

TAB 3: Site and Neighborhood Standards

St. John Neumann Place II is located in an area of racially and economically impacted housing where the Philadelphia Housing Authority and the City of Philadelphia are seeking to preserve affordable housing opportunities.

The St. John Neumann Campus, which will include the proposed St. John Neumann II senior housing and Wellness Center, is located in Census Tract 36. The 2010 Census data for this immediate area describes a community of over 5,700 residents which is clearly characterized by low income seniors:

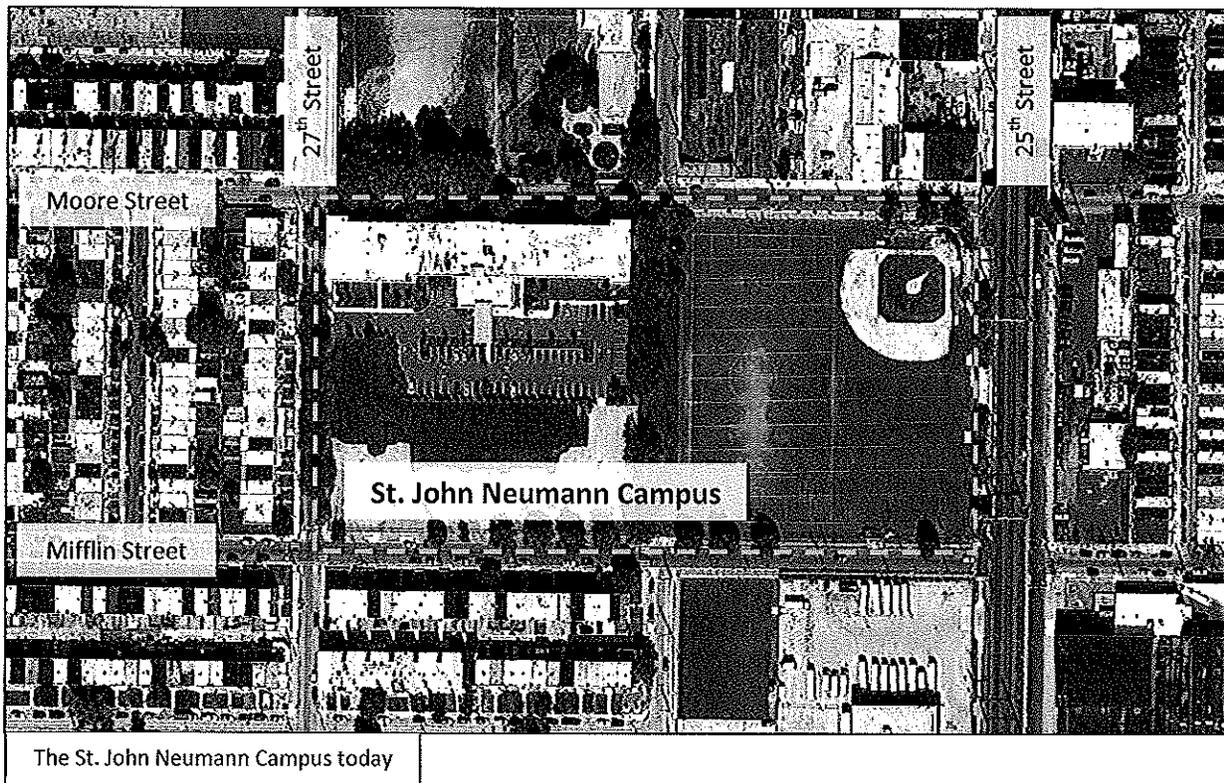
- Whereas 15.3% of the entire population of the City of Philadelphia is 65 or older, 20.7% of the immediate community is 65 or older.
- Whereas only 28.5% of the entire City is supported primarily by Social Security, 40.1% of the immediate area surrounding the proposed St. John Neumann II depends upon Social Security income
- Whereas only 22.9% of the City lives below the Poverty Line, 42% of Census Tract 36 earns income at or below the Poverty Line.

The conclusion is that the proposed site is located in an area which is strongly in need of long term affordable housing for seniors – which will be precisely and exclusively offered by St. John Neumann II.

History

In March 1956, St. John Neumann High School moved to this grand campus on a 7.5-acre vacant parcel at 26th and Moore Streets. The campus included a full auditorium, a large gymnasium, and 3.4 acres of athletic grounds. Most of all, the school brought high-quality Nobertine secondary education to South Philadelphia.

This impressive campus formed the center of the community. It spurred the new construction of townhomes around its perimeter, purchased by families who sent their children to St. John Neumann.



Strategic Reuse of a Key Site

But 47 years later, in 2003, the community had aged and, despite having a capacity of 1,700 students, the school had seen its enrollment significantly decrease. The next year, the school consolidated with St. Maria Goretti, leaving the community without its anchor and fearing that falling property values and further destabilization would follow.

Instead, CHCS reimagined the campus by removing the auditorium and gymnasium and converting the core building into 75 spacious, one-bedroom, LIHTC and City financed, affordable apartments. This initial phase of St. John Neumann Place is 100% occupied, and revealed a strong market for additional affordable senior housing to serve the area's growing number of low-income seniors.

Consistent with Planning Efforts

While no specific neighborhood plan covers the site itself, the southern boundary of the Grays Ferry Redevelopment Area, last amended in April 2012, is located one block north of the site along Morris Street. Page 3 of the Grays Ferry Urban Renewal Plan lists the objectives for the area, which include “encouraging a program of private rehabilitation as a result of a general renewal of confidence in the neighborhood’s viability, and providing opportunities for new residential development.” Specifically, the plan prioritizes the creation of additional affordable housing units for low- and moderate-income individuals. St. John Neumann Place II certainly achieves these goals, and its residual impact on the larger area will help to ensure continued investment and growth.

Access to Employment Centers

Though access to employment centers is strong given the nearby bus and subway locations, the residents of St. John Neumann II will be 62 and older low income seniors whose incomes will largely be Social Security.