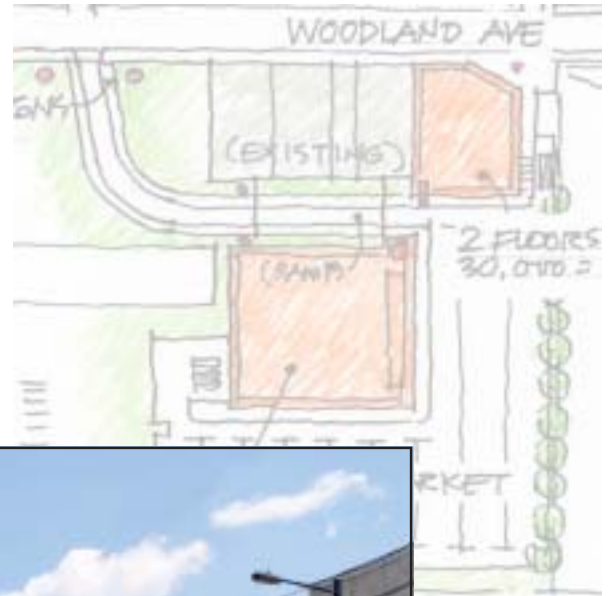


Development Strategy for the Woodland Avenue Revitalization Project

Philadelphia, PA



Prepared for:
**Southwest
Community Development Corporation**

Prepared by:
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Introduction

Woodland Avenue is the traditional commercial and neighborhood spine of Southwest Philadelphia, extending three miles from University City to the Philadelphia county border at Cobbs Creek. Woodland Avenue hosts a variety of land uses including residential row homes, neighborhood shopping stores, commercial and industrial uses, and a dense eight-block “Core Retail Area” from 60th to 68th Streets.

There are currently 179 retail businesses located along Woodland Avenue between 45th Street and Island Avenue. A few are scattered amidst housing and other uses, but most (132) are concentrated in the Core Retail Area. Woodland Avenue has two vital cultural and institutional anchors, the historic Church of St. James at 68th Street and the University of the Sciences in Philadelphia at 45th Street, but the corridor lacks business anchors with the ability to draw customers.

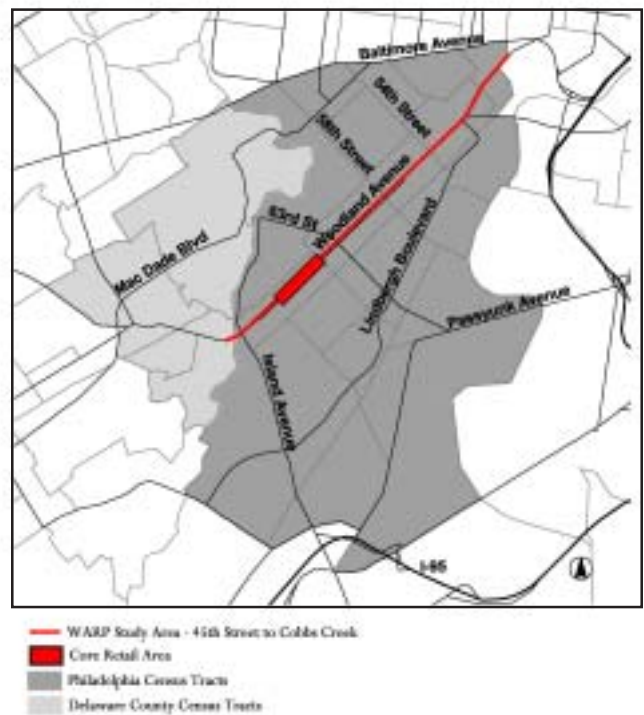
Woodland Avenue has a rich history. It was part of America’s first North-South highway and in its 200 year existence has been known variously as the King’s Highway, Chester Pike, Darby Road, and The Washington Post Road. In time it became a local family destination, a once-lively and diverse retail district. Long-time residents and merchants recall Woodland Avenue as it used to be—a place that offered many reasons to visit: a place to shop for the family, to buy candy and groceries, and to march alongside friends in a parade. Now, lack of store variety forces residents to leave Woodland Avenue to meet their basic shopping needs. Physical deterioration and poor housekeeping gives the feeling of a place about which no one cares.

The Southwest Community Development Corporation, with the Southwest Economic Conference, has responded to these issues and has taken the lead in



Woodland Avenue’s existing Core Retail Area - the No. 11 trolley is a primary asset

Map 1: Woodland Avenue Retail Trade Area



encouraging the economic revitalization of Woodland Avenue by initiating the **Woodland Avenue Revitalization Project (WARP)**.

This Development Strategy provides a market driven framework for WARP and is the culmination of a year-long planning process that included a comprehensive retail market analysis of Woodland Avenue and its trade area. Personal interviews were conducted with 29 retailers and commercial businesses along the Avenue and four public meetings were held to gather input regarding issues from area residents and merchants. Feedback on a draft form of the strategy was obtained through an additional three public meetings. The overall planning process was guided by regular meetings with the Southwest Economic Conference.

Retail Market Opportunities

Woodland Avenue retailers chiefly serve customers from the surrounding Southwest Philadelphia neighborhoods, although a few specialty businesses draw customers from other parts of Philadelphia and Delaware County and, occasionally, from as far away as New Jersey. Woodland Avenue’s trade area (see **Map 1**) includes a population of 103,240 persons residing in Southwest Philadelphia and adjacent Delaware County communities. These trade area residents spend \$705 million annually on retail goods and services. This large trade area includes Woodland Avenue and several other retail concentrations. Taken together, all retailers in the trade area are capturing only 41% of these \$705 million in purchases; **over \$400 million in retail purchases are leaving Southwest Philadelphia each year.**

Woodland Avenue itself is home to 179 retailers providing goods and services in 32 different categories and generating \$62 million in sales annually. The concentration of retailers in the Core Retail Area is one of the few traditional shopping districts in the City that has maintained a strong mix of shopping goods stores providing apparel, furniture, and related products.

The range of retail offerings on Woodland Avenue can be significantly upgraded by adding up to 300,000 SF of new stores, in effect doubling the size of Woodland Avenue’s existing retail area. Priority retail development opportunities identified by the market analysis include:

- a 60,000 SF supermarket in the vicinity of the Core Retail Area;
- a 20,000 SF supermarket east of 56th Street;
- one or two chain drug stores (11,000 SF each);
- up to 25,000 SF of new full-service restaurants;
- a large family clothing store;
- a general-line sporting goods store;
- a full-service auto parts store;
- a more diversified range of shopping goods including a men’s clothing store, a camera shop, a games and hobby shop, a sewing/fabric store, a music store, a CD store, a book store, and specialty gift stores; and
- other freestanding retail stores including a paint and wallpaper store, a nursery and garden center, and a pet supply store.

Retail Development Opportunities

	Purchases by SW Residents Outside SW Phila (In \$000)	Priority Retail Opportunities for Woodland Ave (SF)
TOTAL	\$440,500	306,000
CONVENIENCE GOODS	\$157,541	130,000
Supermarkets, Grocery Stores	\$92,550	70,000
Drug Stores/Pharmacies	\$31,359	30,000
Health Food Supplements	\$2,039	2,500
Other Health & Personal Care	\$2,764	2,500
Full-Service Restaurants	\$28,831	25,000
SHOPPING GOODS	\$199,819	152,000
Full-Service Department Stores	\$21,986	
Discount Department Stores	*	
Warehouse Clubs	\$18,955	
Men's Clothing	*	6,000
Women's Clothing	\$10,004	6,000
Children's Clothing	*	3,000
Family Clothing	\$21,805	30,000
Other Clothing	\$3,609	3,000
Shoe Stores	\$8,498	6,000
Jewelry Stores	\$9,343	6,000
Luggage & Leatherwork	\$833	1,000
Furniture	\$10,100	8,000
Floor Coverings	*	4,000
Other Home Furnishings	*	3,000
Household Appliances	\$2,857	
Radio/TV/Electronics	\$2,762	
Computer & Software Stores	\$6,816	6,000
Camera, Photo Supply	\$638	1,000
Optical Stores	\$2,503	2,000
General-Line Sporting Goods	\$5,441	30,000
Specialty Sporting Goods	*	6,000
Toys & Hobbies	*	6,000
Sewing, Needlework	\$1,860	2,500
Music Stores	\$2,221	2,500
Book Stores	*	8,000
Record/CD/Tape Stores	*	4,000
Office Supply/Stationers	\$9,977	
Gift, Novelty, Souvenir Stores	\$7,490	8,000
OTHER RETAIL STORES	\$83,140	24,000
Home Centers	\$30,165	
Paint & Wallpaper Stores	\$4,641	4,000
Hardware Stores	\$5,121	3,000
Retail Lumber Yards	*	
Nursery & Garden Centers	\$3,167	3,000
Auto Parts & Accessories Stores	\$11,004	10,000
Florists	\$1,729	
Pet Supply Stores	\$3,209	2,500
Art Dealers	\$1,753	1,500

*Data Suppressed

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Many of these new stores will fill existing vacant and underutilized storefronts. However, the Core Retail Area needs to add new large anchor stores such as a supermarket, a family apparel store, or a general-line sporting goods store, for which there are few locations available. Instead, large-scale anchor development will be achieved by expanding the Core Area to include the blocks from 56th to 60th Streets.

Residents living in the vicinity of 50th Street need expanded convenience shopping, which could be met through developing a new retail node there.

A Vision for Woodland Avenue

Although retail stores have traditionally been concentrated between 60th and 68th Streets, the condition of the entire length of Woodland Avenue profoundly impacts the viability of the shopping areas along it as well as the perception of the quality of the adjacent residential neighborhoods. Any effective vision and development strategy for Woodland Avenue must consider its entire length from 45th Street through Island Avenue and Cobbs Creek. Given this requirement, this WARP development strategy is based on a vision for Woodland Avenue that strengthens the corridor as the retail, commercial, and institutional spine of Southwest Philadelphia. Extending from 45th Street to Island Avenue, the WARP study area covers a distance far too great to function as a single unified district. Rather, the WARP strategy calls for a series of six development zones along Woodland Avenue that demonstrate an interrelated and continuous approach to revitalization efforts for the entire length of the Avenue. The zones are defined as follows:

Core Retail Area: 56th to 68th Streets

A special services district will be established in the existing Core Retail Area to provide a cleaner and more appealing shopping environment. On an incremental basis, new large-scale retail development will occur, extending the Core Retail Area to 56th Street.

52nd St. Neighborhood Center: 50th to 52nd Streets

The market demand for convenience goods retail in the vicinity of 50th to 52nd Streets will be combined with property owners' interests in the development of a neighborhood convenience retail shopping and human-services center between 50th and 52nd Streets on the south side of Woodland Avenue.

West Shore Area: 45th to 48th Streets

Land uses on Woodland Avenue as it passes through the West Shore Neighborhood are primarily residential and institutional. These uses will be reinforced with the encouraged participation of the University of the Sciences in Philadelphia.

Woodland Avenue Gateway: 48th to 50th Streets

The 49th Street and Woodland Avenue intersection is a primary crossroads for traffic between Center City, West and Southwest Philadelphia. These blocks will be attractively revitalized and landscaped to welcome people to Woodland Avenue and Southwest Philadelphia.

Mixed Use Revitalization Zone: 52nd to 56th Sts.

The variety of positive and negative land uses in these four blocks require a block-by-block mixed-use revitalization approach.

Woodland Avenue Development Zones



Southwest Philadelphia Gateway: 68th Street to Island Avenue

Existing land uses will be reinforced with residential and institutional infill development. Signage and decorative landscaping will welcome visitors from Delaware County to Southwest Philadelphia.

WARP Development Strategy

The development strategy for the Woodland Avenue Revitalization Project embraces a range of activities that include physical, operational, and development activities for each of the zones expressed in the vision for Woodland Avenue. Additionally, the strategy addresses the critical issues of cleanliness, safety, and streetscape conditions that must be improved to ensure the success of all economic development activity along the Avenue.

Key Public Infrastructure Investments & Development Controls

Infrastructure investment and development control recommendations are applicable to the entire length of Woodland Avenue from 45th Street to Island Avenue.

1. Repave Woodland Avenue

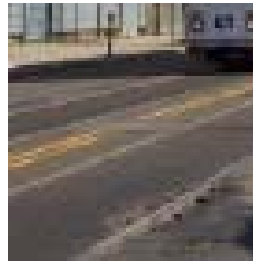
Woodland Avenue will be repaved from 48th Street to Island Avenue. Repaving will occur block by block to minimize the negative impact for corridor businesses.

2. Public Space Housekeeping

All public signage and crosswalks that are faded or damaged will be replaced or repainted to project an attractive, higher quality image of Woodland Avenue. A regular program of painting will maintain this standard of quality. Curbs and sidewalks throughout the entire corridor will be restored as necessary.

3. Zoning Review

A comprehensive zoning review will be undertaken to review land use along the Avenue. Where appropriate, zoning will be updated to facilitate new development consistent with this strategy and to control the placement



Potholes and deteriorated curbs and sidewalks are a problem.

of inconsistent uses such as recycling facilities, used car lots, and automotive repair businesses.

4. Billboard Control

Woodland Avenue is lined by billboards, some are in active use, others are unsightly skeleton frames. WARP will undertake an aggressive program to prohibit new billboards, to demolish unused ones, and to restrict the relocation of existing ones.

Core Retail Area: 56th to 68th Streets

The existing Core Retail Area, extending from 60th Street to 68th Street, does not include any parcels that are large enough to support new modern retail development. Opportunity for site assembly exists, however, between 56th and 60th Streets. The development strategy for the Core Retail Area recommends a series of activities that will first improve its appearance and safety and then expand the district as new retail development occurs between 56th and 60th Streets.

Update & Maintain Attractive Public Spaces

Many streetscape improvements made 25 years ago are in sound condition but appear dated today. The overall appearance of Avenue is further marred by litter and other poor public space housekeeping.

5. Implement a Special Services District

Southwest CDC, with merchant participation, will take the lead in encouraging the City to create the Woodland Avenue Special Services District (SSD) from 60th to 68th Streets. As new development occurs between 56th and 60th Streets, the SSD may be expanded. The SSD will create a clean and inviting environment for Woodland Avenue shoppers and merchants.

6. *Remove Concrete Barriers*

The outdated concrete barriers on the sidewalks within the existing Core Retail Area will be removed.

7. *Streetscape Enhancements*

Distinctive streetscape enhancements will be installed to project a consistent, quality image throughout the Core Retail Area. The outdated street lights will be replaced and uniform trash cans will be installed. Street trees will be added with special consideration given to their placement. Benches will be added at select locations, at first on a trial basis.

8. *Install Coordinated Banners*

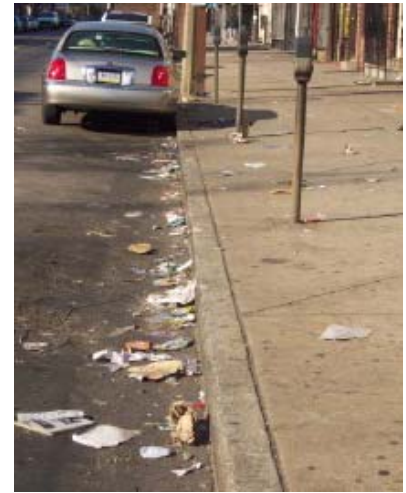
Decorative banners will be placed on lampposts in the special services district. Individual banners may be sponsored by specific corridor businesses.

9. *Add Public Open Space*

Attractively landscaped public space will provide meeting and resting places for Woodland Avenue shoppers. Open space may be included in the redevelopment of the Woodland Village Plaza, 6037 and 6336 Woodland Avenue, and other Core Retail Area sites and could feature outdoor restaurant seating or a farmer's market.



The outdated concrete barriers will be removed.



Litter will be regularly picked-up by Woodland Avenue Special Services District employees, improving the overall image of the Core Retail Area.



A photo rendering illustrating Core Retail Area improvements on the 6300 block of Woodland Avenue including clean sidewalks, a re-paved street, a freshly painted crosswalk, new street lights with decorative banners, signage improvements, and infill development.

New Retail Anchor Development

New retail development, particularly between 56th and 60th Streets, will create spaces large enough to attract significant retail anchor stores to the Avenue.

10. Expand Woodland Village Shopping Plaza

Opportunity exists to expand the Woodland Village Shopping Plaza between 60th and 62nd Streets to the rear of the site, on the approximately 5-acre vacant parcel situated between the rail tracks and the shopping center. This site could accommodate a full-size modern supermarket (60,000 SF) and a split level retail building with two 30,000 SF stores such as a family clothing store and a discount merchandise goods store. The owners of Woodland Village will be encouraged to reconfigure the existing retail structure fronting the Avenue with a series of small stores that will link the pedestrian shopping environment from the current Core Retail Area to the new retail development. A public plaza and staircase will provide pedestrian access directly from Woodland Avenue to the parking lot and lower level stores. Special attention will be paid to establishing appropriate store signage and a rooftop design for the supermarket that will be visible from Woodland Avenue.



The expanded Woodland Village Shopping Plaza, shown here from the 60th Street rail bridge, could feature a full-size modern grocery store and two large shopping goods stores. Stairs from Woodland Avenue provide pedestrian access; automobile access is through the existing Woodland Village parking lot.

11. Redevelop 58th to 60th Streets

New retail development will occur on both sides of Woodland Avenue between 58th and 60th Streets. The Abrams Metal site on the south side of Woodland Avenue will be redeveloped for commercial retail use. A fast-food restaurant is under construction on the northeast corner of Woodland Avenue at 60th Street. The other properties on the north side of the Avenue should be assembled for commercial redevelopment purposes. Cumulatively, Woodland Avenue between 58th and 60th Streets could support two 30,000 SF retail stores and a series of smaller shops. To maintain the pedestrian scale of the street and to extend the density of the Core Retail Area, new development must front the Avenue.



The Abrams Metal site (shown to the right of Woodland Avenue) will be redeveloped for commercial use.



Completed development between 58th and 60th Streets (shown here looking east towards 58th Street) with large retail development on the Abrams Metal site and smaller stores on the north side of the street. Stores fronting the Avenue and uniform streetscape elements extend the Core Retail Area's pedestrian scale and density.

12. Extend the Core Retail Area to 56th Street

On an incremental basis, the Core Retail Area and the services provided through the SSD will be extended east from 60th Street to 56th Street as new retail development occurs. The blocks between 58th and 60th Street will be targeted for new commercial retail development (see Item 11). Between 56th and 58th Streets, the rehabilitation of existing vacant mixed-use commercial structures will be encouraged. The Southern Inn Restaurant is interested in expanding and will be assisted in its efforts to acquire and rehab vacant adjacent buildings. The half-acre vacant parcel at 5621-29 Woodland Avenue will be redeveloped for small-scale retail use. Existing light industrial and auto-related uses including Humphrey's Textile and the Philadelphia Public Auto Auction will be appropriately screened to diminish their impact in the new pedestrian scale retail district. Where possible, additional parcels with existing non-conforming uses between 56th and 60th Streets will be assembled for redevelopment.

Parking Improvements

13. Designate Police Parking Area

An off-street police parking area will be designated and developed within one block of the 65th St. police station, freeing up valuable on-street parking spaces in the heart of the Core Area. Potential sites include the parking lot at 65th St. and Paschall Avenue and 2210 S. 65th St.

14. Designate Loading Areas

Core Retail Area merchants experience difficulty receiving deliveries due to the congested parking situation and trolley traffic. To facilitate deliveries, 20-minute loading spaces will be established at regular intervals in the Core Retail Area. Where possible, these loading areas will be on side streets, just off Woodland Avenue.



Improving the 63rd Street shopper parking lot will make it safer and more attractive.



Infill retail development will be encouraged on smaller vacant lots.



Automotive, recycling and industrial uses will be attractively screened.



Vacant storefronts in the expanded Core Retail Area will be rehabilitated.

15. Shopper Parking Lot on 63rd Street

Improvements to the physical condition and layout of the shopper parking lot on 63rd Street will enhance the attractiveness, efficiency, and safety of the lot. Specific improvements will include:

- Replace the deteriorated fencing, add attractive landscaping, and update signage;
- Install lighting; and
- Repaint parking spaces.

Directive signage from Woodland Avenue will be installed at the intersection of 63rd Street. Once the Woodland Avenue SSD becomes established, it may be feasible to provide a parking attendant for the lot during business hours.

Business Expansion and Improvements

Promotion and business support activities can also contribute to revitalization.

16. Market the Avenue

A marketing campaign for Woodland Avenue will be undertaken, including continued updates of the Woodland Avenue Business Directory, the establishment of a website, newspaper ads, promotional decorative banners, and seasonal holiday lighting.

17. Recruit Quality Retail Stores

Aggressive efforts will be undertaken to attract retail businesses to take advantage of the retail opportunities identified above for vacant storefronts throughout the Core Retail Area.

18. Encourage Facade and Signage Improvements

Private property owners will be encouraged through community pressure, enforcement, and financial and technical assistance to upgrade retail signage, to repaint faded and dated facades, and (where possible) to restore original facades. Priority will be given to properties with aging and unprofessional signage and to multi-store properties where uniform signage and/or awnings would have significant impact. Existing sign ordinances will be enforced and stores utilizing excessive signage will be pressured to improve their appearance. Retailers will be encouraged to provide storefront lighting in the evenings.

Small Property Development

In addition to the larger anchor development sites there are opportunities for both small property redevelopment and new infill development within the Core Retail Area.

19. Redevelop 6713 Woodland Avenue

The vacant historic structure on this three-quarter acre site is in seriously dilapidated condition. This structure should be rehabilitated, if possible, or redeveloped for institutional or commercial use.

20. Develop 6037 Woodland Avenue

6037 is a vacant lot that breaks the flow of retail stores on the north side of the Avenue across from the Woodland Village Shopping Plaza. Developed for small retail use, this lot will accommodate approximately 4,000 SF of store space. The parcel directly behind, 2135 S. 61st Street, is currently for sale and could be developed in conjunction with 6037.



6037 Woodland Avenue is a gap in the dense Core Retail Area. The site will be redeveloped for small retail use.

West Shore Area: 45th to 48th Streets

Woodland Avenue from 45th to 48th Streets will be reinforced as a residential neighborhood with corner convenience retail activity. The West Shore Neighborhood is a strong residential community tucked between the University of the Sciences in Philadelphia (USP), the Schuylkill River, and Grays Ferry Avenue.

21. Encourage USP to Participate in Revitalization Efforts

USP will be encouraged to establish a heightened presence in the community and to participate in physically improving the character of Woodland Avenue between 45th and 48th Streets.

22. Redevelop Vacant Sites

Appropriate institutional, residential or neighborhood convenience retail development should occur on vacant sites.

Woodland Avenue Gateway: 48th to 50th Streets

Woodland Avenue from 48th to 50th Streets will be revitalized as a gateway area to Southwest Philadelphia. 49th Street is often perceived as the border between University City and Southwest Philadelphia. The condition of the blocks at this intersection, both on Woodland Avenue and on 49th Street is very poor, with numerous seriously dilapidated or vacant mixed-use commercial structures. A SEPTA maintenance facility is located on the northwest corner of the intersection, and the Mt. Zion Community Development Corporation is actively undertaking commercial, residential, and institutional redevelopment in the blocks surrounding the gateway intersection.

23. Landscaped Gateway and Corners

Traffic circulation patterns through this area provide many opportunities for visible landscaped features providing a positive image for Southwest Philadelphia.

- A landscaped gateway will be created at the 49th and Woodland intersection to define and highlight this entrance point to the corridor. Special landscaping, signage, and banners will welcome visitors.
- Three intersections--48th & Woodland, Grays Ferry & Woodland, and 48th, Grays Ferry, & Paschall--will be upgraded with additional landscaping features.
- The triangular-shaped lot on the southeast corner of Woodland and Grays Ferry Avenues will be improved as a community/shoppers parking lot.
- 49th Street will be repaved between Kingsessing Avenue and Lindbergh Boulevard.

24. Commercial Development & Revitalization

The block of Woodland between 48th and 49th Streets includes a mix of active businesses, empty storefronts, and vacant lots. Many properties exhibit deteriorating storefronts.

- A concentrated program of facade restoration and improvement will be undertaken on this block.
- New infill retail store development will be encouraged on vacant lots. Through the addition of a diner, for example, the gateway can become a destination point, attracting customers to the area.

25. Support On-going Community Development Activity

Mt. Zion Community Development Corporation will be supported in its efforts to revitalize the blocks surrounding the Gateway, including the development of a new day-care facility on the 4900 block of Woodland.

52nd Street Neighborhood Convenience Center: 50th to 52nd Streets

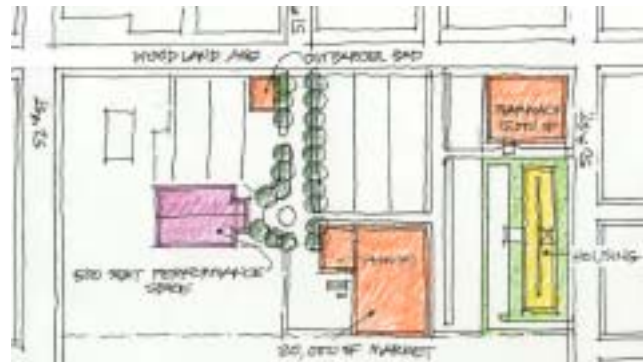
A convenience retail shopping and human services node will be established on Woodland Avenue between 50th and 52nd Streets. Already, the owners of the large vacant block on the south side of the avenue between 50th and 51st Streets are collaborating on a development that will include 60-units of elderly housing, a 500-seat performance venue, and a charter school. Combined with the A&E Pillow Factory site between 51st and 52nd Street, the development could also feature several convenience retail stores, including a 20,000 SF grocery store, a pharmacy, and a restaurant.

26. Support Development of a Retail and Human Services Node

The owners of the 50th Street site will be supported in their efforts to redevelop the site for retail and human services uses and encouraged to purchase and incorporate the A&E Pillow Factory site.

27. Encourage Facade and Signage Improvements

Private property owners on the north side of Woodland Avenue between 50th and 52nd Street will be encouraged through community pressure, enforcement, and financial and technical assistance to upgrade retail signage, to



Up to 40,000 SF of convenience retail stores could be added between 50th and 52nd.
repaint faded and dated facades, and (where possible) to restore original facades.

Mixed-Use Revitalization Zone: 52nd to 56th Streets

Woodland Avenue between 52nd and 56th Streets has a variety of positive land uses including row-homes, neighborhood convenience retail at 54th Street, a healthcare center, and, just off Woodland Avenue, the historic Grays Lane farmhouse. These uses, however, are scattered among vacant lots, seriously dilapidated structures, and auto-related businesses. This development zone requires a property-by-property mixed-use revitalization approach.

28. *Redevelop Vacant Parcels*

Demolition on the north side of the Avenue between 54th and 55th Streets has created a narrow vacant parcel that may be suitable for residential redevelopment. Small triangular lots on the south side are suitable for pocket parks.

29. *Screen Non-Conforming Uses*

Existing automotive and light-industrial uses will be encouraged to screen and landscape their facades to minimize the negative impact these uses have on the overall appearance of the corridor. Keenan @ Penrose

Autobody, located at 5336 Woodland Avenue, is an excellent example of a well-maintained and screened auto-related business.

30. *Preserve Grays Lane Farmhouse*

The Grays Lane Farmhouse is wedged between row homes on Grays Lane just off Woodland Avenue between 55th and 56th Streets. Built in 1764, this farmhouse has significant historic value and will be preserved and celebrated as a cultural and historic attraction in Southwest Philadelphia.

Southwest Philadelphia Gateway: 68th Street to Island Avenue

Woodland Avenue between 68th Street and Island Avenue will be reinforced as a residential neighborhood with interspersed institutional and corner-convenience retail activity. The Church of St. James, the City of Philadelphia's Paschall Apartments, and the transitional housing facility are important anchors in this zone.

31. *Develop Vacant Parcels*

The development of existing vacant parcels for residential or institutional use will be encouraged, including the 1.5-acre site at 7013 Woodland Avenue, the half-acre site at 6924 Woodland Avenue, and the 7,000 SF site at 7046 Woodland Avenue.

32. *Screen Non-Conforming Uses*

The cluster of auto-related uses between 71st Street and Island Avenue will be encouraged to screen and landscape their facades to minimize the negative impact these uses have on the overall appearance of the corridor.

33. *Create a Landscaped Gateway at Island Avenue*

A landscaped gateway will be created at Island Avenue and Woodland Avenue to define and highlight this entrance point to Southwest Philadelphia. Special landscaping and signage will welcome visitors to the area, including a "Welcome to Southwest Philadelphia" billboard.



Church of St. James (above) at 68th Street and the Blue Bell Inn (lower left) at Island Avenue are Southwest Philadelphia historic attractions. Attractive signage will welcome drivers to Southwest Philadelphia.