

## NOVEMBER 9, 2015 | EZEKIEL BAPTIST CHURCH

The first of three public meetings for the Lower Southwest District Plan took place on November 9, 2015 at Ezekiel Baptist Church. The meeting attracted over 120 attendees to the church located at 5701 Grays Avenue.

This meeting served a dual purpose. The first was to educate the public about the District Planning process and the existing conditions of the Lower Southwest 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 of the district, Planning Commission staff led small groups in a Mapping Exercise to garner community input.

The Mapping Group Exercise enabled residents to identify the important physical attributes of their community. Groups were asked to identify **strengths**, **weaknesses**, **barriers**, and **opportunity** areas within the Lower Southwest 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 Lower Southwest 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 and revitalize specific intersections, corridors, or neighborhoods.

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 Lower Southwest District Plan.

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

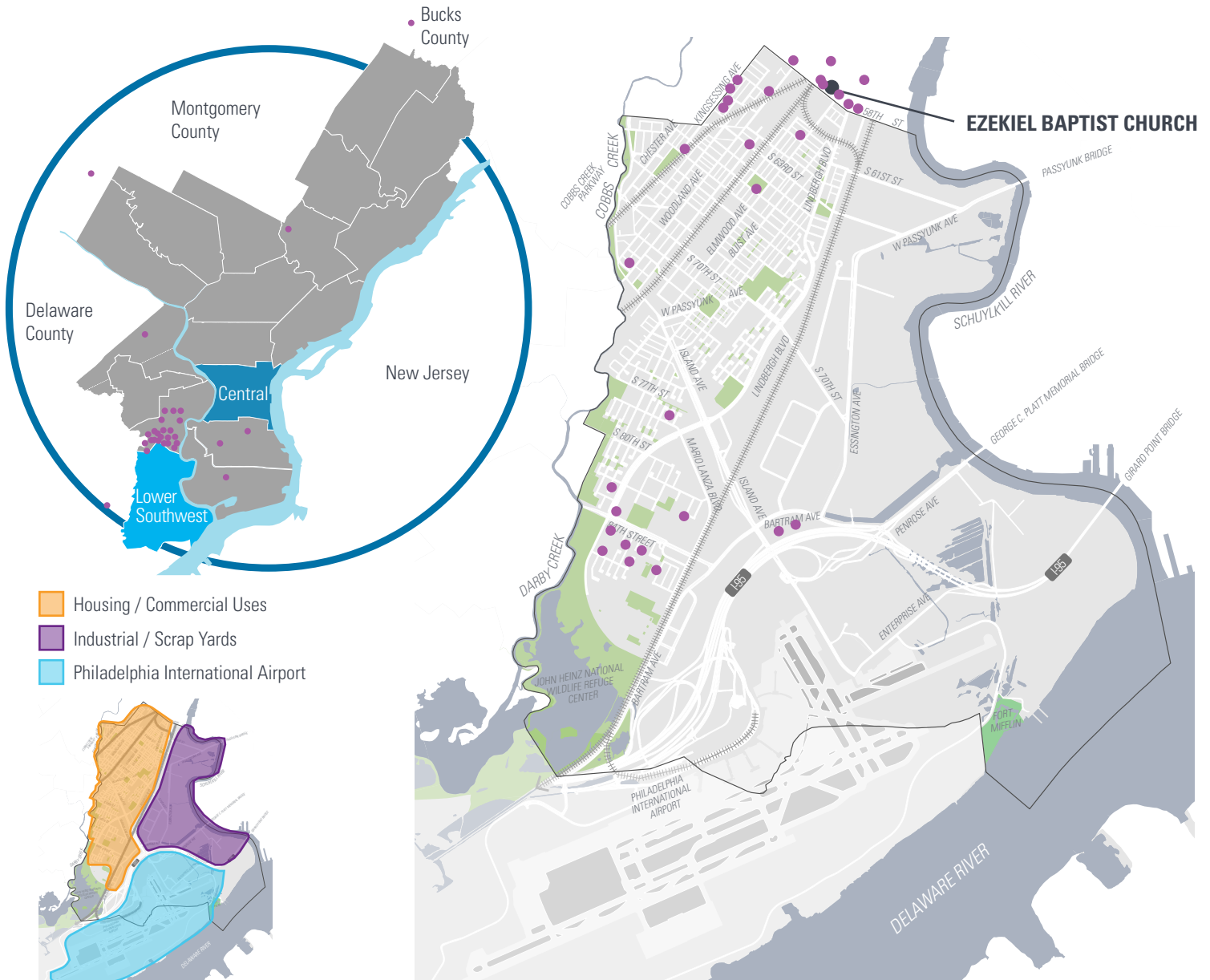


## WHERE DO YOU LIVE?

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

Meeting participants came from all areas within the district, with the exception of the Elmwood section of Lower Southwest Philadelphia. Large concentrations of participants came from Eastwick and areas outside of the district, specifically the University Southwest District, as well as the Bartram’s Garden neighborhood.

PCPC will undertake further outreach efforts to reach additional residents of Elmwood and Paschall and try to also get commercial and industrial land owners to participate as well.



## STRENGTHS

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 PCPC staff take the temperature of the district and understand local perspectives about recommendations that might emerge as part of the plan.

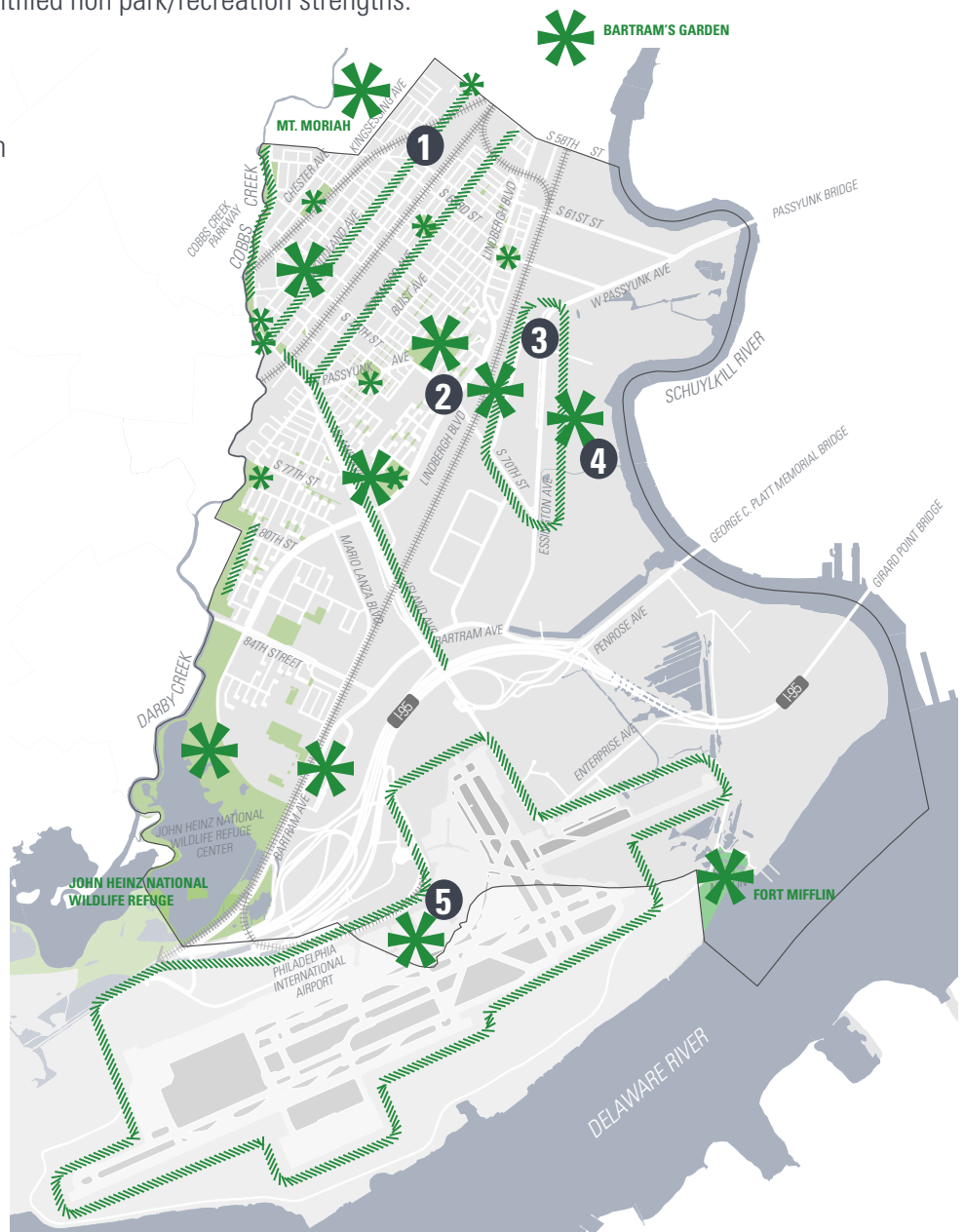
 Ten parks / playgrounds / rec centers / open space amenities in the district were identified as strengths

The following were the most commonly identified non park/recreation strengths:

1. Woodland Avenue
2. Simeone Foundation Automotive Museum
3. Southwest Philadelphia Auto Mall
4. Philadelphia Wholesale Produce Market
5. Philadelphia International Airport

### DISTRICT-WIDE STRENGTHS

- Recreation Centers
- Playgrounds
- Open Space
- Trails
- Trolleys
- Busses
- Libraries



## WEAKNESSES

Participants were asked to share **weaknesses** within the 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 might warrant additional public investment or other attention in order to mitigate their negative influence on the district.

The following are the four most identified weaknesses:

1. Clearview Superfund Site
2. CSX Rail Road Tracks
3. Heavy Industry east of Lindbergh Blvd.
4. Scrap yards/Junk yards along 61<sup>st</sup> Street + W. Passyunk Ave.

### DISTRICT-WIDE WEAKNESSES

- Flooding
- Trash and Short Dumping
- Vacancy/Abandonment
- Auto Repair Shops
- Scrap yards/Junk yards
- Lack of Schools
- Heavy Industry
- Lack of Regional Rail Stations
- Lack of Street Lighting
- Sinking Land + Homes
- Public Transit Accessibility





## OPPORTUNITIES

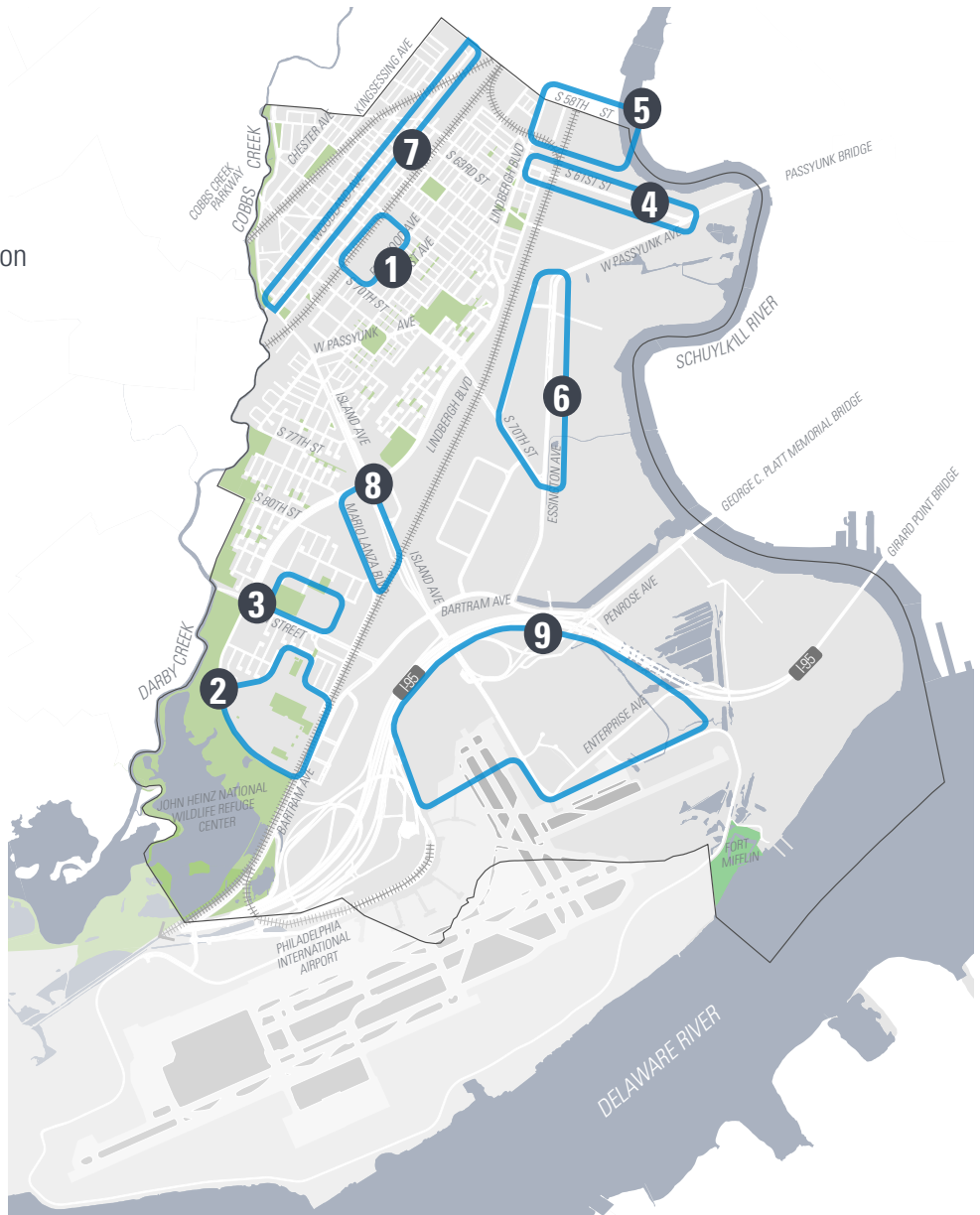
Participants were asked to share areas of **opportunity** within the district where planning and design interventions can have a positive effect. Opportunity areas are specific sites, corridors, intersections or neighborhood centers that the community sees changing positively over the next 10 years.

The following were the most commonly identified opportunity areas:

1. GE Site
2. Korman Site
3. Pepper School Site
4. 61<sup>st</sup> Street
5. 58<sup>th</sup> Street and Lindbergh Blvd.
6. Auto Mall
7. Woodland Avenue
8. Penrose Plaza Shopping Center
9. Philadelphia International Airport Expansion

### DISTRICT-WIDE OPPORTUNITIES

- Schools
- Libraries
- Rec centers + playgrounds
- Commercial activity
- More housing



## BARRIERS

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 are the four most identified barriers:

1. All Rail Road Tracks (CSX + SEPTA)
2. W Passyunk + Essington Avenues
3. Lindbergh Blvd. + major intersections (70<sup>th</sup> St. + Island Ave)
4. Heavy Industry east of Lindbergh Blvd.

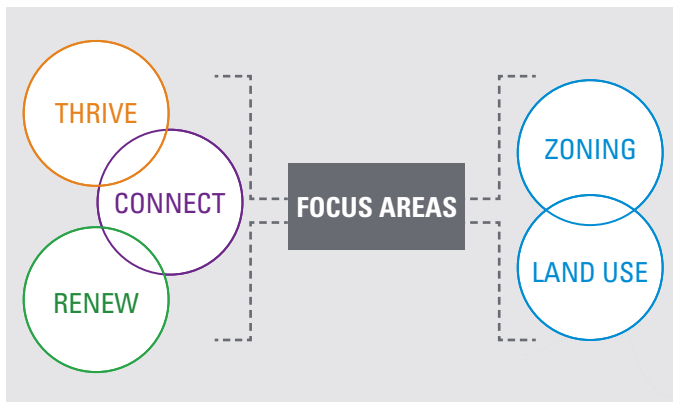
### DISTRICT-WIDE BARRIERS

- Industrial Land
- Cobbs Creek Parkway
- W. Passyunk Avenue Activity
- Island Avenue (intersections)
- Major Intersections
- Schuylkill River



## POTENTIAL 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 Lower Southwest District Plan will have recommendations that address issues in each of these areas.



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

1. Korman Site + Pepper School + Penrose Plaza
2. Woodland Avenue + GE Site + Elmwood Avenue
3. W Passyunk + Essington Avenues
4. Cobbs Creek Parkway + Chester Avenue
5. 58<sup>th</sup> Street + Lindbergh Blvd.



## APPENDIX OF COMMENTS

**Besides the exercises, participants left comments on a separate board about the Lower Southwest District that they would like to see addressed in the plan. These included:**

- Bus funding for public school trips to Heinz Wildlife Center, Bartram's Garden and Fort Mifflin
- Restripe Lindbergh Blvd.
- Protect 128 acres (Korman Site) for flood control and residential uses
- Air pollution coming from PES refinery
- Junk yards that are in violation of code (unlicensed, zoning issues, hazardous materials)
- Vacancy + abandoned housing
- Recreation facilities need maintenance and improvement of programming

**Additionally, participants were asked to leave comments about what they like best about their neighborhoods and what they would like to see preserved in the District. Comments included:**

- Open Space and preservation
- Suburban feel in urban setting
- Cobbs Creek preservation
- Mt. Moriah Cemetery
- Preserve and enhance Woodland Avenue
- Bartram's Garden and Field and the history of Bartram's Village
- Stormwater management
- Wildlife Reserve

