

Amendments to the Southwest Schuylkill Redevelopment Area Plan

PHILADELPHIA CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

October 2002

The Redevelopment Area Plan for Southwest Schuylkill Redevelopment Area was approved by the Philadelphia City Planning Commission on September 15, 1970. The boundaries of the redevelopment area were established as follows: South 52nd Street, Chester Avenue, Woodland Avenue, 40th Street (extended), and the Pennsylvania Railroad right-of-way line. The purpose of this Amendment is to expand the redevelopment area, making more properties eligible for publicly-assisted acquisition and renewal. The area to be added is bordered by S. 52nd Street, Chester Avenue, S. 61st Street, Kingsessing Avenue, S. 62nd Street and the AMTRAK rail line.

Existing Conditions

The redevelopment area is located in the neighborhood known as Kingsessing. The predominant land use is residential, and the predominant house type is the attached row home. The expansion will add 40 city blocks and 275 acres, resulting in an expanded redevelopment area containing a total of 450 acres.

In tandem with this Amendment, the same area is being certified as blighted by the Philadelphia City Planning Commission. The effective date of the blight certification is October 15, 2002. The Planning Commission blight study concludes that a finding of blight is warranted by the following criteria having been satisfied:

1. Unsafe, unsanitary, inadequate or overcrowded conditions
2. Economically or socially undesirable land use
3. Inadequate planning
4. Faulty street layout

These conditions have a deteriorating effect on the neighborhood.

Unsafe and inadequate conditions are verified by recent vacancy surveys indicating that 712, or 16.6% of the properties are vacant. Included among the vacant properties are 506 vacant structures and 206 vacant lots. Economically or socially undesirable land use is documented by 2000 Census data showing that median property values for single-family homes are far below the City median. Inadequate planning is documented by the presence of many house lots that are

substandard in size. These small lots are less than half the size of the minimum house lot according to City code. Faulty street layout is documented by the presence of a dead-end street in the 5800 block of Yocum Street.

Regarding the provisions of the Southwest Schuylkill Redevelopment Area Plan, the following changes are proposed:

1. Redevelopment Area Boundary (see maps on pages 4 and 5)

The boundary of the redevelopment area is expanded as a result of this Amendment to include the area bordered by S. 52nd Street, Chester Avenue, S. 61st Street, Kingsessing Avenue, S. 62nd Street and the AMTRAK rail line. The expanded area is contiguous to the original Redevelopment Area.

New Expanded Boundary: The overall boundary of the expanded redevelopment area is: Chester Avenue, S. 61st Street, Kingsessing Avenue, S. 62nd Street and the AMTRAK rail line, 40th Street (extended) and Woodland Avenue.

2. Objectives

The general goal of this Amended Redevelopment Area Plan is to provide a framework for present and future redevelopment proposals. The Amended Plan is intended to maintain the quality and character of the community. The plan has two specific objectives:

- to eliminate the blighting influence of undesirable land uses by encouraging the improvement of vacant land, and
- to encourage rehabilitation of vacant homes.

3. Proposed Land Use

The redevelopment activity that is envisioned is for residential are related use, with an emphasis on residential rehabilitation. Since this is a predominantly residential area, major changes in land use are not recommended at this time.

4. Street Changes

No changes in the street pattern are proposed.

5. Proposed Zoning Changes

Changes in the zoning are not proposed as part of this Redevelopment Plan. Housing rehabilitation, a major goal of this plan, is generally allowed under existing zoning. Depending on specific plans, future development proposals may require zoning changes by ordinance or use certificates or variances from the Zoning Board of Adjustment.

6. Illustrative Site Plan

A site plan is not applicable because the objective of this Plan is residential rehabilitation and treatment of vacant lots.

7. Rehousing of Displaced Families

Presently there are no plans for rehousing of families. In the event that future redevelopment does require relocation, all relocation will be accomplished in accordance with the terms and conditions of the federal Uniform Relocation Act.

8. Estimated Costs of Redevelopment

Specific cost estimates will be prepared by the Redevelopment Authority.

9. Proposed Standards and Controls

Standards and controls for uses, density, land coverage, building area, parking and off-street loading will be established by the Philadelphia Zoning Code. All impacts of redevelopment on the surrounding residential community will be minimized through development controls regulating site design, building materials and landscaping. These controls will be established by the Redevelopment Authority, and reviewed and approved by the City Planning Commission.

The Pennsylvania Urban Redevelopment Law of 1945, as amended, and the United States Housing Act of 1949, as amended, regulate Redevelopment and Urban Renewal in the City of Philadelphia.

Redevelopment in the expanded Southwest Schuylkill Redevelopment Area will be in conformity with the provisions of this Redevelopment Area Plan and with the requirements of any Urban Renewal Plan prepared by the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Philadelphia for this area, and will comply with the Code of General Ordinances of the City of Philadelphia. All plans and proposals prepared by the Redevelopment Authority will be subject to the recommendations of the City Planning Commission and the approval of the Council of the City of Philadelphia.

Aside from these changes, the provisions of the Redevelopment Area Plan of September 15, 1970 will remain in effect.

Southwest Schuylkill Redevelopment Area



