



THRIVE > Neighborhoods



Philadelphia2035
Citywide Vision

Goal 1.1:
Promote strong and well
balanced neighborhood
centers.

Transit-Oriented Development/Overlay District

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) is a type of community development that locates housing, commercial, entertainment, retail, and services around a transportation hub. TODs are walkable communities where the pedestrian right of way is protected and high-speed, high-frequency transit service is the basis for urban life.

A TOD zoning overlay allows for special design and use controls within a certain proximity of a transit stop or node. This includes bonuses for density, prohibition of auto-oriented uses, and walkable streetscapes.

Corridor Management Program

Vibrant commercial corridors contribute to strong neighborhoods. They provide a place to work, shop, and meet your neighbors. A corridor manager brings planning and resources to the corridor, provides assistance to businesses, oversees activities to make the corridor clean and safe, and works to attract new businesses to the area. Through the Targeted Corridor Management Program the City supports the redevelopment of commercial corridors by providing funding to community based development organizations to hire corridor management staff.

Neighborhood Centers: Commercial Corridors

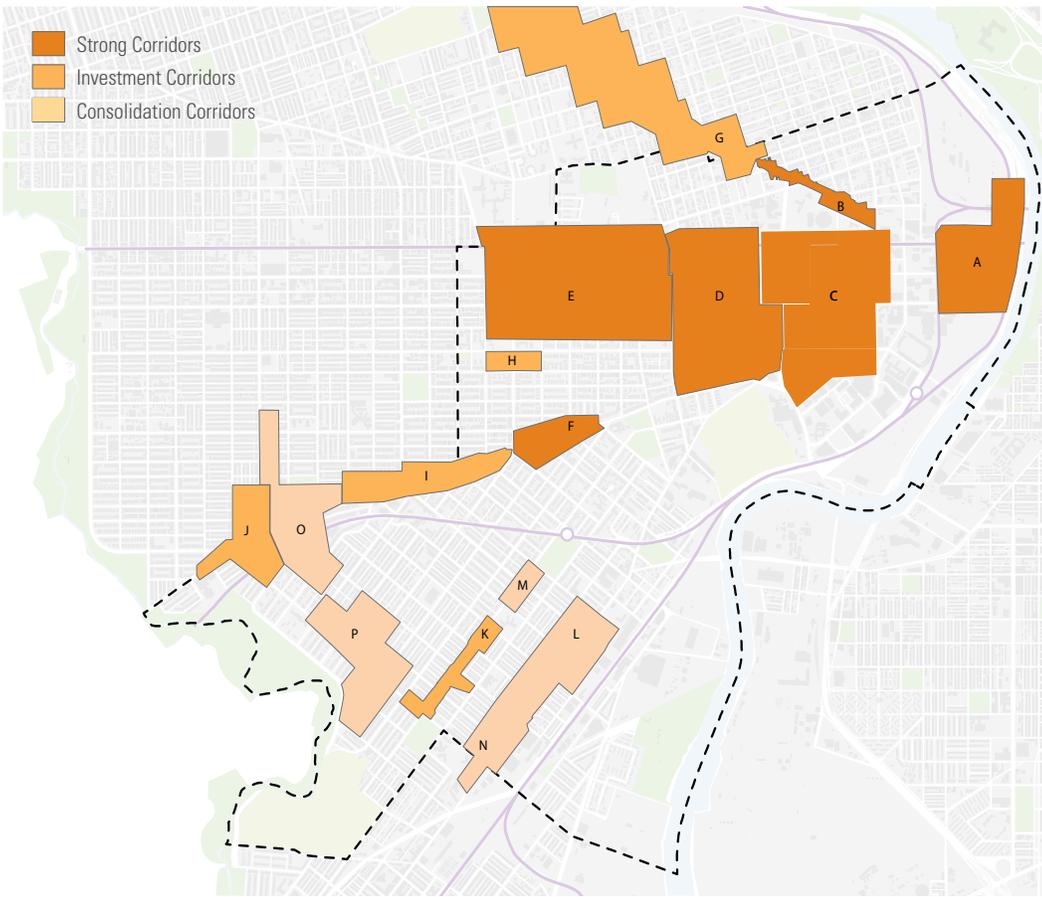
The University Southwest District's commercial corridors and nodes run the gamut from thriving strips with little vacancy and ongoing new investment, to traditional neighborhood shopping streets that struggle to retain tenants and a cohesive identity. Generally, districts and corridors within or immediately proximate to larger University City institutions appear to be performing relatively well. These districts and corridors have benefitted from growth in student population and jobs as well as direct institutional intervention in new housing, commercial development, security, community programming, and streetscape improvements. Three of these areas — 40th Street, 36th Street and vicinity, and 30th Street — are welcoming new development projects of varying scales that will add retail spaces. Other nearby neighborhood commercial areas, including segments of Lancaster and Baltimore Avenues east of 50th Street, have also enjoyed lower vacancy rates and other improvements in recent years.

The average vacancy rate for commercial corridors and districts serving the University Southwest District has remained high, above 20 percent, since 1995. Most of the vacant spaces are in older corridors and less competitive structures in neighborhoods that have lost population and income. These are focused primarily along the western portions of Baltimore, Chester, and Woodland Avenues. Without significant population increases, zoning, streetscape, and facade programs should target strategic nodes to create viable neighborhood-serving centers in place of longer corridors. 52nd Street and Baltimore Avenue is one example of a location that could become a viable commercial node with proper investments in the public realm and vacant properties, even as blocks surrounding this former commercial area may transition back to residential uses.

With substantial employment growth and related development planned for the 46th Street Station area on the Market Frankford Line, it is likely that the current auto-oriented commercial outlets in surrounding blocks will shift focus to serve a larger population of office workers and new residents reaching the area on foot and by transit. The city can encourage appropriate design standards at these locations through zoning overlays, and strengthen the 46th Street commercial area in the process.

Recommendations

1. Establish dedicated corridor management programs for Baltimore Avenue and Chester Avenue to promote the growth and vitality of these corridors.
 - > Implementing Agencies: PCPC, Commerce | CW Objective 1.1.2
2. Prioritize the redevelopment of the Department of Public Property holdings located at 5100-5114 Baltimore Avenue and 728-738 S. 51st Street (see [Focus Areas](#), p. 38-41)
 - Assemble Department of Public Property properties with remaining privately-owned properties on the block.
 - Issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the development of a commercial mixed-use project.
 - > Implementing Agencies: DPP, PRA | CW Objective: 1.1.2, 3.1.3
3. Create transit-oriented development overlay districts along Market St and in vicinity of stations at 30th Street, 40th Street and 46th Street to enable higher density, mixed-use development.
 - > Implementing Agencies: PCPC, Council | CW Objective: 1.1.3, 4.1.3
4. Right-size commercial areas with excess supply through zoning changes to increase the viability of key nodes of neighborhood serving commercial.
 - > Implementing Agencies: PCPC, Council | CW Objective: 1.1.2



4700 block of Baltimore Avenue



Lancaster Avenue



Chester Avenue

Corridor Name	Gross Leasable Area (square feet)	# of Commercial Spaces (2012)	Vacancy Rate	Notes
Strong Corridors				
A 30th Street (Schuylkill River to 32nd, Arch - Walnut)	65,000	48	12.5%	These corridors require little public intervention due to their location in strong and growing market areas. Corridors can become building blocks of surrounding neighborhoods.
B 36th and Lancaster	55,000	51	21.6%	
C 36th Street and vicinity (campus-serving locations)	275,000	104	5.8%	
D 40th Street (Filbert - Spruce)	278,000	119	9.2%	
E 46th Street and vicinity (Filbert - Locust)	238,000	83	21.7%	
F 46th and Baltimore	70,000	58	19.0%	
Investment Corridors				
G 40th and Lancaster	250,000	196	29.1%	These are viable corridors which public interventions could further stabilize and strengthen (zoning changes, streetscape investments, management, etc).
H 48th and Spruce	80,000	39	7.7%	
I 50th and Baltimore	130,000	81	29.6%	
J 58th and Baltimore	55,000	20	5.0%	
K Chester Avenue (54th - 58th)	100,000	66	37.9%	
Consolidation Corridors				
L 49th and Woodland	40,000	43	44.2%	These corridors are no longer viable in their original configuration. Consolidating to a smaller area could strengthen them.
M 52nd and Chester	10,000	10	40.0%	
N 54th and Woodland	50,000	57	19.3%	
O 55th and Baltimore	30,000	30	36.7%	
P 58th and Florence	10,000	13	61.5%	



Housing

*Philadelphia2035
Citywide Vision*

Goal 1.1:
Promote strong and well-balanced neighborhood centers.



Single-family housing stock

Occupancy rates in the USW District have remained relatively stable at approximately 87 percent, as compared to the city-wide occupancy rate of 89 percent, since the 1980s. Between 2000 and 2010, District trends of decreasing household size, decreasing home-ownership, and increasing single-family to multi-family conversions coupled with an increasing population of residents between 20 and 34 years of age indicate a growing rental market for students and young professionals. Despite a general downward trend of homeownership, senior homeowners are on the rise. As of 2010, 32 percent of all homeowners in the district were senior citizens compared to a Citywide rate of 27 percent.

While mid- to high-rise housing is available on the University of Pennsylvania and Drexel University campuses, the majority of the district's housing stock is comprised of two- and three-story twins and rowhomes, many of which have become the subject of multi-family conversions. To date, the majority of conversions have taken place within University City, however, conversions are being observed outside of University City.

Preserving the single-family housing stock in neighborhoods like Cedar Park and West Powelton requires two basic strategies. First, new rental demand must be directed towards transit nodes and commercial corridors (see recommendations in [Neighborhood Centers: Commercial Corridors](#)). Second, existing single-family homes must be maintained in a state of good repair. This is especially critical for the growing senior homeowner cohort.

Recommendations

5. Redesign Bartram's Village public housing complex to provide better connections to the existing street grid and the proposed River Road as well as Bartram's Garden and the 58th Street Greenway.
 - > Implementing Agencies: PHA | CW Objective: 1.2.1
6. Preserve single-family building stock in portions of West Powelton, Saunders Park, Powelton Village, Walnut Hill, Garden Court, Cedar Park, and Spruce Hill by rezoning these areas to single- or two-family zoning classifications (see Table below) and directing multi-family growth to commercial corridors and transit nodes (see [Future Zoning](#), p. 70).
 - > Implementing Agencies: PCPC, City Council | CW Objective: 1.2.2
7. Create a targeted zone for OHCD's Basic System Repair Program in Kingsessing to help residents maintain their homes.
 - > Implementing Agencies: OHCD | CW Objective: 1.2.1, 3.1.2

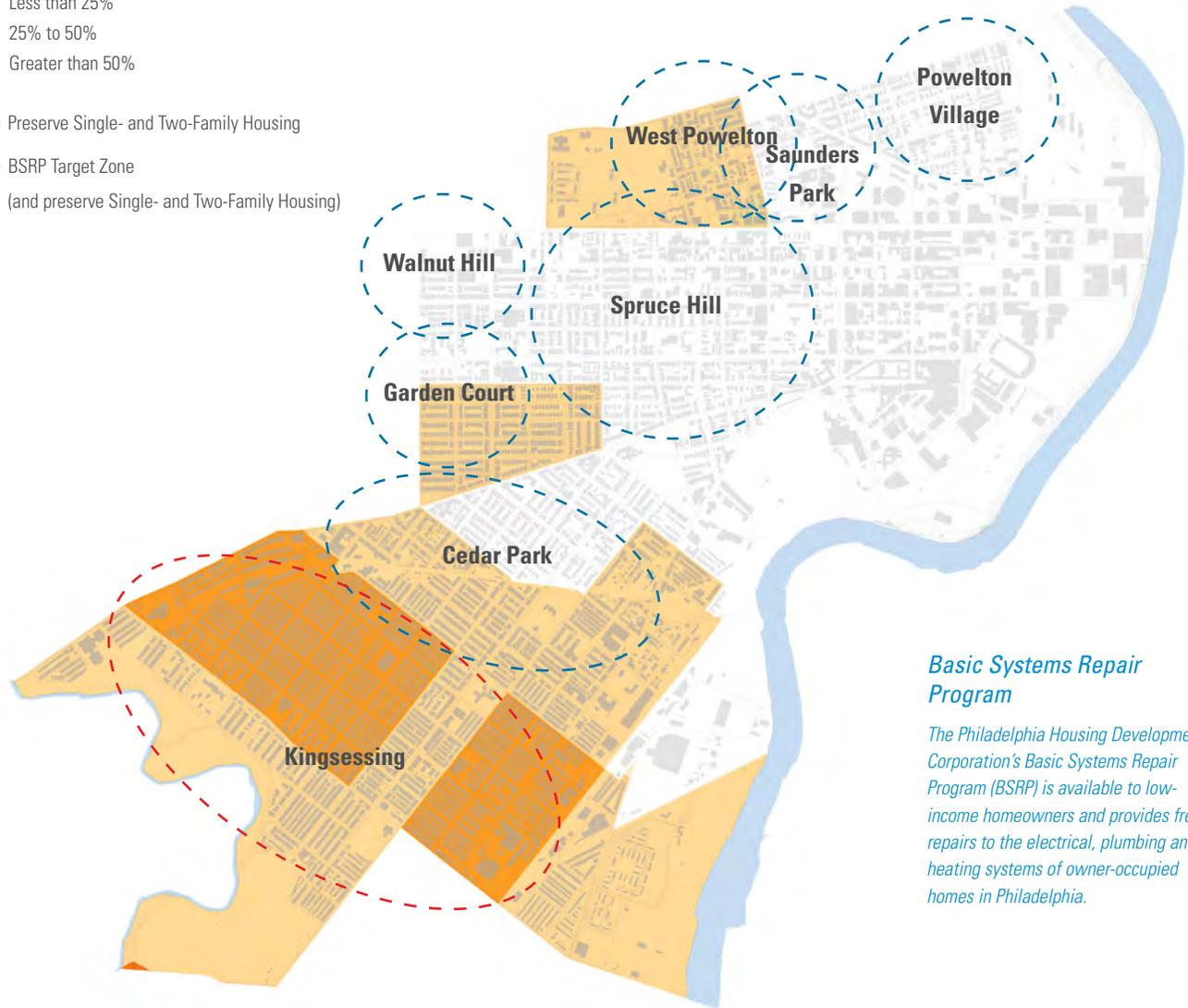
Residential Zoning Typology Table

	Permitted Building Types	Minimum Lot Size (square feet)	Minimum Open Area (% of lot area)	Minimum Front Setback (feet)	Minimum Rear Setback (feet)	Maximum Height (feet)
Single-Family Residential						
RSA-2	Detached, Semi-Detached	3,150	60	15	20	38
RSA-3	Detached, Semi-Detached	2,250	50	8	Single-Family: 15 Multi-Family: 20	38
RSA-5	Detached, Semi-Detached, Attached	1,440	30 (20 for corner lot)	*Contextual	Greater of 9 ft. or 20% of lot depth	38
Two-Family Residential						
RTA-1	Detached, Semi-Detached	2,250	50	8	Single-Family: 15 Multi-Family: 20	38
Multi-Family Residential						
RM-1	Detached, Semi-Detached, Attached	1,440	30 (20 for corner lot)	*Contextual	Single-Family: 15 Multi-Family: 20	38
RM-4	Detached, Semi-Detached, Attached, Multiple Buildings	5,000	30 (20 for corner lot)	20	5 (optional)	No limit

* Setback must be within the setback range established by the buildings on the two abutting lots.

Percentage of Home Ownership by Census Tract

- Less than 25%
- 25% to 50%
- Greater than 50%
- Preserve Single- and Two-Family Housing
- BSRP Target Zone
(and preserve Single- and Two-Family Housing)

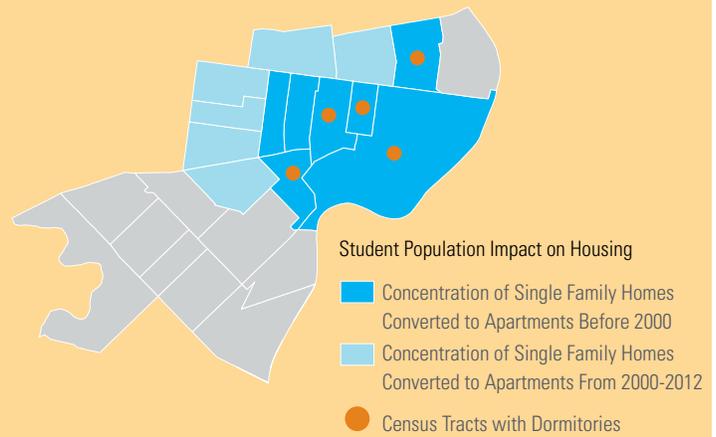


Basic Systems Repair Program

The Philadelphia Housing Development Corporation's Basic Systems Repair Program (BSRP) is available to low-income homeowners and provides free repairs to the electrical, plumbing and heating systems of owner-occupied homes in Philadelphia.

Preserving Single Family Housing Stock

As the universities and medical campuses that make up University City have grown over time, the residential neighborhoods that surround have seen an increase in student population and conversion of single family homes. In some areas, rental housing is appropriate, especially on commercial corridors, major traffic routes, and around transit nodes. In other areas, it is important to maintain a single family/homeowner style of residential block because homeowners are less transient and more likely to take part in neighborhood building activities. As growth continues, zoning will be an important tool to help guide housing to compatible locations that will allow both students and long-term residents to thrive in the district.





Neighborhood Centers: Municipal / Community Support Facilities



*Philadelphia2035
Citywide Vision*

Goal 1.1:
Promote strong and well
balanced neighborhood
centers.

The *Citywide Vision* recommends co-locating, consolidating, and modernizing municipal and community-serving public facilities and locating them along with schools in neighborhood centers. The University Southwest District has a number of facilities, but few that are co-located to conserve space and expenses. The Kingsessing Recreation Center and Library are one such neighborhood center and is a model to build off of for the rest of the district. This pair of facilities gets use from many residents and visitors across a number of neighborhoods and needs modernization to keep it a top destination in the University Southwest District.

Myer’s Recreation, located along the newly-created 58th Street Greenway which connects Cobbs Creek Park to Bartram’s Garden, is another well-located facility. However, there are whole sections of the district with little to no access to such facilities. Residents of the West Powelton, Walnut Hill, and northern Spruce Hill neighborhoods have to travel to playgrounds and Libraries.

Municipal Facilities are located in the more industrial sections of the University Southwest District along the Schuylkill waterfront, and are few in number. Some of these facilities are nearing the end of their useful lives and should be relocated to allow for waterfront access and development.

Definition | Municipal Support Facilities

Municipal support facilities are facilities that serve municipal operations and are generally not used by the public.

Definition | Community Serving Facilities

Community support facilities are city facilities that serve the general public. Examples include recreation centers, neighborhood parks, libraries, and health centers.

Definition | Neighborhood Center

A neighborhood center can be:

1. A clustering of community-serving public facilities
2. A viable commercial corridor or node
3. A transit hub

Recommendations

8. Improve the Kingsessing Recreation Center by providing stormwater management, ADA accessibility, and repairs that bring the building to a level that is commensurate with its Philadelphia Register of Historic Places designation. This should be begun with a strategic plan for the future of the facility.
 - > Implementing Agencies: PHC, PWD, PPR | CW Objectives: 1.1.1, 8.1.1
9. Relocate the Streets Department facility located at South 49th Street and Botanic Avenue to create publicly accessible waterfront activities.
 - > Implementing Agencies: Streets, PIDC, PPR | CW Objectives: 3.3.1



*Kingsessing Recreation Center,
4901 Kingsessing Avenue*

Case Study | Adult Playground

Playgrounds outfitted with equipment to enable fully grown adults of all ages to perform strength conditioning and cardiovascular exercises are gaining in popularity around the world. As with traditional playgrounds, these public amenities are free to use, providing nearby residents with a no-cost alternative to monthly gyms and other organized fitness programs. The picture at right shows a typical day at New York City’s pilot adult playground in Macombs Dam Park in the Bronx. Similar equipment could be introduced at any number of city-owned Parks and Recreation facilities, especially Kingsessing Recreation Center, where there is a range of ages within the service area.



Photo courtesy of www.thetimes.co.uk



THRIVE > Economic Development

Metropolitan Center and Institutions

Institutions are vital to the future economic growth of the University Southwest district and of the Metropolitan Center. The “Eds and Meds” sector is one of Philadelphia’s three strongest economic sectors and the University Southwest district has more education and health care institutions than any other planning district. The district’s institutions are growing, adding new office, research, residential, academic and medical facilities. The Eds and Meds create jobs, attract new residents to the district and the City, and spur reinvestment in the adjacent neighborhoods. The long-term development of these institutions will have lasting physical impacts.

The proximity of the Drexel University, University of Pennsylvania (UPenn), and University City Science Center (UCSC) campuses make Market Street, Chestnut Street, Walnut Street and 34th Street the major spines of institutional development. The Institutions’ recent investments have energized these corridors, attracting new commercial and pedestrian activity. Similarly, the University of the Sciences in Philadelphia has recently expanded its science and technology center campus and improved the Woodland Avenue corridor. The Planning Commission has worked with these institutions on each of their master plans (*PennConnects 2.0*, *Drexel Campus Master Plan 2012-2017*, and USP’s upcoming document) to ensure future development contributes positively to the character of the neighborhoods in which they are located. Additionally, the recently adopted Lower Schuylkill Master Plan calls for harnessing the energy of institutional expansion and the growing tech transfer scene that university research supports by creating an Innovation District along underutilized waterfront land on the west bank of the Schuylkill (see [Focus Areas](#), p. 38-41).

Outside of University City, the 111-acre grounds of the former Pennsylvania Hospital for the Insane, bounded by 42nd Street, 49th Street, Market Street, and Haverford Avenue is the focus of new redevelopment activity. The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia Karabots Center, which opened in the Fall of 2012, provides new access to pediatric care services to families in West Philadelphia. The new Youth Study Center provides rehabilitation services to troubled youth in a campus setting. The former Provident Mutual Life Insurance Building at 4601 Market Street will become the future headquarters of the Philadelphia Police Department. With the recent renovation of the SEPTA 46th and Market transit station, the reuse of the Provident Mutual Life Insurance Building provides an opportunity to integrate this institutional campus back into the neighborhood.

Recommendations

10. Enact parking design zoning controls on Market Street, Chestnut Street, Walnut Street, and 38th Street to prevent curb cuts, driveways, lay-by-lanes, and other interruptions to the streetscape to preserve the pedestrian-friendly environment of University City.
 - > Implementing Agencies: PCPC, City Council | CW Objective: 2.1.1, 4.2.3
11. Create SP-INS district and accompanying Master Plan for the University of the Sciences in Philadelphia. Update and expand SP-INS districts for Drexel University and the University of Pennsylvania.
 - > Implementing Agencies: PCPC, City Council | CW Objective: 2.3.1
12. Create an east-west street through the 4601 Market Street superblock.
 - > Implementing Agencies: PCPC, PIDC, Streets | CW Objective: 2.3.2



*Philadelphia2035
Citywide Vision*

Goal 2.1:
Support the growth of economic centers.

Goal 2.3:
Grow Philadelphia’s strong institutional job sectors.

Parking Design Controls

The zoning code applies a variety of parking design controls in Center City, TOD overlay districts, and rowhouse neighborhood districts to promote a walkable and pedestrian-friendly environment. These controls include limits on curb cuts, requirements for parking to be located behind buildings, screening of parking garages, and required active uses in the ground floor of garages.

SP-INS

The SP-INS, or Institutional (Special Purpose) district, is intended to encourage the development of institutional uses, commercially-related facilities to service the institutional complex and area, and certain other nonresidential uses in accordance with an approved master plan.



University of the Sciences in Philadelphia, 600 S. 43rd Street