

SEPTEMBER 21, 2016 | ST. JOHN NEUMANN CENTER

The first of three public meetings for the Far Northeast Districts Plan* took place on September 21, 2016 at the St. John Neumann Center for Rehabilitation & Healthcare at 10400 Roosevelt Boulevard. Attendants at the meeting gathered around tables to participate in the evening's mapping activities.

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

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

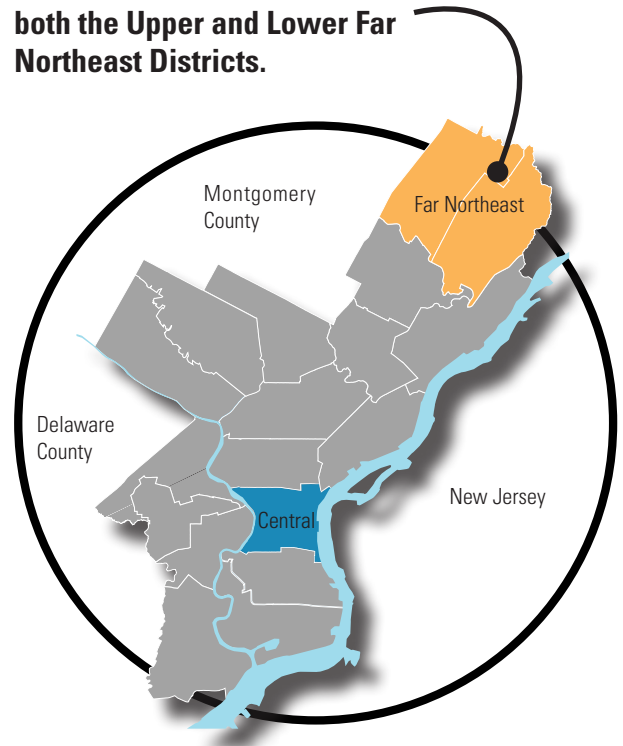
Planning Focus Areas are areas where multiple layers of public intervention (e.g. zoning changes, land sales or acquisition, infrastructure improvements, business incentives, etc.) can come together to create positive momentum; revitalize specific intersections, corridors, or neighborhoods; and impact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

The results of the Group Mapping Exercise are summarized on the following pages. The feedback obtained from this exercise will inform the recommendations for the Far Northeast Districts Plan.

The meeting attracted an equal amount of participants from the Upper Far and the Lower Far Northeast districts. The meeting attracted participants from every corner of the districts including, but not limited to, the neighborhoods of Somerton, Buslteton, Winchester Park, Morrell Park, and Parkwood.

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

*** The Far Northeast consists of both the Upper and Lower Far Northeast Districts.**



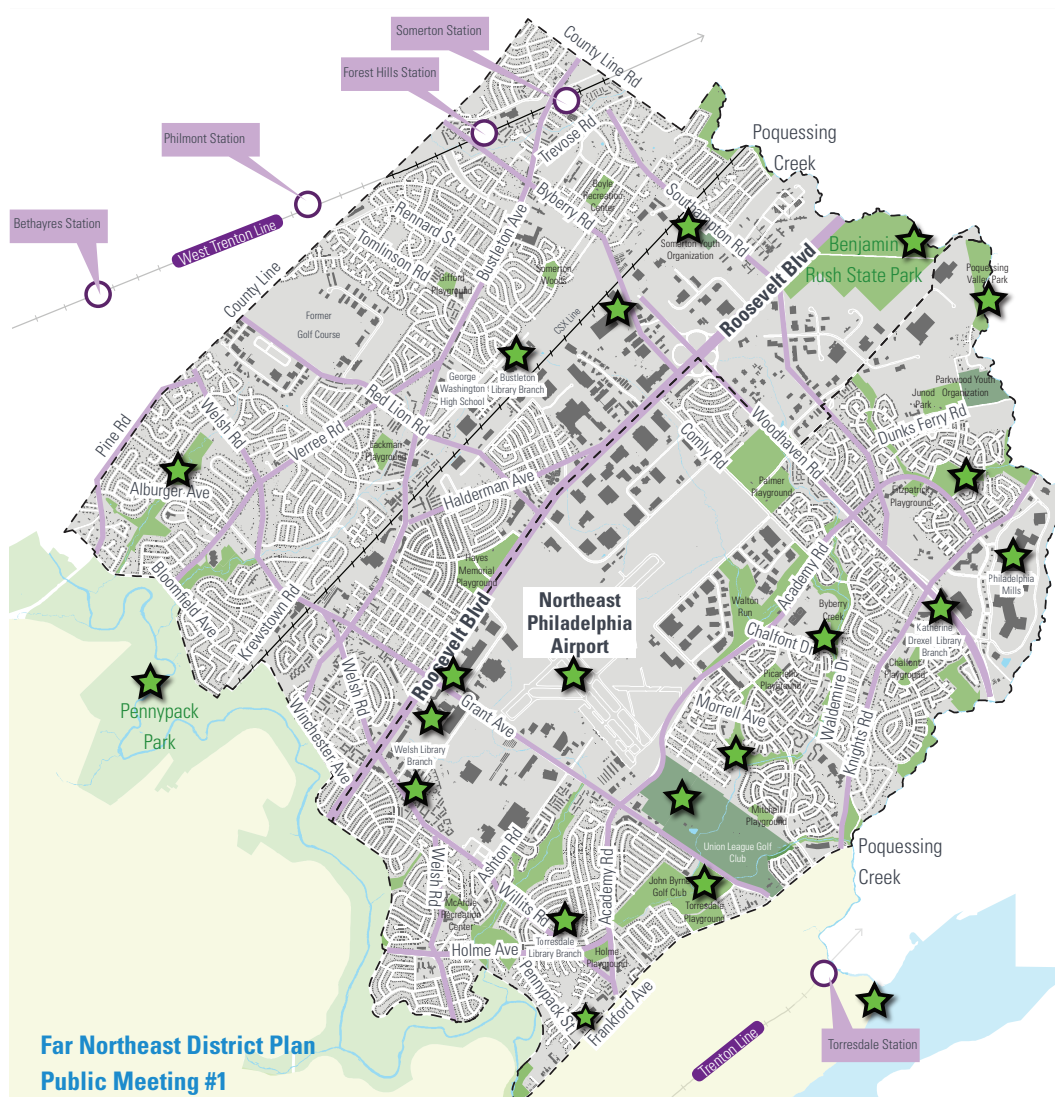
STRENGTHS

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

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

The following were the most commonly identified strengths:

1. Parks and Open Spaces including: Benjamin Rush State Park, Pennypack and Poquessing Creek Parks, the Bird Sanctuary Area (adjacent to Alburger Avenue), Water Department Rights of Way, and the John Byrne and Union League Golf Courses.
2. Capital Facilities such as: libraries, recreation centers and playgrounds including youth organization fields.
3. Retail Centers including: Philadelphia Mills, Leo Mall, Whitman Plaza, Blue Grass & Northeast Shopping Center, and Frankford Avenue.
4. Northeast Airport and Industrial Parks.



WEAKNESSES

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

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

The following were the most commonly identified weaknesses:

1. Traffic congestion and safety concerns on Roosevelt Boulevard, Grant Avenue, Academy Road, Byberry Road, Woodhaven Road, Welsh Road, Holme Avenue, Knights Roads
2. Lack of east west connectivity – bus routes
3. Run down and vacant retail centers
4. Vacant and underused industrial buildings and sites

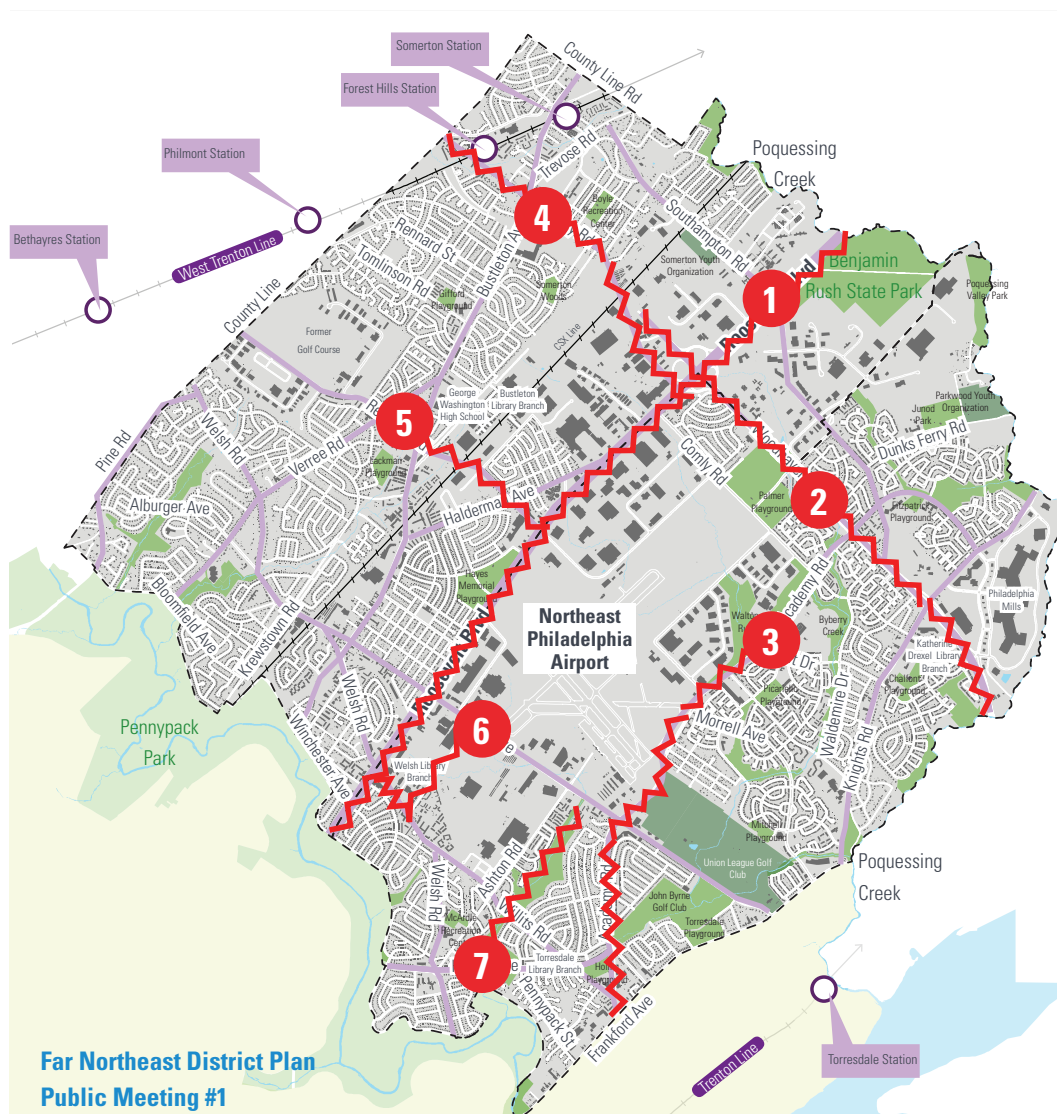


BARRIERS

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

The following were the most commonly identified barriers:

1. Roosevelt Boulevard
2. Woodhaven Road
3. Academy Road
4. Byberry Road
5. Red Lion road
6. Welsh and Bluegrass Roads
7. Wooden Bridge Road (no access)



OPPORTUNITIES

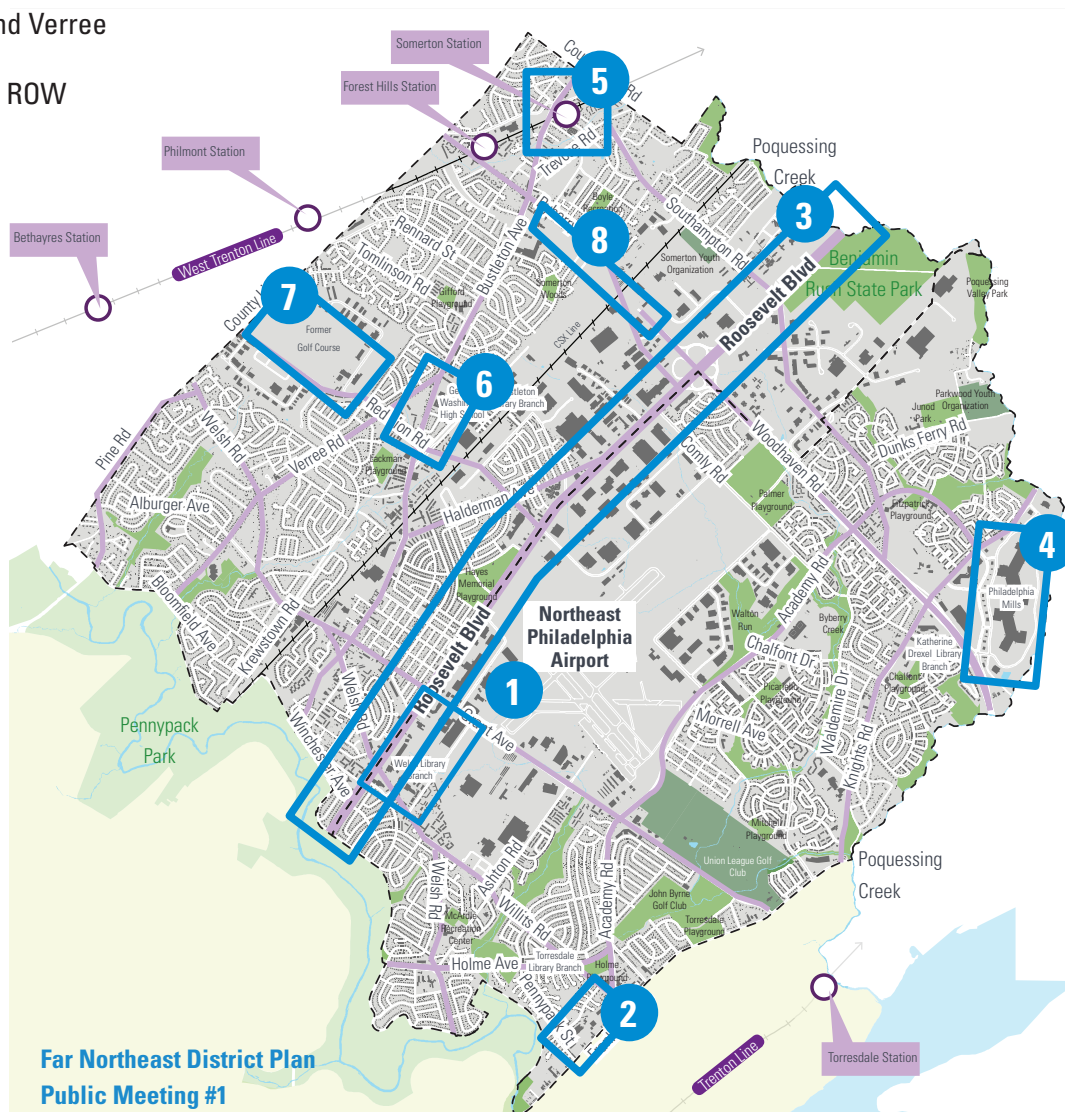
DISTRICT-WIDE OPPORTUNITY

Redevelopment of Vacant Sites

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

The following were the most commonly identified opportunity areas:

1. Northeast and Blue Grass Shopping Center
2. Upper Holmesburg Shopping Center
3. Roosevelt Boulevard Improvements
4. Philadelphia Mills
5. Somerton Train Station
6. Bustleton and Verree
7. Teva Site
8. Woodhaven ROW



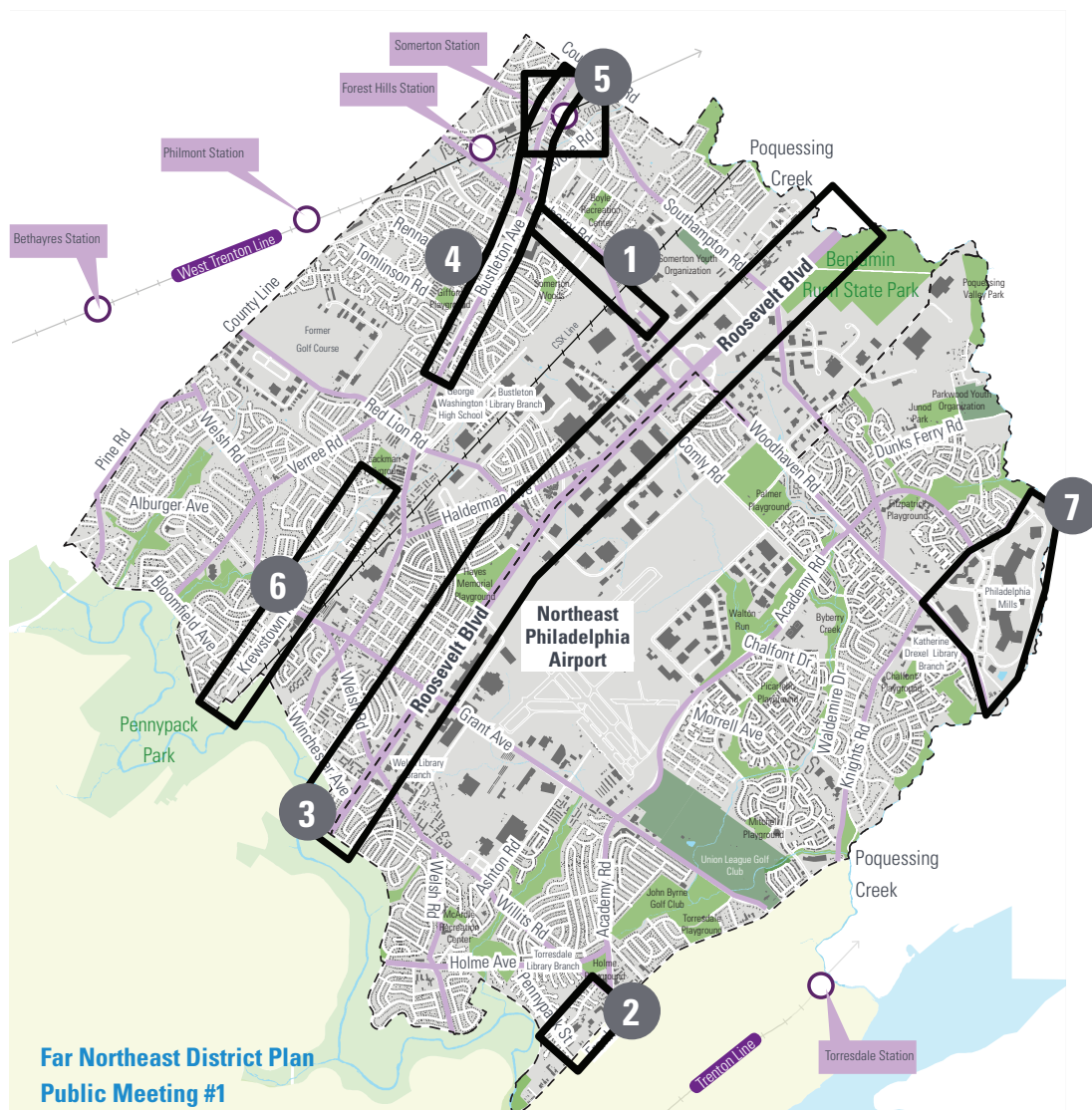
Far Northeast District Plan
Public Meeting #1

PLANNING FOCUS AREAS

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

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

1. Woodhaven Road Right of Way
2. Upper Holmesburg Shopping Center
3. Roosevelt Boulevard
4. Bustleton Avenue from Verree Road to County Line
5. Somerton Train Station
6. Krewstown Road – business and residential
7. Philadelphia Mills area



ACTIVITY BOARD

What qualities of your
neighborhood should be
PRESERVED?

PARKS

ACCESS
TO GREEN
SPACE

NEIGHBORHOOD
INVOLVEMENT
> CLEANUPS

SHOPPING
> LOCAL STORES

What qualities of your
neighborhood should be
IMPROVED?

WALKABILITY

MORE JOB
OPPORTUNITIES

ENFORCE
LITTERING LAWS

BYBERRY ROAD
TRAFFIC

IMPROVE
LIGHTING

MORE TREES
IN GENERAL

MORE MARKETING
OF HISTORY

NEED MORE
PLACEMAKING
FOR COMMUNITY
GATHERING

ACTIVITY BOARD

Where would you prefer to shop? ?



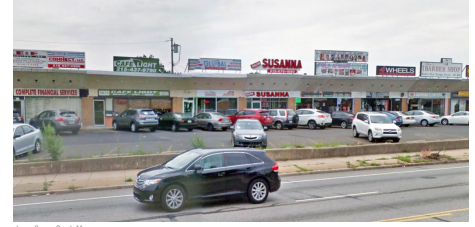
100%

Town Center



0%

Automobile Shopping Plaza



0%

Automobile Strip Mall

How do you
get to shopping
CURRENTLY? ?



Walking

100%



Car



Bus or Train



Bicycle

How do you
WANT to get to
shopping? ?



Walking

50%



Car

33%



Bus or Train



Bicycle



Other (shuttle bus)

17%

APPENDIX OF COMMENTS

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

- Facelift for Morrell Park Shopping Center
- Lack of pedestrian amenities along Willits Road from Holme Playground to Ashton Road
- SEPTA needs bathrooms and better bus loops
- Build more dog parks
- Add activities to parks
- Public transit access is limited