

Upper Northwest District Plan Summary of Public Comments

GENERAL COMMENTS

- **From Formal Written Comments**

- The plan contains many good ideas for encouraging commercial development and improved transportation, and for binding them geographically
- The plan sounds good, as long as local people continue to be heard and respected. That has been a number-one priority
- Big developers should not have access to bank loans and tax breaks that enable them to do development in the very community we live and love for lifetimes while we are denied access to those same resources systematically

THRIVE

- **From the 6/18/18 Public Meeting**

- The vacant land strategy (recommendation 13) is good
- Let vacant land's use be determined by the people that live near it
- Consider "microgrid" development and community wealth building for vacant land
- City or Land Bank should create a program for non-profit groups to develop affordable housing on vacant land
- City-owned vacant land should only be sold for housing if it is affordable
- Accessory Dwelling Units are only one tool; also consider multifamily zoning
- Accessory Dwelling Units are a good idea to capitalize on real estate and allow aging in place
- Allow shared housing to make better use of large houses

- Recommendation 11 [leverage heritage] is great
 - There should be a history museum or welcome center
 - Germantown has 19th and 20th century history, too
 - No condos/apartments at Germantown High School
 - In reusing Germantown High School, focus preservation on the core structure. Additions can be removed but the auditorium especially should be restored
 - Special Purpose zoning for institutions must include historic preservation goals
 - Define RSD-1 and SP-INS
 - Recommendation 7 [minimize subdivision of large lots] is good
 - Reduce multi-family zoning
 - Promote adaptive reuse
 - Support smaller commercial areas in West Mount Airy
 - New buildings on Germantown Avenue should have underground parking
 - Extend the “core growth area” along Germantown Avenue to Northwestern Avenue
 - Zoning permit applications should show context
 - Need better regulation of boarding houses and care facilities
- **From Formal Written Comments:**
 - Support for accessory dwelling units (four commenters)
 - The plan has not done enough to explicitly lay out its commitment to affordable housing (three commenters)
 - I like the idea of preserving the large older housing stock
 - The plan should incorporate recommendations for urban ag and community land trust as laid out by Soil Generation in considering future uses for Germantown High School.
 - Stylize Food Moxie as “FOOD MOXIE” whenever referenced and expand on the relationship between the organization and Stenton Family Manor

- Provide tax credits or other incentives for LEED or other environmentally-friendly housing
- A recurring issue in Germantown is the concentration of Nonprofit services
- Large-lot zoning should be applied to preserve larger estates and historic landscape in Chestnut Hill
- How is development affecting the environment, and how can we reuse what is already built rather than building more?
- Please do not make new structure higher than neighborhood ones. New buildings must work well with existing ones
- What density does the City wish to have?
- We need housing for middle-income and lower-income people
- The plan to build as many buildings and houses as possible appears to be a plan to destroy the basic character of Chestnut Hill
- The plan does not protect open space or consider issues of population density
- Add pocket parks, planters, art, and wayfinding to draft recommendation 1
- Multifamily housing development should be expressly limited to areas near train stations
- Resistance to group dwellings is rooted in racism and classism biases – do not promote policies that work against cooperative living.

CONNECT

- **From the 6/18/18 Public Meeting**

- Improve intermodal connections
- Need more train stations with high-level platforms
- Make Carpenter Lane Regional Rail station accessible
- Replace the two-minute warning light at Sedgwick Regional Rail Station
- Create regional rail free zones for intra-district travel
- SEPTA must maintain adjacent sidewalks and green space

- Remove trolley tracks
 - Don't remove trolley tracks
 - Traffic calming measures should be installed on Cresheim Valley Drive
 - Pedestrian connections across Wissahickon Avenue and Lincoln drive are needed
 - Fix the crossing at East Mount Airy Avenue and Germantown Avenue
 - Support for more crosswalks in Mount Airy
 - Where are traffic calming measures proposed?
 - Lincoln Drive planning and execution projects need to be communicated better to residents
 - Reduce automobile speeds
 - Consider speed cushions on Upsal Street
 - Excellent plan: traffic calming and safe crossings are very welcome
 - Sidewalk gap map error: no gap on Mount Pleasant under CHW line
 - Another road between Germantown/Mount Airy and Roxborough is needed
 - Add more bike lanes and bike parking
 - Reduce bike speeds into the park
 - Standardize sign designs and materials
 - Coleman Library has no parking and needs renovation
 - LED cobra head lights are needed on Germantown Avenue
 - As more residences and businesses are added, there is a need for more, not less parking
- **From Formal Written Comments:**
 - Buses vibrate homes on Greene Street between Cheltenham and Hansberry
 - Promote parking-protected bicycle lanes
 - Support for roundabouts and neighborhood traffic circles

- Remove cobblestones from Germantown Avenue
- Re-align bus routes to run only on wider streets
- Replace “country lane” and “former country road” with more accurate terminology in recommendation 21
- Add Wissahickon Avenue between Sedgwick Street and Westview Street to the map of unsafe intersections on page 7
- Sidewalk grants or other financial assistance should be provided to homeowners in areas with sidewalk gaps
- The routes into the City are already crowded during rush hours. Will any traffic studies be made?
- Where will new residents park?
- Parking in Chestnut Hill’s narrow streets is already a problem. Building many additional apartments and houses will only make the problem worse.
- Add additional intersections to crosswalk list in draft recommendation 22
- Repaint crosswalks on Germantown Avenue
- Germantown Avenue is impossible for cyclists because of the cobblestones and trolley tracks
- The intersection of Germantown Avenue and Bethlehem Pike should be addressed

RENEW

- **From the 6/18/18 Public Meeting**

- Great recommendations, especially the /NCA overlay
- Please create these [proposed] historic districts
- The proposed Germantown Avenue local historic district is a great idea
- Make Pelham a local Historic District
- Consider a local historic district in Chestnut Hill
- Support the nomination for the Wayne Junction local historic district
- Support for adaptive reuse as a historic preservation strategy
- Using accessory dwelling units as a historic preservation incentive is a great idea
- Guide development in national historic districts

- Make sure people can stay in their homes
 - Historic district designation can be overly prescriptive; please consider the ability of homeowners to comply with regulations
 - Keep the Boys and Girls Club
 - Save Germantown Town Hall, including the interior space
 - Recommendation 23 [build comfort stations in the Wissahickon] is great
 - There are not enough trash and recycling receptacles in parks
 - Consider maintenance when proposing new park facilities
 - East Germantown recreation centers draw from different neighborhoods and are not redundant
 - The recommendations to improve access to Picket Pool and Happy Hollow Recreation Center are good
 - Make improvements to Happy Hollow Recreation Center
 - Access to the Cresheim Trail from Cresheim Valley Road is difficult and unsafe for pedestrians
 - Recommendation 35 [increase tree cover] is important especially in Germantown
 - Conservation easements [to protect watersheds] are less expensive to implement
 - Cell towers are unsightly and those on the Lutheran Seminary are damaging nearby properties
 - Please stop ugly, boxy new construction
 - Add a recommendation about cooling centers and storm refuge in terms of climate change
- **From Formal Written Comments:**
 - Change “Chestnut Hill Cricket Club” to “Philadelphia Cricket Club” on p. 60
 - Please add a recommendation to reduce tax assessments on properties with conservation easements
 - Note that Awbury Arboretum is listed on both the local and national historic registers
 - There is no mention of including public art in the improvements on the corridors, parks, playgrounds, transit hubs, etc.

- Add Wayne Junction locations in the list of potential gateway improvements in draft recommendation 41
- Do not expand the Central and Lower Germantown NCA Overlay—it limits potential businesses too harshly
- Add a recommendation to reuse underutilized/vacant historic train station buildings
- Do not allow additional housing units in historic properties

FOCUS AREAS

Central Germantown

- **From the 6/18/18 Public Meeting**

- Why can't [Central Germantown] go back to being the second largest shopping district in the City? (with additional comment, "but with an eclectic mix of businesses reflective of our community")
- Make Germantown the go-to shopping destination, so residents never have to drive to King of Prussia or Plymouth Meeting
- People should feel safe walking between shops along Germantown Avenue
- Support for redevelopment of mixed-use buildings on Cheltenham Avenue
- Support for relocation of Germantown Station and accessibility upgrades
- Support for Market Square improvements
- Keep Germantown High School as a place for education solely
- Design the corner plaza at Pickett School to include an area for group gathering
- Support investment in traditional public schools
- Restore the rotunda [at Town Hall] for public use
- Expand the historic context about the original Germantown Station
- Encourage new development to maintain historic character – good architecture, well-built
- Affordable housing [near Germantown Station]
- Consider Cheltenham Avenue as a corridor from Station to Station

- **From Formal Written Comments:**

- The report mostly shows plans for Central Germantown and Wayne Junction. What's being done with the Chew & Cheltenham business corridor?
- There is no mention of the Germantown Life Enrichment Center
- The part of the plan concerning Germantown is a lightly cloaked proposal for Gentrifying Germantown which would raise housing prices and taxes

Wayne Junction

- **From the 6/18/18 Public Meeting**

- Beer take-out store has got to go (with additional comment, "why?")
- Add pedestrian count-down timers at Berkley Street intersections with Wayne Avenue and Germantown Avenue
- Plant trees on Berkley Avenue, Germantown Avenue, and Roberts Avenue
- Maintain affordability and livability
- Use civic engagement to guide open space projects
- Re-use vacant industrial buildings as commercial and entertainment attractions
- Encourage visits to Stenton Mansion
- Consider the ability of Germantown residents to afford housing and businesses there
- Encourage public art collaborations in public spaces
- Publicize transfers and destinations available from Wayne Junction station
- Make industrial history visible
- Reuse old industrial buildings for affordable housing

- **From Formal Written Comments:**

- Expand the Wayne Junction Focus Area to Logan Street

ZONING & LAND USE

- **From the 6/18/18 Public Meeting**

- Keep RSD Zoning in Pelham
- Support for low-density single family detached zoning
- Support for lower density at Germantown Avenue and Chestnut Hill Avenue

- Why was SP-INS not recommended for Norwood-Fontbonne Academy?
 - Beware of unintended consequences: development incentives ahead of proposed zoning changes
 - Reduce multi-family zoning on residential streets in Mount Airy
 - Encourage more commercial use than mixed or residential [in Mount Airy]
 - Support for proposed single-family zoning on Cresheim Road near Mount Pleasant Avenue
 - Is [proposed] low-density zoning supportive of housing by transit stops such as Allen Lane?
 - Clarify “lower intensity” [Zoning to Advance the Plan strategy ‘G’]
- **From Formal Written Comments:**
 - Consider proposing CMX zoning on the entire block bounded by Germantown Avenue, E. Mt. Airy Avenue, Chew Avenue, and E. Durham Street
 - Consider rezoning Mount Pleasant Avenue at Emlen Street to prevent additional mixed-use development
 - Remove RM zoning from Linglebach School block
 - I support the proposed zoning change for the 300 block of West Mount Pleasant Avenue from CMX-2 to RSA-5
 - The NCA overlay in Chestnut Hill limits bulk to CMX-2 standards, so new CMX-2.5 should not be proposed
 - RM-1 is not an appropriate designation for some Woodward properties
 - The 7100 block of Chew and Germantown Avenues should have higher-intensity commercial mixed-use zoning across the board.