

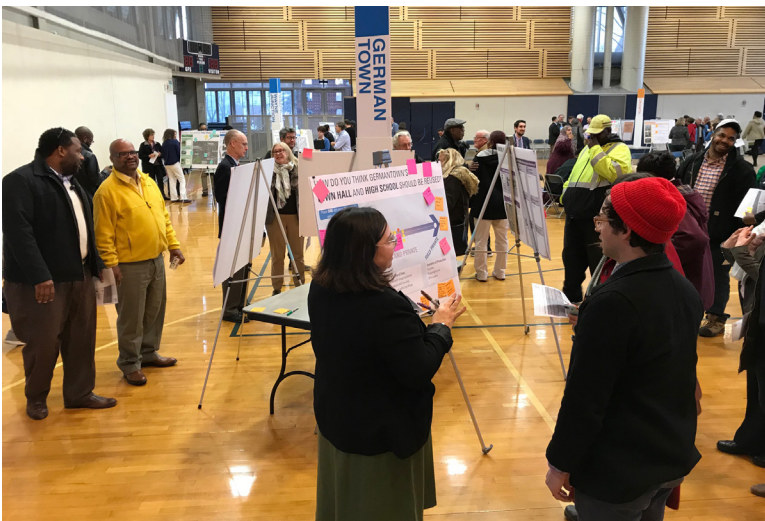
MARCH 26, 2018 - Germantown Friends School Field House

The second of three public meetings for the Upper Northwest District Plan took place on March 26, 2018 at the Germantown Friends School Field House. The meeting attracted 167 attendees.

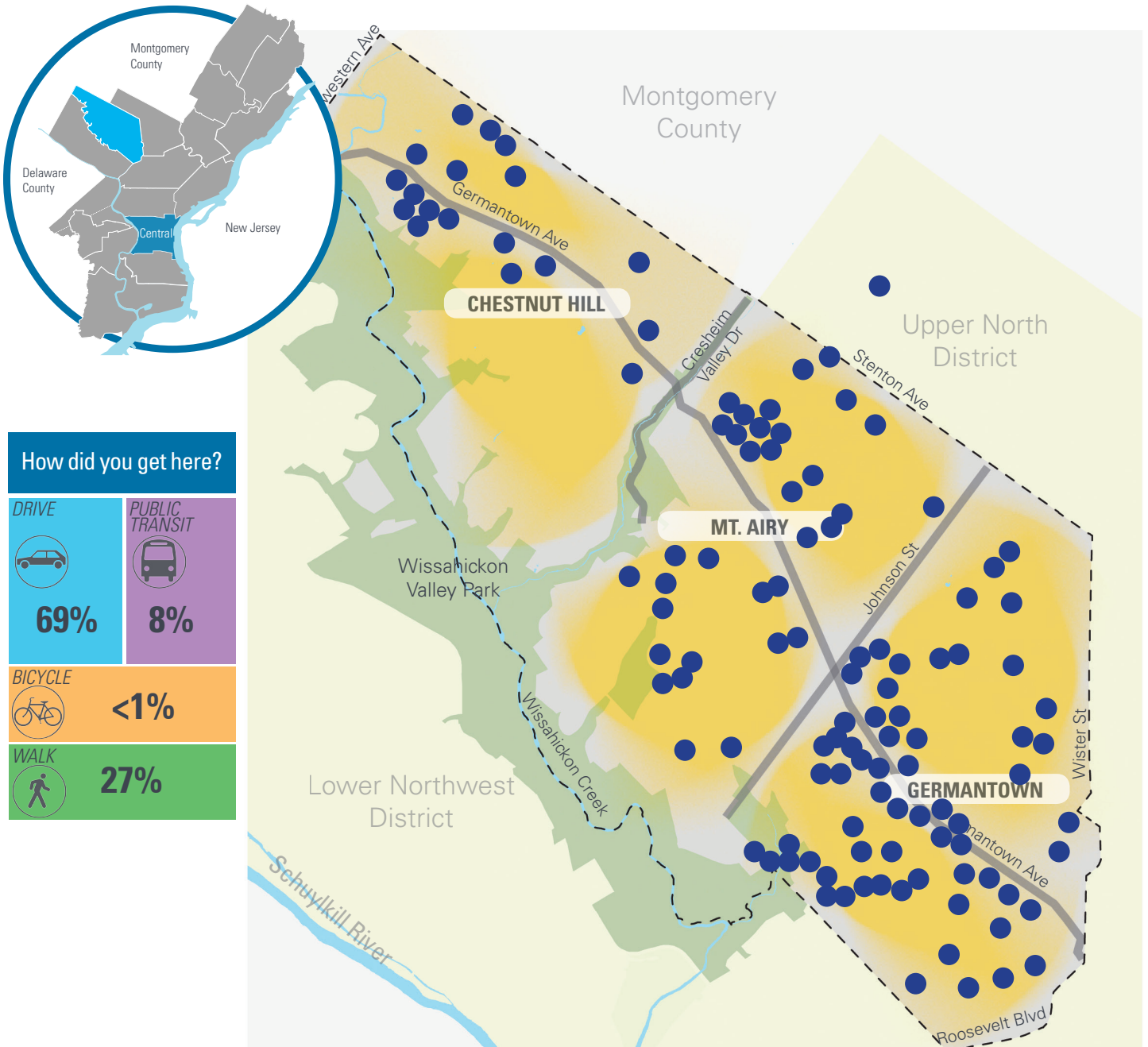
This meeting served two purposes. The first was to update the public about the planning process for the Upper Northwest District Plan. The second was to obtain community input on preliminary recommendations and Focus Areas that may be included in the District Plan. Focus Areas are areas where multiple layers of public intervention (e.g. zoning changes, land sales or acquisition, infrastructure improvements, business incentives, etc.) can come together to create positive momentum and revitalize specific intersections, corridors, or neighborhoods.

Planning Commission staff facilitated conversations at six stations and recorded feedback and comments. The stations were as follows:

- **Video Recap of the First Public Meeting**
- **Managing Growth**
- **History & Culture**
- **Access to Parks**
- **Flooding**
- **Focus Area: Central Germantown**
- **Focus Area: Wayne Junction**



WHERE DO YOU LIVE?



Prior to the staff 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 which sections of the Upper Northwest District were represented at the meeting.

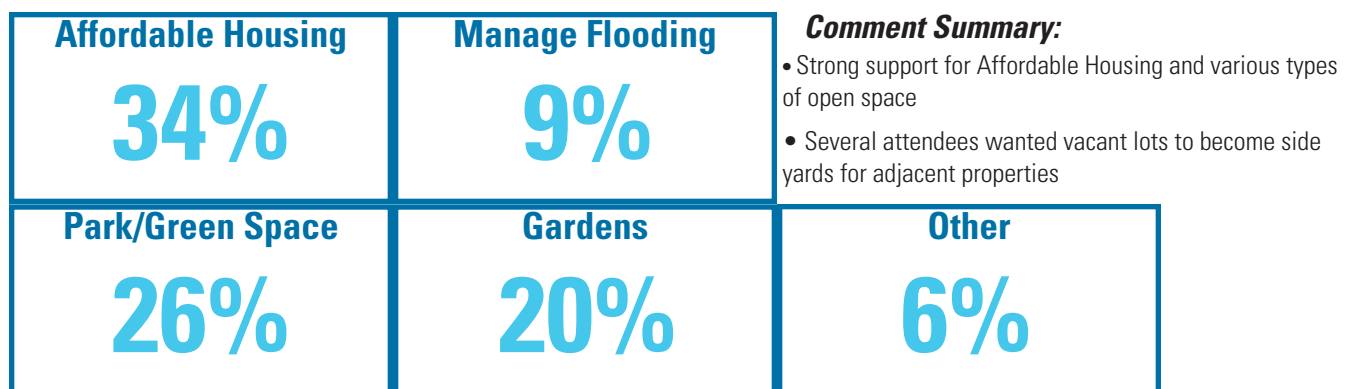
The map above shows responses. Participants came from all areas of the district, with the heaviest concentration in Germantown and decreasing towards Chestnut Hill, a pattern consistent with the overall population. Most participants arrived to the public meeting by car, but over one-quarter arrived on foot.

STATION 1: MANAGING GROWTH

As there has been a recent increase in demand for new housing in the Upper Northwest, attendees were asked how the district should balance growth, affordability, and history. Participants were asked about vacant land and opportunities for growth in commercial and residential areas. Zoning was described as the primary tool for managing growth for the Upper Northwest.

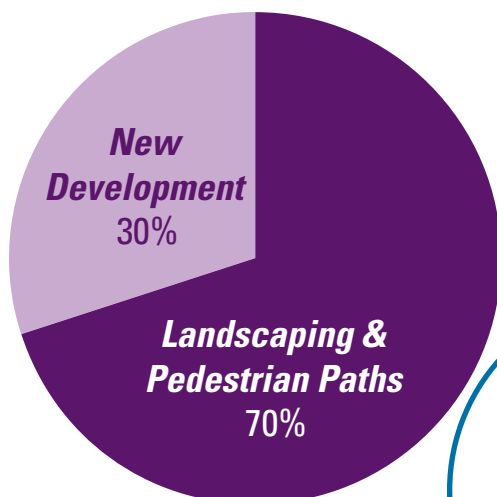
BOARD 1: HOW SHOULD WE USE VACANT LAND?

What should be the top goals for use of city-owned empty lots?



BOARD 2: HOW CAN WE PLAN FOR GROWTH IN COMMERCIAL AREAS?

Which improvements to shopping centers would most benefit the community?

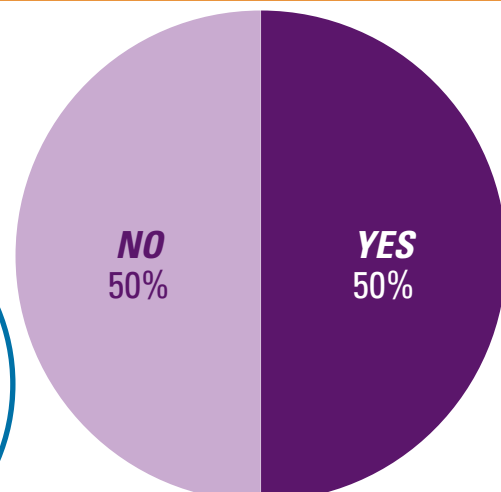


Comment Summary:

- Preference is not to develop shopping centers more densely
- Zoning bonuses must be custom-tailored to complement specific locations

Would you support taller buildings and more units per building in major commercial areas in exchange for these public benefits?




*Affordable Housing / Historic Preservation
Absorbing Rainwater / Public Space*



STATION 1: MANAGING GROWTH

BOARD 3: HOW CAN WE PLAN FOR GROWTH IN NEIGHBORHOODS?

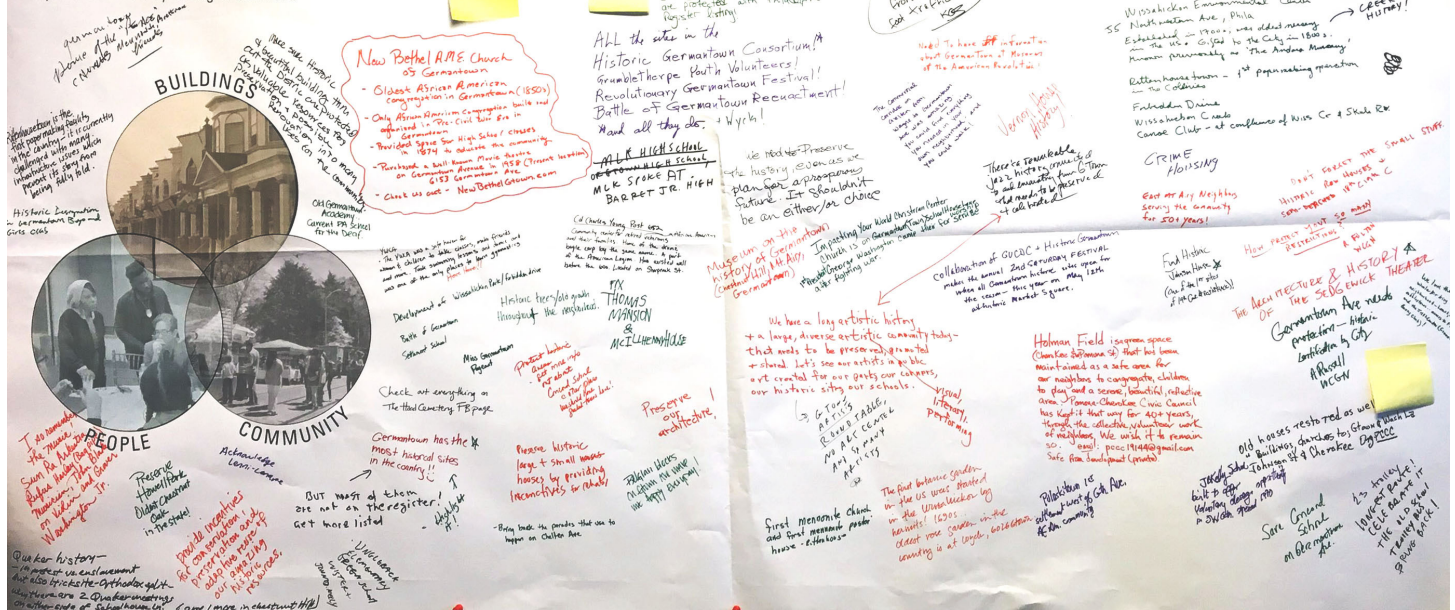
Can new housing be accommodated in large houses and properties?

<i>In-Law Suite</i> 2 units for family members	<i>Income Suite</i> 2 units for unrelated people	<i>Apartment Conversion</i> 3+ units for unrelated people
Yes 88% No 12%	Yes 86% No 14%	Yes 47% No 53%
		

Participants expressed that they strongly support accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and income suites within existing single-family homes of the Upper Northwest. However, there was a near-split vote on converting large houses to apartment buildings of three units or more, recognizing that this renovation may not be appropriate throughout the entire district. Maintenance of rental units was a concern, but the suggestion of condominium units to promote homeownership was noted.

CULTURE & HISTORY

98% of historic buildings may be demolished by right
only 2% are protected, Germantown Ave is an NHL Historic District - one of 200 in the city
↳ HISTORIC SOCIETY UNDERWRITING



Participants were asked how local history and culture make the Upper Northwest unique and attractive. Through written dialogue, they identified places, people, and stories that deserve recognition in the planning process for the district.

Connections to Buildings & Places:

1. New Bethel A.M.E. Church
2. Thomas Mansion
3. Johnson House
4. Charles Young Post (VFW)
5. Retail culture of Central Germantown
6. Rittenhouse Town
7. Boys & Girls' Clubs

Historic & Cultural Significance:

- Support for Germantown Town Hall as a Visitor Center
- Fine arts & music as essential elements of Germantown culture
- Gardens and horticultural history, including the Wissahickon environmental center
- American Indian history



STATION 3: PARK ACCESS

The Upper Northwest contains some of Philadelphia's best-loved natural areas and community parks, including Wissahickon Valley Park, Wister Woods, and Awbury Arboretum. Participants were asked about how access into the parks could be improved from all areas of the district.

BOARD 1: PARK ACCESS

Worst Park Access Barriers

1. Wissahickon Ave/Carpenter's Woods/Kitchens Lane

- Lack of sidewalks and controlled intersections make crossing difficult
- Narrow lanes and high speeds also hinder street use by cyclists despite being a direct route

2. Triangle at Saylor's Grove

- Major park access from Germantown but poor pedestrian facilities
- There is currently no bike parking at trailheads

3. Cresheim Valley Drive

- The road cannot be crossed safely in most places.
- There are questions about access to proposed rail trail from adjoining neighborhoods of East Mount Airy and Chestnut Hill

4. Awbury Arboretum

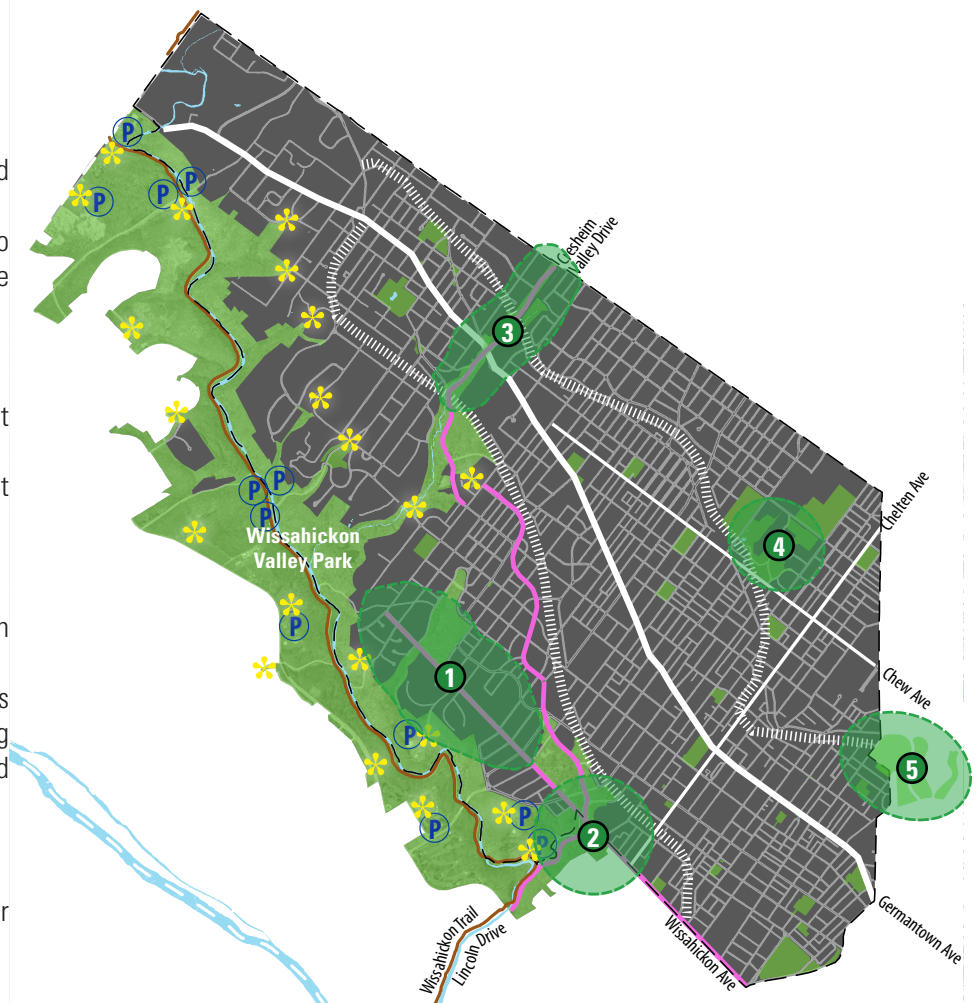
- Entrance is not inviting; lacks clear gateways into the park

5. Wister Woods

- There is support for sidewalk improvements and pathway maintenance

Additional Notes

- There is support for improving the underpass that connects the two halves of Fernhill Park
- Attendees support marking safe and clear routes from Tulpehocken and Cheltenham Regional Rail Stations to Wissahickon Valley Park



FOCUS AREA 1: CENTRAL GERMANTOWN

Central Germantown is Germantown's downtown. It was once the second largest shopping area outside of Center City. It includes Germantown Avenue, with its historic buildings, and Cheltenham Avenue, once home to several large department stores. As part of the current challenge to reuse vacant buildings and storefronts, participants stated that goals to improve the area can be done by improving the quality of life (cleanliness, safety) and adding changes to the retail mix in the neighborhood.

BOARD 1: TOWN HALL AND HIGH SCHOOL ACTIVATION

How do you think Germantown's Town Hall and High School should be reused?



Comments Summary

- Most participants said there should be a mix of public and private space.
- Many comments stated that the two sites should be treated separately.
- Those voting for public use were motivated by a desire to see the high school return to educational use.

BOARD 2: PARKING MANAGEMENT

What is the WORST part about parking in Germantown?

Overall appearance of parking lots

29%

Too little parking available

27%

Location of parking lots

23%

Maintenance of parking lots

10%

Too much parking available

7%

Cost of parking

4%

Results Summary:

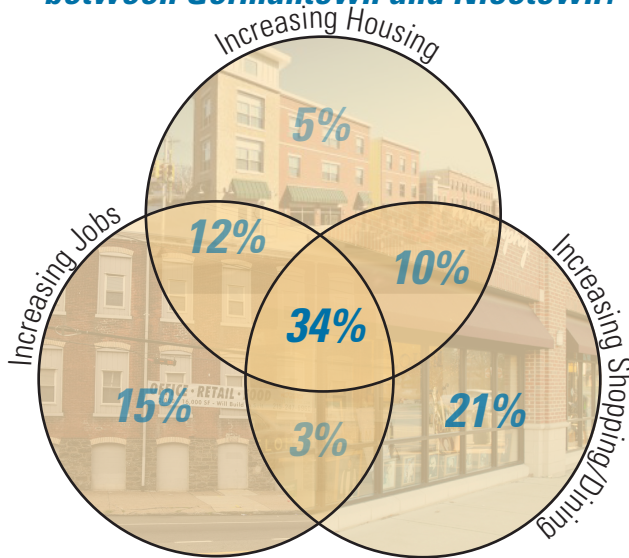
- The lack of spaces currently available and the appearance and location of lots attracted the most votes
- This feedback supports the concept of organizing parking lots under the management of a central organization to manage availability and appearance
- Many people chose not to vote because they did not have a car or drive to Central Germantown

FOCUS AREA 2: WAYNE JUNCTION

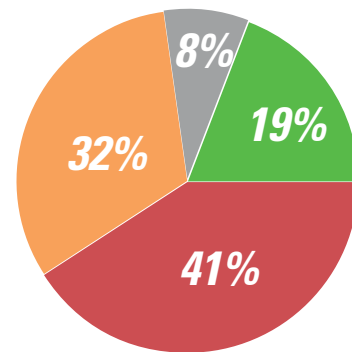
As Wayne Junction has the opportunity to redevelop vacant buildings surrounding active regional rail and bus lines, challenges will be to locate new commercial or residential uses around current industrial uses. Participants were enthusiastic about the potential for redevelopment. Their desires were to make streets more pedestrian-friendly. They also desired cleaning up various areas, creating community gardens, and, specifically, improving access to Loudoun Park.

BOARD 1: BRIDGING GERMANTOWN AND NICETOWN

How should vacant land/buildings be filled between Germantown and Nicetown?



How could new public space better connect Germantown and Nicetown?



Results Summary:

- There is support for a broad mix of uses. Ponce City Market in Atlanta serves as an instructive case study
- Improving public space around the station and enabling outdoor use of vacant lots received the most votes

- 41%** Improve public space around the station
- 32%** Use vacant lots for outdoor gathering/recreational space
- 19%** Green/clean areas along Route 1 & Railroads
- 8%** Take back unused parking space for pedestrian use

BOARD 2: CONNECT AND IMPROVE PARK SPACES

How to Prioritize Park Connections

Create a fitness loop between parks with distance markers

18%

Create a historical walking route around Wayne Junction and nearby parks

28%

Improve park paths and entrances

54%

Comment Summary:

- The most votes were cast for improving park paths and entrances, followed by setting up a walking route highlighting notable historic sites