Park was created sometime in the 1910s. The original design for the small triangular parcel contained a central ring and 3 walking paths extending to each corner of the park. That design was reconfigured in the 1950s to the current design with a single path and central seating and conversation area.

## *ISSUES*

Topographic issues and a perimeter fence combine to limit accessibility to Sherwood Park. Currently, wheelchair bound park users would only be able to access the park from limited points on Baltimore Avenue.  
Perimeter Sidewalks and some site furnishings around 60<sup>th</sup> and Baltimore Park may need to be replaced.

## **SMALL PARKS AND TRAFFIC ISLANDS**

**Including the following: Mantua Community Garden, 42<sup>nd</sup> Street Park, 37<sup>th</sup> and Brown triangle, 59<sup>th</sup> and Lancaster triangle, and 61<sup>st</sup> and Lebanon triangle.**

### *EXISTING CONDITIONS*

The Mantua Community garden is a small park at the intersection of 34<sup>th</sup> and Brandywine Streets. It is a small park with limited seating and very large trees. The perimeter of the garden is fenced. The park is maintained adequately but seems to be used infrequently.

The 42<sup>nd</sup> Street Park is a vacant lot with no site improvements that follows a rail right-of-way behind a block of homes on Mantua Avenue. The property is not particularly useful as open space because it is difficult to access, isolated, and its location adjacent to rail tracks is not desirable.

37<sup>th</sup> and Brown Triangle is a vacant lot currently maintained as lawn by the Clean and Green program. It will be incorporated into the Mantua Greenway as passive green space.

The two parcels at 59<sup>th</sup> and Lancaster Avenue, and 61<sup>st</sup> and Lebanon are both traffic islands that are well maintained but contain no usable space for district residents due to their size and location in the center of busy intersections.

### *ISSUES*

The Mantua Community Garden's layout makes maintenance difficult and limits the usability of the park on the part of the neighborhood. The park might benefit from investment or programming.

The 42<sup>nd</sup> Street Park is not accessible and not a good location for open space. The Mantua neighborhood has an abundance of vacant land, some of it city owned, but this particular lot is not fit for activation. The city should consider its stake in this property.

## **BREEZEWAYS AND SMALL LOTS**

**Including the following: 3947 Reno Street, 3814 Reno Street, Parrish and 48<sup>th</sup> Street.**

### *EXISTING CONDITIONS*

These public properties are residential sized lots within neighborhoods. They are in various states of repair but none enjoy any significant site improvements. Some lots are moderately overgrown and may require immediate maintenance and/or security improvements.

### *ISSUES*

These properties do not offer usable open space for the neighborhoods they exist within. The city may want to evaluate its stake in these properties in the future.



## **THE MANTUA GREENWAY (3/4 MILES IN LENGTH)**

Boundaries: The Greenway will follow Mantua Avenue from 34<sup>th</sup> Street to 38<sup>th</sup>, then follow Parrish Street to 40<sup>th</sup> Street. It will then Follow 40<sup>th</sup> Street northward towards West Fairmount Park. The greenway will also include a triangular parcel bounded by Mantua Avenue, Brown Street and 37<sup>th</sup> Street.

### *EXISTING CONDITIONS*

This proposal will add a landscaped multi-use trail following Mantua Avenue along the northern border of the neighborhood from 34<sup>th</sup> Street to the 40<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge. It will include storm water management features, landscaping, and additional passive green space for the use of the neighborhood. The greenway is currently in the construction documentation phase with an anticipated groundbreaking prior to 2020. The park will connect to the existing West Bank Schuylkill River Trail that runs from the western terminus of the Spring Garden Bridge to the intersection of 34<sup>th</sup> Street and Mantua Avenue.

### *HISTORY*

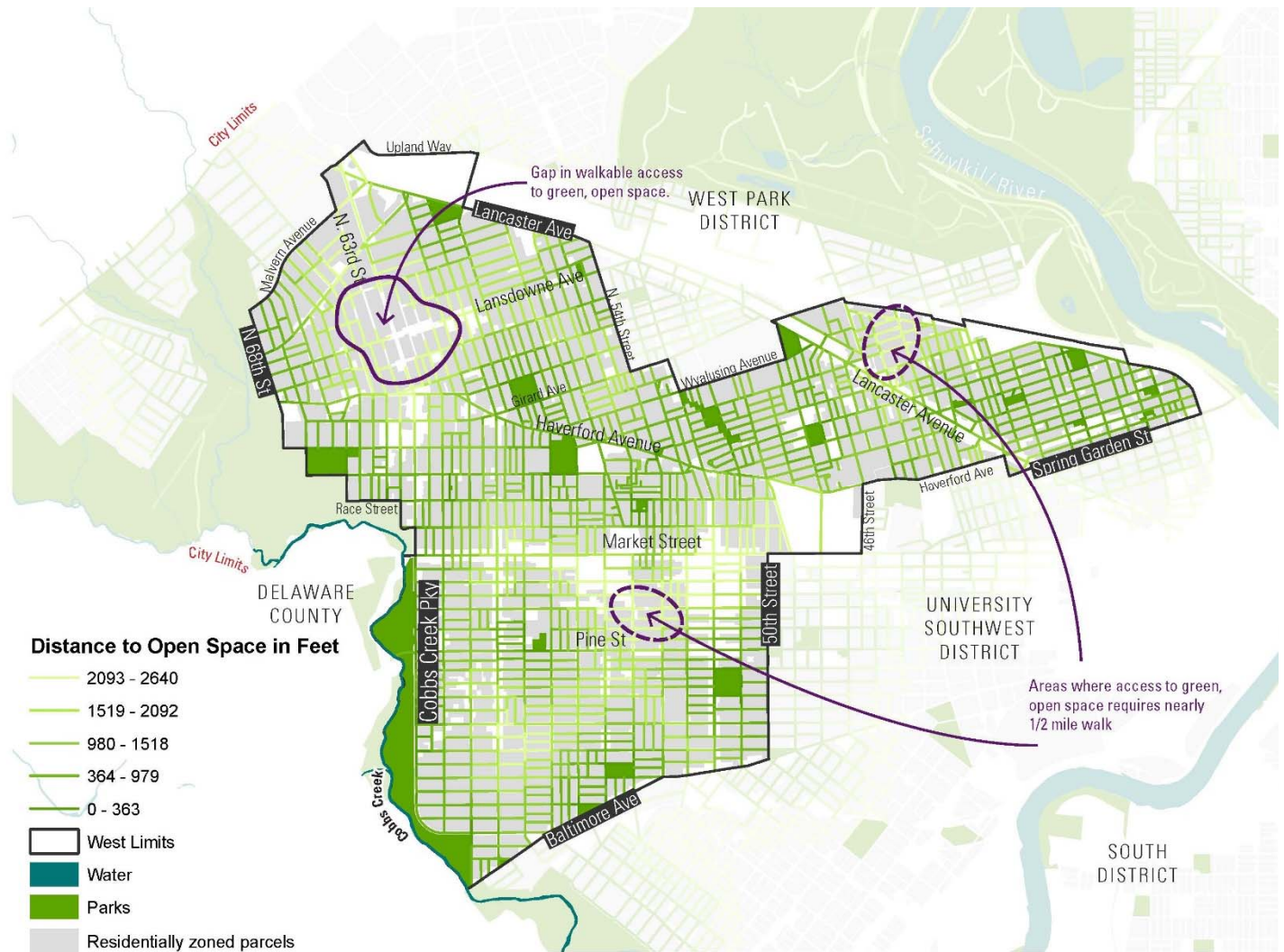
The Mantua Greenway was recommended in 2011 during the *We Are Mantua* planning process led by Mt. Vernon Manor. Neighborhood residents established the Mantua Greenway Resident Advisory Committee in 2013, the same year that a National Park Service Technical Assistance Grant was awarded to assist with concept and design of the greenway. After securing additional funding, a design consultant was selected and final design concepts have been reviewed.

### *ISSUES*

The project is in the construction documentation phase but is in need of additional funding, a complete set of design documents, and a final selection for a contractor.

**Continued on next page.**

## WALKABLE ACCESS TO GREEN OPEN SPACE



The map above illustrates the distance that residents must walk to access open, green space. Most of the district is within a ½ mile walk of an open space larger than 1 acre, however there is a region in the north of the district in the Overbrook neighborhood, where residents cannot walk a reasonable distance to enjoy public green space. This section of the district is heavily residential. Improving these residents' access to high quality open space would help their quality of life. In addition to the Overbrook neighborhood, there are smaller areas of the district in the Belmont Neighborhood and around 55<sup>th</sup> and Spruce Streets where access to green space approaches a ½ mile distance. Improving access to these residents would also represent a positive change to these neighborhoods. In Belmont, availability of city-owned vacant land could help facilitate the addition of open space for this neighborhood.

## PUBLIC REALM

*Philadelphia2035 Citywide Vision Goal: Achieve excellence in the design and quality of Philadelphia's built environment.*

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### SUMMARY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

Generally, the West District has several key urban design and development features that have defined and distinguished the public realm from other regions in the city. Ranging from vacancy levels, to topography, to transit, these features have resulted in a uniqueness to the public realm, which emerged along with the introduction of the trolley/commuter car system and associated housing developments in the mid 19th-century.

#### Land Use:

The West District has two main public realm scales: **1) traditional rowhome or twin residential blocks** and **2) larger scaled commercial corridor mixed-use blocks**. There are very few active (or inactive) industrial parcels, a limited number of institutional mega-blocks, and minimal "big-box" shopping plazas. There are scattered multi-family and senior housing options in the district, but these are typically well scaled within their surrounding contexts. Within several neighborhoods, there are higher residential and commercial vacancies that have negative impacts on the public realm including disconnected streetscapes, or poorly maintained public sidewalks/open spaces.

#### Transit Infrastructure:

Heavy rail infrastructure borders the northern limits of the district (Northeast Corridor). In the Mantua neighborhood, several newly reconstructed bridges allow for strong connections to north-neighboring West Park District. In other areas of the district, the rail line and adjacent streetscapes create unwelcoming public realms, auto-oriented streetscapes, and at times, dangerous intersections. The district plan should look to enhance the public realm along this northern edge. Other fixed rail infrastructure includes three trolley routes and the Market Frankford Line (MFL), which follow several historic thoroughfares [*Market Street (MFL)*, *Lancaster Avenue (Trolley 10)*, *Girard Avenue (Trolley 15)*, and *Baltimore Avenue (Trolley 34)*]. It should be noted that the district is also somewhat divided by Market Street and the elevated MFL, which was reconstructed between 1999-2009. While seen as an iconic thoroughfare and a key connector to the rest of the city, the rail structure and width of Market Street disconnects neighborhoods and commercial corridors, creating an intimidating and sometimes dangerous public realm. But Market Street has opportunities to strengthen streetscape and pedestrian amenities as vacant parcels continue to be redeveloped. The trolley fixed rail streetscapes and adjacent blocks are pedestrian-scaled and walkable. While no significant job centers or major regional destinations are located within the West District, these strong transit connections (as well as easy access to I-76) to University City, Center City, and other suburban employment centers, create a popular, walkable, residentially-focused series of neighborhoods.

#### Urban Form:

The West District's urban form was developed along two main city grid sets divided by Haverford Avenue. As with much of Philadelphia, in the West District south of Haverford, the grid aligns north/south. North of Haverford, the grid aligns in a northwest/southeast grid pattern. In addition to the two grid sets, the existing dense rowhome blocks are intersected along the three previously mentioned historic thoroughfares (Lancaster, Haverford, and Baltimore Avenues). Each separate the district's two grids and create dozens of adjacent triangular parcels. Many of these parcels are vacant or underutilized open spaces, but have the potential to redevelop and/or strengthen each neighborhood with safer intersections, new public streetscape amenities or create identifying gateways.

Overall, the West District is a highly walkable, housing-focused series of neighborhoods with several neighborhood scale commercial corridors. There are several improvements and opportunities that this memo will look to review including:

## CITYWIDE VISION ELEMENTS: PUBLIC REALM

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### DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS (9.1)

**GOAL:** *Enhance and improve the walkable form with buildings and spaces that have appropriately scaled heights, massing, and setbacks*

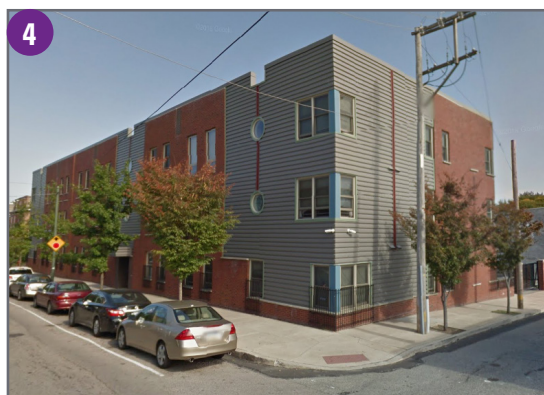
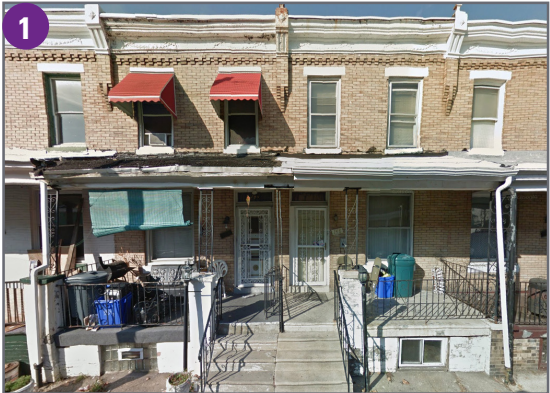
#### Preserve the walkable scale of the city (9.1.1)

- Block Structure
  - The majority of the district consists of tightly packed residential row house streets. Some major blocks have been further divided by intermediate alleys which provide parking and or back yard uses.
  - Public right-of-way space is often limited for pedestrians, and in certain areas cartways are especially wide including Chestnut and Walnut Streets as well as the previously mentioned off-street grid corridors.
  - See Commercial Corridors spread for block structure of larger streetscapes including Market, Lancaster, Baltimore
  - Corner stores in residential neighborhoods are common in the district to supplement nearby commercial corridors (*some neighborhoods have seen these corners become vacant over the last decade*)
- Infrastructure impediments
  - The elevated Market Street Line disconnects north and south portions of the district, and separates several commercial corridors.
  - The northern limits of the West district are disconnected from West Fairmount Park due to limited bridges over the Northeast Corridor (CSX and SEPTA)
  - Cobbs Creek Parkway disconnects residents from the adjacent watershed park
  - Sidewalks are present throughout the district but are impeded by improper parking and auto-oriented parcels.

#### Ensure that new development reinforces the urban scale (9.1.2)

- Residential development patterns are fairly well defined, generally with infrastructure as a boundary or following the hierarchy of streets with some recently constructed exceptions.
- Housing Typologies:
  - 1 Attached row homes:** The majority of the district is comprised of this type of housing. Some portions of the district have front porches, others have no setback at the front or side yard. These homes form a solid wall on either side of the streetscape. Architectural interest is achieved most often in the cornice line which completes and caps the volume of the street. Blocks range in scale from 3-4 story blocks (e.g., Lancaster Avenue) to primarily 2 story blocks (e.g., Spruce Street)
  - 2 Semi-detached (or detached) homes:** This type of home is primarily found in only a few neighborhoods including Overbrook and Cobbs Creek. Although they all have side yard setbacks, these houses still convey urban density. These homes typically have front porches which face onto wider, tree-lined streets. Though atypical for the district, this type of housing, and the Overbrook neighborhood in general, creates a unique public realm experience. This unique enclave bears a density level and scale more in keeping with other neighborhoods in Northwest Philadelphia. Stylistically, the neighborhood feels isolated from the rest of the district. Architectural styles of housing give an exciting experience from the street, though the street wall is less defined than elsewhere in the district.
  - 3 Attached or semi-detached affordable development:** Primarily located in Mantua, Belmont, and Mill Creek, this housing typology is what public and private developers have constructed in recent years for affordable home ownership. Density is low in comparison to adjacent neighborhoods. Some homes include driveways adjacent to the house. Instances of infill in this style are scattered within the traditional row house fabric of the district, making a stark contrast. Cornice lines and street edges are compromised and do not align with the rest of community
  - 4 Multi-Family affordable development:** Primarily located in Mantua and Belmont, this housing typology is what public and private developers have constructed in recent years for affordable home rentals. Density is higher, with apartment style amenities and some surface parking. This housing typology is not seen as often as the attached or semi-attached affordable developments. Their scale tends to be a bit larger and more pronounced and does not fit within most residential contexts.





## CITYWIDE VISION ELEMENTS: PUBLIC REALM

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### URBAN DESIGN (9.2)

**GOAL:** *Elevate public demand for good design in the public realm*

#### **Apply sound design principles to guide development across the city (9.2.1)**

- Promote well-scaled residential and commercial streets, taking into account building massing and the proportion of pedestrian to automobile space. These factors are paramount to the success of a street. This strategy includes underscoring the importance of a consistent street wall and cornice line
- Establish design criteria for residential construction to improve the aesthetic quality of infill and renovation projects and help cement and complement the existing character of a neighborhood.
- Design criteria might be based upon factors such as:
  - Maintaining a cornice line established by existing adjacent architecture
  - Finished height of ground floor should relate to neighboring structures
  - Third stories should relate to the first and second in terms of architectural expression
  - Type of materials used should relate to surrounding neighbors
- Relate the allowable height and density of new developments to the width of streets.
  - Taller structures are more appropriate where the width from property to property across the street is greatest. This includes opportunities for buildings of greater height at some intersections where diagonal streets intersect with the grid.

#### **Create welcoming, well-designed public spaces, gateways, and corridors (9.2.2)**

- Gateway opportunities:
  - Lancaster Avenue Intersections (48th, 40th)
  - Cobbs Creek Parkway (any pedestrian crossing intersection)
  - Reinforce Market Street Gateways at MFL Stations
- Corridor and Streetscape opportunities:
  - Chestnut and Walnut Streets
  - Haverford Avenue Intersections
  - North/South Commercial Corridors (52nd, 60th, 63rd)



## KEY ISSUES

In examination of the West District, some issues appear consistently in several neighborhoods, and can operate as guidelines for the discussion of future improvements. The following are important public realm issues that the West District will face over the next ten years:

### 1 THE PUBLIC REALM UNDER MARKET STREET

The Market Frankford Line and stations have gone through significant infrastructure upgrades and improvements as late as 2009, but there are still issues at a pedestrian scale. High speeds, sight lines, and overall lack of public realm assets, as well as high areas of vacancy create a dangerous environment for pedestrians and disconnect commercial corridors and neighborhoods.

### 2 IMPACTS OF VACANCY ON THE PUBLIC REALM

In several neighborhoods, including Mantua, Belmont and Mill Creek, there are large numbers of vacant buildings and parcels, both residential and commercial. These vacancies are an opportunity for new uses or potential developments, but should have a series of guidelines that help strengthen community and public realm assets. These vacant sites need to be reviewed from a holistic neighborhood scale and look at connection opportunities, placemaking strategies, neighborhood identity features, etc.

### 3 PUBLIC REALM CONDITIONS ALONG WEST'S COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS

There are numerous neighborhood scale commercial corridors (52nd, 60th Streets, Lancaster, Baltimore, Market) that act as the district's main service and good centers. Each commercial corridor has varying levels vacant storefronts and residential units above, maintenance concerns, and lack public realm amenities including identifying signage, landscape treatments, and streetscape amenities. These varying levels of conditions or oversight hurt the vibrancy and activity along each corridor, and have allowed opportunities for other uses to disrupt the commercial uses including ground floor residential.

Additionally, Lancaster, Haverford, and Baltimore Avenues are all historic thoroughfares that pre-date West District development patterns. They were the original east/west connectors to regional destinations/settlements outside of the city. But today, the off-street grid corridors create challenging streetscapes which include unsafe intersections with overly-long crosswalks, dangerous speeds and sight lines, as well as difficult adjacent parcels and triangles which tend to be vacant or underutilized, creating disconnected urban features.

### 4 COBBS CREEK PARK: PUBLIC REALM CONNECTIONS TO NEAR NEIGHBORS

As the only watershed park in the district, Cobbs Creek Park has the potential to be a highly used outdoor amenity for adjacent neighborhoods. But Cobbs Creek Parkway and 63rd Street are dangerous, high speed corridors which disconnect the park from residential blocks with limited crosswalks and poor pedestrian safety amenities. The existing connection points are extremely important, but are auto-oriented and unfriendly. Creating a multimodal streetscape with strengthened access points to the park would allow for better connections to a valued open space in the district. *(See the Open Space Memo for more details).*

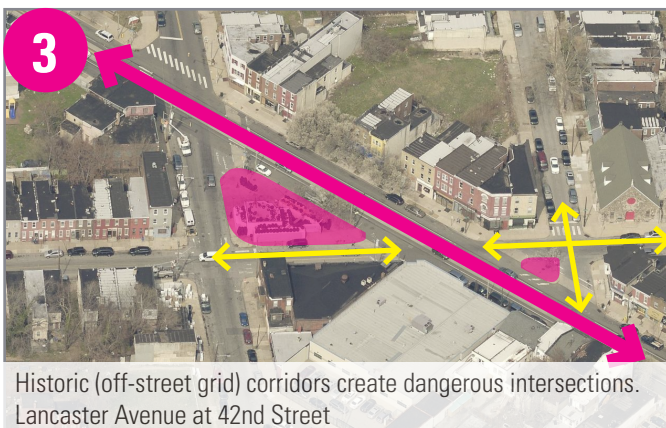
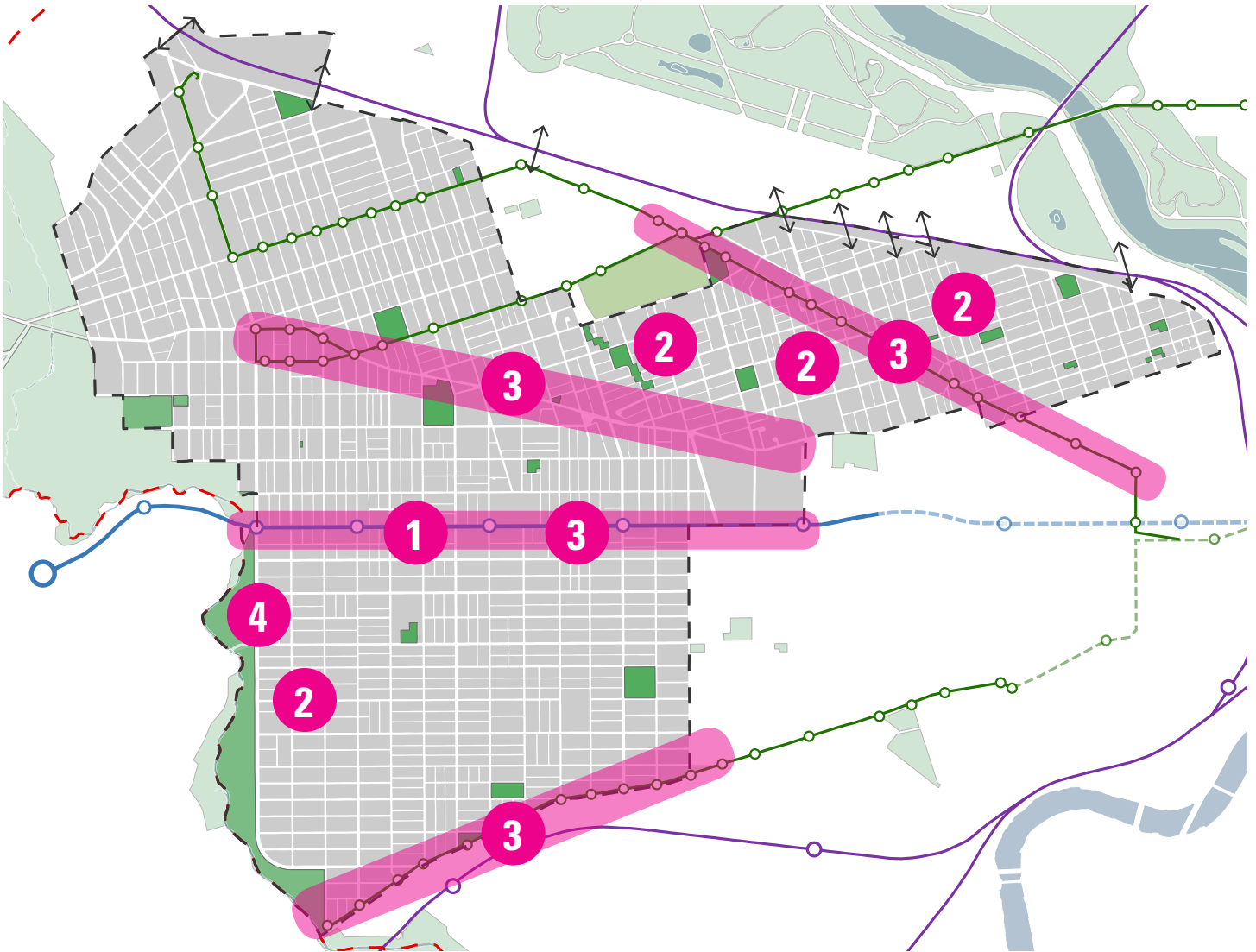


Vacancy and scarce public amenities under the MFL and along Market Street.



Vacancy in Belmont. Large areas of vacant lots disrupt the street wall and create opportunities for new uses or development.

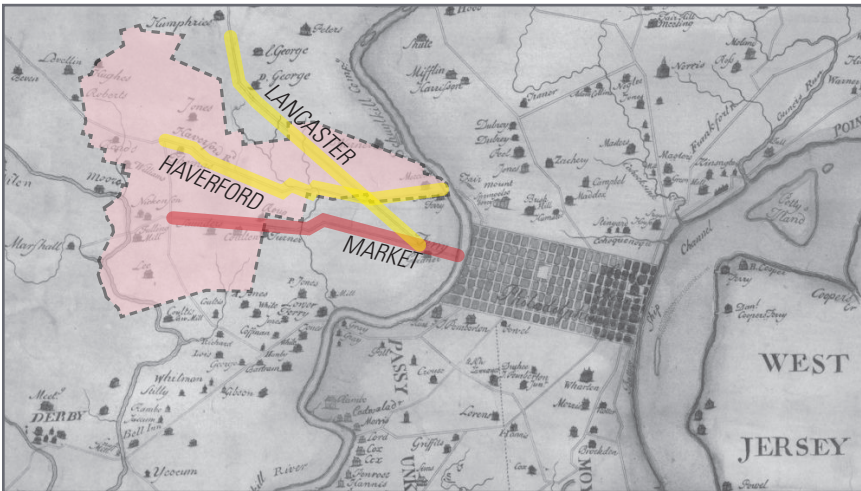
## KEY ISSUES MAP





## 1 THE PUBLIC REALM UNDER MARKET STREET

In addition to Lancaster Avenue and Darby Road, Market Street has been one of the most well traveled roads to and from Philadelphia over the last several centuries. In 1907, the Market Frankford Line (MFL) was opened from 69th Street to City Hall. Initially, the line was elevated west of the Schuylkill River and underground east of the river. In 1955, the current configuration (of a tunnel with stations at 30th, 34th, and 40th Streets) opened, leaving only the elevated structure from approximately 44th Street to Millbourne Station. Reconstruction of the elevated portions of the MFL were complete in 2009, with station upgrades and ADA access. The redesign of the elevated line utilizes single-pillar supports which opens up the north and south sidewalks along Market Street, but still create sight line and public realm issues.



Map of Philadelphia highlighting Market Street, Haverford and Lancaster Avenues (1751)

While many improvements were incorporated as part of the reconstruction, several concerns still exist. The structure itself is a barrier between north and south neighborhoods and commercial corridors. The reconstruction in the 1990s and 2000s compromised several blocks of the commercial and residential vibrancy of Market Street, leaving dozens of empty parcels, which still sit vacant today. As part of the district plan, researching into new investment into Market Street vacancy as well as transit-oriented developments (TOD) strategies should be a main consideration. In addition to vacant parcels, existing building forms along several blocks also dismiss the Market Street elevation wall, creating bleak side walls, blank walls, and provide little pedestrianized elements. Lastly, intersections, high speeds, roadway width, and parking all limit the vibrancy and usefulness of the corridor.

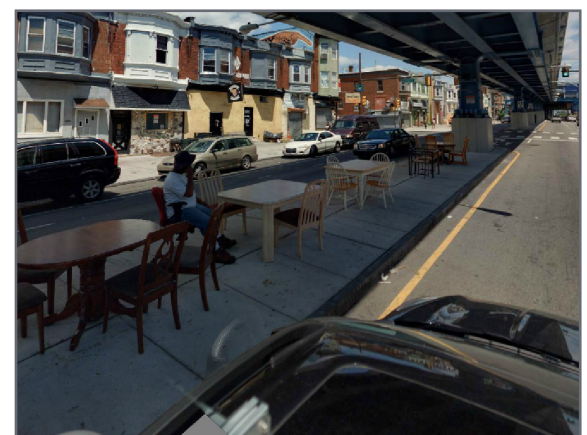
The public realm should look to more transit-oriented development (TOD) around stations, increasing density and providing additional streetscape enhancements to promote and highlight Market Street as an active, livable, destination. Redeveloping on soft sites with a focus on reestablishing the Market Street street wall will also help strengthen the corridor.



Blank walls, with little fenestration or public amenities create an unwelcoming Market Street streetscape.



Vacant parcels should be considered for TOD redevelopment options along Market Street, maintaining an active street wall.

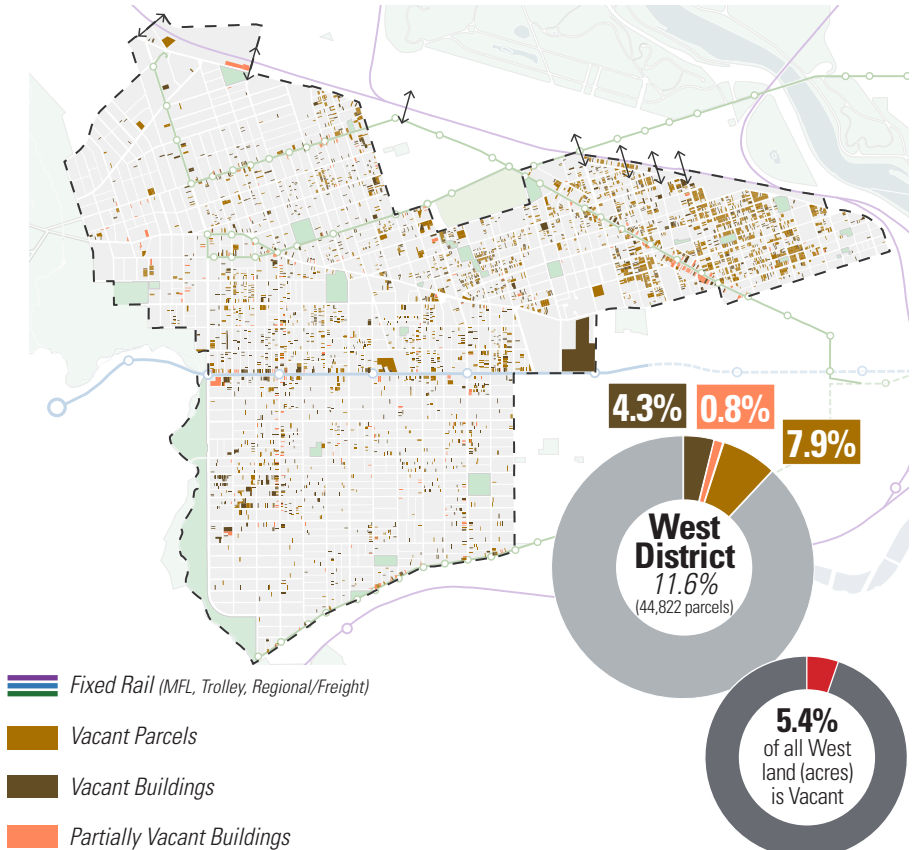


Look to create new public realm amenities along Market Street including traffic calming or pop-up pedestrian uses.

## 2 IMPACTS OF NEIGHBORHOOD VACANCY ON THE PUBLIC REALM

Vacancy has several key impacts on the public realm. The gaps created by demolished vacant structures erode the enclosures of street walls, lead to poor sidewalk and property conditions, and create places that can be used for illicit or dangerous activities. In conjunction with short dumping and trash build-up, diminished lighting, and lawn parking, these sites have a negative effect on common spaces and the perception of public safety. Additionally, in areas of higher vacancy, some thought should be given for the structures that remain. Often blocks with high vacancy levels have weak, adjacent real estate markets, raising the question for how vacant parcels can be stabilized and beautified to raise the quality of life and foster safety for existing residents.

Responses to vacancy can be varied, including new housing developments, as well as cleaning and greening, side yards, and urban agriculture. All of these can be positive enhancements to the public realm, if well executed and with adherence to minimum standards for landscaping, fencing, open areas, and more. It is generally recommended that in areas with high vacancy levels, design guidelines and/or best practices be discussed with local community members to ensure that reuses and adaptations of vacant properties has positive impacts on the neighborhood.



### NUISANCE LOTS AND STRUCTURES

*Long term vacancy and a lack of maintenance can lead to properties that have an extremely negative impacts on the public realm as well as posing safety hazards and an adverse impacts on public health.*





DEGREES OF RESIDENTIAL VACANCY	VACANCY TYPES	VACANCY EXAMPLES AND RESPONSES
<p>The amount of vacancy on a block can influence decisions for how properties are purchased, acquired, consolidated, disposed of, and improved. Sometimes blocks can be stabilized with the disposition and improvement of a few parcels, others require larger-scale interventions.</p> <p>In the course of the district planning process, several stakeholders, including local residents, the Planning Commission staff, and City Councilpersons, can discuss a variety of strategies for addressing vacancy. In previous districts plans, the City Planning Commission staff have employed a range of analysis and recommendations to address the challenges of high vacancies. Shown here are three examples of vacancy classifications and recommendations that might be applicable to the West Planning District.</p> <p>For the purposes of the public realm, local residents may want to weigh in on how different types of interventions will affect the appearance of their streets and the character of their neighborhoods. For example, in a weak real estate market would residents prefer that vacant, deteriorating housing be demolished* and replaced with a vegetated area, or would they prefer that such structures are stabilized and sealed with the long term goal of rehabilitation? Would they want vacant lots to be made available as side yards, as common landscaped parking areas (which would require maintenance), as community garden space, or to be consolidated for the long term goal of new housing construction? Where there is enough vacancy to accommodate multiple goals, which streets and frontages should be restored with new housing, which are suitable for parking, which could benefit from the vibrancy of a well-maintained garden? All of these decisions have implications for quality of life and the character of the neighborhood as well as differing needs for maintenance and local organization.</p>	<p><b>LOW VACANCY/STABLE</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage infill construction and/or side yards and gardens</li> <li>Discourage parking and auto storage</li> <li>Encourage code enforcement of existing structures to prevent block deterioration</li> </ul>	 <p><i>Well maintained street wall with occasional gaps, typically used as side yards</i></p>
	<p><b>MODERATE VACANCY</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage infill construction and/or side yard uses</li> <li>Discourage parking and auto storage</li> <li>Encourage neighborhood block gardens and open spaces</li> </ul>	 <p><i>Scattered moderate vacancy, sometimes overgrown and in need of maintenance</i></p>
<p>* The demolition of vacant housing has to meet several criteria, including those of the Department of Licenses and Inspections to validate that the structure poses a threat.</p>	<p><b>HIGH VACANCY</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prioritize interventions that will stabilize the block and adjacent housing. Options include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demolitions of dangerous structures for non-residential uses such as side yards, community parking, and/or urban agriculture</li> <li>Explore broader environmental measures such as GSI, pollinator corridors</li> <li>Explore consolidation and redevelopment where feasible</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	 <p><i>Large vacant lots and/or blocks with several vacant structures.</i></p>  <p><i>Site stabilization through demolitions and/or new developments should be considered.</i></p>

### 3 PUBLIC REALM ALONG WEST'S COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS

#### HISTORIC “OFF-STREET GRID” VS. “MAIN STREET” COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS

Like many other regions in Philadelphia, several commercial corridors within the West District initially developed as historic thoroughfares and were established prior to the City’s street grid system. Baltimore, Haverford, and Lancaster Avenues, as previously mentioned, are West’s historic, pedestrian scaled, walkable corridors, and have provided goods and services to local residents within modest scale storefronts for decades.

In contrast, urban thoroughfares such as Market, 52nd, and 60th Streets have several larger transit-oriented commercial streetscape blocks with big-box retail options at main intersections. These arterial streets were built to withstand more vehicles, creating a sometimes hostile environment for pedestrians. They often have larger parcels, and vehicular parking for access from several neighborhoods.



*Triangular parcel at 60th and Baltimore -- underutilized and poorly maintained*



*52nd Street (1914)*



*52nd Street (2017)*



*63rd Street - Auto-oriented commercial and minimal public realm amenities*

#### “OFF-STREET GRID” HISTORIC CORRIDORS (LANCASTER, HAVERFORD, BALTIMORE AVENUES)

Historic thoroughfares were originally built with comparative widths and parcel sizes to the gridded residential block form in many other parts of West Philadelphia. Today, these corridors continue to have apartments above ground floor retail, but their smaller sizing has also allowed uses to mix freely on blocks that have seen higher vacancy levels. This has led to commercial corridors that have varying activity and goods and service options, and create disconnected character of the public realm -- some blocks are open and transparent with high pedestrian popularity, other stretches more private and protected (similar to a neighborhood residential block).

One of the largest challenges faced by these corridors is their “off-street grid” form seen in the form of triangular parcels. Activity and retail options are disrupted between blocks, which have parcels that are too small for development, further disconnecting the identity or walkability of the corridor. Many of these parcels sit vacant or underutilized and create dangerous intersections for pedestrians. There are opportunities to redesign these intersections for new public realm amenities or gateway features, all while helping to maintain a safe, cohesive, and vibrant commercial corridor.

#### DESTINATION COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS (52ND, 60TH, AND 63RD STREETS)

The larger destination commercial corridors developed along main, gridded, arterial streets. 52nd Street is known as the “Main Street of West Philadelphia” and still provides a regional draw from many neighborhoods.

These larger arterial streets have been upgraded to withstand new transit options and more cars, which has diminished the public realm and pedestrian scale of the blocks. Additionally, these corridors all intersect or align with the elevated Market Frankford Line, which disconnects the public realm north and south on Market Street.



### ELEMENTS OF ACTIVATING A COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR

Providing streetscape elements along commercial corridors can help strengthen surrounding neighborhoods and have a positive impact on new stores, goods and services within a community. But varying characteristics of West's corridors (narrow sidewalks, transit stops, utilities) often limit options to beautify and activate the public realm. Some elements to help enhance the public realm include:

- Awnings
- Signage
- Contrasting facade materials/colors
- Planters and window boxes
- Outdoor seating and bike parking
- Storefront and street lighting
- Street trees / stormwater GSI



*Example rendering of successful commercial corridor elements. (Source: West Humboldt Park Dev. Council)*

It should be noted that inconsistent and uncoordinated uses of these elements often creates a chaotic and less than successful public realm. Corridor management and/or the creation of design guidelines can stabilize and enhance the quality of the corridor.

### VACANCY WITHIN COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS

Over the last half century, both of these commercial typologies have shrunk in their corridor sizes and have exhibited changes in character and usage. Both types of corridors have also been affected by the selection of businesses which have chosen to locate on them in recent years, limiting access to needed goods and services for residents. This has changed the urban form, signage, landscape, and sidewalk characteristics.

As economic trends evolve, the West District commercial corridors have tried to respond. Unfortunately, several neighborhood commercial corridors have either almost disappeared entirely or left block-long gaps between commercial stores. Some have changed to new uses, while others now sit vacant on both the ground floor and above. Where corridors have shrunk, residential uses have often replaced retail blocks (such as along portions of 60th Street). Additionally, even the intact commercial block frontages of these corridors have partial vacancy, which has led to poor maintenance of the structures, with occasional shuttered ground floors and boarded up upper floors.

While nothing can replace an active and open storefront, there have been improvements that have changed the appearance of the street and/or helped spur reinvestments. These include public art installations such as the painting of store grates and sidewalls of buildings along Lancaster Avenue, as well as recent City investment in mobile vendors along 52nd Street.

### CURRENT RESPONSES TO CORRIDOR VACANCY



*Lancaster Avenue (3800 block) - 3-story commercial, depicting vacant commercial and converted ground floor residential units*



*52nd Street Vendor Kiosks help provide commercial opportunities along the corridor, while maintaining a unified identity*

## MAJOR OPPORTUNITIES

There are significant public realm opportunities in the district. Below are some of the improvement areas with the greatest potential to benefit the several neighborhoods or even the entire West District. Please see the following spread for a map of the opportunity site locations.

### MULTIPLE-SITE OPPORTUNITIES

#### Opportunity 1 -- Streetscape and intersection enhancements to high priority corridors including Market Street, and the historic commercial corridors of Haverford, Baltimore, and Lancaster Avenues

- Investigate safety, sight line, and crosswalk enhancement opportunities for pedestrians
- Consider streetscape enhancements and beautification that incorporate trolley modernization progress
- Increase vibrancy of streetscape through new vegetation, signage, commercial and gateway treatments

#### Opportunity 2 -- Increase accessibility, visibility, and use of “off-street grid” triangular parcels

- Investigate ownership and current uses of underutilized and vacant parcels
- Research best practices for new open space amenities and pedestrian-scaled spaces for underutilized parcels
- Consider gateway opportunities within “off-street grid” parcels to strengthen commercial corridor identities

#### Opportunity 3 -- Increase accessibility to Cobbs Creek Park

- Investigate safety, sight line, and crosswalk opportunities for better access into Cobbs Creek Park
- Consider multimodal improvements to Cobbs Creek Parkway to enhance usability for all modes
- Investigate increasing access points along Cobbs Creek Parkway or additional signage, gateway features

#### Opportunity 4 -- Increase connections to neighborhood open space assets

- Investigate safety, sight line, and crosswalk opportunities for better access into existing facilities
- Research initiatives like removing fences to provide for better access and more inviting sites
- Investigate opportunities of adding open space amenities to underserved neighborhoods
- Investigate new pedestrian north/south connections to West Fairmount Park/ Cobbs Creek Park

#### Opportunity 5 -- Reuse of vacant parcels and underutilized sites for neighborhood serving development

- Investigate ownership and current uses of underutilized or vacant parcels
- Look to new uses including residential, commercial or new light industrial options
- Investigate new uses along rail corridors to allow for more pedestrian scale development

### SINGLE-SITE OPPORTUNITIES

#### Opportunity 6 -- Intersections of Vine Street, Haverford Avenue and N 52nd Street

- Investigate safety, sight line, and crosswalk opportunities for safer pedestrian movements along corridors
- Consider new development uses on vacant parcels
- Investigate roadway diets, and review current traffic patterns

#### Opportunity 7 -- West Mill Creek Recreation Center and Open Spaces

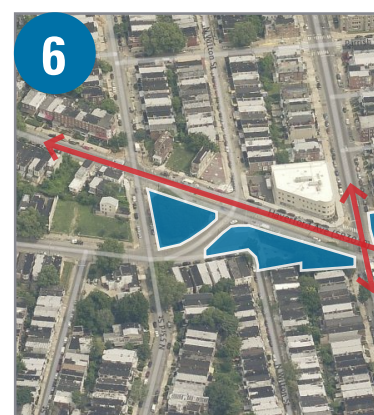
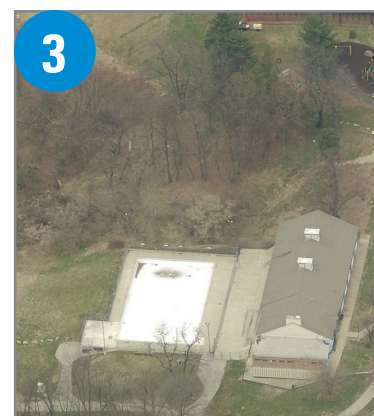
- Consider creation of stronger identity between disconnected parcels.
- Create a pedestrian/bicycle enhanced streetscape
- Review existing edge conditions of open space and research initiatives to enhance public realm/access to West Mill Creek Rec Center

#### Opportunity 8 -- 4601 Market Street

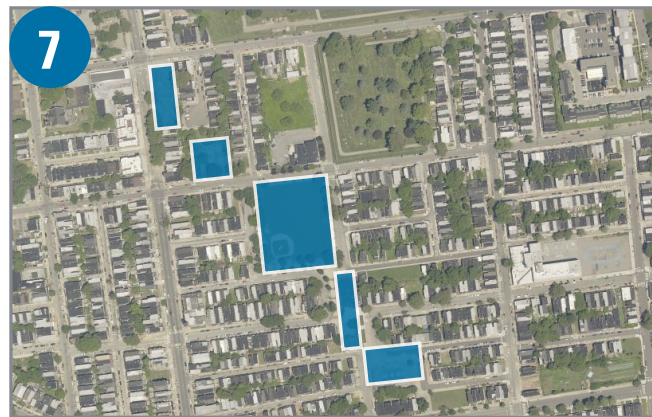
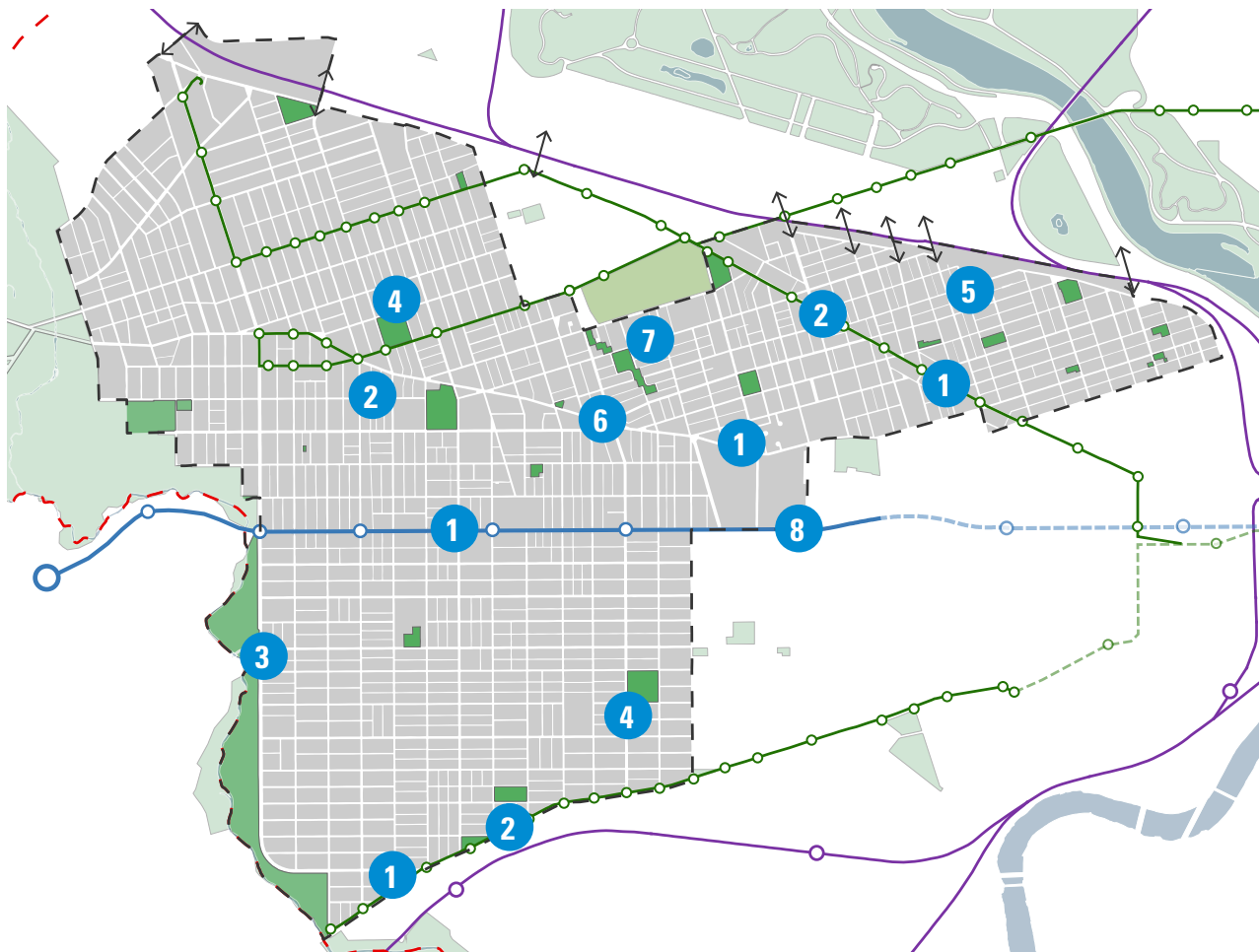
- Attract new users, which will allow for varying public realm opportunities



WEST DISTRICT







## LAND MANAGEMENT

*Philadelphia2035 Citywide Vision Goal: Capitalize on land assets.*

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### SUMMARY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS:

The West District is a predominately residential district, with the majority of the housing being single family rowhomes with pockets of twin style housing in the Cobbs Creek and Overbrook neighborhoods. The Market Frankford Line (MFL) bisects the district, providing key transportation access to the residential and commercial uses along Market Street, the surrounding neighborhoods and commercial corridors. The network of trolley lines, including Routes 10, 15 and 34, provide residents and visitors access to the Lancaster Avenue corridor and the neighborhood serving retail along 63<sup>rd</sup> Street and Lansdowne Avenue. Additional commercial corridors are present along 52<sup>nd</sup> Street, 60<sup>th</sup> Street in the Cobbs Creek neighborhood and along Haverford Avenue.

One of the most defining features of the West district is the lack of industrial land use, particularly large industrial parcels. Except for two parcels, one along Mantua Avenue in Mantua and the other along Upland Way in Overbrook, both of which are on borders of the district, the small amount of remaining industrial land is scattered and small in size. While there are small concentrations of industrial land uses in the Morris Park and Cobbs Creek neighborhoods, the sites are not contiguous and are usually only about a rowhouse parcel in size.

The West District is home to many natural resource assets. In addition to Carroll Park, Malcolm X Park and Clara Muhammad Square, which are neighborhood-scale parks, seventy nine acres of Cobbs Creek Park lay within the District. There are also substantial natural resources just across the border of the District in Delaware County and in the West Park District. The remainder of Cobbs Creek Park is in both the adjacent West Park district and across the City border in Delaware County. Additionally, West Fairmount Park, including the Philadelphia Zoo and the Mann Center are just outside the district across the Paoli/Thorndale rail line.

Worth particular attention is the high rate of building occupancy in the West District. By far, the majority of the buildings are fully occupied and vacancy is scattered throughout the district. However, there is some clustering of vacancy along commercial corridors, particularly along Lancaster Avenue, the far end of Market Street and lower 60<sup>th</sup> Street. There is only one large vacant structure, located at the corner of Market and 46<sup>th</sup> Streets. There is also substantial vacancy in the Mantua, Belmont and Mill Creek neighborhoods.

### KEY ISSUES:

- Commercial corridors within the district suffer from concentrated vacancy.
- A high percentage of parcels in the district currently host land use inconsistent with their base zoning for reasons ranging from residential conversions of commercially zoned properties, single-family use of properties in multi-family zoning classifications and existing industrial uses not being located in industrially zoned properties.

- Residential uses are encroaching along commercially zoned properties along commercial corridors, limiting the effectiveness of the existing commercial corridors.
- Industrial uses are scattered throughout the district and often not located in industrially zoned parcels.

#### KEY OPPORTUNITIES:

- The high rate of building occupancy displays strong investment in the community that can potentially be leveraged for additional investment.
- The presence of Mercy Hospital, the Karabots Pediatric Care Center and the Kirkbride Center create a health care node that could be expanded.
- Strong transportation networks and access along both the Market Frankford Line and trolley network, provide the opportunity for investment and revitalization of commercial corridors and their abutting residential neighborhoods.
- The existing recreational and open spaces can be made more accessible, and new and improved connections to nearby assets, including the Philadelphia Zoo and West Fairmount Park, can be explored.

#### LAND USE & ZONING

*GOAL: Make land use the basis for sound planning and zoning decisions*

##### Land Use

The charts and maps in this section reflect the current pattern and relative quantity of land uses within the West District, as surveyed by the City Planning staff during the winter of 2016-2017.



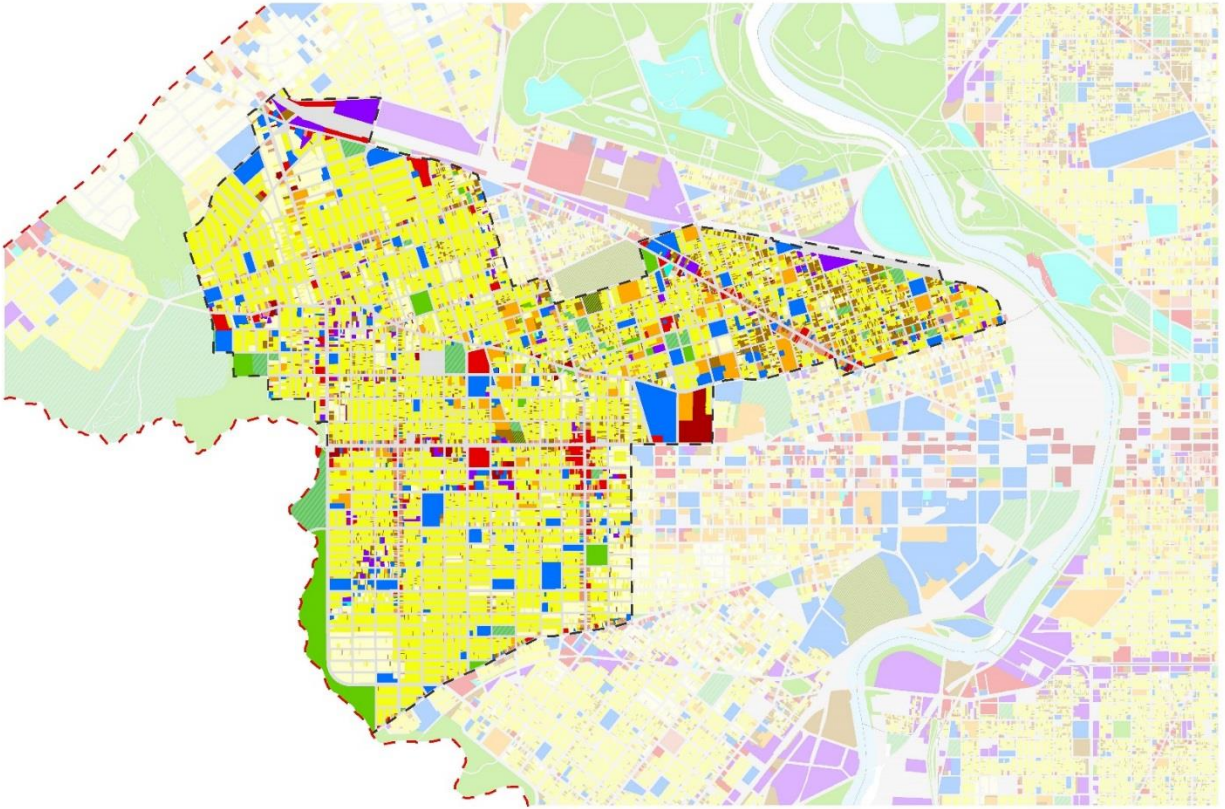


Figure 1: Map of Land Use in the West District

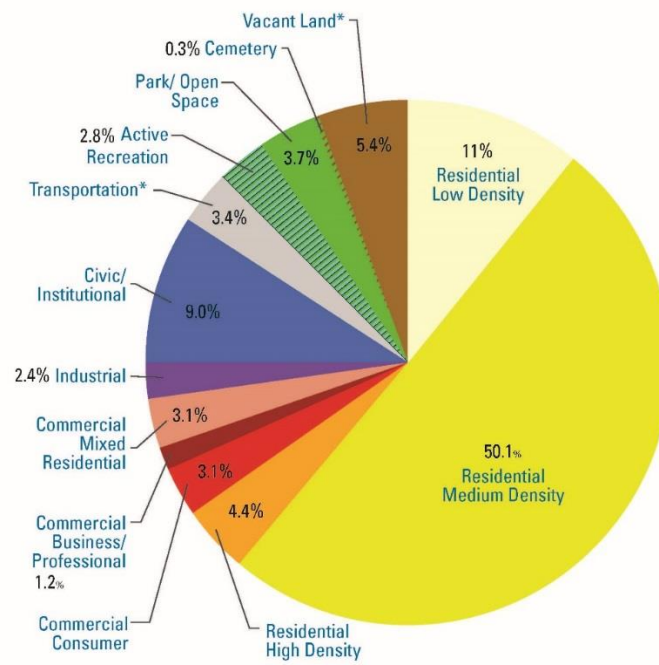


Figure 2: Land Use in the West District by Acreage



The survey reveals that residential uses predominate the district, with 65.75% of its land devoted to residential uses. More than half (66.06%) of the residential acreage are residential rowhomes, 43.43% of the total area of the district, making it almost exclusively the housing type in the district. Only two other housing types represent a significant portion of the district: more than 5% of the acreage used residentially- semi-detached homes (15.68% of the residential land in the district, 10.31% of the total land in the district) and apartment buildings with more than five units (5.51% of the residential land in the district, 3.62% of the total land in the district). Residential rowhomes can be found in every neighborhood of the district and are no more prevalent in some neighborhoods over others. While semi-detached homes can be found throughout the district, there are distinct clusters of them in the Overbrook and Morris Park neighborhoods along 63<sup>rd</sup> Street, in the southwest section of Cobbs Creek neighborhood near Cobbs Creek Park and in the Cedar Park, Garden Court and Walnut Hill neighborhoods along the 50<sup>th</sup> Street border of the district. The apartment buildings with more than five units are scattered throughout the district but there is a small cluster of them along 63<sup>rd</sup> Street between Oxford Street and Lansdowne Avenue and near Haverford Avenue in the Dunlop and Mill Creek neighborhoods.

A little more than seven percent of the district, 7.37%, of the district is comprised of commercial uses. While there is some scattered commercial uses the large majority are located along commercial corridors. There are four commercial corridors along which commercial land use is particularly concentrated- Lancaster Avenue, Market Street, 60<sup>th</sup> Street and 52<sup>nd</sup> Street below Market Street. Of the commercial uses, the most predominate type, 30.95%, are retail stores. They are scattered throughout the district with one notable cluster along 52<sup>nd</sup> Street from Filbert Street to Walnut Street. While they are the most common commercial type, they are only the second most present commercial type that define the commercial corridors. Rowhouse structures with either a store or office on the first floor and residential units above make up 29.89% of all of the commercial uses in the district. This typology can be found along Lancaster Avenue, the upper portion of Market Street, 60<sup>th</sup> Street between Arch Street and Hazel Avenue and along 52<sup>nd</sup> Street between Walnut Street and the Baltimore Avenue border of the district.

Industrial uses occupy an exceptionally small portion of the district, only 2.38% of the total land. There is no discernable pattern as to the location of the industrially used land. It is scattered both along the borders of the district and throughout it, as well as near commercial corridors and in more residential areas. There are three types of industrial uses that collectively make up 79.72% of the industrial land in the district. Warehousing and distribution occupy 31.90% of the district's industrial land, 23.76% of the district's industrial land is other production, distribution, repair and maintenance and 24.06% is other industrial, a use that is identifiable as industrial but can be not be further classified by the surveyor. Due to the lack of overall clustering of industrial land there is no grouping of types of industrial uses within the district.

There are quite a few institutional and civic uses located throughout the district, occupying 8.78% of the total land use of the district. Within the district there is the beginnings of a notable health care node including Mercy Hospital (501 S. 54<sup>th</sup> Street), the Kirkbride Center (111 N. 49<sup>th</sup> Street) and the CHOP Karabots Pediatric Care Center (4865 Market Street) that can serve residents and Philadelphians of all ages. Almost half, 43.30%, of the institutional land within the district is occupied by educational uses. Many of the educational uses are quite large such as the Martha Washington School, the Belmont Charter School, Blackenburg Elementary School and the WC Bryant Promise Academy, each of which occupies an entire city block. There are also quite a few houses of worship located within the district.

They are scattered throughout the district but are often located near other civic and institutional uses. It appears that the majority are located within residential neighborhoods as opposed to being located along commercial corridors.

Transportation facilities other than street rights-of-way occupy 3.35% of the land in the district. Of the land that is used for transportation purposes, the vast majority of it, 62.72%, is used as a rail right of way, yards or stations. This designation includes both passenger and freight rail. There are two fixed rail passenger lines that run through the district: the Market Frankford Line along Market Street and the Harrisburg Keystone Line that runs along the northern edge of the district. Additionally, the Callowhill Bus Depot, located between 58<sup>th</sup>, 59<sup>th</sup>, Callowhill and Vine Streets and the AMTRAK line that runs parallel to the SEPTA Regional Rail in Overbrook share this land use designation. The bulk of the remaining transportation land, 27.84% of all land that is used for transportation, is parking. This category includes all public and private parking garages but does not include parking that is accessory to individual homes unless it has shared parking. These sites are scattered throughout the district but have some clustering near commercial corridors and large institutions.

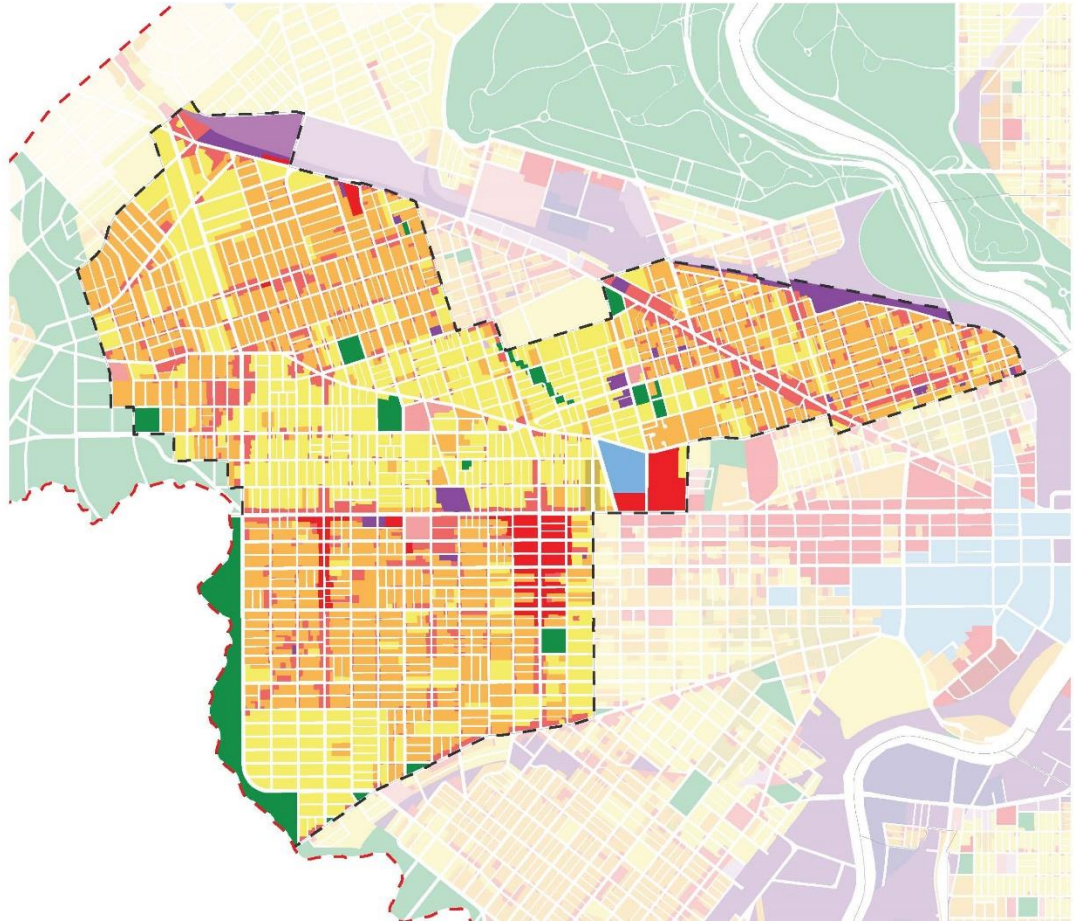
Parks and open space occupy 4% of the district. Almost all of the park and open space land, 92.89%, is open space available for use. While there are few small-scale parks within the district, the location and access to Cobbs Creek Park, which is partially located within the district, is a strong asset. Cathedral Cemetery in Mill Creek and other cemeteries provide additional open space.

The full summary of land use in the district can be seen below:

Categories of Land Use by Acres		
Land Use	Acres	Percent of Total
111- Residential Detached	12.47	0.62%
112- Residential SemiDetached	208.28	10.31%
113- Res. Condo 1 - 1.5 story	0.07	0.00%
119- Other RLD	2.32	0.11%
121- Residential Rowhouse	877.69	43.43%
122- Residential Detached Conv to Apts/Condo <=3st	1.87	0.09%
123- Residential SemiDetached Conv to Apts/Condos <=3st	44.48	2.20%
124- Residential Rowhouse Conv to Apts/Condos <=3st, <5 units	59.55	2.95%
125- Apt. House/Condos 2-4 Units. Residential Duplex or Quad <=3st	19.26	0.95%
129- Other RMD	9.29	0.46%
131- Apt. House 5 Units+	73.16	3.62%
132- Residential Detached and SemiDetached Conv to Apts/Condos >3st, but <5 units	0.74	0.04%
133- Residential Rowhouse Conv to Apts/Condos > 3 stories, < 5 units	0.13	0.01%
135- Hotel/Motel	0.17	0.01%
136- Residential Care Facility	12.50	0.62%
137- Dormitory	0.60	0.03%
138- Correctional Facility	5.26	0.26%
139- Other RHD	0.87	0.04%
211- Commercial Store	46.07	2.28%

212- Commercial Food Service and Drinking	3.31	0.16%
213- Commercial Auto	12.32	0.61%
219- Other CC	0.42	0.02%
221- Commercial Office	20.56	1.02%
222- Commercial Service	4.01	0.20%
229- Other CBP	0.05	0.00%
231- Commercial Store/Office with Residential	13.89	0.69%
232- Rowhouse Store/Office with Residential	44.48	2.20%
233- Detached or SemiDetached Store/Office w/ Res	3.54	0.18%
239- Other CMR	0.19	0.01%
313- Manufacturing	0.30	0.02%
314- Utilities	5.96	0.30%
315- Construction	3.47	0.17%
317- Warehousing and Distribution	15.32	0.76%
318- Other Production, Distribution, Repair, and Maintenance	11.41	0.56%
319- Other IND	11.56	0.57%
411- Health Care	31.31	1.55%
412- Day Care	7.81	0.39%
413- Education	76.83	3.80%
414- Library	1.63	0.08%
416- Public Safety	1.75	0.09%
417- Worship	54.38	2.69%
418- Fraternal Org and Social Clubs	2.06	0.10%
419- Other Civic	1.65	0.08%
512- Transportation Rail ROW, Yards, Stations	42.52	2.10%
513- Transportation Truck/Bus/Taxi	6.30	0.31%
514- Transportation Parking	18.88	0.93%
519- Other Trans	0.09	0.0%
611- Performing Arts	1.03	0.05%
612- Cultural and Natural History	0.30	0.01%
613- Amusement	0.53	0.03%
619- Other C/A	0.24	0.01%
621- Active Recreation	57.34	2.84 %
711- Park/Open Space	75.09	3.72%
719- Other POS	0.22	0.01%
721- Cemetery	5.53	0.27%
811- Water	0.0	0.0%
911- Vacant Parcels	109.76	5.43%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,020.84</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

## Zoning



*Figure 3 Zoning Map of West District*

The West district is zoned predominately for residential use, with residential zoning categories making up 75.23% of the land in the district. The majority of the residential zoning, (41.07% of the total district area, 54.6% of the total district area zoned residential) is zoned RM-1, a multi-family district. RM-1 zoning can be found in every neighborhood within the district except for Dunlop and the southwest portion of Cobbs Creek. Most of the remaining residential zoning is RSA-5, a single family zoning district and is located in the neighborhoods where RM-1 is not the majority as well as noticeably in Overbrook in the most northern point of the district.

Commercial zoning makes up 14.81% of the land in the district. Almost three quarters, 67.54% of the commercial zoned land is CMX-2, a district that is intended for neighborhood serving retail and service uses. Its intended use is reflected in the zoning map, as CMX-2 is scattered throughout the district in clusters within residential neighborhoods such as Cobbs Creek, Carroll Park and Morris Park. However, it is the zoning classification that is used along some of the existing commercial corridors such as Market Street and Lancaster Avenue. It will be worthwhile during the district plan process to examine the zoning along these commercial corridors, as well as others, to identify if a more appropriate zoning classification should be recommended to increase their economic opportunity and overall health as a corridor.

Approximately 65% of the industrially zoned land in the district is zoned I-2, medium industrial. It is key to note that only a very small portion of the district is zoned industrially in any fashion, less than 4%. The industrially zoned land can mostly be found near commercially zoned land, although not always along commercial corridors. In fact the largest areas of industrially zoned land are located along the rail rights-of-way.

Special purpose districts, consisting of recreational and institutional zoning, represent 6.09% of the district.

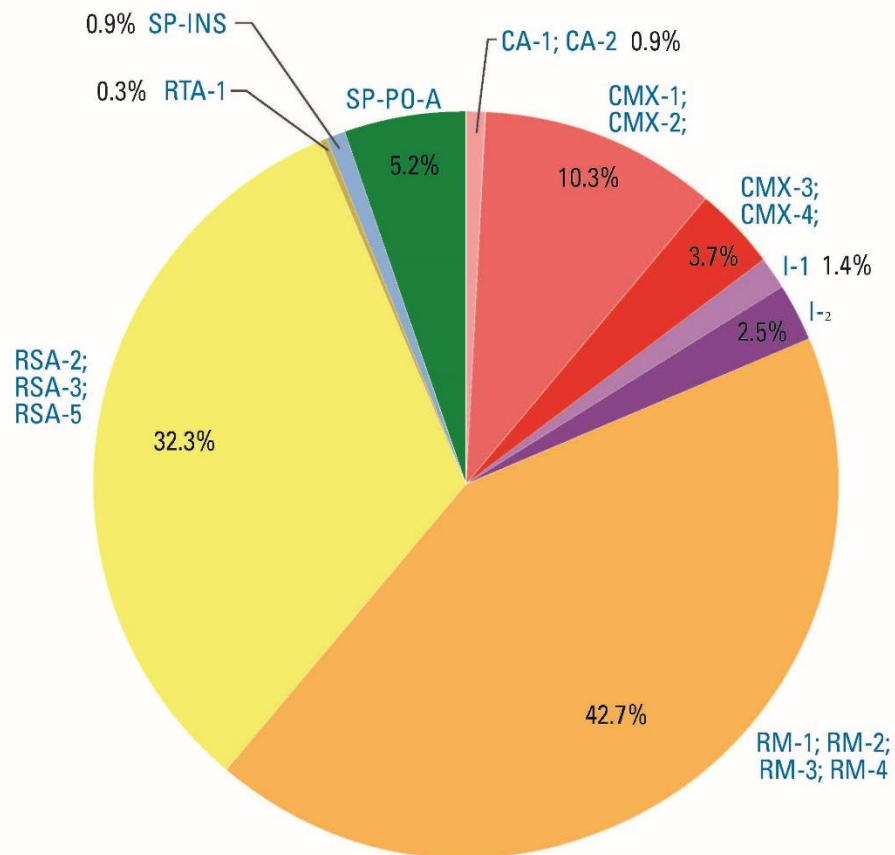
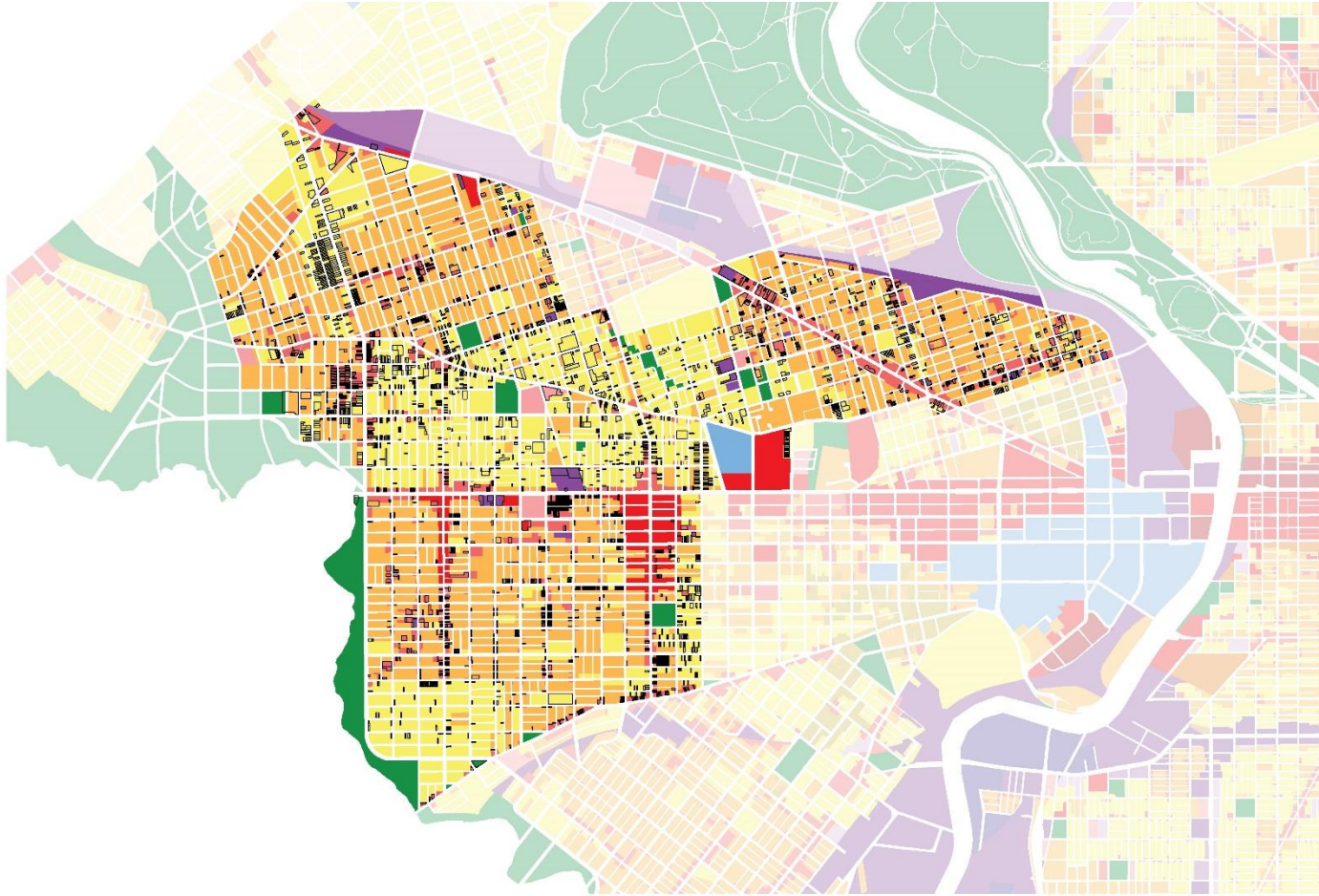


Figure 4 Existing Zoning in the West District by percentage

Existing Zoning by Acreage		
Zoning District	Total Acres per District	Percent Total Acres
CA-1	1.96	0.10%
CA-2	15.75	0.77%
CMX-1	5.55	0.27%
CMX-2	204.80	10.00%
CMX-3	50.44	2.46%
CMX-4	24.71	1.21%
I-1	27.72	1.35%
I-2	51.52	2.50%
ICMX	0.38	0.02%
<b>Total Industrial &amp; Commercial</b>	<b>382.43</b>	<b>18.68%</b>
RM-1	840.78	41.07%
RM-2	27.30	1.33%
RM-3	1.89	0.09%
RM-4	3.75	0.18%
RSA-2	20.22	0.99%
RSA-3	269.02	13.14%
RSA-5	371.84	18.16%
RTA-1	5.17	0.25%
<b>Total Residential</b>	<b>1539.98</b>	<b>75.23%</b>
SP-INS	17.77	0.87%
SP-PO-A	106.97	5.23%
<b>Total Special Purpose</b>	<b>124.74</b>	<b>6.09%</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>2,047.15</b>	<b>100.00%</b>



## Zoning & Land Use Inconsistencies



*Figure 5 The outlined parcels are those where the current land use conflicts with the underlying base zoning*

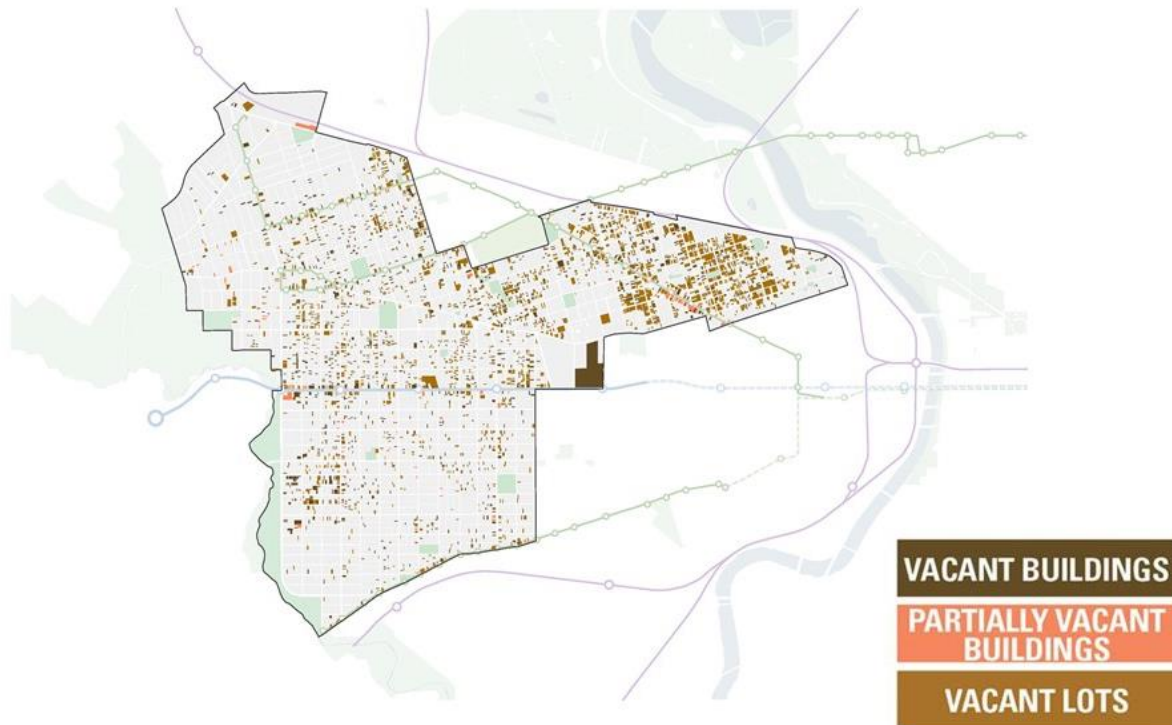
On the above map, the parcels whose current land use is inconsistent with their base zoning are highlighted. 220.58 acres of land, making up 10.77% of the land in the district, currently host land uses inconsistent with the underlying base zoning; a high percentage compared to the city as a whole. There are two zoning districts that house the vast majority of the acreage that has a land use that is inconsistent with the zoning. 3.56% of all of the acreage that is being used in a way that is inconsistent with its zoning is zoned CMX-2 and 3.26% of all of the acreage that is being used in a way that is inconsistent with its zoning is zoned RSA-3. Regarding CMX-2, almost half, 47.32%, of all of the properties that are zoned CMX-2 that have an inconsistent land use are being used solely as a residential use without a commercial component. These properties are scattered throughout the district except for the Haddington and Dunlop neighborhoods, where there is little property zoned CMX-2. The RSA-3, one of the zoning classifications for single-family attached homes, properties are clustered. They can be found between 50<sup>th</sup> and 51<sup>st</sup> Street in the lower portion of the district as well as along 63<sup>rd</sup> Street and 40<sup>th</sup> Street. While the majority of these structures are used residentially, either their structure or use is inconsistent with the zoning. Many of the properties zoned RSA-3 are being used as a multi-family structures and those that aren't being used residentially are most often converted to a mix-used space or are being used solely as parking.

There are two zoning districts of note due to presence of inconsistent land uses. While neither of these districts represent a large portion of the overall acreage of the district, they are worth discussing due to the high percentage of acreage zoned that has an inconsistent land use. The first of these districts, CA-1, a district used for auto-oriented shopping centers, represents only 1.69 acres of land but of those acres 86.32% has a land use that is inconsistent with the zoning. The properties with inconsistent zoning and land use are located along Haverford Avenue between 55<sup>th</sup> and 56<sup>th</sup> Street and are being used residentially, similarly to how the inconsistent CMX-2 zoned properties are being used. It will be worthwhile during the district plan process to consider the zoning along commercial corridors not only to increase their viability but to consider where transitions to other uses have occurred and whether these new uses should be encouraged to flourish.

The second zoning district with a high rate of inconsistency, RTA-1, a district intended for two-family semi-detached houses such as twins, is also only zoned in a small portion of the district, along 50<sup>th</sup> Street between Market and Race Streets. 43.16% of the properties zoned as RTA-1 are being used in a way that inconsistent with their zoning. Very few of the homes located there are currently being used as a two family dwelling, some are being used as single family homes while others house many units. This may be a unique housing typology within the district worth preserving and it should also be considered whether it is worthwhile to encourage in other areas and whether it should be zoned in other areas based on the existing housing.

## VACANT LAND & STRUCTURES

*Goal: Manage and reduce vacancy*



### Vacant Land

The West District contains 109.76 acres of vacant land, 5.43% of the total land in the district. Vacant land can be found in practically every neighborhood with clear clusters in Mantua, Belmont, Mill Creek, Dunlop and Haddington. The largest concentration of vacant land is located in the Mantua neighborhood, east of Lancaster Avenue. Vacant land is prevalent in this neighborhood and therefore both vacant and commercial land is vacant. As more than 75% of the district is zoned residentially, it is logical that most of the vacant land is zoned residentially. However, the rate of vacancy along Lancaster Avenue is noteworthy as it is the commercial corridor that appears to have the most vacancy along it as well near it. Within Mantua, the lower section, east of 40<sup>th</sup> Street to the district boundaries, house the most vacancy. In some instances entire block faces and almost entire blocks are vacant land. During the district plan process it may be worthwhile to investigate the unique qualities within the district that have led to such a high level of vacant land within the Mantua neighborhood.

## Vacant Structures

The West District contains 1,721 fully vacant structures and 306 partially vacant buildings, 4.85% of all of the buildings in the district. In the district, those buildings that are used industrially have the highest rate of full vacancy. Of all of the fully vacant structures, 19.13% have previously had an industrial land use. While the parcels with industrial land use are scattered throughout the district, there is some clustering of those that have been identified as industrial and fully vacant in Cobbs Creek to the west of 60<sup>th</sup> Street. There is also a small cluster in the upper portion of Mantua but on the whole, the remaining fully vacant, industrial buildings are spread throughout the district. Commercially used structures also have a high rate of fully vacant structures in the district, 12.24%. These structures are very heavily concentrated along commercial corridors, specifically, along Lancaster Avenue, Market Street west of 58<sup>th</sup> Street, 60<sup>th</sup> Street and Lansdowne Avenue.

By far, commercially used buildings have the largest concentration of partially vacant structures. Of all of the partially vacant structures in the district, 13.89% are used commercially. The presence of partially vacant structures is particularly apparent along Lancaster Avenue between Ogden Street and the district boundary of Spring Garden Street. While there are other smaller clusters of partially vacant commercially used structures, Lancaster Avenue stands out as in need of special attention. Through the district plan work a strategy for the future of Lancaster Avenue should be recommended with economic development strategies and rezonings, if appropriate.

## RECOMMENDED FOLLOWUP

- Pursue corrective zoning changes to protect the current built environment of intact residential neighborhoods and accurately reflect current land use where changes are not recommended
- Study potential solutions to the vacancy in the Mantua neighborhood
- Study whether the use of the CMX-2.5 zoning district should be expanded along existing commercial corridors
- Pursue zoning remapping to define, preserve, and strengthen neighborhood commercial corridors
- Examine the prevalence of vacancy along the Lancaster Avenue commercial corridor to determine a vision for the Avenue
- Consider the scattered industrially zoned properties to determine if a different zoning classification is more appropriate
- Identify the properties that are currently commercially zoned but being used residentially to consider potential zoning remappings
- Consider interventions to help the existing health care node expand

## NEIGHBORHOODS

*Philadelphia2035 Citywide Vision Goal: Improve neighborhood livability.*

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### SUMMARY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

- A variety of community-serving public facilities are distributed throughout the West District. These include libraries, park and recreational resources, fire stations, police stations, and municipal parking lots. The district does not have a city-operated public health center.
- Parts of some neighborhoods appear under-served by pedestrian-accessible, convenience-oriented goods and services, although overall the district is adequately served by stores, restaurants, and personal/professional services due in part to proximity to 69<sup>th</sup> Street, Center City, City Avenue, and recent auto-oriented shopping centers such as Park West Town Center.
- Neighborhood centers with frequent service by the Market-Frankford Line, buses, and trolleys have potential, in existing buildings or in underutilized sites, to accommodate increased residential and commercial activity.
- The Philadelphia Department of Public Health and City Planning Commission have been working together to identify gaps in walkable access to healthy food. As of 2014, gaps in walkable access to healthy food remained in parts of Cobbs Creek, Mantua, Overbrook and Mill Creek.
- The West experienced very little new housing construction since 2007 and has an older housing stock. Only recently did home sales prices begin to recover from steady declines during the Great Recession.

### KEY ISSUES

Important neighborhood issues faced by the West District include:

- Because of funding constraints in the City's Capital Program, several public-serving facilities are in need of maintenance and repairs.
- Market Street, Cobbs Creek Park, and the Regional Rail lines may be perceived as barriers between neighborhoods or between residents and potential destinations for shopping or services.
- Much of district residents' demand for goods and services is met by commercial centers outside of the district.
- A number of commercial corridors in the district are in poor or fair condition.
- A substantial number of existing, older homes remain in need of modernization and repair, but with limited demand and generally low household incomes in many parts of the district, housing resources may be limited.
- The district has a high percentage of long-term homeowners whose homes may come onto the housing market in relatively large numbers in a relatively short period.



## MAJOR OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities to improve neighborhood and housing conditions in the District include:

- Additional sources of capital improvement funding (e.g. Rebuild) may increase the ‘state of good repair’ of selected community-serving facilities.
- New trees, stormwater infrastructure, directional signs, and traffic-pedestrian safety improvements can help to improve connections between neighborhoods and public-serving parks and recreation facilities.
- Nearly all residential areas within the district are served by traditional commercial corridors that have the potential, guided by land use and transportation decisions, to maintain a viable, pedestrian-accessible mix of consumer goods and services.
- The district’s walkability, bikeability and transit services create a foundation for increased occupancy of existing buildings and redevelopment of underutilized sites in proximity to Market-Frankford stations and intersections of high-frequency bus and trolley lines.
- Opportunities exist to improve resident access to healthy food stores serving the district, farmers markets, and healthy corner stores in underserved areas. Strategic investment in larger, permanent grocery stores or supermarkets can help reinforce commercial centers while filling gaps in walkable access to healthy food.
- A potential generational change of homeowners can help spur reinvestment in older homes.
- Targeted housing outreach and assistance, including resources available from a proposed bond issue, can help preserve areas where the existing housing stock is stable but vulnerable to disinvestment.

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## NEIGHBORHOODS (SPECIFIC TOPICS)

### Neighborhood Centers

Citywide Goal: *Promote strong and well-balanced neighborhood centers.*

Convenient, efficient, and attractive neighborhood centers help to retain and attract residents and businesses. In the context of *Philadelphia2035*, neighborhood centers are comprised of community-serving facilities, commercial corridors, transit-oriented development, and outlets for healthy food.

### Community-Serving Facilities

Sites that provide direct services to the surrounding community are identified as community serving facilities. The West District has approximately 47 community-serving facility sites and 131 related fixed assets, including buildings, structures, and fixed equipment (e.g., playground equipment). The West’s facilities perform a variety of functions, from safety services such as fire and police stations, recreational and open space sites, libraries, and historic buildings.

Over the five-year period of FY2012 to FY2016, approximately \$5.5M of capital funding was allocated to 27 community serving facilities in the West District. For the current fiscal year of 2017 through 2022, approximately \$6.4M is programmed for four community-serving facilities in the district, specifically the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Police Districts, as well as Engine 44 and Engine 41/Ladder 24. Yet, there are 20 facilities within the district that did not receive funding in the past five-year capital program, nor are they programmed to receive money in the next capital program.

The conditions and needs for site improvements or modernizations at each facility vary by operation, and are influenced by recent capital expenditures. For the West district plan, PCPC staff visited the majority of the facilities and performed cursory visual assessments, informed by on-site staff when available. Issues with facility structures, building mechanicals, public access and safety were reviewed with staff on-site, and with related departmental administrative management, where applicable.

### *Fire & Police Facilities*

There are five active public safety sites in the district. Engine 44, Engine 54, Engine 57 and the 18<sup>th</sup> Police District are all stand-alone stations, and Engine 41/Ladder 24 is co-located with the 19<sup>th</sup> Police District. These public safety buildings are generally in fair to good condition.

- Police 18<sup>th</sup> District / Fuel Site 8 – Building is in good condition; Auxiliary parking lot down the block for non-police cars; Fuel pump in accessible location in parking lot.
- Police 19<sup>th</sup> District / Fire Engine 41 & Ladder 24 / Fuel Site 9 – Not enough spaces to get fire truck out; One bay; Old building doesn't provide enough space for operations or parking; Only police use small parking lot; Fuel pump in adequate location in lot.
- Fire Engine 44 – Older building constructed in 1907 does not provide enough space for two trucks; Single bay arrangement is prohibiting to operations; Interior rain and water damage sustained and has tried to be mitigated; Dated heating system, wall unit ACs; Kitchen upgrades scheduled for potentially 2017; Poor overall exterior and interior conditions, although some recent upgrades with newer windows.
- Fire Engine 57 – Outdated building that does not provide enough space for operations; Two bays; Minimal parking; Located on corner but unclear if staff have control of the traffic signal.
- Fire Engine 54 / Fuel Site 141 – Building constructed in 1948 with only one bay; Should be nominated for historic register if not already listed; Inadequate parking lot forces staff to park on surrounding sidewalks; Inconveniently located fuel pump

### *Libraries*

The West District contains five public library branches: Blackwell Regional, Blanche Nixon, Haddington, Haverford and Charles L. Durham. Blanche Nixon and Haddington Branches are Carnegie libraries, built in 1925 and 1915, respectively, with funds from philanthropist Andrew Carnegie. Blackwell Regional,

Charles Durham, and Haverford branches were all built in the mid-to-late 1970s. Blackwell Regional was the second regional library constructed in the city.

- Blackwell Regional Branch – Closed at time of survey due to renovations, including new HVAC, roof and structural modifications.
- Blanche Nixon Branch – This is a building constructed in 1950 and in need of attention; Not ADA accessible; Exterior paint is peeling; There are many steps to access building; Window screens are rusted and old.
- Charles Durham Branch – In good condition overall; However, the roof leaks in storage closet and HVAC is temperamental; Library shares building with James Wright Recreation Center and has smaller designated space than other libraries in district.
- Haddington Branch – Carnegie library; Potential preservation opportunity if not designated; Windows don't open and leak, along with the roof; They don't have scaffolding to take care of the vents and lightbulbs; They run a building bridges program with Barry School; Good basement room for meetings and nice elevator.
- Haverford Branch – Overall good condition, accessible along major corridor, sidewalks, and exterior in working order, no visible sign of leaking, and interior is in good condition with working computers, additional tables, seating, and kid's area. Small space for meetings, not large enough for public meetings.

#### *Parks, Recreation Centers and Other Recreational Assets*

The West District is home to 15 municipal recreation centers, eight neighborhood parks/playgrounds, and two squares/plazas. The recreation centers and other assets are briefly highlighted below. For further detail on parks, see the Open Space Memo.

- 34<sup>th</sup> Street Park (520 N 34<sup>th</sup> Street) – Park is small with no seating and a large tree which takes up most of the space; Has relatively new fence with minimal planting; Does not seem highly used; Maintenance is tough with current layout.
- 60<sup>th</sup> & Baltimore Park (5961 Baltimore Avenue) – Well maintained; Benches are old but still in fair condition; Surrounding sidewalk is in good condition and has mature trees; This is a simple small triangle passive park.
- Horton Street Play Lot (229 Horton Street) – Broken swings and other playground equipment are only in fair condition; The lot is relatively clean and free of trash; Fence surrounding the lot is in good condition; There are some mature trees; This is in the middle of a residential block.
- Nichols Park (5430 Race Street) – Park in need of updates, poor sidewalks, fences, and play equipment; Courts are not well maintained and are in bad shape; Rehabilitation plans in progress and will replace pathways soon.
- Sherwood Park (5601 Baltimore Avenue) – Playground equipment is in good condition but some old and minimal – still have metal slides; Benches are old but in good condition; Part of the

surrounding fence is broken; Sidewalks and paths are in good condition; Lawn is maintained but there is some trash present.

- 33<sup>rd</sup> and Wallace Playground (3300 Wallace Street) – Newly renovated facility, new fences, basketball courts, play equipment and play surface replaced within the last 5 years; Good space and fields are in fair shape; New fences, but additional access needed.
- 37<sup>th</sup> and Mt Vernon Playground (606-16 N 37<sup>th</sup> Street) – Brand new facility, recently updated within 2016; New facility including playground, basketball court, and stormwater facilities; New paving and sidewalks, new fencing, and open on both sides.
- 39<sup>th</sup> and Oliver Playground (700-14 N 39<sup>th</sup> Street) – Pool and playground with several vacant lots surrounding it; vacant lots could be added to park, to add additional green space; Most of property is hardscape; Condition of paving, fencing equipment was fair to poor, with limited vegetation. Small rec building with restrooms; Scheduled to receive new rubber surfacing.
- 61<sup>st</sup> & Baltimore Ave Playground (61<sup>st</sup> Street and Baltimore Avenue) – Benches are old but in fair condition; Relatively old but maintained playground equipment; Swings are damaged; Grass was maintained and mowed; Basketball court surface was in good condition; Has lighting and grills; Park adjacent to Cobbs Creek Recreation Path.
- Baker Playground (5431-43 Lansdowne Avenue) – The pool is small but in fair/good condition; Basketball courts are in fair condition; Playground equipment is in good condition; Benches are old but fair condition; Has new stormwater management system and sidewalks. May receive 22'x22' extension to building to add restrooms.
- Belmont School (4030 Brown Street) – Now Belmont Charter School; Not great connections to school, as only accessed at one point, and fenced from school yard. Poor conditioned benches, pavement, and play equipment. Open 24/7, but not accessible from school yard.
- Christy Rec Center (728 S 55<sup>th</sup> Street) – Playground equipment/surfaces and benches are in good condition; Some broken swings; Tennis courts have no nets and basketball court is also missing nets and paint; There is broken asphalt; Pool is in fair/good condition; The baseball field is not in good condition and is missing grass; Potentially a good opportunity for Rebuild.
- Clara Muhammad Square (4700 Lancaster Avenue) – Trees add great aesthetic appeal, park has fair paving and fencing is low and in fair shape; Overall park is in good condition, good access and connections and has opportunities for stormwater; Received new playground equipment 5-6 years ago; Scheduled to receive new sidewalks; Has old oil monitoring wells on-site.
- Cobbs Creek Park & Rec Center (12 Cobbs Creek Parkway) – Very good playground and equipment; Ice skating rink building's exterior in good condition; Pool in good condition; Boxing ring/bottom floor is in very poor condition and the gym's roof leaks; Center is ADA accessible and has ADA bathroom; Center does not have heat or air conditioning or hot water; Basketball gym floors are scheduled to be redone; Old interiors but well cared for.
- Granahan Playground (338 N 65<sup>th</sup> Street) – Spray ground old and may not work; Asphalt is cracked and needs painting; No trees at all; Might be an opportunity to partner with PWD; Some swings are missing and other playground equipment is fair; Basketball court is missing baskets

and posts; Field is in poor condition; Not ADA accessible; Will be converting hockey rink into skate park; Scheduled to receive all new playground equipment and concession stand.

- James L Wright Recreation Center (3320 Haverford Avenue) – Staff was not able to access facility as it is open only for afterschool and evening programming during the school year; Recently received new heating system.
- Miles Mack Playground (732 N 36<sup>th</sup> Street) – Condition of playground was fair to poor, with play surfacing a major issue (tripping hazard – tiles are all warped), fields were in fair condition, and access is maintained; Will have connections to Mantua Greenway and has potential to be useful adjacency and node for users; New mural; Site may be filled in to create new skate park here.
- Mill Creek Playground (743 N 48<sup>th</sup> Street) – Newish equipment, fencing, spray ground and pavement; Permeable pavement (stormwater) for basketball courts; Leaky pool, condition of facility is fair, with minimal indoor space, exterior facilities are in good to fair condition, including baseball/recreational field; Potential reconstruction as part of Blackwell Park.
- Sayre Morris Recreation Center (5800 Walnut Street) – PPR runs the indoor pool at the recreation center but the Philadelphia School District owns and operates all other recreational assets at this site; Sayre High School is directly adjacent to site; Pool recently received new pump and filter; Football field in good condition; Playground equipment is in good condition and the surface is good but old; Benches are also old but in fair condition; Access/asphalt is raised and cracked; ADA accessible; Some trash present.
- Shepard Recreation Center (5700 Haverford Avenue) – Very large rec facility with large portions of underutilized space that is mostly used as storage; 2-story facility with no ADA access to either floor (enter into building up or down stairs), well used indoor basketball facility and boxing facility down in lower floor; Many locker rooms and restrooms are poorly maintained and now used for storage of (broken) equipment; Larger outdoor pavilion and pool facility which are in poor to fair condition; Major issues both with flooding and larger holes within boiler room; Mayor Kenney recently pledged money to update the bathrooms; Installing an elevator is a top priority for Rebuild.
- Tustin Playground (5901 W Columbia Avenue) – Playground equipment is old and the surfaces are fair; Basketball courts are new and in very good condition; Football and baseball fields are in poor condition and need grass; The pool is in good condition; Site has poor drainage overall and staff reported that they have put in a capital request; The rec building itself is in poor/fair condition; staff would like to expand building to get more usable space; art studio room is unusable and needs floor replacement due to broken leaking pipes; Nice upstairs dance studio room but not ADA accessible.
- West Mill Creek Playground (5100 Westminister Avenue) – New spray ground, but overall condition of exterior is in very poor shape, broken sidewalks, fences, and play equipment; Grounds and athletic fields are poor condition, and outdoor equipment is not fully functional; Scheduled to have complete rehab, including roof, building, HVAC and asbestos abatement.
- Carroll Park (5801 W Girard Avenue) – Overall exterior condition is fair/good; Has adult gym equipment; Benches are old and need replacement; Shed is new; Paths and sidewalks were in fair/good condition; Playground equipment is old and needs replacement; Has mature trees.



- Malcolm X Memorial Park (5100 Pine Street) – Very well-maintained park; Playground equipment, benches, pathways are all very good; Multiple old, mature trees; nice old lampposts; Fencing needs to be replaced; Identified as needing restrooms, as park hosts many concerts.

### *Parking Lots*

There are three parking lots in the West District. The lot at 4039-81 W Warren Street is partially used, with poor paving and limited access. The parking facility at 432-52 N Edgewood Street is also minimally used and located in the middle of a residential neighborhood. The lot at 5919-31 Market Street is well used, however it is only-partially paved and it is unclear if the entire lot is owned by the City. None of the lots seem to have a money collection system and should be evaluated to determine if these resources are optimally located and priced.

### Municipal-Serving Facilities

The West District hosts several facilities that support citywide needs and a population larger than that of just the West district. These facilities include the Philadelphia Juvenile Justice Services Center and the Kirkbride Center. Between FY2012 and FY2016, over \$13.6M of capital funding was allocated to the construction of the Philadelphia Juvenile Justice Services Center. For the coming fiscal years of 2017 through 2022, no capital monies are programmed to be spent in the district on municipal-serving facilities.

The former Provident Mutual Life Insurance Company headquarters at 4601 Market Street was conceived of and funded during the Nutter Administration to house critical city functions, such as Police Administration, Public Health Laboratories, Medical Examiner's Office and Morgue. The preservation of the building is proceeding but the Kenney Administration is now considering alternate uses for the 12-acre campus.

### Miscellaneous City-Owned Properties

- 3841 Reno Street – Breezeway, poorly maintained with debris, seems to be used as a side yard and could be utilized for potential development as infill housing.
- 3947 Reno Street – Vacant land, partially fenced, with overgrown vegetation, vacant corner lot, potential for redevelopment.
- 42nd Street Park – Small area of land; well maintained.
- 59th and Lancaster – Small triangle of land with tree; well maintained.
- 61st and Lebanon – Small triangle of land; well maintained.
- Brown and 37th Street – Adjacent to vacant land/private property, mowed, well maintained, vacant land.
- Hestonville Lot – Has newer gazebo and nice pedestrian path with new PWD stormwater management and sidewalks.
- Mantua Community Garden – Well-maintained small space; numerous plantings and greenery with a couple mature trees, all providing a nice green respite. Has a few benches/seating areas and fence in good condition.
- Parrish and 48th Street – Garden and side/back yard of adjacent church, not well maintained.

## Commercial Corridors

The West District is immediately served by about 3 million square feet of floor area available for establishments that provide consumer-oriented goods and services. This includes space in districts, corridors, or centers identified in the City Planning Commission's Philadelphia*Shops* ('Shops') inventory that are within or immediately adjacent to the West District. The inventory did not cover Upper Darby's 69<sup>th</sup> Street commercial area. The inventory covers auto-oriented commercial centers as well as traditional pedestrian and transit-oriented corridors.

The 29 commercial corridors or centers that directly serve the West District range from very small neighborhood subcenters to large, community-scale retail centers. The district is served by at least 11 small to large-scale grocery stores, not including the grocery departments within large general merchandise stores.

52<sup>nd</sup> and Market Streets (450,000 sq. ft.), known as West Philadelphia's 'Main Street', is the largest, pedestrian-transit oriented, community-scale commercial area serving the West District. The area maintains a notable presence of comparison-goods stores, and is unique in its tradition of organized sidewalk vending. 40<sup>th</sup> and Lancaster (290,000 sq. ft.) and 60<sup>th</sup> and Market Streets (235,000 sq. ft.) have traditionally served as community-scale shopping corridors although, despite some recent reinvestment, both have experienced a reduction in overall commercial spaces and floor area and a shift to predominantly convenience-goods and services.

The Park West Town Center (335,000 sq. ft.) is a newer, auto-oriented, community-scale shopping center immediately adjacent to the north of the district. The 46<sup>th</sup> and Market area (235,000 sq. ft.) is a decentralized, neighborhood-scale shopping resource with anchor grocery stores and chain pharmacies immediately to the east of the district.

Many of the older commercial corridors in the West District clearly continue to be challenged by newer competition, the district's generally low incomes and population growth, and in the case of corridors along the Market-Frankford El, the shadow of disruption caused by the El reconstruction a decade ago. The 'Shops' inventory for the West district found that 18 of the 29 inventoried areas had vacancy rates at or above 20 percent, and many corridors had reductions in the number of commercial spaces of ten percent or more since they were last inventoried in 2002. Some of these spaces were demolished while others were converted to residential use. The 'Shops' update indicates that number of smaller neighborhood centers and neighborhood subcenters serving the district appear to already be in poor overall condition or at risk of declining from fair to poor condition.

The 'Shops' surveys also found, however, a significant degree of reinvestment and resilience in corridors where new entrepreneurs, immigrants, local community development organizations, and City and non-profit partners are active. These activities, including public investments in site improvements, appear to be having a stabilizing influence on many corridors. This stabilization can set the stage for investors to better respond to new market opportunities to better serve district residents, workers, and visitors.

The following table lists commercial corridors, centers, and districts within or immediately proximate to the West District.

**Commercial Corridors, Centers, and Districts Serving the West District, 2017.**

PCPC ID	Name	Type of Center	Gross Leasable Area (sq. ft.)
80	58 <sup>th</sup> and Baltimore	Neighborhood	55,000
81	55 <sup>th</sup> and Baltimore	Neighborhood Subcenter	25,000
82	50 <sup>th</sup> and Baltimore	Neighborhood	130,000
88	46 <sup>th</sup> Street and vicinity	Neighborhood	235,000
89	48 <sup>th</sup> and Spruce	Neighborhood Subcenter	80,000
92	52 <sup>nd</sup> Street	Community	450,000
94	52 <sup>nd</sup> and Cedar	Neighborhood Subcenter	80,000
97	56 <sup>th</sup> and Cedar	Neighborhood Subcenter	12,000
98	56 <sup>th</sup> and Spruce	Neighborhood Subcenter	12,000
99	56 <sup>th</sup> and Market	Neighborhood	130,000
102	57 <sup>th</sup> and Walnut	Neighborhood Subcenter	25,000
103	60 <sup>th</sup> and Market	Community	235,000
105	60 <sup>th</sup> Street South	Neighborhood Subcenter	75,000
106	63 <sup>rd</sup> and Market	Neighborhood Subcenter	85,000
112	6500-6800 Haverford Ave	Neighborhood	125,000
113	63 <sup>rd</sup> and Girard	Neighborhood Subcenter	85,000
114	60 <sup>th</sup> and Girard	Neighborhood Subcenter	40,000
115	Park West Town Center	Community	335,000
116	Progress Haddington Plaza	Neighborhood	80,000
117	52 <sup>nd</sup> and Haverford	Neighborhood Subcenter	25,000
118	North 52 <sup>nd</sup> Street	Neighborhood	150,000
119	Lansdowne Avenue	Neighborhood Subcenter	90,000
120	Lancaster Avenue/54 <sup>rd</sup> -61st	Neighborhood	80,000
121	Lancaster Avenue/44 <sup>th</sup> -50th	Neighborhood Subcenter	70,000
122	63 <sup>rd</sup> St/Malvern-City Ave	Neighborhood	100,000
131	40 <sup>th</sup> and Girard	Neighborhood Subcenter	15,000
132	35 <sup>th</sup> and Haverford	Neighborhood Subcenter	15,000
133	48 <sup>th</sup> and Brown	Neighborhood Subcenter	15,000
134	40 <sup>th</sup> and Lancaster	Community	290,000
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>3,014,000</b>

Source: PCPC. Philadelphia Shops inventory, 2011-2017.

### Transit-Oriented Development

The West District has potential to continue in-fill development, and promote increased occupancy of existing structures, to reinforce neighborhood centers around transit nodes. The district is well served by SEPTA's Market-Frankford line and bus and trolley system. With stabilized or increased market demand, it may be feasible to redevelop key, transit-oriented sites with greater density and mixes of compatible land use. Commercial centers around the 46<sup>th</sup>, 52<sup>nd</sup>, 56<sup>th</sup>, 60<sup>th</sup>, and 63<sup>rd</sup> Street stations of the EI could accommodate increased utilization of existing properties and sites.

### Access to Healthy Foods

Philadelphia lags behind other large US cities in a number of diet-related health categories. Within the City and across the US, there are substantial economic and racial disparities in access to healthy food and in diet-related diseases. Access to healthy food is an essential first step towards helping people meet their nutritional needs sustainably. To support Philadelphia's goal to improve neighborhood livability, *Philadelphia2035* seeks to provide convenient access to healthy food for all residents by:

- Identifying suitable supermarket, healthy corner store, community garden, and urban farming sites
- Improving access to existing healthy food sources through multimodal transportation improvements and location of new stores near transit stations
- Permitting and encouraging on-street produce displays and farmers' markets and urban agriculture on city-owned properties

The Philadelphia Department of Public Health (PDPH) and the Philadelphia City Planning Commission have been working together since 2010 to identify and address geographic gaps in access to healthy foods around the city. Through the Health Department's incentives program to equip corner stores with healthy foods (Healthy Corner Stores Initiative), substantial progress has been achieved since 2010. However, the food retail business can be volatile due to relatively low profit margins, and the closing of even a single supermarket can have a substantial impact on access. Since 2012, a number of chain supermarkets in the city have gone out of business. This has had relatively small impact on the West District, which has lost two smaller Murry's supermarkets. Along with the Department of Commerce and various community partners, PCPC and PDPH continue to work to promote the development of supermarkets and other healthy food purveyors in areas of poor access, particularly where there is also a concentration of poverty. The 4000 block of Lancaster Avenue in Mantua lost two small neighborhood-serving supermarkets between 2012 and 2014 which have not been replaced, making this area a priority for increased supermarket access.

Few blocks in the West District are characterized in PDPH analyses as having no walkable access to healthy food, but many blocks fall into the category of having relatively low access. These blocks largely coincide with the district's higher poverty areas, where walkable access is most essential. The Cobbs Creek neighborhood, distanced from Upper Darby supermarkets by Cobbs Creek Park, is densely developed and lacks space for new, sizeable supermarkets. This suggests that a more intensive survey of

healthy offerings at corner stores in the district, followed by engagement with one or more of them through the Healthy Corner Stores initiative, could be quite helpful in that area.

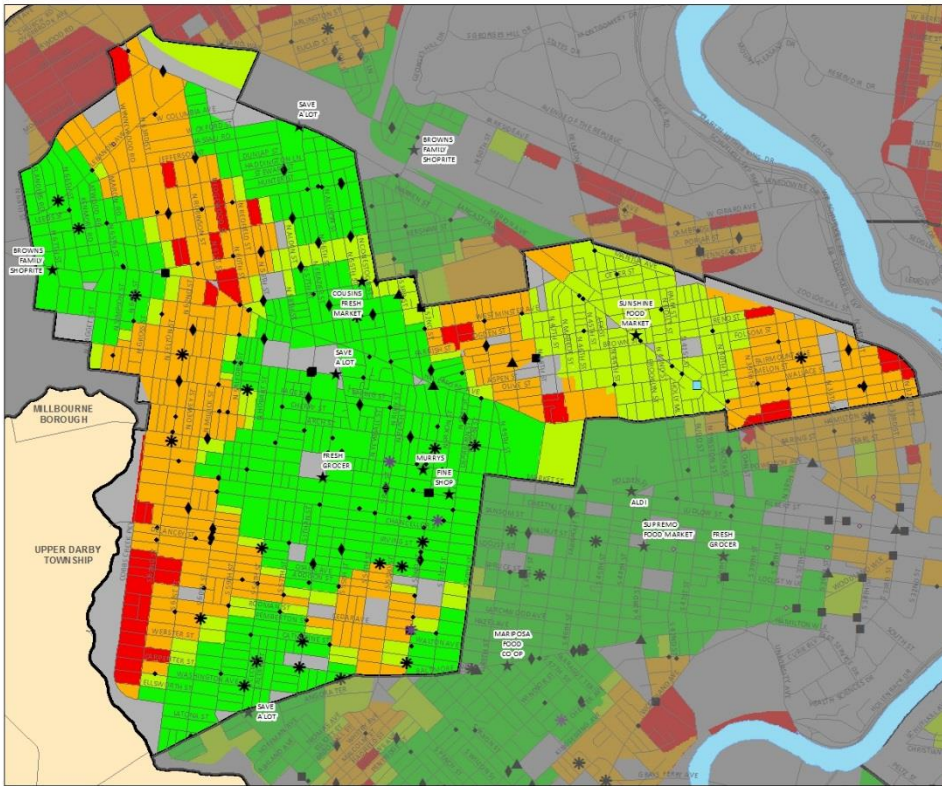
Some vacant land in the West District offers opportunities for community gardening, which helps promote good nutrition, physical activity, and community interaction while improving the condition of vacant properties. However, development pressures also threaten some existing community gardens in and near the West District. Current larger established gardens in the district include Mill Creek Farm at 4901 Brown Street, Aspen Farms at 4843 Aspen Street, and Mantua Urban Peace Garden at 3700 Brown Street. Another key community resource is Urban Tree Connection, based in the Haddington neighborhood, a non-profit that works to transform abandoned open spaces into community gardens and other green spaces that provide wide-ranging community benefits and host a variety of education programs.

Farmer's markets and community gardens provide valuable sources of fresh, healthy food access in the West District. From May to November, there are six weekly farmer's markets in the district. Most of these markets accept SNAP, WIC, and Senior Farmer's Market Nutrition Program benefits. The Walnut Hill and 52<sup>nd</sup> & Haverford markets also participate in the Philly Food Bucks program, which allows SNAP recipients to stretch their healthy food buying power by providing a coupon for \$2 worth of fresh fruits and vegetables for every \$5 spent with SNAP at the farmer's market.

In addition to low access to healthy food, much of the West District can also be considered a "food swamp". This means that there is a preponderance of access to unhealthy food options – fast food and highly processed convenience foods that are high in sodium, sugar, fat, and preservatives and provide few nutrients. West District residents consume sugary beverages at higher than city average rates, with about 39 percent of adults consuming at least one daily, no doubt in part due to these beverages' wide availability in corner stores and delis. Like tobacco, unhealthy beverages and foods are often more ubiquitous and more prominently marketed in neighborhoods with lower incomes and higher percentages of people of color.

Both the recently-enacted sweetened beverage tax, and efforts by the Philadelphia Water Department and Philadelphia Parks and Recreation to provide more water fountains and bottle filling stations, seek to reduce the attractiveness of sweetened beverages and promote availability and awareness of more healthful options. As PDPH continues to refine its healthy food efforts, the Healthy Corner Store program is changing to focus on more comprehensive improvements at a smaller number of stores, as research is proving that simply adding healthy options doesn't significantly change consumption patterns, particularly if prices aren't competitive with less healthful options.





## Walkable Access to Healthy Food

PLANNING DISTRICT - WEST

2014

### Legend

- ★ Supermarkets (Score Range = 25 to 400)
- ◆ Big Box Stores (Score Range = 25 to 400)
- Standard Corner Stores (Score = 2)
- ◊ Chain Convenience Stores (Score = 10)
- ◆ Healthy Corner Stores (Score = 5)
- ✱ Enhanced Healthy Corner Stores (Score = 10)
- ✱ Certification Healthy Corner Stores (Score = 10)
- Mobile Produce Vendors (Score = 2)
- Produce Stores (Score = 15)
- ▲ Farmers Markets (Score = 5)
- Non Residential

### Walkable Access to Healthy Food

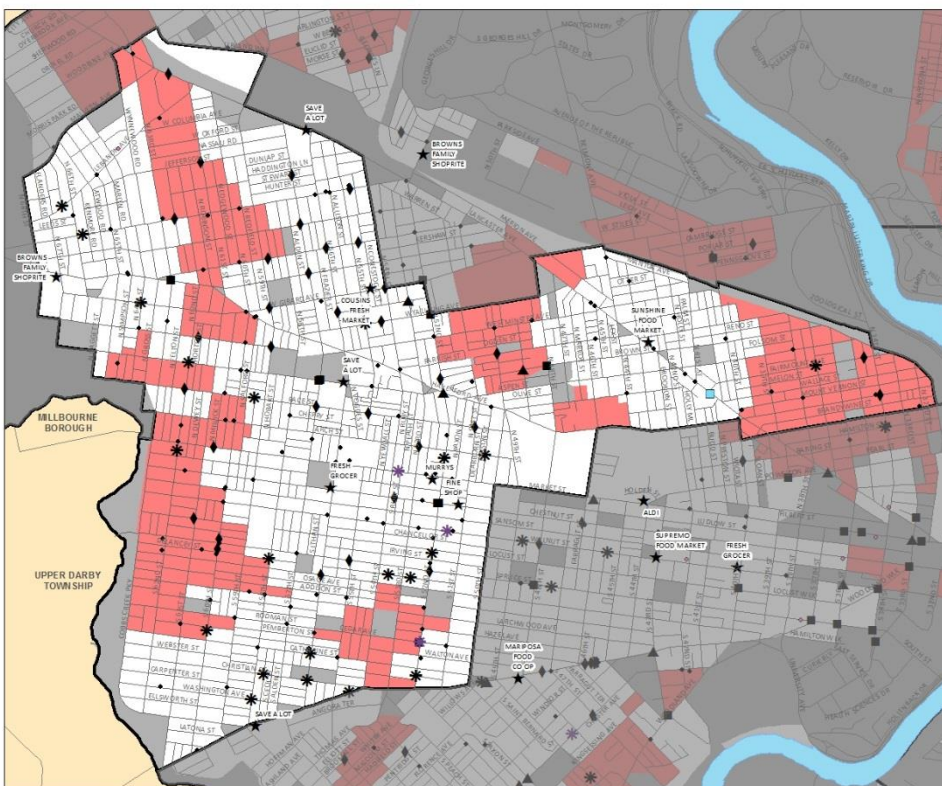
- 0.00 - 0.99 (No Access)
- 1.00 - 19.99 (Low Access)
- 20.00 - 49.99 (Moderate Access)
- 50.00 - 825.00 (High Access)

### Area of Study



Created by Amory Hillengas at the Philadelphia Department of Public Health on 10/1/15.  
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0 0.4 0.8 Miles



## High Poverty and Low to No Access to Healthy Foods

PLANNING DISTRICT - WEST

2014

### Legend

- ★ Supermarkets (Score Range = 25 to 400)
- ◆ Big Box Stores (Score Range = 25 to 400)
- Standard Corner Stores (Score = 2)
- ◊ Chain Convenience Stores (Score = 10)
- ◆ Healthy Corner Stores (Score = 5)
- ✱ Enhanced Healthy Corner Stores (Score = 10)
- ✱ Certification Healthy Corner Stores (Score = 10)
- Mobile Produce Vendors (Score = 2)
- Produce Stores (Score = 15)
- ▲ Farmers Markets (Score = 5)
- Non Residential
- High Poverty and Low to No Walkable Access

High Poverty - Census block groups where 20% or more live in poverty as defined by household income less than 100% of the federal poverty level. (Source 2009-2013 US Census, American Community Survey)

Low to No Access - Areas with a walkable access to healthy food score of 20 or lower based on a combined, weighted proximity to healthy food retail outlets.

### Area of Study



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0 0.4 0.8 Miles

## Housing

*Goal: Improve the quality and diversity of new and existing housing*

While population and incomes in parts of the West District are slowly increasing, persistent poverty and unemployment continue to plague the district, creating hardships for many homeowners and renters living in aging and deteriorated housing stock. Although there has been some new housing construction in the district, 72 percent of the district's housing units were built before 1950 and needs critical repairs and improvements. The costs of this work could add to the already financially-burdened housing expenses of many West District households.

Between 1980 and 2010, the district's total population declined by 29,027 people or nearly 22 percent, yet the total number of ownership and rental housing units only decreased by 4,784 in these years, a decline of 9 percent. More units became vacant due to decreased demand, as the district saw an increase in housing vacancy from 11.3 to 15.6 percent during these years. Meanwhile, remaining units generally became occupied by smaller households, as the average household size decreased from 2.78 persons in 1980 to 2.50 persons in 2010. The average household size of the West district is larger than the citywide 2010 average of 2.45 persons per household. The West District also has a slightly above-average percentage of family households. Based on 2011-2015 5-Year Estimate data from the American Community Survey (ACS), 55 percent of all households in the West District were family households and 45 percent were non-family households. Citywide, 53 percent of all households were Family Households and 47 percent were Non-Family Households. **(Also see Demographics memo for more details about population and housing)**

Based on 2011\_2015 ACS data, only 3.3 percent (1,701 units) of the housing units in the West District were built in 2000 or later, compared to 4 percent Citywide. By comparison, the four Planning Districts with the highest percentage of units built in 2000 or later are: Lower South District (30 percent), the Central District (12 percent), the Lower North District (11 percent), and the Lower Northwest District (6 percent). At the other end of the housing age spectrum, the West district's 52.2 percent of housing units built before 1939 is much higher than the citywide average of 39.8 percent. A significant 20.2 percent of the district's units were built in the 1940s. The predominance of pre-1950s housing suggests a need for focused attention on the specific challenges of an older housing stock. The West District also has the second highest percentage of long-term residents (behind the Lower Far Northeast- 26 percent) who have lived in the district for 25 years or more. Based on 2011-2015 ACS 5 Year Estimate data, 24 percent of the population in the West District moved to the District in 1989 or Before. Citywide, only 18 percent of the population Moved to the City in 1989 or Before.

According to Census data, between 2000 and 2010 the number of Renter Occupied Housing Units in the district increased 20 percent (3,156 units), from 15,959 units in 2000 to 19,115 units in 2010. The Renter Occupancy Rate increased from 37.4 percent in 2000, to 45.9 percent in 2010. The Renter Occupancy rates in the West District remained comparable to the Citywide Renter Occupancy rate of 45.9 percent. During this same time, the Owner Occupancy Rate in the district declined from 62.5 percent in 2000, to

54 percent in 2010. The number of owner occupied housing units in the district decreased 15.7 percent (-4,195 units), from 26,658 units in 2000 to 22,463 units In 2010. Homeownership rates in the West District are now comparable to the citywide average. The Citywide homeowner occupancy rate was 54.1 percent, in 2010. Between 2000 and 2010, rental occupancy rates increased in every census tract in the district, except for tract 109. Owner Occupancy rates decreased in every census tract in the district.

### **L&I Activity**

Between 2008 and 2015, the Department of Licenses and Inspections (L & I) issued building permits for 570 units of new housing units in the West District. Of those proposed five hundred and seventy units, six were single family structures, 145 were twin-row house structures, 84 were two-family structures, 102 were three and four- family structures, and 233 were five or more-family structures. Citywide permits were issued for 16,653 new housing units during this period. Planning districts with high volumes of residential permits include: the Central District (4,962 units); the Lower North District (3,067 units); and the University/Southwest District (2,513 units).

Of the 570 permitted units, 208 were for new housing units in census tract 109 in the Mantua neighborhood. Of the remaining permits issued, 174 were for units in tracts 106, 107, and 108 in Belmont-Mantua, 149 were for units in tracts 104 and 105 in Millcreek-Cathedral Park.

<b>Proposed Residential New Construction Units By Building Type –West District</b>							<b>Total Proposed New Units</b>
<b>Year</b>	<b>101 - Single</b>	<b>102 - Twin/Row</b>	<b>103 - 2Fam.</b>	<b>104 - 3/4Fam.</b>	<b>105 - 5+Fam.</b>	<b>118 - Misc. Res. Bldg.</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
2008	2	26	4	3	6		41
2009	3	4	2	12	92		113
2010	1	27		28	103		159
2011		26	8	15			49
2012		53	2				55
2013		3	46	4	16		69
2014		5	17	27	16		65
2015		3	3	13			19
<b>Total Units by Building Type</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>570</b>
<b>Percentage Of Total by Building Type</b>	<b>1 percent</b>	<b>25 percent</b>	<b>15 percent</b>	<b>18 percent</b>	<b>41 percent</b>	<b>0 percent</b>	

Proposed Residential New Construction Units By Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	TOTAL 2008- 2015	Percent by Tract
Tract 80	1								1	0.17 %
Tract 81				2					2	0.35 %
Tract 82						6	3		9	1.57 %
Tract 83				2		4	8	1	15	2.63 %
Tract 84										
Tract 85			4				4	2	10	1.75 %
Tract 93					1				1	0.17 %
Tract 94					1				1	0.17 %
Tract 95										
Tract 96										
Tract 100										
Tract 101										
Tract 102										
Tract 103										
Tract 104			106		1	26			133	23.3 %
Tract 105			6			7		3	16	2.8 %
Tract 106	15				12		1		28	4.9 %
Tract 107	12	3	1						16	2.8 %
Tract 108	8	2	30	30	38		15	7	130	22.8 %
Tract 109	5	108	12	15	2	26	34	6	208	36.1 %
Tract 112										
Tract 113										
Tract 114										
Tract 115										
<b>TOTAL WEST DISTRICT</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>570</b>	
<b>Percent by Year</b>	<b>7 %</b>	<b>20 %</b>	<b>28 %</b>	<b>8.5 %</b>	<b>10 %</b>	<b>12 %</b>	<b>11 %</b>	<b>3 %</b>		

## Sales Prices and Trends

The volume of homes sales in the West District has fluctuated, and median home sales price experienced a long decline between 2008 and 2013. Sales volumes in the district peaked in 2015 with a total of 1,595 sales. The lowest volume of sales occurred in 2012, when there were only 655 home sales, a 135 percent difference from the peak sales volume in 2015, comprising just 5.4 percent of the 12,012 citywide home sales. Historically, median home sales prices in the West District have been significantly lower than the citywide median home sales prices. The median home sales price in the West District peaked in 2007 at \$63,000 and declined through the Great Recession until 2013. The 2016 median home sales price in the West District remained below the citywide median. Although the 2016 sales volume numbers were slightly lower than the peak period numbers, given that the West District has a high percentage of homeownership units occupied by long-term residents, sales volumes could increase again as older homeowners age out of their homes and new buyers move in. Also, should economic conditions continue to improve, investments in the rehabilitation of existing housing in the district and the construction of new housing units should increase.

Year	West District Sales Volume	West District Median Price	Citywide Sales volume	Citywide Median Price	West District Sales Volume as Percent of Citywide Total
2003	1,281	\$29,800	\$66,000	\$66,000	5.98 percent
2004	1,538	\$36,000	26,787	\$79,000	5.74 percent
2005	1,577	\$47,500	27,325	\$98,900	5.77 percent
2006	1,552	\$60,000	24,130	\$110,000	6.43 percent
2007	1,461	\$63,000	21,151	\$114,900	6.90 percent
2008	1,080	\$55,500	15,896	\$112,500	6.79 percent
2009	813	\$49,000	13,622	\$120,000	5.96 percent
2010	842	\$42,000	12,711	\$117,000	6.62 percent
2011	785	\$37,000	11,490	\$110,000	6.83 percent
2012	655	\$37,162	12,012	\$119,900	5.45 percent
2013	781	\$40,000	13,776	\$123,000	5.66 percent
2014	905	\$35,650	12,669	\$119,000	7.14 percent
2015	1,595	\$35,500	15,081	\$118,500	10.57 percent
2016	1,223	\$43,603	14,695	\$105,957	8.32 percent



## Recommended Follow-Up

- Monitor the development of the Kenney Administration's announced *Rebuilding Community Infrastructure* initiative, as well as 'community schools' initiatives, for potential impacts on City parks, libraries, recreation centers, and playgrounds.
- Evaluate the location and service levels of community-serving public facilities to determine whether relocation of existing facilities or construction of new facilities is necessary or feasible.
- Explore ways to improve the commercial corridor mix of existing centers while reinforcing the ability to access goods and services on foot or via transit.
- Evaluate the recent Philadelphia 'Shops' updates, demand trends, and other information to develop and prioritize zoning, corridor management, and site improvement recommendations for the district's commercial corridors and centers.
- Assess opportunities for greater utilization of existing buildings around major transit nodes, and for future redevelopment of underutilized sites to help reinforce neighborhood centers
- Confer with PDPH about extending the reach of the Healthy Corner Store Initiative to underserved areas in Cobbs Creek, Overbrook, Cathedral Park, and Mantua.
- Explore opportunities to preserve urban agriculture, farmers markets, and the retention and attraction of supermarkets in underserved areas
- Identify areas where existing, affordable rental and sales housing, as well as historic or architecturally noteworthy housing stock, may be at risk due to deferred maintenance or obsolescence.