



# Northern Liberties Neighborhood Plan

**Northern Liberties  
Neighbors Association**

Prepared by  
**INTERFACE STUDIO**

November 2005



# Acknowledgements

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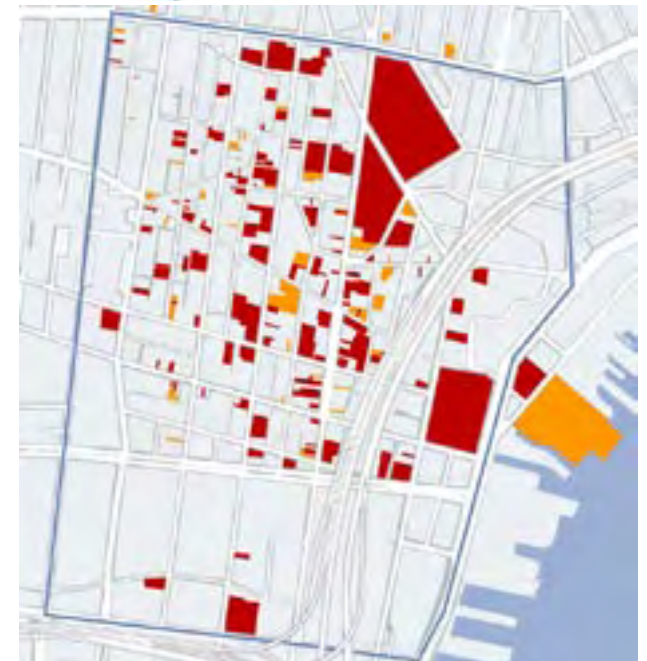
# Preface

For decades, neighborhoods throughout Philadelphia have been subject to the changing dynamics of urban decline – population loss, loss of economic competitiveness with surrounding suburbs, continued decline of the historic industrial base, and increased financial strains due to a declining tax base and cutbacks in federal housing programs. Despite these challenges, neighborhood civic associations and community development corporations have stepped in to provide a counter balance to these trends. Some neighborhoods have focused on creating affordable housing while others developed programs to manage vacant land and oversee local zoning review for any proposed private investment.

Recently, low mortgage rates, a national housing boom, and the increased interest in living within mixed-use urban neighborhoods has provided new hope for neighborhoods positioned to capture that growth. Many neighborhoods in Philadelphia, particularly those close to Center City, have experienced significant investment and market pressure often represented by increasing home sales prices and an expanding array of services available within neighborhoods. This growth and rapid change comes at a cost. Fears of losing what is unique while being priced out are constantly cited by residents throughout redeveloping communities in relationship to new development. In addition, while community organizations are seeing investment that has long avoided their neighborhoods, they are also now burdened with additional responsibilities to manage growth including local zoning review and constant negotiations with private developers and the City to advocate for necessary improvements, services and revitalization assistance.

In the context of Philadelphia, no community is more representative of these trends than Northern Liberties. As a vibrant and unique urban neighborhood, Northern Liberties' history as a center of industrial activity, and more recently arts production, is evident in its physical fabric and "vibe." The neighborhood has been featured often in the local press as one the city's most desirable places to live and has been highlighted nationally by the New York Times and Utne Reader. Due to all of this attention, Northern Liberties is in the midst of a dramatic transformation. Vacant land and buildings have been converted into new houses, coffee shops, restaurants, and galleries and rapid development, of uneven quality, has radically altered the physical appearance of the community while pushing up land and home prices. The number of residential housing units in the neighborhood has exploded and the population is set to more than double over the next ten years. Although Northern Liberties is viewed as an active nighttime destination, 2<sup>nd</sup> Street has yet to reach its full potential as a neighborhood commercial center. Finally, development has constrained opportunities for preserving existing open space and creating new open space, further taxing the community's storm-water infrastructure.

But in the wake of this tremendous increase in development and population, Northern Liberties remains a close-knit community. The activities of the NLNA, Zoning Committee and Urban Design Committee as well as ongoing efforts by artists and concerned citizens have had an immense impact on how the community supports its diversity and character. The strong commitment to grass-roots activities that currently make up Northern Liberties continues to be a driving force for the future of the community.

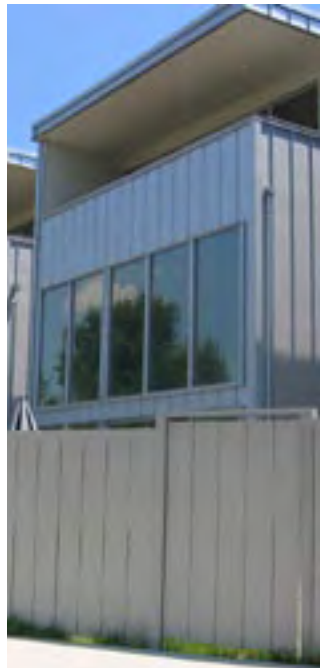


Top: Northern Liberties in context  
Bottom: Development proposals over the past 5 years



These transformations have put the community at a crossroads. Will Northern Liberties be able to retain its mosaic of residential, commercial and industrial uses? Will its history be obscured by the rapid development of every available parcel? Is there a “plan” approach that can help influence the future of the neighborhood in ways that support the desires of the community?

The challenges facing a planning effort for Northern Liberties are significant and nuanced. A substantial amount of land has already been acquired by developers with specific projects already designed and zoning approved. Many of the traditional tools employed by planners – such as land use plans, zoning overlays, façade guidelines, etc. – may not support the diverse, eclecticism that the neighborhood values so deeply. This plan seeks to amplify the community’s uniqueness, not employ techniques which tend to standardize urban fabric. It is a guide to lead the community based upon what it is they want for the neighborhood’s future and a tool to organize their efforts and coordination with City agencies and other stakeholders / investors that will be partners in its implementation.



*A sample of new development in Northern Liberties*

# Introduction

In January 2005, the Northern Liberties Neighbors Association (NLNA) issued a Request for Proposals for a Northern Liberties Neighborhood Plan. Citing significant growth over the past decade, the RFP communicates the shared concern that rapid reinvestment will irreversibly change Northern Liberties, permanently ridding the neighborhood of some of its most cherished characteristics. Home to a rich history that informs today's diverse population and varied urban landscape, the NLNA believes in Northern Liberties' future as a model community for urban living, encompassing the full promise and miscellany of city life. The RFP speaks to the strong desire to protect Northern Liberties' existing and valued diversity, both of people and of place, and emphasizes the Plan's role as an advocacy tool for reinforcing the fabric of the neighborhood.

The planning process is an opportunity to develop a collective vision for the future of Northern Liberties, a chance to think about the effects of change, and how best to integrate old with new. The Plan itself is a mechanism to help balance the value of organic, unguided growth with the importance of neighborhood priorities and preferences that, once clearly established, will steer the neighborhood down a path of development that is in the neighborhood and its residents' best interest. The Plan will empower the neighborhood as a proactive participant in Northern Liberties' unfolding future, adding structure to the development review process and giving a voice to the understood, but at times unspoken, qualities that define life in Northern Liberties and render the neighborhood a distinctive place, worth preserving.

## Methodology

### STUDY AREA

The Northern Liberties Neighbors Association established the designated study area for the Neighborhood Plan. Bounded by Callowhill Street to the south, Girard Avenue to the north, 6<sup>th</sup> Street to the west, and Delaware Avenue to Frankford Avenue to the east, the site encompasses a territory slightly larger than the area traditionally recognized as Northern Liberties. Though the NLNA bylaws identify the same north, south and western edges as those defined for the plan, the bylaws state that the eastern border of the neighborhood falls along Front Street between Girard Avenue and Laurel Street and along the west bank of the Delaware River between Laurel and Callowhill Streets.

Given the cooperative dialogue that exists between adjacent neighborhoods and the reality that change in one neighborhood effects change beyond that neighborhood's borders, the Neighborhood Plan adopts more flexible boundaries. The chosen study area naturally incorporates an expanse of under used urban land that serves as a buffer, both between neighborhoods and between elevated infrastructure and the residential life that occurs below. As such, the northeastern corner of the study area includes a portion of the Fishtown neighborhood, and recommendations or implementation strategies targeting this section of the site will require discussion and coordination with neighboring community groups, specifically the New Kensington CDC.



Introduction



Sanborn Map of 2nd Street, 1940

## PROJECT PARTNERS

### **The Northern Liberties Neighbors Association**

**(NLNA)** is a volunteer driven, professionally staffed, nonprofit organization established in 1975 by a small group of local citizens. Composed today of a 14 member Board of Directors, the NLNA organizes activities around a number of committees that address local issues such as trash, crime, open space and fundraising. The zoning committee is the most active committee and represents the NLNA's main source of local control but is also beset with continuing applications for new development which takes up the majority of the organization's time and resources.

In response to the rapid change over the past decade and in recognition of continued investment interest in the neighborhood, the Northern Liberties Neighbors Association obtained a grant from the Department of Community & Economic Development to develop a Neighborhood Plan and retained Interface Studio LLC to provide such professional services.

**Interface Studio LLC** is an urban design, planning, and architecture practice based in Philadelphia that concentrates on neighborhood planning and design. Interface Studio assists clients in visualizing the potential impact of their investments, exploring creative solutions to complex design problems, and developing feasible strategies for implementation. Scott Page, Principal at Interface Studio and project manager for this effort, has completed over 10 neighborhood plans across the country and has extensive experience in Philadelphia. As a lecturer at the University of Pennsylvania, he led a planning workshop of graduate level planning students that

focused on the Northern Liberties neighborhood in the Spring of 2000.

As described in the NLNA's Request for Proposals, the Northern Liberties Neighborhood Plan intends to "formalize a vision for the future of the neighborhood." Given that the plan belongs to the neighborhood and will serve as the unified voice of the community concerning prospective change and development, the participation and support of community stakeholders was integral to the development and adoption of the plan. These opinions and views were expressed through a comprehensive **community engagement process** that guided the analysis and determined the recommendations. The community engagement process sought to interact with local stakeholders through a number of methods including:

- Confidential one-on-one interviews with a sample of long-term residents and neighborhood leaders;
- A series of "focus groups" with representative samples of distinct stakeholders within the neighborhood, each with unique concerns and opinions regarding future growth in Northern Liberties. Interface Studio conducted six focus groups of ten to fifteen people representing the following constituencies: the NLNA Zoning

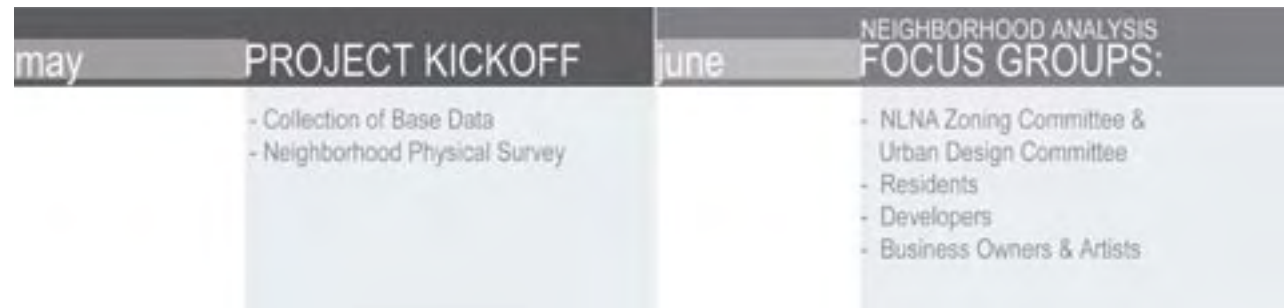
Committee and Urban Design Committee members, neighborhood residents, local artists and business owners, and developers currently investing in Northern Liberties;

- A public meeting held as a forum to garner critique and input on the planning analysis and recommendations for all community members and;
- A Neighborhood Needs Survey designed to quickly and effectively gather information on local issues, concerns and future priorities. The surveys were distributed by the NLNA and captured a wide range of residents, business owners and other stakeholders.

(Brian Phillips, Principal at Interface Studio, a Northern Liberties resident and member of the NLNA Urban Design Committee, did not direct the planning process or lead any focus groups.)

## PLANNING PROCESS

The planning process for the Northern Liberties Neighborhood Plan began in May 2005 and was completed in the Fall of 2005. Guided by the NLNA Neighborhood Plan Steering Committee and led by Interface Studio, the planning process followed a three-phase progression.





The **Analysis Phase**, defined by observation, research, and outreach, included:

- A comprehensive survey of Northern Liberties to create an up to date land use map and determine the physical conditions of the neighborhood;
- Census research to evaluate demographic and socioeconomic changes within the neighborhood over time;
- A review of historic maps and photographs, the 1982 *Guide to Northern Liberties*, the 1985 National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form, and the neighborhood plan completed in the Spring of 2000 by University of Pennsylvania graduate students in city planning;
- An assessment of real estate sales data from the Philadelphia Multiple Listing Service for Northern Liberties and adjacent neighborhoods to better understand market pressure in the study area;
- A tabular and visual analysis of zoning committee meeting minutes from 2001 to the present to quantify recent and imminent

change within the neighborhood; and, perhaps most informative,

- A public outreach campaign that composed of individual interviews, focus groups, and a neighborhood-wide questionnaire, all intended to tap the neighborhood's most valued resource, its residents, for their thoughts and opinions, concerns and desires regarding the future of their neighborhood. Their words are sprinkled throughout this report.

The **Preliminary Recommendations Phase** involved processing the information collected during the analysis, comparing observed trends and projections against shared concerns and desires for the future of Northern Liberties, and beginning to imagine opportunities and outcomes as well as strategies to achieve such goals. The preliminary recommendations phase was marked by several collaborative sessions during which Interface Studio sought feedback on recommendation ideas:

- A meeting with the NLNA Neighborhood Plan Steering Committee and NLNA Board Members
- A second series of focus groups, one with the NLNA Zoning Committee and , and one with

local artists, business owners, and developers; and

- A public meeting open to all residents and business owners in Northern Liberties.

The planning process culminated with the **Final Recommendations and Report Phase**, characterized by the preparation of a Northern Liberties Neighborhood Plan in report form. The plan, which follows, presents all analysis materials, final recommendations, and an implementation strategy for each recommendation.



NLNA public meeting to discuss the plan

july	august	september
<p><b>NEIGHBORHOOD ANALYSIS REVIEW:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Steering Committee Review</li> <li>- Individual Interviews</li> </ul>	<p><b>PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS FOCUS GROUPS &amp; SURVEY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- NLNA Zoning Committee &amp; Urban Design Committee</li> <li>- Developers, Business Owners &amp; Artists</li> <li>- Electronic Neighborhood Needs Survey sent to NLNA listserve</li> </ul>	<p><b>RECOMMENDATIONS / DRAFT PLAN PUBLIC MEETING</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Followed by open public review of Draft Master Plan</li> </ul>

## Executive Summary

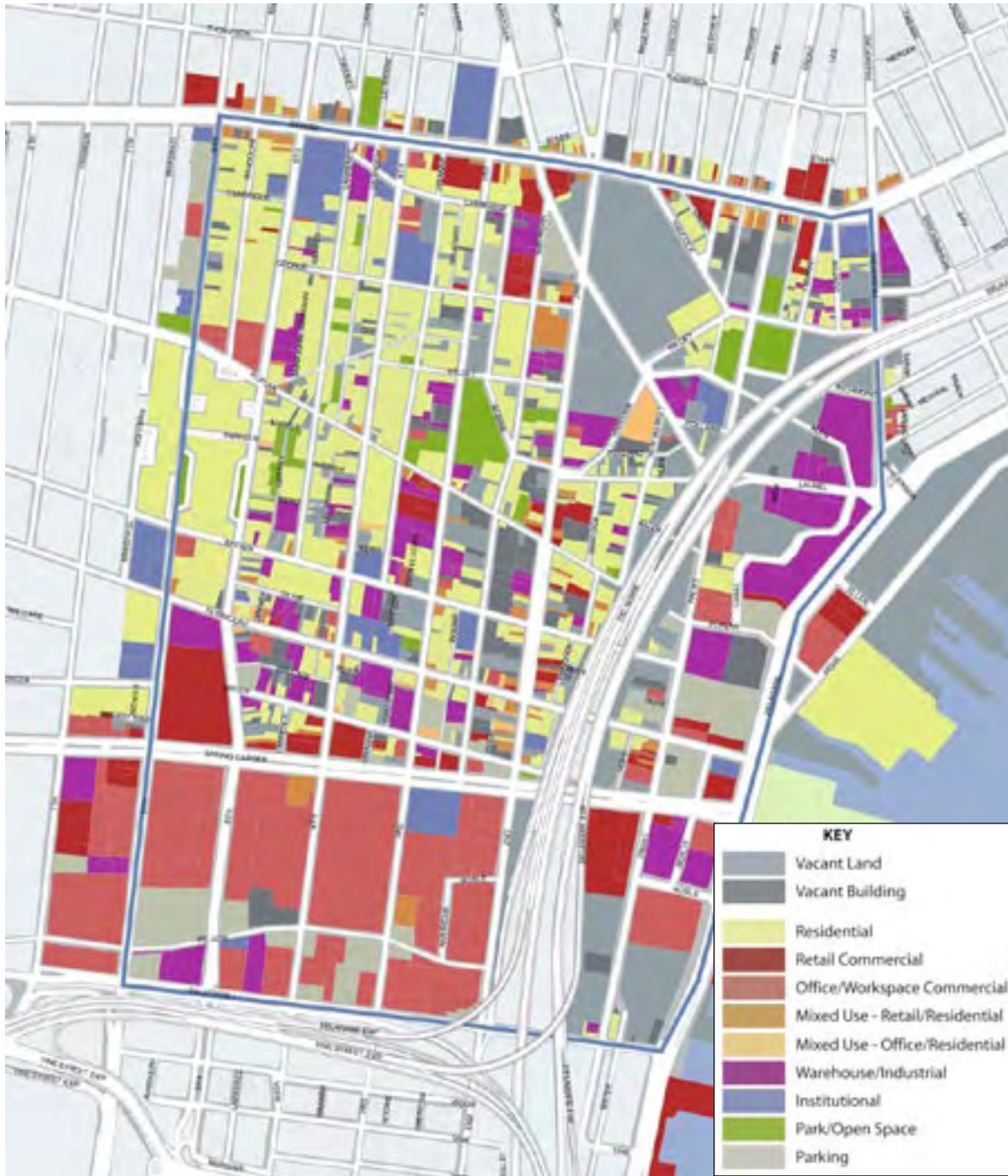
Northern Liberties represents the convergence of location, transportation, industry, community, and social tolerance. Today, the distinct place that is Northern Liberties is impacted by widespread physical, social, and economic change. Proactively influencing and guiding change is the focus of this plan.

The plan seeks to empower the neighborhood as a strong community, a capable, progressive, involved, and creative partner informing local preservation and change. The underlying character of Northern Liberties serves as a guide for its future, a future that is **Diverse, Distinctive, Green, Livable** and **Collaborative**. A source of continuity amidst change and a voice of democracy within the neighborhood, the Northern Liberties Neighbors Association will advocate for the realization of the plan's vision.

The recommendations that follow emerged from the outreach process. We have developed objectives to address each issue raised as well as strategies to meet the objectives. The strategies encompass both policies and actions: policies that the NLNA should adopt to guide their decisions regarding future development, and actions that the NLNA should strive to accomplish, either alone or in partnership. The seven key recommendations are:

### Reinforce the diversity of the neighborhood's population and the unique collective identity

Amidst the development interest and rush of new residents moving to Northern Liberties lies a deep concern about the future of the neighborhood's diversity and unique identity. While the landscape is



experiencing visibly significant change, the population living behind Northern Liberties' doors is shifting at a more subtle pace. With diversity, creativity, and openness at the core of Northern Liberties' self-identity, neighborhood stakeholders have a strong desire to at once protect local people and values while welcoming new residents.

*Key Recommendations Include:*

- Promote excellence in design through Urban Design Committee and Zoning Committee activity
- For large, new, residential developments, advocate for affordable units
- Complete the Northern Liberties Community Center
- Encourage public art by local artists including the design of new street furniture and lighting
- Expand the NLNA website to collect, organize and distribute local stories and histories
- Promote and expand organized community events



**Preserve the collaged landscape and mosaic of land uses**

Traditionally a place of industry and artisanal work, housing both laborers and their workplaces, Northern Liberties is losing its base of industrial and commercial operations. The strength of the local residential real estate market has rendered housing the most lucrative form of redevelopment in the neighborhood. The neighborhood must preserve a link to the area's industrial past while balancing the demand for accessible new services to meet the needs of a growing residential population.

*Key Recommendations Include:*

- Limit conversion of commercial properties for residential development

- Encourage commercial use on Girard, Spring Garden, and 2<sup>nd</sup> Street
- Form a business association with the legitimacy and support of a wide range of local businesses
- Create a business retention and marketing initiative
- Create and adopt guiding principles for the redevelopment of key commercial properties

**Re-establish 2<sup>nd</sup> Street as the heart of the neighborhood**

Once a flourishing commercial corridor from Northern Liberties' southern edge to its northern boundary, 2<sup>nd</sup> Street today only hints at its bustling past and future potential to become, once again, a thriving and vibrant neighborhood center. Community leaders, residents, artists, business owners, and developers, all active stakeholders in Northern Liberties, vocalized recognition of the street's special role within the neighborhood, concern about its current state, and commitment to its revitalization. The recommendation establishes place-based policies, actions, and design scenarios intended to support 2<sup>nd</sup> Street's future commercial viability, reduce polarizing conflict regarding new development, and build spaces for community development and enjoyment.



*East side of 2nd Street*



Top: Potential section of 2nd Street with a widened sidewalk.  
 Bottom: Potential Green approach to the design of 2nd Street intersections

*Key Recommendations Include:*

- Encourage ground floor commercial use for every parcel between Spring Garden Street and Girard Avenue
- Undertake traffic calming measures at key intersections and change 2<sup>nd</sup> Street’s one-way traffic flow to two-way
- Significantly improve the physical character of 2<sup>nd</sup> Street between Poplar and Fairmount including conceptual ideas for creating new public space, greening and traffic management.

**Adopt a “Green” philosophy and demand low-impact development techniques**

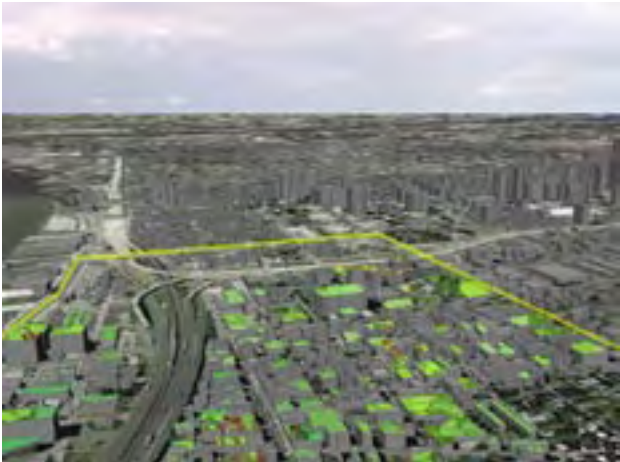
Stormwater management is a historic and persisting problem in Northern Liberties, with floods causing damage and disrupting the lives of generations of residents. The consumption of open space linked to rapid development in Northern Liberties is incongruous with the neighborhood’s dire environmental need for preserved permeable surfaces and better water management. The neighborhood is encouraged to

extend its self-defined identity to include a dedication to environmental sustainability. This recommendation strives to position Northern Liberties as Philadelphia’s first truly Green neighborhood.

*Key Recommendations Include:*

- Promote low-impact development and green building technologies through the Zoning Committee and Urban Design Committee through new open space requirements and green expectations on new development
- Educate neighborhood residents about effective individual efforts to reduce the impact of development on the environment
- Reactivate the Tree Tenders program and target new tree plantings
- Identify, acquire, secure, and improve the neighborhood’s inventory of open space
- Create an Open Space Fund funded by developers who cannot meet the new open space requirements – funds will be used to maintain and expand local green space





Green roofs are encouraged as a means of providing open space and reducing stormwater runoff. Above, Northern Liberties in the foreground looking toward Center City

**Foster a seamless transition between the traditional neighborhood fabric and the developing waterfront**

As the Delaware River waterfront’s potential as an attractive and lucrative site for high-rise, luxury, condominium living actualizes and the pace of waterfront reinvestment quickens, residents of neighboring Northern Liberties fear that such massive change will compromise the Northern Liberties lifestyle. Concerns encompass blocked views of the river, restricted waterfront access, and the anti-social message that gated communities send to their neighbors. The recommendation includes both public and private investments and improvements that will mutually benefit both current and new residents and responds to a larger goal of bridging two distinct and rapidly changing residential communities for the common good.

Above Center: Conceptual plan for open space under the I-95 and EI overpasses.  
 Right: Before and after view of the lands under I-95



*Key Recommendations Include:*

- Oppose any future restrictions to waterfront access
  - Improve pedestrian crossings to the waterfront at Frankford, Brown, and Spring Garden
  - Seek funds for streetscape improvements for Fairmount, Brown, and Laurel
  - Develop active park space and parking under the highway and EI to creatively reuse vacant, under utilized space retrofit for an alive and growing neighborhood



## Ensure livability through optimized mobility

With intensifying development interest and the subsequent influx of new residents and numerous visitors, parking has become a source of local conflict and concern. In addition to the growing number of households, households often own and park more than one car, raising the demand for parking within the residential community itself. As the parking demand escalates, adding stress to and consuming time from peoples' daily lives, the NLNA must expend more time and energy attempting to mitigate the issue, to mediate between conflicting uses, both in need of parking.

### *Key Recommendations Include:*

- Limit curb cuts for parking along major streets
- Advocate for increased SEPTA ridership
- Improve bicycle and pedestrian facilities
- Improve signage and information about on-street parking
- Develop a shared parking approach to underutilized lots along Green Street
- Create new parking lots and garages in strategic locations



## Build capacity within the NLNA; generate desirable change

The NLNA lacks resources in both time and money to tackle many areas of concern. The development climate in the neighborhood consumes the majority of staff time and volunteer efforts, leaving scant resources for the NLNA's other initiatives like trash management, recycling, and community building. To enact the policies and pursue the actions laid out within the neighborhood plan, the NLNA needs to enhance its organizational capacity, and by so doing, enable the neighbors association to better serve Northern Liberties.

### *Key Recommendations Include:*

- Charge a nominal fee for project review
- Expand the NLNA Volunteer Base through an outreach campaign and greater awareness in local press, the web and in key local gathering spaces
- Develop transparency in the zoning review process and expectations and automate application submittal and review by the NLNA
- Maintain a database of new development proposals and outcomes
- Form a coalition with surrounding neighborhood groups to address issues of common concern.



## Analysis

### NORTHERN LIBERTIES: Past, Present, and Future



Evidence of an industrial past: looking north along Delaware Avenue from Callowhill Street, 1914

#### PAST

The lands north of historic Philadelphia were a distinct part of William Penn's plan for the City. Penn offered plots of the unpopulated land "north of the city and south of Germantown and Frankford Avenues," for free to potential investors as an incentive for the purchase of urban land. Deriving its name from Penn's concept of "libertylands," the area known today as Northern Liberties began to urbanize after the American Revolution, owing in part to its proximity to the docks along the Delaware River. Northern Liberties became an incorporated township in 1803 and a part of the City when Philadelphia's districts consolidated in 1854 (1).

An atmosphere of tolerance and openness defines Northern Liberties' history. The neighborhood welcomed both a large and changing immigrant community as well as a host of artisanal and industrial uses, such as tanneries, leather shops, and breweries, forbidden from locating downtown by anti-nuisance City regulations. Reflecting the growing trends of immigration and industrialization in the United States, by the mid-1800s, Northern Liberties was home to an enclave of German artisans and, by the late 1800s, to a more diverse population of Eastern European factory workers. The 1860 and 1870 censuses reveal Northern Liberties as the only region in the City to be less than half populated by native-born Americans. At that time, three of five Northern Liberties residents worked as artisans rather than as professionals, proprietors, or laborers



1796 map illustrating large plots of "libertylands" north of the urban grid system

(National Register of Historic Places Inventory – Nomination Form).

During the nineteenth century, the African American population in Northern Liberties also began to grow. The two Quaker meeting houses at 3<sup>rd</sup> and Green Streets and 6<sup>th</sup> and Noble Streets sheltered former slaves moving north in search of employment, and by 1856, Northern Liberties had the largest black population in Philadelphia. In addition to factory and railroad jobs, the African Zoar Methodist Church, dating back to 1794, and the public school for blacks



Construction of the elevated rail line along Front Street, 1917



Under the El, 2005

that was established in the 1830s were resources for the growing African American community (34 - 36).

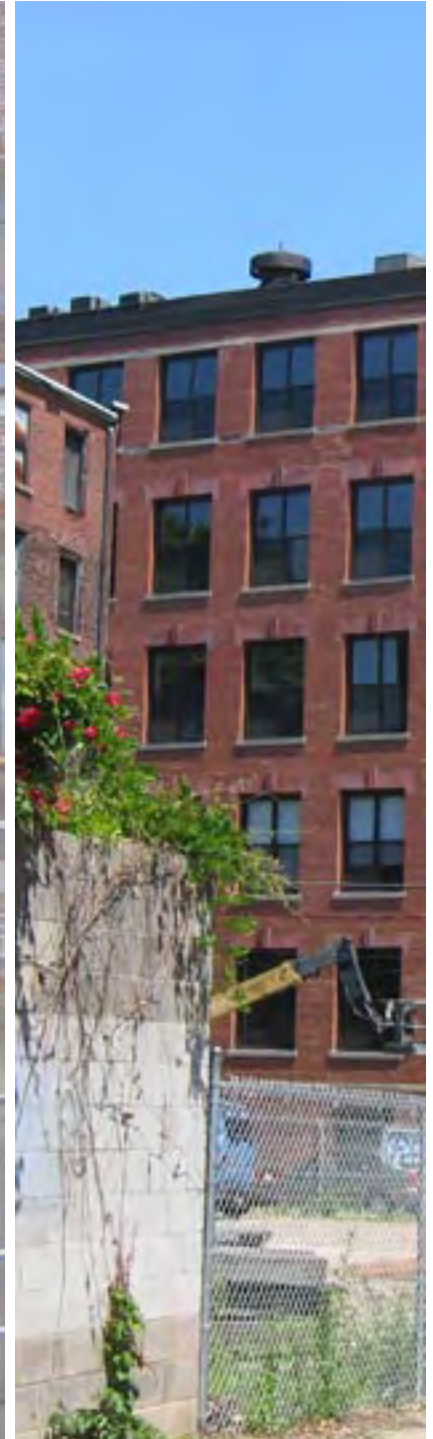
In 1916, construction of the Frankford Elevated Railway began, altering the fabric of Northern Liberties along Front Street with the addition of raised rail lines. The El opened for public service in 1922. As described in the *Guide to Northern Liberties*, “the advent of the new transportation technology such as the Subway-Elevated system, which connected the center city to all parts of West Philadelphia and the suburbs signaled the exodus from Northern Liberties. Made prosperous by their hard work, the residents were able to afford better and greener surroundings for their families” (37).



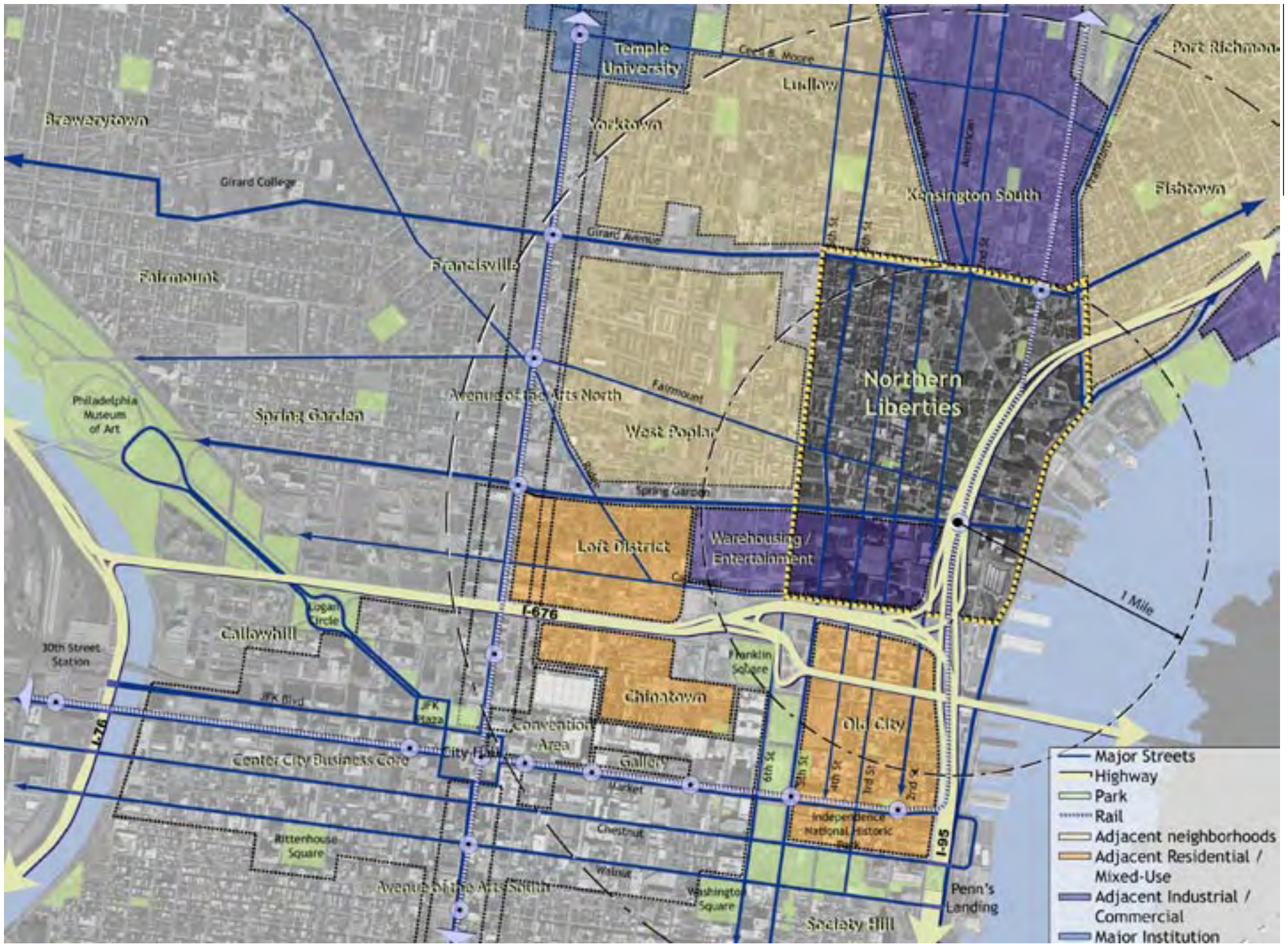
Under Interstate 95, 2005

The middle class flight from the cities escalated post World War II, and the decline of urban manufacturing might translated to job loss and further demographic change. As ethnic whites and financially mobile residents moved to the suburbs, urban poverty intensified. Northern Liberties’ black population continued to grow, and, beginning in the 1960s, a Puerto Rican community established itself in the neighborhood (43). Also in the 1960s, discussion, demolition, and construction of the elevated eight-lane segments of Interstate 95 began, again drastically changing Northern Liberties’ physical environment. The neighborhood lost blocks of historic streetscape, residential and industrial in character, to urban renewal.

More recently, the trend of decline in Northern Liberties has reversed, at first slowly, and now proceeding at an astonishingly rapid pace. A 1982 sketch of the neighborhood, at once grounded in the past and predictive of the future, explains, “as owners aged and passed away, their homes were left vacant, abandoned by disinterested heirs. Vacant homes became victims of demolition. Some remained standing, perhaps in hope that an imaginative mind would be attracted and attempt to restore or rehabilitate it. Today this is taking place







Northern Liberties in context of the City, adjacent neighborhoods, and major routes of transportation

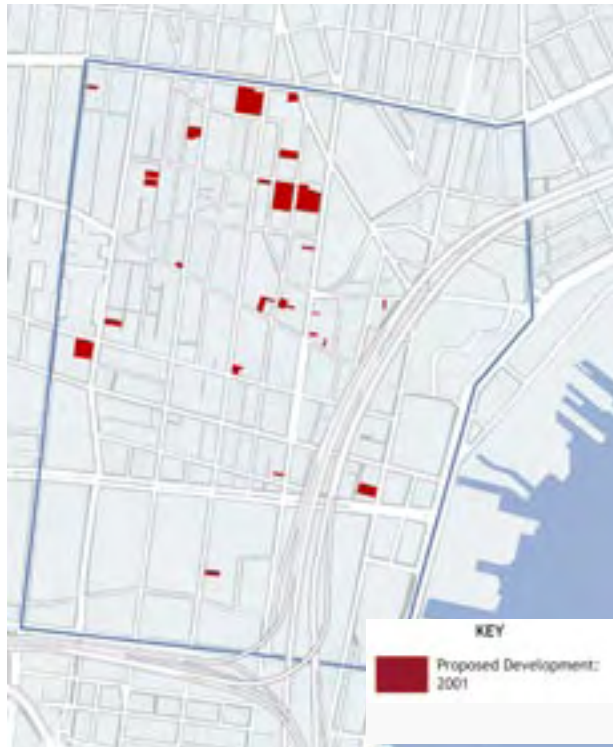
as we find people coming into the neighborhood restoring ‘shells.’ Progress is taking place and it is hoped that more residents will be attracted to the area in the near future” (3).

## PRESENT

Northern Liberties’ eclectic past translates into the neighborhood’s present day personality and personalities. The diversity of uses, of the architecture and built form, of the people, their races, ethnicities, occupations, and economic status have roots in history, are valued today, and are to be preserved and protected in the future. Both long-term residents and newcomers describe the neighborhood with pride and affection, eager to elaborate upon Northern Liberties’ many assets. The neighborhood is close to Center City and near to the waterfront; it enjoys access to transit; its inhabitants can live and work within its confines; art, music, and entrepreneurship thrive in Northern Liberties; and once, it was an affordable place to live.

More importantly though, Northern Liberties is beloved for its independent spirit and its distinct sense of community, fashioned over time. It is a neighborhood to join, to be embraced by, and to belong. It is a place of soul and of choice, a place of potential and, a place with an identity. It is a real neighborhood in a real city, at once unique and quirky, gritty, flexible, green, decayed and charming, welcoming, spacious, open, quiet, diverse, close-knit.

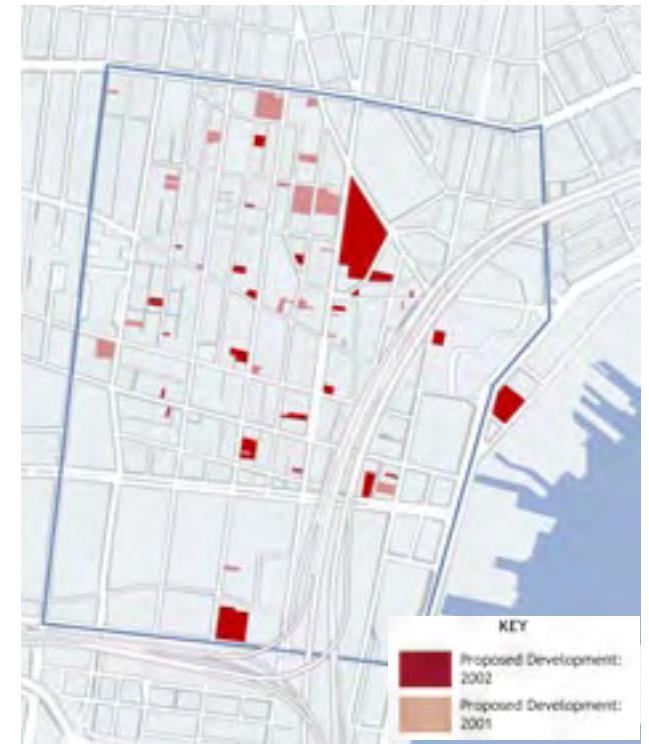
As much a reflection of the neighborhood’s variety as the reason for it, the unique and diverse people of Northern Liberties are collectively defined by their tolerance, activism, energy, and creativity. Totalling 3,954 in number in the U.S. Census 2000, Northern



*Variance requests for new development reviewed by NLNA Zoning Committee, 2001*

Liberties has been experiencing population growth since its low point of roughly 3,500 residents in 1980. Though residents perceive Northern Liberties as one of the few integrated neighborhoods in the City of Philadelphia, in reality, only portions of the neighborhood remain truly racially and ethnically diverse. In 2000, the overall population make up was as follows: 55% Caucasian, 31% African American, 1% Asian, and 13% Other. 18% of Northern Liberties residents identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino.

The population composition was similar in 1990, suggesting relative stability: 59% Caucasian, 27% African American, 1% Asian, 13% Other, with 17% percent of all residents identifying themselves as

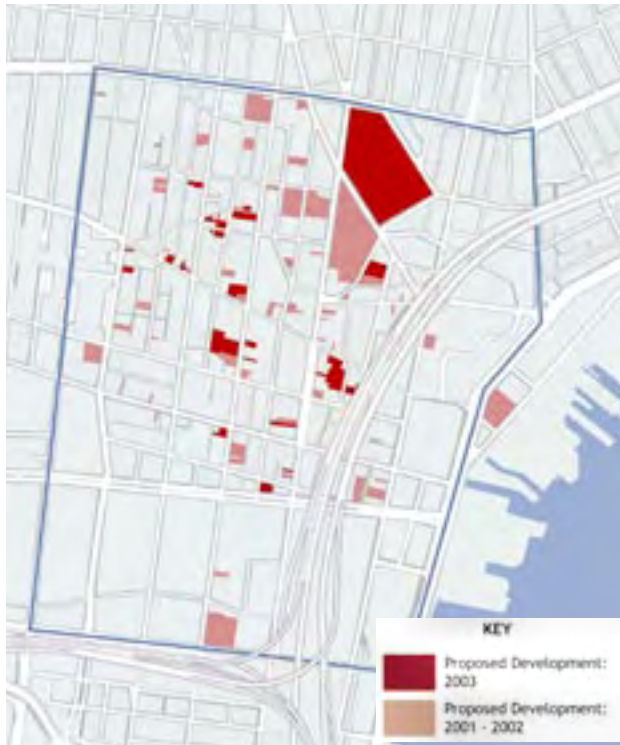


*2001-2002*

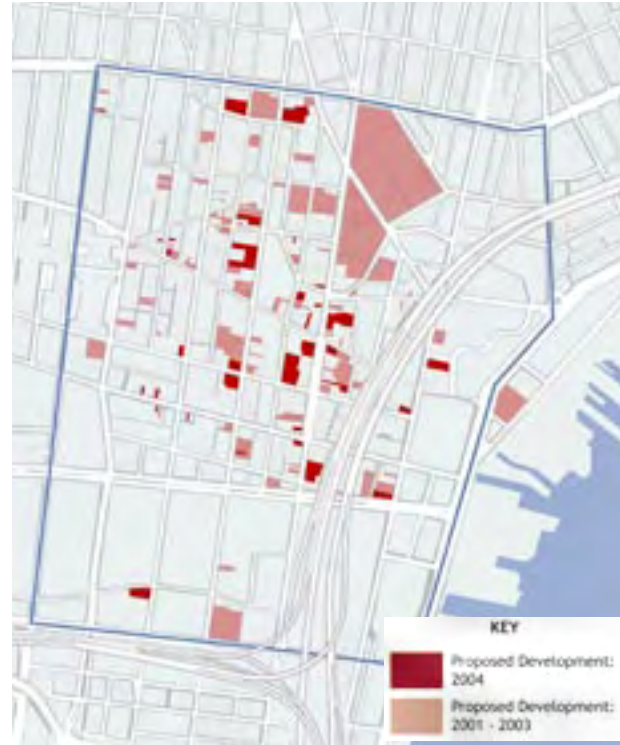
of Hispanic origin. However, both Census tract data and anecdotal accounts suggest that Northern Liberties is racially and ethnically diverse only along the north and western edges of the study area.

## FUTURE

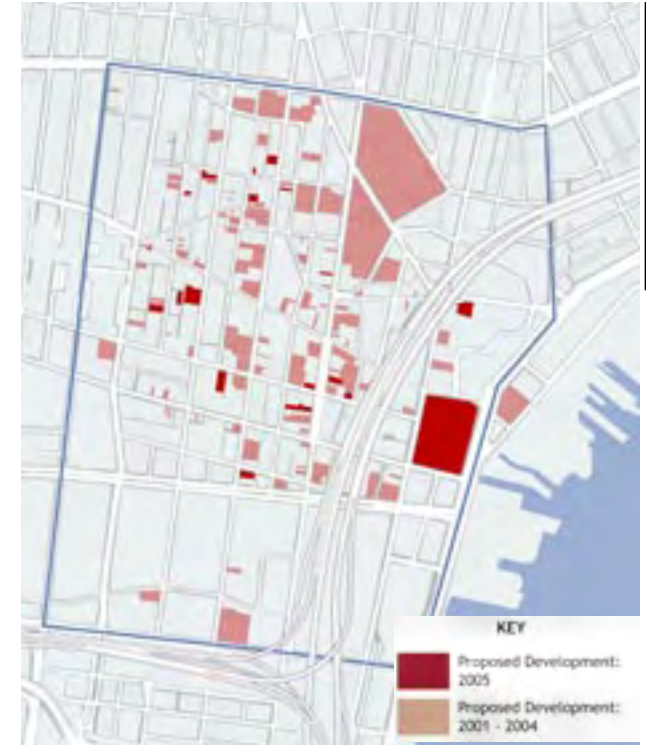
Given the valued history of Northern Liberties, its organic, grass-roots evolution, and the distinctive character and pride of its current residents, a sense of trepidation and in some cases, resentment, accompanies the buzz of recent and rapid change, reinvestment, and development. Long-term neighborhood stakeholders have a strong desire to preserve and protect Northern Liberties, its purity and soul, the hard work of old time residents who



2001-2003



2001-2004



2001-2005

Analysis

built the community that exists today. Ironically, some of the neighborhood qualities worth protecting from extinction are those attracting new development. Developers are drawn to the untapped potential of the neighborhood, the opportunity, and the community that is flourishing amidst the urban residential renaissance.

Philadelphia Multiple Listing Service data for 2005 quotes the average sales price in Northern Liberties at roughly \$312,300 dollars, behind only Rittenhouse Square, Olde City, and Queen Village. Thus far, the 2005 high sales price in Northern Liberties is \$690,000 dollars, indicating the desirability of the community and justification for continued investment and development.

More significantly, Multiple Listing Service data ranks Northern Liberties first in residential sales price change between 2003 and 2005, at a rate of 181%. For comparison, residential sales prices in Olde City, Brewerytown, and Graduate Hospital during the same time period rose by 171%, 163% and 142%, respectively, in Queen Village, 121%, Bella Vista, 121%, Rittenhouse Square, 109%, and the Art Museum area, 108%.

The maps (shown above) of the NLNA Zoning Committee Activity between 2001 and 2005 provides proof of development interest in Northern Liberties and facilitates comprehension of recent and coming change. Analysis of the Zoning Committee's meeting minutes from 2001 through May 2005, helped

to quantify the change; since 2001, the Zoning Committee has reviewed proposals for 38 acres of development, or 13% of the study area. Physical observation of the neighborhood identified at least 5 additional acres, or 2% of the study area, that have changed recently, either as projects built as of right without need for a variance or as projects developed prior to 2001.

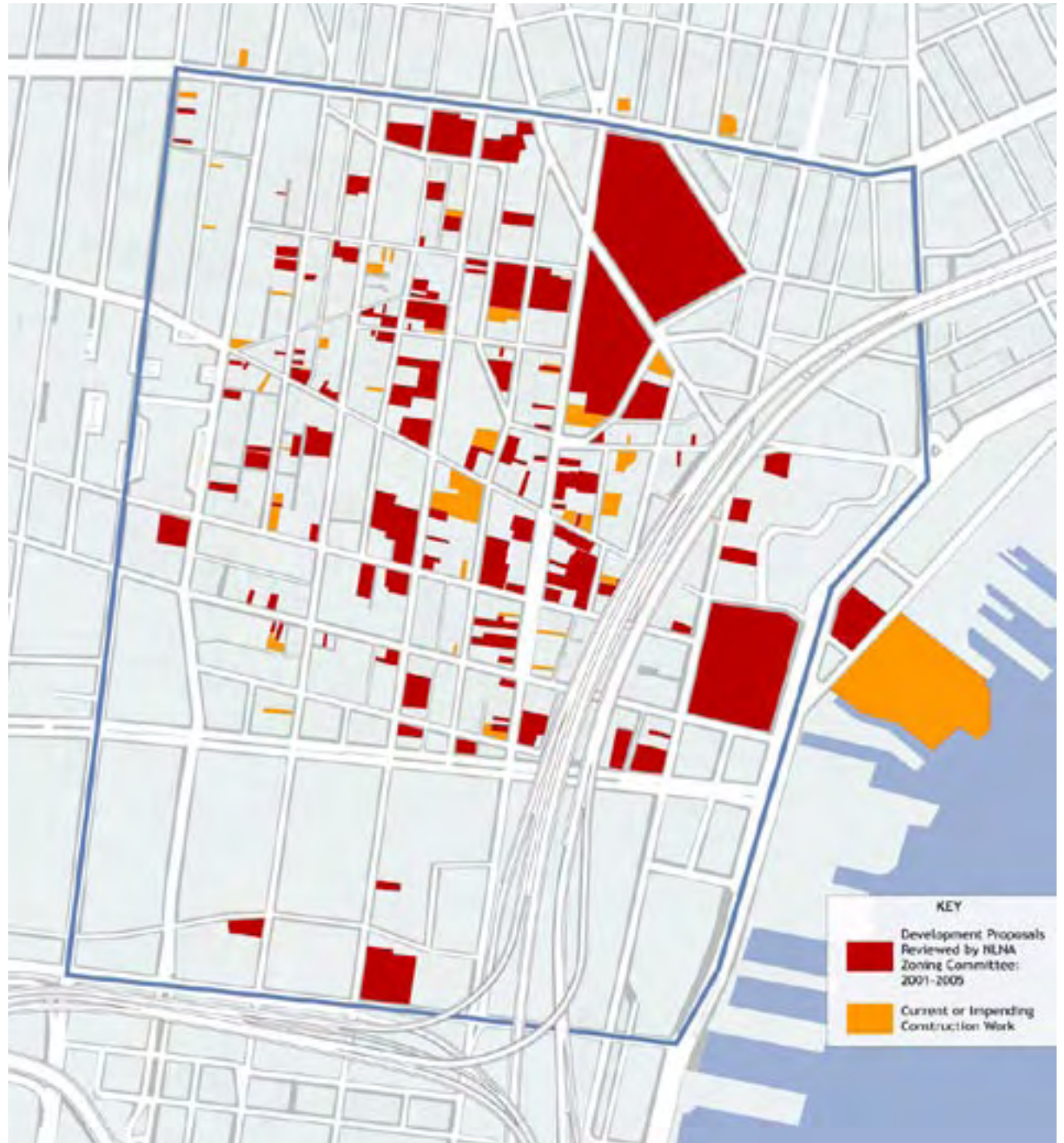
Such change corresponds to a total of 5,242 residential units, 3,866 of them new or proposed, which equals a 230% increase in residential units in Northern Liberties from the 2,276 counted by the 2000 Census. Including the five towers of condos currently under construction at Waterfront Square across Delaware Avenue, the total number of

dwelling units in Northern Liberties jumps to over 6,000, an increase of 270%.

Employing the Census 2000 average household size in Northern Liberties (2 people per household) and the Census 2000 dwelling occupancy rate for the neighborhood (85%), a rough population projection for Northern Liberties estimates population growth from 3,954 people in 2000 to 8,910 people in the near future, 10,441 including Waterfront Square. The proposal of more than 400 commercial or work spaces within Northern Liberties in the past five years, suggests that pedestrian and automobile traffic will experience marked increases as well.



*Waterfront Square was one project granted a variance without traditional neighborhood zoning committee oversight*

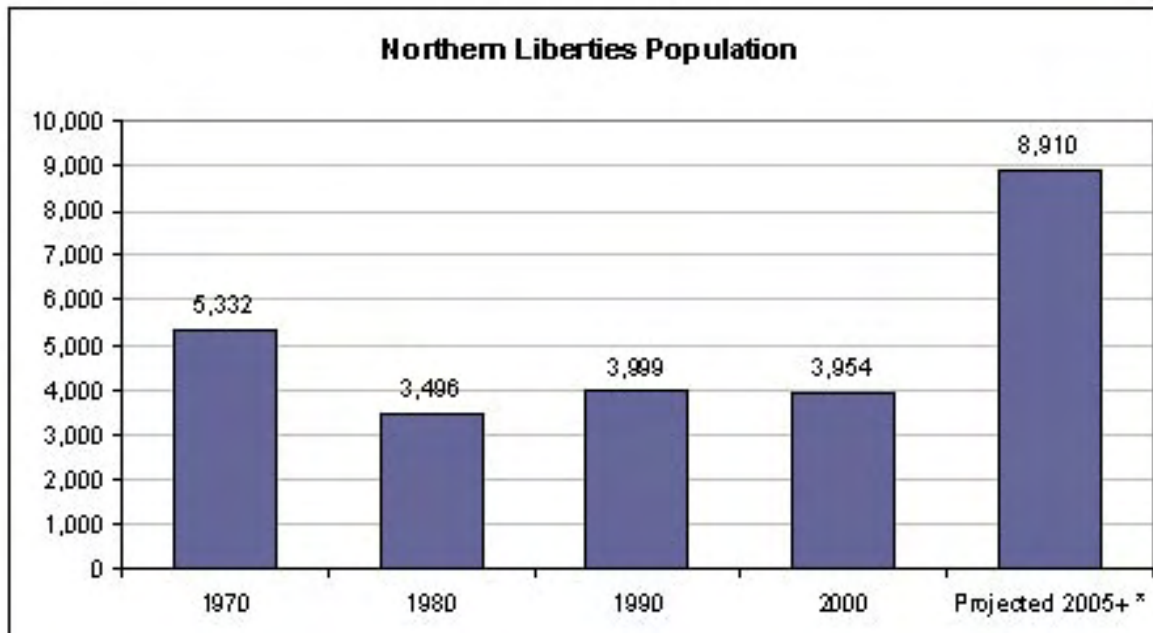


*Variance requests plus as-of-right development, 2001-2005*

MLS Data		
Neighborhood	Average Sales Price: 2005	High Sales Price: 2005
Rittenhouse Square	\$593,156.30	\$2,900,000.00
Olde City	\$466,672.86	\$1,465,000.00
Queen Village	\$410,621.62	\$840,000.00
Northern Liberties	\$312,338.32	\$690,000.00
Bella Vista	\$311,779.17	\$1,475,000.00
Brewerytown	\$302,666.67	\$353,500.00
Graduate Hospital	\$275,905.34	\$595,000.00
Art Museum	\$240,234.35	\$370,000.00
Pennsport	\$181,904.43	\$450,000.00

MLS Data	
Neighborhood	Sales Price % Change: 2003-2005
Northern Liberties	181%
Olde City	171%
Brewerytown	163%
Graduate Hospital	142%
Pennsport	140%
Fishtown	131%
Queen Village	121%
Bella Vista	121%
Rittenhouse Square	109%

Analysis



\* 2005+ Estimate based upon 2000 average household size, 2000 vacancy rate, and construction & development proposals between 2001 and 2005



Recent residential development

Despite the rate of change in Northern Liberties, the perception that such change is complete, that all developable parcels have been spoken for, is inaccurate. In fact, vacant land comprises 44 acres of Northern Liberties; vacant buildings, 24 acres; 4 acres of property are currently marked as “available,” but do not yet have development plans; and 36 acres are currently occupied by industry and warehousing, and are likely susceptible to change in the near future. The total land not yet claimed for redevelopment is 108 acres, or 46% of the study area. While much of the undeveloped land and soft sites are not as attractive for new development as current proposals due to their size, location or other factors, in a market as active as that in Northern Liberties, it is reasonable to assume these properties will face pressure in the near future.

The implications of the impressive rate of change in Northern Liberties touch all aspects of the neighborhood: land use and zoning, the residential community, waterfront development and access, open space and recreation, commercial services and business development, mobility and physical infrastructure, as well as social infrastructure and the role that the Northern Liberties Neighbors Association will play in welcoming and guiding change, advocating for sensitive, sustainable, responsible, thoughtful, and community-enriching development, in helping new meet old with grace and consideration.



*Susceptibility to Change Map, 2005*

## LAND USE & ZONING

The current land use map of Northern Liberties resembles a chaotic mosaic in which all but a handful of blocks contain some mix of residential, commercial, industrial, or open space. The existing mix of uses is evidence of the neighborhood's artisan and industrial past, when laborers lived and worked in close proximity. Compared to many of Philadelphia's primarily residential

neighborhoods, the mix of uses distinguishes Northern Liberties and contributes to the live/work flexibility and varied streetscape so valued by local residents and workers. The current zoning map for the neighborhood is incongruent with reality, an unrealistic portrait of Northern Liberties' existing conditions.

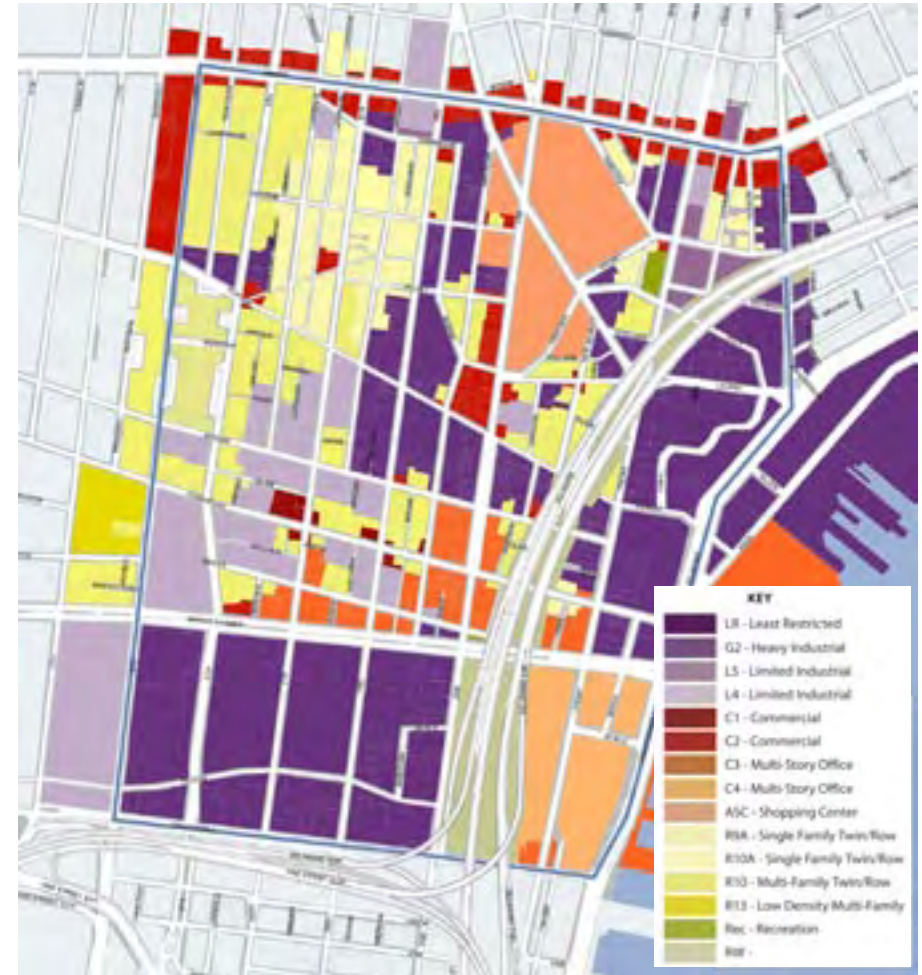
While the two maps illustrate the strong residential pocket in the northwest corner of the study area,

the yellow areas in the land use map, representing parcels devoted to residential uses, appear to be spreading throughout the neighborhood, spilling into the large tracts of land that the zoning map still deems suitable for industry.

Indeed, as in all Philadelphia neighborhoods, variances sought for redevelopment projects are the rule rather than the exception. Such procedures render zoning a powerful tool for guiding the new



Land Use Map, 2005



Zoning Map, 2005

development and place a significant amount of responsibility and influence in the hands of local civic groups, as developers must seek support and approval from neighborhood residents and leaders before submitting their plans to the City of Philadelphia's Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA). In Northern Liberties, a team of dedicated volunteers form the NLNA Zoning Committee, are charged with reviewing and negotiating aspects of all projects requiring a variance that appear before the neighborhood. Their recommendations are made to the NLNA Board, which votes on each project. Neighborhood residents and business owners are invited to attend zoning committee meetings to voice their opinion as well.

## RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITY

Much like the collage of land uses, a collection of sub-neighborhoods, each containing a variety of architectural styles and dwelling forms, comprises Northern Liberties' residential community. Both long-term residents and newcomers appreciate that Northern Liberties exists as a small town or village within a larger urban context. While all residents of Northern Liberties live under the umbrella of a larger, shared neighborhood identity, the varied land uses subdivide the study area in to smaller residential

communities, each with specifically tailored concerns about coming change and development: for some, proximity to open space is the most pressing issue, for others, the high water table and susceptibility to floods, the impossibility of parking, or the intermingling of blossoming commerce amongst homes and apartments. Another source of unease surrounding the influx of new development is balancing the desire to be open to the wave of

newcomers in traditional Northern Liberties fashion with the fear and assumption that new residents do not understand what Northern Liberties *is*.

Northern Liberties' residential population, 49% homeowners, 51% renters, reside in row homes, twins, single-family homes, and multi-unit structures, in traditional dwelling units, as well as in spaces that accommodate the growing trend of live/work



*Existing residential and mixed use fabric*



*Smaller residential communities within Northern Liberties*

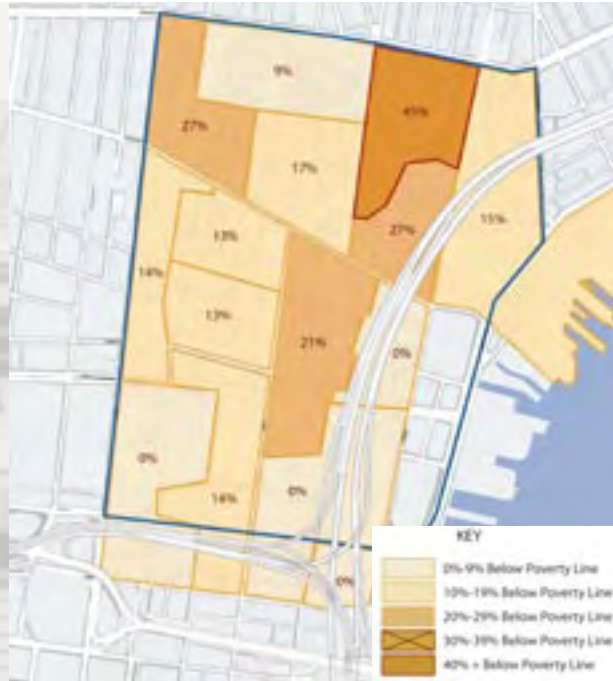




situations. Still standing are many relics of the typical workers' housing stock of the 1790s. Termed "bandboxes," these homes are 16 feet by 16 feet and two and a half stories tall with an interior spiral staircase (30). Within the same block, contemporary architecture meets structures from another era. Both historic and new construction tuck homes, apartments, and condos in buildings devoted entirely to residential uses, in mixed-use structures above first floor commercial spaces, and, more recently, in converted industrial and warehousing spaces.

In some instances, new construction in Northern Liberties respects the neighborhood's tradition of diversity and experimentation, adding imaginative design solutions and building materials to the evolving urban fabric. However, with property values rising, raising housing costs in turn, the desire for good design must be balanced with the necessity of maintaining a sufficient stock of high quality affordable housing. A shared concern among neighborhood residents, leaders, and business owners is that long-term inhabitants of Northern Liberties be protected from escalating property taxes and rents, which bear the potential, ultimately, to cause displacement.

Indeed, the 2000 poverty rate within Northern



2000 poverty rates by Census block groups

Liberties was 18%, lower than the City of Philadelphia's rate of 23%, but seven percentage points higher than the nation's rate of 11%. Like the poverty rates, which range within the neighborhood Census Block Groups from 0% to 45%, the median incomes by Census Block Group range from \$11,200 dollars to \$60,400 dollars within the study area. The 2000 average median income in Northern Liberties

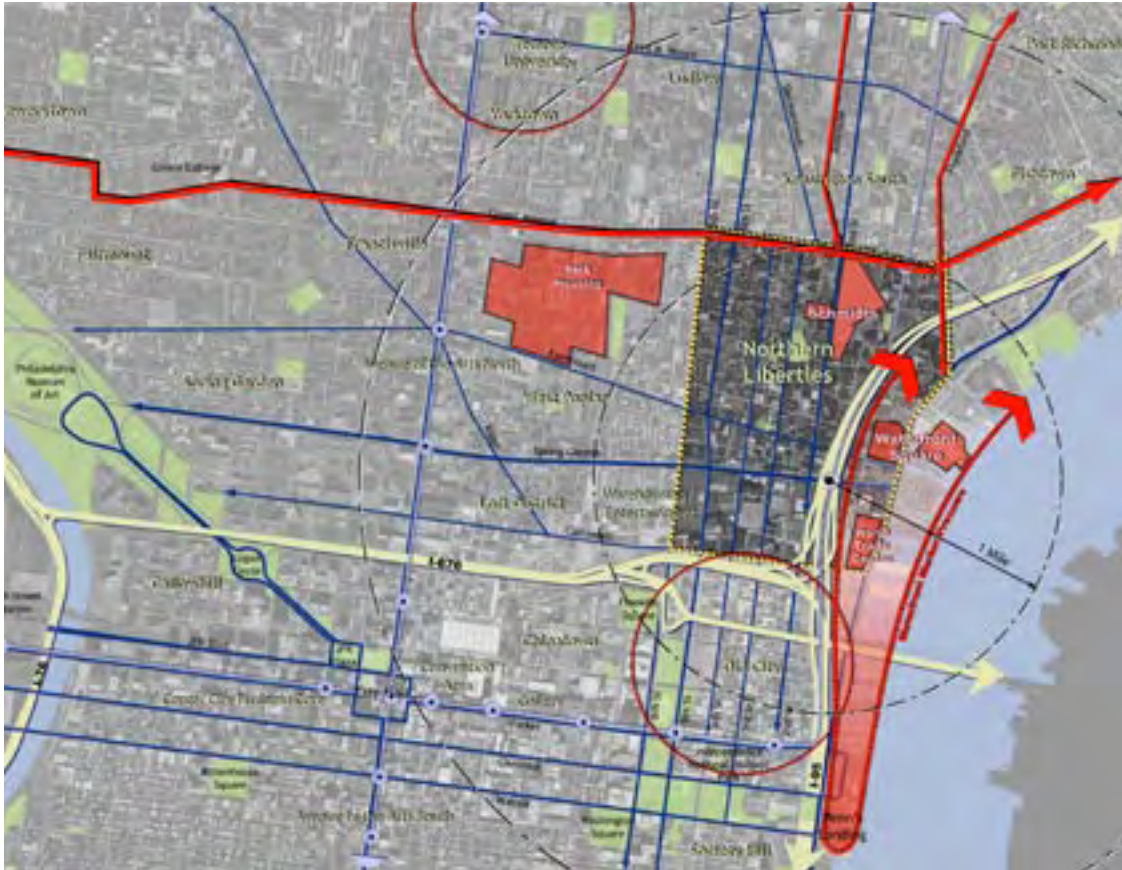


2000 median incomes by Census block groups

was \$32,320, higher than the City's average of \$29,537. That 19% of homeowners and 44% of renters in Northern Liberties pay more than 30% of their income on housing confirms two perceived trends: the neighborhood's affordable housing supply is insufficient, and the neighborhood has a growing student population not reporting an income to the Census.

Analysis





Waterfront development is one of several reinvestment initiatives, in red, driving market pressure in Northern Liberties.



Model of new waterfront proposals and construction

## WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENT

Fast becoming a neighborhood within a neighborhood, or perhaps a new Philadelphia neighborhood of its own, the Delaware River waterfront is in the midst of a transition from an industrial port to a high-rise residential zone. The five towers of Waterfront Square, currently under construction, will draw as many as 900 new households to a compact site just east of the study area, but within the area termed “Northern Liberties” by the NLNA bylaws. In the early stages of the development process, a two-tower high-rise complex

between Poplar and Fairmount, Front Street and Delaware Avenue, currently referred to as “700 Delaware Avenue” will add 1,100 condos and 150 townhouses to Northern Liberties’ residential base in the coming years.

In addition to the waterfront properties that have been claimed for high-rise residential development, much of the study area that lies east of I-95 is occupied by industrial uses, which, as they become less profitable and appropriate given surrounding land uses, become more susceptible to change in the near future.

Waterfront redevelopment poses two challenges for Northern Liberties: access to the riverfront and the role of the collection of vacant and under utilized land underneath I-95 and the EI. While legislation forbids continuous uses from the parcels below the highway and EI, those spaces can no longer remain neglected and let to lie fallow. Besides providing the community new services and open space, revitalization of this area can also help to address the concerns of residents that currently live east of I-95 who often feel excluded from neighborhood activity. The buffer zone is thus a crucial region within



Existing land use along the waterfront



The neglected area under I-95 and the EI acts a strong physical boundary further inhibiting access to the waterfront.

Northern Liberties, serving as a physical and social bridge between and within communities.

Access to the waterfront requires that Northern Liberties residents cross not only the visual and psychological barriers that the looming I-95 and EI impose, but also a physical barrier created by the automobile dominated Delaware Avenue. Once on the east side of Delaware Avenue, riverfront seekers face the challenge of finding an entry point to the water. At present, Festival Pier to the south and Penn Treaty Park to the north offer the nearest access to the Delaware River. While there is no hard

plans for a waterfront walkway, there is increasing interest and pressure to create a trail and ensure new development provide access to the River. This plan should anticipate the future existence of such a pathway and ensure that Northern Liberties has attractive and safe access to this potential amenity.



Visual barrier to the waterfront



Vacant land adjacent to the highway



Vacant land adjacent to the EI

## OPEN SPACE, PARKS, & RECREATION

Open space is a major concern for neighborhood stakeholders in Northern Liberties. For many, the plentiful space and lush vegetation drew them to the neighborhood years ago, and they watch with sadness, frustration, and fear as both large open spaces and small lots are claimed for new development. Not only does such land consumption permanently alter the fabric of the neighborhood, it implies a growing population that will be forced to share decreasing greened, open spaces.

Northern Liberties' greatest open space resource is Liberty Lands, the community-owned park located between Bodine, American, Wildey, and 3<sup>rd</sup> Streets. Liberty Lands was originally a tannery, which fell vacant, accumulated tax liens and a



*Gardens at Liberty Lands*



*Orianna Hill Dog Park*

list of environmental offenses, and was ultimately transferred from City ownership to the NLNA at no cost. The property transfer occurred in the 1980s, before the market for redevelopment in Northern Liberties existed. Though the neighborhood's original plan for the former tannery was to develop a senior housing complex, a fire in the late 1980s destroyed all of the existing tannery structures. The City demolished the charred remains, and the NLNA reconsidered its plan, opting instead to create a neighborhood park. Described as "the perfect homey park" and "the communal backyard" of the neighborhood, the park's beloved eclectic uses and "goofiness" are a reflection of the neighborhood. Indeed, the park is not only owned, but also maintained, by the community.

West of Liberty Lands lies another community-owned open space resource, the Orianna Hill Dog Park. Donated by the City of Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority, the NLNA pays no taxes on the canine-friendly park as a beneficiary of the Real Estate Tax Forgiveness Program, which exempts public space from taxes.

The NLNA is currently in the process of securing a third community-owned park from the City, an existing playground with unsafe play equipment



*Proposed new community park on Orkney Street*

and many instances of graffiti located on Lawrence between Myrtle and Reno Streets. If the City grants the NLNA ownership of the playground, the NLNA plans to rehabilitate the playground and link it to an intimate collection of public green spaces and gardens along Orkney Street.

Northern Liberties residents also enjoy easy access to two city-owned recreational open spaces, a well maintained, muraled playground on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street between Fairmount and Brown associated with the Northern Liberties Recreation Center at 321 Fairmount Avenue, as well as the playground and basketball courts on Hope Street. Directly across Front Street from the Tip Top Playground, is a large, informal and untended, green space. Situated along Front between Laurel and Wildey Streets and sandwiched between the Market-Frankford El and the elevated highway, the overgrown garden is an opportunity for improved open space accessible to both Northern Liberties and Fishtown.

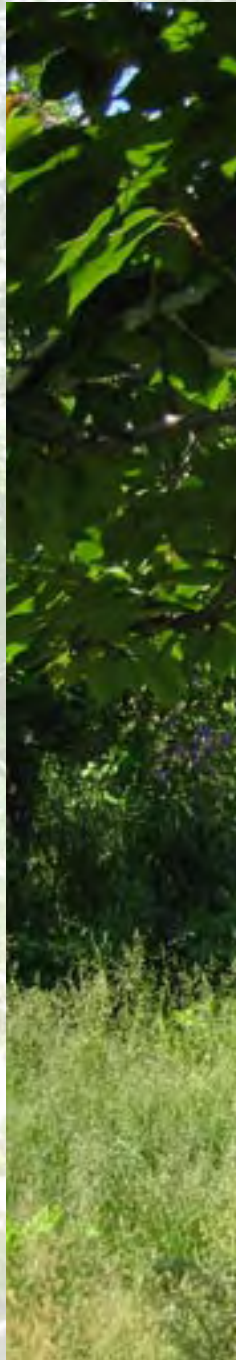
In addition to the open space noted above, most blocks in Northern Liberties boast a streetscape punctuated by trees of varying age and size. Though the street trees map evidences several pockets within the study area that suffer from a dearth of plantings, this is mostly due to prior industrial and



*Tip Top Playground*

manufacturing uses which are, in many cases, under redevelopment.

The trees and park spaces add more to Northern Liberties than pleasant urban vistas framed by green arcades and comfortable, open gathering places amidst the urban fabric of the neighborhood. The permeable surfaces of green space and the leaves and root beds of street trees act as reservoirs, absorbing storm water runoff that otherwise rushes to the neighborhood's sewer system, causing floods during heavy rains. Community residents and leaders, local business owners, artists, and developers, alike, are aware of the social and financial value of dense development in urban settings. All parties are equally cognizant of the resultant need for open space to allow for recreation, relaxation, and environmental balance. As such, attendants at each focus group expressed concerns about green space consumption and commitment to open space conservation and creation.



2nd Street Commercial Corridor, 1941, Sanborn Map

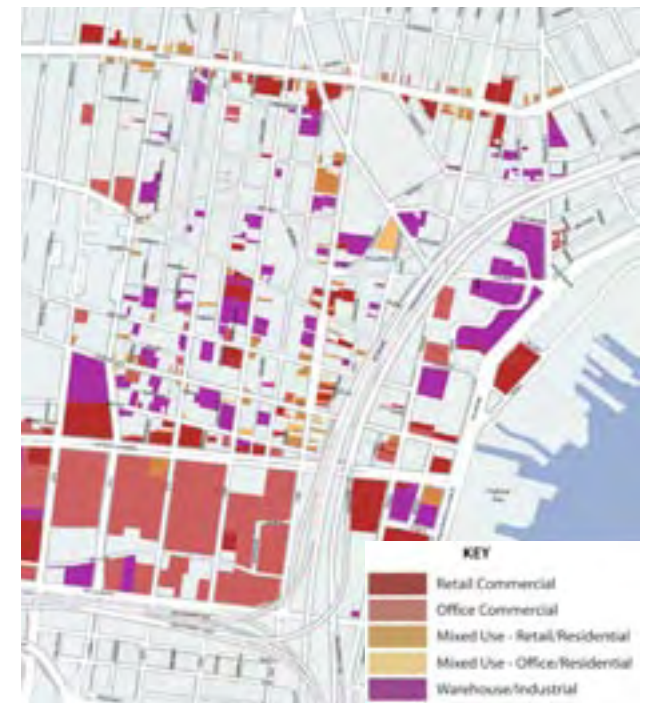
## COMMERCIAL SERVICES & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

The 1916 Sanborn Insurance Maps of Philadelphia, edited in the 1940s, illustrate not only the incredible density that defined Northern Liberties during an earlier era, but also the clearly defined commercial corridors lining the neighborhood. Inhabitants lived in the residential pockets punctuating the diverse industrial fabric, and they supported the shops and services that filled almost every storefront along Callowhill, Spring Garden, Poplar, and 2<sup>nd</sup> Streets as well as Girard Avenue. Indeed, the 1850 Census lists nearly 48,000 inhabitants within a half mile area of Northern Liberties (33).

Additional commercial venues existed throughout the remainder of the neighborhood too, dating back to the mid 1700s when the British Army Barracks located between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Streets, Willow and Green, sparked the establishment of taverns, shops, and other services in the area (18). Built in 1796,

a head-house, or covered market place, once sat along the center of 2<sup>nd</sup> Street between Fairmount Avenue and Poplar Street, where 2<sup>nd</sup> Street widens (1-1 Student Plan).

The commercial corridors and scattered retail and services that exist in Northern Liberties today reflect the patterns of the past. Parts of Spring Garden, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Streets, and Girard Avenue enjoy robust retail activity during the day, while offices and industry populate the regions between Callowhill and Spring Garden, I-95 and Delaware Avenue, and along American Street, Front Street, and Frankford Avenue. In the evenings, commercial activity in Northern Liberties centers around the restaurant and bar scene on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Streets and Girard Avenue. Larger venues along the fringes draw people to the waterfront and along Spring Garden.



Existing commercial and industrial fabric



Daytime commercial activity

Overall, there are 194 businesses in the area which are represented by the accompanying chart. Residents and stakeholders have raised concerns regarding the lack of some services (food shopping for instance) and over representation of other uses most notably bars and clubs.

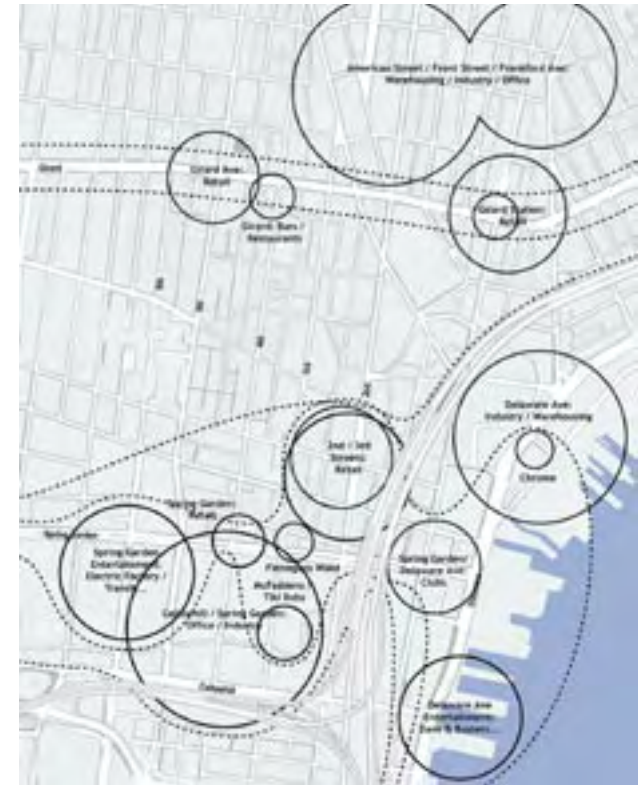
Though tensions between commercial uses and surrounding residential areas exist, neighborhood stakeholders seek to maintain the diversity that makes the physical fabric of Northern Liberties unique. Members of the community recognize the importance of supporting commercial activity in Northern Liberties. They appreciate the services that local businesses provide in close proximity, the income that commercial uses generate, which



Nighttime commercial activity

business owners often reinvest in the community, and the benefit to public safety that results from having more eyes on the streets throughout the workday and into the evenings. Furthermore, the perceived loss of light industrial uses has sparked interest in creating a more supportive network for neighborhood business owners, artists, and entrepreneurs, perhaps in the form of a business association that will advocate for the vitality of Northern Liberties' commercial sector.

Returning 2<sup>nd</sup> Street to a vibrant commercial corridor is a common goal of neighborhood stakeholders, proud that the commercial has "maintained its integrity," and wary of intrusion by nation-wide chains. Having benefited from much recent



Temporal commercial activity overlay

reinvestment, the redevelopment of 2<sup>nd</sup> Street remains unbalanced and incomplete. Not only is there a discrepancy between the east and west sides of the street, but commercial activity remains heavily concentrated between Spring Garden and Laurel Streets. The completion of Liberties Walk and the development of the Schmidt's site will reinforce the role of commercial uses along 2<sup>nd</sup> Street north of Laurel Street.

At present, there are 95,000 square feet of commercial space on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street between Spring Garden and Laurel, and there are 73,000 square feet of additional office and retail space proposed for the strip. The current vacancy rate is 30%, high for a commercial corridor in a healthy urban

Commercial Services in Northern Liberties	
32	Restaurants
31	Offices/ Professional Services
24	Bars/ Clubs/ Entertainment Venues
13	Auto-Related Services
12	Food Markets
11	Home Furnishings/Improvement Retailers
11	Miscellaneous Retailers
10	Beauty Services
8	Cafes
6	Apparel Retailers
6	Fitness Centers
5	Art Galleries
5	Adult Entertainment Venues
4	Check Cashing Locations
4	Dry Cleaners, Tailors, Laundromats
3	Bakeries
3	Banks
2	Pharmacies
2	Florists
2	Tattoo Parlors
194	TOTAL

neighborhood. Local merchants and developers feel strongly that the neighborhood should support more diverse development and commercial services as 2<sup>nd</sup> Street evolves to reach its potential.

2<sup>nd</sup> Street suffers from unique pedestrian and vehicular traffic problems. While the unsafe traffic conditions may inhibit the success of 2<sup>nd</sup> Street as a commercial corridor, the streets current parking environment poses challenges for new development. With 159 on-street parking spaces between Spring



*Commercial reinvestment on 2nd Street*

Garden and Laurel Street, and 95,000 square feet of retail space, the parking ratio of spaces per 1,000 square feet is 1.64, “insufficient” by Philadelphia City Planning Commission Standards. The addition of 73,000 square feet of proposed commercial space will reduce the parking ratio to 0.93, worsening parking conditions. The challenge of maximizing parking opportunities for the employees and patrons of 2<sup>nd</sup> Street’s commercial spaces while maintaining a pedestrian friendly shopping environment will partially determine the success of 2<sup>nd</sup> Street.

Spring Garden Street divides the traditional fabric of Northern Liberties, a mix of residential and smaller scale commercial and industrial uses situated to the north of the street, from the larger scale office, warehousing, and entertainment district to the south. Along its entire length, Spring Garden Street exists as the no man’s land between neighborhoods, either ignored or charged with housing “necessary evils,” nuisance businesses and chain stores, like gas



*Ground floor vacancy on 2nd Street*



*High speed traffic on 2nd Street*



*Construction and loading docks consume parking resources.*



Suburban-style shopping strip on Spring Garden Street



Large entertainment venues cause noise and trash nuisances.

stations and Rite Aids. In Northern Liberties, Spring Garden creates both challenges and opportunities. The large bars and clubs bring excess cars to the residential portions of the neighborhood, loud crowds, and littered sidewalks. However, vacant and available parcels on the north side of the street, as well as the barely-operational Liberty Shopping Plaza at the northeast corner of Spring Garden and 6<sup>th</sup> Streets, are poised for change in the near future. Northern Liberties has the opportunity to take a proactive stance toward Spring Garden's redevelopment, to imagine what the street can and should be and to advocate for new uses that will best serve the neighborhood.



Neighborhood street network

## MOBILITY & PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

### TRAFFIC & CIRCULATION

Northern Liberties is bounded on its south, north, and eastern edges by auto-oriented, relatively high-speed throughways: Callowhill and Spring Garden Streets to the south, Girard Avenue to the north, and Delaware Avenue to the east. To the west, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Streets carry a sizable volume of traffic, also traveling at accelerated speeds. The speed and regulation of vehicular travel through the neighborhood are cause for concern for neighborhood residents. Lingering industrial and



Sidewalk obstruction caused by construction

commercial uses bring large trucks through the neighborhood during the day, and at night, patrons of Northern Liberties' bar and restaurant venues flood the area.

As retail opportunities within the neighborhood expand, traffic conditions deteriorate, threatening the quality of life within Northern Liberties and raising questions about desirable density, successful coexistence between conflicting uses, and the differing needs of community residents and visitors. Indeed, the mixed-use corridor along 2<sup>nd</sup> Street presents specific traffic-related issues. Between Fairmount and Poplar, the one-way street widens to 100 feet across. With only two traffic lights, no traffic lines, and few designated pedestrian crossings, 2<sup>nd</sup> Street is prone to a style of driving reminiscent of drag racing. Those opting to park along the street's east and west side later face the dangerous prospect of backing out into traffic.

A walkable neighborhood in size and scale, navigating the pedestrian environment with ease remains a challenge for Northern Liberties residents. The seemingly constant construction in the neighborhood renders many sidewalks unusable, obstructed either by fencing and debris or by destruction of the sidewalk itself. Cluttered



and uneven sidewalks prevent comfortable travel on foot, especially when pushing a stroller. The lack of bicycle racks also discourages the use of alternative means of transit within the neighborhood.

## TRASH

Noted through observation and anecdotes, waste disposal is a continuing problem throughout Northern Liberties. Resident compliance with the City's sanitation procedures and schedule remains a challenge, as does illegal dumping on vacant lots by non-residents. Car dumping is an enduring grievance for residents and business owners, often frustrated by the further reduction in neighborhood's parking supply. In addition to quality of life concerns expressed by local residents and business owners, the developer community in Northern Liberties believes that the trash problem in the neighborhood reduces the marketability of their projects to prospective residents and tenants.

In response to complaints about trash clean up and litter, the NLNA has recently hired an additional staff member to lead a reinvigorated cleaning initiative. The initiative will expand and augment City efforts. The NLNA will collect complaints about offending neighbors and businesses and will then send letters requesting adherence to proper trash disposal methods. The trash initiative also includes a mini-cleaning machine for 2<sup>nd</sup> Street and an awareness campaign that describes all garbage-related regulations and explains the trash pick up schedule. The NLNA also coordinates a recycling program.



*Illegal dumping east of I-95*



*Illegal dumping east of I-95*

## PUBLIC TRANSIT

Northern Liberties is well served by public transportation. SEPTA's Market-Frankford elevated line stops twice within the study area boundaries, at Spring Garden between Front and 2<sup>nd</sup> Streets and again at the intersection of Girard Avenue and Front Street. As such, almost all residents and employees of Northern Liberties live or work within a half mile



*Public Transportation Resources Map*

(or ten minute walk) of the Market-Frankford Line. Additionally, four bus lines and a trolley line serve the neighborhood, providing easy access to Center City, West Philadelphia, Northeast Philadelphia, and the length of Philadelphia's Delaware River Waterfront. While SEPTA affords mass transportation that complements Northern Liberties' central location within the city of Philadelphia, the neighborhood's access to transit primarily serves day commuters. Because the Market-Frankford Line stops running just after midnight, patrons of Northern Liberties' evening and late-night social scene do not benefit from, and therefore are less inclined to ride, mass transit to and from the neighborhood.



Parking survey results, weekday evening



Parking survey results, weekend evening

**PARKING**

Parking in Northern Liberties is an issue of great concern and grave debate, affecting the daily life of residents and visitors, employers and employees, daytime, nighttime, and commuting populations, alike. Some neighborhood stakeholders feel that the subject of parking consumes too much of the NLNA’s time and attention and too much of the debate surrounding proposed development projects. Undeniably, in a thriving urban environment, parking will always be in short supply, a reality which reinforces the appeal of a walkable community situated near mass transportation, like Northern Liberties. However, in an increasingly auto-dependent society in which the number of cars per household continues to escalate, the ability to park with relative ease and a sense of security contributes significantly to most people’s quality of life.

The scope of services for the Neighborhood Plan, therefore, includes a review of the current parking environment in Northern Liberties. A parking survey conducted once on a weekday evening and once on a weekend evening, in addition to less formal observation during the workday, confirmed that on-street parking in the neighborhood is consistently in short supply, attempting to meet the demand of full-time residents and employees as well as of distinct day and night populations. The detailed parking survey targeted the following portion of the study area: Front Street to 5<sup>th</sup> Street, Spring Garden to Laurel and Poplar Streets.

On the weekday evening, overall on-street parking reached an occupancy level of 75%, while on the weekend evening, the overall occupancy level was 90%. During both surveys, on-street parking spaces on residential blocks approached 100% occupancy



Parking Restrictions Map

consistently. As explained above in the discussion of commercial services, parking occupancy was greater

near active commercial uses, less so near industrial sites, underneath the elevated highway, and where either the street configuration or the signage made parking availability unclear. The large bars and clubs located south of Spring Garden Street spurred the most visible change between the weekday and weeknight evening, as patrons' vehicles filled the blocks adjacent to Spring Garden and the large paid parking lot on the northeast corner of Spring Garden and Front Streets.

Though the large paid public parking lot reached capacity by 11:00 PM on a weekend night, the parking survey revealed that both the smaller private paid parking lots are under used. That residents remain unwilling to purchase advertised monthly parking spaces in private lots suggests that on-street parking in Northern Liberties is not yet impossible to find.

Some residential blocks have petitioned the city for permit parking restrictions on their blocks. In exchange for a yearly permit and the requirement that the permitted car be registered in the city of Philadelphia, permit owners enjoy unlimited parking on their streets while non-owners must obey the hourly restrictions. Opponents of permit parking argue that blocks with parking restrictions lose 10% of existing parking spaces, as parking in restricted areas cannot extend the full length of each block. Permitted parking also brings parking enforcement to areas where the previous lack of rules has tolerated illegal parking techniques. Because the restrictions are inconsistent throughout the neighborhood, the establishment of parking limitations on one block merely redirects abusive day commuter parking to another portion of Northern Liberties that remains unrestricted. Furthermore, the narrow hours of



*Streetscapes suffer from addition of garage doors.*

restricted parking on both weekdays and weekends do not serve to discourage late-night restaurant, bar, and club-goers from parking in residential areas.

As noted, the parking issue encompasses a range of practical concerns about how best to accommodate Northern Liberties' current and future populations but also presents an interrelated set of social and aesthetic challenges. Accompanying the rapid residential investment in Northern Liberties is the City's mandate that developers provide one off-street parking space for each new dwelling. The required one to one parking ratio for new residential development has drastically altered the urban fabric of several Philadelphia neighborhoods, Northern Liberties among them. The ubiquitous emergence of street-front garages for single-family homes evokes hostile critique from many neighborhood stakeholders. Not only are the new garages unsightly, reducing the valued variation in the Northern Liberties streetscape, but they require curb cuts, reducing on-street parking by one or one and a half spaces each. Of equal concern, the new garages destroy Northern Liberties' street life culture, characterized by frequent and friendly interactions between neighbors. Garages replace front stoops and first floor windows, remove eyes from the street and increase storm-water run-off onto local streets due to driveways made of impermeable surfaces.

### SEWERS

The low lying lands and high water table in Northern Liberties render the neighborhood prone to flooding. Historical accounts document the marshes and creeks that once saturated portions of the neighborhood and the annual spring floods that

plagued Front Street, north of Coates Street (current day Fairmount Avenue), during which “boys would ferry travelers over the street for about 200 feet to where the road emerged” (7). Today, the City’s combined sewer system, managing both stormwater and sanitation sewage, are easily overburdened by rapid or prolonged rainfall, causing sanitary sewers to overflow into stormwater drainpipes, thus allowing sewage to mix with runoff from buildings, parking lots, and streets, resulting in water contamination.

In Northern Liberties, fast paced development adds an additional burden by consuming undeveloped land and replacing it with impermeable surfaces that send stormwater directly into the sewers. According to Water Commissioner Bernard Brunwasser, despite the population growth and new development, the sewers, which date to Northern Liberties’ industrial past and population peak are equipped to manage the extra water volume caused by new residents.

The issue is not one of capacity but increased impermeable surfaces which inhibits the ability to slow water run-off during heavy rains.

The recent flooding that occurred on July 22<sup>nd</sup> caused by a broken 48-inch water main on the 900 block of North 3<sup>rd</sup> Street pushed Northern Liberties’ longstanding water management problems into the arena of public awareness. Though the damage caused by the main break was severe and the inconvenience great, the recent system failure and service disruption has motivated immediate action by the Philadelphia Water Department. The Water Department is currently investigating the cause of the problem, conducting detailed research about the current status of the neighborhood’s sewer system. The neighborhood will soon have access to an up to date assessment of the health and capacity of the underground infrastructure through this investigation.

Furthermore, the Water Department has formed a Storm Flood Relief Committee, currently developing new ideas and strategies for managing flooding caused by rainfall. The Storm Flood Relief Committee had designated several Philadelphia neighborhoods as priority areas, including Northern Liberties, Washington Square, and Pennsport, indicating that Northern Liberties is poised to become a trial site for implementing progressive water management techniques at a neighborhood scale.

Lastly, as of January 1, 2006, the Philadelphia Water Department will be enacting more stringent guidelines regarding stormwater management for all development or redevelopment that alters a surface area equal to or greater than 15,000 square feet. The guidelines are designed to raise base requirements for site water retention, detention, and quality treatment throughout Philadelphia.



*Aftermath of July 22nd, 2005 water main break, 900 block of N. 3rd Street*

Conventional stormwater management has mandated that projects sufficiently control rainfall caused by storms of great magnitude, one-, two-, five-, and ten-year storms, allowing more lenient disposal strategies for the most common storms, those that cause one inch of rain or less at a time and comprise the vast majority of rainfall in the city each year. As the first half to one inch of stormwater runoff conveys the highest concentration of urban pollutants per storm, conventional stormwater management overlooks the bulk of water pollution caused by rainfall. Thus in addition to advocating for better retention and detention techniques designed to lessen the burden of rainfall on Philadelphia's sewers, the new development guidelines will also ensure better water quality for residents.



## SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

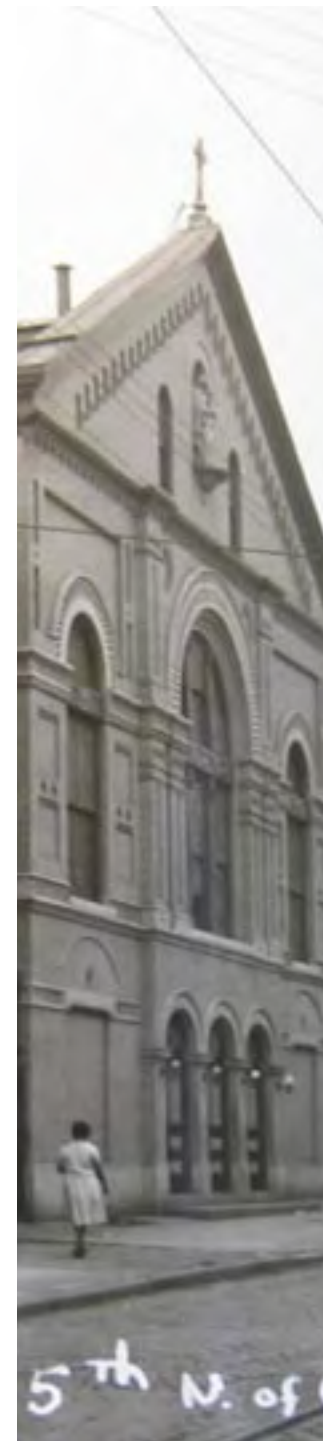
### SCHOOLS

A number of educational and religious institutions form smaller communities within Northern Liberties. The General Phillip Kearny School, located at 601 Fairmount Avenue is the public elementary school serving Northern Liberties' youth. There is no public middle school within the study area, but the neighborhood is home to the Bodine High School for International Affairs, a small magnet school founded by the Philadelphia School District in partnership with the World Affairs Council of Philadelphia. In addition to the public school resources, Northern Liberties has several charter schools within its boundaries: The Laboratory Charter School of Communication and Languages at 800 North Orianna Street, the Leadership Learning Partners Charter School on the west side of 6<sup>th</sup> Street, and the Northern Liberties Charter School, scheduled to open in the fall of 2006. Saint Peter's Roman Catholic Church at the corner of 5<sup>th</sup> and Girard hosts a parochial school, Saint Peter the Apostle School for elementary and middle school students.

### RELIGIOUS ESTABLISHMENTS

Northern Liberties is also home to several beautiful and historic religious institutions, which host worship services and related functions as well as the meetings of other community groups and social service programs. Representative churches include:

- Saint Andrews Russian Orthodox Church at 707 North 5<sup>th</sup> Street;





- Saint Michaels Russian Orthodox Church at 335 Fairmount Avenue;
- Saint Peter’s Catholic Church at 5<sup>th</sup> and Girard;
- Holy Trinity Romanian Orthodox Church at 723 North Bodine Street;
- Immaculate Conception Church at 1020 North Front Street ;
- Saint John’s Romanian Church at American and Brown Streets;
- Saint Agnes – Saint John’s Church at 4<sup>th</sup> and Brown Streets; and
- Killingsworth Temple at 51 Brown Street.

community center. The community center would house offices for the NLNA and CDC as well as a mix of offices, classrooms, a commercial space, and four apartments.

Northern Liberties residents have access to the Ramonita de Rodriguez Branch of the Free Library of Philadelphia at the corner of 6<sup>th</sup> Street and Girard Avenue. The Rodriguez Branch administers the LEAP After School Program to provide homework assistance, computer and library skills, and multicultural enrichment activities for students in grades 1 through 12. Also easily accessible to residents of Northern Liberties, the Philadelphia Health Center #6 at 301 West Girard Avenue offers free or low cost medical care and free prescription drugs to Philadelphia residents.

### CITY INSTITUTIONS

The Northern Liberties Recreation Center, located on Fairmount between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, offers a variety of opportunities for organized physical activity for people of all ages. The recreation center hosts basketball leagues, a boxing league, a soccer league, a dodge ball league, swimming, an after school program, a performing arts camp, dance classes, martial arts classes, pottery classes, and tai chi classes. Adjacent to the Recreation Center is a playground and a vacant lot and building. Seeking additional interior gathering space, the NLNA and its Community Development Corporation (CDC) has taken steps to acquire the land for use as a

## **THE NORTHERN LIBERTIES NEIGHBORS ASSOCIATION**

The Northern Liberties Neighbors Association’s stated mission is: to provide services and programs beneficial to all residents and businesses in the neighborhood; to encourage and promote the preservation and beautification of historically significant structures, streets, and the natural environment, and; to plan for the creation and/or preservation of open spaces for community benefit. Though the role of the NLNA has evolved over time, as a civic alliance charged with representing the neighborhood and its residents, the organization’s most important functions are to facilitate communication among disparate groups of neighborhood stakeholders and serve as a liaison between the neighborhood and the City.

Comments by neighborhood residents, business owners, developers, and NLNA committee members, alike, indicate that while the NLNA succeeds as an advocate for Northern Liberties in some respects, the association struggles to accomplish some of its tasks.

### NLNA SUCCESSES

Described as one of Northern Liberties’ strongest assets, the Neighbors Association is comprised of a small professional staff and a team of very dedicated and caring volunteers. Within the context of Philadelphia’s redevelopment process, the City delegates much responsibility to civic groups, granting them the opportunity, and, at times, imposing the burden, of reviewing development proposals and, in doing so, of guiding change within

their neighborhood. As development pressures continue to increase in Northern Liberties, much of the NLNA's time and energies have shifted away from the community building and outreach aspects of the organization's role. In the face of great change, the NLNA and its subcommittees, the Zoning Committee and the Urban Design Committee, have instead offered a voice of continuity and stability over time for Northern Liberties. The committee meetings, where committee members, neighborhood residents and stakeholders, and developers convene to discuss proposed projects provide a forum for all to voice their opinions.

The NLNA Zoning Committee carries the neighborhood's only formal power to influence coming change, and together with the Urban Design Committee, the neighborhood uses its sway to advocate for high quality design and development that respects the needs and concerns of current residents. The committees are familiar with the City's development procedures, they understand the zoning code and its detailed rules, and they have learned the importance of meeting preparation, both on their part and on the part of the developers.

The committees must balance their intentions to work in partnership with developers to produce projects that are both sensitive additions to the neighborhood as well as financially successful with their desire to slow the rate of change for the sake of neighborhood preservation. Perceived as a victory for the neighborhood and as an ongoing frustration for developers, the review process creates hurdles for the development process. Indeed, the extension of the review process in 2000 to mandate developer presentations before the Urban Design Committee requires developers and their architects

to think deeply about their projects and about creative design solutions that match the City zoning specifications as well as neighborhood ideals about what contributes to a livable urban environment.

### NLNA CHALLENGES

Voiced both by external parties and as self-criticism, the NLNA, its subcommittees, the development process, and public outreach have potential to improve. What started as a means to review a handful of proposed projects has now blossomed into a full time community effort. Faced with unprecedented development pressure, the zoning committee has struggled to fully develop recognized and consistent expectations for new development. The inability to step back and take a deep breath has not allowed this introspection, thus, each decision feels reactive to community members. Commended for recognizing that the rate of change in Northern Liberties has accelerated to the point of overwhelming the capabilities of the Neighbors Association, the decision to retain professionals to create a master plan to guide future change is an important first step to becoming a proactive partner in Northern Liberties' growth.

Other general critiques of the NLNA and its subcommittees concern the clarification of their roles. Should the NLNA devote so much time to detailed project review or should it function at a larger scale, working to improve neighborhood quality of life by advocating for more city services? Would the time and energy of NLNA staff and volunteers be better spent forging partnerships with developers to facilitate contributions to agreed upon neighborhood objectives rather than confronting developers about the minutiae of specific projects? When the needs

and desires of neighborhood residents and the neighborhood as a whole diverge, should the NLNA represent the neighbors or the larger community?

Assessment of NLNA committees in particular reflects some internal conflict in terms of development expectations. Developers feel that their interests are underrepresented on the committees of zoning review and cite concerns regarding the consistency, transparency, timeliness and lack of professionalism and "business sense" in the review process. They cite examples in other neighborhoods where a smaller group of residents streamlines the review process and works with developers and residents to develop mutually reinforcing outcomes. At the same time, the lack of committee resources, time, money, and staff, coupled with the high development pressure in Northern Liberties, exhausts and frustrates committee members. That the committees do not distinguish between outside investors and local business owners and residents seeking to engage in the neighborhood's commercial development breeds tension and ill will among neighbors.

These comments notwithstanding, the speed at which Northern Liberties has changed requires that both the NLNA and developers find common ground. This has already begun with the developer funded NLNA staff position to coordinate trash removal in the neighborhood. As the zoning review process continues to evolve, there must be a balanced approach which combines an NLNA review based upon up-front expectations, continued community activism, *and* active developer involvement in local issues that impact everyone.

NLNA activity also meets with some dissatisfaction in its role as a vehicle for public outreach and communication within the residential and business community. Residents feel that the organizations cannot claim true neighborhood representation and that some parts of the neighborhood are therefore neglected during project reviews. Equally as serious, many new and long-term residents perceive the NLNA as a closed society, open by invitation only; residents suggest that if the organization would open itself and diversify, it could tap the time and energies of many willing neighborhood participants.

Finally, as an increasingly important tool for communication, the NLNA's website is inadequate, which could better serve neighborhood stakeholders with information about NLNA activities and involvement, current and coming change, development procedures and requirements, and neighborhood resources.

## **NEIGHBORHOOD NEEDS SURVEY SUMMARY**

As described above in the overview of the planning process, Interface Studio with the help of the NLNA, conducted a Neighborhood Needs Survey, the results of which echo the values and concerns documented in the analysis. The neighborhood priorities made explicit by the survey feedback guide the recommendations set forth in the plan.

The NLNA received 86 completed surveys, 81% completed by neighborhood homeowners, 13% by renters, and 6% by business owners. The survey participants ranged in age from 18 to over 66 years, with 50% of the respondents between 26 and 40 years old. The length of residency of the survey

participants ranged from less than 2 years to longer than 21 years, with the greatest concentration (31%) of respondents having lived in Northern Liberties for 2 to 5 years. The survey results offer the following summary of neighborhood priorities and consensus:

### QUALITY OF LIFE

Cleaning and trash received the greatest overall number of votes, with 66% of those surveyed ranking cleaning and trash removal efforts as within their top three priorities. Safety and crime received the most votes as the number one quality of life priority, with 37% top priority votes. Parking concerns were a close third for the survey respondents.

### HOUSING NEEDS

The survey included a question about priorities regarding housing in the community. The survey offered a number of choices to improve local housing from stronger code enforcement to limiting parking curb cuts. Providing open space with new development received the greatest overall number of votes, with 73% of those surveyed ranking this need as within their top three priorities. Providing open space with new development also received the most votes as the number one priority, at 31%. Respondents also ranked the rehabilitation of existing buildings, improved code enforcement, and creation of new affordable housing as important.

### COMMERCIAL AND BUSINESS IMPROVEMENTS

Streetscape improvements for 2<sup>nd</sup> Street received the greatest overall number of votes, with 85% of those surveyed ranking this need as within their top three priorities. Streetscape improvements for 2<sup>nd</sup>

Street also received the most votes as the number one priority, at 35%. Respondents also placed much value in attracting and retaining a greater range of businesses and providing adequate street cleaning and trash removal in commercial areas.

### OPEN SPACE AND PUBLIC SPACE

Improvement of existing open space received the greatest overall number of votes, with 63% of those surveyed ranking this need as within their top three priorities. Improvement of existing open space also received the most votes as the number one priority, at 26%. Respondents also emphasized the high importance of creating new parks and planting additional street trees.

### NEIGHBORHOOD WIDE PRIORITIES

Improving 2<sup>nd</sup> Street as a neighborhood commercial center received the greatest overall number of votes, with 55% of those surveyed ranking this need as within their top three priorities. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street also received the most votes as the number one priority, at 17%. Respondents also emphasized the importance of creating additional parking resources, undertaking streetscape improvements for other major streets, and creating new parks and gardens.



# Recommendations

## Vision

Northern Liberties represents the convergence of location, transportation, industry, community, and social tolerance. Today, the distinct place that is Northern Liberties is impacted by widespread physical, social, and economic change. Proactively influencing and guiding change is the focus of this plan.

The plan seeks to empower the neighborhood as a strong community, a capable, progressive, involved, and creative partner informing local preservation and change. The underlying character of Northern Liberties serves as a guide for its future, a future that is:

- **Diverse** – with a commitment to maintaining racial, cultural, social and economic diversity and generating new growth that accommodates BOTH living and working;
  - **Distinctive** – with excellence in design for all new buildings and public space;
  - **Green** - with new development that is environmentally responsible and balanced by creation or conservation of green space;
  - **Livable** – with riverfront access, civic space and amenities, and added parking resources for both current residents and newcomers to the community; and
  - **Collaborative** – with transparent lines of communication between all residents and businesses and sustained grass roots activism.
- Reinforce the diversity of the neighborhood’s population and the unique collective identity.
  - Preserve the collaged landscape and mosaic of land uses.
  - Re-establish 2<sup>nd</sup> Street as the heart of the neighborhood.
  - Adopt a “Green” philosophy and demand low-impact development techniques.
  - Foster a seamless transition between the traditional neighborhood fabric and the developing waterfront.
  - Ensure livability through optimized mobility.
  - Build capacity within the NLNA; generate desirable change.

A source of continuity amidst change and a voice of democracy within the neighborhood, the Northern Liberties Neighbors Association will advocate for the realization of the plan’s vision.

The recommendations that follow respond to specific issues raised most frequently during the public outreach process. We have developed objectives to address each issue as well as strategies to meet the objectives. The strategies encompass both policies and actions: policies that the NLNA should adopt to guide their decisions regarding future development, and actions that the NLNA should strive to accomplish, either alone or in partnership, to build upon and support prized neighborhood assets and to reform undesirable trends, thereby shaping the neighborhood’s future. The seven key recommendations are:



## Recommendation 1.0

### Reinforce the diversity of the neighborhood's population and the unique collective identity.

Amidst the development interest and rush of new residents moving to Northern Liberties lies a deep concern about the future of the neighborhood's diversity and unique identity. While the landscape is experiencing visibly significant change, the population living behind Northern Liberties' doors is shifting at a more subtle pace. As real estate prices continue to climb, property owners in the neighborhood face higher taxes while the rents of tenants have been raised in response to the neighborhood's desirability. While existing residents fear further displacement from their neighborhood where affordability once welcomed a population diverse in race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status, residents with a far more homogeneous and affluent profile are moving in. With diversity, creativity, and openness at the core of Northern Liberties' self-identity, neighborhood stakeholders have a strong desire to at once protect local people and values while extending welcome to new residents.

This recommendation thus proposes a two part approach in which the neighborhood advocates for active preservation of the local mix of people, land uses, opportunities, and values while concurrently allowing the community to evolve and expand, bridging old with new, for a future defined by continuity, not temporal factions.

#### Objectives:

- Encourage a greater understanding of the area's history
- Protect, and where possible expand, affordable housing in the community
- Build the base of active neighborhood stakeholders to ensure continuity of values
- Dissolve tensions between long term residents and the influx of new neighbors

#### **Policy: Promote excellence in design through Urban Design Committee and Zoning Committee activity**

Northern Liberties' architectural legacy is evident by the varied mixture of building styles, materials, density and site design of properties throughout the community. The community's long history of tolerance and creativity has today made Northern Liberties one of the few communities where architectural experimentation is appreciated, and in some cases, expected. To promote a greater attention to design issues, the Urban Design Committee was formed to review the design aspects of projects and to coordinate with the Zoning committee on variance requests.

As the NLNA moves forward in refining its zoning review process, excellence in design must be promoted for all projects proposed in the community. Excellence in design refers to the following broad characteristics:

- Context sensitive site and building design that enhances the local environment;
- Use of quality materials that add value to the community as whole;
- Maximizing natural light through the use of adequate and attractive windows;
- Potential integration of green building techniques;
- Transparent and active street front facades at ground level particularly for commercial uses; and
- The avoidance of contrived historical references.

Excellence in design need not designate only contemporary architecture as an acceptable product as each project can and should develop designs that are responsive to its specific site and program requirements. Re-creating the past, however, is not appropriate nor reflective of Northern Liberties' long acceptance of change and creativity. As Northern Liberties continues to evolve, its unique architectural diversity and character should be protected with a continued acceptance and promotion of quality and varied designs.



*Northern Liberties has a long history of varied and innovative designs. The community continues to accept new designs that complement and enrich past eras of architecture. The collage of old and new provides a reading of the neighborhood over time.*

**Policy: For large, new, residential developments, advocate for affordable units**

The building boom that has sent median home prices soaring in Northern Liberties by 181% between 2003 and 2005 has raised extensive concerns over the long-term affordability of the neighborhood. Northern Liberties has long been a location for a wide mixture of families of different socioeconomic backgrounds.

Without action, the community's economic diversity is at risk for both homeowners and renters.

In some cities and counties, inclusionary zoning is used as a means to legally enforce mixed-income development by requiring 10%-15% affordable units for projects of over 10 units. Although Philadelphia does not have such a law in place, the NLNA should promote a percentage of affordable units be integrated within new developments of 25 units or

more. The NLNA should seek a maximum of 10% affordable units for larger projects of 50 units or more and minimum of 5% for smaller projects. Affordability should be defined as up to 80% of the City's median household income which in 2000 was \$30,700 dollars.

As this is not legally binding, the NLNA will only be able to promote this policy in close discussions with developers at the outset of each project. This will allow the NLNA and developers some flexibility in determining what is fair for each project. Further, the NLNA should offer density bonuses for projects that meet or exceed the 5-10% affordable requirements. Currently, the majority of the neighborhood has height limits of between 35' for residential districts to 60' for industrial zones. A 150% density bonus in terms of height could be offered as of right for projects that meet these requests. Further bonuses for specific sites (along the waterfront for instance) could be offered with additional negotiation.

**Recommendation 1.1 – Complete the Northern Liberties Community Center**

The Northern Liberties Community Center was conceived a decade ago as a means of providing a central gathering space for the community while creating central offices for the NLNA. A site was designated for the project and the NLNA subsequently raised funds and retained an architect to develop the approach. The City's Gift of Land Program was to provide the site at 3<sup>rd</sup> and Brown Streets to the NLNA for the community center. Since approval by the City for the transfer, however, the budget crisis impacted the process and the NLNA has yet to receive the property.



Proposed Community Center @ 3rd and Brown. Rendering: Re: Vision Architecture

Completion of the community center will be a major asset for the community providing a civic space to introduce new residents to the neighborhood, flexible space for exhibits and classes, NLNA offices and 4 rentable apartments which will provide a steady source of annual income for NLNA activities. The NLNA should organize a meeting with the RDA, Councilmen Clarke and DeCicco to resolve the delay and move forward with the project.

**Recommendation 1.2 – Encourage public art by local artists**

Public celebration of Northern Liberties’ creative spirit and people is another vehicle for reinforcing the neighborhood’s longstanding identity as a community of artists and artisans. The NLNA should work with local artist advocates, such as those behind the Art in Northern Liberties events, to preserve and document the neighborhood’s history with a permanent public installation showcasing local artists and crafts people. The commissioning of local artists to create pieces for display, enjoyment, and use within their community will introduce newcomers to the neighborhood’s vibe and will help ensure that as the buzz surrounding this “artist’s community” intensifies, the truth beneath the buzz does not face extinction.

While public art is a common tool for place-making strategies, the design of other streetscape amenities, such as benches, light posts, and garbage cans are often chosen from a catalog of prefabricated designs.



Above: street furniture design by artist Leo Razzi. Below: local murals

The NLNA should instead opt to work with local artists and designers to custom design new street furniture that reflects Northern Liberties’ character. The New Kensington CDC is locally leading these types of innovative efforts to marry public art and street furniture. Discussions with them regarding the recently installed Frankford Avenue ArtRacks should take place in a cooperative spirit to infuse all of the area with locally produced art.

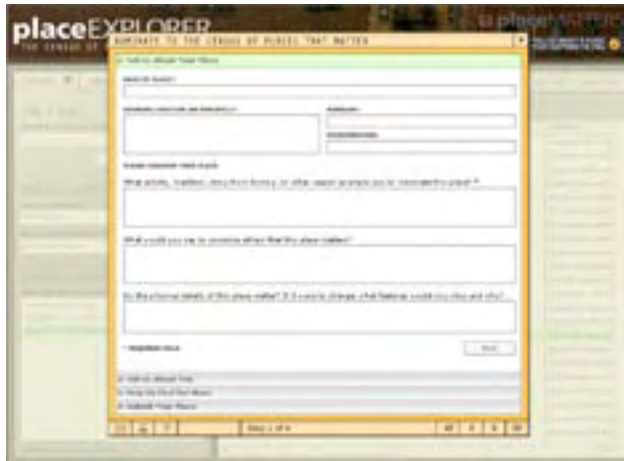
**Recommendation 1.3 – Use NLNA website for local stories and histories**

Northern Liberties is comprised of both families that have lived in the community for generations and those that have recently discovered the area. A major challenge, and concern, for long-time residents is how the character of Northern Liberties gets communicated to new residents such that what makes the community unique continues. The local histories and stories play a strong role in this process, creating the vibe in Northern Liberties that participants in the focus groups identified as distinctive, gritty, creative and quirky.

Websites represent critical opportunities to communicate and organize local information. Much



as Google provides a window to the internet, the local Northern Liberties website should provide a window into the people and place of the community. The use of the web as a means of organizing and



Top: Screen capture from the Murmur website - the map is interactive and contains embedded stories.

Below: PlaceMatters oral history project in NYC

distributing information is already well established with Northernliberties.org and phillyblog.com. The NLNA should augment these efforts with a project to reveal and distribute local stories. This is an on-line art project based on a very simple premise – the more one knows about where they live, the stronger the attachment to that place and the values that have evolved over time. The consultants heard many

stories about elements of Northern Liberties during this process covering everything from Liberty Lands to Girard Avenue. Designing a page on the website for everyone to hear and experience these stories is a means of exploring Northern Liberties' identity.

Examples exist of simple initiatives underway in different cities. New York Municipal Art Society allows users to post stories on-line as a running message board tied to a place. Murmur has recorded oral stories which are linked to an on-line map of specific districts within Toronto. These stories can also be accessed via cell phone within Toronto itself. As stated on the Murmur website –

“the city is full of stories, and some of them happen in parking lots and bungalows, diners and front lawns. The smallest, greyest or most nondescript building can be transformed by the stories that live in it.”

**Recommendation 1.4 – Consider re-activating the CDC to promote affordable housing**

The Northern Liberties Community Development Corporation (CDC) has been in place since the 1980s. Originally active in acquiring and developing small housing projects, the CDC's recent project has been to coordinate the implementation of the community center. Despite efforts on the community center as well as a designated president and executive director, the CDC is largely inactive. Land prices are too high to make development feasible and much of the local revitalization efforts are coordinated by the NLNA. However, a CDC can be a valuable tool for creating new affordable housing and acquiring additional funds for specific projects. The Fairmount CDC for instance recently



An early housing project by the CDC

received a TreeVitalize grant to plant 150 trees in that neighborhood.

For the CDC to be truly active, however, a half-time to full time staff will be necessary and funds in place to pay that staff person. CDCs maintain staff through small developer fees on their projects. For the Northern Liberties CDC to pursue this route, they will need to partner with a private developer on a project large enough for the CDC to develop a percentage of affordable housing units. This is one of the most effective roles the CDC can and should play in the community – advocating for affordable housing and, where possible, partnering to create new units.



The Northern Liberties Recreation Center is a local center of youth activity

**Recommendation 1.5 – Create a youth advisory council**

Northern Liberties has a burgeoning youth population, which will likely continue to grow as the neighborhood’s numerous young adults opt to remain in the area to raise their families. The preservation of Northern Liberties’ traditional role as a place of tolerance, diversity, creativity, and activism relies on the transmission of such values to community youth. To ensure continuity of the area’s history and unique qualities, local children, adolescents, and teens must play an active role in implementing the plan’s place making and community building elements.

A youth advisory council should be created to add depth to the NLNA’s outreach and activities. The youth council would communicate local concerns, interests, and activities of community youth to neighborhood leaders and would further serve as source of imaginative and innovative solutions key issues. As active participants and emerging leaders, the youth are apt to develop the neighborhood pride and sense of identity shared by their adult residents.

The youth council should have one representative at the table for every NLNA board meeting and deliver a youth report to the board. The NLNA should reach out to local schools and organizations to identify ideal candidates for the council. A partnership between parents, school administrators and the NLNA will make this possible. Discussions should take place within the coming year between these stakeholders to define a detailed outreach approach and creation of the council.

The council should be self sustaining over time with limited interference by NLNA members unless requested. In the interim, however, the NLNA will need to play an active role in capacity building among the participating youths to help them identify their priorities and arrange a meeting schedule and related activities.

**Recommendation 1.6 – Promote and expand organized community events**

The public outreach process elicited concerns regarding the future of Northern Liberties’ spirit, its sense of community and collective identity. Some residents sense that the neighborhood’s openness, friendliness, and longstanding appreciation of diversity are in danger of disappearing with the rapid influx of new residents and the displacement of long term neighbors due to raised housing costs. Other residents, both newcomers and those with a longer history in the neighborhood, feel that the close-knit nature of the NLNA deters active participation of willing volunteers and new people interested in continuing the neighborhood’s tradition as an activist and cooperative community. The two sentiments portray perceived conflict between the interest of the old and the new, beliefs that newcomers lack an



Local events such as First Saturdays and North of the Border as well as other festivals in Liberty Lands build appreciation and raise awareness for the community’s identity.

understanding about what it means live in Northern Liberties and that long term residents do not want to embrace the growing neighborhood constituency with traditional tolerant and welcoming enthusiasm.

These contradictory concerns underscore the importance of the NLNA’s community building events and festivities. The NLNA must continue promoting its neighborhood-wide festivals with vigor, as such

social opportunities provide a valuable forum for old and new residents to meet and establish common ground. The NLNA should create a year-long activity calendar in partnership with other active groups in Northern Liberties, such as Art in Northern Liberties and the businesses spearheading Northern Liberties' First Saturdays. The calendar, to be posted on the NLNA's website and on the community bulletin board in Liberty Lands, should advertise community-wide events and festivities for all seasons, adding continuity to community building efforts and encouraging consistent participation.

NLNA-sponsored events should also extend a welcome to other neighborhood bodies, such as local religious institutions and non-profit organizations, who serve a broader constituency in Northern Liberties. Their involvement will help populate community building activities with new faces. Collaboration between the NLNA and other local organizations as co-hosts of new events and creators of a comprehensive neighborhood social calendar will benefit the community at large, the NLNA, and the other organizations as well.

## Recommendation 2.0

### Preserve Northern Liberties' collaged landscape and mosaic of land uses.

Traditionally a place of industry and artisanal work, housing both laborers and their workplaces, Northern Liberties is losing its base of industrial and commercial operations. The strength of the local residential real estate market has rendered housing the most lucrative form of redevelopment in the neighborhood. The growing live-work trend is also

spurring the conversion of small-scale industrial sites into studio spaces with attached living quarters. Aware of the significant population increase that accompanies new residential projects, the NLNA must be mindful of the demand for new commercial services to meet the needs of the growing populace. The neighborhood must, therefore, have a clear concept of the commercial services that the neighborhood needs and the locations best suited for such uses, prepared with a comprehensive approach to guide commercial and economic development.

The recommendation that the NLNA strive to preserve the neighborhood's varied landscape and

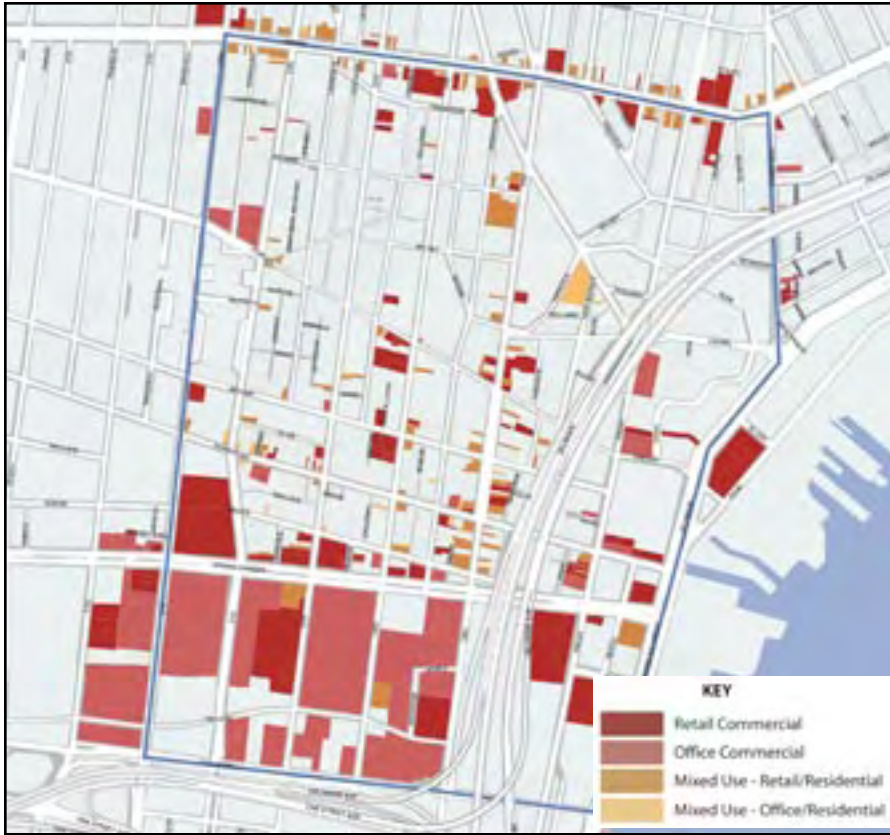
eclectic land uses recognizes the desire to preserve a link to the area's industrial past and the need for accessible new services to meet the needs of a growing residential population.

Objectives:

- Retain mixed-use quality of neighborhood
- Attract and maintain a diverse mix of businesses
- Ensure a wide range of services are locally available

*Delaware Avenue, 1930s*





Top left: Existing commercial use dispersed throughout Northern Liberties. Top right: The bottling house on American Street. Below: the historic market / headhouse along 2nd Street.

**Policy: Limit conversion of commercial properties for residential development**

The integrated collage of commercial and residential properties that typifies Northern Liberties' history is diminishing. Over the past decade, many properties formally used for commercial or manufacturing purposes have been transformed into housing. At this time, many developers based on this past experience, expect that they can pay top dollar for commercial sites in anticipation of turning the property into residential use. This practice has raised land values and forced the community to constantly question whether the future of each site should be commercial or residential.

As a matter of policy, the NLNA should not allow conversions of commercial and industrial properties solely for residential use. Some amount of commercial, artisanal or light industrial use is expected in each project based upon negotiations between the NLNA and developers. In areas where the existing zoning supports this policy, the NLNA will have strong support from the Zoning Board of Adjustments which reviews closely use variances.

For this policy to have maximum effect, the NLNA may need to assist developers in finding commercial tenants for specific properties. The proposed business association should take this task on as part of a retention / marketing effort to improve

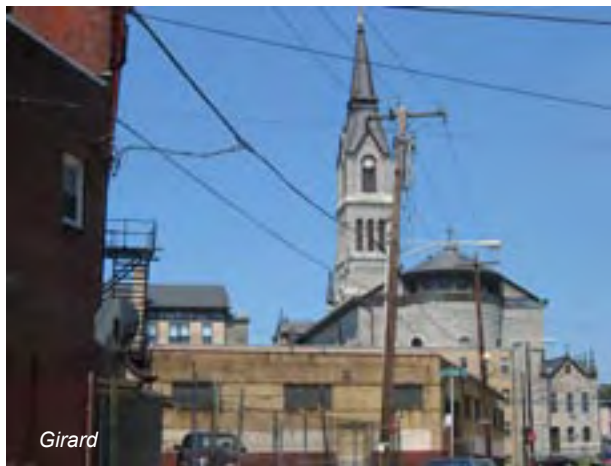


the local commercial environment as described in Recommendation 2.2.

**Policy: Encourage commercial use on Girard, Spring Garden, and 2<sup>nd</sup> Street**

Despite the mixed-use quality of Northern Liberties with some amount of commercial activity on nearly every block, historically, commercial activities were focused on Girard Avenue, Spring Garden Street and 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. Although each corridor has evolved differently, these three corridors remain focal areas for commercial activity. The NLNA should continue to promote and encourage commercial uses for each of these corridors. Different activities should be advanced for each corridor.

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Street – As the traditional heart of the community and an issue of primary concern for the majority of respondents to the Neighborhood Needs Survey, 2<sup>nd</sup> Street requires a mix of new development, traffic calming and public improvements. The NLNA should coordinate all of these activities as described further in Recommendation 3.0.
- Girard Avenue – The Girard Coalition is actively working to improve the business and physical climate of Girard Avenue. As a major east-west corridor in the City and boundary with adjoining neighborhoods, Girard should not be forgotten by the NLNA. It remains a primary source of real and perceived criminal activity and its continued improvement will benefit all neighborhoods. The NLNA should coordinate closely with the Girard Coalition as plans move forward and the Route 15 Trolley is reinstated.



- Spring Garden Street – Spring Garden has become a back door between neighborhoods. From river to river, uses oriented toward automobiles have settled along the corridor. Within Northern Liberties, Spring Garden is primarily dominated by office use and entertainment / club venues. However, a few sites along Spring Garden are either currently vacant or “soft sites” as identified in the analysis. The NLNA should promote commercial and mixed-use development in these locations with a stronger street presence and limited negative impacts on surrounding residential areas. Some guidelines for key sites are included in Recommendation 2.3.

**Recommendation 2.1 – Form a business association with the legitimacy and support of a wide range of local businesses**

A decade ago, business in Northern Liberties was limited to the remaining industrial uses and a handful of local stores. Since that time, the business environment in Northern Liberties has expanded widely. New restaurants, cafes, stores and necessary services like banks now form a strong presence within the community. Currently, there is a critical mass of varying commercial activities but no forum within which to reinforce and leverage their business to improve the community. As noted in the focus group meetings, business owners and merchants have a number of concerns that are not presently being met within the neighborhood or through NLNA activities.

With a growing number and variety of businesses, the neighborhood should have a business association to coordinate their activities and bring

additional financial resources to the community. The business association should be comprised of a wide range of businesses thereby representing the interests and concerns of large cross section of the local business climate. Specifically, business association activities could include:

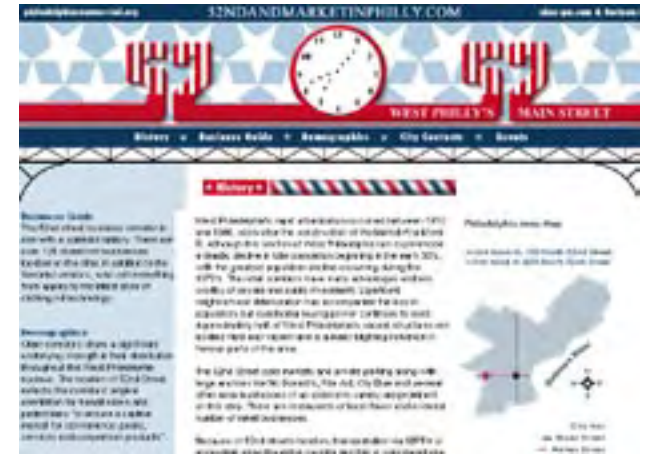
- Trash removal and regular cleaning;
- Hiring of ambassadors or other personnel dedicated to providing more eyes on the street;
- Fundraising and coordination for streetscape improvements including 2<sup>nd</sup> Street;
- Marketing and promotion of local businesses, events and activities;
- Façade and other physical improvements;
- Small business assistance and education about navigating the neighborhood review process for interested new businesses; and
- Advocating and fundraising for potential parking structures.

The business association must have its own board of directors and a full time staff position to coordinate activities. Typically, this staff is paid for by a combination of Department of Commerce funds and membership dues. It is imperative that the business association, although a separate organization with its own mission and budget, should be guided by the NLNA. The proposal here is twofold: 1. Share board members between the two board of directors and; 2. Pay the business association staff person's salary through the NLNA. This is a typical arrangement whereby Department of Commerce funding is

usually targeted toward established neighborhood non-profits to assist in starting up a business association. The staff person, as executive director of the business association, could also be the head of the NLNA's Economic Development Committee and thus coordinate all activities relating to business development.

The Department of Commerce and the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) offers planning funds to begin the process of creating a business association. This money can be used to hire a consultant who specializes in business associations who would create a business plan for the organization. The business plan would identify the committees and, by working with the NLNA, develop an action plan for business association activities for the next 5 years. Specifically, the business plan would also identify the specific types of commercial uses / niches that Northern Liberties should retain and attract to the community.

Once a business association is in place, Northern Liberties will be able to apply for larger sums of money to accomplish specific improvements in the neighborhood. These resources include Main Street dollars (for commercial corridors) and Elm Street money (to improve neighborhoods surrounding commercial districts) both of which provide substantial resources and assistance. Eight commercial corridors within Philadelphia are currently receiving dollars through LISC by nature of their strong capacity in organizing their activities and proactively planning for their commercial environment. It is time that Northern Liberties take control of its commercial future by organizing, fundraising and promoting the area for business.



Websites for local business associations. Top: 52nd Street. Bottom: Broad and Olney.

Once in place, the Business Association could also create a Special Improvement District (SID) as an alternative or additional source of funding to support beautification, safety, and trash removal initiatives. All businesses within the neighborhood or along a commercial corridor would be required to buy into the SID through an additional annual tax that would finance the improvements. The SID structure affords 100% business participation, eliminating cases of free riding by neighboring businesses who might otherwise opt out of contributions for

streetscape improvements and amenities. The SID would also be an established vehicle through which the business community can give back to the neighborhood, thereby smoothing relations between conflicting uses.

### **Recommendation 2.2 – Create a business retention and marketing initiative**

Building from above, one of the business association’s primary objectives is to create a business retention and marketing initiative. The flight of commercial business and light industrial use to other areas cannot be stopped solely by discouraging the conversion of commercial and industrial properties to residential use. The neighborhood again must be proactive in defining the types of uses they would like to see and work closely with developers, realtors and property owners to match the right business with the right space. At this time, the following broad categories of uses are recommended:

- Specialty stores (clothing, crafts, home furnishings),
- Local services (banks, pharmacies, dry cleaners, florists, beauty services),
- Restaurants (small, BYOB establishments),
- Food markets,
- Galleries,
- Small offices / professional services and,
- Artisanal uses.

As mentioned above, a business plan for the association should identify which specific uses and niches should be developed according to the market realities within Northern Liberties and the objectives of the NLNA.

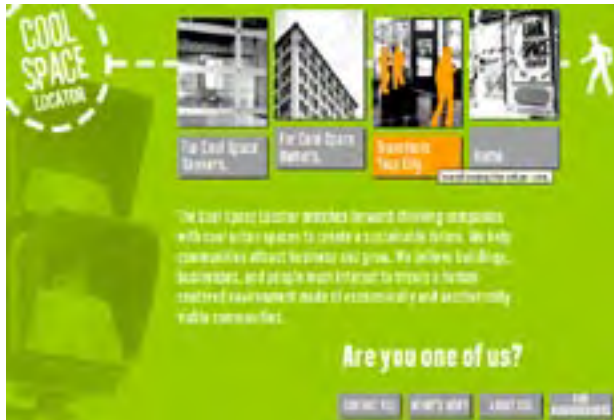
This initiative will rely heavily upon keeping a comprehensive database of commercial properties within the community. Information on property ownership, land use and zoning status, tax information and square footage should form the basis of the database to be maintained by the business association executive director. This data can be used to recruit specific uses and merchants through working with local realtors. A business association website can also play an active role by encouraging businesses, artists and others looking for space to contact the business association and review available space in the area.

A relevant example is the CoolSpace Locator in Pittsburgh, PA. CoolSpace was set up to market the vacant and “funkier” spaces in the City for small office and artisanal uses. These spaces, due to their size, condition or otherwise, are often left out of traditional marketing and real estate sites thus remaining vacant. Any small business owner or artist will tell you that finding cool space in Philadelphia can be a real challenge. Given the diversity of spaces in Northern Liberties, marketing empty commercial space for new tenants could provide the assistance property owners and/or developers need to retain commercial use in the neighborhood.

An important supporting component to the business marketing and retention strategy involves assisting interested businesses in navigating the NLNA and City project review processes. As the



*Vacant industrial structures would benefit from a proactive marketing and retention program.*



Cool Space Locator, Pittsburgh

review process can be daunting and confusing for a new, small business owner, guidance from existing business owners would prevent the loss of potential commercial service providers deterred by the prospects of negotiating with neighborhood stakeholders. Such mentoring, conducted by the Business Association, would help attract new businesses to Northern Liberties.

**Recommendation 2.3 – Create and adopt guiding principles for the redevelopment of key commercial properties**

There are many soft sites that require a closer examination by the community either due to their scale, previous use or location. This plan identifies a number of critical soft sites whose redevelopment will have a large impact on the community within the next few years. These sites were chosen by community members through the planning process.

The NLNA should be proactive about determining what it is they want for key sites. A set of principles and simple diagrams should be produced for each key site by members of the Urban Design

Committee and Zoning Committee to be used in negotiations with developers. The principles provide clear expectations from the community to potential developers that can be used as an initial guide for their plans.

At this time, six sites were chosen by the community for the development of design principles. These include: The Liberty Shopping Plaza and adjacent manufacturing uses extending to Fairmount; the Paradise Day Care site; the north side of Spring Garden between 3<sup>rd</sup> and Orianna Streets; the north side of Spring Garden between 4<sup>th</sup> and Lawrence Streets; scattered sites along Green Street between 5<sup>th</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Streets; vacant and under utilized properties along Front Street and under the I-95 / El overpasses; and 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. The last two sites are addressed in more detail in other portions of this report.



Key properties / soft sites identified for the creation of design principles. The waterfront area and 2nd Street are discussed later in the plan.

## Liberty Shopping Plaza

*Location:* Between 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, Spring Garden and Fairmount.

*Existing Uses:* 1 story shopping center on Spring Garden with two manufacturing uses behind toward Fairmount.

*Zoning:* L4 – Limited Industrial. 60' height maximum / no open space requirements / permits the uses allowed in any commercial district except for dwellings and public utilities substations

### *Design Principles:*

- Encourage a mix of uses including office, artisanal, limited retail and residential.
- Limit set backs on Spring Garden to activate street edge.
- Promote varying densities with taller structures along Spring Garden and shorter buildings along Fairmount.
- Explore the possibility of a private or public parking deck along Spring Garden to serve the new development and the clubs and entertainment venues in the area.
- Ensure the design of any parking is screened from nearby residential use.
- Re-connect Green Street to disperse traffic and provide a stronger linkage between the Northern Liberties and West Poplar neighborhoods.

- Promote parking in the interior of the site.
- Ensure green space is provided to mitigate storm water runoff.

- Consider a small public plaza at the corner of 5<sup>th</sup> and Spring Garden to enhance this gateway to the community.



## Paradise Day Care

*Location:* South of Poplar between Orianna and 3rd.

*Existing Uses:* Day care and residential uses.

*Zoning:* G2 – Heavy Industrial. No height restrictions except as limited by other provisions of the district / maximum floor area ration (F.A.R.) of 500% of the lot area / no open space requirements / permits all manufacturing uses, trolley and cab stations, bus terminals, car and bus barns, correctional institutions, meat packing, laundry and dry cleaning, and building materials storage.

*Design Principles:*

- Encourage a mix of uses along 3<sup>rd</sup> Street including office, artisanal and retail. Although the community wants to retain the day care, without a new tenant, other commercial uses should be considered.

- Focus residential use above commercial use on the Paradise Day Care site.
- Ensure a zero-setback along 3<sup>rd</sup> Street for the Paradise Day Care site.
- Consider up to 4 stories of new development on the Paradise Day Care site.
- Ensure the design of any parking is screened from nearby residential use focusing lots along Orianna (which is already across from a parking lot).
- Ensure green space is provided to mitigate stormwater runoff.
- Explore the potential of a mid-block pedestrian access-way to connect Orianna to 3<sup>rd</sup> Street with potential extension of a footpath through to American Street, accessing and the bottling house.

North side of Spring Garden between 3<sup>rd</sup> and Orianna Streets

*Existing Uses:* Vacant lots

*Zoning:* C4 – Multi-Story Office. No height restrictions / maximum F.A.R. of 500% / no open space requirements except that buildings of 5 stories or less containing one or more families may not occupy more than 90% of the lot area / permits high-density business core uses such as parking garages above or below ground floor level and all other commercial uses except automobile sales, rental or leasing lots, automobile service facilities, and public or private parking lots.

*Design Principles:*

- Encourage office / retail use along Spring Garden Street.
- Oppose proposals for drive-thru uses.



Paradise Day Care.



Diagram illustrating potential uses, connections and locations of parking and open space.



Spring Garden and Orianna

- Promote parking and loading areas behind structure access from either 3<sup>rd</sup> or Orianna.
- Consider reducing parking minimums to ensure parking is not visible from Spring Garden.
- Promote permeable materials to reduce storm water runoff.

North side of Spring Garden between 4<sup>th</sup> and Lawrence Streets

*Existing Uses:* Vacant gas station

*Zoning:* C4 – Multi-Story Office. No height restrictions / maximum F.A.R. of 500% / no open space requirements except that buildings of 5 stories or less containing one or more families may not occupy more than 90% of the lot area / permits high-density business core uses such as parking garages above or below ground floor level and all other commercial uses except automobile sales, rental or leasing lots, automobile service facilities, and public or private parking lots.



Spring Garden and 4<sup>th</sup>

*Design Principles:*

- Encourage office / retail use along Spring Garden Street.
- Oppose proposals for drive-thru uses.
- Promote parking and loading areas behind structure access from either 4<sup>th</sup> or Lawrence.
- Consider reducing parking minimums to ensure parking is not visible from Spring Garden.
- Promote permeable materials to reduce storm water runoff.

Scattered properties along Green Street between 5<sup>th</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Streets

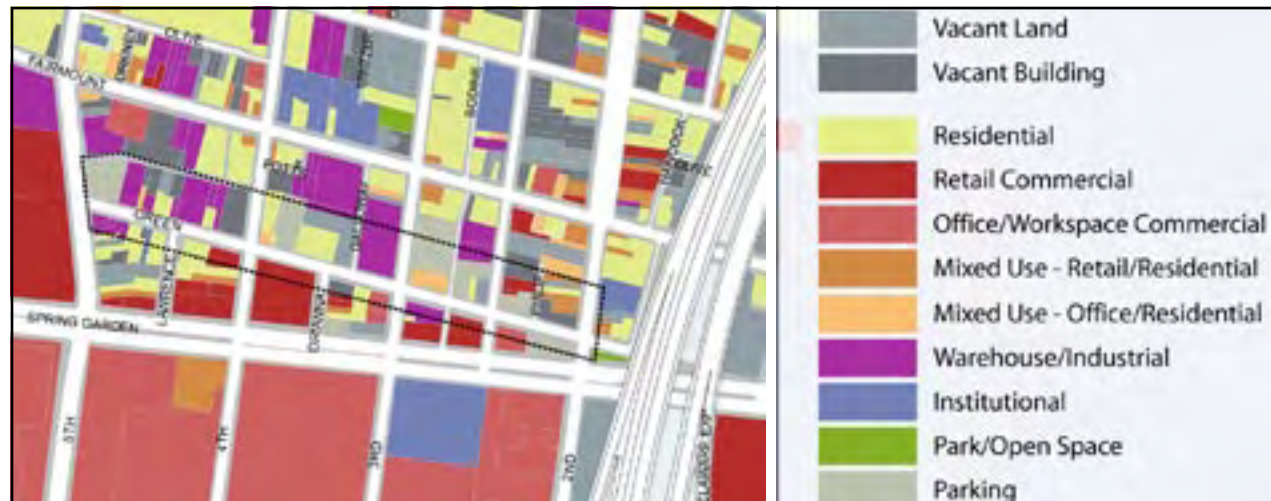
*Existing Uses:* A mix of residential and light industrial uses

*Zoning:* Primarily L4 – Light Industrial with two pockets of C4, Multi-Story Office on the northeast

corner 3<sup>rd</sup> and Green and the northwest corner of 2<sup>nd</sup> and Green. A handful of properties zoned R-10 is located between Orianna and 4<sup>th</sup> on the north side of Green.

*Design Principles:*

- Encourage reuse of any vacant industrial structures for new office, artisanal or light industrial uses.
- Promote the restoration of any historic detailing.
- Allow upper floor residential use for reuse of industrial structures where appropriate.
- Limit new uses that require frequent loading.
- Limit any proposed curb cuts and eliminate curb cuts where possible.
- Promote permeable materials and drainage systems on roofs to reduce storm water runoff.



Existing land use along Green Street



Green Street



Green Street looking west



Green Street at Phillip Street

### Recommendation 3.0

#### Re-establish 2<sup>nd</sup> Street as the heart of Northern Liberties, reflective of local character and equipped to meet neighborhood needs.

Once a flourishing commercial corridor from Northern Liberties' southern edge to its northern boundary, 2<sup>nd</sup> Street today only hints at its bustling past and future potential to become, once again, a thriving and vibrant neighborhood center. Community leaders, residents, artists, business owners, and developers, all active stakeholders in Northern Liberties, vocalized recognition of the street's special role within the neighborhood, concern about its current state, and commitment to its revitalization. At present, the street enjoys a distinctive character, underscored by the mix of specialized retail, bars, and restaurants, the lack of national retail chains, and the prevalence of fallow land and vacant structures. Indeed, the west side of the street does not reflect the apparent reinvestment on the eastern side, giving the impression that redevelopment along 2<sup>nd</sup> Street lags behind that of the rest of Northern Liberties.

In addition to the high vacancy rate, the street suffers from high traffic speed. Though the two widened blocks between Fairmount and Laurel suggest that 2<sup>nd</sup> Street is a unique place, appropriate for public gathering space in addition to clustered retail, chaotic vehicular traffic currently dominates the street's social life. The revitalization of 2<sup>nd</sup> Street faces further challenges as commercial development projects meet the strong resistance of neighboring residential uses. Without a clear and documented

vision for 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, the street's redevelopment will remain slow and piecemeal, yielding a haphazard result that falls short of a cherished and quirky, well designed, mixed use strip that reflects the neighborhood's identity and meets constituent needs.

It is therefore integral that the NLNA and its constituents collaborate with developer interest to "re-establish 2<sup>nd</sup> Street at the heart of the neighborhood," ensuring that the end result remains an interesting and colorful place. The recommendation establishes place-based policies, actions, and design scenarios intended to support 2<sup>nd</sup> Street's future commercial viability, reduce polarizing conflict regarding new development, and build spaces for community development and enjoyment.

#### Objectives:

- Re-establish 2<sup>nd</sup> Street as the neighborhood's center of commercial and social activity
- Minimize conflict between commercial and residential uses
- Expand the range of commercial services available



2nd Street, early 1900s



- Reduce traffic speed
- Improve pedestrian environment
- Create public gathering space

**Policy: Encourage a ground floor commercial use for every parcel between Spring Garden Street and Girard Avenue**

2<sup>nd</sup> Street’s commercial viability depends as much on the buzz of its marketing, which pulls expendable income into the neighborhood for other parts of Philadelphia, as it does on its cultivation as a true commercial destination with a cluster of varied commercial services, both functional and recreational, within walking distance of local residents. The NLNA should, therefore, adopt a policy that encourages ground floor commercial use along 2<sup>nd</sup> Street for every parcel between Spring Garden Street and Girard Avenue, where a concentration of commercial activity already exists. The mix of residential uses within the commercial fabric of 2<sup>nd</sup> Street is a valuable asset, complementing the commercial services by providing an immediate consumer base. Furthermore,

residential uses offset the nuisances that often accompany commercial uses, like noise, trash, and odors. However, a strong commercial corridor benefits from storefront continuity that keeps pedestrians engaged, and housing, therefore, should be constrained to the second floor and above.

Promoting ground floor commercial along 2<sup>nd</sup> Street will also increase the square footage available to interested retailers and service providers, creating space for a larger base of commercial services for local residents. However, for an approach that concentrates commercial uses along one corridor to be successful, the neighborhood must be clear about the kinds of commercial uses needed and desired. The abundance of bars and restaurants in the vicinity populates the street with people and fills available parking in the evenings and on weekends. As the grievances associated with the number of bars in the neighborhood are well documented, location of new bars along 2<sup>nd</sup> Street is discouraged. It is recommended, therefore, that daytime commercial uses that provide services for the local community be promoted as identified in Recommendation 2.2.

The NLNA Zoning Committee and Urban Design Committee should be responsible for implementing the new policy as they review development proposals, and the Business Association, once formed and active, should devise a specific list of new business types to target for added breadth in Northern Liberties’ commercial environment.

**Policy: Remove loading docks from 2<sup>nd</sup> Street**

As another matter of policy, the NLNA should lobby to remove the loading docks along 2<sup>nd</sup> Street that serve currently inactive or vacant buildings and should forbid the creation of loading docks for new development along 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. “No Parking” signs currently punctuate 2<sup>nd</sup> Street’s façade, consuming valuable space for added on-street parking and harming the streetscape with large metal garage fronts that do not encourage pedestrian passersby. Loading docks further disrupt commercial activity on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street by causing persistent traffic blockage problems during commercial deliveries. Local residents also lament the associated traffic jams, causing conflict between residents and business owners and breeding hostility toward new commercial development proposals.



2<sup>nd</sup> Street, today



Active retail along 2<sup>nd</sup> Street between Green and Fairmount



Dead space on 2<sup>nd</sup> north of Brown



*Loading docks along 2nd Street*

In the short term, the removal of loading docks from inactive commercial uses will grow the neighborhood's parking supply. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street will gain as many as 30 parking spaces between Spring Garden and Laurel with the removal of commercial loading docks. As new development and tenants replace the vacant buildings, storefronts will restore visual interest to the sidewalk environment and will enhance the feeling of public safety by adding more windows and eyes on the street. While the removal of active loading docks is unlikely, a ban on new

loading docks for commercial uses will limit traffic blockage along 2<sup>nd</sup> Street caused by commercial deliveries during the workday. Such a stance against loading docks will also decrease opposition to commercial projects by adjacent neighbors who wish to prevent truck traffic and parking loss near their homes.

**Recommendation 3.1 – Undertake traffic calming measures at key intersections**

The lack of traffic calming measures along 2<sup>nd</sup> Street creates a hazardous navigating environment for vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians, alike. The widened blocks between Fairmount and Poplar are devoid of lane lines, and as a result, up to four lanes of one-way traffic can travel between the rows of parking on either side of the street. Pedestrians must traverse seventy two feet of roadway when crossing the street. While the intersections at Brown and Fairmount have traffic lights and crosswalks, the intersection at Poplar has neither. The widened blocks lack parking lines designating the diagonal parking spaces, encouraging cars to pull arbitrarily into parking spaces at speeds. Parked cars must back out into the fast and irregular oncoming traffic. The street narrows again south of Fairmount, creating a traffic bottleneck, in which two lanes of one-way traffic, still traveling quickly, squeeze between two lanes of parallel parking. The lack of traffic calming measures attracts frequent truck travel. A successful urban commercial corridor requires pedestrian safety and accessibility as well as usable public gathering spaces. Before 2<sup>nd</sup> Street can realize its potential as the heart of the Northern Liberties, existing travel conditions must be tamed.

The three intersections that frame the widened section of 2<sup>nd</sup> Street require enhanced traffic calming measures to help vehicles navigate the transition between wide and narrow travel routes and to assist pedestrians in crossing the broad thoroughfare. The sidewalks at Fairmount, Brown and Poplar require bump outs or extensions to shrink the gap between the street's edges, decreasing the distance that pedestrians must travel to cross the street. Sidewalk bump outs will also funnel traffic into two lanes at each intersection despite the greater width of the street. Raised crosswalks or atypical paving should call attention to the pedestrian right-of-ways between the sidewalk bump outs, alerting drivers to the presence of people on foot. The intersection at 2<sup>nd</sup> Street and Poplar requires a traffic light as well to control vehicle speeds as they enter the widened space. Parking reconfiguration, explained in detail in Recommendation 3.3, will further slow traffic speeds.



*Traffic calming devices such as crosswalks, speed bumps, raised intersections and bump-outs can help to manage traffic flow along 2nd Street*



Germantown

Laurel

Poplar

Brown

Fairmount



Recommendations

Plan and section illustrating existing conditions along 2nd Street between Fairmount and Poplar

North of the street widening, the intersections at Laurel and Germantown need traffic calming tactics as well. A traffic light and raised or paved crosswalks at Laurel Street would increase the safety of pedestrians en route to and from Liberty Lands Park and would help manage excess traffic volume during park festivals and events. Finally, traffic calming measures at the large intersection at 2<sup>nd</sup> Street and Germantown Avenue are necessary. The open expanse of one-way road between Girard and Germantown currently invites high speed travel as drivers enter Northern Liberties and continue toward the heart of the neighborhood. The width of the Germantown intersection justifies inclusion of curb bump outs in addition to a traffic light and raised or paved crosswalks. A traffic light is also necessary

to provide safe traffic management for the future residents of the Schmidt's Brewery site who will access Germantown Avenue to reach the proposed parking garage proposed as part of the development.

**Recommendation 3.2 – Change 2<sup>nd</sup> Street’s one-way traffic flow to two-way**

2<sup>nd</sup> Street’s one-way traffic flow further hampers the economic success of the commercial corridor. Running from north to south, visitors to 2<sup>nd</sup> Street traveling from neighborhoods to the south must navigate around their destination though the neighborhood’s network of one-way, primarily residential streets. As a result, residential areas experience increased traffic volume, and 2<sup>nd</sup> Street



2nd Street north of Poplar. Despite the narrower cartway, high traffic speeds are common.

fails to capture easily potential customers driving along the heavily traveled Spring Garden Street. To reinforce the commercial activity along 2nd Street between Spring Garden and Girard, the street's traffic should be changed to two-way. Conversion to two-way traffic would better disperse traffic throughout the neighborhood, add navigational choices, and slow traffic speeds.

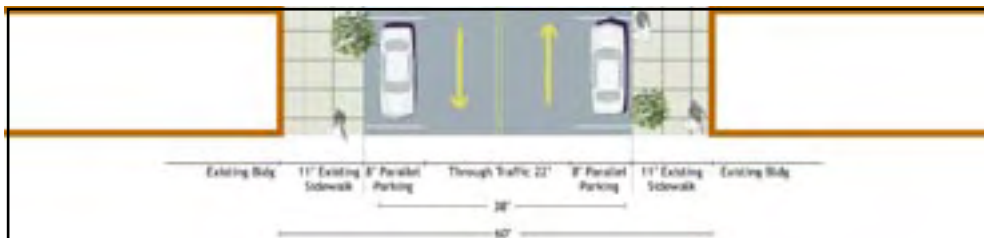
Because reconfiguring directional travel patterns is a major undertaking, requiring an in-depth traffic study, partnership with the City, and financial resources, the conversion of 2nd Street to a two-way street within Northern Liberties' borders could be undertaken in phases. The widened blocks between Fairmount and Poplar are presently in need of major streetscape improvements, to be discussed



Existing traffic flow

to be designed to allow cars to loop, between these two blocks (Bainbridge Street in Queens Village is an example of this traffic configuration). Changing only these two blocks to two-way would fail to pull traffic from Spring Garden and would not connect the commercial corridor to Laurel Street and Liberty Lands. While the Phase I scenario is not ideal, the neighborhood and the City would be able to measure the economic benefits and added mobility of the redirected travel pattern and evaluate whether the projected gains of converting the rest of the street justify doing so.

The Phase II scenario, changing 2nd Street to two-way between Spring Garden and Laurel would remedy the constraints of the first Phase. Spring Garden would feed traffic directly to 2nd Street's commercial uses and would afford access to Liberty Lands during park festivals and events that typically bring large numbers of people to Northern Liberties, thus boosting business along 2nd Street through added visibility and access. The residents of 3rd Street would also benefit from reduced north bound travel along their street. However, given the narrower width of the blocks between Spring Garden and Fairmount and Poplar and Laurel, changing those blocks to two-way could cause traffic conflicts at the active loading docks on 2nd Street. In the existing one-way conditions, cars can circumvent parked delivery trucks freely. Phase II must therefore be undertaken in conjunction with anti-loading docks policy. The narrower portions of 2nd Street would need to be widened slightly to continue accommodating two lanes of traffic and two lanes of on-street parking. This would entail taking one foot from each sidewalk (which are currently 13') and transferring them to parking lanes.



Narrower portions of 2nd Street could still accommodate on-street parking with two-way traffic flow by slightly reducing sidewalk widths to 11'.

in Recommendation 3.3, and given their width, are also poised for a trial of the two-way scenario. Given that the change is only for two blocks, the street would need



Traffic flow alternatives. Left: two-way between Fairmount & Poplar. Middle: two-way between Spring Garden & Laurel. Right: two-way between Spring Garden and Girard.

The long-term goal, Phase III, is the optimal solution to boosting commerce along 2<sup>nd</sup> Street in Northern Liberties, changing the street from Spring Garden to Girard to two-way. This complete redirection of traffic would afford the most freedom of mobility, the most accessibility, and the most visibility to new businesses locating north of Laurel and included in the redevelopment of the Schmidt’s Brewery site. This scenario is also the most costly and will require the most signage to communicate the changes to drivers.

**Recommendation 3.3 – Significantly improve the physical character of 2<sup>nd</sup> Street between Poplar and Fairmount**

The final recommendation intended to spur 2<sup>nd</sup> Street’s return as the thriving and vibrant heart of Northern Liberties, calls for significant improvement of the street’s physical environment, specifically within the widened segment between Fairmount and Poplar. Between Fairmount and Poplar, the space between the buildings on either side of the road is a full 100 feet wide, 72 feet of which are currently devoted to parking and driving. The space is dramatically larger than the road width of the remainder of 2<sup>nd</sup> Street within Northern Liberties’ boundaries, which provides 60 feet of throughway between buildings and 34 feet of roadway for parking and driving. The widened space, framed on either end by a more typically scaled street, feels inherently special. The space, which once housed a head house that served the surrounding community, is currently an opportunity unrealized, a void where a restored civic gathering space belongs.

The NLNA should initiate the redevelopment of the public space along 2<sup>nd</sup> Street between Fairmount and



Top: East side of 2nd Street. Bottom: West side of 2nd Street

Poplar, mindful of the following guiding principles: slowing traffic, reducing stormwater runoff, providing bicycle and pedestrian amenities, and creating usable civic space.

Common to all alternatives presented here, is a recommendation that the NLNA advocate for back-

in diagonal parking on the wide blocks of 2<sup>nd</sup> Street in place of the existing pull-in diagonal parking. As previously mentioned, pull-in parking facilitates hasty parking but leaves drivers to back out into the high speed oncoming traffic. While diagonal parking consumes less street width than perpendicular parking, 16 feet versus 19 feet respectively, back-in

diagonal parking enjoys safety benefits that pull-in parking does not.

The advantages of back-in parking include good visibility and ease when exiting the space, better view of approaching bicyclists, curbside loading, and vehicle doors opening toward curb directing small



Back-in parking examples from other communities.

children safely to sidewalk. The maneuver required to enter a back-in diagonal space entails two fewer steps than parallel parking, and as the instructive signs illustrate, “It’s as easy as 1-2-3: Signal, Stop, Reverse.” Back-in parking exists across the country and has been in place in Seattle for 30 years, Washington, D.C. for 20 years. Pottstown, Pennsylvania recently implemented back-in angle parking along the main commercial corridor with much success.

What follows is a description of design alternatives for 2<sup>nd</sup> Street utilizing the principles stated above. These are intended to generate discussion and interest about the future of 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. As the design of such an important corridor will require a separate set of public outreach and design development, a consultant will need to be hired to lead the design process and develop construction documents. In

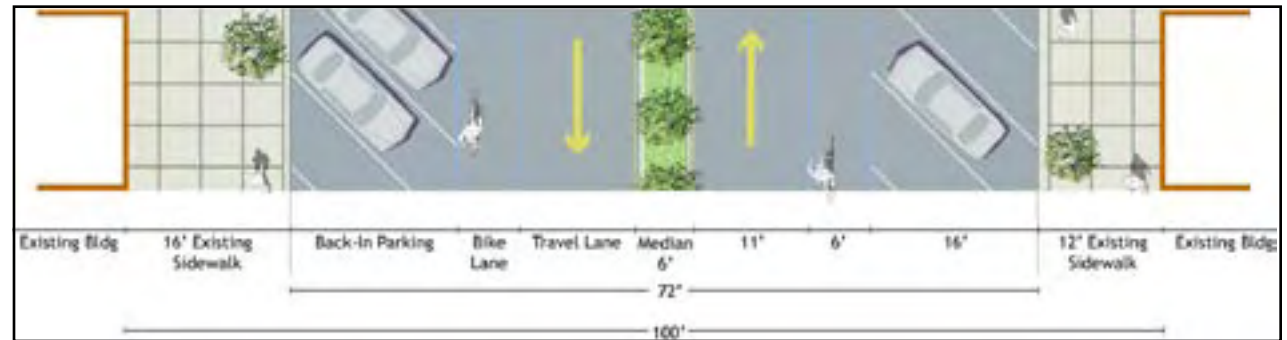
the end, the design will be tailored to the amount of money the community can raise through grants, donations, City agencies and other organizations that target dollars to the types of improvements proposed here. It should be noted that the inclusion of a green streetscape approach including stormwater basins and swales expands the available sources of funds for the project allowing the NLNA to tap organizations with sustainable development as their focus for assistance.

### Base Scenario

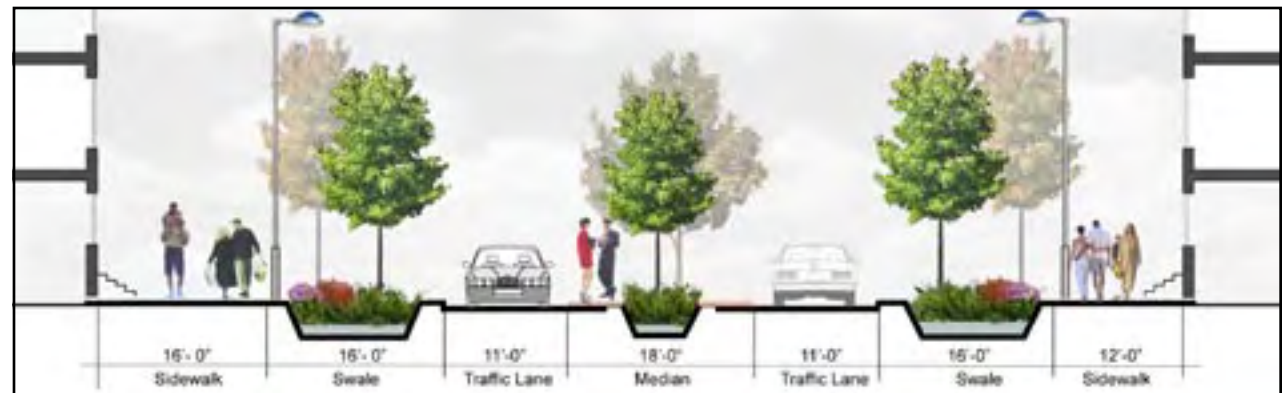
The base scenario recognizes that reinvestment in the streetscape will bring additional commercial and residential activity to 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, in turn enlivening the street life that occurs on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street’s existing

sidewalks. Allowing the existing sidewalks to remain the forum for public interaction, the base scenario addresses the parking, traffic speed, and greening needs of the two widened blocks. The second and third scenarios incorporate the same parking, traffic, and stormwater management approaches, while focusing greater attention of the design of addition space for meeting and gathering.

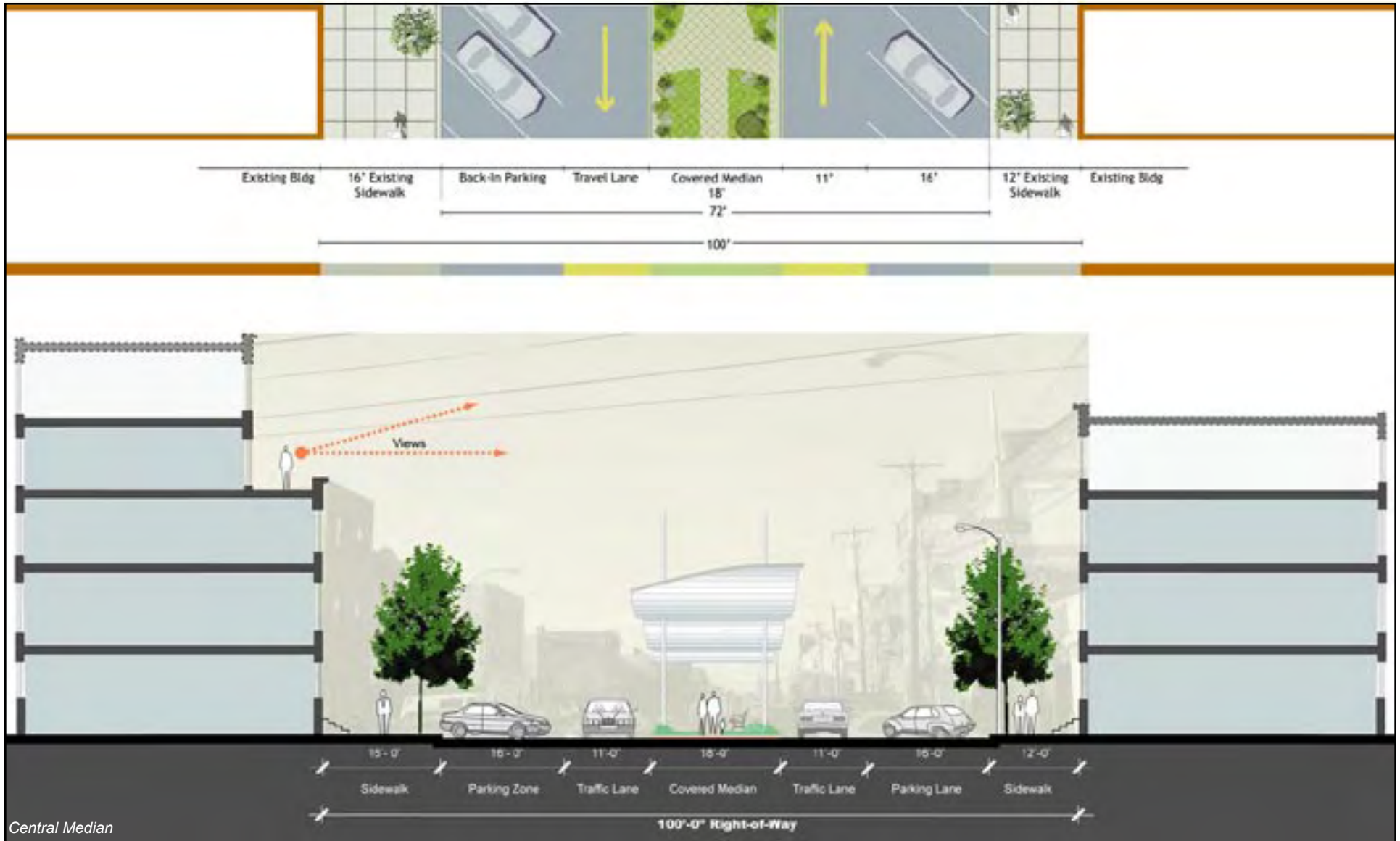
The base scenario, illustrating the minimum required to appreciably improve the 2<sup>nd</sup> Street experience calls for a two-way traffic flow separated by a modest, greened median, back-in diagonal parking, and planted bio-swales where Fairmount, Brown, and Poplar intersect 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. This scenario also allows for designated bike lanes traveling in both directions.



Base scenario: small median, bicycle lanes and back-in parking. The scenario works with either one-way or two-way traffic flow.



Stormwater approach for 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. Potential section including swales for the median and adjacent to curb bump-outs.



Central Median

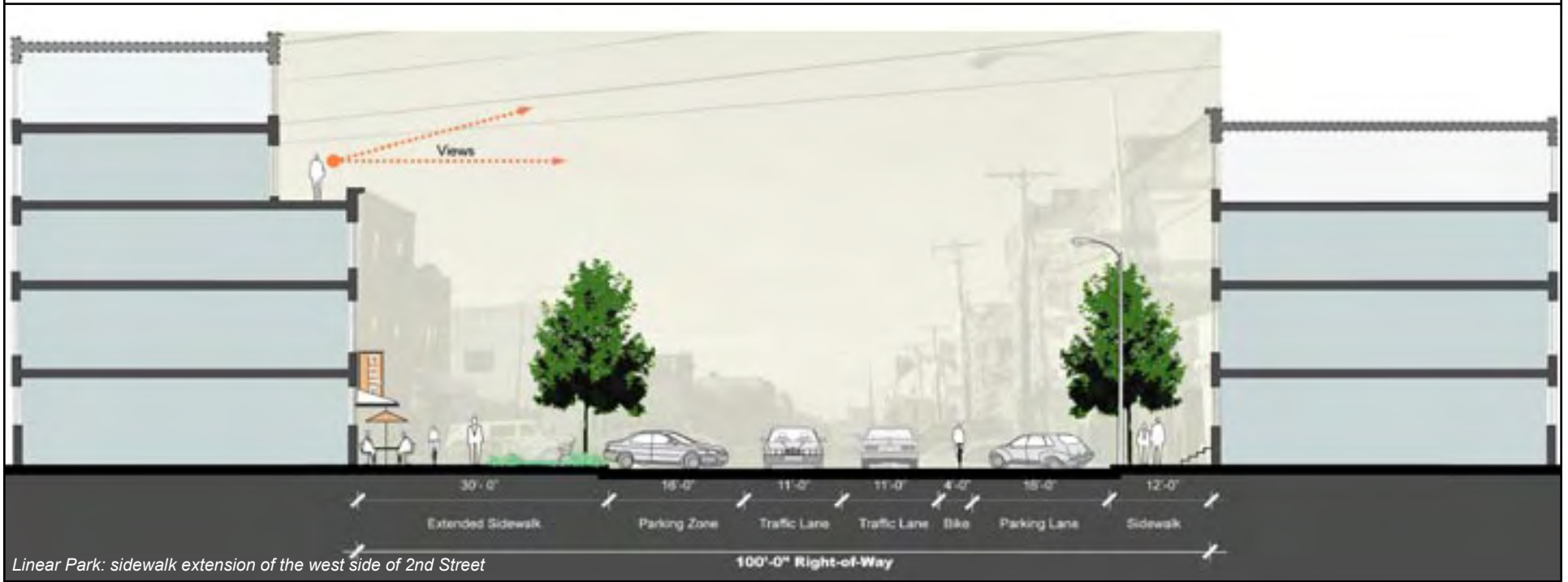
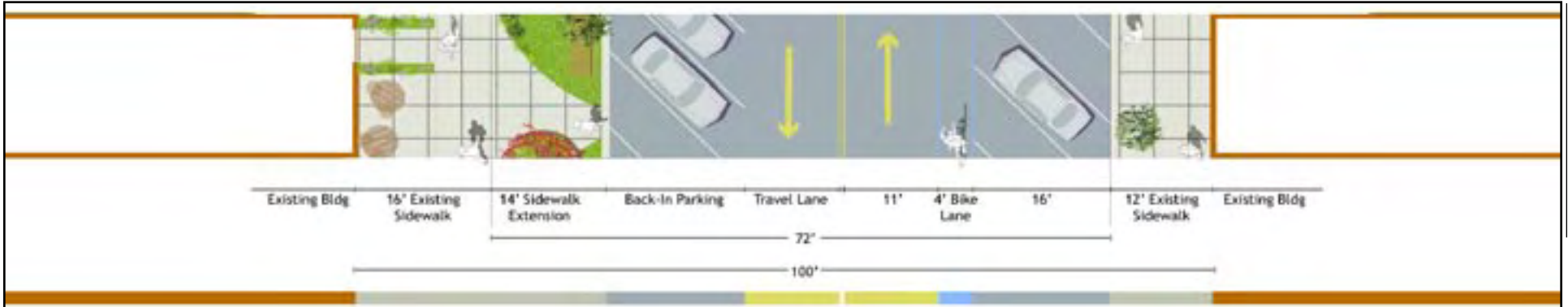
The small median of 6 to 10 feet would serve both to regulate traffic by dividing and tightening the space allocated for travel. The planted median would also offer stormwater management benefits by collecting stormwater in a basin below the planted surface. The basin allows water that would otherwise run directly into the sewers to seep slowly

into the soil below. The plant matter also helps manage stormwater by absorbing water through their membranes. Bio-swales, or planted areas hugging the curb bump outs at intersections mentioned in Recommendation 3.1, function similarly, retaining stormwater and adding aesthetic value.

### Central Median

Due to the former presence of the head house within 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, many residents have longed to bring back a usable median to 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. This scenario maintains the existing sidewalks with the addition of curb bump outs and bio swales at the intersections.





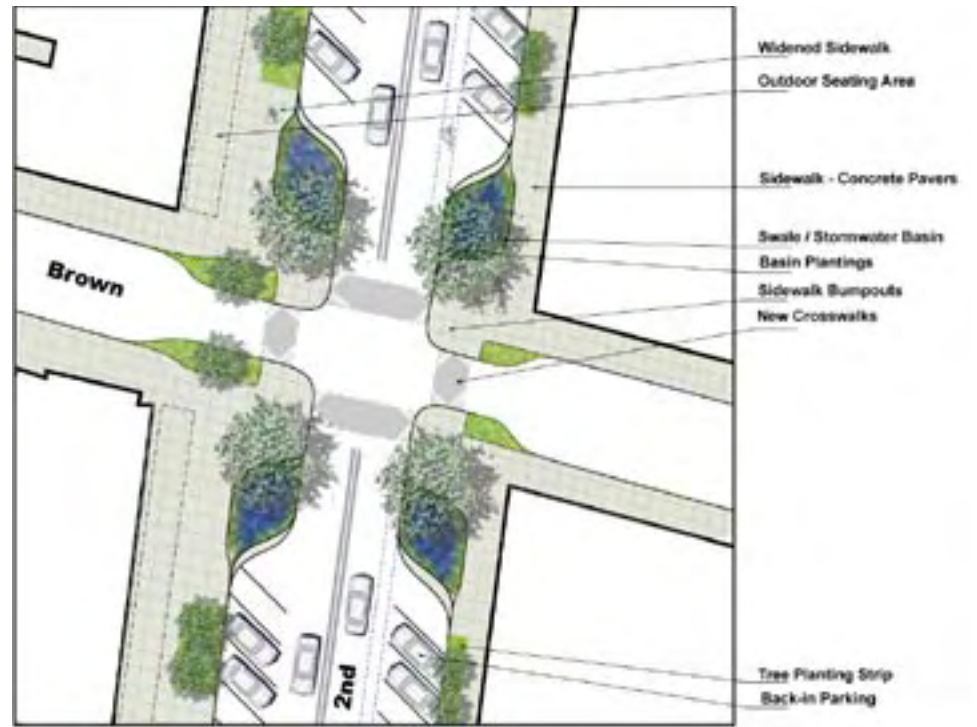
Linear Park: sidewalk extension of the west side of 2nd Street

Adjacent to the sidewalks lie a row of back-in angle parking on each side of the street. The result is an 18 foot median which provides ample space for greenery and stormwater management as well as gathering spaces and a walking path. The median could remain open or partially covered by a light structure. A trellis would give the space a sense of

enclosure without fully sheltering the public space. Advocates for a more substantial structural enclosure reference the historic market head house and the present day desire to host a farmers' market within the neighborhood. A farmers' market might occupy the median one day a week, leaving the space for informal public use during the other weekdays.

Linear Park

As an alternative to creating an active and usable civic space along 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, this scenario depicts a substantially widened sidewalk on the west side of the street, adding 14 feet to the existing 16 foot sidewalk – in effect creating a linear park. (The



Potential improvements at intersections including swales adjacent to curb cuts, landscaping, traffic calming and parking. Left: Central median scenario. Right: Linear park scenario.

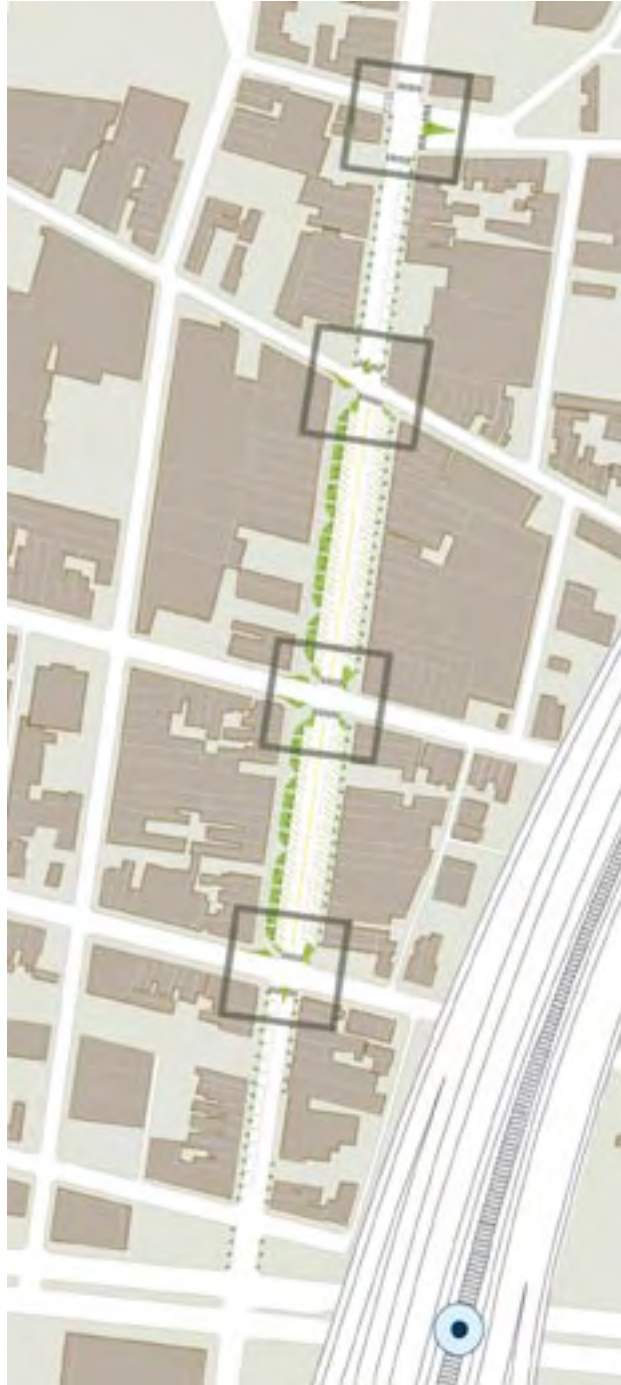
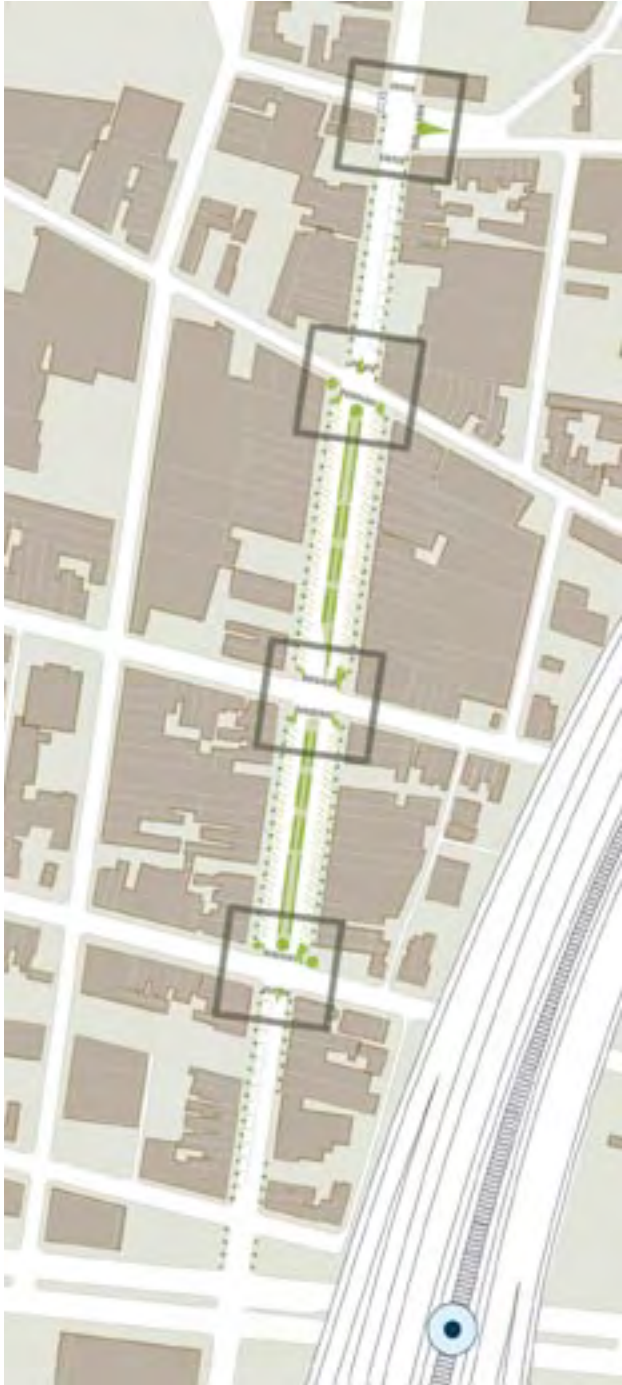
existing sidewalk on the east side of the street is 12 feet.) The west side of the street is far less developed than the east side at present, easing the construction burden to be placed on existing businesses. Focused reinvestment on the west side of the street might also provide the impetus for the needed commercial and mixed use development that will render 2<sup>nd</sup> Street a more balanced commercial corridor. Concerns about the widened sidewalk include unfairly benefiting one side of the street over another and inappropriate privatization of public space by adjacent commercial uses, as observed near the bars and restaurants on the south side of Market Street in Old City. In actuality, businesses on both sides of 2<sup>nd</sup> Street will reap the benefits of streetscape improvements and a civic gathering space that populates their block with customers. To

ensure that the public space remains public, the final plan for the sidewalk extension's linear park will employ street furniture, art, and park design to clearly demarcate community space.

Like the median, the linear park will be heavily planted to green the street and manage stormwater with water retention devices like large planters and detention basins beneath the planted ground. The park will also provide pedestrian walkways and comfortable gathering spaces. Unlike the median scenario, the sidewalk extension provides for separate bike lanes in both directions – one within the street and one as a part of the linear park. The linear park thus allows for two lanes of diagonal back-in parking, two-way traffic, one or two bike lanes, and the most pronounced addition of public space in of the three scenarios.

During the course of the planning process, the team evaluated another design approach not illustrated here. In this alternative, the sidewalks could also be extended evenly on both sides of the street. While this solution solves the issue of favoring one side of the street over the other, it lessens the visual impact of the redesign and streetscape improvements and limits the potential of a larger gathering space, extending each sidewalk by only 5 to 7 feet. For these reasons, we have focused on the scenarios illustrated here which elicited significant interest by community members and stakeholders.

The creation of new public space in Northern Liberties will bring new maintenance and security responsibilities. As the City has limited financial resources for public and recreational space, the



Alternative scenarios for 2nd Street from Spring Garden to Laurel Streets.



*While new ground floor commercial uses are recommended to activate 2nd Street and complement the proposed public improvements described in this document, much of the existing residential uses are attractive and should be retained to ensure a diverse, integrated and neighborhood-oriented commercial corridor.*

NLNA must be prepared to assume ownership of the new median or linear park. Given that the civic space created by either of these scenarios will be advantageous for nearby businesses, the proposed business association should be a source of financial and maintenance support for the NLNA to ensure the long term success of this initiative.

## Recommendation 4.0

### Adopt a “Green” philosophy and demand Low Impact Development (LID)

Stormwater management is a historic and persisting problem in Northern Liberties, with floods causing damage and disrupting the lives of generations of residents. The neighborhood’s combined sewer system now faces the additional strain of fast paced development. The growing population sends many more gallons of water into the sewer system, and non-permeable surfaces now lie where open space once stalled water runoff, routing stormwater directly into the sewers as well. Indeed, the massive open space consumption linked to rapid development in Northern Liberties is incongruous with the neighborhood’s dire environmental need for preserved permeable surfaces and better water management. Furthermore, as the neighborhood’s population increases and the proportion of local children grows, the open spaces suitable for youthful recreation become more crowded and overburdened. The neighborhood needs both more green space and more green thinking if development is to continue at such a rapid pace.

The recommendation that Northern Liberties “adopt a Green philosophy and demand Low Impact Development” suggests that the NLNA encourage the neighborhood to extend its self-defined identity to include a dedication to environmental sustainability. The recommendation seeks to capitalize on two of the neighborhood’s strengths in an effort to mitigate one of its major challenges: easily overburdened sewers and the resulting tendency to flood. First, Northern Liberties has the benefit of open-minded, environmentally concerned, and

activist local residents, interested and capable of generating change. Second, Northern Liberties has substantial developer interest coupled with a desire for innovative design. With internal commitment from individuals to green and Green their neighborhood, paired with the potential ability of the neighborhood to promote sustainable building techniques, this recommendation strives to position Northern Liberties as Philadelphia’s first truly Green neighborhood.

#### Objectives:

- Reduce stormwater runoff
- Mitigate flooding
- Attract balanced growth with both development and open space
- Provide safe and usable open space for residents of all ages

#### **Policy: Promote low-impact development and green building technologies through the Zoning Committee and Urban Design Committee**

Philadelphia’s current development climate delegates significant responsibilities and much influence to neighborhood groups, allowing them to inform the redevelopment of their communities. In Northern Liberties, the vast discrepancy between the existing land uses and the current zoning map, coupled with the influx of residential conversion proposals, produces a situation in which the majority of development projects must appear before the NLNA Zoning Committee and Urban Design Committee. While the history of conflict and frustration between the neighborhood and the neighborhood’s

developers has bred an atmosphere of tension, the adoption of priorities for new development, clearly communicated by the neighborhood plan, will help alleviate the longstanding friction. As mentioned in Recommendation 1.3, the Zoning Committee and Urban Design Committee should use their authority to encourage excellence in design. This recommendation suggests that the committees add a commitment to sustainable design to their list of priorities for new development. Indeed, once the neighborhood and its constituents embrace greening and sustainability efforts at the community and individual level, expectations that developers follow suit are not only justifiable, but to be expected.

The NLNA should thus use their influence to adopt a policy of promoting Low Impact Development and green building techniques at all levels of redevelopment, from the individual homeowner’s yard to large scale residential and commercial projects. Low Impact Development (LID) is a growing trend in design and development that fuses site planning, land development, stormwater management, and ecosystem protection. LID “strives to preserve predevelopment hydrology and water quality through a series of small-scale, distributed water controls” and effectively yields quantifiable results. LID techniques reduce long-term costs for stormwater infrastructure, shift maintenance burdens away from local governments, provide pollution control and hydrologic control of small, frequently-occurring storms, and mitigate combined sewer overflow (CSO).

To compensate for the environmental and infrastructural strain wrought by new development, the NLNA should require developers to implement Low Impact Development techniques in the

construction of their projects or to contribute to LID endeavors elsewhere in the neighborhood. LID strategies minimize the proportion of precipitation that is converted to surface runoff by maximizing the water volume that evaporates or infiltrates. Such preventative stormwater management requires both sensitive site design as well as the incorporation of Integrated Management Practices (IMP).

Integrated Management Practices are distributed small scale water retention or detention devices that collect water for infiltration and evaporation or store water on site temporarily for later release, respectively. A list of IMPs follows:

- **Green Roofs** – The soil and plants in green roofs detain, absorb, and filter precipitation, reducing the annual volume of roof runoff. Extensive green roofs contain several inches of soil and hardy, self-sustaining plants, and may be added to many existing roofs. Intensive green roofs are full-fledged rooftop gardens.
- **Permeable Pavements** — Permeable asphalt, concrete, and paving blocks allow runoff to infiltrate into the underlying subbase and soil.
- **Tree Box Filters** — Located below grade, tree box filters provide “bioretention in a box” along road curbs, integrating the water quality benefits of bioretention into ultra-urban settings.
- **Vegetated Swales** — Shallow vegetated swales simultaneously serve as drainage, infiltration, and storage devices.



Varying applications / types of green roofs.



Top: Edge plantings to detain rainfall from buildings. Bottom: Permeable materials used for parking lot drainage.

- **Dry Wells/Infiltration Trenches** — Dry wells are aggregate-filled pits that promote infiltration into the surrounding soil. Infiltration trenches are similar in function, but filled with sand or soil.
- **Rain barrels or cisterns** — These devices retain rainwater indefinitely for uses such as landscaping and potable water applications. Rain barrels often are easy to add to an existing downspout.
- **Soil Amending** — This non-structural practice can increase soil permeability dramatically. Amending with compost or lime reduces runoff volume and pollutant transport, and improves plant viability.

The NLNA Zoning Committee and Urban Design Committee should adopt minimum standards for environmentally sensitive design requirements and formulate an incentive-based policy to encourage implementation of additional Low Impact Development and green building techniques in the neighborhood. To promote an environmentally sustainable and cooperative development atmosphere, the policy should afford a streamlined review process for projects incorporating Low Impact Development and green building methods. The policy should also recognize and reward projects that provide additional accessible green space.

At a minimum, the NLNA should:

- Require that the 30% open space zoning requirement for residential zoning districts be 100% permeable. Parking will not be accepted as open space unless the driveway

is constructed of permeable materials and a minimum of a third of that space is planted, green space.

- Although commercial and industrial zoning districts require in some cases no open space, the NLNA should apply this policy to all developments regardless of pre-existing zoning.
- For projects that cannot meet these open space minimums, or where 100% coverage of the site is pre-existing, developers must address stormwater runoff concerns through the construction of a green roof or through the use of permeable materials that occupy 30% of the site. Flexibility should be granted to developers who suggest alternative methods for reducing stormwater runoff.
- For the design of public spaces, the NLNA must promote use of IMP's throughout the design of new public space as well. Parks, streetscapes and other public spaces must strive to exceed the ideals set forth here in terms of greening and stormwater run-off. The conceptual designs proposed for 2<sup>nd</sup> Street described above reflect this expectation.

Beyond environmentally responsible site design and Low Impact Development, the NLNA should advocate for the use of green building technologies in all new construction and rehabilitation projects. Green building techniques adopt a comprehensive design approach to create buildings that are ecologically and economically efficient and interior spaces that are healthy and comfortable. To lessen the environmental impact of new construction, the

NLNA should:

- Encourage building design that uses energy and water efficiently;
- Support building design that uses renewable sources of energy, like solar and wind;
- Encourage the use of building materials that are energy efficient, have high recycled content, low toxicity, and good durability; and
- Expect developers to reduce the waste from construction, renovation, and demolition when possible.

The Philadelphia Water Department's stringent new guidelines for stormwater management for all new development will give the neighborhood political support for demanding more ecologically sensitive design. The guidelines will be in place at the start of 2006. The NLNA should meet with their deputy commissioner and representatives from the Office of Watersheds to discuss these guidelines and determine the full range of legal assistance provided by the new guidelines.

It is important to also note that there are national organizations dedicated to bringing about a sustainable future for our communities. Earth Pledge is a resource for green development and the NLNA should seek their guidance in all "green" initiatives. Further, Greening Gotham ([www.greeninggotham.org](http://www.greeninggotham.org)) provides a tool kit and other assistance for creating green roofs. The NLNA should contact and coordinate with these organizations as these recommendations and policies move forward.



*A green future for Northern Liberties? Conceptual model illustrating a long-term commitment to green roofs.*

**Policy: Require explicit and transparent communication between neighborhood stakeholders regarding Brownfield redevelopment**

Northern Liberties was developed as an integrated residential and industrial hub. In the wake of the area’s historic productivity lie a large number of properties that are considered Brownfield sites. As defined by the EPA, Brownfields are sites with real or perceived environmental contamination from past uses. As such, the redevelopment of properties with former industrial activity must be closely monitored to ensure that the proper tests and if necessary, cleanup, are undertaken by developers and investors. In accordance with Act 1995-2 of the

PA DEP, developers seeking DEP assistance with liability must undertake a public involvement plan. The NLNA must ensure that a public involvement plan is undertaken for development proposals for all Brownfield sites seeking DEP assistance in the community.

**Recommendation 4.1 – Educate neighborhood residents about effective individual efforts to reduce the impact of development on the environment**

The first step to adopting a Green philosophy and working toward a sustainable future for Northern Liberties is gaining the support and enthusiasm of the neighborhood’s residents, artists, and business

owners. An exercise in community building as well as in education, the NLNA must launch an awareness campaign to teach their constituents about affordable, individual efforts that effectively lessen the volume of water passing through the neighborhood’s sewers. The educational outreach must not only teach residents about what they can do, how they can do it, and why they should do it, but must also create sufficient excitement and solidarity to sustain collective effort.

One component for the outreach campaign should be a rain barrel drive. Rain barrels, generally 55 to 57 gallon food grade barrels made of recycled plastic, collect stormwater directly from a structure’s roof gutter, storing the water for later use in the garden or yard. The barrels have spigots for hose or irrigation attachments as well as overflow tubes that redirect runoff to the garden when the barrel reaches capacity. Beyond their function as a buffer between rainfall and the sewer system, rain barrels reduce internal flooding by directing stormwater away from residential foundations.



*Rain barrels are inexpensive and can be effective for saving water and reducing runoff.*

They also improve plant health by providing a supply of natural, not municipally treated, water. Pre-configured rain barrels cost between \$80 and \$120 at the outset, but lessen water bill costs in the future. [www.UrbanGardenCenter.com](http://www.UrbanGardenCenter.com) is a resource for researching and purchasing rain barrels. To quantify the effect of neighborhood-wide rain barrel implementation, use the following formula:

- 1 inch of rain on a 1,000 square foot roof yields 623 gallons of water. Calculate the yield of your roof by multiplying the square footage of your roof by 623 and dividing by 1,000.

The NLNA should also educate their constituents about decreasing water usage within the home by reducing the number of gallons of water per flush sent to the sewer system. While many new toilets have smaller water tanks of 1 – 1.5 gallons, older toilets have tanks that flush 3.5 – 5 gallons per use. Toilets made before 1980 have 7 gallon tanks. A safe, inexpensive, and effective strategy for reducing the volume of water flushed in the sewers daily is to fill one or two 12 oz. plastic water bottles with water and to place the capped bottles inside the toilet tank, making sure they retain room for 3 gallons of water for flushing purposes. The added volume helps the tank fill before reaching its full capacity, thus reducing the gallons of water expended per flush.

The NLNA should also encourage neighborhood residents to employ permeable surfaces in the re-design or construction of their backyards and parking areas. Permeable surfaces allow stormwater to naturally seep into the ground instead of rushing along the pavement directly into the sewer system.

#### **Recommendation 4.2** **– Reactivate the Tree Tenders program**

As illustrated by the map of street trees in Northern Liberties, some portions of the neighborhood enjoy ample tree cover, while others would benefit for a greater green presence. As the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society’s website proclaims,

*“trees add beauty to any landscape, but they are especially beneficial in the city. They reduce heat, help control run-off, act as noise buffers, filter pollution, provide shade, and soften the urban landscape. Mature trees can cut summer cooling costs by 40%, and can increase property values by 5% to 15%. Some studies even indicate that the mere presence of trees creates stronger neighborhood ties and even reduces violence.”*

Tree planting is an achievable strategy that produces immediate results in the physical environment as well as within the community’s social fabric, as volunteers share both the responsibility of tree maintenance and the communal rewards of their work. Street trees are also an affordable greening technique, with public and foundation monies available to finance urban tree planting.

The NLNA should reactivate a pre-established entity in Northern Liberties, the neighborhood’s Tree Tenders program, by campaigning for and



*Existing trees and existing parks in Northern Liberties*

coordinating a new wave of interested volunteers. Founded in 1993 by the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, the Tree Tenders program offers 9 hours of free basic training twice annually to organized community groups. The training covers tree care, tree pruning, and tree pit maintenance, as well as organization building techniques and grant writing skills.

The reinstated Tree Tenders should assume the tasks of growing Northern Liberties’ urban forest. There are currently over 800 street trees in Northern Liberties. The NLNA should set a goal of





Potential trees in Northern Liberties

The NLNA should tap local residents for their knowledge and experience with green design, collecting data about building materials and procedures as well as local and best practices case studies. The NLNA should also solicit references for local consultants and contractors and compile a list for dissemination. The information should be assembled in an organized library kept at the NLNA office, and links to instructive websites and green design service providers should be maintained on the NLNA website. The list of internet resources should include, but not be limited to, the following websites: [www.lowimpactdevelopment.org](http://www.lowimpactdevelopment.org), [www.greenbuilder.com](http://www.greenbuilder.com), [www.greenerbuildings.com](http://www.greenerbuildings.com), and [www.urbangardencenter.com](http://www.urbangardencenter.com).

an additional 400 trees (a 50% increase) over the coming 5-10 years.

**Recommendation 4.3 – Provide links to local resources for green development and information on specific materials and strategies**

With Northern Liberties’ high concentration of seasoned urban gardeners and substantial constituency of architects and designers, the neighborhood has, well within its power, the ability to help developers understand and implement sustainable development and construction practices.

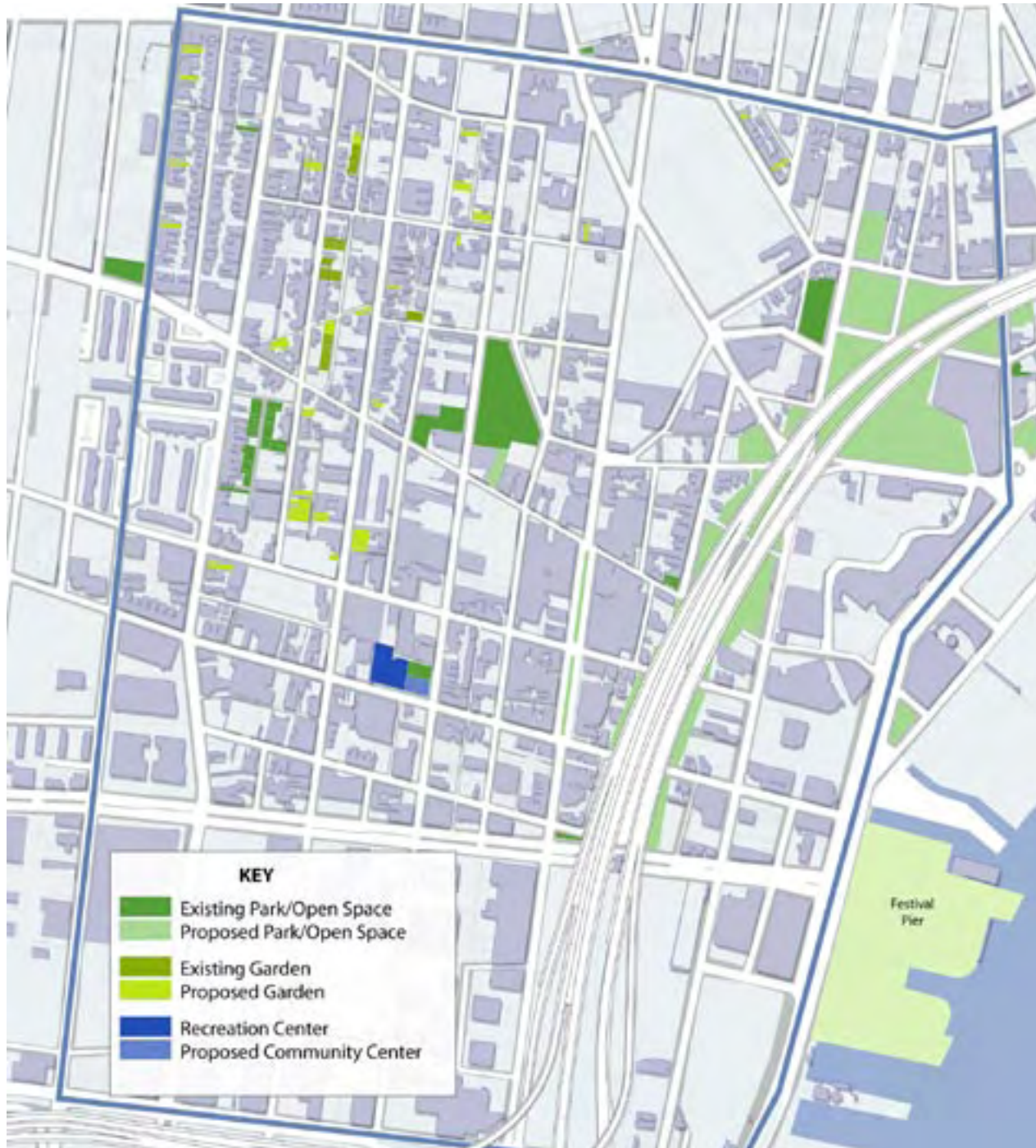
**Recommendation 4.4 – Identify, acquire, secure, and improve the neighborhood’s inventory of open space**

As new residents continue to locate in Northern Liberties, and, more specifically, more children begin to inhabit the neighborhood, the demands placed on the neighborhood’s designated open spaces increase. The City maintains the playground on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, near to the recreation center, and owns the smaller playground and basketball courts that lie on the west side of Front Street at Allen. The latter recreational space is largely neglected, lacking basic

park amenities like trees for shade and benches for rest. The community owns and maintains both Liberty Lands and the Orianna Hill Dog Park, depending upon fundraising events to sustain care of the parks. The neighborhood hopes to soon add the green space along Orkney between Poplar and Brown and the playground on Lawrence to their inventory of community-owned open spaces.

While park spaces benefit all members of the neighborhood, providing breathing space and play space, serving as grounds for evaporation and infiltration, providing shade and natural cooling mechanism, adding beauty, and raising surrounding property values, financing open space resources remains a challenge. Though the need for more active and passive open space is understood, acquiring land that will remain exempt from profitable development is difficult in a high-priced real estate market like Northern Liberties’. After meeting the acquisition challenge, the task of supporting continued maintenance and park improvements raises new concerns. Thus, in light of the rush of new residents and in support of neighborhood commitment to a green lifestyle, the NLNA must identify key, as yet undeveloped properties for acquisition, devise a means of securing such properties as permanent public open spaces, and improving both existing and newly acquired park lands in Northern Liberties. We believe that future open spaces, where possible, should owned and maintained by the NLNA following a yearly budget set by the NLNA’s open space committee.

The accompanying map illustrates the existing open spaces as well as potential new park spaces and gardens. The potential park spaces were identified through the planning process and are described



Potential open space in Northern Liberties

more fully in other recommendations relating to 2<sup>nd</sup> Street and waterfront. The potential gardens were identified due to their proximity to other gardens and / or their small or irregular size between occupied structures. Contiguous groups of vacant lots and / or structures were deemed better suited for redevelopment

**Recommendation 4.5 - Create an Open Space Fund**

To accomplish these considerable tasks, the NLNA must establish a sustainable source of funding for the acquisition of new public open spaces and the maintenance of community-owned parks. The NLNA should create an Open Space Fund into which developers at all scales of development must pay if their project does not fulfill the open space requirement established by the property’s zoning specifications and cannot reasonably meet the requirements set forth in Promoting Low-Impact Development described above. This would apply for example to a small residential infill project where, due to site constraints, less than 30% open space is possible and the construction of a green roof would significantly expand the budget to the point of making the project unfeasible. It is suggested that for projects of less than 10 units, the NLNA allow developers to pay into this fund in-lieu of creating a green roof or investing in permeable materials and drainage systems. Again, given the large percentage of properties currently zoned as L4 and G2, these requirements should be considered neighborhood wide regardless of pre-existing zoning classifications.

Contributions should be calculated based on the total construction costs of each project. This plan suggests a .5% of total construction costs be



Liberty Lands



Orianna Hill Park

### **Recommendation 5.0**

#### **Foster a seamless transition between the traditional neighborhood fabric and the developing waterfront.**

As the Delaware River waterfront’s potential as an attractive and lucrative site for high-rise, luxury, condominium living actualizes and the pace of waterfront reinvestment quickens, residents of neighboring Northern Liberties fear that such massive change will compromise the Northern Liberties lifestyle. Concerns encompass blocked views of the river, restricted waterfront access, and the anti-social message that gated communities send to their neighbors. As Philadelphia’s newest neighborhood will house a mostly wealthy populace, Northern Liberties residents worry not only about the new traffic and the added burden placed on their limited public green spaces, but also about the

relationship between two distinct communities with potentially different sets of values.

Thus the recommendation that the NLNA forge paths to the river and foster a seamless transition between the traditional neighborhood fabric and the developing waterfront proposes a cooperative and amicable relationship between the NLNA and waterfront developers. The recommendation includes both public and private investments and improvements that will mutually benefit both current and new residents. The recommendation responds to a larger goal of bridging two distinct and rapidly changing residential communities for the common good.

Objectives:

- Work with waterfront developers to ensure that local concerns are addressed
- Ensure waterfront access
- Promote spaces that residents both east and west of I-95 and the El can *and wish* to use.

The division of the land between the elevated rail and highway routes and the Delaware River into four categories for development creates broad guidelines for a vision particular to this juncture between two neighborhoods. Illustrated in blue, Zone 1 waterfront parcels should be targeted for mixed use development that permits public access to the river. Parcels in Zone 2, designated in red, face Delaware Avenue. Zone 2 should be developed as mixed use, low-impact properties that provide neighborhood amenities such as services, parking, and open space. Again, waterfront access should be an

directed toward this fund. The NLNA Board and Open Space Committee should be charged with apportioning the income to acquisition, improvement, and maintenance initiatives.



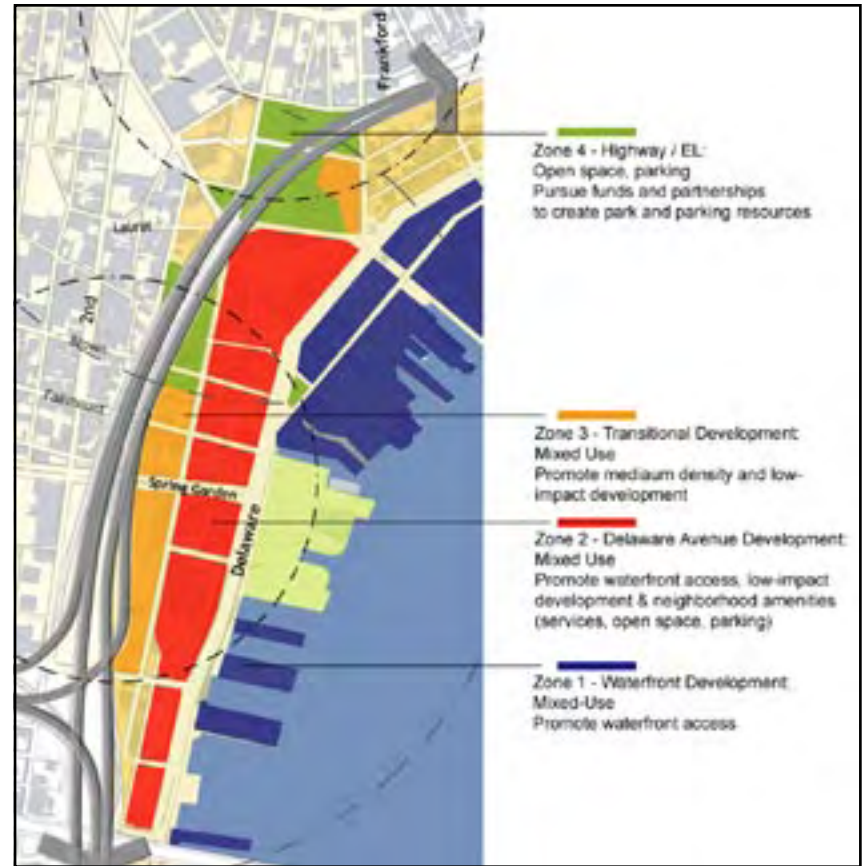
Three models of the waterfront. Top: Existing. Middle: Including 700 N. Delaware. Bottom: Including the proposed World Trade Center.

element of all proposals. Zone 3, in orange, is suited for transitional development, mixed use, medium density, and low-impact in nature. Finally, Zone 4, in green, is most appropriate for open space and parking. Located underneath the highway and EI, public-private partnerships and fundraising efforts should aim to transform this space into active urban park space and parking.

**Policy: Oppose any future restrictions to waterfront access**

Bearing the legitimacy of a democratic neighborhood group, the NLNA should, as a matter of policy, object to all future proposals that restrict public access to the waterfront. As part of a campaign to preserve Northern Liberties' identity as an open and tolerant community and to retain a public good for public enjoyment, not private consumption, the NLNA should oppose all future gated communities along the Delaware River waterfront. Indeed, gated communities contradict Northern Liberties' history and enduring character, creating tense relations between neighbors before new residents begin to inhabit their waterfront homes.

An integral part of the campaign to keep the waterfront open to the public involves vocal neighborhood support for development projects deemed "neighborhood friendly," those that grant unrestricted access to the river and bring



services along with new residents to Northern Liberties' doorstep. Recognizing the impending redevelopment of waterfront properties and the potential value of density if planned for appropriately, the NLNA must be willing to work with developers to reach an agreement that meets its top priorities of waterfront access, traffic calming, and neighborhood amenities.

**Recommendation 5.1 – Ensure Brown Street is opened to Delaware Avenue**

The preliminary drawings for the redevelopment of 700 North Delaware Avenue show the extension of Brown Street through from Front Street to Delaware

Avenue. As an important, yet currently non-existent, point of access to the Delaware River waterfront, the NLNA should declare Brown Street's extension to the river as a high priority for the neighborhood throughout the design and development phases of the project. Upon Brown Street's (re)constitution, all major cross streets in Northern Liberties will share the same endpoint, the riverfront.

**Recommendation 5.2 – Improve pedestrian crossings to the waterfront at Frankford, Brown, and Spring Garden**

Establishing physical routes to the waterfront is only a first step toward guaranteed waterfront access. Crossing the auto-oriented Delaware Avenue remains a daunting challenge for pedestrians at all major intersections. Key intersections identified for traffic calming measures are Delaware / Spring Garden, Delaware / Brown, and the convergence of three major thoroughways at Delaware / Laurel / Frankford. Intended to create a safer environment for waterfront goers, traffic calming measures would include raised crosswalks, or speed humps with pedestrian striping and signage, additional street lights, and curb bump outs. Alternatively, special paving materials could include brick or stone, used to alert driver attention to the presence of pedestrians. In the case of Brown Street, improvements must also include a new traffic light to stop traffic and allow pedestrian to cross. This traffic light may be requested by the developers of 700. North Delaware to better serve the development's residents.

As with the extension of Brown Street, the NLNA should build strong relationships with waterfront developers, leveraging private contributions for street

improvements or advocating for the inclusion of such elements in the final scope of services in exchange for local support for a project. The NLNA can also work with the Philadelphia Streets Department, the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, and the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation for further study and implementation of traffic calming tactics along Delaware Avenue.

**Recommendation 5.3 – Seek funds for streetscape improvements for Fairmount, Brown, and Laurel**

As major connectors and highly visible points of both entry to and exit from Northern Liberties, Fairmount Avenue and Brown and Laurel Streets require streetscape improvements. Especially as waterfront destinations develop and waterfront access is granted, Fairmount, Brown, and Laurel must be made safe, attractive, and interesting paths to the Delaware River. Not only will such reinvestment populate the waterfront with those seeking recreation and relaxation, but it will encourage those residing to the west of the EI and highway to explore the eastern edge of their neighborhood.

The NLNA should seek financial resources to plant trees, add pedestrian-scaled lighting, and punctuate the street with physical suggestions of Northern Liberties' character and creativity including custom-designed street furniture and signage created by local artists and crafts people. In all cases, streetscape improvements should be targeted for areas between 2<sup>nd</sup> Street and Delaware Avenue.



Potential connections to the water and future walkway



Existing Ellen Street underpass



Potential improvements



Existing underpasses

**Recommendation 5.4 – Improve areas under I-95 and the EI with new lighting and signage focused on Spring Garden, Girard, Fairmount, Brown, and Laurel**

Currently, the looming elevated structures of SEPTA’s Market-Frankford line and Interstate-95 create a visual and psychological barrier within Northern Liberties, deterring local residents from actively engaging with all corners of their neighborhood. The dark, unadorned underpasses are desolate during both the day and at night. Only

the Spring Garden EI station and bus stop provide reason for people to frequent the space directly underneath I-95 and the EI. Indeed, on weekend nights, the abundance of parking spaces under the elevated travel routes are the last to fill. As such, the underpass areas require special attention and additional resources to effectively bridge Northern Liberties with the waterfront, the western portion of the neighborhood with the east.

Once access to the waterfront is created and clear travel routes are defined, the first step to reclaiming the dead space immediately surrounding I-95 and the EI is to focus on improving the experience of being under the elevated structures. With the goal of making the underpasses feel less transient and more inhabitable, the neighborhood must proactively take ownership of the space and the underbellies of the large structures, adding them to the list of the neighborhood’s unique attributes. The spaces deserve and require a beautification strategy that lends an element of Northern Liberties’ energy, creativity, and spirit while respecting the gritty and functional beauty that the structures have inherently.



Inspiration images for underpass improvements.

The neighborhood should consider the roles of decorative lighting, public art, and creative greening in their vision for the underpasses, all of which would beautify the structures, encouraging people to turn toward them, not walk away. An improved appearance and additional lighting will also increase the sense of public safety under the dark pathways, as well tended and thoughtfully designed spaces are, in turn, respected and maintained by passersby.

**Recommendation 5.5 – Develop active park space and parking under the highway and EI**

The deleterious effects of the elevated infrastructure on Northern Liberties' fabric are felt beyond the underpasses. Restrictions about land uses surrounding elevated rail and highways, in addition to the sounds, sights, smells, and slight tremors that



*Lighting, art, and greening are all cost effective measures for creating usable and attractive space.*



*Existing condition of land below I-95 and the EI.*

accompany high speed traffic, have yielded a barren buffer zone in the blocks adjacent to I-95 and the EI. In a neighborhood where development pressure breeds soaring land prices, providing public goods such as greened open spaces and municipal parking is difficult, if not impossible, to afford. As the land near the highway and EI is not suitable for housing or commercial uses, reclamation of the land for public purposes is logical. Creative reuse of the space is fitting for an alive and growing neighborhood.

To date, reinvestment energies in Northern Liberties and Fishtown have left the land under the highway



*The area under I-95 and EI is at the center of existing development proposals and 2nd Street.*



From left to Right: 1) Built form of the waterfront area (buildings are

Analysis

and EI untouched. The blocks are highly irregular in shape and physically fragmented by a series of small roads that do not connect gracefully with the established street network in either neighborhood. Additionally, the parcels within the buffer zone are owned by many different people, making land acquisition a daunting task.

This collection of under utilized parcels sits equidistant from two large development projects – Schmidt’s and Waterfront Square – and at the doorstep of 2nd Street and other proposed projects including 700 North Delaware. For these reasons, the reclamation of the land under the highway and EI is no longer just an attractive option for consideration, but rather a necessity. Improved parkspace and additional parking will lessen the strain on existing resources, bridge the eastern and western portions of the neighborhood, and render the new development projects at Schmidt’s and

700 North Delaware more attractive to buyers and tenants. Such a large scale revitalization project will require the interest, support, and dedication of all stakeholders, the neighborhood, its residents, and developers alike.

The series of figure ground drawings highlights in black the extent of the deterioration of the built form and the resulting abundance of open space surrounding the highway and EI. However, when the blocks that are significantly built and the sites for major new development projects are subtracted from the map, a target area of opportunity emerges. As the land use map detail shows, within the target area lies much vacant land, minimal existing recreational or open space, several vacant buildings, as well as several large industrial sites, deemed soft sites, poised for redevelopment in the near future.

The susceptibility to change map further analyzes the existing state of the parcels within the target area. In pale yellow are properties occupied by recent construction or investment, private homes, or religious institutions, as well as those owned by developers, which will likely be developed for residential use. In light orange are the properties designated susceptible to change in the long term, parcels currently occupied by active industrial sites. Dark orange indicates parcels deemed likely to change in the short term, parcels that are either currently vacant or used as storage, parcels with signage indicating current availability, aggregated parcels owned by a single owner, and publicly owned land.

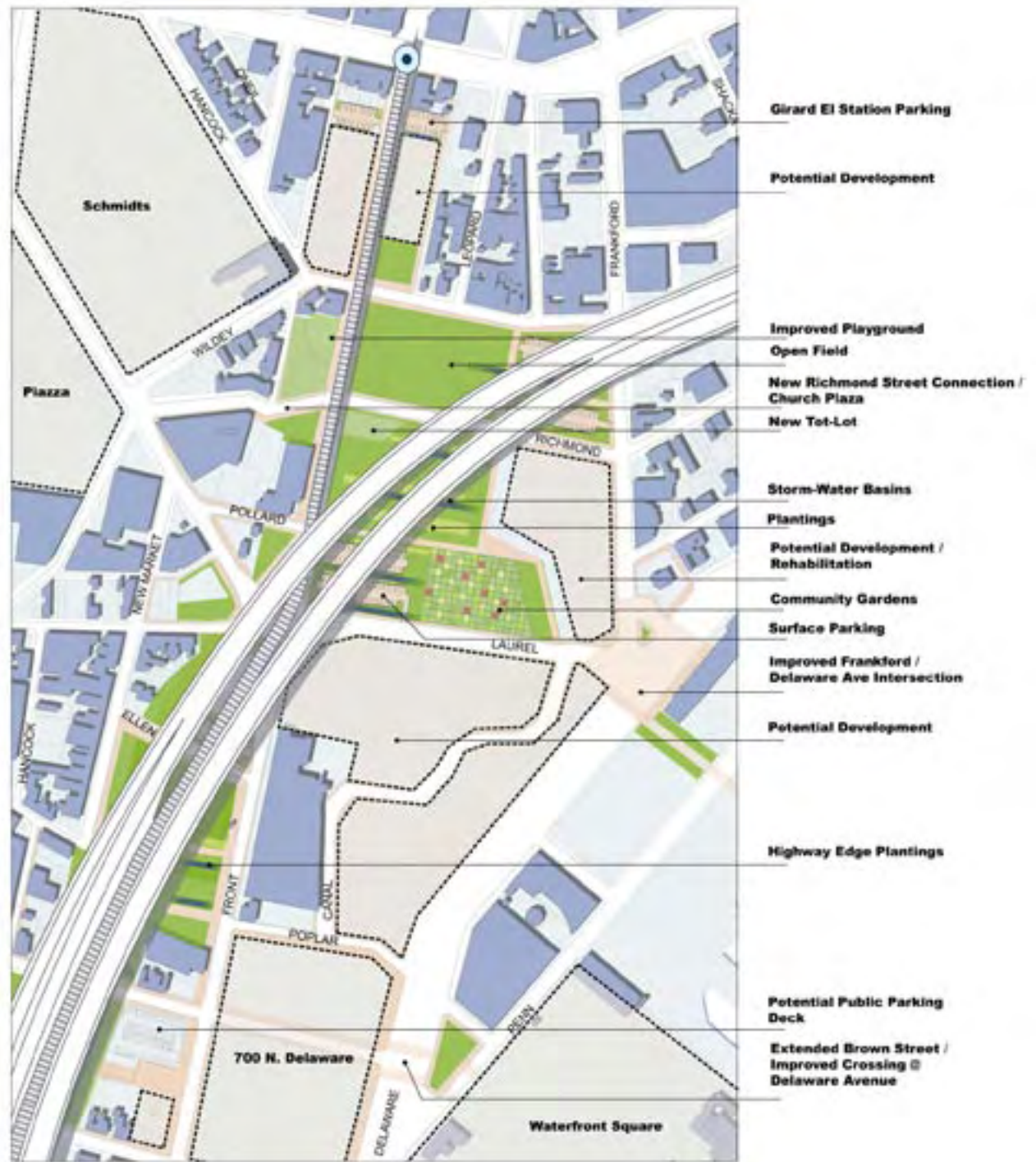
The analysis and susceptibility to change map reveals a potential phased strategy for the neighborhood to pursue. The recommended approach serves many neighborhood purposes:





Above: Diagrammatic approach to target area. Right: Conceptual site plan of park

reactivating currently under used urban land, capturing stormwater runoff that drains from the highway, creating new, green civic space, bridging two unique urban fabrics, providing additional parking resources, opening a new gateway into the neighborhood from its eastern border, and increasing the appeal of adjacent properties for future redevelopment.





*Inspiration images for uses under elevated infrastructure. Active uses important for creating comfortable public space.*



The first phase of the project plan to redevelop the land under the highway and EI for public use entails street reconfiguration and should be undertaken in conjunction with the traffic calming efforts described in Recommendation 5.2. To create more substantial grounds for continuous park space, the NLNA

and New Kensington CDC should petition to close Leopard between Wildey and Richmond Streets and portions of Allen Street. In addition, Allen should be rerouted to meet Richmond at Front Street to create more direct access to Frankford Avenue.

The diagramed approach above illustrates the recommended land program for the target redevelopment area. In green are areas suited for green space, either well-maintained open space along the edge of the infrastructure lines or active park space where the EI and highway diverge to follow different courses. In addition to park space, possible programming for the open space areas includes activity specific recreation areas, places for outdoor markets, and parking. Neighborhood constituents also voiced interest in relocating the stables, currently on George between Bodine and American Streets, to the proposed green space under the highway and EI. A valued element of



*Before and after under I-95*

Northern Liberties fabric, residents would like to keep the stables in the neighborhood after the lease for their current site expires.

The diagram and conceptual site plan on page 77 show the City-owned recreation facility located on the west side of Front Street, between Allen and Wildey Streets as an integrated part of the neighborhood's active park space as well. The grey strips under the highway park a total of 200 cars within the proposed park, rendering the space accessible to local residents as well as visitors to the area. The additional provisions for parking resources, located at-grade on either side on Front Street just south of Girard and in a multi-story garage on the southwest

corner of Brown and Front Street are discussed in greater detail in Recommendation 6.7.

To supplement these potential public improvements, additional space for new development is also identified in the approach. Medium to high density projects are possible along Delaware Avenue and near the waterfront, and a number of buildings are possible overlooking the new park space directly. In all cases, parking for these development should be provided in decks out of the sight line of major streets and the open space.

Given the dispersed ownership pattern, the NLNA should focus neighborhood energy on acquiring the properties that comprise the largest and most usable open space between Wildey and Laurel, Front Street and Frankford Avenue. In collaboration with the New Kensington CDC, the NLNA should explore the possibility of designating the area a Renewal Zone by the Redevelopment Authority to allow for the condemnation of private properties. In addition, given the proximity of the area to large developments along the water, the NLNA should also coordinate closely with developers to obtain contributions to the park and open space investments under the highway and EI, which will improve the marketability and attractiveness of their projects.

## Recommendation 6.0

### Ensure livability through optimized mobility.

With intensifying development interest and the subsequent influx of new residents and numerous visitors, parking has become a source of local conflict and concern. In addition to the growing number of households, households often own and park more than one car, raising the demand for parking within the residential community itself. During the work-day, Northern Liberties' relaxed parking restrictions draw commuters who park for extended periods of time, riding transit into Center City or walking to a nearby workplace. In the evenings and on weekend nights, on-street parking in residential areas is increasingly burdened by patrons of Northern Liberties' collection of restaurants, bars, and clubs. Commercial operations depend on available and accessible parking options to attract a consistent customer base and to accommodate their employees. Thus, parking is a challenge for all segments of Northern Liberties' population, threatening the neighborhood's livability and the viability of its businesses.

As the parking demand escalates, adding stress to and consuming time from peoples' daily lives, the NLNA must expend more time and energy attempting to mitigate the issue, to mediate between conflicting uses, both in need of parking. Recognizing that parking in a robust urban environment will always be in short supply, the objectives of "ensure livability through optimized mobility" reflect the belief that the ability to efficiently manage parking conflicts will afford the NLNA more resources to work for positive change instead of against a persisting problem.

Objectives:

- Encourage the use of alternate modes of transportation
- Better manage and utilize existing parking resources
- Improve the parking supply for residents and customers

**Policy: Limit curb cuts for parking along major streets**

As on-street parking is already scarce, the NLNA should adopt a policy of limiting curb cuts for off-street parking and loading purposes along major



The El en route from Girard to Spring Garden



*Curb cuts for above garages eliminate on-street parking spaces.*

streets. Though in some cases such curb cuts create a private parking space for the adjacent property owner, the cuts reduce the on-street public parking supply by one to one and a half car lengths. The restriction of curb cuts also helps to maintain a varied streetscape façade and vibrant street life from conversion into a row of garages devoid of human interest and activity. An additional benefit to a policy that limits curb cuts is increased safety and mobility for pedestrians navigating Northern Liberties' sidewalks. With cars confined to the road, not the sidewalk, the pedestrian pathways remain an unobstructed and level plane.

The anti-curb cut policy should target all streets in the community where on-street parking currently exists. The NLNA Zoning Committee and Urban Design Committee review process should enforce the policy for projects requiring variances, and all developers should be notified of the policy as it pertains to properties that may be developed as of right.

**Policy: Consider reducing or eliminating parking minimums in specific cases**

The City's one parking space for each unit requirement can encourage end results that are not in keeping with local objectives related to height, streetscape and design. The NLNA should support reducing or eliminating these parking minimums where their application is altering the quality of the project.

**Recommendation 6.1 – Advocate for increased SEPTA ridership and improved transit service**

In a walkable urban environment such as Northern Liberties, the first step to improving mobility within the neighborhood should focus on increasing usage of the neighborhood's public transportation resources. During the public outreach process for the plan, focus group participants and survey respondents emphasized that local residents and business owners value Northern Liberties' proximity to SEPTA's Market-Frankford EI and several bus routes. However, descriptions of the parking squeeze experienced on nights and weekends

suggest that public transit remains under utilized by guests to the neighborhood.

A SEPTA ridership campaign should be initiated by the NLNA, targeting both neighborhood residents, and, more pointedly, visitors coming to Northern Liberties from other parts of Philadelphia. As the buzz of Northern Liberties' nighttime social scene grows in volume, a simple link to SEPTA's maps and schedules for routes serving the neighborhood should be added to both the NLNA webpage as well as to [www.northernliberties.org](http://www.northernliberties.org), a much visited website advertising local venues and events. Advertising Northern Liberties as an accessible neighborhood and educating people about how to navigate the public transit system will inform the transportation habits of guests and newcomers.

The web-based campaign for increased visitor ridership should also include information about purchasing tokens, reminding out-of-town guests that tokens are sold in bulk (\$1.30 per ride) at the local Rite Aid on Spring Garden. At the station, SEPTA passengers must pay the full \$2.00 per ride. The addition of a token machine to a commercial use along 2<sup>nd</sup> Street would serve to remind local residents of the public transportation resources at their doorstep.

Furthermore, improvements to the Spring Garden and Girard Avenue stations and underpasses, as explained in Recommendation 5.4 will enhance the feeling of public safety and therefore encourage ridership into the evening hours. Such advocacy for public transportation usage will further reinforce Northern Liberties' identity as a green neighborhood, as developed by the strategies under Recommendation 4.



*The EI makes two stops within Northern Liberties.*

While these recommendations can help address the effectiveness of transit, more will need to be done to supplement existing transit service and significantly reduce automobile usage. One solution includes a strong advocacy and education effort related to promoting the use of Philly CarShare. Philly CarShare has proven to be successful in reducing the number of cars owned in the City, particularly in dense neighborhoods with parking issues such as Fairmount. A second strategy to consider is the creation of a separate bus / shuttle that runs on weekends and serves Northern Liberties, Olde City, Penns Landing and South Street. As these areas share common concerns relating to traffic and parking, this solution is mutually beneficial and relies on a strong coordinated approach between community groups.

Additionally, long-term strategies should be explored to pressure SEPTA and the City for additional light rail lines and improved bus service. Although SEPTA has experienced significant budget difficulties, a concentrated and coordinated effort to improve transit can, over time, gain political support. The Girard Avenue Trolley represents the first step toward a larger recognition of the role of transit in neighborhood and economic development. The NLNA should reinforce this recognition with continued advocacy for transit services along the waterfront and potential major streets such 2nd and Spring Garden.

These are obviously long term efforts that require the resources and voices of many organizations beyond Northern Liberties. For this reason, close contact with neighboring community groups, key organizations and local political representatives is necessary to effect any change over time.



*Proposed expansion of local bicycle network*

**Recommendation 6.2 – Improve bicycle and pedestrian facilities**

Though bicycles are a visible form of mobility throughout Northern Liberties, the existing official bicycle network maintained by the City is meager within the neighborhood’s boundaries. Only Spring Garden and parts of Delaware Avenue, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> Streets offer bike lanes, while Girard and part of Callowhill and Frankford are deemed bicycle “friendly” despite their lack of separate lanes for travelers on bikes. The City has evaluated the potential of 4<sup>th</sup> and the remainder of 5<sup>th</sup> for additional bike lanes within Northern Liberties, but even with

their inclusion in a green network for Northern Liberties, the bicycle lane plan overlooks major thoroughfares.

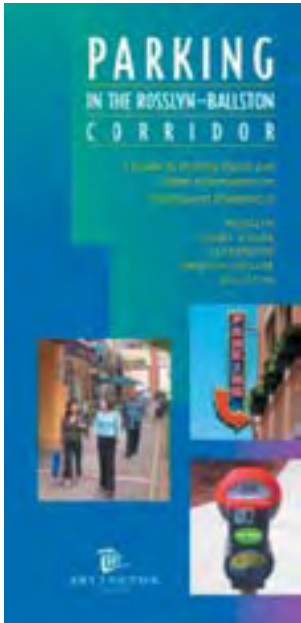
When pursuing funding for streetscape improvements along 2<sup>nd</sup>, Laurel, Brown Streets and Fairmount Avenue, the NLNA should include bicycle lanes in their list of objectives. As noted above, such thoroughways bring people to and from the heart of Northern Liberties, its developing commercial core, 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. The streets also provide access to and from the waterfront, and should, therefore, connect the neighborhood with a future jogging and biking path that may find its course along the Delaware River.

In addition to bicycle lanes, the Northern Liberties currently lacks an adequate supply of bicycle racks or lockers for storage. All developments that create destinations, residential, commercial, or recreational, should be required to accommodate bicycle storage to further encourage travel by bike.

Sidewalk repair that accompanies streetscape improvements will facilitate better pedestrian mobility, as will high expectations and required satisfaction guarantees set by the NLNA for post-construction sidewalk conditions. Together, expanded education about public transportation improved bicycle and pedestrian pathways will serve to reduce the number of cars traveling Northern Liberties’ streets, lessening the ill-effects of traffic and the demand for parking.

**Recommendation 6.3 – Improve signage and information about on-street parking**

Though the results of the parking survey present a consistently high rate of parking occupancy, the lack



Arlington's parking brochure

of clear signage about on-street parking access and restrictions rendered measurement parking occupancy difficult. Indeed, in a neighborhood of many long term residents and severe parking shortages, select blocks continue to appear under-parked. Given the scattering of diverse land uses within each block of the neighborhood, the internal changes in traffic directions, and the plethora of active and inactive loading

docks, the neighborhood must communicate parking availability in order to maximize the use of existing resources. In locations without permit parking restrictions, painted lines and/or standardized "No Parking" indicators would instruct drivers as to their parking options.

Arlington, Virginia offers one example of comprehensive approach to educating drivers about available parking resources. The City created a transportation brochure that illustrates transit lines, parking facilities, and shared parking resources. The information in the brochures was also printed on large-scale static signage to clearly communicate parking availability to en route drivers. A parking resource map would be instrumental to new residents and visitors to Northern Liberties as well as to long term residents unaware of implemented changes to parking configuration and provision.



Untapped parking resource on American Street

#### **Recommendation 6.4 – Develop a shared parking approach to underutilized lots along Green Street**

The under utilized, at-grade, private parking lots along Green Street are a visible sign that existing parking resources in Northern Liberties are inadequately managed, resulting in surplus empty spaces during the day and at night. Privately owned, the lots currently serve only one population, either daytime employees or nighttime club goers, depending on the lot. A shared parking program that opens the lot to two, temporally distinct populations would maximize the profit yield of the lots for the owner as well as lessen the burden on Northern Liberties' on-street parking supply.

Shared parking programs generally facilitate common parking resources between commercial uses. In Chicago, for example, the Zoning Administrator may authorize shared parking arrangements between non-residential uses with different hours of operation within 600 feet or

walking distance of each other (Center City Parking Workbook 5-23). In Northern Liberties, such a shared parking scenario would work either between daytime commercial uses and evening club venues or as a dual permitting arrangement between daytime commercial uses and neighboring residents seeking secure and guaranteed parking at night. As club patrons have abused shared parking privileges in the past, engaging in nuisance behavior in the parking lots late at night, successful implementation of a shared parking program will necessitate some form of lot security and/or maintenance.

The Philadelphia Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) is currently working with the Girard Avenue Coalition to develop a Shared Parking and Private Parking Management Guide, to be published as Appendix E of *Girard Coalition INsights: Approaches for Stability and Change for Girard Avenue*. The document will be available for download on the internet at [www.lisc.org/philadelphia/programs/coalition\\_6066/documents\\_7343/index.shtml](http://www.lisc.org/philadelphia/programs/coalition_6066/documents_7343/index.shtml), and the NLNA should both refer to the guide as a resource and collaborate with the Girard Avenue Coalition in their shared parking programming.

#### **Recommendation 6.5 – Create new parking lots and garages in strategic locations**

In addition to the two proposed parking garages that will accompany the Schmidt's Brewery site redevelopment and the 700 North Delaware Avenue proposal, Northern Liberties needs affordable municipal parking resources to service the general public. The NLNA should advocate for the development of strategically located public parking garages and lots near local amenities and



Existing and proposed parking resources

attractions. Potential opportunities for new parking supply include:

- A municipal parking garage situated directly to the east of I-95, at the southwest corner of the intersection of Brown and Front Streets. A multi-story garage in this locale would serve existing commercial uses along 2<sup>nd</sup> Street as well as club venues at

night and on weekends. The garage would also be within a five minute walk of the Market-Frankford El's Spring Garden Station and replace vacant land with an active and supporting use for the community.

- A municipal or private parking garage built in conjunction with the redevelopment of the Liberty Shopping Plaza on Spring Garden

between 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Streets. The multi-story garage would park daytime employees of Spring Garden's many office buildings as well as nighttime clientele of nearby clubs and bars. A portion of this lot should be made available to the local residential population and the specific design and site placement of the structure will need to be carefully considered to reduce the potential impacts on nearby residents buildings.

- At-grade municipal lots directly east and west of the Market-Frankford line along Front Street between Girard and Wildey. These lots, located just south of the Girard Avenue station, would serve those looking for affordable parking and willing to continue their commute by elevated rail. Patrons of Girard Avenue commercial venues would also benefit from such lots.
- A series of small, at-grade municipal lots directly underneath I-95 as it passes above Laurel, Allen, and Richmond Streets. The lots would service visitors to the proposed park and garden spaces in the surrounding blocks, as described in Recommendation 5, as well as neighboring residential populations.

Proposals for parking garages will require a market study to fully understand the potential demand, user groups and price points that may make the project feasible. The public parking garage in Olde City followed this process. Discussions with the Olde City Civic Association can provide initial guidance toward implementing this strategy.

## Recommendation 7.0

### Build capacity within the NLNA; generate desirable change.

The NLNA lacks resources in both time and money to tackle many areas of concern. The development climate in the neighborhood consumes the majority of staff time and volunteer efforts, leaving scant resources for the NLNA's other initiatives like trash managements, recycling, and community building. Additionally, the CDBG funds that support many NLNA activities are under threat by the Federal government and cannot be counted on as continued funding in the future. To enact the policies and pursue the actions laid out within the neighborhood plan, the NLNA needs to enhance its organizational capacity, and by so doing, enable the neighbors association to better serve Northern Liberties.

This plan has already outlined a few strategies for increasing local resources including forming a business association, potentially reactivating the CDC and creating an open space fund. Additionally, completing the community center will generate income each year that will directly fund NLNA activities. These can be significant steps toward finding additional resources, however, more can be undertaken to strengthen NLNA's position and effectiveness in the community.

#### Objectives:

- Ensure the NLNA's leading role in the ongoing revitalization of the neighborhood
- Increase the NLNA's effectiveness and efficiency

- Ensure sustainable funding for NLNA activities
- Grow the NLNA to meet new needs
- Promote transparency in all NLNA activities

#### Policy: Charge a nominal fee for project review

The amount of development proposals, review and negotiations puts significant stress on the volunteers dedicated to assisting the neighborhood guide its future. As a matter of policy, a nominal fee of \$100.00 or less should be charged to compensate for administrative costs and support NLNA staff and materials for project review.

#### Recommendation 7.1 – Monitor the Success of the Trash Removal Initiative

The NLNA recently received dollars from local developers to hire a staff person to specifically address trash in the community. The staff will be responsible for undertaking an educational campaign, manage regular street cleanings and, work with property owners to address L&I issues such as dumpster locations. Successes associated with this effort need to be marketed and communicated with local residents, business owners and other stakeholders. The NLNA should seek to make this a yearly effort with identified funding to potentially expand efforts to also improve townwatch outreach efforts which are currently organized by the NLNA.

#### Recommendation 7.2 – Expand the NLNA Volunteer Base

The public outreach associated with this plan discovered that many in the neighborhood feel

the NLNA is a “closed society.” Many expressed interest in participating in NLNA activities but did not know whom to contact or how to get involved. Furthermore, there is widespread perception that the NLNA only addresses zoning issues and only so many people can reasonably be involved in the zoning committee. For the NLNA to undertake the strategies in this plan, more volunteer support is necessary. By capitalizing on the help of interested volunteers, the NLNA will not only build capacity, but will also ensure that neighbors, both new and those not affiliated with the NLNA, take a more active role in shaping their community and embracing a sense of neighborhood ownership. This requires three inter-related actions:

- A greater presence by the NLNA in local press and in the fabric of the neighborhood. A flyer / brochure needs to be created and made available in local stores, churches and restaurants that summarize this plan and in effect express a call for help. Public signs / bulletin boards in Liberty Lands could also supplement this outreach effort.
- A greater presence on the web. Discussed in Recommendation 7.4, the website needs to communicate all of the NLNA activities and be interactive with the public.
- A new volunteer drive organized by the head of each NLNA committee to coincide with local events such as First Saturday.

The NLNA should maintain a record of effective communication networks that possess the ability to advertise NLNA news and events to a broader, more representative contingent of the neighborhood. Most





*Images from public meeting - the plan should be used to generate more interest in NLNA activities.*

importantly, with the continuing influx of newcomers and the persisting hesitancy of some long-term residents the NLNA must sustain outreach efforts if they are to truly engage and accurately represent their neighborhood.

**Recommendation 7.3 - Develop transparency in the zoning review process**

Given that heavy development pressure in the neighborhood requires that the NLNA devote the majority of its time and resources to lengthy and frequent zoning review meetings, steps to increase the productivity of Zoning Committee meetings are

needed to free organizational time and energy to pursue other objectives. Furthermore, members of each of the public outreach focus groups cited dissatisfaction with the review process, suggesting openness to procedural reform.

The Zoning Committee and Urban Design Committee application forms currently provide basic information and guidelines detailing what the committees expect from developer presentations. However, the available materials do not fully explain the appropriate steps for projects of varying sizes and uses to follow. As a result, the committees spend significant amounts of time educating developers about navigating the neighborhood and City review process and dealing with applicants who fail to present adequate materials at the time of the presentation. The NLNA should clearly communicate the correct / desired approach, indicating the following:

- which committee(s) applicants should see for various project types;
- in which order applicants should see the committees,
- whether applicants for various project types should appear before the City ZBA before presenting in the neighborhood;
- the specific materials required for review; and
- the anticipated time frame for project review and delivery of final decision.

Such procedural navigational tools must be made available on the NLNA website for download by developers along with digitized application forms.

The entire presentation scheduling process should be completed through the website and posted on a meeting calendar so that interested neighborhood stakeholders can plan to attend the meetings as well. In addition, a simple one-page primer for the entire process should be developed and made available on-line and in the NLNA offices to answer basic questions.

Better communication between the NLNA, developers, and neighborhood stakeholders, all of whom can access and read the review process explanation and expectations will add transparency to the review process, thereby lessening uncertainty, frustration caused by meeting inefficiency, and tension between different neighborhood groups.

**Recommendation 7.4 – Develop transparency in project expectations**

This plan has recognized that the main source of power and influence the NLNA has at this time to guide their community is through zoning review. To that end, this plan has sought to make specific proposals that generate up-front expectations for the quality and type of development projects in the area. These expectations include: Excellence in design; low-impact development techniques; no curb cuts; a percentage of affordable units for larger projects and; limiting the conversion of commercial properties to residential use.

It is critical that these values are clearly expressed in all Zoning Committee and Urban Design Committee literature as well as on the website. To provide a measure of certainty for developers in terms of expectations can soothe tensions and streamline the current process.

To streamline the review process further, the NLNA should consider developing a point system to review projects. The system would award points for meeting or exceeding specific requirements and provide a transparent basis for approving or opposing proposals. The system could also allow flexibility for developers to meet the point minimum for approval. A developer could provide, for instance, a large number of affordable units in lieu of using recycled materials or providing a green roof. As aesthetics are difficult to measure and award points, other elements could be included in the system including:

- The setback of the development in the context of the block;
- Height of the structure in the context of the block
- Location of parking and lack of curb cuts;
- Use of permeable materials or other low-impact development techniques;
- Use of recycled and/or energy efficient materials;
- Extensive use of windows to improve daylighting and;
- Transparent ground floor window treatments for commercial uses.

Excellence in design is viewed as an umbrella concept to which each of these elements contribute. The points could be weighted or flat but the process for awarding points and the requirements for each will need to be defined by the Zoning Committee and Urban Design Committee.



*Proposed Conservation District target area*

Another potential means of developing some transparency in the zoning review process is to relegate a portion of the neighborhood to becoming a “Conservation District.” A conservation district enables every single development proposal, whether it requires a variance or not, to be reviewed according to pre-determined criteria defined by the neighborhood. The neighborhood develops design guidelines that can be tailored to each block if desired which is used to review all proposals. The review is handled by the Planning Commission in which case the neighborhood is effectively out of the process after completion of the design guidelines. Given this provision, we would recommend

considering a conservation district for the most established portion of Northern Liberties north of Fairmount and west of 3<sup>rd</sup>. The benefit would be to reduce the workload of the Zoning Committee and Urban Design Committee who review small projects in this area, allowing them to focus on other parts of the community. The additional benefit is that the conservation district will be a transparent means of guiding development where designated. Queen Village is set to become the first conservation district in the fall. The NLNA should monitor the outcome of this process in that location before any decisions are made regarding this suggestion.

**Recommendation 7.5 – Maintain a database of new development proposals and outcomes**

Part of building capacity for any organization, volunteer, non-profit, or otherwise, is keeping a detailed record of past work and accomplishments. The NLNA must commit to maintaining an up-to-date database of new development proposals and outcomes, which can be presented or reviewed in digestible format, tabular, cartographic, or photographic, as necessary. The database should have the capability of querying the number of new



*Draft model of the Philadelphia World Trade Center, 700 North Delaware Avenue, and Waterfront Square with Northern Liberties' existing urban fabric in the background*

residential, commercial, mixed use, light industrial, and artisanal project proposals that the neighborhood reviews each year as well as the acreage that corresponds to such proposals. Such hard numbers will greatly strengthen the neighborhood’s fundraising capabilities, especially regarding external monies sought for green initiatives and tree planting to offset the consumption of open space.

Furthermore, the ability to quote numbers of new residential units entertainment venues in the neighborhood over a short period of time will justify concerns about the rapid redevelopment of Northern Liberties, the lack of services, the excess noise and trash, and the loss of open space. The sustained capability to quantify change over time will be integral to managing new growth and informing the neighborhood’s future. The small monthly task of updating a neighborhood development database will garner significant rewards, for fundraising efforts, for increasing the NLNA’s legitimacy, and for validating the NLNA’s role as a neighborhood advocate.

A database was created during this planning process, covering all development proposals over the past 5 years. A hardcopy of the tabular format is included in the appendix to this report, and the digital Excel file will be provided to the NLNA for updating. In addition to the ability to quantify change, which the tabular format of the development database provides, the NLNA should consider the benefits of being able to visualize change. Three dimensional modeling offers an understanding of the current built form of the neighborhood and can easily add proposed development projects at scale so that the neighborhood can accurately imagine and evaluate the effects of large scale development proposals.

To this end, the NLNA should consider hiring a consultant to create and maintain, on an on-going basis, a 3-D model of Northern Liberties, accessible through the NLNA website, into which developers can drop their proposed projects for visualization and review. Not only would this afford the ability to comprehend the rapid change to the local built form, but the ability to model a project within the context of the neighborhood would encourage specificity regarding developers’ plans from the outset of the review process.

**Recommendation 7.6 – Develop the website to fully communicate NLNA activities**

It is difficult to find a professional organization that has not placed considerable effort in developing and maintaining a web presence. Similarly, as more and more neighborhood groups are using the web to distribute and coordinate information, a web presence for non-profit organizations is no longer a luxury, but a vital aspect of their effective operation.

Currently, finding information on the NLNA and their activities can be a challenge. Although the NLNA has some information on-line, the majority of residents use [www.northernliberties.org](http://www.northernliberties.org) for up to date information on local news. This plan has placed considerable emphasis on improving the communication of NLNA activities and local issues as a means to reinforce grass roots involvement. Unlike many other neighborhoods in Philadelphia, the majority of Northern Liberties’ residents have access to the internet making the effective use of the web even more vital. The NLNA’s website needs a significant update in terms of the look and content of information.

The website should first act as a vehicle of representation for the NLNA, describing the mission of the organization, community outreach programs, and display of accomplishments. Each committee should have its own page including their budget and proposed activities for the year.

An early improvement that will greatly assist the NLNA’s zoning committee is to place the requirements, expectations and applications for zoning review on-line. Developers will be able to fill out the forms electronically and submit via the website. The submission can be automatically forwarded to the email of all Zoning Committee and Urban Design Committee members. Meeting agendas can also be on-line and clear requirements regarding the types of drawings and information required will help to better prepare developers for their neighborhood meetings.

While these basic improvements will greatly improve the use and function of the website, its critical to position the NLNA as a model for how neighborhoods use technology to organize, coordinate and address community issues of primary concern. In this sense, the website should be viewed as a Local Information Network that serves two primary purposes. The first targets providing more local information to residents and business owners. This could include the creation of an on-line interactive map of the neighborhood that designates the location and type of services and amenities. As expressed in Recommendation 1.3, this local information should include an expression of the social fabric of the community through on-line stories about specific places and events. The more people know about where they live, the stronger the connection to that place often becomes.

The second purpose of the Local Information Network is to organize the activities of not just the NLNA but also adjacent community groups. Many issues that the NLNA faces are similar to those of adjacent neighborhoods. Despite common concerns, there is often limited communication across neighborhoods to collectively address an issue with one voice. The website can assist this communication by including message boards, places for sharing information about specific issues, updated news and a forum for organizing meetings to coordinate approaches. Similar to how the NLNA uses email list-serves to coordinate townwatch information, a robust website can organize the efforts of a large number of concerned citizens to effect change.

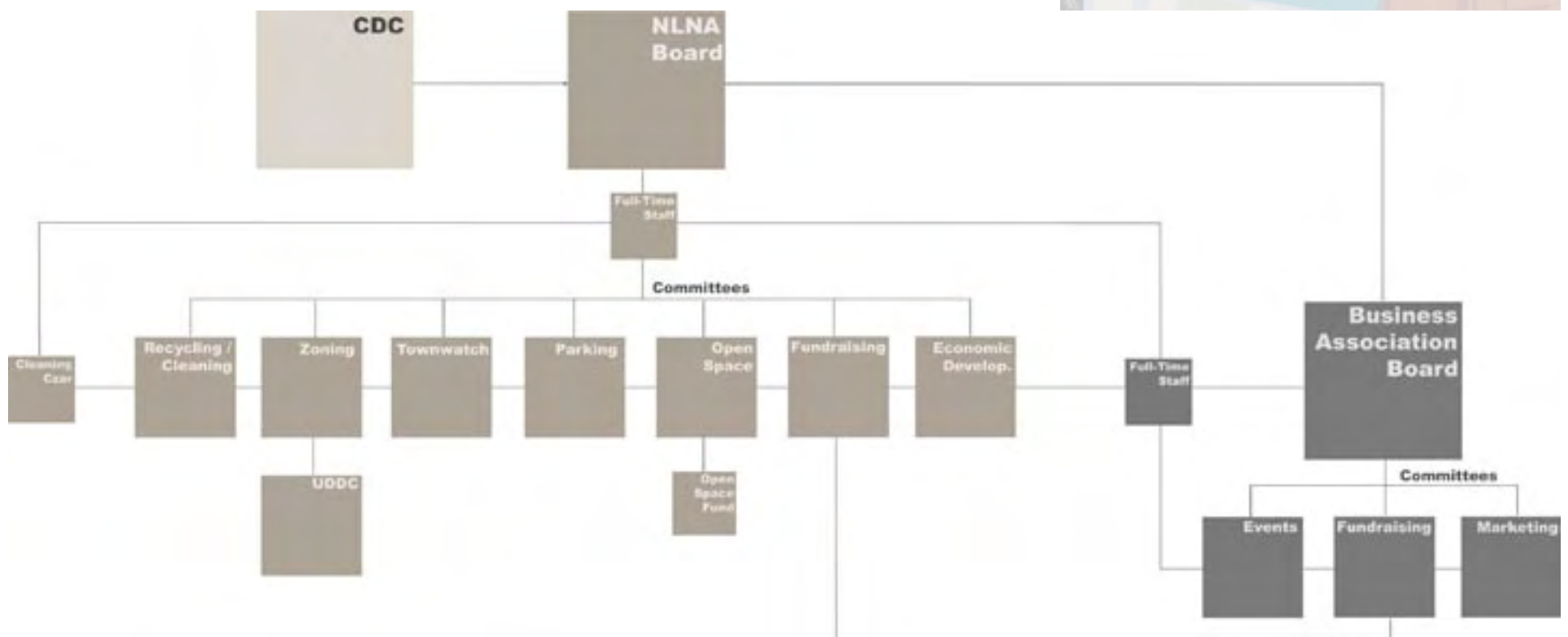
In the future, the website can expand to assist the business association promote commercial uses and reinforce the activities of local, small businesses. It should be valued now as an organizing tool. As more people use the internet to learn about the City and neighborhood in which they live, an interactive site will be expressly useful in furthering NLNA objectives.

**Recommendation 7.7 – Organize a coalition of local neighborhood organizations to coordinate revitalization efforts**

While the website can become the tool through which the NLNA works with local neighborhood groups, a coalition is needed that expressly designates issues

of common concern where coordinated action would be beneficial to all parties involved. The NLNA should reach out to organizations including, but not limited to, the New Kensington CDC, Kensington South CDC, West Poplar Civic Association, Olde City Civic Association and, for issues pertaining to waterfront development or commercial activity, Society Hill Civic Association, Washington Square West and the South Street Merchants Association. This report has mentioned a number of items that should be raised with local organizations including:

- Potential creation of a bus / shuttle that connects Northern Liberties, Olde City, Penns Landing and South Street to alleviate traffic and parking issues on the weekends;



- Use of the internet to share information and address crime and safety issues across neighborhood boundaries;
- Sharing of information about effective zoning techniques to better guide and manage development;
- Coordinated advocacy for better transit services from SEPTA and improved rail stations;
- Coordinated funding requests / grant submittals for specific street improvements and other public enhancements;
- Coordinated events and marketing and;
- Promoting waterfront access and amenities that serve adjacent neighborhoods.

This list is by no means comprehensive but represents a starting point for discussions to create a unified, community voice. After initial discussions with surrounding groups, this list should be amended, distributed and discussed. A meeting schedule and agenda should then be developed to identify priority issues and discuss possible solutions.

It is important to note that in some cases, other organizations such as the Center City District or Central Philadelphia Development Corporation, may be crucial resources for assisting the coalition in meeting their objectives.

# Implementation Plan

The Northern Liberties Neighborhood Plan has outlined a guide for the neighborhood's future. Although the plan contains multiple strategies for the NLNA to pursue, many recommendations require different partners and different sources of funds enabling a number of recommendations to be addressed concurrently. In addition, many of the recommendations are tailored to low-cost solutions that can be implemented by volunteer efforts and through the expertise of local residents dedicated to improving Northern Liberties.

As noted in this report, the NLNA has been consumed by responding to, and managing, the local zoning process. Diversifying the organization will take time but it is critical that each committee of the NLNA begin to take a more proactive position on the future of the community. This means setting aside time to discuss many of the items recommended during this process. In some cases, new committees should be formed to take on specific projects such as developing the website, promoting events and expanding NLNA membership. For all recommendations, particularly those targeted as priority items, one person from the neighborhood needs to be identified as the point of contact and conduit through which actions of the NLNA and their partners are coordinated. There are a wide range of extremely interested and committed people in Northern Liberties, many of which have already expressed interest in coordinating implementation on specific recommendations.

To keep track of the NLNA's progress toward implementation, we have provided an excel spreadsheet at the end of this report that outlines

action steps, timeline, responsibility, costs and potential funding sources. The spreadsheet should be actively used, updated and changed to reflect the NLNA's progress. It should be noted that the costs are preliminary and will need to be updated as efforts move forward with each recommendation item. Similarly, although a number of potential funding sources are identified for some items, it is the NLNA's responsibility to determine what the most feasible funding strategy is, based upon information collected as projects move forward.

While the excel spreadsheet can be a valuable tool, there needs to be accountability and an organizing body that tracks the status of the plan and the different individuals / committees that are overseeing different components. The steering committee that guided this plan should be charged with this task, meeting 3-4 times a year to coordinate and report on the implementation progress. To assist the steering committee perform this task, the chair of each of the NLNA committees should prepare a yearly plan that incorporates the recommendations within this plan. These committee plans should earmark potential costs, schedule of activities and responsible individuals for specific items.

It is critical to understand that this plan can, and should, be updated in five to ten years. Funding sources, political representatives, community leaders and even some local priorities will change in ways that are impossible to fully predict. This plan serves as a beginning. As different recommendations move forward, priorities should be re-evaluated if necessary and, new recommendations should be considered that reinforce the principles set forth during this process.

## PRIORITY ACTION ITEMS

The first action item for the Coalition is to present this plan to both Councilman DeCicco and Councilman Clarke as well as the Planning Commission and NTI. The intent is to get the plan recognized by these representatives as the designated plan for Northern Liberties and to raise awareness that significant strides have been made to improve the community. This also provides an opportunity to get City officials and other players interested in different aspects of the plan, seek their guidance and identify key opportunities for funding. This should occur within the next 6 months.

All of the policies identified in this document are also priorities. The policies recognize and reinforce the greatest power the NLNA possesses which is to manage development through zoning review. There are no costs associated with these policies. They should be viewed simply as amendments to how the committees, particularly zoning and urban design, conduct their meetings. These include:

- Promote excellence in design;
- For large, new residential development, advocate for affordable units;
- Limit the conversion of commercial properties for residential development;
- Encourage commercial use on Girard Avenue, Spring Garden and 2nd Streets;
- Encourage ground floor commercial use for every parcel between Spring Garden and Laurel Streets on 2nd Street;
- Remove loading docks from 2nd Street;

- Promote low-impact development and green building technologies;
- Require explicit and transparent communication between neighborhood stakeholders regarding Brownfield development;
- Oppose any future restrictions to waterfront access;
- Limit curb cuts for parking along major streets;
- Consider reducing or eliminating parking minimums in specific areas and ;
- Charge a nominal fee for project review.

In addition to the policies, this plan has made recommendations that require time, partnerships and, in some cases, funds. Through discussions with the NLNA, a number of projects have been identified as priority projects that should commence either this year or at the outset of 2006. Given the strong market pressure, there are many recommendations that need to be started as soon as possible to be able to have a sufficient voice as the community continues to develop. These include many of the recommendations related to low-impact development and open space as well as those that improve the NLNA's outreach and capacity to guide this plan into implementation. Some of the key priorities include:

- Complete the Northern Liberties Community Center;
- Promote and expand organized community events;

- Form a business association with the legitimacy and support of a wide range of local businesses;
- Undertake traffic calming measures at key intersections;
- Educate neighborhood residents about effective individual efforts to reduce the impact of development on the environment;
- Reactivate the Tree Tenders program;
- Create an Open Space Fund;
- Advocate for increased SEPTA ridership;
- Improved bicycle and pedestrian facilities;
- Monitor the success of the Trash Removal Initiative;
- Expand the NLNA volunteer base;
- Develop transparency in the zoning review process and;
- Develop the website to fully communicate NLNA activities.

While many of these priority items will likely not be implemented within the next year, it is important to begin working toward the solutions identified in this plan. Almost all of the priority projects require limited funds but nevertheless require time and energy to identify and write grants to enable further action. The neighborhood has taken a tremendous step in raising funds and completing this plan. The momentum created by this process must be sustained over the coming year to ensure the continued interest and assistance from all members of the community to see their vision in action.

Priority Projects Indicated by: ►

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Indicates no cost associated with task



**Note: All costs are conceptual and will need to be re-evaluated as action items move forward.**

**1.0 Reinforce the diversity of the neighborhood's population and the unique collective identity**

►		Timeframe	Responsibility / Partners	Estimated Cost	Potential Source of Funds
	1.1 – Complete the Northern Liberties Community Center				
	Organize a meeting with Councilman DeCicco and Clark to determine status	2006	Northern Liberties CDC	--	--
	Organize a meeting with the Mayor to present proposal and determine timeframe for acquisition	2006	Northern Liberties CDC	--	--
	Complete fundraising campaign	2006	Northern Liberties CDC / Fundraising Committee	\$5,000 for marketing	Member contributions, volunteer time, in-kind donations
	1.2 – Encourage public art by local artists				
	Meet with New Kensington CDC to discuss their program and fundraising approach	2006	NLNA Board Members	--	--
	Determine what furniture should be targeted for a pilot artist program. Determine location (furniture should be concentrated for visibility)	2006	NLNA Board Members / Urban Design Committee	--	
	Raise funds to implement 5-10 items	2007	NLNA Board Members / Fundraising Committee	\$5,000 for marketing	Member contributions, volunteer time, in-kind donations
	Release a call for local artists to design and implement specific items	2008	NLNA Board Members	--	--
	Implementation	2010	NLBA Board	\$40,000 for 10+ elements installed	Target arts funding through Pew, Wachovia & William Penn -
	1.3 – Use NLNA website for local stories and histories				
	Send an email to the NLNA board and membership describing the project and requesting individual stories for the site	2006	Web Design Steering Committee (formed to move website along)	--	--
	Hire a web designer to completely re-work the site	2006	Web Design Steering Committee	\$5,000	Member contributions, in-kind donations
	Purchase recording equipment	2006 / 2007	Web Design Steering Committee	\$2,000	Foundation / City
	Select 1-2 volunteers to interview interested participants and record stories	2007	Web Design Steering Committee	--	--
	1.4 – Consider re-activating the CDC to promote affordable housing				
	Monitor development activity and coordinate with developers	ongoing	Zoning Committee	--	--
	Seek opportunities as a partner with a private developer to undertake low-income housing tax credit units	2005--	CDC	Future costs include acquisition, planning and design	Private developers, City, LISC predevelopment funds



	1.5 – Create a youth advisory council	Timeframe	Responsibility / Partners	Estimated Cost	Potential Source of Funds
	Organize meeting of local principals and organizations egaged in after school activities	2007	Economic Development Committee	--	Volunteer activity
	Identify and designate 10 youth representatives	2007	Economic Development Committee	--	Volunteer activity
	Develop plan for Council with youth representatives	2008	Economic Development Committee	--	Volunteer activity
	Set preliminary budget for Council outreach activities to local youth	2009	Youth Council	\$5,000 starting budget to be approved by the Coalition	City, local schools, United Way, Foundations
	1.6 – Promote and expand organized community events	Timeframe	Responsibility / Partners	Estimated Cost	Potential Source of Funds
	Organize a meeting with organizers of First Saturdays and the Philadelphia Open Studio Tours to coordinate events	2005	Events Oversight Committee (subcommittee of Fundraising Committee)	--	--
	Develop a list of existing and potential events - coordinate 2-3 marketing campaigns for groups of events each year	2006	Events Oversight Committee (subcommittee of Fundraising Committee) / Business Association	--	--
	Fundraise for marketing, promotion and other event costs	2006	Fundraising Comm. / Business Assoc.	\$5,000	In-kind services, donations

<b>2.0 Preserve Northern Liberties' collaged landscape and mosaic of land uses</b>					
		Timeframe	Responsibility / Partners	Estimated Cost	Potential Source of Funds
	2.1 – Form a business association with the legitimacy and support of a wide range of local businesses				
	Submit proposal for planning grant to set up association	2006	Fundraising Committee	--	--
	Hire planner to develop business plan, set-up organization structure, develop target commercial niches and create a marketing plan	2006	Business Association (4-5 person steering committee comprised of local business owners)	\$15,000	Commerce Department, DCED, LISC
	Coordinate with Department of Commerce for operating assistance	2007	Business Association	\$15,000-\$30,000 depending upon business plan	Commerce Department
	Apply for Main Street / Elm Street Funding - planner / grant writer needed	2008	Business Association	\$15,000 for grant writing / planning	Association funds
	2.2 – Create a business retention and marketing initiative	Timeframe	Responsibility / Partners	Estimated Cost	Potential Source of Funds
	Research commercial and vacant properties from BRT data	2006 / 2007	Business Association	--	--
	Create a map that illustrates available properties, ownership, etc.	2007	Business Association	\$500	Association funds
	Organize a series of meetings with local realtors to discuss coordination on sharing information on leasable space	2007	Business Association	--	--
	Set-up space on the NLNA and Association websites for commercial space inquiries by businesses	2008	Business Association	\$10,000 for Business Association website and NLNA website update	Association funds
	Develop marketing package for targeted new businesses	2008	Business Association	\$10,000	Commerce Department
	Reach out to 5-10 property owners looking to lease or sell commercial space / properties	2008	Business Association	--	--
	Maintain list of commercial property owners and potential tenants	2008	Business Association	--	--
	Develop searchable database of commercial properties with map on the website	2010	Business Association	\$5,000-\$10,000 for web programming	Association funds
	2.3 - Create and adopt guiding principles for the redevelopment of key commercial properties	Timeframe	Responsibility / Partners	Estimated Cost	Potential Source of Funds
	Formalize a meeting schedule and agenda for 4-5 meeting spaced over 6 months to discuss specific sites	2005	Urban Design Committee	--	--
	Identify additional sites of critical concern	2006	Urban Design Committee	--	--
	Develop broad conceptual approaches for discussion purposes only with developers	2006	Urban Design Committee	--	--

### 3.0 Re-establish 2nd Street as the heart of Northern Liberties, reflective of local character and equipped to meet neighborhood needs

▶	3.1 – Undertake traffic calming measures at key intersections	Timeframe	Responsibility / Partners	Estimated Cost	Potential Source of Funds
	Appoint one NLNA member to coordinate effort	2006	NLNA Board	--	--
	Prioritize list of improvements for specific intersections	2006	NLNA Board / Urban Design Committee	--	--
	Prepare initial drawings and specific improvement request for each intersection	2006	NLNA Board / Urban Design Committee	--	in-kind services
	Coordinate with City & DVRPC to determine potential funding approach	2007	NLNA Board	\$2,000 for grant writing	Donations, operating funds
	Implementation	2010	NLNA Board / City Streets	\$60,000	SAFETEA / DVRPC / Penns Landing Development Corp. / Private Developers
	3.2 – Change 2nd Street's one-way traffic flow to two-way	Timeframe	Responsibility / Partners	Estimated Cost	Potential Source of Funds
	Organize a meeting with local Council reps, business owners and NLNA Board members to lobby for two-way traffic flow	2006	NLNA Board	--	--
	Raise funds for detailed traffic / planning study if City will not agree to undertake study	2006 / 2007	Fundraising Committee	--	--
	Hire firm to undertake traffic study	2007	NLNA Board	\$15,000	Commerce Dept, DCED, DVRPC
	Submit final plans to City Street Department for review	2007	NLNA Board	--	--
	Determine final costs and coordinate with City on fundraising strategy (City may require a local match)	2007	NLNA Board	--	--
	Implementation	2008	NLNA Board / City Streets	\$50,000	City Capital Program
	3.3 – Significantly improve the physical character of 2nd Street between Poplar and Fairmount	Timeframe	Responsibility / Partners	Estimated Cost	Potential Source of Funds
	Hire designer to undertake detailed design and implementation strategy for 2nd Street	2007	NLNA Board / Urban Design Committee	\$15,000	Commerce Department, DCED, Business Association
	Apply for implementation funds - target foundations / programs that fund sustainable development	2008	Fundraising Committee / NLNA Board	--	--
	Hold a fundraising event along 2nd Street to generate excitement / interest and funds for the improvements	2008	Fundraising Committee / NLNA Board	--	--
	Complete construction documents and set time frame for implementation	2010	NLNA Board / Urban Design Committee	\$10,000 for construction docs based on a \$100,000 overall cost for implementation (cost may vary greatly depending upon plan)	Commerce Department, SAFETEA, DVRPC TCDI Grant, City Capital Program

**4.0 Adopt a "Green" philosophy and demand Low Impact Development (LID)**

▶	4.1 - Educate neighborhood residents about effective individual efforts to reduce the impact of development on the environment	Timeframe	Responsibility	Estimated Cost	Potential Source of Funds
	Coordinate with the Philadelphia Office of Watersheds, Earthpledge and other organizations to gather information about effective low-impact education initiatives	2006	Open Space Committee	--	--
	Develop a short brochure of information covering permeable materials, rain barrels and other possibilities for distribution in local stores, churches and on the website	2006 / 2007	Open Space Committee	\$5,000-\$10,000 for design and printing	Foundation focused on sustainable development
	Coordinate a deal with a local supplier of rain-barrels to secure a reduced price in exchange for purchasing above a specific number	2007	Open Space Committee	--	--
	Send regular emails / newsletters via the website to residents about the ecology of their community	2008	Open Space Committee	--	--
▶	4.2 - Reactivate the Tree Tenders program	Timeframe	Responsibility	Estimated Cost	Potential Source of Funds
	Coordinate with PHS on setting up program	2006	Open Space Committee	--	--
	Seek foundation assistance for trees and subsidy to participants - apply for TreeVitalize Grant	2007	Open Space Committee	\$2,000 for grant writer if necessary	Foundation, operating budget of the NLNA
	Recruit local property owners to participate	2007 / 2008	Open Space Committee	--	Volunteer activity
	First planting - 50 trees	2008	Open Space Committee	\$25,000	TreeVitalize / PHS / Property Owner Match
	4.3 - Provide links to local resources for green development and information on specific materials and strategies	Timeframe	Responsibility	Estimated Cost	Potential Source of Funds
	Conduct web search for useful websites that contain information and toolkits for individuals / developers to build green	2006	Open Space Committee	--	--
	Organize meeting with local designers to tap their knowledge and experience in green construction	2006	Open Space Committee	--	--
	Designate 1 local designer as the green "librarian" for the community (gathers additional information, organizes information, available for questions)	2006	Open Space Committee	--	--
	Develop list of preferred local materials that meet these green standards for both architecture and civic space	2007	Open Space Committee	--	--
	Maintain and update list regularly on website	2007	Open Space Committee	--	--
	4.4 - Identify, acquire, secure, and improve the neighborhood's inventory of open space	Timeframe	Responsibility	Estimated Cost	Potential Source of Funds
▶	Divide neighborhood into small sectors and send members of the committee to survey, identifying existing open space, necessary improvements and potential new open space	2006	Open Space Committee	--	volunteer effort
▶	Develop list of priority projects from improvements to securing new gardens, etc.	2007	Open Space Committee	--	--
	Research parcel ownership / tax status of properties targeted for new open spaces	2007	Open Space Committee	--	--
	Approach RDA and local Council representatives to secure specific properties under NLNA ownership	2008	Open Space Committee	TBD	DCNR / PHS / Foundation
▶	4.5 - Create an Open Space Fund	Timeframe	Responsibility	Estimated Cost	Potential Source of Funds
	Convene meeting to discuss zoning requirements for low-impact development - determine types of projects and amounts for dedicated fund	2006	Zoning, Urban Design and Open Space Committee	--	--
	Clearly describe the new local requirements in all documents related to zoning review in the community	2006-	Zoning, Urban Design and Open Space Committee	--	--
	Develop yearly plan to allocate the fund to specific priority projects	2007	Open Space Committee	--	--

**5.0 Foster a seamless transition between the traditional neighborhood fabric and the developing waterfront**

	5.1 - Ensure Brown Street is opened to Delaware Avenue	Timeframe	Responsibility	Estimated Cost	Potential Source of Funds
▶	Work closely with the developers of 700 N. Delaware on design and access issues	2005 / 2006	Zoning and Urban Design Committees	--	--
	5.2 - Improve pedestrian crossings to the waterfront at Frankford, Brown, and Spring Garden	Timeframe	Responsibility	Estimated Cost	Potential Source of Funds
	Survey intersections noting crosswalks, street width, signage and lighting	2007	Zoning and Urban Design Committees	--	Volunteer time by committee members
	Develop recommendations regarding basic improvements for each intersection	2007	Zoning and Urban Design Committees	--	Volunteer time by committee members
	Work with Councilman DeCicco, Penns Landing Dev. Corp. and City to advocate for improved Delaware Avenue crossings	2007 / 2008	Zoning and Urban Design Committees	--	--
	Coordinate with adjacent neighborhoods to pressure City to undertake improvements	2008	NLNA Board	--	--
	5.3 - Seek funds for streetscape improvements at Fairmount, Brown, and Laurel	Timeframe	Responsibility	Estimated Cost	Potential Source of Funds
	Develop basic streetscape improvements for targeted streets	2007	Zoning and Urban Design Committees	\$5,000 for preliminary plans and renderings	Commerce Department, Wachovia, William Penn Foundation
	Seek assistance from DVRPC and the City on identifying sources of funds for improvements	2008	NLNA Board	--	--
	Fundraise locally, if necessary to match funds (donations for trees for instance)	2009	Fundraising Committee	--	--
	Streetscape implementation (including construction docs)	2011	NLNA Board	\$100,000	SAFETEA funding / DVRPC
	5.4 - Improve areas under I-95 and the EI with new lighting and signage focused on Spring Garden, Girard, Fairmount, Brown, and Laurel	Timeframe	Responsibility	Estimated Cost	Potential Source of Funds
▶	Designate key areas / structures for improvements - lighting and/or greening	2006	Urban Design Committee	--	Volunteer time
	Determine necessary signage	2006	Urban Design Committee	--	Volunteer time
	Implement three pilot improvements in highly visible locations	2008	Urban Design Committee	\$30,000	Foundation
	5.5 - Develop active park space under the highway and EI	Timeframe	Responsibility	Estimated Cost	Potential Source of Funds
▶	Compile list of targeted properties and owners	2006	NLNA CDC	--	--
▶	Present list and preliminary plan included in this plan to Councilman DeCicco and City for consideration of designating district a Renewal Area	2006	NLNA CDC	--	--
	Work with RDA to develop need / blight study to designate Renewal Area	2007	NLNA CDC	--	--
	Create redevelopment plan for area	2008	NLNA CDC	\$25,000 for consultant	DCNR, Foundation
	Work with local developers to determine interest and levels of financial assistance for physical improvements / implementation	2008	NLNA CDC	--	--
	Acquisition	2010	NLNA CDC	TBD	RDA, DCNR
	Implementation of first phase of improvements	2011	NLNA CDC	\$200,000	DCNR, National Foundations, Capital Program

<b>6.0 Ensure livability through optimized mobility</b>					
<b>▶</b>	<b>6.1 - Advocate for increased SEPTA ridership</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>	<b>Potential Source of Funds</b>
	Collect information on schedules, where to purchase tokens and amenities near each station	2006	Parking Committee	--	--
	Undertake ridership campaign - web based	2006	Parking Committee	--	As part of website design and maintenance
	Distribute postcards with SEPTA information to major local bars	2007	Parking Committee	\$2,000 for printing	DVRPC* / SEPTA
	Advocate for station improvements - coordinate with SEPTA and Councilman DeCicco	2007 -	NLNA Board / Parking Committee	--	--
	Coordinate with surrounding neighborhoods on the possibility of a weekend shuttle	2007 -	NLNA Board / Parking Committee	--	--
<b>▶</b>	<b>6.2 - Improved bicycle and pedestrian facilities</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>	<b>Potential Source of Funds</b>
	Coordinate with the Philadelphia Bicycle Network on approaches and implementation approach	2006	Open Space Committee	--	--
	Focus on 4th and 5th Streets for initial implementation	2007	Open Space Committee	\$20,000	Foundation, DVRPC*, SAFETEA
	Designate locations for new bike racks - consider having them designed by local artists	2008	Open Space Committee	\$40,000 (coordinate with Rec 1.2)	Foundation, in-kind services, local donations'
	<b>6.3 - Improve signage and information about on-street parking</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>	<b>Potential Source of Funds</b>
	Identify necessary signage and locations to improve on-street parking	2006 / 2007	Parking Committee	--	--
	Create parking brochure that includes all available parking resources in the area	2008	Parking Committee	\$5,000	DVRPC*, Business Association
	<b>6.4 - Develop a shared parking approach to underutilized lots along Green Street</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>	<b>Potential Source of Funds</b>
	Collect information on all property owners for lots along Green Street	2006	Parking Committee	--	--
	Meet with LISC to coordinate on shared parking approaches	2007	Parking Committee	--	--
	Determine legal arrangements and night time management (security)	2008	Parking Committee	\$5,000 - \$10,000 for legal services	Business Association, LISC
	<b>6.5 - Create new parking lots and garages in strategic locations</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>	<b>Potential Source of Funds</b>
	Designate at grade parking areas integrated within park under I-95 (coordinate with Rec. 5.5)	2006	Parking Committee	--	--
	Collect information on ownership and tax status for properties at Brown and Front and on the Liberty Shopping Center	2006	Parking Committee	--	--
	Undertake market study to determine feasibility of a mixed-use parking garage	2007	Parking Committee	\$10,000	Business Association, local donations / developers
	Explore potential of City assisted acquisition of properties for a mixed-use parking garage	2008	Parking Committee	TBD	RDA

\* indicates potential for a joint grant submittal to DVRPC for funding

**7.0 Build capacity within the NLNA; generate desirable change**

		Timeframe	Responsibility	Estimated Cost	Potential Source of Funds
▶	7.1 - Monitor the success of the Trash Removal Initiative				
	Set benchmarks for assessing success of program	2006	Recycling / Cleaning Committee	--	--
	Explore additional City funding to expand program	2006	Recycling / Cleaning Committee	TBD	L&I, Clip Program
▶	7.2 - Expand the NLNA volunteer base				
	Create a brochure summary of this plan for distribution in local stores, churches, etc.	2006	Newly formed Membership & Events Committee	\$12,000 for design and printing	DCED, Foundation, in-kind services
	Undertake one large volunteer drive to coincide with a major local event such as First Saturday or May Day - distribute fliers	2006	Membership and Events Committee	\$3,000 for printing	Donations, in-kind services
	Write an op-ed column in the local newspaper solely dedicated to the need to assist with this plan's implementation	2006	NLNA President	--	--
	Design two community billboards that can be updated regularly with local news, events, and activities - ideal locations include Liberty Lands and 2nd Street	2007	Urban Design Committee / NLNA Board	\$10,000 to implement both	Foundation
▶	7.3 - Develop transparency in the zoning review process				
	Create a short summary of the local zoning process for distribution and web	2006	Zoning Committee	--	--
	Place "FAQ" on zoning on the NLNA website	2006	Zoning Committee	--	--
	Consider offering 3-4 training workshops a year for developers and business owners to navigate the review process	2006 / 2007	Business Association / Zoning Committee	--	--
	7.4 - Develop transparency in project expectations				
	Create a clear document summarizing the design expectations of the community	2006	Zoning Committee	--	--
	Organize a joint meeting of the zoning and urban design committees to discuss a point system for project review	2006	Zoning Committee	--	--
▶	7.5 - Maintain a database of new development proposals and outcomes				
	Update provided excel database of proposals during each zoning meeting	2005--	Zoning Committee	--	--
	Consider hiring a consultant to create 3-D model of neighborhood into which new proposals could be inserted and evaluated	2007 / 2008	Zoning Committee	\$25,000 for height survey, basic forms, streets, curbs, and overpasses	Donations, Comcast Foundation, Microsoft Foundation
▶	7.6 - Develop the website to fully communicate NLNA activities				
	Form web design oversight committee	2006	NLNA Board	--	--
	Discuss the necessary content for the site	2006	Web Design Committee	--	--
	Hire web designer to rebuild site	2006	Web Design Committee	\$5,000-\$15,000 depending upon level of in-kind services	State Dept. of Commerce, Comcast, United Way's Teaming4Technology
	7.7 - Organize a Coalition of local neighborhood organizations to coordinate revitalization efforts				
	Reach out individually to community leaders to discuss Coalition	2006	NLNA President	--	--
	Email list of priorities and issues to all Coalition members	2006 / 2007	NLNA Board	--	--
	Organize meetings to prioritize and coordinate efforts	2007	NLNA Board	--	--
	Jointly seek funds for specific improvements	2007 -	NLNA Board	TBD	TBD
<b>Glossary</b>	DVRPC=Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission		PHS=Philadelphia Horticultural Society's Philadelphia Green Program		
	LISC=Low Income Support Corporation		L&I=Liscence and Inspections (City)		
	DCED=Department of Community and Economic Development (State)		RDA=Redevelopment Authority (City)		
	SAFETEA=Federal Transportation Admin. Transportation Fund		Capital Program=City's Capital Budget		
	DCNR=Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (State)		TCDI=Transportation and Community Development Initiative (DVRPC grant)		







Appendix



**Sample Northern Liberties Neighborhood Needs Survey, Summer 2005**

**Northern Liberties Neighborhood Needs Survey,  
Summer 2005**

Thank you for filling out this survey. Your input is necessary to assist the NLNA in defining priorities for the Neighborhood Plan which is currently underway. This is your plan and we are interested in your priorities for the neighborhood. Please answer all questions and return the survey to the NLNA via email or at their offices:

NLNA Offices:

733 N. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street

Email:

[gesthernlna@yahoo.com](mailto:gesthernlna@yahoo.com)

**Please tell us about yourself:**

*Please check only one box*

**Housing Status:** Homeowner

Renter

Business Owner

Address

**Age:** 18-25

40-40

55-55

65-65

66 and over

**Residency Length** Under 2 yrs

2-5 yrs

6-10 yrs

11-20 yrs

21 and over

Unknown

# Sample Northern Liberties Neighborhood Needs Survey, Summer 2005

## Quality of Life Issues & Priorities:

Please indicate your top three (3) priorities only by writing a 1, 2, or 3 next to desired items.

\_\_\_ Cleaning / Trash

\_\_\_ Graffiti

\_\_\_ Safety / Crime

\_\_\_ Traffic

\_\_\_ Trees / Gardens

\_\_\_ Parking

\_\_\_ Noise (construction related or other)

\_\_\_ Public Transit

\_\_\_ Street / Sidewalk Improvements

\_\_\_ Other Quality of Life Issues

If other, please write your concerns below:

## Housing Needs:

Please indicate your top three (3) priorities only by writing a 1, 2, or 3 next to desired items.

\_\_\_ Improved Code Enforcement

\_\_\_ New Affordable Housing

\_\_\_ Rehab Existing Buildings

\_\_\_ Limit Curb Cuts on Major Streets

**Sample Northern Liberties Neighborhood Needs Survey, Summer 2005**

\_\_\_ Provide Open Space with New Development

\_\_\_ Ensure a diversity of architectural styles

\_\_\_ Other Housing Needs

If other, please write your concerns below:

**Commercial / Business Improvements:**

*Please indicate your top three (3) priorities only by writing a 1, 2, or 3 next to desired items.*

\_\_\_ Active Business Association

\_\_\_ Streetscape improvements for 2<sup>nd</sup> Street (trees, lighting, benches, etc...)

\_\_\_ Façade Improvements

\_\_\_ Street cleaning / trash removal for commercial areas

\_\_\_ Coordinated marketing for area businesses

\_\_\_ Greater range of businesses

\_\_\_ Other Commercial Improvements

If other, please write your concerns below:

**Open Space / Public Space:**

*Please indicate your top three (3) priorities only by writing a 1, 2, or 3 next to desired items.*

\_\_\_ Gardens

\_\_\_ Parks

\_\_\_ Tot Lots / Playgrounds

\_\_\_ Public Art



## Sample Northern Liberties Neighborhood Needs Survey, Summer 2005

\_\_\_ Community Center

\_\_\_ Senior Center

\_\_\_ Improvements to Existing Open Space

\_\_\_ New Street Trees

\_\_\_ Other Open Space Improvements:

If other, please write your concerns below:

\_\_\_ Create new parks / gardens

\_\_\_ Improve 2<sup>nd</sup> Street as a neighborhood commercial center

\_\_\_ Improve local volunteer efforts / public outreach about townwatch, cleaning, etc..

\_\_\_ Create additional parking resources

\_\_\_ Address inadequate infrastructure

\_\_\_ Undertake streetscape improvements for major streets

\_\_\_ Other Neighborhood Wide Priorities

If other, please write your concerns below:

### Neighborhood Wide Priorities:

*Please indicate your top three (3) priorities only by writing a 1, 2, or 3 next to desired items.*

\_\_\_ Ensure / create waterfront access

**Northern Liberties Neighborhood Needs Survey, Summer 2005 Results**

<b>RESPONDENTS</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>Housing Status</b>	<b>% Share</b>
Homeowner	81%
Renter	13%
Business Owner	6%
<b>Age</b>	
18-25	2%
26-40	50%
41-55	34%
55-65	13%
66+	1%
<b>Length of Residency</b>	
Under 2 years	15%
2-5 years	31%
6-10 years	17%
11-20 years	23%
21 years and over	13%
Unknown	0%

<b>PRIORITIES</b>		
	<b>Ranked Within Top Three Priorities by X% of Surveyed</b>	<b>Top Priority of X% of Surveyed</b>
<b>Quality of Life Priorities</b>		
Cleaning/Trash	66%	8%
Safety/Crime	64%	37%
Parking	53%	23%
Trees/Gardens	49%	14%
Street/Sidewalk Improvements	19%	3%
Noise (Construction related or other)	10%	1%
Traffic	9%	3%
Other*	9%	3%
Graffiti	8%	2%
Public Transit	6%	2%
* schools, late night drunkenness, antisocial behavior		
<b>Housing Needs</b>		
Provide Open Space with New Development	73%	31%
Rehab Existing Buildings	69%	28%
Improved Code Enforcement	47%	16%
Ensure a Diversity of Architectural Styles	36%	9%
New Affordable Housing	31%	14%
Limit Curb Cuts on Major Streets	22%	5%
Other*	16%	1%
* senior housing		

## Northern Liberties Neighborhood Needs Survey, Summer 2005 Results

	Ranked Within Top Three Priorities by X% of Surveyed	Top Priority of X% of Surveyed
<b>Commercial/Business Improvements</b>		
Streetscape Improvements for 2nd Street	85%	35%
Greater Range of Businesses	66%	33%
Street Cleaning/Trash Removal for Commercial Areas	60%	15%
Façade Improvements	31%	5%
Active Business Association	20%	6%
Coordinated Marketing for Area Businesses	15%	5%
Other*	9%	6%
* grocery store, removal of sidewalk dumpsters		
<b>Open Space/Public Space</b>		
Improvements to Existing Open Space	63%	26%
Parks	55%	23%
New Street Trees	55%	16%
Gardens	35%	9%
Community Center	35%	12%
Public Art	26%	6%
Tot Lots/Playgrounds	16%	8%
Other*	10%	0%
Senior Center	6%	1%



**Northern Liberties Neighborhood Needs Survey, Summer 2005 Results**

	<b>Ranked Within Top Three Priorities by X% of Surveyed</b>	<b>Top Priority of X% of Surveyed</b>
<b>Neighborhood Wide Priorities</b>		
Improve 2nd Street as a Local Commercial Center	55%	17%
Create Additional Parking Resources	51%	22%
Undertake Streetscape Improvements for Major Streets	51%	12%
Create New Parks/Gardens	47%	16%
Ensure/Create Waterfront Access	33%	15%
Address Inadequate Infrastructure	24%	6%
Improve Local Volunteer Efforts/Public Outreach	20%	7%
Other*	3%	2%
* trash, traffic, controlled development, reclaim empty lots		

Development Proposals Reviewed by the NLNA Zoning Committee, 2001- 2005

Source: NLNA Zoning Committee Meeting Minutes, 2001- 2005

\* The below table documents only new construction and rehabilitation projects. The table does not include proposals for home additions or improvements. Presentations rejected by the Zoning Committee were omitted from the table. To avoid double counting, projects that required multiple presentations before the Zoning Committee are listed only once, under the date of the most recent appearance.

2005	MTG. DATE	DEVELOPER / ARCHITECT / OWNER	ADDRESS	USE	# of Comm. Uses	# of Res. Units	NOTES
1	04/26/05	Ed Fink	412 W. George St. & 978 & 990 N. Leithgow St.	4 single family dwellings		4	replacing 3 trinities
2		Zeev Shenkman	722-24 N. 2nd St.	change commercial & 5 residential units to less commercial space with 7 dwellings	1	7	
3	04/25/05	Ross Copeland	444 Poplar St.	1 single family dwelling		1	
4		George Vallone	Fairmount Ave. - Poplar St. - Delaware Ave. - Front St.	residential and commercial: 1500 residential units in two towers and townhomes	1	1,250	700 Delaware Avenue
5	03/30/05	Khara Clendenon (owner), Johnnie Ray Tyson (restaurateur)	800-02 N. 2nd St	Mexican Restaurant (Los Limbos) with liquor license	1		support restaurant, but not liquor license or hours (more bar-like than restaurant-like)
6		David Alperin, Tim McDonald	1036-38 N. 4th St.	5 condos with parking		5	ZC suggests 4 condos, not 5
7	03/28/05	Tina Roberts, Tower Investments	202-234 George St. (excluding 206, 208 & 210), 1035 N. 3rd Street, 1021-25 N. Orianna St.	19 new townhomes (part of Liberties Walk)		19	discussion of variance for height and lot coverage, parking issues
8		Steve Pollack, attorney	218-234 Green St.	Dunkin' Donuts	1		only supported if: no drive through, no 24 Hrs, meet with UDC, no on site cooking
9	03/15/05	Henry Spector	NW corner Brown & Hancock	5 townhouses		5	
10		Daryl Rothmund	957-959 N. Lawrence St. & 852-64 N. Leithgow St.	6 townhouses with parking		6	
11		Daryl Rothmund	839-51 N. 3rd St. through to Orianna St.	8 single family homes & 32 condo units with up to 44 parking spaces		A	space currently a day care center. ZC opposes variance because of the potential of the property as a shopping center.
12	02/28/05	Amy Davis	956 N. 2nd St.	commercial & residential: 1st floor commercial with 3 condos above w/o parking	1	3	currently an abandoned, vacant 1-story lot
13		Ed Fink	612 George St.	Single family dwelling with parking		1	
14		Brian Phillips for Ed Curran	1112-18 N. 3rd St.	10 condos with parking		10	
15	02/01/05	Don Ventresca	850-58 N. 4th St.	9 townhomes with parking		9	
16		Sean O'Reilly	320-28 Brown St.	18 townhouses with parking		18	
17		Ross Copeland	315 W. George St.	single family dwelling w/o parking		1	
18	01/31/05	Ed Fink for Asher Greenspun & Sabbahdery	811-15 N. 2nd St.	9 residential units and one 2nd floor commercial unit with ground floor parking	1	9	
19		Ed Fink for Roland Cassis	834 N. Lawrence St.	3 single family units with parking		3	
20		Jose Hernandez for Larry Thompson	74-98 Laurel St. (SE corner of Front & Laurel)	9 townhomes with parking		9	

2004	MTG. DATE	DEVELOPER / ARCHITECT / OWNER	ADDRESS	USE	# of Comm. Uses	# of Res. Units	NOTES
21	12/20/04	Tina Roberts, Tower Investments	828-40 N. 2nd St.	new commercial uses for 3 buildings	3		
22	11/30/04	Tony Rim (owner)	The Foodery (SE corner of 2nd & Poplar Sts.)	upscale gourmet beer and food shop, WAWA style grocery and convenience items	1		not approved for sales of convenience items
23	11/29/04	Joe Scarpone & Carrie	702-04 N. 2nd St.	new restaurant (Sovalo)	1		
24		Steve Labov	817-27 N. American St./211-21 Brown St. (NE corner of American & Brown)	22 townhomes		22	
25		Bill Waskey	726-34 N. 3rd St. (SW corner of 3rd & Brown Sts.)	8 units with parking for units and additional parking for artist studios (total 15 spaces)	8	8	
26	10/25/04	David Betz	601-607 N. 2nd St. through to Hancock St.	demolition of existing bldgs, proposed 1st floor commercial and 16 residential units with 16 parking spaces	1	16	
27		Ed Fink	609 N. 2nd St.	1st floor commercial with 3 residential units and 1 parking space	1	3	
28		Craig Deutsch	919-25 N. American St.	4 single family dwellings		4	
29	10/06/04	Tina Roberts, Tower Investments, Erdy/McHenry	North Schmidt's site	124 townhouses with garages and 97 on street parking spaces, 124 apartments, commercial space with supermarket, and a 700 car parking lot above. 500 for Piazza and 200 mixed. Corner of 2nd & Girard would be a 7 story office building	2	148	
30	09/27/04	Eric Blumenfeld	Cigar Factory @ 4th & Girard (1147 N. 4th St.)	parking reduction: 32 units, 32 spaces		32	
31	08/30/04	Steve Maffei	800-806 N. 3rd St.	6 residential units with parking		6	
32		Ed Fink	429 Poplar St.	1 single family dwelling, no garage		1	
33		Ed Fink	1004-1010 N. 3rd St.	discussion of decks for 4 single family dwellings then under construction		4	
34	07/27/04	George Minosis	336 Fairmount Ave.	1 single family dwelling		1	
35	07/26/04	Henry Spector	431 Fairmount St.	15 condos with parking lot		15	
36		Ed Fink for Greenspun & Sabbahdery	926-32 N. 3rd St.	18 residential units		18	
37		Ed Fink	321 Wildey St.	1 single family dwelling		1	
38	06/29/04	Sarah Lockwood	209 Poplar St. (2nd & Poplar)	café with fenced-in outdoor seating	1		
39		Ed Fink, Roman Drab (owner)	226 W. Wildey St.	1 single family dwelling		1	
40		Mike Severo & Brent Koch	930 N. 2nd St.	Subway/Ice Cream	1		location fell through, seeking to find a new location - perhaps on Spring Garden or Girard
41		Ellen Mogul	NW corner of 4th & Brown	proposed Brunch only restaurant open 7 days a week.	1		
42	06/28/04	Liz Zimmer	609 N. 3rd St.	2 residential units & 1 commercial unit	1	2	

2004 con't	MTG. DATE	DEVELOPER / ARCHITECT / OWNER	ADDRESS	USE	# of Comm. Uses	# of Res. Units	NOTES
43		Gordon Houston	101-15 Spring Garden St.	high rise residential development (48 condos with 2nd floor health club and pool for residents). Alternate plan: 19 story 76 unit building with upscale supermarket and free underground parking for 47 customers and 57 spaces for residents.		48	
44	05/24/04	Mary Ellen Reed	630 N. 2nd St.	Coffee shop & light fare with take-out and rear outdoor seating	1		
45		Marie Bontigao	944 N. 2nd St.	Proposal for café boutique and 2 residential units	1	2	
46	04/26/04	Khara Clendenon (owner) and Ollie Cherniahisky (architect)	800-02 N. 2nd St	6 residential units and 1 commercial space	1	6	SAME PARCELS AS MEXICAN RESTAURANT NOTED IN MARCH 05
47		John Garagozzo	NW corner of 3rd & Brown St.	6 duplex units with 6 parking spaces		6	
48	03/30/04	Ed Fink for George Minosis	105 Brown St.	1 single family dwelling		1	
49		Oron Daskal	909-15 N. 2nd St.	Spare Time Bowling Alley with liquor license and valet parking for a lot .25 miles away at Front & Poplar	1		
50	03/29/04	Kelley DeFeo	987 N. 6th St.	1 single family dwelling		1	
51		Greg Katz	809 N. 2nd St.	Digital photography studio on ground floor, apartment above.	1	1	
52		Moshe Barazan & Hillel Tsarfati (B&T Home Builders)	919 N. Front St.	8 townhomes with garages		8	
53		Michael Shamshick	Becker Building (1151 N. 3rd St.)	45 units and 46 parking spots plus 1 commercial space	1	45	
54	03/16/04	Tower Investments	Special Schmidt's Site Mtg. (2nd & Girard)	Introduction of mixed use plan rather than previous "big box" proposal.			
55	02/23/04	Chris Sincavage	912 N. Lawrence St.	Partial demolition and rebuild of existing structures			
56	01/27/04	Tom Cohen	913 N. Lawrence St.	1 single family dwelling		1	
57		Alex Generalis	444 N. 4th St.	live/work apartments: 300 units, 152 spaces		300	conversion of industrial building
58	01/26/04	Anthony Sembello	419 Fairmount Ave.	1 single family dwelling		1	conversion of garage
59		Kim Leicester	412 Fairmount Ave.	2 residential units with parking on Wallace St.		2	
60		Zeev Shenkman	934-50 N. 3rd St.	28 condos		28	

2003	MTG. DATE	DEVELOPER / ARCHITECT / OWNER	ADDRESS	USE	# of Comm. Uses	# of Res. Units	NOTES
61	12/16/03	Vince Soldaki	726 N. 3rd St.	pre school			former industrial building (noted elsewhere)
62	11/25/03	Rual Luna	881 N. 5th St.	1 single family dwelling		1	
63		David Sabag	307-09 St. John Newman Way	Proposal to combine two lots into one to build 1 single family dwelling.		1	
64		David Perlman	419-25 Poplar St.	3 single family units		3	
65		Shawn Ward	201 Spring Garden St.	Bartending School on 5th Floor	1		
66	11/24/03	Sam Gordon	407-09 Poplar St.	1 duplex with parking		1	
67		Dave Amburn	712 N. 2nd St.	8 residential units and 1 commercial space	1	8	
68	10/27/03	Tower Investments	817 N. 3rd St.	Subdivide one lot into two and renovate existing building into 8 live/work units with parking on second lot		8	
69		Henry Spector	821 N. 2nd St., 153 Brown St., 800 block of Hancock, 807-811 N. Hancock St.	17 residential units with parking		17	
70	09/29/03	Don Murtaugh	1030-34 N. 4th St.	3 single family dwellings		3	
71	09/08/03	Ed Fink	626-30 N. 3rd St.	commercial & bi-level condo at corner and 2 single family dwellings with garages	1	3	
72	08/25/03	Matt Ruben	326 St. John Neumann Way, 1005 N. 4th St. rear, 325-31 W. Wildey St., 1002-1006 N. Orianna St.	Consolidate 9 lots into one to legalize one off-street parking space with a fence			
73		Bob Aretz	948-50 N. Orianna, 330-32,36 W. Wildey St.	Consolidate 4 lots into one to legalize one off-street parking space with a fence			
74		Ed Fink	SE corner of 5th & Myrtle	2 single family dwellings		2	
75		Henry Spector	815 N. 2nd St. rear and on west side of Hancock St. from Brown St. to 826 N. Hancock	18 condo units with parking		18	
76	07/28/03	Gina Thompson	610 N. 2nd St.	fortune-telling business	1		
77		Ed Fink for David Sabag	1015 N. Orianna St. & 1016 N. 3rd St.	Consolidation of 6 lots for the construction of 2 single family dwellings		2	
78	06/30/03	Zeev Shenkman	2nd & Poplar	19 condos with parking		19	Poplar Estates
79		Theresa Delgado	1016 N. Orkney St.	1 single family dwelling		1	
80	05/28/03	Tower Investments	Special Presentation of Piazza project, Schmidt's Urban Renewal Tract				
81	04/28/03	Ray King	829-35 N. 3rd St.	conversion to live/work units with parking			
82		Tower Investments	1022 New Market St.	18 live/work units in existing building with parking		18	
83	03/31/03	Ed Fink	624 N. 3rd St.	1 single family dwelling with parking		1	
84		Zeev Shenkman	820-828 N. 3rd St.	18 apartments and 5 townhouses, all with parking		23	
85	02/24/03	Bill Stinson	201 Spring Garden St, 1st Floor	coffee shop & sandwich shop	1		
86	01/27/03	Tina Roberts for Tower Investments	908 N. 3rd St.	8 townhomes		8	
87	01/21/03	Tower Investments	The Piazza Project, South of Germantown Ave., North of Laurel, between 2nd & New Market St.	4 proposed new buildings with 270 apartments and commercial space, a central piazza, and public space	?	270	3rd presentation on the Piazza Project

2002	MTG. DATE	DEVELOPER / ARCHITECT / OWNER	ADDRESS	USE	# of Comm. Uses	# of Res. Units	NOTES
88	12/16/02	Tom Spiker	408 Fairmount	conversion of 2 family to 3 family building with garage		3	
89		Lou Orokofsky	900-06 N. 3rd St. (NW corner of 3rd & Poplar)	4 duplexes = 8 units with parking		8	
90		Zeev Shenkman	800 block of N. 3rd	demolish existing building, create 6 townhouses and 13 apartments with parking		19	
91		Ron Patterson	901 N. Delaware Ave.	Skate Park	1		
92	11/25/02	Steve Friedman	813 N. Lawrence St.	1 single family dwelling		1	
93	11/18/02	Lou Orokofsky	(NE corner of 2nd & Brown)	4 apartments with parking, commercial on 1st & 2nd floor	1	4	
94	10/30/02	Zeev Shenkman	NW corner of Front & Spring Garden and the West side of Hope Street	temporary 36 month parking lot			
95	10/21/02	Daryl Rothmund	946-54 N. American St.	4 single family dwellings with parking		4	free standing homes made of corrugated steel.
96	09/23/02	Gary Reitman	621 N. 3rd St.	legalize parking lot			
97	08/26/02	Rich Brown	159-63 Laurel St.	1 single family dwelling		1	
98		Lou Orokofsky	712-16 N. 2nd St.	8 apartments & ground floor commercial	1	8	
99		Lou Orokofsky	801-805 N. 2nd St.	ground floor commercial & 9-12 apartments, no parking to replace NoLib Meats building	1	9	
100	06/24/02	Seymour Rubin	821 N. 2nd St.	Iron Works gym proposal	1		
101		Tower Investments	1016 New Market St.	renovation of bldgs at 969 N. 2nd St. and 1016 New Market St. for 67 apartments and ground floor commercial. Parking for all units.	1	67	
102		Melanie Ellerbe	943-53 N. Front St.	Restaurant	1		liquor license opposed
103	05/20/02	Bob Bitros	931-33 N. 2nd St.	Restaurant	1		
104		Kevin Hartzell	607 N. 2nd St. @ Hancock	4 family dwelling with commercial, no parking	1	4	
105		Rene Ermilio	606 N. 2nd St.	Restaurant	1		
106	04/29/02	Bill Alesker	840-46 N. Lawrence St.	3 single family dwellings		3	
107		Fernando Lopez	618 N. Front St.	Car Wash & Detailing	1		
108		Moneer Farhat	625 N. Front St.	Restaurant	1		
109		Mike Untermeyer	401-17 N. 3rd St.	Use parking lot for flea market on weekends, public parking on weekdays & nights			
110	03/25/02	David Sabag	1017 N. Orianna St.	1 single family dwelling		1	
111		David Sabag	907 N. Lawrence St.	1 single family dwelling		1	
112		David Sabag	115 Laurel St.	1 single family dwelling		1	
113	02/25/02	Greg Sclicht	421 Fairmount St.	conversion to live/work space		1	
114		David Sabag	1129-37 N. Orianna St.	4 single family dwellings with parking on Galloway St.		4	
115	01/28/02	Darlene Threatt	915-19 N. Orianna St.	Auto repair	1		

2001	MTG. DATE	DEVELOPER / ARCHITECT / OWNER	ADDRESS	USE	# of Comm. Uses	# of Res. Units	NOTES
116	12/17/01	Darlene Threatt	165 Poplar St.	1 single family dwelling with garage		1	
117		Bart Blatstein	984 N. 2nd St.	4 apartments and 1 commercial space		4	
118		Bart Blatstein	233-37 Poplar St.	6 townhouses with parking		6	
119		Bart Blatstein	1156 N. 3rd St.	12 loft apartments		12	
120		Angel Franqui	232-36 W. Girard Ave. & 1140-50 Germantown Ave.	Wine & Spirit Shoppe with 3 apartments above and parking	1	3	
121		Ron Patterson	457-61 N. 3rd St.	Tiki Bob's Cantina with 224 parking spaces	1		
122	11/26/01						nothing not previously noted
123	10/29/01	Rene Ermilio	604 N. 2nd St.	ground floor commercial with 1 apartment above	1	1	
124		George Manosis	1039 N. 3rd St.	renovation of abandoned property from industrial to single family residential		1	
125		David Perlman	1126-34 N. 4th St. (& 1023-35 N. Leithgow St.)	9 townhomes without parking		9	
126	09/25/01	Mike Slocum	76 Carriage House	demolish & rebuild stables and carriage house	1		
127		Joseph Beller	813-17 N. 5th St.	2 commercial uses & 6 apartments with 5 residential parking spaces	2	6	
128	08/20/01	Ray Metzger	911-17 N. American St.	combine 5 lots into one to construct home/studio	1	1	
129		Mark Bee	801-05 N. 3rd St. (NE corner of 3rd & Brown St.)	Restaurant	1		
130		Bart Blatstein	between 2nd & 3rd, South of George St.	Liberty Walk: 22 townhouses with garages, 25 ground floor commercial spaces, 65 rental apartments, all with parking and a pedestrian walkway	25	87	
131	07/30/01	Daniel Katz	107 W. Spring Garden St. (NW corner of Front & Spring Garden)	140 Room Ramada Hotel	1		
132	06/25/01	Tom Updegrove	824 N. Hancock St.	Martial Arts Studio	1		
133		David Perlman	968-72 N. Lawrence St.	Rehab of existing 12 units to convert into 6 single family dwellings, no parking		6	
134	05/29/01	Bart Blatstein	919-25 N. 2nd St.	2 retail spaces, a restaurant, and 2 apartments, no parking	2	2	Previously Marvin Fives/Imperial Theater Bldg
135		David Perlman	960-62 & 964 N. Lawrence St.	3 single family homes with driveways and garages		3	
136		Stuart Harting	SW corner 5th & Brown	conversion of industrial building to 62 unit apartment building, 45 parking spaces		62	Bissell Building
137	04/30/01	Frano Lombardo	903 N. 2nd St.	Take out restaurant	1		
138		Ludmila Skibnegska	808 N. 3rd St.	commercial/industrial with apartment above	1	1	Miffin School
139		Drew Miller	900-02 N. 4th St.	2 family units with commercial on ground floor	1	2	
140	02/26/01	Varghese Thomas	1003 N. 6th St.	4 residential units with 1 office space	1	4	
141	01/29/01	John Franklin	126 W. Laurel St.	conversion of single family house into two apartments		1	
		<b>TOTAL # OF REVIEWED UNITS</b>			<b>92</b>	<b>2,850</b>	

Recent Development Built As-Of-Right, Noted through Visual Observation, May 2005

			ADDRESS	USE	Estimated # of Comm. Uses	Estimated # of Res. Units	NOTES
142			921 Christopher Columbus Blvd	1 commercial with 900 residential		900	Waterfront Square
143			538 N. 4th St	commercial/residential		2	
144			403-411 Wallace Street	residential		4	
145			600 N. 2nd St.	commercial/lofts?			
146			703 N. 2nd St.	commercial/residential		3	
147			712 N. 2nd St.	commercial/residential			
148			730 N. 2nd St.	commercial/residential		1	
149			223 Fairmount	residential		1	
150			NE Corner of Lawrence & Brown Streets	residential		10	
151			430 Poplar St.	residential		1	
152			849 Lawrence St.	residential		1	
153			225 Brown St.	residential		1	
154			220 Poplar St.	factory in demolition phase			Ortlieb's
155			813 Hancock	residential		2	
156			157-173 Poplar St.	residential		7	
157			909-917 Hancock St.	residential		7	
158			144-158 Laurel St.	residential		6	
159			147 Laurel St.	residential		1	
160			1020 New Market St.				?
161			943-949 N. 2nd St.	commercial-residential			ZBA sign, 56 units (part of Piazza project noted above)
162			986 N. 2nd St.	commercial/industrial			
163			1015 N. Bodine St.	commercial/residential			part of Liberties Walk, noted above
164			1002 N. 3rd St.	residential		1	
165			920 N. Orianna St.	residential		1	
166			928 N. 4th St.	residential		3	
167			908 N. Leithgow St.	residential		1	
168			901-903 N. 5th St.	commercial-residential			?
169			953 N. Randolph St.	residential		1	
170			987 N. Randolph St.	residential		1	
171			1009 N. 6th St.	residential		4	
172			507-509 W. Girard	mixed		2	
173			946 N. Lawrence	residential		1	
174			1027-1031 N. 4th St.	residential		3	
175			330 & 334 W. George St.	residential		2	
176			1120 N. 3rd St.	mixed			?
177			137 W. Girard	residential		9	
			<b>TOTAL # OF OBSERVED UNITS</b>			<b>976</b>	
					<b>92</b>	<b>3,826</b>	
<b>TOTAL # OF REVIEWED &amp; OBSERVED UNITS</b>					<b>92</b>	<b>3,826</b>	