

Civic Goals and Urban Design Strategies for the 40th Street Corridor



**University City
Philadelphia, PA**



Prepared for the University City District, SCI West & Friends of 40th Street
Prepared by PennPraxis & the Penn Project for Civic Engagement

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18th Police District: Captain David Bellamy
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University Square Tenants Association (3901): Sia Rah
Walnut Hill: Earl Williams and Horace Patterson
West Powelton: John Leatherberry
Woodland Terrace Home Association: Magali Larson and Marianna Thomas



October 25, 2011

Harris M. Steinberg
Executive Director
PennPraxis
School of Design
409 Duhring Wing
Philadelphia PA 19104-6311

Harris J. Sokoloff
Executive Director
Penn Project on Civic Engagement
Graduate School of Education
3440 Market Street, Suite 500
Philadelphia, PA 19104-3325

Dear 40th Street Stakeholders,

40th Street sits at an important juncture in both University City and the city as-a-whole. As the spine that connects an array of active neighborhoods along its north-south axis it is also the seam of academic and residential life – the classic meeting place of town and gown. Recently, the Philadelphia City Planning Commission identified 40th Street as the western boundary of Philadelphia's metropolitan center – highlighting the importance of University City to the city's and the region's economic base.

In 2004, Penn Praxis and the Penn Project on Civic Engagement facilitated the 40th Street Forums - designed to develop a set of values-based principles for equitable development that could inform the evolution of 40th Street. Those principles centered on finding ways to create unity while maintaining the rich diversity found along 40th Street. The Friends of 40th Street was formed as a result of the forums and since that time the group has advocated for equitable development along the corridor from Baltimore Avenue to Lancaster Avenue.

In 2011, PennPraxis and the Penn Project for Civic Engagement were invited to continue the public discussion about the evolution of 40th Street as a vibrant center of a dynamic series of neighborhoods. Working with the University City District (UCD), SCI West, the Friends of 40th Street and a wide group of stakeholders, we designed a public process intended to translate the principles for equitable development into a set of shared goals and aspirations for the quality and character of 40th Street's public realm. To help to achieve these goals, this document offers a set of strategies that can structure an ongoing public conversation around how public space, transportation, historic preservation and development and density and scale can work together to create a street with a strong sense of place.

Successful cities, their streetscapes and their neighborhoods are constantly evolving and changing. Managing change to ensure that the essence of a place is respected while enabling the expression of our age and time is a challenge that each generation faces. This document is intended to have a civic usefulness in that discussion about change – as a tool for neighbors, institutions, developers and business people to use in your deliberations about what makes a great street, neighborhood and district. It is neither prescriptive nor rigid but rather reflects the wide-ranging set of values expressed in the 2011 public forums and suggests how they might guide the evolution of 40th Street as one of Philadelphia's great urban thoroughfares.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Harris M. Steinberg".

Harris M. Steinberg, FAIA
PennPraxis
School of Design
University of Pennsylvania

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Harris J. Sokoloff".

Harris J. Sokoloff
Penn Project on Civic Engagement
Graduate School of Education
University of Pennsylvania

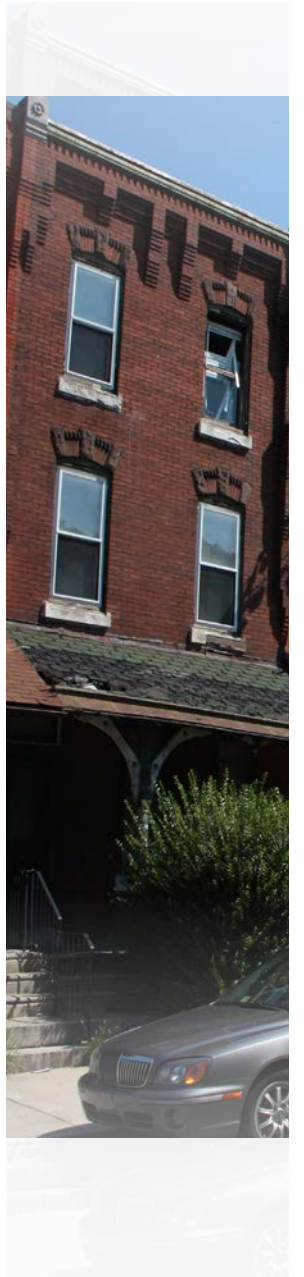
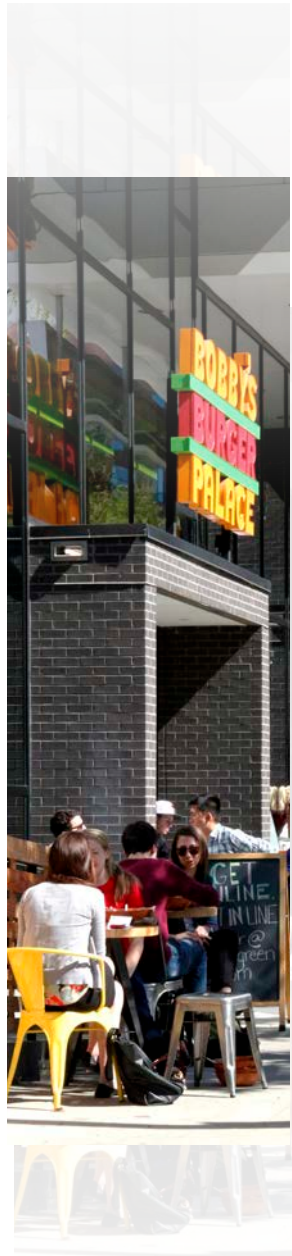




Table of Contents

1. Executive Summary	6
2. Project Overview	10
3. Understanding 40th Street	22
4. Civic Goals and Urban Design Strategies	32
5. Next Steps	44
6. Appendix	48

Executive Summary





Executive Summary

During the summer of 2011, the University City District, SCI West and the Friends of 40th Street convened a series of public forums focused on creating urban design strategies for 40th Street in University City. The forums were designed and facilitated by PennPraxis and the Penn Project for Civic Engagement as a way to engage community stakeholders in a conversation about the future of the corridor – from the Woodlands Cemetery at the south to Lancaster Avenue at the north and including 39th and 41st Streets to the east and west. The 2011 forums built upon the 2004 40th Street Forums that created principles for equitable development along the corridor.

University City has become a center of commercial vitality, innovation, and development. It is a place that is home to nearly 70,000 jobs; where \$2 billion in real estate projects have been recently completed and/or are under construction; where institutions

have invested more than \$1 billion in research and development; that has experienced a decade of significant population growth; and a place where home prices increased seven percent in 2010.⁹ 40th Street is the core of University City, connecting residential communities, commercial corridors, and institutions.

This report - *Civic Goals and Urban Design Strategies for the 40th Street Corridor* - represents the work of the 2011 40th Street Forums. It is designed as a tool for community members to use in their ongoing civic conversations about the impact of future development along the 40th Street corridor. The 2011 forums attracted more than 100 participants representing residents, community groups, non-profit organizations, businesses, institutions, and youths. All of the material from the forums can be found at www.40thSt.org.

The following civic goals and aspirations for 40th Street were identified during the 2011 forums:

- Ensure that new development contributes to the pedestrian experience and retains a connection to the human scale.
- Encourage visual variety and contrast along the corridor. Contrast and variety can be achieved through the use of different materials, colors, lighting and textures.
- Honor our cultural history and connections with the past.
- Foster a sense of continuity in space, scale, and time.
- Create a sense of place.
- Promote improved connectivity and accessibility.
- Maximize the existing assets along the corridor while simultaneously ensuring that properties and resources are not overburdened.
- Recognize that the corridor is evolving and take steps to ensure that it remains adaptable and poised to move forward.

The goals and aspirations provide a broad look at urban design principles that are considered most important to 40th Street stakeholders. The goals are complemented by strategies organized around four fundamental urban design elements – public space, transportation, preservation and development, and density and scale.



40th and Walnut -- one of the commercial zones along the 40th Street Corridor.

The strategies include:

Public Space:

- Enlivening streets and sidewalks
- Creating vibrant parks
- Establishing an identity for the corridor
- Maintaining a pedestrian character at the ground level of buildings

Transportation:

- Creating a sense of arrival
- Ensuring universal accessibility
- Incorporating pedestrian-scaled infrastructure
- Organizing modes of transportation
- Addressing parking issues

Preservation and Development:

- Filling in the gaps
- Balancing the old and new
- Maintaining the architectural diversity of the corridor
- Embracing the 21st century

Scale and Density:

- Targeting development around transportation nodes
- Designing for the human scale
- Gauging height and density relative to the existing context

The goals and strategies center on ensuring that particular attention is paid to the streets, parks, and the shared spaces of the public realm – the area of the city shared by everyone.



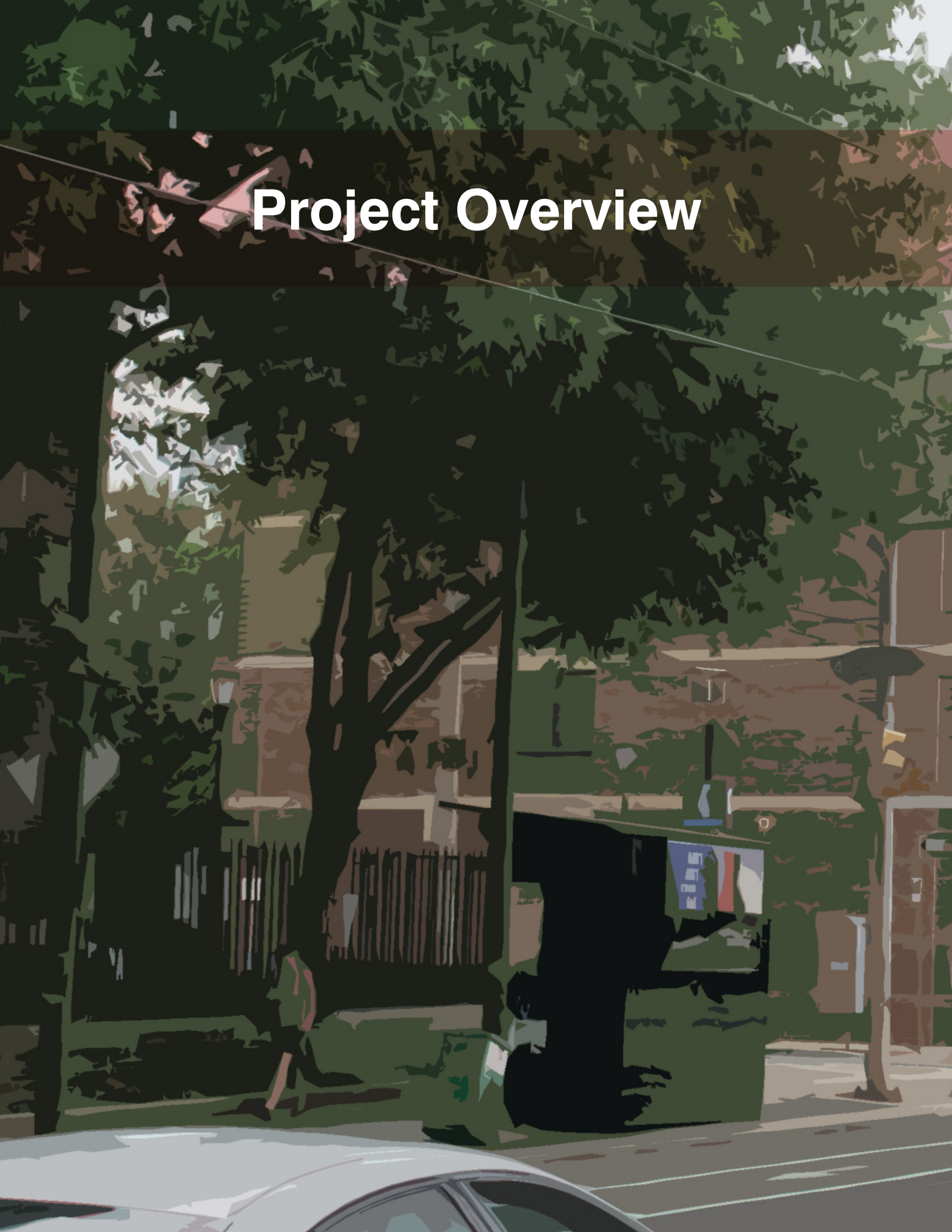
The corridor consists of many diverse districts -- residential, commercial, and institutional -- and also contains a wide variety of building types and scales. The Hub at 40th and Chestnut (above) and residences at 40th and Green (below) illustrate the architectural variety along the corridor.

About this Guide:

The *Civic Goals and Urban Design Strategies for the 40th Street Corridor* are presented to the 40th Street stakeholders as a tool to encourage citizens, business owners, developers, and others to engage in an ongoing dialog about the many ways in which design-centric strategies and actions work together to create a balanced, beautiful, and resilient corridor that will withstand the test of time. This document strives to fulfill a number of roles: It is

designed to be useful to citizens and professionals in helping to assess proposed development plans and it is designed to help developers begin a project with a better understanding of community expectations. The hope is that this document will foster a more collaborative design and development process that responds to local opportunities and needs and encourages high quality development that will contribute to creating a lasting sense of place along 40th Street for many years to come.

Project Overview





Project Overview

Objectives

The 2011 40th Street Forums were designed to:

- **Build upon the work that the Friends of 40th Street has done since the 2004 public forums that created a set of principles for equitable development along the corridor (www.40thSt.org).**
- **Convene community members from across the corridor for a guided discussion based on principles of urban design.**
- **Create a set of civic goals and aspirations that expresses the community's hopes for the future of the 40th street corridor and interprets these goals into urban design strategies and actions.**
- **Connect to ongoing planning efforts along the corridor. In particular, the Philadelphia Planning Commission's West Philadelphia neighborhood district plan that will begin in 2012.**

In the summer of 2011, the University City District (UCD), SCI West, and the Friends of 40th Street invited public participation to shape common planning principles and urban design ideals for consideration in development activities along the 40th Street corridor. With guidance provided by PennPraxis and the Penn Project for Civic Engagement, the conveners aimed to encourage local stakeholder involvement in the identification of characteristics that may influence the success of a mixed-use retail and residential corridor in this community. Together the University City District and SCI West work to bring groups together to foster positive changes in West Philadelphia neighborhoods. This project is an extension of the missions of both organizations.

This report represents the outcomes of the 2011 civic conversation around the future of 40th Street in University City. Citizens, working with PennPraxis and the Penn Project for Civic Engagement at four public forums, participated in facilitated conversations about how employing certain urban design strategies might help the community achieve the goals of ensuring that 40th Street is a vibrant, diverse, human-scaled, mixed use retail and residential street. The work of the forums created a set of shared civic aspirations and goals for the corridor. These civic goals are presented in this report along with suggested urban design strategies to help achieve the goals. For the purpose of this study, the 40th Street corridor is defined as the section of the University City

neighborhood of West Philadelphia bounded by Woodland Cemetery to the south, Lancaster Avenue to the north, 39th street to the east, and 41st street to the west.

Like all successful commercial streets, 40th Street is an evolving corridor. With the economic downturn brought on by the recession of 2008, it was felt that now is an important opportunity to both reflect upon the strengths of the corridor and arrive at a set of shared goals that can be used to help shape its future. Given the significant role that 40th Street plays at the juncture of academic, community and commercial life in University City, having the chance to consider the qualities that make for a successful urban commercial street is important. Neighbors, business people, students and institutional representatives discussed the importance of design issues such as the character and quality of public space, the role of public transportation in development, the importance of designing with human scale in mind, and the relationship between historic preservation and contemporary development.

The convergence of civic engagement around the comprehensive plan, zoning reform, institutional planning efforts, and neighborhood-based initiatives presents an opportunity for active citizens to participate in thoughtful conversations about changes along the 40th Street corridor. Today, community conversations between a variety of stakeholders can have a positive impact on future development in the city. This document serves as a guide to help frame community conversations about the impact of planning and design on the future development of the 40th Street corridor.

City-wide Planning Efforts

University City is a changing place; one that must respond to the needs and demands of a wide variety of disparate stakeholders. That is why it is important that the community have conversations that will help to define a common vision for the 40th Street corridor. Within city government, these conversations have already begun. Some of the key initiatives underway include:

Planning Commission

In 2010, the City of Philadelphia began the multi-year process of updating its comprehensive plan. The plan, Philadelphia 2035, closely examines historical and emerging economic, social and cultural trends and relationships and establishes broad goals for the city as well as a baseline from which the city can measure its progress over the next 25 years. Beginning in 2012, the Philadelphia City Planning Commission will initiate the University/Southwest District plan,

the neighborhood focused component of the comprehensive plan. The University/Southwest District Plan presents the University City community with an opportunity to think critically about the 40th Street corridor and to think about how the area might utilize the strong community and institutional presence to ensure that the corridor thrives and supports a broad range of constituents.

Zoning Code Commission

Since 2007, the Philadelphia Zoning Code Commission has been working on an update to the city's outdated zoning code; with the expectation that a modernized code that reflects current land use will be adopted by City Council in December 2011. The goal has been to develop a more simplified zoning code that "provides a clear vision for the revitalization of the City while preserving the fabric of the neighborhoods."¹ The overarching goals of the code, "preserve neighborhood character" and "promote quality and design" have direct relevance for the 40th Street corridor. With the zoning

rewrite underway, it is essential that community groups and residents take an active role in ensuring that the district plan, developed in conjunction with Philadelphia 2035, and any neighborhood planning effort, highlights the community's desire to hold developers accountable for a high standard of development.

These city-wide initiatives will set forth broad policies and guidelines that will ensure that Philadelphia continues to grow and maintain its vibrancy and authentic urban form. The guidelines outlined in the city-wide comprehensive plan, the district plan, and in a reformed zoning code will be implemented at the local level by the citizens, institutions, businesses and community groups that are integral to University City.

Institution-based Planning Efforts

An important outcome of the Philadelphia 2035 Comprehensive Plan has been that the city of Philadelphia redefined and expanded the traditionally accepted boundaries



Meeting attendees participate in breakout sessions at a Philadelphia City Planning Commission sponsored public meeting about the 2035 Comprehensive Plan. To read more about the plan visit, <http://phila2035.org/>

of Philadelphia's metropolitan center. Today, metropolitan Philadelphia extends north to Girard Avenue, south to Washington Avenue, east to the Delaware River, and west to 40th Street. These extended boundaries recognize that University City, home to major employers and strong institutions such as the University of Pennsylvania, Drexel University, University of the Sciences, and the University of Pennsylvania medical system, serves as one of the primary economic centers of the region. Philadelphia's expanded metropolitan center recognizes that education and medicine are both significant economic drivers in Philadelphia's regional economy and that the 40th Street corridor itself is an important edge to an area where several of these institutional drivers are expanding and developing. The institutional initiatives outlined below offer an overview of a few of the institutions that have

a major impact on the economy of University City and the larger region.

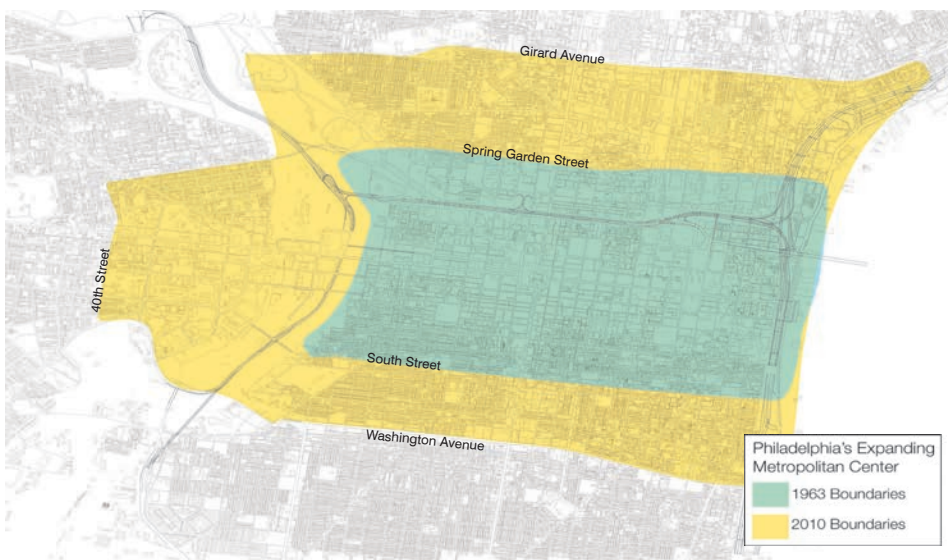
Drexel University

A 2005 analysis of the economic and fiscal impacts of Drexel University indicated that the university generates over \$1.6 billion of economic activity for the Pennsylvania economy each year. The same report estimated that the university accounts for bringing over 22,000 students to West Philadelphia, and contributing to 15,479 regional full and part-time jobs and over 18,183 jobs statewide.² In recent years, university-community initiatives have focused on establishing a "high impact university-community partnership that will lift Drexel University and its surrounding neighborhoods to new heights."³ In response, the university has put forth a plan for neighborhood improvement that includes expanding

the security patrol area, establishing a loan forgiveness program for employees who buy homes in the nearby communities, providing support to nearby public elementary schools, and improving the Lancaster Avenue business district. Today, Drexel is working in partnership with community residents and leaders, both in addressing its campus master plan and also in engaging university expertise and resources to help address community needs and goals.⁴

University of the Sciences

The University of the Sciences was founded in 1821 and is an important institution within West Philadelphia. With over 700 staff and faculty and nearly 3,000 students, the University of the Sciences is an important economic driver, especially around the Woodland Avenue community.⁵ In recent years, the university has been working closely with the West Shore Civic Association, Councilwoman Blackwell's office, and the residents, businesses and churches along Woodland Avenue, to develop a community-based strategy for the economic revitalization of the Woodland Avenue commercial corridor. The project yielded a development strategy, now in the early stages of implementation, that outlines prospective commercial and retail usages, along with lighting, signage, and streetscape concepts, that would benefit the long-term residents of the community, the students, staff, and faculty of USciences, and that would draw additional patrons from the communities north of Woodland Avenue. Some early improvements to the Woodland Avenue commercial corridor include the addition of Four Worlds Bakery, Guacamole Restaurant, Whispering Leaves Herb and Sip Shop, and Little Learners



This illustration depicts the recently expanded boundaries of metropolitan Philadelphia. 40th Street is now considered the westernmost boundary of the metropolitan center.

Day Care Center. In addition, a local developer was recently awarded a city grant to renovate two more commercial and residential spaces in the 4600 block of Woodland Avenue.⁶

University of Pennsylvania

The University of Pennsylvania and Penn Medicine is a leader in Philadelphia's non-profit and institutional sectors. With 31,000 employees, Penn is the largest private employer in Philadelphia and the second largest private employer in the state. The University and Penn Medicine contribute nearly \$14 billion yearly in total economic activity for the state and \$9.5 billion yearly to the City of Philadelphia.⁷ The university estimates that nearly 48,000 people live, learn, and work on Penn's 269-acre West Philadelphia campus and that Penn students spend nearly \$200 million in the city. These statistics underscore the importance of the University of Pennsylvania on the regional economy. Throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, Penn initiated a series of programs that addressed the social and economic concerns impacting both the campus and the community. The success of community-centric initiatives helped to form stronger university-community relationships and has enabled the implementation of design-based initiatives that make significant strides in better linking the university to the city and the city to the university.⁸ Today, Penn is entering into the next phase of the PennConnects plan – PennConnects 2.0. Moving forward, the University will focus on sustainability and enhancing the urban environment by incorporating active street level uses into new developments and creating more urban, landscaped open spaces that



The Science Center recently worked with community stakeholders to revitalize the streetscape between 34th and 41st streets. The revitalization project included the addition of new trees, sidewalks, benches, bike lanes, lighting and crosswalks.

fully integrate the campus and the community.

Penn Presbyterian Medical Center

Under the umbrella of the University of Pennsylvania and Penn Medicine, Penn Presbyterian Medical Center (PPMC) was founded in 1871 and has provided health care services for more than a century. The hospital became a part of Penn Medicine in 1995 and offers premier programs in oncology, cardiology, orthopaedics, urology, general surgery and ophthalmology. PPMC is an important economic driver for West Philadelphia. Annually, the hospital admits over 16,000 patients, performs over 12,000 operating room procedures and records over 38,000 emergency visits.⁹ In addition to the large patient base that the hospital serves, PPMC also employs approximately 2,000 people. PPMC is invested in the West Philadelphia community and continually strives to enhance its facilities and technology.

Currently, the hospital is planning an approximately \$100 million, 150,000 square foot campus expansion, which will include state-of-the-art operating and recovery rooms, expanded ambulatory treatment areas, the latest diagnostic imaging services and an expanded emergency department.¹⁰

University City Science Center

Established in 1963, the Science Center was the first, and remains the largest, urban research park in the United States. Since the 1960s, the Science Center has made significant strides to become an important outlet for bringing new research into the marketplace. The Science Center's port business incubator brings innovators, scientists, entrepreneurs from the fields of life sciences, clean and green technologies, nanotechnology, IT, and emerging technologies together on its campus.¹¹ The Science Center then provides incubator residents



In September 2011, Jannie's Place opened to great fanfare. Developed by the People's Emergency Center, Jannie's Place provides energy efficient, affordable housing while revitalizing a once unused corner at 40th and Lancaster.

access to funding, laboratory facilities, and business services in order to support technology commercialization and technology-based economic development. The business incubation and support services that are provided by the Science Center have helped to bring new commercial development and spin-off activity to University City and many of the companies that start, and thrive, in the Science Center have become industry leaders in Pennsylvania. The Science Center is an important avenue for developing and keeping jobs in Philadelphia. In fact, the Science Center reports that graduate organizations and current residents of the University City Science Center's Port business incubators have created more than 15,000 direct jobs that remain in the Greater Philadelphia region today and contribute more than \$9 billion to the regional economy annually.¹²

The impact that these institutions have on University City, Philadelphia, and the state can be measured with the tangible, quantitative benefits of job creation, local income, purchasing power, and the impact on the local

housing market. But, the impact that the universities, the hospitals, and the dozens of other institutions have on University City are also intangible. Each institution plays an important role in creating a positive quality of life and enhancing the image of University City and Philadelphia. These intangible assets are helping to make University City, Philadelphia, and the region a preferred location for workers, residents, students, and visitors.

Community-based Planning Efforts:

In addition to the nearby institutions, community development corporations and non-profits play an important role in helping to strengthen neighborhoods along the corridor. The 2000 Census indicated that in the tracts around the 40th Street corridor, the community faced an 11 percent unemployment rate and approximately 48 percent of the population has a household income of \$20,000 or less.¹³ It is evident that despite the presence of strong institutions, University City is also a stressed community. As a result, a strong

contingent of community development corporations and business improvement districts provide a variety of important services to the economically distressed population in University City. In recent months the study area has experienced a noticeable increase in the number of proposals for smaller-scale economic development and quality of life initiatives. In many instances these projects have been sponsored by active non-profit, community-based organizations like the People's Emergency Center (PEC) and the University City District.

People's Emergency Center

People's Emergency Center focuses on providing comprehensive supportive services to homeless families, revitalizing West Powelton, Saunders Park, Belmont, and Mantua, and advocating for social change. Recognizing that strong families thrive in stronger communities, PEC's community development arm (PECCDC) works to build new homes, repair existing homes, and clean up and maintain vacant lots and parks. Since 1995, PEC has leveraged over \$65 million in public and private investments to convert over 100 blighted properties into nearly 200 units of affordable rental and homeownership units; has developed four family resource centers, a community playground, and a mixed use development; and has helped 49 homeowners complete home repairs and façade improvements.¹⁴ PEC's most recent development project, Jannie's Place, opened in September 2011. Jannie's Place brings twenty new units and nine renovated units of affordable housing to 40th and Lancaster. In addition to new housing

off of Lancaster Avenue, PECCDC is working to transform Lancaster Avenue between 38th and 44th Streets into a more competitive retail corridor. The corridor program focuses on safety, cleanliness, façade and streetscape improvements, promoting the area, and providing support and training for the 167 business owners along this segment of Lancaster Avenue. The program has been a success – in fact, over the past few years, PEC has recruited 21 new businesses to Lancaster Avenue and completed 24 commercial façade improvements. Currently, PEC is working to develop affordable, artist, live-work space along the avenue Creative initiatives such as Jannie’s Place and new artists housing are helping to stimulate economic growth and breathe new life into the corridor and the community.¹⁵

University City District

The University City District (UCD), a business improvement district, focuses its efforts on commercial revitalization and quality of life initiatives that emphasize the importance of public safety, public space maintenance, planning, and economic development.¹⁶ One distinctive economic development initiative, that has ramifications for the 40th Street Corridor, has been the UCD’s Baltimore Avenue Corridor Management program. A grant from Pennsylvania’s Main Street Program helped to spur public and private investment along Baltimore Avenue. On the public side, Baltimore Avenue businesses are eligible for \$30,000 for façade improvements and the corridor is eligible for \$75,000 in streetscape improvements. On the private side, the corridor has seen \$355,000 invested

in façade improvements and building fit-outs and \$590,000 invested in new construction. These investments have netted 12 new businesses and approximately 60 new jobs along the corridor.¹⁸ In addition to economic development, UCD has focused on public space greening projects such as the new parklet located at 43rd and Baltimore. Projects like the parklet have helped to build public support for improved public spaces and, ultimately, have helped make important inroads towards permanent projects that will improve the quality of life in and around the 40th Street corridor. Through capacity building and by leveraging public funds, UCD plays an important role in working with community associations and local businesses to strengthen the community and to augment private

investment – all of which contribute to the revitalization of the neighborhoods around 40th Street and reinforce University City as a neighborhood of choice in Philadelphia.

The neighborhoods that are adjacent to the 40th Street corridor are also active and well-informed and over the years have involved neighbors in rethinking community goals, ultimately helping to achieve improvements along the corridor.

Spruce Hill

In 1995 the Spruce Hill community came together to develop the Spruce Hill Community Renewal Plan which was created to “serve as a road map for renewal.”¹⁹ The plan outlined a series of goals including improving



In August 2011, the University City District unveiled Philadelphia’s first parklet, a small 40’ x 6’ public park carved out of two parking spaces at 43rd Street and Baltimore Avenue. The parklet was developed for \$10,000.¹⁷

public education in and around Spruce Hill, improving retail areas, increasing cleanliness, and reducing crime and the perception of crime. Today each of these goals has been achieved, establishing a strong foundation on which the community association has continued to grow and serve as an advocate for the community. One accomplishment in particular was the important role that the community played in helping to establish the Penn Alexander School. Since the school opened in 2001, parents have flocked to its doors and the neighborhood. Philadelphia's parents continue to be "drawn to the high expectations of [the schools] partnership with the University of Pennsylvania, its modern facility, small classes, diverse student

body, high test scores, turning the enrollment process into a frenetic race."²⁰ Additionally, working with the UCD to coordinate programming efforts such as the Baltimore Avenue Dollar Stroll has brought many shoppers to the commercial corridor. By partnering with UCD, the Spruce Hill community has made great strides in addressing streetscape maintenance and reducing crime. All of these accomplishments have helped to reinforce and strengthen the community.

West Powelton/Saunders Park

Through 2004 and 2006, West Powelton and Saunders Park, and portions of Mantua and

Belmont worked with the People's Emergency Center to develop a neighborhood plan that provided the community with a comprehensive framework for improvements to be completed over five to ten years. The recommendations focused on quality of life improvements in housing, economic development, and transportation. The plan also identified priority projects and series of implementation actions and responsibilities.²¹ The plan charged PEC and the neighborhood with increasing participation in homeowner improvement projects, developing new housing, instituting a façade improvement program for homeowners, revitalizing the Lancaster Avenue Corridor, and investing in streetscape improvements. Since 2006, PEC has been instrumental in helping the community realize these goals. As a result, PEC recently received a \$100,000 grant from Wells Fargo to complete an update to the 2006 community plan. The "Make Your Mark" campaign provides a rare "venue for neighborhood residents and stakeholders to collectively take stock of the changes, successes, and challenges encountered since the 2004 plan and establish a renewed vision for improving the quality of life, built environment, economy, and access to resources in the community."²²

Walnut Hill

The Enterprise Center Community Development Corporation provides services in the neighborhoods of 45th and 52nd from Market to Spruce. The CDC works closely with the Walnut Hill Community Association, a coalition



Market and 40th Street represents an important point of convergence for local residents, institutions, non-profits, and community groups.

of elected officials, business owners, residents, educational institutions, and faith groups. One of the most effective programs in the Walnut Hill community has been the development of the Walnut Hill Street Team. In 2007, the Enterprise Center CDC was working to get the word out about their many service programs but no one was responding because so few residents had regular Internet access. In response, the CDC worked with the Walnut Hill Community Association to figure out a way to get people onto the street and into homes to spread the word about the useful services available to residents. The Street Team is made up of ten residents who walk the neighborhood three times a week for four hours each day. The team aims to contact each household every two weeks. The impact on the community has been remarkable – attendance at community meetings has improved, people are becoming more interested in the community and starting to support local activities, and people are reporting more positive changes in the community.²³

Each of the community-based planning initiatives outlined above represent different approaches to strengthening community. However, the examples of economic development initiatives, social service programs, and planning exercises sponsored by community development corporations and neighborhood groups point to the fact that when non-profits and well-organized neighbors collaborate they have a positive impact on the community and can help to make University City and the 40th Street corridor a thriving area of Philadelphia.



In the 1990s, the Spruce Hill Community Association completed a community renewal plan that has successfully addressed neighborhood cleanliness and safety (above). Today, PEC is working with West Powelton, Saunders Park, Belmont, Mantua, and Mill Creek to develop the Make Your Mark initiative, a resident-driven, comprehensive revitalization plan. The Make Your Mark open house is temporarily transforming a vacant storefront church into an interactive exhibit on Lancaster Avenue (below).

Process

While city government works to put policies into place to help neighborhoods think more strategically about the future, civic engagement serves as the cornerstone that adds legitimacy to long term neighborhood plans. For this reason, community forums are an essential component for creating a community-based plan or vision. Forums bring neighbors together and introduce the varying segments of the corridor's population to each other, creating a space for understanding and comprehensive thinking about community values and how best practices in urban design can support those values for all users.

The following elements of civic engagement helped to inform the civic goals and urban design strategies for the 40th Street corridor:

Build on the Friends of 40th Street Planning Principles for Equitable Development [see sidebar]

The 2004 Planning Principles were developed in a round of facilitated public forums, and represent values important to the communities along the 40th street corridor. The principles served as the basis for the work of the Friends of 40th Street – a civic organization that grew out of the 2004 forums. During the 2011 forums, participants were charged with identifying how the values identified in 2004 could translate into the urban design elements along 40th street in the future.

Form an advisory group made up of key stakeholders from a variety of organizations, neighborhoods, and interests along the corridor.

This project acknowledges that many different types and groups of people utilize and care for the 40th street corridor. As different groups look to different organizations for their community information, the advisory group on this project was comprised of neighborhood and community leaders and representatives from nearby institutions, development companies, businesses, city agencies, and community development corporations. This diverse group helped to ensure representation and involvement of the multiple populations of 40th street.

Hold open-invitation public forums

Flyers and other outreach methods were targeted so that any person who lives, works, or otherwise engages with or cares about the 40th street corridor was invited to participate. At each forum an introductory presentation was given to all participants about the architectural and development character of the corridor along with a primer on the elements of urban design. This enabled all participants to have a conversation about urban design even with limited prior knowledge about the subject. Over 100 people attended the four public forums.

Outreach

The Friends of 40th Street created a web site (www.40thSt.org) that is both an archive and a news site for

the 40th Street corridor project. It contains minutes of Friends of 40th Street meetings dating back to the formation of the group in 2004 and up-to-date information about the 2011 forums. By continuing to use this web site, participants were able to stay informed about the project and pass all of the information onto interested people who were unable to attend the forums. In addition, the materials available at the forums and on the web site were collated into a large binder, copies of which are available at several highly-trafficked locations along the corridor such as the Free Library and the Enterprise Center. These binders ensured that residents and other stakeholders without Internet access remained informed about the project.

Creating Civic Goals and Aspirations for the 40th Street Corridor

The comments received and lessons learned from the residents, business owners, advisory group members, community leaders, and government officials who participated in the 2011 public conversations about 40th Street were instrumental in forming the civic goals and aspirations for the 40th Street corridor. Throughout the public process, we found that stakeholders want to see the public realm well-cared for and respected and there was the recognition that in order to thrive, the corridor needs to be able to support new development; new development that contributes to the evolving vitality of the 40th Street corridor. The following civic goals for 40th Street were identified by the public process. They are expanded upon in the Civic Goals and Urban Design Strategies section of the report.

Friends of 40th Street Planning Principles: Creating unity while maintaining diversity

- Ensure that new development contributes to the pedestrian experience and retains a connection to the human scale.
- Encourage visual variety and contrast along the corridor.
- Honor our cultural history and connections with the past.
- Foster a sense of continuity in space, scale, and time.
- Create a sense of place.
- Promote improved connectivity and accessibility.
- Maximize the existing assets along the corridor while simultaneously ensuring that properties and resources are not overburdened.
- Recognize that the corridor is evolving and take steps to ensure that it remains adaptable and poised to move forward.

The following is a summary of the principles developed during a month-long community engagement process in the winter of 2004, with suggested revisions from the summer of 2006. As a set, these principles represent a coherent image for the evolution of 40th Street in West Philadelphia between Lancaster and Baltimore Avenues. The Friends of 40th Street grew out of the community forum process and has assumed the responsibility for advocating for these principles in the ongoing evolution of the 40th Street corridor.

The many faces of 40th Street

Enhance the urban character of 40th Street by promoting and sustaining a rich urban blend of culture, class, age, race, and gender along 40th Street with shops, services, arts, and culture that reflect a vibrant sense of place. Aim for a mix of uses, such as residential living above small-scale retail that will enhance the innate character of this very public and urban thoroughfare.

Here, there, everywhere

Celebrate the rich diversity found on 40th Street. 40th Street is a living, social and cultural corridor. It is a place where many traditions merge and blend, a place where differences are respected and a place for people to feel welcome along its entire length.

To market, to market

Encourage development by balancing a strong sense of social responsibility towards existing and new local businesses and jobs with free market economics. It must reflect daily local needs, as well as the larger social and cultural identities of University City.

It's our house

Make 40th Street clean, safe, attractive, and accessible. Create and sustain the highest quality public street life on 40th Street from Lancaster Avenue to Baltimore Avenue. Design the street so that street life reflects the vibrancy and values of the community.

Destination 40th Street

Build on the diversity of uses and customers on 40th Street that change throughout the day, week, and year. Think of 40th Street as both a local street and a unique destination where community meets campus with a rich offering of commerce and culture reflecting the surrounding neighborhoods.

Building community

Keep the dialogue going. Citizens of University City want to enlarge the public conversation about 40th Street and create a community-based process that will ensure continued consultation, communication, dialogue, and promotion among the stakeholder groups aimed at sustaining a viable vision for the future.

40th Street Green

Think globally, act locally. Make 40th Street a leader in demonstrating how urban neighborhoods can promote environmental sustainability practices. Promote and increase the use of the existing public transportation infrastructure. Encourage green building practices and recycling. Reduce energy consumption, stormwater runoff, and waste streams. Make 40th Street a more responsible and better place for everyone.

Click here to read more about the principles:
<https://sites.google.com/site/friendsof40th/about-friends-of-40th-street/civic-vision>

Understanding 40th Street

A photograph of a two-story brick house with a porch, partially obscured by a large tree. The text "Understanding 40th Street" is overlaid in white on a dark teal background. The house has a prominent front porch with white columns and a railing. The brickwork is a reddish-brown color. There are several windows, some with white frames and shutters. The tree in the foreground is large and leafy, with some green and some brown leaves. The sky is a clear, bright blue.



The Past

The neighborhoods around the 40th Street corridor have a rich development history that dates back to the 17th century. In the mid 1600's William Warner first negotiated with the Lenape and purchased the rights to 1,500 acres of land on the west bank of the Schuylkill River. In 1681, when William Penn began to settle his utopian city of Philadelphia, Warner continued negotiations with William Penn and added additional acreage to his holdings.²⁴ The early settlers, like Warner, were British farmers, and as they prospered these early farm lands gave way to the development of large "country estates" along the banks of the Schuylkill River. By the 19th century the "country estates" were being subdivided and allowing for the westward extension of Philadelphia's standard grid street system. For example, in 1808, William Hamilton, a descendant of one of West Philadelphia's early settlers, subdivided his estate and laid out streets, houses, churches, and schools – creating suburban "Hamilton Village" in the area between what is now 32nd

Street, 40th Street, Market Street, and Spruce Street. Residents from "Hamilton Village" commuted to work each day and returned home each evening, creating a "streetcar suburb" within the city – a type of development that remains characteristic of the neighborhoods around the 40th Street corridor even today.²⁵ The development of West Philadelphia into a commuter suburb paralleled transportation innovations occurring in Philadelphia: in 1805, the opening of a permanent bridge over the Schuylkill sparked a residential development boom and this was followed by the invention of the electric street car and the Elevated Rail. Together, these innovations increased development pressures in West Philadelphia.²⁶

While West Philadelphia was transforming from a community of family farms to a residential community, the area was still primarily characterized by its country setting and large tracts of land. As a result, West Philadelphia became home to institutions that were seeking more land outside of the city center – institutions such as the city asylum, universities, and hospitals.²⁷ The Blockley Almshouse, a public institute that served as a shelter, workhouse, orphanage, and hospital was one of the first significant institutions constructed in the area, followed by a series of medical institutions including the Pennsylvania Hospital for the Insane at 49th and Market Streets, the Home for the Incurables at 47th and Woodland, and one of the country's largest military hospitals at the time of the Civil War, Satterlee Hospital. Additionally, in the 1870's-1890's, universities came to West Philadelphia. In the 1870's the University of Pennsylvania relocated and expanded in West Philadelphia and in the

1890's the Drexel Institute of Art, Science, and Industry opened. These institutions brought student dormitory buildings, hospital teaching facilities, and encouraged the westward growth of West Philadelphia.

The simultaneous convergence of innovations in transportation and institutional growth increased the demand and the attractiveness of West Philadelphia as a residential neighborhood. In 1850, West Philadelphia's population was 13,265 and by 1900 the population had ballooned to 129,110.²⁸ As West Philadelphia grew and became better integrated into the core of the city both physically (via transportation) and economically (via the influx of new residents and jobs), West Philadelphia was annexed to Philadelphia, and it remained primarily residential and institutional, the prestige of the neighborhoods and prestige of the institutions were important factors in establishing Philadelphia as a major commercial center.²⁹

Throughout the early 20th century West Philadelphia's institutions, particularly its universities, continued to grow. During World War II universities with research facilities, like Penn and Drexel, thrived as the government poured money into defense spending. Then, following the war, the GI Bill resulted in dramatic increases in the number of college students. These factors required West Philadelphia's institutions to increase classroom space, research space, and student housing.³⁰ In the 1940 and 1950's the institutions turned to the Urban Redevelopment Act as a means to keep up with increasing demands for university expansion. The Redevelopment Authorities created out of the Urban



Rowhouses on Spruce Street, above 40th Street. By HC Leighton Co. in 1906.

The Changing Corridor

Redevelopment Act were given the power of eminent domain -- the taking of private land for public good with just compensation, the power to issue bonds, and to borrow money.³¹ The Redevelopment Authority of Philadelphia established the University City Redevelopment Area and designated areas around Penn as a redevelopment zone, giving the city and the university the tools needed to acquire properties within the zone and then sell the properties to private buyers. This enabled the institutions to expand into West Philadelphia [see Denise Scott Brown sidebar]. The effect of this redevelopment program was the displacement of many West Philadelphia residents and this history associated with university expansion led to decades of community-institutional tensions – memories of which still resonate today. However, between the 1970s and 1990s, the institutions in West Philadelphia began to reevaluate their purpose and mission with an increased awareness of the community needs and concerns.



Before the discussion about the future of 40th Street can begin, it is important to note that commercial corridors change and evolve over time, particularly around the four urban design elements which we have used for a discussion along 40th Street: public spaces, transportation, preservation and development, and scale and density. These photographs show various points along the corridor as they looked in 1964 juxtaposed with what stood in the same spots in 2004. The photographs from 1964, taken by the eminent planner Denise Scott Brown for a planning studio at Penn's School of Design, show a rich and vibrant streetscape; but, much of it was leveled during the ensuing period of urban renewal. By 2004, a span of 40 years, it is evident that the scale of development had changed. At the intersection of 40th and Market, for example, the south east corner of the intersection once held a large civic structure, and now is a semi-public space. Studying these photographs reminds us that dramatic changes can occur in short periods of time and that new development projects today can help to restore a streets vibrancy.

Credit:

Denise Scott Brown. 1964 Photographs taken for Penn Planning Studio.
Matt Conte, 2004. Photographs taken as part of an internship at PennPraxis.

The Present

In the past decade, the universities – Penn, Drexel, the University of the Sciences – and the hospitals have found themselves in the midst of the next wave of development and expansion. With the legacy of the redevelopment era still fresh, each institution has re-evaluated traditional approaches to development and it is now standard practice to engage the community, developing to more fully integrate the institutional campus with the neighborhood.

The 40th Street corridor is an example of one location in West Philadelphia where the campus and community boundaries are beginning to blur. In the late 1990s and the early 2000s a series of projects were developed to help make 40th Street a more vibrant community

corridor characterized by a mix of uses. Properties at 40th and Walnut were designed to include new retail including a movie theater, restaurants, a grocery store, and parking. These improvements were aimed at creating amenities for both students and long-time residents of the community and making the 40th Street corridor more of a “Main Street” within West Philadelphia.³² The University of Pennsylvania helped to spur this development by investing \$149 million in commercial development around the campus, including at 40th and Walnut. Penn’s initial investments have since leveraged \$489 million in private investment in and around the 40th Street corridor.³³ The impact has been the beginning of a series of successful spin-off developments

-- for example, private developers invested in The Hub (2006) and The Radian (2008), both mixed use housing complexes located along 40th Street. Additionally, smaller-scale developers and retailers are beginning to revitalize portions of the 40th Street corridor to the north of Walnut Street.

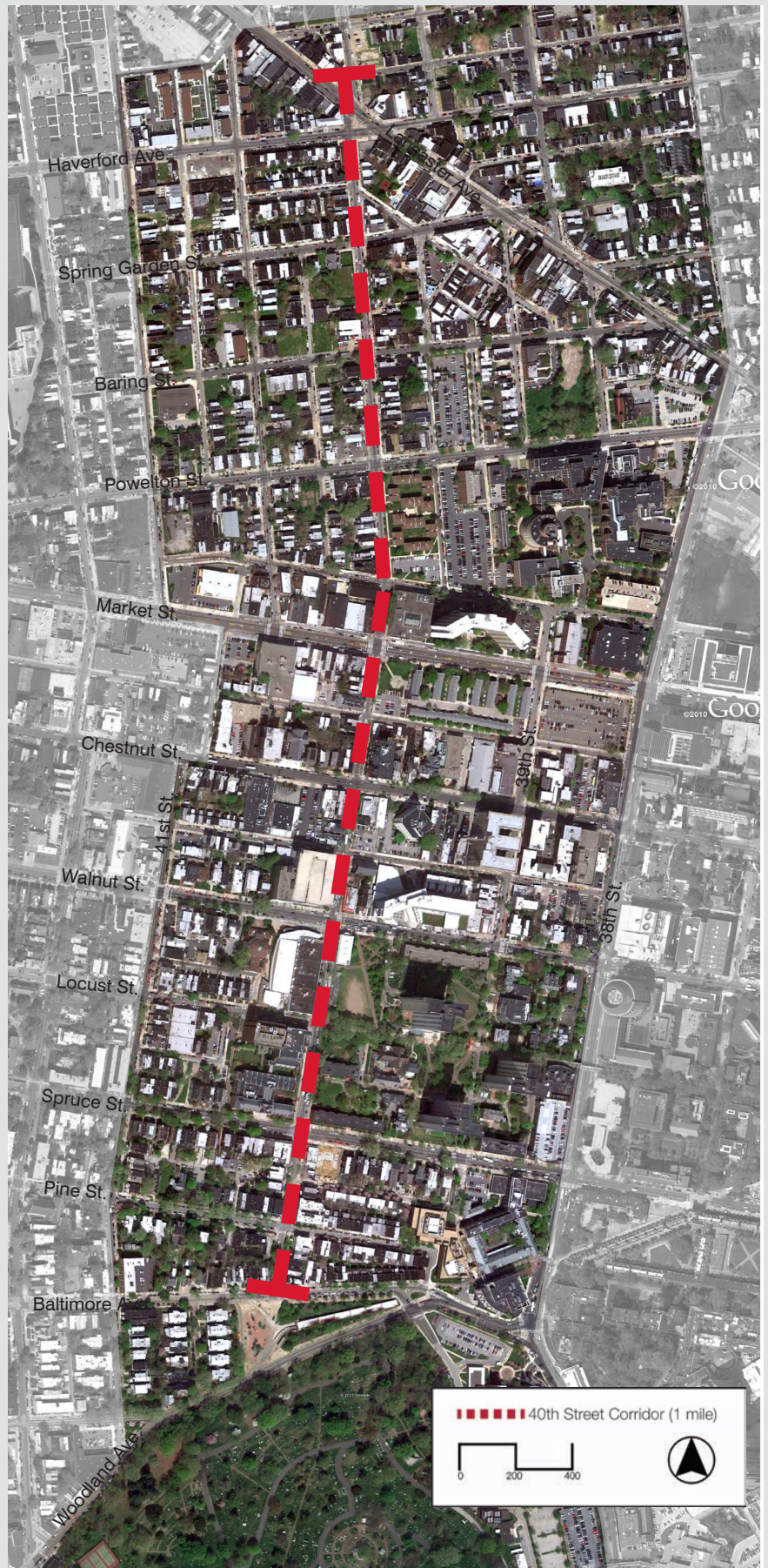
One of the distinguishing components of these more recent development projects, however, has been the fact that community stakeholders have been much more involved in the development process. In 2004, PennPraxis and the Penn Project for Civic Engagement, worked with Penn and community groups to create a series of principles for equitable development along the corridor. These forums led to the creation of the Friends of 40th Street – a civic organization dedicated to improving the quality of life along the corridor. In 2006, the Friends of 40th Street, in collaboration with the Partnership CDC, engaged the community in creating a shared civic vision for the area surrounding 40th and Market Streets. Since 2006, the community has seen the planning principles successfully reflected in some newer developments along the corridor including the opening of the Rotunda to public arts programming, the development of the Hub on Chestnut Street [see Spotlight, page 43], and most recently, the development of the mixed-use Radian complex on Walnut Street.

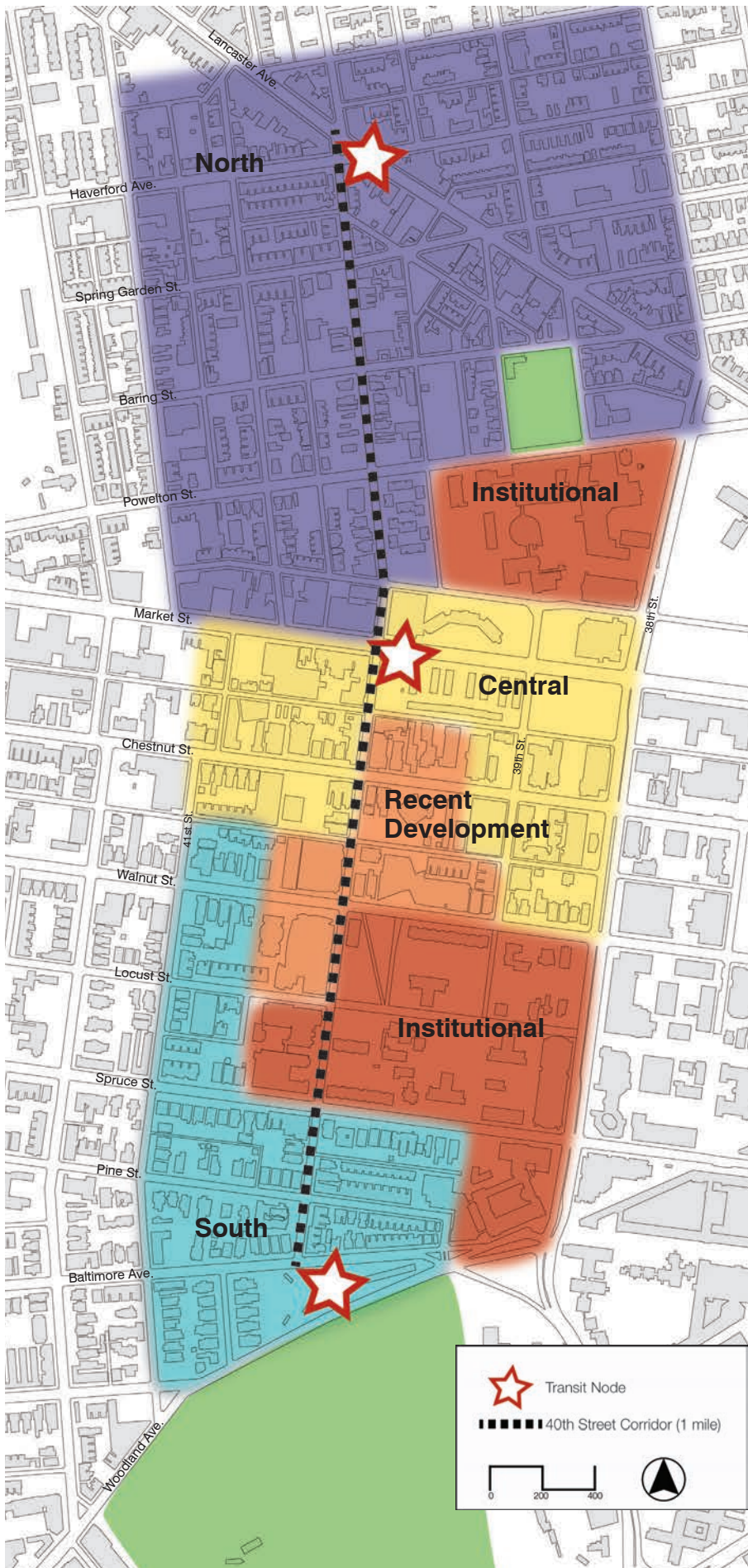
Considering the many stakeholders along the corridor as well as the complex history of the corridor, any attempt to define the corridor as one undifferentiated entity is impossible. One of the assets of the 40th Street corridor is its eclectic diversity of



The Radian, developed in 2008, features a mix of uses -- residential and retail. The development has helped bring more activity to the street during the day and evening hours.

users, uses, and architectural styles. To better understand the current characteristics of the corridor, we have broken the study area into six loosely-defined districts, which are explained in further detail on the following pages. These districts are helpful in defining the existing conditions along the corridor, and can also be used by developers and community stakeholders alike to find some common language to talk about the ways in which proposed projects fit into the physical, social, and historical context of the corridor.





South

The southernmost district is characterized by 54-acres of green space in the Woodland Cemetery;³⁴ an important transportation node at the 40th and Baltimore trolley stop (which has an average of 3,377 daily passengers);³⁵ and residential buildings, some of which date back to the 1800's. The historic homes – large, twin, Italianate-style villas – are a mixture of single-family and multi-family residences. Overall, the dominant land use is residential. The 2010 Census revealed that, of the occupied housing units, 5 percent are owner-occupied and 95 percent are renter-occupied.³⁶ Over the past ten years, nearby neighborhoods have experienced increased investment and more people have started to move into the area- evidenced by the fact that the 2000 census reported a vacancy rate of 11 percent for total housing units. But, by 2010 that vacancy rate had been reduced to 6 percent.³⁷





Institutional

The Institutional Districts are characterized by larger-footprint buildings located within campus-like settings, and include the University of Pennsylvania and Presbyterian Hospital. The westernmost portion of Penn’s campus houses over 3,000 students in seven dorms. These dorms range from low-rise structures to high rises that are over 20 stories. This area of the campus is home to historic buildings that serve as a reminder of the corridor’s past – such as St. Mary’s Church. The Penn campus is publicly accessible at 40th Street via Locust Walk, a pedestrian-only, tree-lined walkway that provides a direct connection to 34th Street. Penn Presbyterian’s medical campus is located at 38th and Powelton Streets. The campus is auto-oriented and does not interact with the urban street. The hospital buildings represent a variety of styles – dating from the 1870’s to the present day.



Recent Development

This area of the corridor features the most recent new development and preservation projects, notably the Radian, Hub, Fresh Grocer, The Rave Cinema, and the renovated Free Library. The new buildings have a variety of details and textures that make the buildings visually interesting, retail uses that are oriented towards the street, large windows that connect the activity within the buildings to the street, and a mix of setbacks that help to make the larger buildings feel smaller to the pedestrian. This area has also retained many lower-scale, mixed-use buildings, i.e. the Lovers and Mad Men coffee shop. It is evident that within this district, a good balance has been established – where new architecture is embraced but the existing fabric is also protected. Moving forward it will be important to maintain this balance as the district is home to surface parking lots ripe for redevelopment.



Central

The Central District is the corridor’s least-homogenous area, home to buildings from a range of eras with a variety of scales and densities. For example, pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use buildings on Chestnut and Market Streets are around the corner from auto-oriented outposts of chain restaurants like Boston Market. Additionally, row-house style residential developments along Sansom Street are juxtaposed against the University Square Apartments, a high-rise apartment complex. The district also has significant gaps in the urban fabric – i.e. a surface parking lot on the corner of 39th and Market. These factors contribute to an overall absence of a sense of place and identity for the district. However, this portion of the corridor functions as an important gateway because the 40th and Market El stop, with an average daily passenger rate of 11,336 people, is one of the most heavily-trafficked El stops on the Market-Frankford line.³⁸



North

Like the southernmost district, the North District is primarily residential. The residential architecture is primarily two- to three-story traditional Philadelphia, brick row homes. When compared to the rest of the corridor, this northernmost section is more urban in character and has experienced a greater degree of prolonged deterioration. This is best represented by a 15 percent vacancy rate for all housing units.³⁹ However, vacancy is being addressed as development companies and non-profits have teamed together on infill and new construction projects. Historically, Lancaster Avenue has served as the community gathering place for the nearby neighborhoods. In 1965, Martin Luther King addressed 10,000 people at 40th and Lancaster during his “Freedom Now” tour. Today, the Lancaster Avenue business district continues to be the center of the community’s commercial district.



Moving Forward

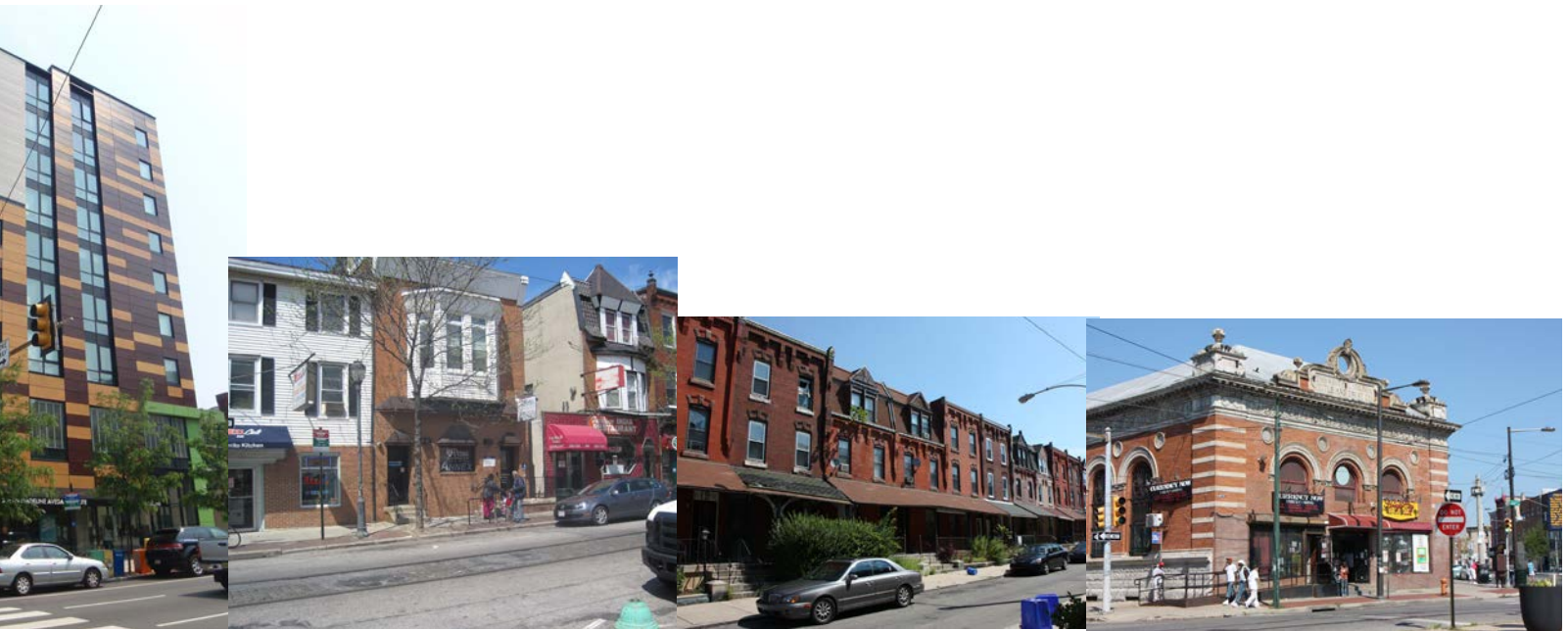


By no means do the previous descriptions of the corridor represent a steadfast pattern or design; in fact, at any given point along the corridor there is variation in height, architectural style and design features among adjacent buildings. For the future, it is important for developers and design professionals to be aware of the patterns that do exist, and to place new development projects into a neighborhood context that reflects

and responds to existing heights, scale, architectural features, and infrastructure.

What the previous descriptions of the corridor provide, is a way to help us understand the physical context of the 40th Street corridor. In general, buildings are at a lower scale at the southern end, with taller and dense development concentrated in the center, tapering down to a lower scale

again in the north. And, while it is important to understand this context, it is also important to recognize the existing supportive infrastructure. The 40th Street corridor benefits from many assets: its proximity to transit, employment centers, and stable, growing neighborhoods. In order for the corridor to become a more desirable, vibrant, urban place it will be essential to maximize these assets that already support the corridor. In

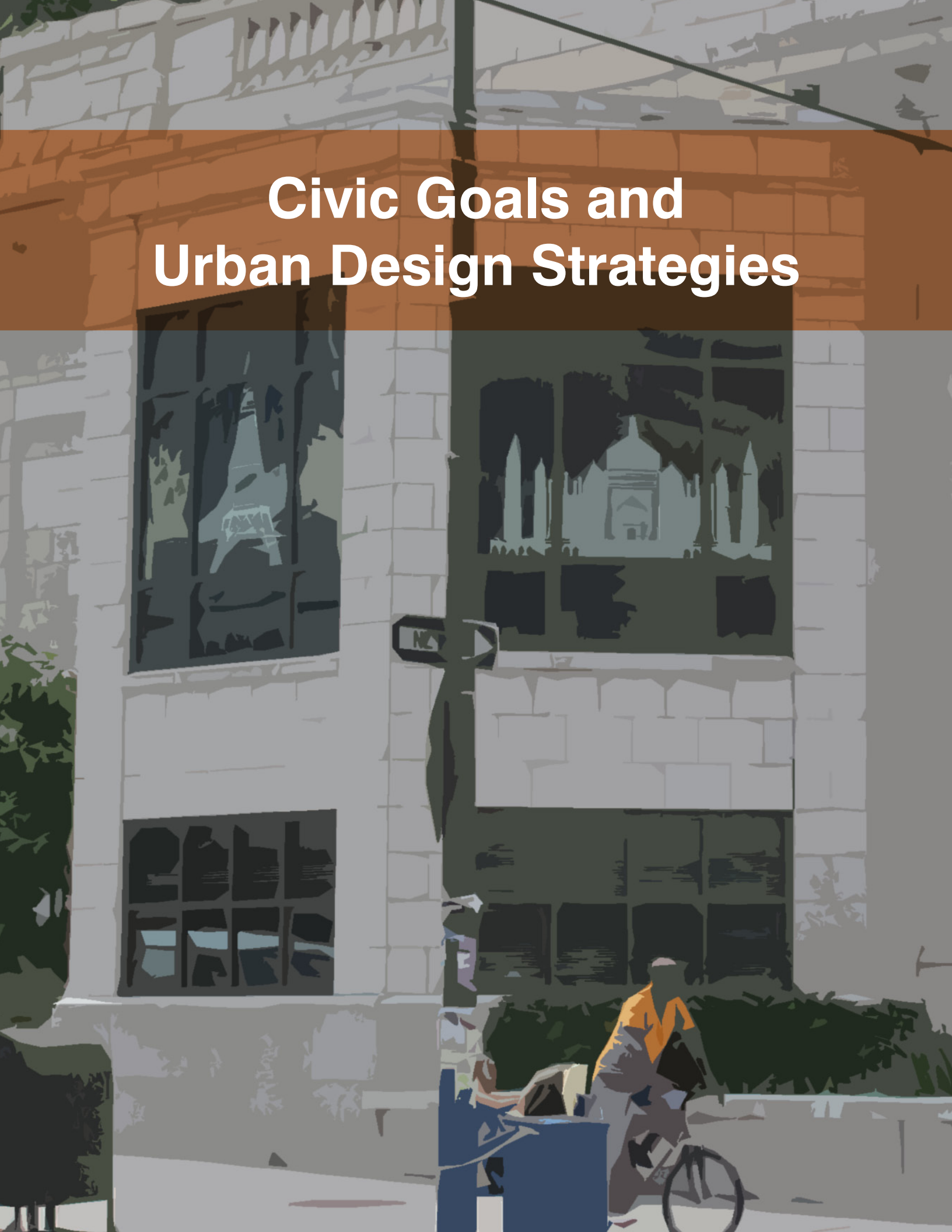


fact, the Central District is at the confluence of many of these assets – it contains the 40th Street El stop and benefits from proximity to major employment centers (like the Science Center, Presbyterian Hospital, and the universities) as well as growing residential neighborhoods. Moving forward, capitalizing on these assets will help to ensure that the 40th Street corridor plays an important role in:

- **Helping West Philadelphia to thrive within the city and region;**
- **Providing improved connections throughout the city and region; and**
- **Helping to renew neighborhoods in West Philadelphia.**

The civic goals and urban design strategies that are outlined on the following pages summarize the shared aspirations for the corridor. Taken together, the goals and strategies can help to inform future development projects along this mixed-use, residential and retail corridor.

Civic Goals and Urban Design Strategies





ONE
WAY
→



The Public Conversation

The public realm contains the most visible and utilized spaces of city life - the streets, squares, plazas, piazzas and sidewalks that tie our communities together. The public realm is quite literally the backdrop to the theater of daily life. In the public realm the form, structure and identity of urban communities is established; social encounters happen; and people meet.⁴⁰ A successful public realm helps to shape a community; it is a vibrant, safe, and cared for place where people are free to come together and participate in the richness of urban life.

In recent years, the public realm of the 40th Street Corridor has begun to be redefined. Newer developments are beginning to include physical characteristics that help to define well designed public spaces. For example, the Radian Plaza at 40th and Walnut merges residential units with

ground floor retail. The ground floor retail provides the community with a mixture of convenience retail (drug store, banking) and entertainment retail (dining). The plaza also features a weekly afternoon farmers market with live music by local bands.⁴¹ Just west of the Radian, the Fresh Grocer, the Rave Movie Theater complex, and Metropolitan Bakery have each established outdoor seating areas, helping to make 40th Street a hub of activity. This kind of activity is new to 40th and Walnut and has helped to give a new identity to the 40th Street corridor. Additionally, the corridor features those social qualities that add to the vibrancy of public life. For example, the 40th Street Artist-In-Residence Program provides West Philadelphia-based artists with free studio space and encourages the artists to share their talents with the community through classes, workshops, and exhibitions.⁴² Programs like the Artists-in-Residence program help to bring creative individuals and innovative programming to the corridor. Through these new development projects and artist-based initiatives, 40th Street is quickly becoming a place where smart urban design and creativity intersect to create a sense of place.

It is evident that 40th Street is changing and this project presented the stakeholders along the corridor with the opportunity to come together to think about the future of 40th Street as a community. By thinking about the corridor holistically, the corridor can be strengthened – becoming a more desirable place to be, to spend time, to live, and to work. Through this project, we have encouraged the 40th Street stakeholders to build upon

the 2004 40th Street Principles for Equitable Development (see page 21). Using the principles as the foundation, the public came together to develop a set of shared goals that could help shape development projects within the 40th Street corridor. Based upon the goals, a series of urban design strategies for public space, transportation, preservation and development, and scale emerged from the forums. The goals offer the community – civic associations, developers, individuals, and institutions – a framework for discussing new development along the corridor. The corresponding urban design strategies are suggestions for how design might help the community realize its common aspirations for the 40th Street corridor.

It's important to underscore that good corridors are not created through design alone. Social cohesion, public safety and a shared sense of pride, identity and ownership of the public realm are critical components of healthy urban corridors. Design can enhance and support these goals but it is the work of citizens, business people, institutions and neighbors alike to ensure that overall, the corridor both reflects the public's sensibilities and is maintained and protected as a safe, public space.

Together, the civic goals and urban design strategies provide a context for helping 40th Street stakeholders think critically about new and future development along the 40th Street corridor. The citizen-derived goals can be a tool to empower the diverse community to have informed and thoughtful discussions about the complicated set of factors that go into making successful urban places.



Community stakeholders participate in the public forums held at the Christ Community Church on June 22, 2011.

Goals and Aspirations for the 40th Street Corridor

Ensure that new development contributes to the pedestrian experience and retains a connection to the human scale.

The entire corridor will benefit from buildings and public spaces that work at multiple levels – along the street, the sidewalk and within the neighborhoods. Successful and attractive urban environments are designed to encourage human interaction; often a series of differing parts that taken together form harmonious patterns. These environments allow the community to experience the corridor in many ways – perhaps people stop to shop or talk or perhaps they take a moment to pause and enjoy the street life.

Encourage visual variety and contrast along the corridor. Contrast and variety can be achieved through the use of different materials, colors, lighting and textures.

Variety and contrast can also be realized by inserting modern buildings into the existing urban context and fostering an eclectic mix of styles and uses. Contrast will enhance the vitality of the public realm by creating visual variety, sensory excitement, and interest in the urban fabric - ultimately resulting in a visually appealing and attractive corridor.

Honor our cultural history and connections with the past. While variety and contrast may create an interesting urban fabric by bringing old and new together, it is also essential that modern design elements work to create an overall unity along the corridor. New development that references and respects the existing urban fabric will help to weave the past and future together so that the corridor is representative of the community around it.

Foster a sense of continuity in space, scale, and time. Changes to neighborhoods are to be expected in urban areas. Therefore, urban spaces need the flexibility to be able to change with the times and to be able to respond to both physical and social innovations. New development should reflect the best aspects of the era in which it is built but, at the same time, acknowledge the important continuing relationship between the old and the new.

Create a sense of place. Establish and reinforce the identity of 40th Street by integrating distinctive street furniture, transit hubs, lighting, public art and architectural details into the public realm throughout the corridor. The thoughtful integration of special physical characteristics in buildings, parks, and public art can establish traditions and create memories that will create a sense of connectedness and identity for the corridor. Establishing a distinctive character for the street will attract people to live, work, and visit instilling a greater sense of pride of place and civic ownership.

Promote improved connectivity and accessibility. Within the public realm, people of all ages and ethnicities meet and interact. In order for the corridor to succeed as a successful place to live, work, and play, the public realm must be accessible to all and well-connected to surrounding neighborhoods and to the city, especially via transportation connections. Ensure that our seniors can access the existing public transportation and work to make sure that everyone feels welcome throughout the different sections of the corridor.

Maximize the existing assets along the corridor while simultaneously ensuring that properties and resources are not overburdened.

It is important that development responds to the available capacity within each district. For example, the 40th Street corridor benefits from terrific transportation assets. In order for the corridor to thrive, it is important to capitalize on key transit intersections and match the scale and massing of buildings to the surrounding transportation capacity.

Recognize that the corridor is evolving and take steps to ensure that it remains adaptable and poised to move forward. 40th Street is home to a distinctive array of buildings from a variety of architectural periods. These buildings were at one time new and different. Successful corridors strike a balance between embracing change and protecting cherished buildings. 40th Street has successfully integrated new buildings into the urban fabric. As the buildings along the street change, the public realm is altered. It is essential to view every change along the corridor as an opportunity for improving the character and quality of the public realm.

Goal

Public spaces along the 40th Street corridor include parks, yards, sidewalks, and streets. Streets and sidewalks should allow for people to get where they are going, but they cannot be places to simply pass through. The elements that make up public space remind pedestrians and other users that 40th Street is a unique and interesting place, with gathering spaces that enliven the streets and encourage people to pause, meet, exchange ideas and enjoy the day. Open, breathing spaces remind users to slow down and reflect, and greenery along the streets makes pedestrians feel welcome on the corridor; providing shade on hot days and color in the fall.

Strategies

Enliven Streets and Sidewalks

- Create vibrancy through the use of moveable street furniture, sitting terraces, and well-designed lighting.
- Focus the development of public sitting areas around the key transportation stops to improve linkages between the corridor and city transit systems.
- Include clearly marked building entrances along main corridors.
- Artfully illuminate buildings so that the corridor is activated day and night.
- Create opportunities for people to buy and eat food outdoors along the street in fair weather. This can include street vendors, kiosks, and cafes adjacent to moveable seating and park spaces.

Create Vibrant Parks

- Add inviting landscaping to existing open spaces such as the 40th and Baltimore trolley portal.
- Utilize “found” public spaces such as sidewalks, parking spaces, and building setbacks to create small-scale green spaces that incorporate more trees, seating and greenery into the corridor.
- Connect greening projects with the Philadelphia Water Department’s *Green City, Clean Waters Plan* to manage storm water through the development of rain gardens and green streets.
- Become a place that encourages the implementation of experimental ideas such as parklets, pop-up-parks, public Wi-Fi, digital information, and lighting technology. By fostering creative means of implementing improved public spaces, support for public spaces will build and significant inroads will be made towards permanent improvements to the quality of life in the 40th Street corridor.
- Utilize the streetscape to create a sense of an outdoor room through human scaled retail spaces at ground level, attractive awnings and signage, welcoming benches and transit shelters, contemporary art, and distinctive lighting elements.

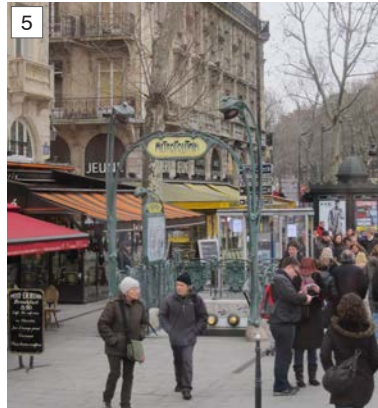
Establish an Identity for the Corridor

- Work with local artists in the planning stages of development to determine how works of public art can be incorporated into the corridor. High quality public art will give an identity to the corridor and enhance the sense of place along the corridor.
- Celebrate the history and historic events along the corridor with signage and commemorative artwork.
- Develop a coordinated streetscape plan for the corridor as this will avoid clutter and confusion. A coordinated design for street trees, street furniture, honor boxes and lighting will help to reinforce the character of the corridor.
- Program events such as sidewalk sales, dining days, night markets, and concerts to provide opportunities for neighbors and visitors to socialize and experience the corridor in new ways. The communities, institutions, and non-profits should coordinate programming efforts so that the barriers between communities diminish.
- Design key junctions (such as 40th and Baltimore, 40th and Market, and 40th and Lancaster) as points of entry to the corridor. Incorporating innovative landscape design, iconic architecture, signage and landmarks will help to acknowledge a sense of arrive on the corridor and serve to improve connections along the corridor. Create public plazas at key intersections such as 40th and Market and 40th and Baltimore with seating and cafes to encourage active street life.

Maintain a Pedestrian Character at the Ground Level of Buildings

- Prioritize pedestrian uses and street access at the ground level of buildings.
- Install attractive and eye-catching signs, a mix of low and high scale lighting, and windows that face the street to connect retail buildings with pedestrians.
- Orient retail activities toward the street with large windows and signage.
- Carefully consider how projects relate to the sidewalk and consider how the design defines the public realm.

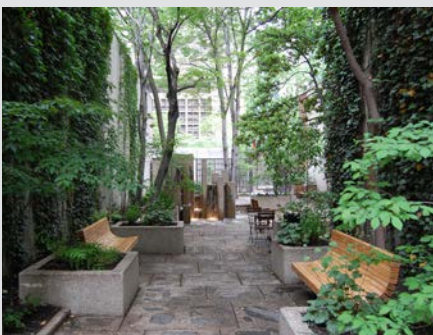
Examples



There are many elements that contribute to vibrant public spaces. Some of them include:

1. Attractive street benches
2. Moveable street furniture
3. Corralled newspaper honor boxes
4. Bicycle shelters that are also public art
5. Well designed head houses
6. Pocket parks that make use of underutilized spaces to provide a respite from city life
7. Variation in heights of buildings that add to the excitement of the streetscape

Chestnut Park Philadelphia, PA



The newly re-opened Chestnut Park is a pocket park that utilizes the space between two low-rise buildings to create a landscaped public space that is safe, attractive, and inviting. The space incorporates a variety of seating and tables. The park also features a public art sculpture and fountain, which adds an element of relaxation to the space through the sound of running water. The design of the park keeps it safe, as it is open with entrances at both ends and well lit from above,

and closes at sunset. This is also a programmed space, with music in the park providing opportunity for free public activities. This is an example of successful creation of a new public space and “found” green space incorporated in a meaningful and yet unobtrusive way along a very busy corridor. The park was recently transferred to the Center City District which programs and manages the park.

Goal

A significant number of transportation modes are currently used to convey people into and out of the corridor: several bus lines, the Market-Frankford El, green trolley lines, cars, bicycles, and pedestrians. In order to continue to attract many visitors and comfortably accommodate residents, thoughtful consideration needs to be applied to the use of transit on the corridor. When visitors disembark from the bus or subway or trolley, it is important to experience a sense of arrival into a clean, safe, and welcoming corridor. Despite the large mass-transit systems that connect to the corridor, the car dominates the streetscape. For the corridor to be successful as a public space, it is essential that the pedestrian experience is a priority. For transportation, safety means streets and bus shelters that are well-lit, a street hierarchy that makes the right-of-way very clear to all users, and the infrastructure that allows any pedestrian to navigate the streets and sidewalks comfortably.

Strategies

Create a sense of arrival:

- Design attractive arrival gateways with clear information graphics at major transit hubs. These can be distinctive buildings that include elevator access to transit lines or graceful, sheltering canopies that signal arrival into a well-cared for district. The transit portals at 40th and Baltimore and 40th and Market are key opportunity areas and both stations are in need of improvements. These portals are natural gateways to the corridor and improvements should be prioritized.

Ensure universal accessibility for all users:

- Smooth sidewalks and walkways to create a safe space for people using wheelchairs and walkers.
- Install elevators and ramps to allow any user to ride whatever transportation mode is convenient for him or her.
- Allow for adequate sidewalk widths to accommodate pedestrian flow and activity.

Incorporate well-designed, pedestrian-scaled infrastructure along the corridor:

- Install bus shelters that are welcoming, clean, modern and convenient.
- Buffer sidewalks from parking and moving vehicles through integrated landscape and street furniture such as benches, newspaper honor boxes, information kiosks, bicycle racks, and bus shelters.

Organize the different modes of transportation:

- Use clear signage to mark bike paths and outline the rights-of-way on the street.
- Incorporate real-time transit information into bus shelters and subway stops to help users move quickly and efficiently.
- Utilize the existing infrastructure, in particular the trolley tracks, to provide improved connections to and along the 40th Street corridor. Rethinking and expanding existing transportation routes would help to connect the neighborhoods of Powelton and Southwest Philadelphia with the rest of the city.⁴³
- Ensure that any proposed transportation project reflects the urban design qualities of the complete streets initiative where equal weight is given to the safety needs of pedestrians, cyclists, and the handicapped.

Address parking issues:

- Work with developers, institutions, and city agencies to define new approaches to parking management in an effort to address issues of informal and long-term parking.
- Identify opportunities to capitalize on shared parking opportunities for daytime employees or students and nighttime residents to minimize the amount of grade-level parking along the corridor.
- Bring property owners, community development corporations, non-profits, neighbors, and community associations together to program surface parking lots with interim uses such as markets and pop-up playgrounds.

Examples



There are many features of successful transportation infrastructure enhancements. Some of them include:

- 1 Well designed, well-lit transit hubs
- 2 Distinctive transit head houses
- 3 Shared parking
- 4 Well concealed parking garages
- 5 Accessible public transportation
- 6 Clearly marked bicycle lanes

*Rotunda de Sergio Cardell*⁴⁴ Alicante, Spain



This large transit plaza makes creative use of landscaping and open space at this traffic circle and trolley stop, which feels like a destination and a pleasant place to wait for the train, but also invites other uses as a park space with benches and shade from trees. What could otherwise be “just” a traffic circle becomes a true green breathing space for pedestrians and transit travelers in the middle of a busy city. It also incorporates modern, beautifully-designed transportation

structures such as large lights that also serve as a shelter from rain for tram passengers. As a whole, the stop is designed to take advantage of both shade and breeze while cutting down on wind shear. The result is that the tram stop makes transit riders feel safe and comfortable at all times of day, and is also a visually appealing asset that replaced an unused traffic circle.

Goal

When considering the future of the 40th Street corridor, it is as important to discuss history as it is to discuss the challenges and opportunities of new development. On an evolving corridor with buildings from different ages, where different sizes, styles and materials blend together, new buildings should be designed to mix thoughtfully with the old. This means preserving treasured buildings such as the Free Library building at 40th and Walnut while also encouraging experimentation and the best of contemporary design – ensuring that new buildings reflect the age in which they are built. Careful attention should be given to how new materials complement existing buildings through color and texture, helping to continue the evolution of the corridor as a living place that honors the past and embraces the present. The practice of enhancing public spaces and preserving important buildings along the corridor while rethinking underutilized sites like surface parking lots will ensure that the corridor remains eclectic and interesting to both visitors and residents.

Strategies

Fill in the gaps:

- On vacant and underutilized sites, pursue urban land uses that allow for a mix of uses. Where possible, redevelop such sites to ensure a continuously interesting and activated streetscape.
- In the short term, bring property owners, community development corporations, non-profits, neighbors, community associations, and local institutions together to program vacant lots with interim uses such as farmers markets, Night Markets, and pop-up playgrounds.

Balance old and new:

- Choose new materials that complement existing buildings. This will help to create new buildings that fit in to the context of the corridor but also are modern and different.
- Add additions to old buildings or design new buildings in ways that articulate the relationship between old and new while relating to the surrounding context in terms of urban character, layout, and rhythm of street frontage and details.
- Balance relationships between buildings of different heights through the use of architectural elements like setbacks and open space.
- Reinforce the positive, identity-forming aspects of the neighborhood.
- Encourage the evolution of the corridor. When new buildings replace older buildings take steps to ensure that they are well designed and reflect the best values of 21st century design and positive place-making.

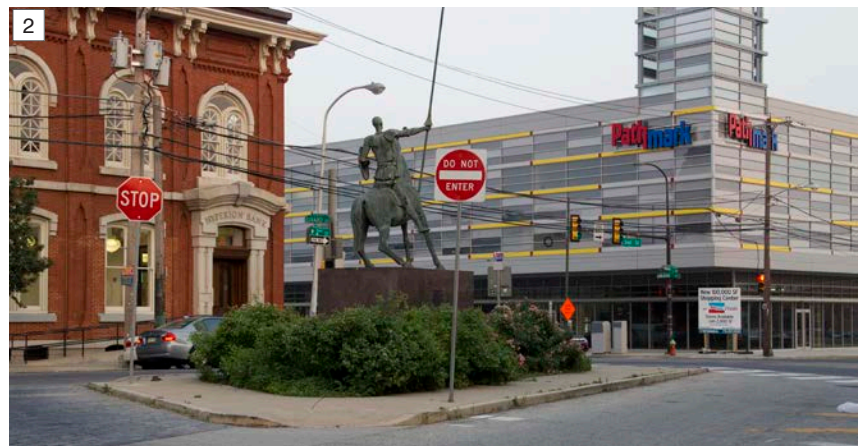
Maintain diversity of corridor in terms of height and scale:

- Continue to develop with a variety of heights to provide interest along the corridor.

Embrace the 21st century:

- Design new buildings in a style and with materials that reflect their time.
- Incorporate sustainable design practices.

Examples



There are many examples of places where new and old development coexist. For example:

- 1** The materials and low scale of Providence's new Wheeler School complement the streetscape.
- 2** The scale of the new supermarket has a positive relationship with the historic bank building in Philadelphia.
- 3** In Edinburgh, a modern aluminum rainscreen facade references the texture of adjacent sandstone buildings.
- 4** Materials, details, and finishes help place Montreal's former pumping station into the context of the street.

*Thin Flats*⁴⁵ Philadelphia, PA



This nine-dwelling development completed in 2008 rethinks the Philadelphia row house for the 21st century. In scale it matches the row homes that surround it, but physically signals its time with new colors, rhythms, lines, and materials. It is the first LEED-H Platinum multi-family residence in Pennsylvania, and utilizes the roof space for a garden terrace and rooftop solar water heaters, thereby literally moving beyond the traditional row house design which generally does

not consider the roof as a highly-used space. Here the concerns around infill development, such as how to create a new building that has a relationship to and honors the surrounding historic buildings, are solved with a combination of bold design decisions and modern amenities. Thin Flats both respects and reinvents the historic row home.

Goal

Along the length of the corridor, the existing urban fabric includes many variations in the scale (height and massing) of buildings along with variations in the infrastructure that supports development. For example, the northern and southern ends of the corridor are characterized by predominantly lower-scale residential development while the central areas of the corridor feature taller, more-dense development centered on transportation hubs. It is important to note that the street is not a monolithic development; nor are the side streets that feed into 40th Street. Rather, 40th Street is a lively and varied streetscape with buildings of different periods and sizes fitting comfortably within an urban whole. The evolution of 40th Street and the surrounding streets will benefit from the integration of a thoughtful variety of old and new buildings, of varying material, height and massing. The character and quality of the existing urban fabric along the corridor allows for variations in the scale of development. However, regardless of scale, a successful building feels like it is a comfortable part of the public realm and is designed for pedestrians, who should feel welcome and accommodated at street level. This means orienting buildings and entrances toward the street, creating buildings with interesting architectural detail, and stepping down the scale of large buildings to retain the pedestrian quality of the corridor.

Strategies

Target development at transit nodes:

- Cluster construction of larger scale development around the busiest intersections and frequently-used bus, trolley and subway stops.

Design for human scale:

- Include interesting architectural elements and details such as windows, railings, porches, and stairways onto the exterior of buildings – particularly at the first floor eye level where the pedestrian is most engaged. A rhythm of details and textures will help to create visually interesting building facades.
- Orient retail activities and building entrances toward the street and sidewalks and use large windows to connect the activity within the buildings to the pedestrians on the sidewalk.
- Articulate the different uses within a building. This can be accomplished through the use of a variety of materials and building forms.
- Step tall buildings down gradually and utilizing set-backs to make large scale and large-footprint buildings feel smaller to the pedestrian on the street. Breaking large buildings into more appropriately scaled forms helps to distribute massing across a site and creates visual excitement and variety along the corridor.
- Maintain a continuous street wall. The street wall might include new buildings, pocket parks, or terraces that create a visual connection from one end of the street to another. Within the streetscape, it is important to allow for those exceptions that will encourage public gathering and create breathing room.

Gauge height and density relative to the existing context:

- Design new buildings that complement neighboring buildings without overwhelming them. New buildings or additions to existing buildings can be taller than existing buildings when they are designed to fit into the existing and new rhythms of the public realm. Also, it is important that the ground levels of buildings, where the pedestrian interacts with the building, are activated. Together this will help add vitality to the streetscape.
- Construct new buildings that contribute positively to the existing patterns of density and maximize existing infrastructure such as public transportation stops.
- Discourage the development of single story buildings along the corridor as single story buildings often have limited uses and do not foster a corridor that is active day and night.

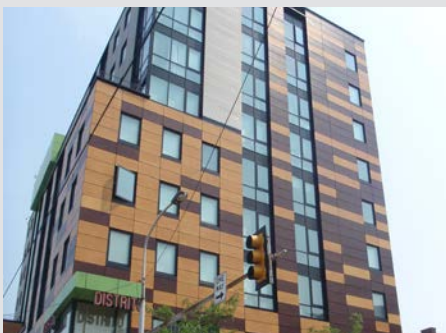
Examples



There are many urban areas that accommodate a variety of scales of development. For example:

- 1** In San Francisco, CA, the large scale of the building is broken down with variations in height and a mix of materials - wood, stucco, steel, and glass.
- 2** The Columbia Heights Station in the Washington, DC Metro area illustrates how a mixed-use development can be well integrated around transit.
- 3** In Cambridge, MA, buildings with a wide variety of scales coexist and work together to create a vibrant streetscape.

The Hub Philadelphia, PA



The Hub on Chestnut is an example of medium scale new development in an area of the 40th Street corridor that includes a mix of high- and low-rise buildings. Directly across the street from the Hub are traditional row house style buildings, but The Hub is designed to play with scale in ways that makes it feel much smaller from the pedestrian's perspective. Multi-level street retail and bold colors and materials give the

building a striking visual appeal that catches the pedestrians' eye. Parts of the building also step down in height, so that the many apartments are contained within a large building that does not feel intimidating on the street.

Next Steps





Conclusion

There are many different levels on which to engage with the civic goals and urban design strategies. For example:

- **On a proposal-by-proposal basis, community members can utilize the goals and strategies to discuss how proposed development is enhancing the urban design goals of the corridor.**
- **The goals and strategies can help the community identify and understand how neighborhoods are unique and how, through design, the community can work to ensure that the neighborhood can change while retaining its identity.**
- **Developers can use the goals and strategies as they develop projects to ensure that their work will contribute to the evolving success of the corridor as a pedestrian-scaled commercial district.**
- **Community members and developers can use these goals and strategies as the basis for a community conversation about the identity, quality, and character of the public realm along 40th Street.**

Ultimately, the civic goals and urban design strategies will help to provide guidance on design actions that can help the neighborhoods of University City realize successful development within the 40th Street Corridor. The purpose being to help foster a design and development process that is collaborative, that responds to local opportunities and needs, and that, will

encourage high quality development and improved connections for the whole community.

These civic goals and urban design strategies are not intended to be an exhaustive checklist or a prescription for urban design, but rather a starting point for a more informed community discussion about creating more beautiful, cared-for, safe and vibrant neighborhoods that we can all be proud to call home.



Appendix





ADELINE AVE NE

Summary of Notes from Public Forums

The University City District (UCD), SCI/West and Friends of 40th Street invited public participation in four public forums to help shape common planning principles and urban design ideals for consideration in development activities along the 40th Street corridor. PennPraxis and the Penn Project for Civic Engagement served as meeting facilitators and worked with meeting attendees to identify the design characteristics that may influence the success and future development of a mixed-use retail and residential corridor for 40th Street. PennPraxis and the Penn Project on Civic Engagement then worked together to translate the ideas expressed during the public forums into design guidelines that may be used to inform future development along the corridor.

Over 100 people attended the four forums and participated in discussions about urban design and community needs. The attendees included residents from a variety of nearby neighborhoods (such as Spruce Hill, West Powelton, Walnut Hill) as well as representatives from community development corporations, nearby institutions, business owners, and

students. The forum dates and locations:

Wednesday, June 15, 7:30 AM
University Square Apartments
3901 Market St.

Wednesday, June 22, 7:30 AM
Christ Community Church
4017 Chestnut St.

Monday, June 20, 7:00 PM
The Rotunda
4014 Walnut St.

Monday, June 27, 6:00 PM
Greater Faith Baptist Church
4031 Baring St.

Based on the feedback received from each of the meetings, the project team identified a series of aspirations for public spaces, transportation nodes, preservation and development, and building scale. Across the corridor, community stakeholders are seeking a vibrant place that is well cared for, accessible, and green. In regards to new development, the community articulated an interest in balancing the old and the new and honoring history. Importantly, the community identified a real need to fill in the gaps with new

development – reducing the number of vacant homes and storefronts as well as reducing the number of surface parking lots. There was consensus among meeting participants that the corridor could support new development of various heights but that large-scale development should be concentrated around existing transportation nodes. The graphic below highlights some of the priority topics that were addressed at every public forum.

It is important to note that, in some cases, the comments, thoughts and ideas captured during the forums extend beyond the scope of creating design guidelines. In the notes that follow, we have made an attempt to record all of the ideas expressed during the forums however only those ideas directly related to urban design will inform the final recommendations. A complete compilation of the forum notes are available www.40thst.org: <https://sites.google.com/site/friendsof40th/>

direct link to the notes:
<https://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&pid=sites&srcid=ZGVmYXVsdGRvbWFpbnxmcmllbmRzb2Y0MHRofGd4OjEzY2MxYjBhYjg5YjZkZmZl&pli=1>

CLEAN MODERNIZETRANSPORTATION NEIGHBORHOODCIRCULATOR TALLBUILDINGSINCOMMERCIALZONES COMMUNITY-FOCUSEDRETAIL MAINTAIN OUTDOORSEATING LIGHTING BICYCLESAFETY
 DEDICATEGROUND FLOORTOTHEPUBLICREALM PERMITTEDPARKING HONORHISTORY LEVELSIDEWALKS ACTIVEGROUND FLOOR TRAFFICCALMING
IMPROVED TRANSPORTALS
 SIGNAGE YOUTH-ORIENTED VIBRANCY GATHERINGS SPACES PEOPLE FRIENDLY CORRIDOR ACCESSIBILITY MAINTAIN OLDER BUILDINGS
 GREEN



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Table of Contents:

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<https://sites.google.com/site/friendsof40th/>

Hard copies are available at:

Walnut Street West Library:
201 South 40th Street

Durham Library:
3320 Haverford Avenue

University City District:
3940-42 Chestnut Street

People's Emergency Center:
325 N. 39th Street

Partnership CDC:
40th and Market Streets

The Enterprise Center:
4548 Market Street

Elwyn:
40th and Market Streets



Harris M. Steinberg
Bridget Keegan
Andrew Goodman
Lily Applebaum
Keyleigh Kern
Leonard Klipper



Harris Sokoloff
Linda Breitstein



Prema Gupta



Iola Harper

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