

FEBRUARY 23, 2017 | THE LENFEST CENTER

The first of three public meetings for the North District Plan took place on February 23, 2017 at The Lenfest Center. The meeting attracted approximately 108 attendees to the community center located at 3890 North 10th 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 North 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 meeting was conducted in both English and Spanish. Translation assistance was provided by HACE, Esperanza, and the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.

The Group Mapping Exercise enabled residents to identify the important physical and social attributes of their community. Groups identified strengths, weaknesses, barriers, and opportunity areas within the North 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 North District Plan.

The results of the Group Mapping Exercise are summarized on the following pages. The feedback presented here will inform the prioritization of recommendations and selection of Focus Areas within the plan.

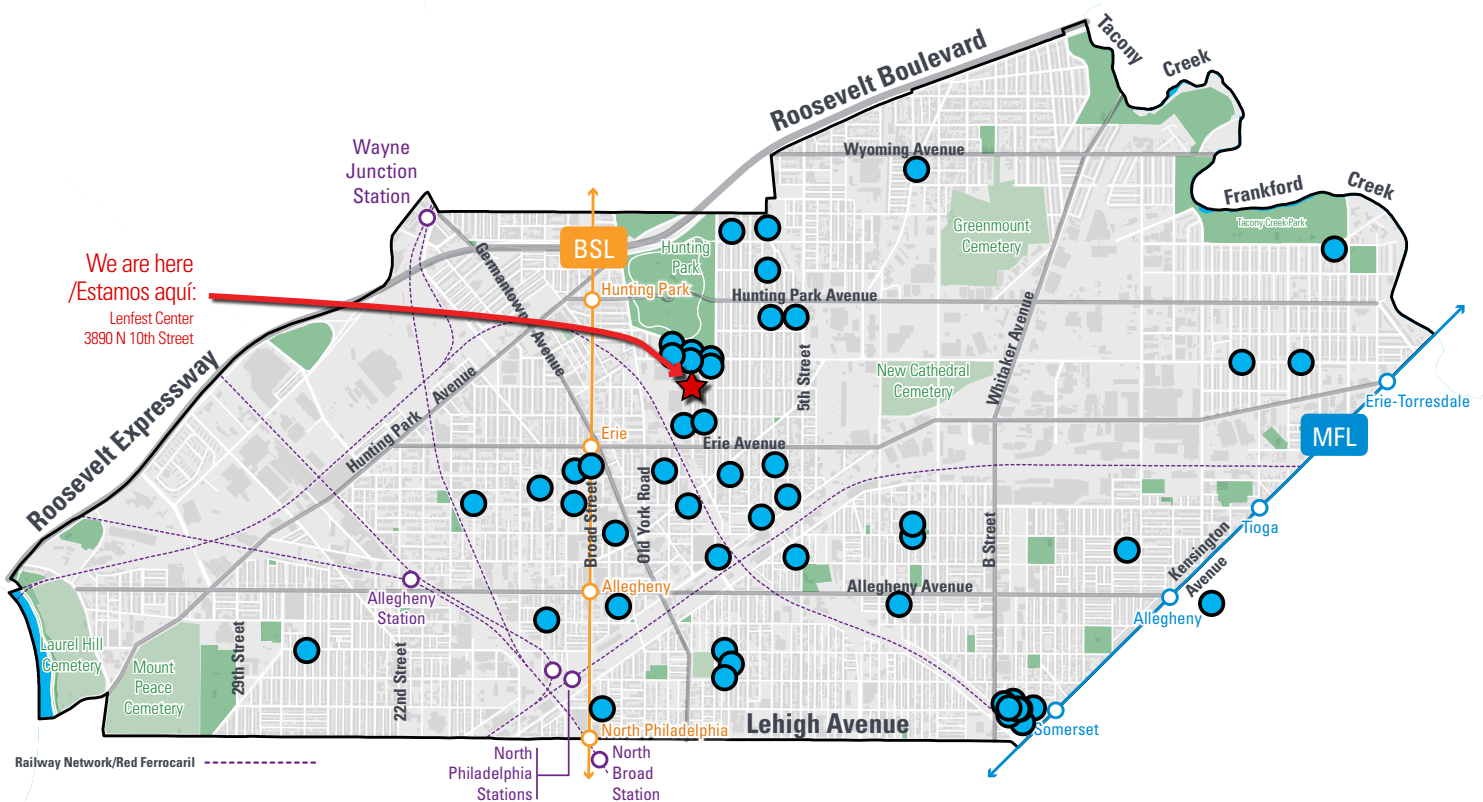
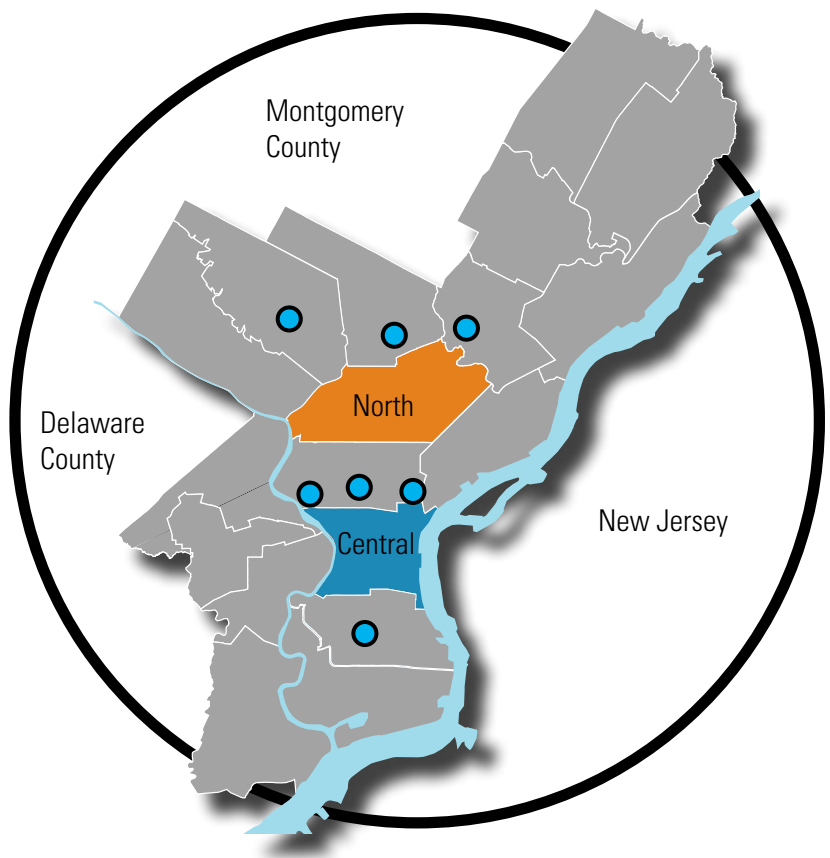
The second community meeting will be held in April 2017.



WHERE DO YOU LIVE?

Prior to the North District Plan presentation and the facilitated Group Mapping Exercises, meeting participants were asked to participate in a “Where Do You Live” welcoming exercise. The purpose of this exercise was to assess what areas of the North District participants represented.

Meeting attendees represented many of the District’s neighborhoods. Those directly adjacent to The Lenfest Center were particularly well-represented, such as Hunting Park and Tioga. There was also participant representation in the Fairhill, St. Hugh, and Kensington neighborhoods. Please note that not all attendees participated in this exercise and therefore does not reflect all 108 attendees.



STRENGTHS

DISTRICT-WIDE STRENGTHS

Public Safety Services
(Fire & Police)

Community Development
Corporations
(Esperanza, HACE,
Nicetown CDC, Congreso)

Participants were asked to share strengths within the district. These can be popular destinations, parks, transportation amenities, commercial corridors, education or job facilities, health institutions or frequently visited retail locations.

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

Nine public parks/playgrounds/recreation centers (R) and three libraries (L) in the district were identified as strengths. In addition to recreation amenities and libraries, the following were the most commonly identified strengths:

1. Kroc Center
2. Broad Street Line
3. Market-Frankford Line
4. St. Christopher's Hospital
5. Temple Medical Campus
6. Bakers Centre
7. Broad & Erie
8. The Lunfest Center



WEAKNESSES

DISTRICT-WIDE WEAKNESSES

Nuisance Businesses
Homeless/Squatters
Drug Use
Lack of Healthy Food Options
Vacancy
Poor Street and Sidewalk Conditions

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. Crime & Litter along Old York Road
2. Crime, Vacancy, & Dumping along Amtrak Right-of-Way
3. Crime, Vacancy, & Dumping along Conrail Right-of-Way
4. Drug Activity in Fairhill/St. Hugh
5. Lack of Lighting under the Market-Frankford Line



BARRIERS

DISTRICT-WIDE BARRIERS

Drugs & Crime
Outdated Zoning

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. Conrail Right-of-Way
2. Amtrak/ Northeast Corridor Right-of-Way
3. Roosevelt Boulevard/Expressway
4. Broad Street
5. Market-Frankford Line



OPPORTUNITIES

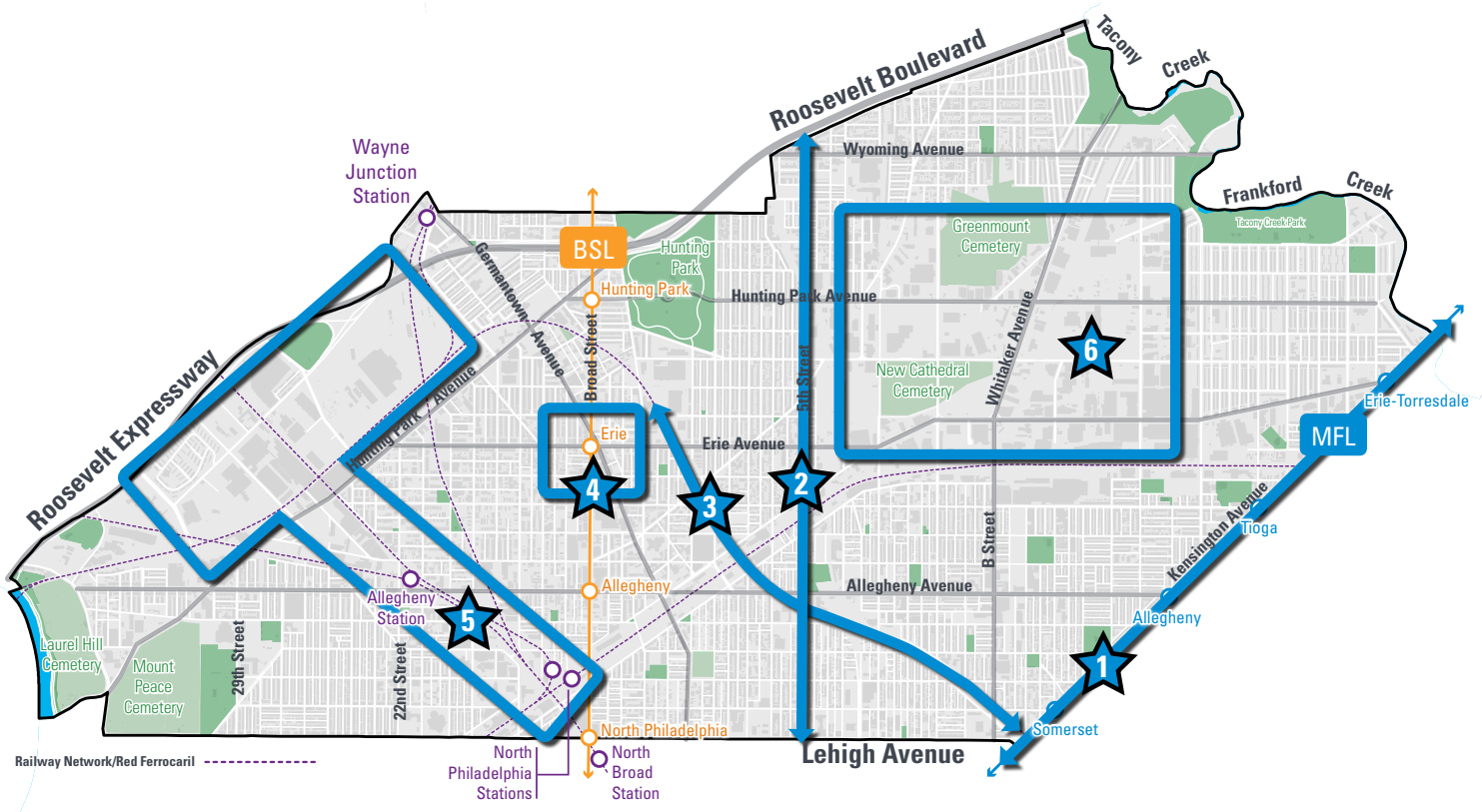
DISTRICT-WIDE OPPORTUNITIES

Recreation Centers
Schools
Vacant Land
Zoning Changes

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. Kensington Avenue
2. North 5th Street Commercial Corridors
3. Conrail Right-of-Way
4. Broad & Erie
5. Hunting Park West Industrial District and Allegheny Station
6. Hunting Park East Industrial District

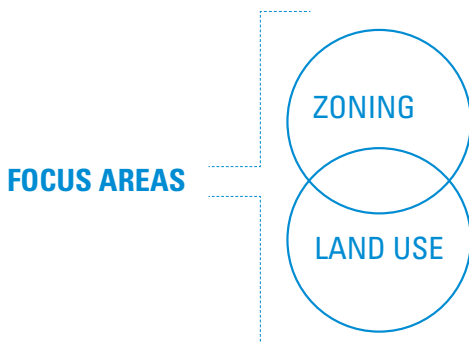


PLANNING FOCUS AREAS

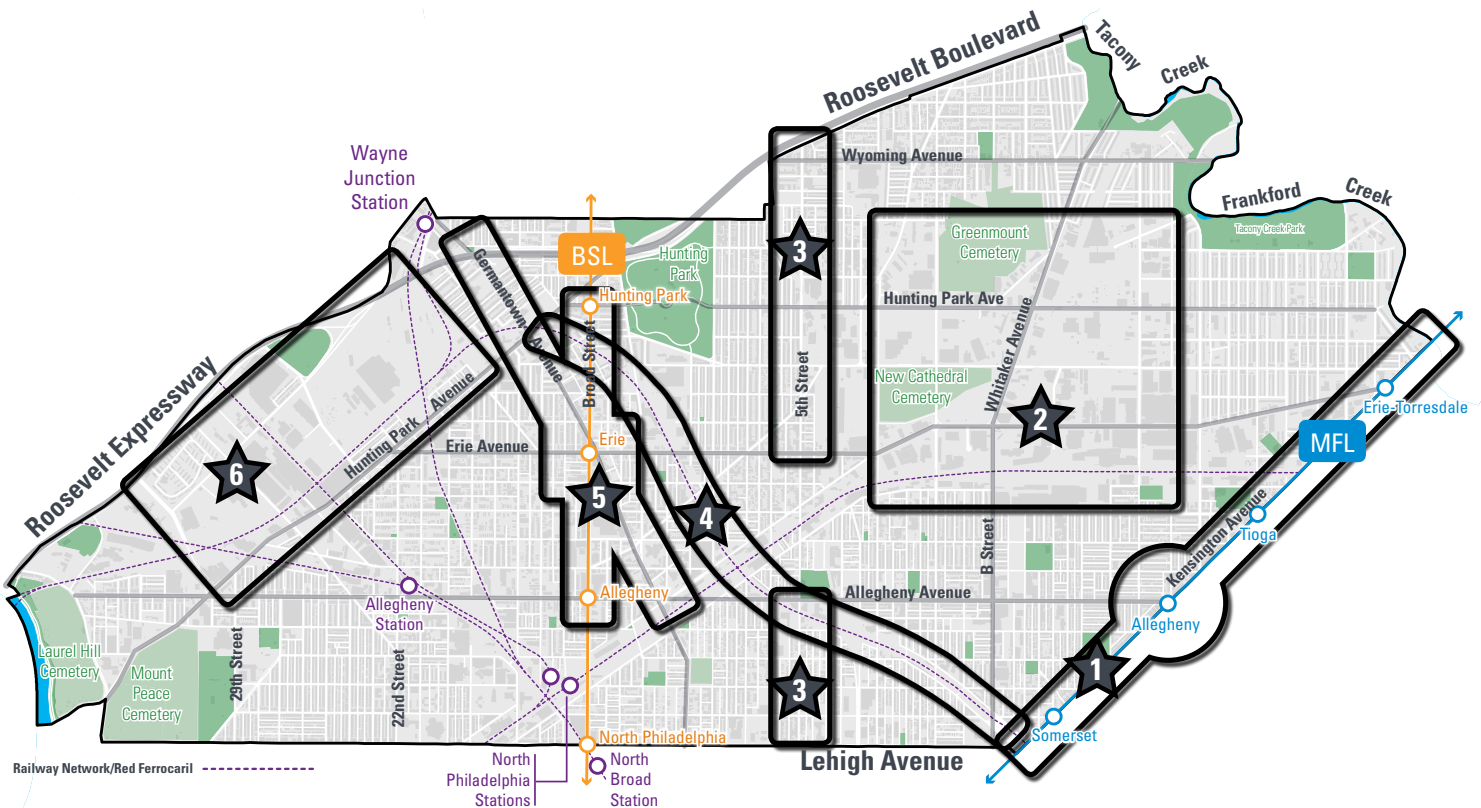
The Planning Focus Area exercise allowed residents to identify areas that are in need of public intervention (e.g. zoning changes, land sales or acquisition, infrastructure/capital improvements, business incentives), preservation (e.g. historic buildings, open space), or civic improvements on specific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

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 map shows the most discussed potential focus areas:



1. Kensington Avenue / K & A
2. Hunting Park East Industrial District
3. 5th Street Commercial Corridors
4. Conrail Right-of-Way
5. Broad & Erie / Germantown Avenue
6. Hunting Park West Industrial Area



APPENDIX OF COMMENTS

In addition to feedback received through the map exercises, participants also shared their planning ideas about the North District on a separate boards that discussed topics, including Health and Activity, Employment, Public facilities, Vacancy, and General Comments.

Comments from participants included:

- Bring in new businesses and jobs without displacing existing residents
- There is poor access to healthy food
- Many don't feel safe walking in their neighborhood
- More children's programs are needed
- Liquor Stores everywhere
- Idling cars/trucks are a health and environmental issue
- Sidewalks are in poor condition
- Park maintenance is poor
- Litter and dumping are an issue
- Trolley tracks are an annoyance
- Vermin (raccoons/rats/mice) are an issue
- Drug use and sales are an issue
- Halfway houses cause problems in the neighborhood



APPENDIX OF COMMENTS

- There is a lack of affordable healthcare
- Speeding cars are dangerous
- Asthma is a serious health issue
- Mental health/trauma issues
- More street sweeping is needed
- Improve maintenance of public space, especially weeds in sidewalks
- Areas around railroads in Swampoodle need to be improved
- Continue commercial and industrial parcel development
- There is no public library around Marshall
- Jerome Brown Playground building is not big enough for community meetings
- Forgotten blocks between 18th and 20th and Lehigh and Cambria need attention
- More recreation space for children is needed
- More/better libraries are needed
- PIDC and the Commerce Department need better communication with the public
- Funding programs are needed to improve Germantown Avenue commercial corridor
- Will there be development pressure from Fishtown?
- There are no incentives for builders to come into the area
- Need banks to lend in the Nicetown/Tioga area
- Vegetable gardens could be planted in vacant lots
- Playgrounds could be built on vacant lots
- It's difficult to acquire financing for mixed-use development projects
- Historic vacant housing should be rehabbed instead of demolished
- Tioga used to be safe, but drugs and vacancy changed it
- Occupied lots next to vacant lots struggle

