

## JANUARY 13th 2014 | THE LOOM PHILLY

The first of three public meetings for the River Wards District Plan took place on January 13, 2014 at The Loom Philly, a former carpet mill converted to artist studios and office space. The meeting attracted about 100 attendees to the building located at 3245 Amber Street.

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

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

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

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

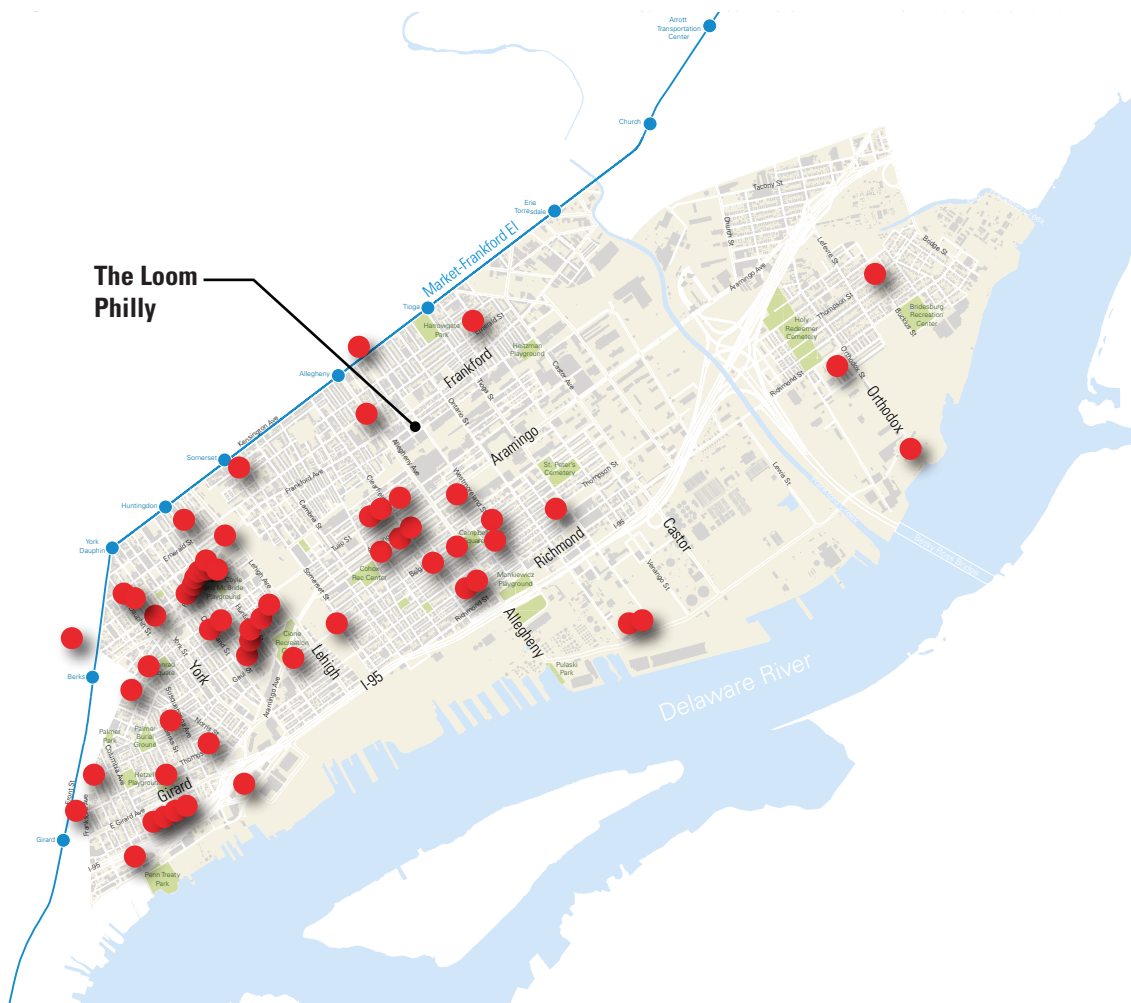
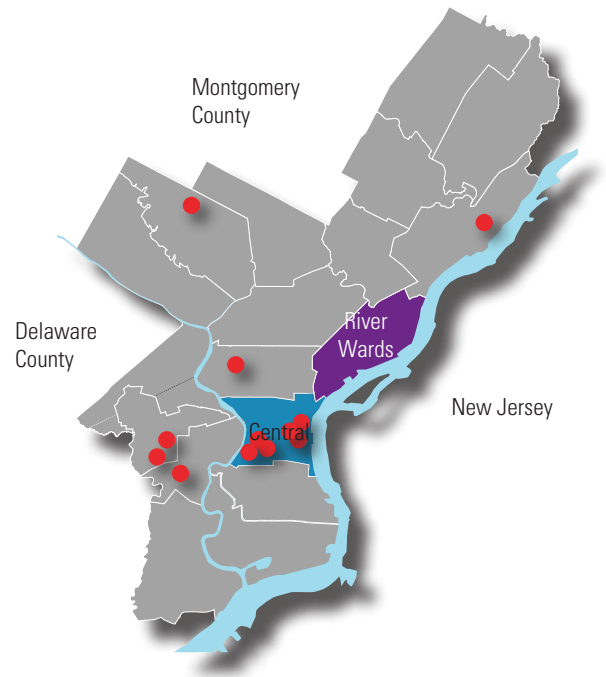
The second community meeting (in a series of three) will be held in March 2015.



## WHERE DO YOU LIVE?

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

Meeting participants came from all areas within the district. Large concentrations of participants came from the Fishtown, East Kensington, and Port Richmond neighborhoods. Residents from other areas of the City also attended.



## STRENGTHS

### DISTRICT-WIDE STRENGTHS

Parks  
Transit/Highway Access  
Walkability  
Affordability  
"Small Town" Feel  
Small Business Climate

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

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

The following were the most commonly identified strengths:

1. Delaware Riverfront
2. Market-Frankford EL
3. Parks, Playgrounds, and Recreation Centers (specifically, Bridesburg Rec Center, Campbell Square, Monkiewicz Rec Center, Pulaski Park, and Penn Treaty Park)
4. Frankford Creek
5. Neighborhood Commercial Corridors (specifically, Frankford Ave, Allegheny Ave, Girard Ave, and Richmond St)
6. Religious Institutions



## WEAKNESSES

### DISTRICT-WIDE WEAKNESSES

Lack of Green Space

Lack of Riverfront Access

Poor connections to the  
Market-Frankford El

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

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

The following were the most commonly identified weaknesses:

1. Aramingo Avenue Shopping District
2. Lehigh Viaduct
3. Kensington Area around the Market-Frankford Line
4. Bridesburg Brownfields (Philly Coke, Dow Chemical)
5. Monkiewicz Recreation Center
6. Front and Girard





## BARRIERS

### DISTRICT-WIDE BARRIERS

Active and Inactive  
Transportation Infrastructure

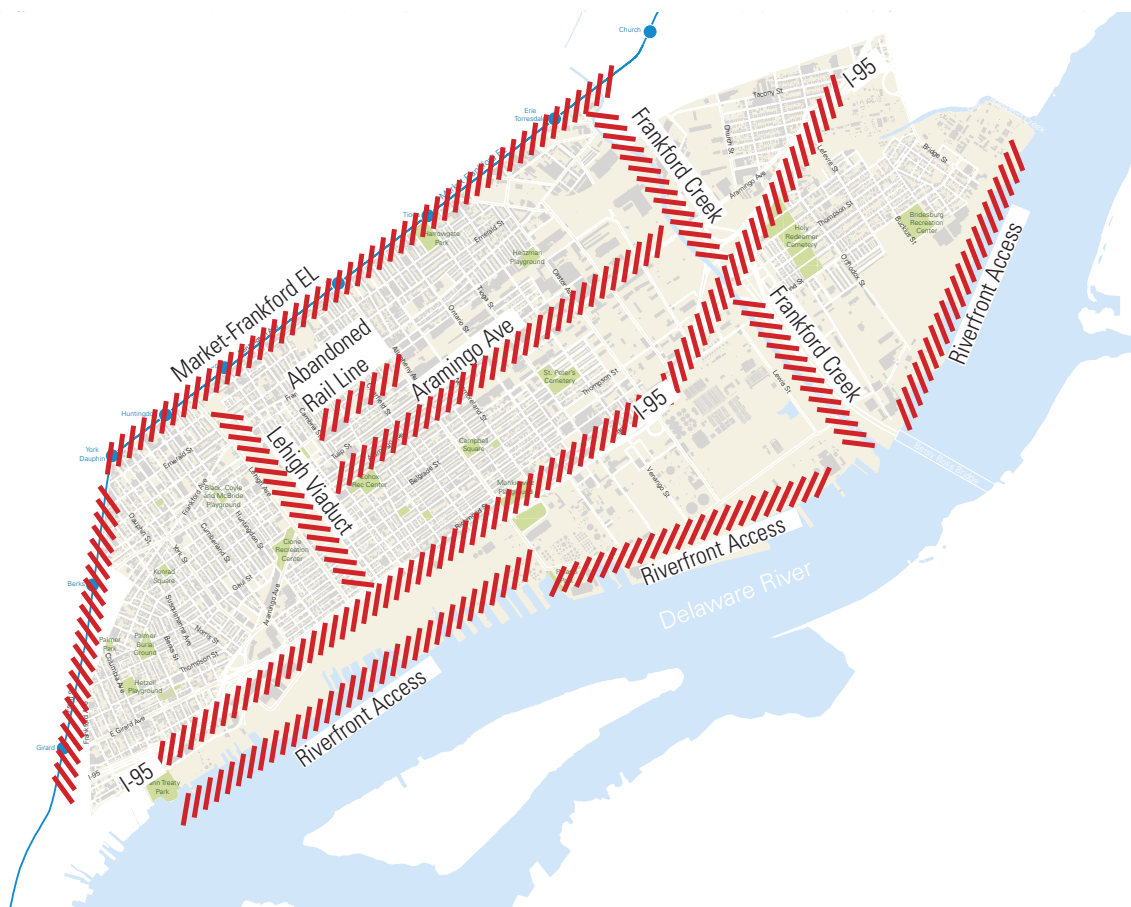
I-95

Obstructions to Riverfront  
Access

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

The following were the most commonly identified barriers:

1. Aramingo Avenue
2. Frankford Creek
3. Obstructions to Riverfront Access (industry, lack of connections)
4. Lehigh Viaduct
5. Market-Frankford El
6. Abandoned Rail Line in Kensington



## OPPORTUNITIES

### DISTRICT-WIDE OPPORTUNITIES

Underused/Obsolete Industrial Land and Infrastructure

Commercial Corridors

Market-Frankford El

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

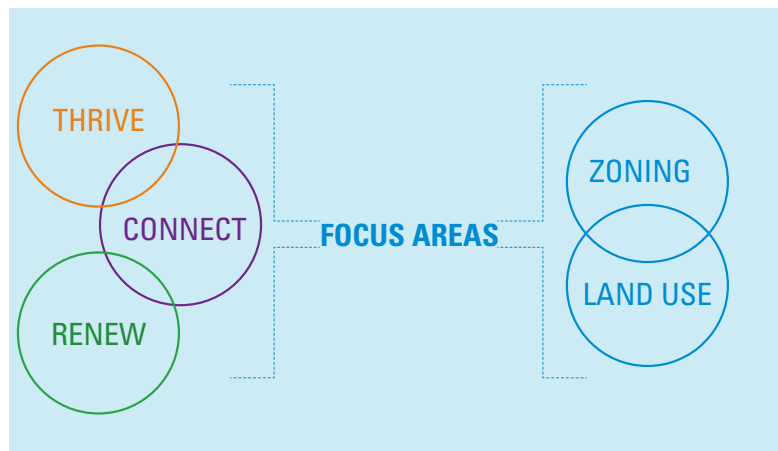
The following were the most commonly identified opportunity areas:

1. Frankford Creek
2. York Street
3. Lehigh Viaduct
4. Former Coal Piers (Anderson Site)
5. Allegheny Avenue
6. Richmond Street
7. Frankford Avenue
8. Port Richmond Industrial Development Enterprise (P.R.I.D.E.)



## PLANNING FOCUS AREAS

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



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

1. Area Beneath the Market-Frankford El
2. Front & Girard
3. Lehigh Viaduct
4. Riverfront Access
5. Aramingo Avenue Retail Area
6. Monkiewicz Rec Center



## APPENDIX OF COMMENTS

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

- More lighting under the Market Frankford El
- Increase pedestrian, bicycle, and motorist safety along Aramingo Avenue
- More bus shelters north of Lehigh Ave
- More bike parking needed in the District
- More bike lanes needed in the District
- Better walking connections, safety, and access to the MFL is needed
- Business Improvement District and historic preservation needed along the El, Girard Ave, and York St
- Along the big box section of Aramingo, no SEPTA shelters, hit and runs occur
- Dangerous intersection at Front and Thompson
- Too few SEPTA routes through Bridesburg
- Roads out of Bridesburg are very high traffic (Aramingo and Richmond Street)
- Frankford/Trenton/York intersection needs pedestrian safety improvements
- Lower Aramingo has dangerous intersections
- Route 15 trolley needs more improvements
- More trees and greening on Aramingo Avenue
- More safety improvements in Harrowgate Park
- Lack of waterfront access and activities along the waterfront, the public uses the coal piers to gain access
- Poor pedestrian environment on lower Aramingo
- Lehigh viaduct, underpass upgrades should include letting light through to the street below
- More trees and greening in Port Richmond and Kensington
- Campbell Square important place to gather for the Polish Community
- Preserve sacred spaces, churches, the Union of Polish Women, and WW1 veteran's spaces
- Use Trenton Ave rail line as a linear park, grade unutilized sections
- Monkiewicz playground is unusable
- Lack of grocery stores in Port Richmond and Bridesburg
- Art spaces are needed in Port Richmond Industrial Development Enterprise (PRIDE) area
- Short dumping is prevalent in areas of the District (e.g. Lewis St, Tioga St, areas east of I-95)
- More community centers in the District as a whole
- Frankford Valley, no green or public space and neighborhood organizations
- Reuse underutilized or vacant industrial lands for mixed use development
- Land use along the waterfront is not the highest or best use
- Trenton Avenue has a lot of space, character, and opportunities



## APPENDIX OF COMMENTS (cont'd)

- A movie theater is needed
- Underutilized upper stories spaces along the Market-Frankford El
- Vacancy on Kensington Avenue is a disincentive to businesses that are currently there, desire to rehab existing buildings
- Poor food access in Kensington and low car ownership
- Lack of trash cans throughout the whole District
- Preserve neighborhood housing stock around Market-Frankford El stations, and Frankford Avenue up to the viaduct
- Preserve cultural presence around York and Huntingdon stop
- Address the quality of and preservation affordable or low income/working class rental properties
- The creation of Historic immigrant village and longshoremen museum from Pulaski Park to Campbell Square
- No venue for the presentation of the District's history
- Scrap metal and salvage yards along Lehigh viaduct, Somerset, Frankford to Tulip are a nuisance
- Bridesburg needs a Main Street