



COMMUNITY PLANNING ASSISTANCE TEAMS

West Chelten Concept Plan

Germantown, Philadelphia
Final Report | October 31, 2016



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Germantown United Community Development Corporation (GUCDC) submitted a proposal to the American Planning Association's (APA) Community Planning Assistance Teams (CPAT) program seeking help with revitalization efforts along the neighborhood's major commercial corridors. CPAT projects are rapid and intensive pro bono planning projects with a focused scope of work and manageable study area. Through discussions with its planning and design committee, GUCDC decided to focus the effort on a three-block stretch of West Cheltenham Avenue from Greene Street to Morris Street.

Team leader Philip Walker, AICP, and APA Programs Manager Ryan Scherzinger conducted an advance site visit in September 2015 to tour the neighborhood and discuss issues and ideas with area stakeholders. Following the visit, Walker and Scherzinger recruited four other volunteer planners and designers from around the country. The full team prepared in coordination with GUCDC staff, then travelled to Germantown and executed the project May 16–20, 2016. This report presents the team's findings, observations, conceptual designs, and recommendations for GUCDC and the residents and stakeholders of Germantown.

The report begins with a description of existing conditions within the study area. Historic resources appear limited, but the potential of others may hide behind building facade treatments. Parking lots and a few recent infill buildings break up the mostly urban form and character of the corridor. Curb cuts (or driveways) also disrupt the urban aesthetic and create safety issues for both pedestrians and motorists. Transit options are a major asset for residents and visitors, but both rail and bus stations need improvements. Street trees and storefront enhancements would benefit the corridor. The storefront vacancy rate is greater than 30 percent along West Cheltenham and the retail mix is limited.

A review of previous policies reveals a common theme of calling for more public-private cooperation. Much-needed design standards are best handled through an overlay or special district. Maximizing capital assistance and incentive programs such as the city's Storefront Improvement Program is an important step toward revitalization. Tax Increment Financing (TIF) can help finance major capital improvement projects. Public policy needs to align with plans for the area. Maintaining clear communication with elected officials on the goals and intent of new policies is critical for success.

The CPAT developed a concept plan out of its analyses and the charrette process with residents and stakeholders. The lack of a market study limited the plan; however, GUCDC plans to commission one soon. The team's concept plan includes a series of illustrative designs that demonstrate a range of key physical planning issues and ideas. The plan addresses the street by eliminating the unnecessary curb cuts, integrating green infrastructure, and adding safety measures around intersections. It identifies key gathering places and offers recommendations to make them more versatile and user-friendly. The plan discusses programming opportunities like a farmers market in the proposed Cheltenham Green. Illustrations show the possibility for phased improvements to buildings along the corridor. A kiosk, seating, bike racks, public art, and lighting around the SEPTA rail station are all possibilities for improvement.

Filling voids in the streetscape is an important part of the revitalization strategy. Any new buildings should front the street and adhere to design principles that keep pedestrian sightlines and help maintain a consistent overall form along the corridor. Shipping containers, which have been used successfully to activate other places in a variety of ways, might serve to fill the voids temporarily. Parking lots can be redesigned not only for increased efficiency and added lighting for safety, but with internal and peripheral landscaping that creates shade and beautifies space.

Business development is critical. There is a need for programs that train new entrepreneurs and connect them to start-up capital. The report includes multiple suggestions on how to attract new businesses, including a vacancies inventory, opportunities report, and property showcase. Vacancies present opportunities. Pop-up retail stores should be explored. They offer a formalized way to experiment with new business ideas and provide revenues to building owners. Local businesses need help, though. A creative district marketing campaign can generate new excitement for the area and help attract more consumer traffic.

Keeping the community involved is a vital ingredient to implementing this plan and any others. All efforts require collaboration, partnerships, and ongoing management and coordination of those efforts, and GUCDC should play a key role. Finding a quick-victory project is often a good way of building momentum and gaining increased support in the community. The historical decline of the neighborhood left its mark on many of the long-time residents. People need to see positive change, even if it is small and incremental. Starting with a target area that has the greatest inherent strengths and working from there is likely to produce more sustainable results. Focused, successful projects and initiatives will build wider support in the community and unlock new opportunities for partnerships and investment in the neighborhood.

PURPOSE | PRINCIPLES | PLAN

The Purpose of the CPAT Program

The purpose of the Community Planning Assistance Teams program is to serve communities facing limited resources by helping them address planning issues such as social equity and affordability, economic development, sustainability, consensus building, and urban design, among others. By pairing expert urban planning professionals from around the country with residents and other stakeholders from local communities, the program seeks to foster education, engagement, and empowerment. As part of each team's goals, a community develops a vision that promotes a safe, ecologically sustainable, economically vibrant, and healthy environment.

APA staff works with the community, key stakeholders, and the host organization(s) to assemble a team of planners with the specific expertise needed for the project. The team meets on-site for three to five days, during which time a series of site visits, focused discussions, and analyses are performed. On the final day, the team reports their results back to the community. A more detailed report is issued to the community at a later date.

GUCCDC Executive Director Andy Trackman served as the primary community liaison throughout the effort. Garlen Capita (GUCCDC board president), Emaleigh Doley (GUCCDC corridor manager), and Rachael Griffith (chair of the GUCCDC planning and design committee) also served as important contacts and valuable resources for the CPAT during the project. Special thanks go to Renny Molenaar and Rocio Cabello for providing the Imperfect Gallery in Germantown as a studio workspace for the team members during their visit. Residents, business owners, and other area stakeholders all participated in the CPAT's charrette process. As a community, they provided invaluable insights and ideas that are integral to the team's concept plan and recommendations.

Guiding Values

APA's professional institute, the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP), is responsible for the CPAT program. Addressing issues of social equity in planning and development is a priority of APA and AICP. The CPAT program is part of a broader APA Community Assistance Program, which was created to express the value of social equity through service to communities in need across the United States.

Community assistance is built into the professional role of a planner. One principle of the AICP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct states that certified planners shall aspire to "seek social justice by working to expand choice and opportunity for all persons, recognizing a special responsibility to plan for the needs of the disadvantaged and to promote racial and economic integration." Another principle is that certified planners should aspire to "contribute time and effort to groups lacking in adequate planning resources and to voluntary professional activities."

Program Background

In recognition of the key role urban and regional planners play in shaping vibrant, sustainable, and equitable communities, the APA Board of Directors established the Community Planning Team initiative in 1995. This initiative resulted in a pro bono effort to assist an economically struggling African American community in Greensboro, North Carolina. APA has continued to develop a pro bono planning program that provides assistance to communities in need.

In 2005, program efforts were increased after Hurricane Katrina in the Gulf Coast region to include a number of initiatives, including planning assistance team projects in the affected cities of Henderson Point, Mississippi, and Mandeville, Slidell, and New Orleans in Louisiana. Another Gulf Coast recovery project included the Dutch Dialogues, which brought American planners together with Dutch experts to transform the way that Louisiana relates to and manages its water resources.

AICP broadened the scope of the CPAT program with its 2009 project in Buzzard Point, a neighborhood in Southwest Washington, D.C. Completed projects since the program's official relaunch in 2011, including Matthews, North Carolina; Story County, Iowa; Unalaska, Alaska; La Feria, Texas; Pine Hills, Florida; Lyons, Colorado; and others, including the first international project in the Yarbrough neighborhood of Belize City, Belize (June 2016), are all important landmarks in the development of the CPAT program as an ongoing effort. CPAT is now an integrated part of APA's service, outreach, and professional development activities.

More information about the CPAT program, including community proposal forms, an online volunteer form, and full downloadable reports from past projects, is available at: planning.org/communityassistance/teams.

Introduction

APA's CPAT program worked with the Germantown neighborhood of Philadelphia in 2015–16 on a community revitalization project. The Germantown United Community Development Corporation had submitted a project proposal, "Economic Development Plan for Germantown's Commercial Corridors," to the CPAT program in December 2014.

GU CDC was founded in 2011 by concerned citizens and neighborhood organizations who protested against a heavily tax-subsidized, redundant, and low-end commercial development (Cheltenham Plaza) at the corner of Cheltenham Avenue and Pulaski Street. The community outcry was too late and the plaza was built. A new awakening occurred in the community as a result, however. GU CDC's stated mission is "to promote and facilitate the revitalization of Germantown's business corridors through a sustainable, creative, and community-driven approach to economic development."

Following initial talks between APA and GU CDC, work on the project began. APA asked Philip Walker, AICP, to volunteer and serve as the team leader for the project. Walker and APA Programs Manager Ryan Scherzinger conducted an initial site visit to Germantown on September 16, 2015. During the visit, they toured Germantown, met with a variety of neighborhood stakeholders, and discussed project ideas with GU CDC staff and board members.

The original GU CDC proposal included all of Germantown's commercial corridors. Germantown is a sizable community with long commercial corridors. The original scale, therefore, was too large for a CPAT project. Following the site visit, Walker prepared a scope of work with a smaller study area centered on the busy intersection of Cheltenham and Germantown Avenues. The GU CDC planning and design committee ultimately decided on a three-block segment of West Cheltenham Avenue. The three-block stretch includes the SEPTA rail station, Cheltenham Plaza (the subject of community protest in 2011), and a significant amount of retail.

Project Overview

Following the site visit, Walker and Scherzinger recruited four other volunteer team members with the expertise needed to address the issues associated with the project: urban design and architecture, streetscapes and public spaces, business development, public safety and cleanliness, and marketing and promotion. The four additional team members included Juan Ayala, Ricard Calixte, Nikolas Davis, ASLA, and Ralph Moore (see Appendix A for more on each team member). The team reviewed information and communicated via email and telephone to discuss project elements, logistics, and other coordination aspects. GU CDC executive director Andy Trackman met via conference call with Walker and Scherzinger on a weekly basis to discuss and coordinate the project.

The full team arrived in Germantown and began working Monday, May 16, 2016. They set up a working studio space at the Imperfect Gallery, one block from the eastern edge of the study area. After meeting with Trackman, the team set out on foot to explore the study area. That afternoon, the team discussed their observations, brainstormed ideas, and prepared for the public workshop.

More than 50 people attended the workshop that evening at the Pegasus Room, located within the study area on Pulaski Avenue. The team gathered important insights and ideas from participants (more on the workshop is discussed below). Team members met with GU CDC board members and other stakeholders who dropped by the studio. The team worked on the plan the remainder of the week and presented their findings and recommendations to the public (at the Pegasus Room again) on Thursday evening. Community members provided additional feedback following the presentation (see Appendix C for the team's schedule). Following the visit, the team worked to complete the final report, which was presented to GU CDC upon completion.

Brief History of Germantown and West Cheltenham Avenue

Germantown is located approximately six miles northwest of downtown Philadelphia. Germantown is rich in and emblematic of American history. Germantown was established in 1683, and was originally a township independent of Philadelphia. The settlement represented William Penn's ideas of religious tolerance by bringing together different faiths in one colony. In 1688, four Germantown settlers drafted a protest against slavery, which is considered the earliest antislavery document made public by whites in North America. One of the largest engagements of the American Revolution happened in Germantown. The historic Deshler-Morris House, also known as the Germantown White House, sheltered George Washington and served as a meeting place for the president and his cabinet during the 1793 yellow fever epidemic in Philadelphia.

Philadelphia incorporated the township of Germantown in 1854. Demographics changed as Italians began settling the area in the late 1800s. During the Great Migration of the early 20th century, many German, Scotch-Irish, and Irish moved to Germantown. African Americans first settled in north Philadelphia, but as the housing supply decreased, many lower-income African Americans started moving to the northwest, including Germantown, during the 1950s. The introduction of public housing and a growing African American population induced white flight, a complex and enduring history shared by other U.S. cities during the same period.

Following World War I, the area surrounding the intersection of Cheltenham and Germantown Avenues was a major commercial destination for the region. Only Center City Philadelphia rivaled its popularity. Major retailers such as J.C. Penney, Allen's, Franklin Simon, and C.A. Rowell helped form an upscale shopping district and served as an economic driver for the neighborhood. The early commercial development of the Cheltenham and Germantown Avenue corridors has shaped neighborhood activity to this day. The avenues still serve the neighborhood with businesses and remain active with local residents. The area's steady decline since the 1950s, however, is evident in the growing number of storefront vacancies, the lack of retail diversity, and the overall physical deterioration of the neighborhood.

West Cheltenham contains promising foundational elements. It has "good bones," one might say. It is well connected by public transportation; it has wide sidewalks lined with cobblestones (or Belgian blocks), a public library, the recently revitalized Vernon Park, a public plaza (with existing plans for improvement), a primarily urban character with businesses fronting the street, and historic buildings with untapped potential.

Existing Conditions

This planning project focuses on a three-block segment of West Cheltenham Avenue within Philadelphia's Germantown neighborhood. The three-block study area is bound by Greene Street on the east end and Morris Street on the west end (see Figure 1). That corridor segment is only one block to the west of Germantown Avenue, a key corridor in the neighborhood. The concept plan focuses on properties that front onto West Cheltenham Avenue, as opposed to nearby properties fronting onto West Rittenhouse Street to the north and West School House Lane to the south. Despite the study area focus, the broader geographic context has been considered in crafting this concept plan.

Physical Conditions

Historic Resources

Technically, based upon federal criteria, "historic resources" are 50 years old or older. In most contexts, including this study area, the majority of historic resources are buildings. However, historic resources can also include other types of structures and objects, such as bridges, walls, and similar features. Within the West Cheltenham study area, there is not an extensive amount of cohesive historic building fabric, as the pattern is somewhat fragmented because of the many buildings that have been lost over the years to provide for parking lots and new buildings. Of those that do still remain, they tend to date from between the late 19th century and the middle of the 20th century. According to the city's website, no properties within the study area are designated on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, but there are at least a few buildings that are eligible for (if not already designated on) the National Register of Historic Places. Perhaps the best example of such a mid- to late-19th century building is located on the northeast corner of the intersection of Pulaski Street and West Cheltenham Avenue (see Figure 3). There are also several one-story buildings fronting Cheltenham that may be historic, but their facades have been obscured with mid- to late-20th century siding that might be masking their original architectural integrity. It is noteworthy that National Register eligible/designated buildings can benefit from the federal and state investment tax credits for qualified historic rehabilitations that follow federal standards for preservation.

Land Uses

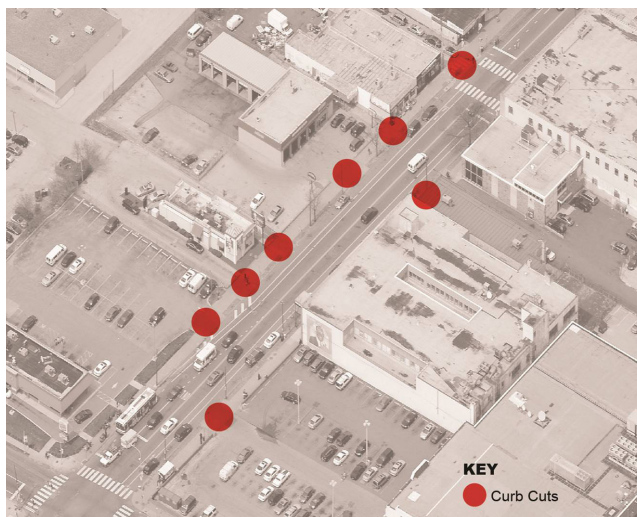
The existing land-use map (Figure 2) illustrates the broad range of land uses that currently comprise the study area. Because the city's existing land-use information does not include a category for mixed use properties, it is likely that their inventory focused on ground floor uses. The most dominant land use is commercial (red). While the map illustrates parking lots in medium gray, it can be a bit misleading, as parking lots are more extensive than it might initially appear. Only properties that are used solely for parking have been indicated as parking in gray, while commercial properties that also include parking are illustrated in red. Thus, as just one example, the extensive parking areas on the northeast quadrant of Cheltenham and Wayne do not visually stand out on the existing land-use map since they are part of commercial uses and are not illustrated in the gray color used to denote parking. Other uses on Cheltenham that are much less prevalent include vacant buildings (dark gray) and industrial uses (purple). While there are no civic/institution (blue) uses within the study area, the Coleman Library is just beyond the study area boundaries on the southeast corner of Greene and Cheltenham.

Development Densities/Intensities, Form, and Character

While data on the study area's existing density/intensity in terms of quantifiable floor-area ratios (FAR) and residential units per acre is not readily available, the overall general density/intensity appears to be consistent with that of a low-rise urban environment. The vast majority of building heights consist of one- and two-story buildings. There are only two three-story buildings that were identified, both historic. There is also one five-story building, the historic Delmar Morris Apartments at the northeast corner of Cheltenham and Morris.

With respect to the form and character of the study area's existing development, it is urban in that buildings strongly address the street by being built to or near the West Cheltenham Avenue sidewalk. While a minority of buildings have relatively blank front facades, the majority have good "building transparency" because of extensive ground floor glazing via doors and windows/storefronts. Although there are a few more recent infill buildings, particularly fast food restaurants, with a suburban character and expansive adjacent parking lots, even those buildings are sited relatively close to the street. As noted previously, while there are several historic buildings, many older one-story buildings have had their front facades obscured with mid- to late-20th century "slipcovers." These can sometimes be easily removed to reveal high-quality historic facades.

One additional negative impact on the study area's character is the many security grates on storefronts. Some are pulled down permanently for vacant buildings, while occupied buildings use them only during non-business hours. Although their function is understood, they are unattractive and convey a negative image of the study area (see Figure 4).



(Clockwise from top) Figure 3: This historic building on the corner of Pulaski Street and West Cheltenham Avenue is a good example from the mid-to-late 19th century. Figure 4: Metal roll-up doors are common along West Cheltenham Avenue and contribute to a negative public image of the area. Figure 5: Turning lanes are available at key intersections, which is a helpful safety feature. However, additional improvements are needed to improve the overall safety of the corridor. Figure 6: Curb cuts (driveways, shown by red dots) pose a safety hazard to pedestrians and moving traffic, and disrupt the continuity and overall aesthetics of the streetscape.

Streets and Mobility

Because this concept plan focuses on a three-block segment of an urban street, this topic is critical to the study area's existing conditions. Below is a summary of West Cheltenham Avenue's characteristics and available transit within this corridor.

West Cheltenham Avenue

In many respects, this street constitutes an ideal urban street for balancing the needs of multiple modes of mobility. It consists of two travel lanes (one in each direction), a bike lane adjacent to the outside edge of each travel lane, and an on-street parallel parking space between each bike lane and the street curb. At key intersections, a left turn lane has been provided on Cheltenham (see Figure 5). Despite the relatively context-sensitive design of this street, there have been numerous accidents over the years, both auto-to-auto and auto-to-pedestrian. Thus, interventions to improve the safety of intersections are needed, particularly the Wayne-Cheltenham intersection, which reportedly has the highest number of accidents. That intersection is also adjacent to the Pickett Campus charter school. Furthermore, several curb cuts (driveways) have been introduced along Cheltenham over the years to provide access to some of the suburban-style infill development, particularly along the segment of Cheltenham immediately east of Wayne Street (see Figure 6). Those curb cuts interrupt both the aesthetics and pedestrian safety of the adjacent streetscapes.

Transit

In addition to readily accommodating motorized vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians, this corridor also provides opportunities for transit travelers. Multiple bus lines traverse and service the corridor, although bus stops featuring better shelter designs are needed in many places. For example, the bus stop located in the plaza at the northeast corner of Greene and Cheltenham (just beyond the study area) has a shelter featuring only a roof supported by four posts, with no vertical sheltering components to protect riders from the elements. There are also SEPTA rail stations located on Cheltenham between Morris and Pulaski, with two entrances located on either side of the street. While functional, they would benefit from improvements such as better lighting and amenities for riders waiting for the train (seating, coffee, and newsstand kiosk, etc.).

Streetscapes and Public Gathering Spaces

The West Cheltenham Avenue streetscape and public gathering spaces represent the vital public realm for this study area. Below is a summary of each:

Streetscapes

Streetscapes can be thought of in terms of four key components (see Figure 7):

- **Street Edge**—This component occurs at roughly the street curb and is the boundary with the street, which was described previously. As noted before, the West Cheltenham Avenue street profile consists of two driving lanes, two bike lanes, and two parallel parking lanes.
- **Ground**—For West Cheltenham Avenue, the ground consists of a cobblestone strip along the edge of the curbing that functions as a utility zone for tree plantings and utility poles, while the balance of this area consists of concrete sidewalks.
- **Building Edge**—This streetscape zone is defined by the front facade of adjacent buildings. An ideal building edge includes plenty of ground floor transparency with storefronts, while vacant lots and surface parking should be avoided. A well-defined building edge makes the streetscape more appealing to pedestrians.
- **Canopy**—The canopy is any sort of covering just above the ground level and it can include balconies, street tree canopies, and similar features.

In general, the study area's streetscapes have good "bones," but could benefit from improvements such as landscaping within the cobblestoned utility strips, enhancements to storefronts, and infill development to fill the gaps in the building edge.

Public Gathering Spaces

Although this study area has a couple of public spaces just

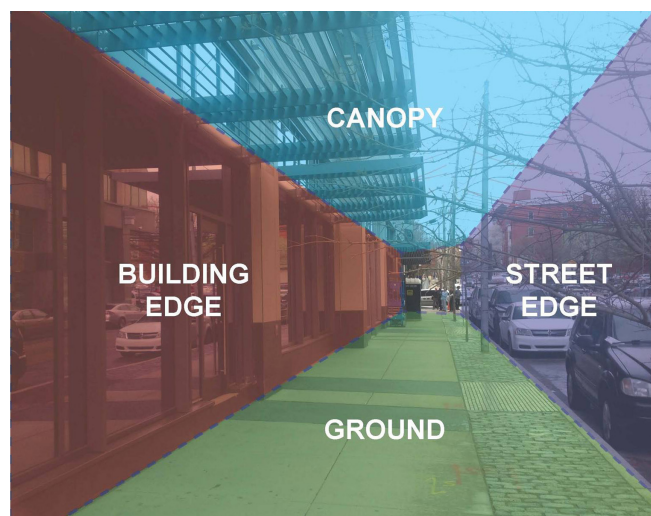


Figure 7: There are four key components to consider when addressing streetscapes.

beyond its boundary, there is only one legitimate public gathering space within the corridor. On the east side of Greene Street is a small park on the northeast corner of Cheltenham that extends north to Vernon Park. This small park is about to be redeveloped based upon a new design, and it will then connect with Vernon Park by eliminating the existing fence that separates the two spaces. On the opposite corner (southeast corner of Greene and Cheltenham) is a small plaza in front of the library. That space leaves much to be desired, as it now features an enclosing fence (often locked), very little seating, and bulky landscaping that takes up space without providing a shading canopy.

While these two spaces are on the outside edge of the study area, the one public space within it is the plaza of the Pickett Campus. It is located on the northwest corner of Cheltenham and Wayne. This space sees little use because of its current design (see photo). While two sides are bound by the school's facades, the other two that are open to the streets are behind a wall, as the plaza is elevated above the street level. Within this space is barren concrete with no seating (beyond the peripheral walls) and no landscaping. It would require extensive redevelopment to become user-friendly.

Market and Economic Conditions

The presence of a strong local business district is a key component to a vibrant community. The study area along the West Cheltenham Avenue commercial corridor faces many challenges. An immediate observation when walking along this strip is the high number of vacant commercial storefronts. With a vacancy rate exceeding 30 percent, this results in a lack of retail continuity, which is important for economic vitality. Additionally, the retail mix is limited and does not reflect the dynamic attributes of this community. These conditions were not always the case for this business district, which was once a thriving shopping destination.

Retail Diversity

There are about 50 occupied storefronts facing West Cheltenham Avenue in the study area. Approximately 20 percent of those spaces are occupied by discount stores and hair and beauty salons alone. There are some dining establishments, but the options are limited to fast food takeout and a few independent sit-down restaurants. Restaurant and entertainment businesses are great anchors for generating economic activity, but these sectors are not well-represented on West Cheltenham Avenue. Businesses with higher quality goods would be a great addition to strengthen the reputation of the corridor. For the most part, the current business composition does not have the complementary attributes to make it a desired shopping destination. Table 1 reflects the type of businesses located on West Cheltenham Avenue. Some sectors are underrepresented or completely missing from the avenue. A discussion with community members highlighted much-needed business additions and is discussed later in this document.

Business Density

There is plenty of "dead" space in the study area because of vacant storefronts or undeveloped land. There just is not the volume of businesses needed to attract pedestrians that can go to the corridor to fulfill multiple shopping needs. The limited number of operating businesses is not conducive to a shopper spending numerous hours on the strip. Typically, a shopper on West Cheltenham Avenue is going to a specific business or two and leaving. These types of shoppers are likely local residents and workers and not outside consumer dollars.

Business Type	Count	Business Type	Count
Apparel/Footwear	3	Jewelry/Pawn Shops	1
Automobile Services	2	Laundromat/Dry Cleaning	2
Discount Store/Variety/Party Supplies/Thrift	6	Liquor/Wine Store/Beer Distributor	1
Financial Services (banks, check cashing, tax)	5	Medical/Health Services (doctor office, pharmacy, optical, dentist)	6
Groceries/Food Markets/Deli	2	Restaurants/Bars/Cafes/Bakeries	9
Hair/Beauty	5	Wireless/Telecommunications	2
Home Improvement (hardware, fabric, upholstery, furniture)	4	Event Hall	1

A long-term infill development plan can explore opportunities to increase the total retail square footage along West Cheltenham Avenue. However, due to the existing stock of vacant commercial spaces, simply adding new spaces for business may just exacerbate the problem. In order to support the retail supply, there must be increased demand through additional consumers. This can be accomplished by building new mixed-income housing to accommodate the needs of the community and make West Cheltenham an appealing destination for the working class, young professionals, and established families alike. A detailed market analysis may help gauge if the development of new housing should follow the commercial development or vice versa. The question to be reviewed is if the increased population density would spur the need for more retail, or if the retail is necessary first to make West Cheltenham more appealing to attract new residents.

This was once a thriving shopping destination that experienced a common transition in many urban communities over the past few decades: demographic changes, economic disinvestment, and neighborhood neglect. The section below on social conditions reflects the area's economic challenges. However, the neighborhood is home to a broad spectrum of household incomes and cultural diversity which presents opportunities for economic growth.

Social Conditions

It is always a challenge to prepare an effective plan for communities determined as economically stressed or challenged, meaning that the majority of its inhabitants fall within or below the national poverty level or that unemployment is above the national average.

Socioeconomics

In the case of the Germantown community, the residents living within the project area (closely defined by Census Tracts 240 and 241) are the chronic unemployed and poor. Table 2 provides a snapshot of the leading indices that define the socioeconomic health of the Germantown community, according to the 2010–2014 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates.

This snapshot of economic/social indicators reveals a very strong need for both public and private programming to assist residents for the basic maintenance of their living conditions. Philadelphia, like all major U.S. cities, provides social services from the private, public, and institutional sectors to assist residents in securing basic necessities. From feeding the working poor, to drug intervention clinics, to employment training, the Germantown residents have an adequate inventory of social service agencies available to assist them throughout the city. Although most services are located in central Philadelphia, most service agencies are on or near transit routes.

Public Safety

One of the many challenges to revitalizing an area within a major city is the issue of changing social profiles that reduce the incidents of crime. This issue is one of the more important transformations needed to facilitate increased development and consumer interest in the area. Philadelphia suffers from the same problems common to many big cities and that includes a higher rate of crime in its poorer and more depressed areas of the city. Although much of the focus of this concept plan is on the physical improvement of the public realm, it is important that community crime is also addressed. According to the city's Crime Mapper website, which provides data on six categories of crime (homicide, rape, robberies, aggravated assaults, burglaries and thefts), thefts are by far the most common crimes in the study area. Table 3 indicates the crimes committed in and around the study area.

Table 2: Socioeconomic Health of the Germantown Community			
Economic/Social Indicators	United States	Census Tract 240	Census Tract 241
Unemployment % (16 and older)	10.9%	9.2%	16.5%
Persons/Families (Below Poverty Level)	11.5%	20.4%	13.5%
Food Stamp/SNAP Benefit (last 12 mos.)	13.0%	20.2%	40.5%
Median Household Income	\$53,482	\$36,442	\$16,985
No Health Insurance Coverage	14.2%	13.1%	17.2%

Table 3: Reported Crime in Germantown Community

Crime Categories	Homicides	Rape	Robberies	Aggravated Assaults	Burglaries	Thefts
January 2016 to June 2016	1	0	6	2	5	70
June 2015 to December 2015	0	1	17	6	3	76
January 2015 to May 2015	0	2	12	5	3	70
June 2014 to December 2014	0	0	0	0	0	0

From the data obtained from the website of the Philadelphia Police Department, it appears that the majority of crimes are criminal thefts. The limited amount of information concerning the numbers provides little ability to offer an analysis of any preventative measures that could be sought by the community. If thefts are committed in the commercial area, the possibility of unscheduled police foot patrol offering more visible presence could serve as a deterrent to criminals. Philadelphia offers store owners their Business Security Camera Program, providing 50 percent reimbursement (maximum of \$3,000) for store owners installing security cameras. A greater understanding of the types and trends of crimes committed in the area will provide a fuller explanation for a preventative strategy for the Germantown community.

Public Policies

Public policies remain the essential component toward providing direction and structure to the public domain for decision makers and stakeholders. Public policies are typically developed by lawmakers or their appointed representatives found on independent planning boards and commissions. Public policies are traditionally found in the form of laws and ordinances that provide a level of structured enforcement to facilitate the implementation of the desired outcome.

Within the context of development policies, planning documents often provide guidance for the creation of new development laws or the amendment of existing development laws. Often within stressed areas, attempts to bring solutions to the challenges of community decline can result in the development of several planning documents all working toward solutions. In the case of Germantown's study area, past development plans are the result of efforts by the city, private, and educational sectors. The following plans are devoted toward the redevelopment of the Germantown community:

- *Central Germantown Business District Beautification Plan (2012)*
- *West Cheltenham Plan (Lentz)*
- *Germantown & Nicetown Transit-Oriented Plan (2008)*
- *Cheltenham & Greene Plaza Master Plan (2016)*
- *Vernon Park Improvements Plan (2014)*

All of the previous redevelopment recommendations provide a common theme—the requirement of private and public cooperation to implement a vast majority of public policies. The central theme for the city government involved fiscal investment for capital improvements for open spaces, streetscaping, and public facilities (transit station). To avoid duplication of past planning efforts, a careful review was provided of past recommended planning policies and incorporated when appropriate for the purpose of this plan.

Zoning

Zoning is one of the fundamental regulatory powers given to local governments by states through enabling legislation. Zoning regulates the use of land; intensity or density of the development; the building height, bulk, and structure location on the property; required automobile parking; and other general uses of the land. Philadelphia manages its development through its zoning ordinance, which contains separate categories regulating residential, commercial, office, industrial, and/or a combination of the general land-use types.

West Cheltenham contains the following three zoning classifications found within the planning area (see Figure 8):

- **CMX-2.5: Neighborhood Commercial Mixed-Use District**
This district is primarily intended to accommodate active, pedestrian-friendly retail and service uses in commercial nodes and along commercial corridors.

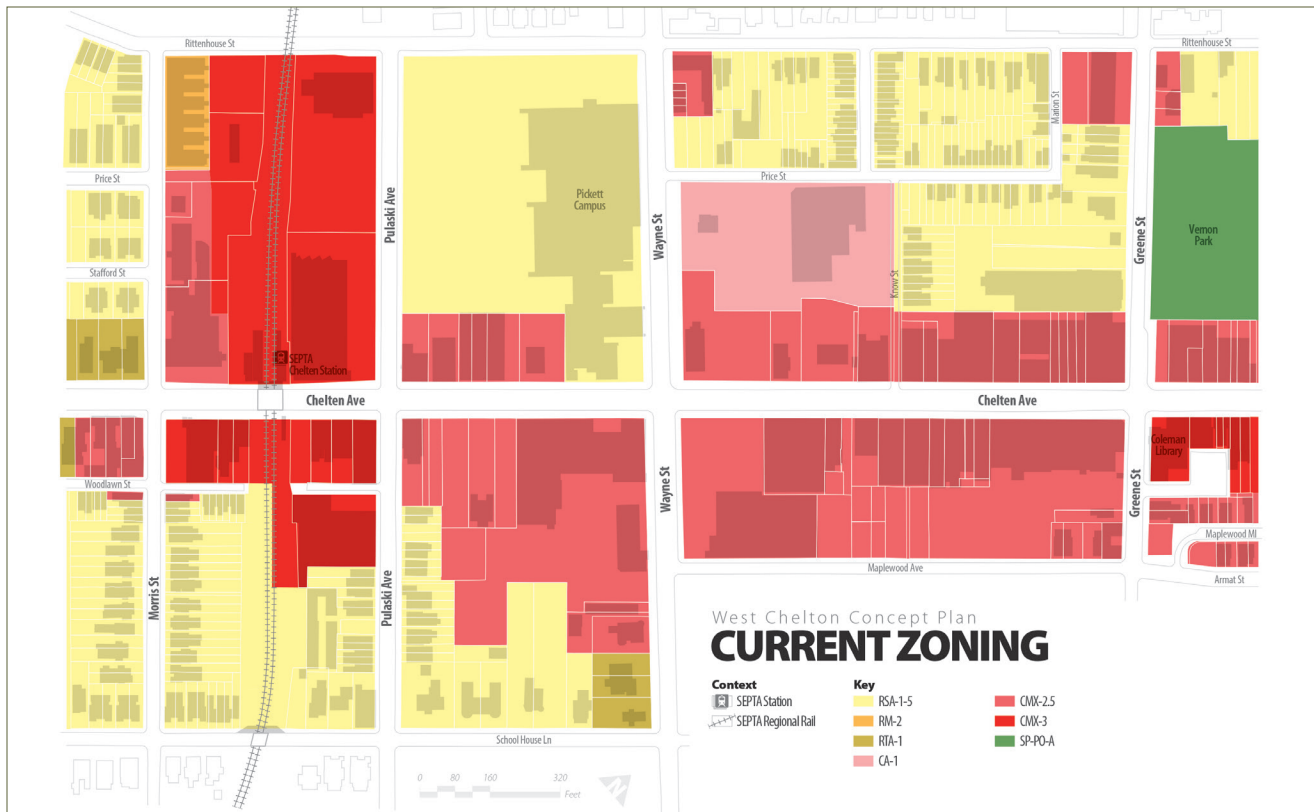


Figure 8: The majority of West Chelton Avenue is zoned for broad commercial uses.

- **CMX-3: Community Commercial Mixed-Use District**

This district is primarily intended to accommodate community and region-serving retail and service uses. The range of allowed uses is broader than the CMX-1 and CMX-2 districts.

- **RSA: Residential Single-Family Attached District**

This district is primarily intended to accommodate attached and semidetached houses on individual lots, but may be applied in areas characterized by a mix of housing types, including detached houses.

Current zoning policies found within the West Chelton planning area can accommodate the proposed design and market recommendations. There is no need to amend the current zoning policies. Any recommended design standards that are parochial to the planning area may find a higher degree of acceptance in the form of an overlay or special district.

A zoning district seeking an effort to enhance the area with unique physical forms such as street lighting, storefront facades, sidewalk pavers, awning design, etc., may receive a higher degree of acceptance by the governing body and avoid overcoming the difficulty of justifying those standards in the entire city through a general amendment of the desired zoning classification.

Often, no one owner wishes to become the first when attempting to revitalize even an one-block area unless there is a greater level of comfort that future development is most likely to occur. As a result, implementation has the possibility of staggering along fading the hopes of concept plan's success. Frequently, the use of overlay districts provides a level of public push to achieve some of the design concepts of the concept plan.

Commercial Incentives

The condition of the West Chelton storefronts represents a number of years of decline and neglect due to many reasons found in other urban centers (lack of capital, declining retail market, building age, lack of confidence in market area, etc.). Whatever the reason(s), the unsightly appearance of a storefront sends a message to consumers and potential investors of an unhealthy business environment. This appearance furthers the cycle of decline and consumers' resistance to patronize the businesses.

In the case of the West Cheltenham Plan, a great number of recommendations are centered on improving the appearance and function of the public realm. While the city currently has programs that will facilitate the concept plan recommendation, such as the Storefront Improvement Program (SIP), such a program requires a voluntary acceptance by the property owner. Although this type of program is common in many communities, the greater success of the program is predicated by the participation of property owners. The fundamental standards for the SIP have three major components:

- Fifty percent match for facade improvements
- Up to \$10,000 for single-address buildings; \$15,000 for multi-address buildings
- A design review committee (including design professionals) reviews applications, but they need to have design standards drafted.

The program emphasizes enhancing the historic and architectural integrity of the buildings, a focus described numerous times in this study. Storefront facade improvement candidates are required to emphasize improvements toward the following:

- Masonry/brick pointing
- Cornices
- Exterior painting
- Windows/glazing
- Exterior doors
- Exterior facade lighting
- See-through security grills
- Signage and awnings

Because of the importance of the storefront facade improvement program in reviving the image of a declining corridor, a design committee review is required to ensure that any improvement proposal follows the intent of the program. Sometimes the applicant must make changes in order to receive funding for facade improvement.

In addition to improving the visual appearance of a building(s), the program makes funding available for the installation of security cameras and alarm systems as part of a larger project. Applicants who apply for security improvements only are subject to design review as previously described.

Philadelphia has a great number of capital assistance and incentive programs available to the Germantown community. This plan recognizes the opportunity to use the TIF program as a major tool to finance capital improvement projects and hard development cost (primarily infrastructure) for private projects. The fundamental principle behind TIF is the receipt of appreciated revenues from a frozen tax base. A TIF district is created by the governing body and the district property value is frozen at a certain point at a designated point in time. As new development and the appreciation of existing development occurs, the “increment” over the frozen tax base value can be used as revenue for capital projects or funding to assist a developer in the hard cost of developing a project, such as demolition or an intersection improvement. Under Pennsylvania law, projects allowed under TIF funding are new construction, building rehabilitation, site improvements, machinery and equipment acquisition, and limited settlement and processing fees.

Essential to effective public policy is ensuring that the policy aligns itself with the goals of the concept plan and any additional planning documents created in support of the project area. Having a total understanding of the principles of the policy and how it relates to the Germantown community will mean greater acceptance and willingness to implement the plan. As the Germantown stakeholders pursue the new policies necessary toward the improvement of the community, having a positive engagement of elected officials is extremely important and necessary. Understand and have a willingness to explain the intent of an amended or new public policy. Do not assume that an elected official understands what you are seeking; explain what you wish to do.

Social and Institutional Amenities

Social and Institutional amenities are not necessarily public policies that carry some level of enforcement, but rather they are the results of public sentiment that measures a positive social well-being of a community with the psychological and cultural stability of the community. The West Cheltenham planning area appears to host several community facilities that offer educational, social, recreational, and cultural activities that are within a reasonable walking distance or accessible to public transportation.

Planning Principles and Workshop Results

Planning Principles

It is important to develop and gain consensus on a general set of principles to serve as the bridge between background research, public input, and the preparation of the plan. It is useful to have a set of principles to guide the planning process, as well as ideas that can be revisited later when important issues are debated so the original intent can be considered. The following principles were initially adapted from a set of “smart growth” principles of the nonprofit group Smart Growth America, but they were revised to their current form based upon stakeholder input for this project for West Cheltenham Avenue. In particular, principle number nine came from this project’s stakeholders. The nine principles are as follows:

1. Provide a rich mixture of uses for a 16-hour environment.
2. Create a range of housing opportunities by type and cost.
3. Encourage a “walkable” environment that accommodates vehicles, but prioritizes pedestrians.
4. Promote a strong sense of place, including preserving and rehabilitating historic buildings.
5. Create and maintain safe and appealing public spaces for gathering.
6. Provide a variety of transportation choices.
7. Foster an environment that allows businesses to thrive.
8. Provide cultural and educational opportunities.
9. Utilize “green infrastructure” and other techniques to insure that development is environmentally sustainable.

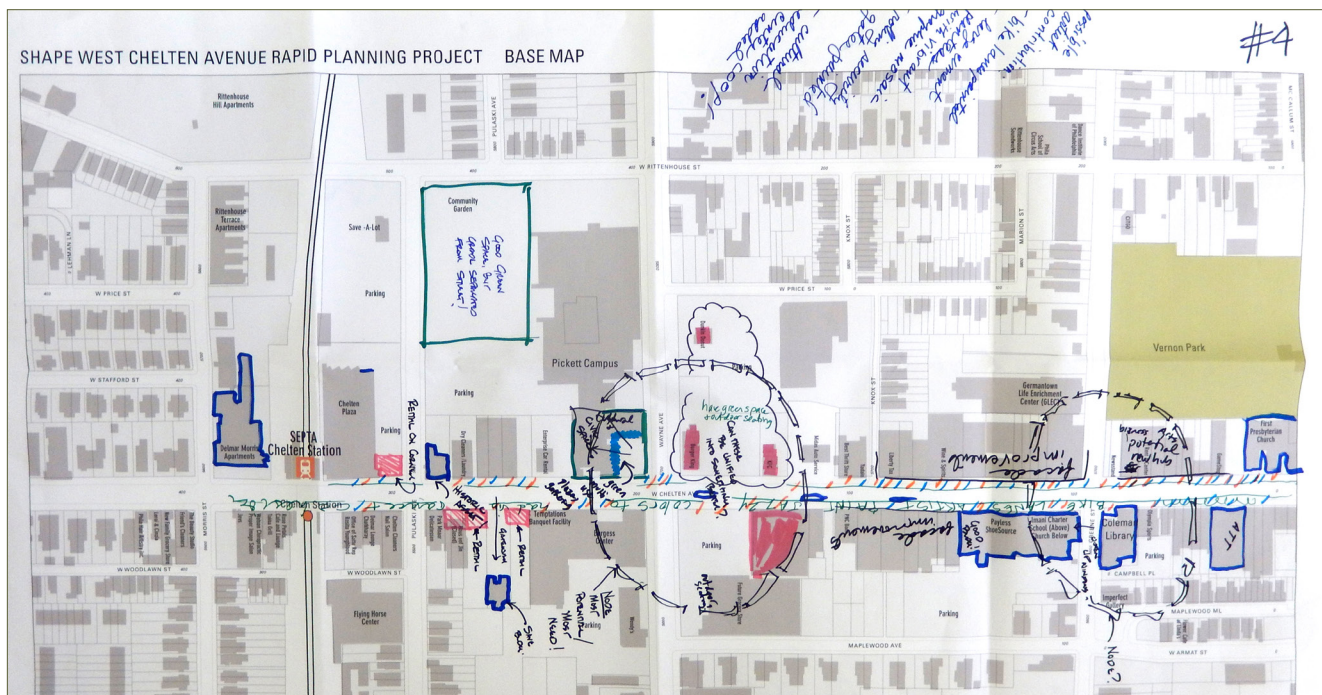


Figure 9: Small groups of residents and stakeholders created their own plans for the study area during the first public workshop. See Appendix C for more community input from the workshop.

Workshop Results

On the first evening of the four-day planning charrette on May 16, 2016, a public workshop was conducted in the Pegasus Room at the Flying Horse Center on Pulaski Avenue. More than 50 local residents and stakeholders participated. Following a presentation by the Project Team on the project intent, the process, and initial observations of the study area, the public participants were split up into multiple teams, with one team at each of the tables set up in the room. Each team was provided a base map of the study area, supporting information (existing conditions maps), and a set of colored markers. Each team was then walked through a process by the Project Team in which the teams developed their own plans for the study area. Following the roughly one-hour planning session, the full group reconvened and representatives from each team presented their respective plans (see Figures 9–13). There was a brief question-and-answer period after each presentation, and the Project Team then made conclusions and invited participants back for the Thursday evening Concept Plan Presentation.



Figures 10–13: Workshop participants discussed their ideas, concerns, and visions for the study area as they worked to create plans for the study area.

That plan was to be based, at least in part, on the various plans created by each team of public participants that Monday evening. The workshop served, essentially, as a springboard for the Project Team's next three days of planning work.

While there were dozens of ideas generated by the workshop, below are a few examples of key ideas:

- Improve intersections and eliminate select driveways on Cheltenham for pedestrian safety.
- Establish more businesses that meet residents' needs, including shopping and dining options.
- Explore new uses such as a farmers market and a bowling alley.
- Enhance the SEPTA rail stations as more user-friendly public spaces, with a newspaper and coffee kiosk and a gateway treatment.
- Develop a large number of residential units within new mixed use buildings.
- Preserve older buildings and develop in an environmentally sustainable way.

The Concept Plan

This document has been deliberately referred to as a “concept plan” rather than a “master plan” or some other term that might suggest a more detailed and thorough plan document. Given the volunteer-driven nature of CPAT plans, and the fact that only a minimal level of background research and analysis is possible prior to the Project Team’s charrette trip, the term “concept plan” is appropriate. Similarly, it must be kept in mind that this plan does not benefit from a market analysis on the front end to project future demand for various land uses, as is often done in detailed master plans to help inform the plan. However, the Germantown United Community Development Corporation is about to commission such a market analysis that will greatly benefit the subsequent implementation of this plan. With those caveats, the concept plan is described below.

The Built Environment

This concept plan section addresses the urban design framework, mobility, public spaces, and buildings.

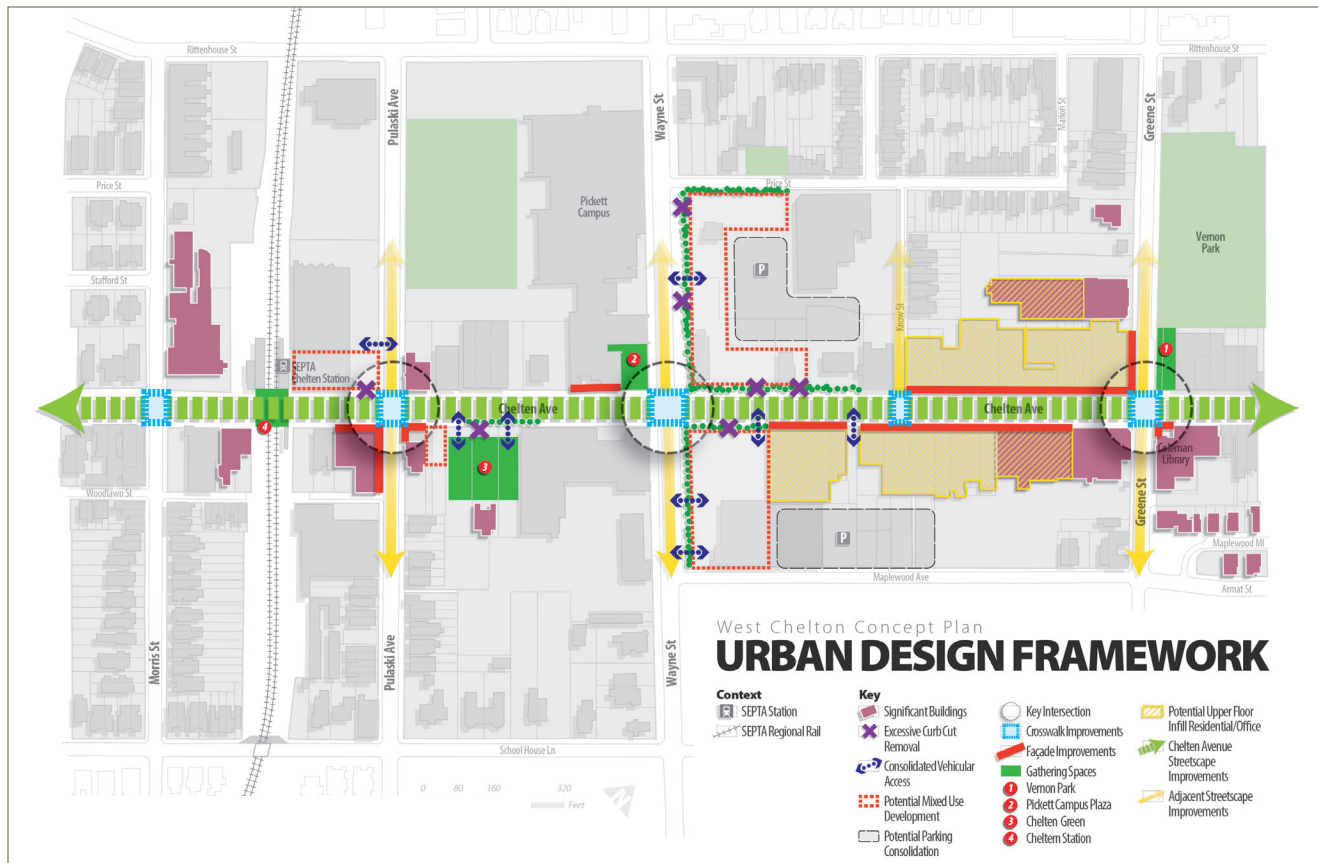


Figure 14: The urban design framework illustrates an overview of the concept plan's physical aspects.

Urban Design Framework

The urban design framework serves as a graphic table of contents for the aspects of this concept plan that address the built environment (see Figure 14). While the balance of this plan section goes into more detail on each key topic addressed, the legend and associated plan map graphics address the following key physical planning issues:

- Significant buildings
- Excessive curb cut removal
- Consolidated vehicular access
- Potential mixed use development
- Potential parking consolidation
- Key intersections
- Crosswalk improvements

- Facade improvements
- Gathering spaces
- Potential upper-floor infill residential/office
- Chelten Avenue streetscape improvements
- Adjacent streetscape improvements

The Street

Within the context of this concept plan, the term “street” is used broadly to include not only the portions of West Chelten Avenue between the curbs (driving, bike, and parking lanes), but also to the adjacent streetscapes that exist between the street curbs and adjacent building facades. Chelten’s current street configuration and lane widths work well. The street consists of two driving lanes (one in either direction), two bike lanes (each between the driving lanes and parking lanes), and two parking lanes (parallel spaces adjacent to the sidewalk on either side of the street). However, there is still room for improvements. Key recommendations include the following:

- Improve the safety of intersections: pedestrian bulbs and crosswalks.
- Eliminate unnecessary curb cuts (driveways): some are close to intersections—access should be from side streets.
- Integrate “green infrastructure” for sustainability: bioswales and rain gardens, permeable edge strips, and street trees.
- Reinforce the building edge and canopy: locate infill development near the street and utilize canopies where desired.

Below is more detail on the above four concepts.

Improve the Safety of Intersections

There is a strong consensus that many of the corridor’s intersections are not safe for pedestrians (see Figure 15), and accident reports seem to confirm that idea. There are three key improvements that can enhance the safety of Chelten’s intersections, as illustrated here (see Figure 16). First, pedestrian bulbs or “bump-outs” can be added at each corner to decrease the street crossing distance and protect the end cars for on-street parking. Secondly, paved crosswalks can be installed to delineate where pedestrians should cross the street and send a signal to drivers, as drivers will subtly feel the crosswalks under their tires. Finally, it is believed that leveling the excessive crown on Chelten might enhance driving safety, so that concept should be further explored.

Eliminate Unnecessary Curb Cuts (Driveways)

Numerous curb cuts have been added to Chelten over the past few decades to provide direct access to suburban type developments such as fast food restaurants (see Figure 17). See Figure 6 on page 12 for an aerial photo map showing numerous curb cuts immediately east of Wayne on Chelten. It is recommended that driveways that are too close to street intersec-



(Left to right) Figure 15: Traffic accidents involving cars and pedestrians are common where Chelten and Wayne meet. The pronounced crown at the intersection is widely believed to contribute to the frequency of those accidents. Figure 16: “Bump-outs” at each corner, paved crosswalks that are well marked, and leveling the crown at the intersection (at Chelten and Wayne specifically) are all improvements that would improve the safety of intersections.



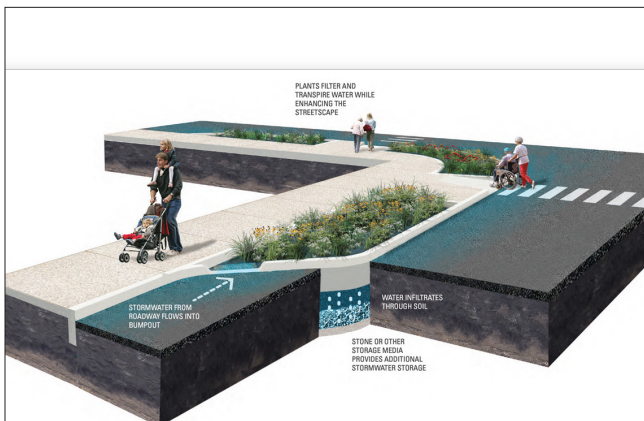
Figure 17: Recent suburban-style developments have added excessive curb cuts (driveways) that create conflicts and safety issues among cars, buses, pedestrians, and bikes.

tions be prioritized for elimination since they create the most significant driving conflicts. Where possible, access to these sites should be transferred to side streets to reduce the number of vehicular turning movements on Cheltenham. Eliminating driveways allows the streetscape to be more intact and enhances pedestrian safety and the area's aesthetics.

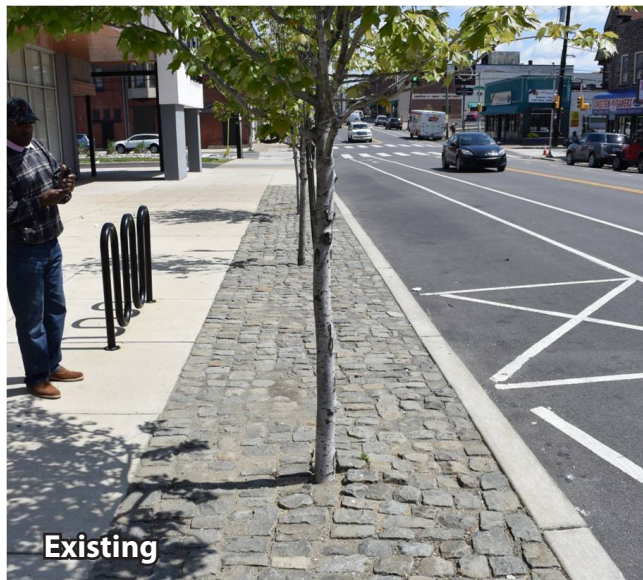
Integrate Green Infrastructure for Sustainability

Green infrastructure is the approach of using natural systems to address stormwater management rather than relying solely on engineering, such as pipes. It is recommended that bioswales and rain gardens be used at intersections based upon the city's adopted design standards (see Figures 18–19).

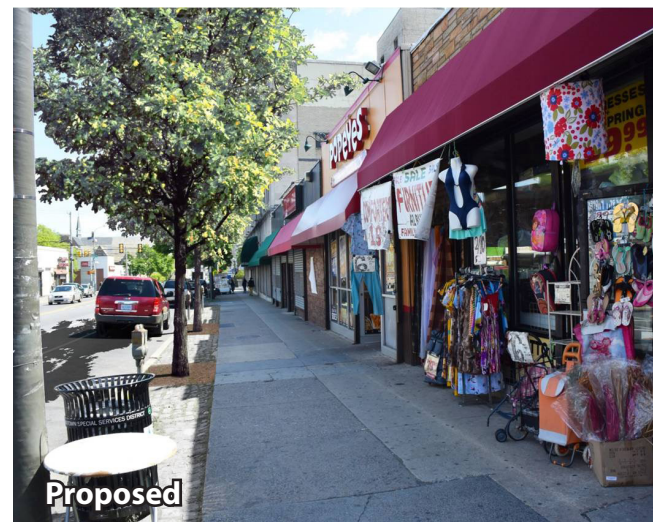
The existing cobblestone edge strips located between the curbs and sidewalks on Cheltenham should be reconstructed for permeability. It is important to keep these edge strips because they add an interesting texture to the streetscape and they have historic significance for the area. The existing cobblestones should be removed, the compacted soil beneath should be treated to be permeable, and the edge strips should then be rebuilt to their original design. Furthermore, street trees should be added by creating tree wells and planting new trees based upon the designs recently installed on the block between Germantown Avenue and Greene Street. Figures 20–25 on page 24 show existing conditions and simulations with street trees and other enhancements.



(Left to right) Figure 18: Green infrastructure has the dual benefit of providing neighborhood beautification and managing stormwater. (Source: City of Philadelphia Green Streets Design Manual). Figure 19: An example of how bioswales and rain gardens can be added to "bump-outs" at an intersection or driveway.



Figures 20–21: Tree wells increase a tree's chance of survival and create more permeable surface to capture stormwater.



Figures 22–23: Street trees add character and texture to the streetscape.



Figures 24–25: The cobblestones (or Belgian blocks) should be preserved to maintain the original character of the streetscape, but the compacted soil beneath them should be treated to increase permeability.

Gathering Spaces

Public gathering places include parks and greens, which are primarily landscaped, and plazas, which are primarily hard-scaped. Regardless of their specific form and character, public spaces are a key component of the civic realm and serve as a cultural amenity. Below are recommendations for improving existing spaces, as well as for the creation of new spaces.

Chelten and Greene Plaza

This existing plaza is located at the northeast corner of Greene and Chelten, which is just beyond the project study area. Nevertheless, it is an amenity for the area. The current design of the space is not very inviting or user-friendly, and it fails to connect to the adjacent Vernon Park because of fencing (see Figure 26). Fortunately, the city recently commissioned a plan to redesign the plaza and connect it with Vernon Park (see Figure 27). A new bus stop shelter will be an important part of this project. This project will greatly enhance the space as an amenity for the area.

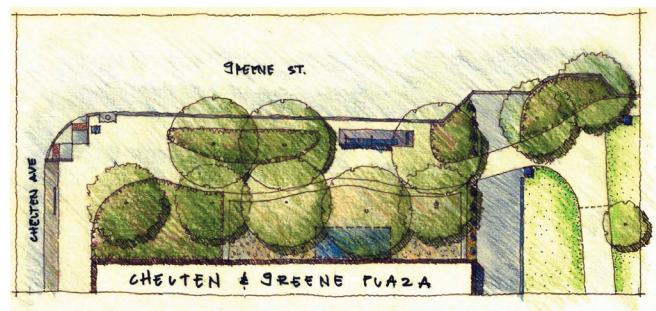
Joseph E. Coleman Northwest Regional Library Plaza

This small public plaza is located in front of the Coleman Library. Located on the southeast corner of Greene and Chelten, it too is just beyond the boundaries of the study area. However, it too has the potential to greatly benefit the study area. The current design is not very user-friendly, as it features a peripheral gate that is often locked, limited seating, and bulky landscaping that detracts from the space (see Figures 28–29). The following recommendations are offered for improvements:

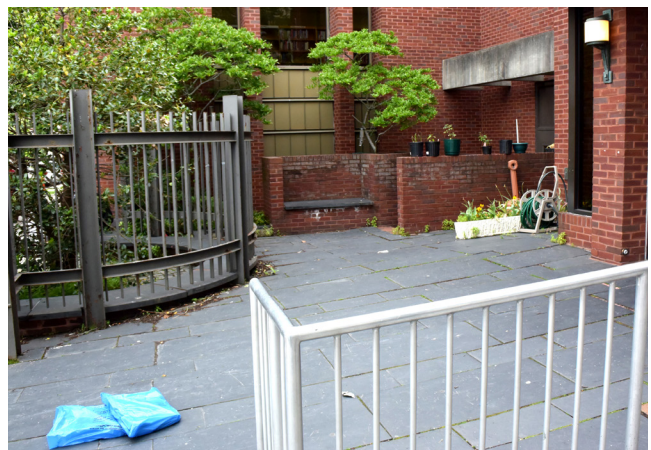
- Remove the peripheral fencing.
- Add more seating.
- Replace the existing bulky tree with a canopy tree for better visibility, safety, and shade.

Pickett Campus Plaza

The square-shaped plaza existing as an extension of the Pickett Campus school building on the northwest corner of Chelten and Wayne is barren and rarely used (see Figure 30). To transform it into a user-friendly and attractive space that people



(Top to bottom) Figure 26: The fence at the rear of the plaza blocks Vernon Park. Figure 27: The new design of the plaza, already commissioned by the city, will connect Vernon Park, offer a new bus shelter, and serve as an attractive public amenity to the area. (Source: Kittelson & Associates / Philadelphia City Planning Commission)



Figures 28–29: The bulky fencing and gate to the small plaza in front of the library does not provide a welcoming environment, and contributes to negative perceptions of the neighborhood.



Figures 30–31 (left to right): The Pickett Campus Plaza is a key opportunity for revitalization efforts along West Cheltenham Avenue.

will enjoy, the following improvements are recommended (see Figure 31):

- Expand the width of the two sets of steps accessing either side of the two peripheral walls to increase the space's visual accessibility and safety.
- Provide interior seating to supplement the informal peripheral seating currently provided by the walls fronting Cheltenham and Wayne.
- Redesign the interior's ground cover to introduce lawn areas.
- Plant shade trees.

As illustrated here, this proposed enhancement of the plaza, coupled with the intersection improvements recommended earlier in this report, would bring dramatically positive changes to this important area of the West Cheltenham Avenue corridor.

Proposed Cheltenham Green

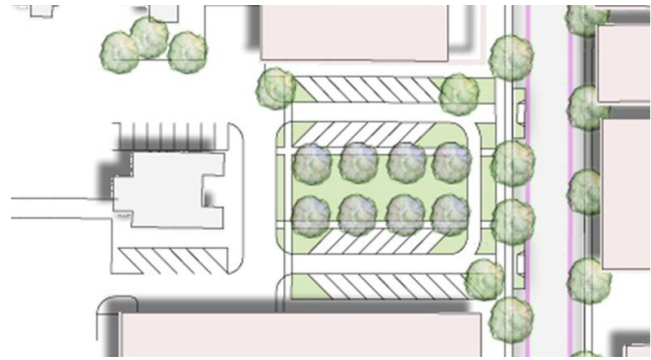
On the south side of Cheltenham, between Pulaski and Wayne, is a beautiful historic stone building that sits back from the street and is fronted by a large bleak parking lot (see Figure 33). The building has strong architectural character and currently houses a medical business. It is proposed that the parking lot be transformed into a rectilinear green, bound on both sides by angled parking in a manner that still retains a large amount of parking (see Figure 35). This concept, modeled loosely after a traditional “town square” or “green” such as the Market Square located nearby on Germantown Avenue (see Figure 34), could be programmed for a farmers market. The project's benefits include:

- Enhancing the area's aesthetics and providing more dignity for the building
- Activating the space with programming (farmers market)
- Converting paved area to permeable surface for stormwater drainage, while still maintaining a substantial amount of parking

Public stakeholders participating in this planning project voiced strong support for the idea of establishing a farmers market in the area and it appears to be a viable concept. As part of the development of the green, utility hook-ups would need to be installed, and a formal organization would need to operate the market. Information on how to start a farmers market and the benefits a market can bring is available from the Project for Public Spaces (ppps.org/markets) and the Farmers Market Coalition (farmersmarketcoalition.org).



Figure 33: The above historic stone building with a large parking lot in front offers an opportunity for community programming.



(Left to right) Figure 34: Market Square is located along Germantown Avenue and could offer some design elements suitable for the above historic stone building and parking lot. Figure 35: A rectilinear green surrounded by angled parking offers a more flexible space with increased opportunities for community programming, such as a farmers market, and the added benefit of green infrastructure.

SEPTA Rail Stations

There are four SEPTA rail station entrances and exits on Chelton—two per side, between Pulaski and Morris. There are currently no amenities (see Figure 36). However, stakeholders who participated in this planning process expressed a strong desire for the following:

- Kiosk selling coffee, newspapers, etc.
- Seating
- Better and more bike racks
- Increased lighting

There is also an opportunity to create a gateway type of treatment for this area. Consideration should be given to sponsoring a design competition for public art for one or both sides of Chelton at the SEPTA stations.



Figure 36: The Chelton Avenue rail station is a major asset, yet there are no amenities, signage, or public art that would help create a more welcoming environment for neighborhood riders and visitors.

Private Realm: Buildings and Off-Street Parking

Thus far, this concept plan has provided physical planning recommendations for the public realm of the study area. This section focuses on the private realm, including buildings fronting Chelton and their associated parking lots (see Figure 37).

Historic Buildings

Historic buildings are critical for providing character and a strong sense of place. There are also various financial incentives for the appropriate rehabilitation of qualified historic buildings at the local, state, and federal levels, such as the investment tax credit for historic rehabilitation. As explained previously in this concept plan, there are several buildings more than 50 years old in the study area, most of which date from between the late 19th century and the mid-20th century. However, there is a general lack of cohesion, as parking lots and non-historic infill development results in a fragmented pattern of historic building stock. Figure 38 highlights significant older buildings in purple and proposed building facade improvements in red.



Figure 37: The public and private realms are both key elements to a neighborhood revitalization plan.

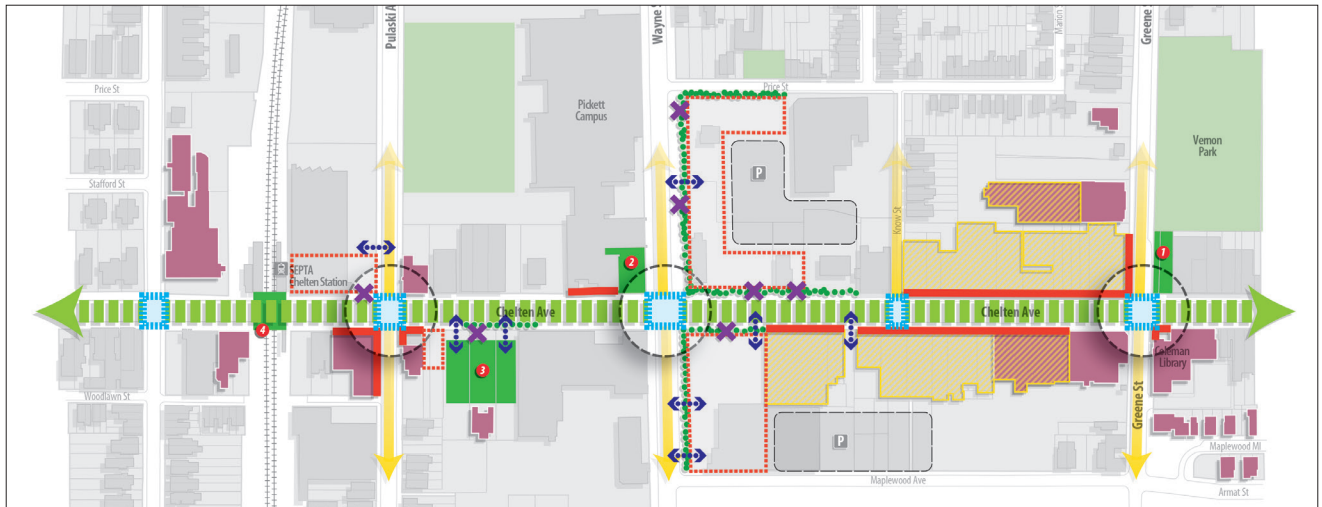


Figure 38: Purple shows significant older buildings and red shows buildings recommended for facade improvements.

There are numerous examples of existing historic buildings within the study area that could be greatly enhanced through some relatively simple (and often cost-effective) measures. One such building is located on the southwest corner of Cheltenham and Pulaski (see Figure 39). This two-story stone building with castellation along the parapet facade could be improved by removing the plastic canopy on the ground floor, which also functions as internally lit signage. It could be replaced with a historically accurate canvas awning. The other key improvement would be the removal of siding that currently encloses most of the storefronts and windows.



While most of the study area's historic buildings are in need of physical enhancement, there are at least a few examples of well preserved and/or rehabilitated historic buildings, such as the one located on the northeast corner of Cheltenham and Pulaski (see Figure 40). This three-story brick building from the mid to late 19th century enjoys the following attributes:

- The original storefront is intact and not filled in.
- The upper floor windows are also still exposed.
- The horizontal panel above storefront's transom windows is an appropriate location for signage.

This building can serve as an excellent example of how such older buildings should be treated to aesthetically enhance the study area and reinforce its historic character.



On page 29 a series of six graphics (Figures 41–46) illustrate how one portion of a historic block face could be enhanced in a phased approach by removing inappropriate alterations and restoring the original storefronts.

Redeveloped Buildings

While the study area is blessed with several older buildings that warrant preservation and rehabilitation to return them

(Top to bottom) Figure 39: This building at Cheltenham and Pulaski is a good candidate for specific improvements that could better highlight the historic character of the neighborhood. Figure 40: The unique historic character of Cheltenham Avenue is well preserved in this building.



Figures 41-46: This series of illustrations demonstrates how historic character could be renewed over time.



Figures 47–54: This series of illustrations shows a phased approach to altering the Plaza at Cheltenham, ending with a new building over the old that is better suited for the overall character and form of the neighborhood.

to their former glory, there are at least a few others that are more recent and that fail to fit in with the scale and character of the corridor. One such example is The Plaza at Cheltenham, a relatively new mixed use building located on the northwest corner of Cheltenham and Pulaski. While this building's frontage does meet Cheltenham Street, the important corner of the site is used for a driveway and adjacent parking. Combined with an oversized freestanding sign, it has a generally suburban character that lacks compatibility with the street. A series of photos and graphics illustrate a phased approach to completely redeveloping this site (see Figures 47–54), while still retaining the existing structure beneath it. Starting with the simple intervention of removing the freestanding sign, the final phase would be the construction of a new building by adding to the existing structure.

New Buildings

To help fill the voids in the streetscape created by demolishing older buildings to make way for parking lots, as well as to provide space for new uses that can energize the area, the neighborhood should seek new buildings. However, with respect to prioritization, new buildings should take a back seat to the improvement of the area's existing buildings. There are many opportunities for new infill buildings, particularly on both sides of Cheltenham on the east side of Wayne. See the Urban Design Framework plan (Figure 55), which highlights potential mixed use development outlined in red dashed lines and potential upper floor infill residential/office in yellow outline and crosshatching.

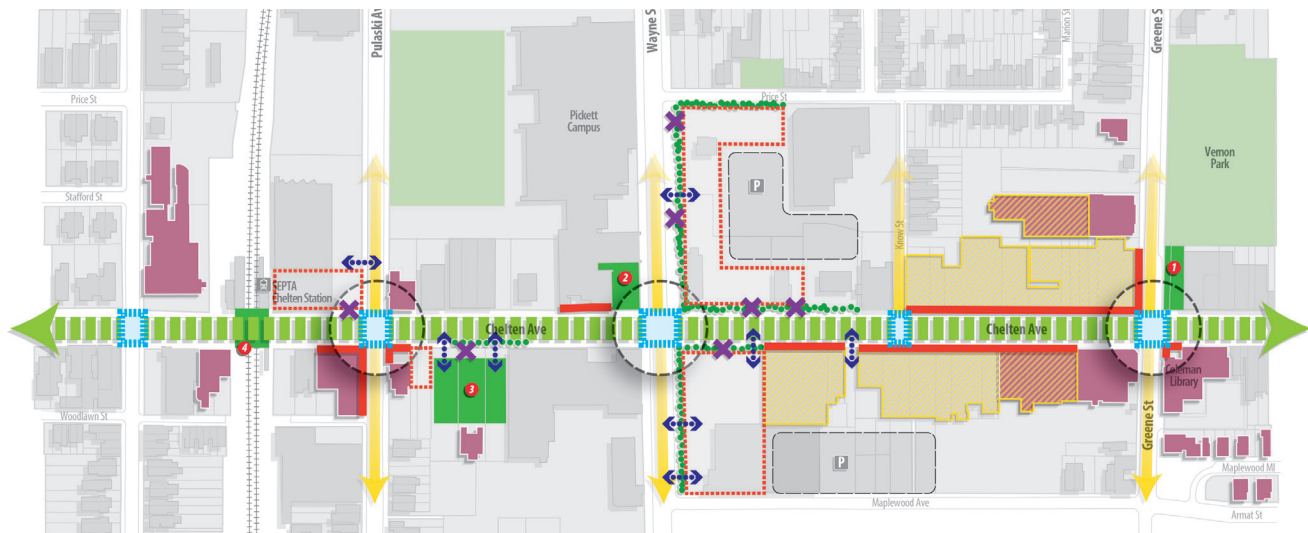


Figure 55 (top): The red dashed lines show where there is potential for new mixed use buildings and those outlined in yellow show where there is potential for infill residential/office. Figure 56 (left): The building, currently found on Cheltenham Avenue, does not meet the design standards, while the one on the right, an example from Milwaukee (Figure 57), demonstrates the design principles recommended for the study area. (Source: Cooltown Studios)

Figure 58: The creative use of shipping containers occupied with new businesses could serve as an interim solution to filling current voids and activating areas along Cheltenham Avenue. (Source: Regal Properties website, News section, May 28, 2015)



It is recommended that new buildings adhere to the following design principles:

- Front directly onto the street (no front parking lots)
- Multiple stories for upper floor housing and offices
- Break up the facade massing with projecting and/or recessed vertical bays
- Minimum ground floor height (14+ feet) for appropriate proportions
- Minimum ground floor transparency (glazing for windows and doors)

Figures 56 and 57 on the previous page are examples of buildings that do and do not follow such principles. The building on the left exists in the study area. While it does strongly relate to the street via its minimal front setback, it is only one story and lacks facade massing and sufficient transparency. However, the building on the right—Toussaint Square in Milwaukee—does meet these suggested principles.

One potential form of new infill development that could be considered for the street is the adaptive reuse of metal shipping containers, an idea that has been successfully employed in many other places (see Figure 58). They can cost-effectively activate the void between buildings caused by parking lots, although the containers are likely not a long-term solution. Like any other form of development, this potential interim solution would have to meet the city's development and building codes.

Off-Street Parking

The Urban Design Framework illustrated throughout this concept plan conveys a wide range of urban design interventions, including potential site reconfigurations to enhance access and parking for existing and future development. Among the ideas illustrated in the map's legend (see Figure 55) are proposed curb-cut eliminations, consolidated vehicular access, and potential parking consolidation. An area having particularly strong potential for reconfiguration is both sides of Cheltenham on the east side of Wayne. Such reconfigurations will require initiation by the city, GUCDC and others, and affected property owners would need to be willing participants.

An important improvement that will go hand in hand with these proposed site reconfigurations is the enhancement of parking lots with redesigned driving aisles and parking stalls for maximum efficiency, internal and peripheral landscaping, and improved lighting for safety. The site plan graphic (Figure 59) highlights the areas having strong potential for parking lot redesign, and Figure 60 illustrates a parking lot redesign for the parking area on the southeast corner of Cheltenham and Wayne.



Figure 59–60: Proposed enhancements to parking lots such as new configurations, landscaping, and lighting will maximize efficiency, improve safety, add green infrastructure, and help beautify the area.

Business Development

A multipronged economic development strategy is needed for the commercial revitalization of West Cheltenham Avenue. It should be guided by a comprehensive retail market analysis that explores the dynamics of the local economy. This analysis should include an assessment of area demographics, consumer spending data, traffic patterns (pedestrian and vehicular), resident and business surveys, and retail supply and demand information to determine leakage and market potential. Findings from this analysis can provide insights for attracting public and private investments, and lay the foundation for a full-scale revitalization plan. In addition to the urban design concepts addressed in this concept plan, the comprehensive economic revitalization plan should pay special attention to three aspects of economic development: entrepreneurship development, business attraction, and district marketing. All three topics are addressed below.

Entrepreneurship Development

Small businesses are the backbone of a strong local economy. They help create new jobs and generate tax revenue for municipalities. Generally, a majority of dollars spent at local small businesses are circulated within that community. Business ownership also provides opportunities for upward mobility for various groups of people. However, starting and succeeding in business ownership is not easy. In fact, a majority of business ventures fail within the first year. A framework for nurturing and promoting entrepreneurship can be the catalyst for innovation and economic transformation.

Training

Entrepreneurship training comes in many forms. It can be incorporated into the curriculum at local middle and high schools. Many nonprofit organizations with an economic development mission offer workshops on business development. Some provide business counseling and technical assistance to entrepreneurs going through the process. These programs can be provided through government funding to supplement publicly operated business resource centers.

The city's Office of Business Services offers one-on-one assistance with registering a business, acquiring necessary permits and licenses, obtaining financing for a business, and support services.

The nonprofit Entrepreneur Works provides workshops and classes that help entrepreneurs build their business skills. The organization has office locations in Philadelphia and Chester, Pennsylvania. A majority of their clients are minorities and lower-income individuals.

The Business Center for Entrepreneurship provides education and business networking programs to contribute to improving Northwest Philadelphia's minority business ecosystem. The center's Communiversity program is a workshop that reviews business fundamentals and management strategies and culminates in the development of a detailed business plan.

The Small Business Administration (SBA) provides a variety of resources to help start, build and grow a business. The SBA establishes Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) that connect entrepreneurs with professional business counselors to provide guidance and education on business development. Unfortunately, none of these centers are in the immediate Germantown area. The nearest SBDC location is located over five miles away at Temple University. The next nearest center is located at the Wharton School of Business about eight miles away. All of the other centers are located at least 20 miles away at other college campuses.

Many new entrepreneurs can use the assistance of strong mentors and the Service Corps of Retired Executives provides opportunities for them to learn from experienced retired business executives.

Capital

Access to the capital needed to start a business is the biggest burden many aspiring entrepreneurs face. Most start-ups do not qualify for financing from traditional banks. Microlenders such as Community Development Financial Institutions and credit unions can fill this gap. Many cities including Philadelphia seek creative partnerships with the private sector to help small businesses get access to start-up and expansion funds.

FINANTA is a 501(c)(3) community lender that provides capital and credit-building services to low- and moderate-income entrepreneurs. It offers a comprehensive program to take businesses through the start-up and growth stages:

- **Credit-Building.** FINANTA provides cash-secured and equity microloans that help the borrower to establish credit history of making payments and position them to qualify for larger business loans.
- **Business Loans.** FINANTA provides business loans and lines of credit for up to \$100,000 for business expansion purposes.
- **PreCaps Program.** This provides access to capital for groups of entrepreneurs with similar financing needs, creating a network of small businesses peers that grow together and while receiving business education and management skills.

The Philadelphia Industrial Development Corporation (PIDC) is a public/private economic development entity offering a suite of financial resources to aid the growth of businesses in Philadelphia. These include:

- **Working Capital and Equipment Loan.** This provides financing to small and mid-sized businesses and nonprofits for working capital, equipment, or leasehold improvements.
- **Capital Project Loan.** This loan provides financial support to businesses and nonprofits undertaking capital projects such as building acquisition, renovations, and equipment purchases in need of additional financing to complete the project. PIDC generally funds up to 40 percent of the project cost (maximum \$750,000) and borrowers must create at least one new full-time job for every \$35,000 borrowed.
- **Contract Line of Credit.** This supports small businesses owned by minorities, women, and the disabled that need a line of credit to fund contract-related working capital.
- **Partner Bank Guarantee.** For small businesses or nonprofits that are not able to obtain conventional financing, the PIDC provides up to 50 percent of the loan amount through a partner bank with a maximum guarantee amount of \$250,000. This program allows for banks to be more willing to lend to what may be considered riskier investments because a significant percentage of that loan is guaranteed by PIDC in case the borrower defaults.

The Pennsylvania Minority Business Development Authority supports loans to businesses that are owned and operated by ethnic minorities. Manufacturing, high-tech, international trade, or franchise companies may be eligible for loans up to \$500,000 (up to \$750,000 in enterprise zones) or 75 percent of total eligible project costs, whichever is less. Retail or commercial businesses are eligible for loans up to \$250,000 (within an enterprise zone, up to \$350,000) or 75 percent of eligible costs, whichever is less.

The SBA offers number of loans, either directly or through private lenders. The 7(a) Loan Program offers financial help for business with special requirements. The Express & Pilot programs offer streamlined loan procedures for particular groups of borrowers such as active-duty military personnel, veterans, and individuals from distressed communities. The microloan program provides small, short-term loans to small businesses and certain nonprofit childcare centers. The average microloan is about \$13,000. Microloans are often the basic funding a new small start-up needs to get off the ground.

The Startup PHL funds program is a collaborative effort between the city of Philadelphia, the Philadelphia Industrial Development Corporation, angel investors, and investment firms to establish seed money for early-stage tech start-ups.

Kiva Zip is a crowdfunding platform that allows entrepreneurs to raise capital through interest-free loans made by a community of people around the world that wants to support business ventures.

These are the type of resources that need to be targeted to stagnant business districts such as West Cheltenham Avenue. Many of the resources for small businesses are more readily accessible for residents and business owners in downtown Philadelphia. Satellite offices in underserved communities such as Germantown are important to ensuring that more people can tap into these resources. Many entrepreneurs would prefer to open a business within the community where they live, and West Cheltenham Avenue has numerous vacant spaces waiting to be filled.

Business Attraction

The following suggestions are offered to attract businesses to the study area:

Vacancies Inventory

The first step in reducing vacancies is to know where they are located. A database of vacant properties should be maintained as a reference document in pursuit of a business attraction program. The database should include property owner contact information, site attributes such as square footage, and zoning designation. This should be updated regularly and shared with community partners such as business resource centers, entrepreneurship programs, and the real estate community.

Opportunity Report

A more formal Neighborhood Retail Opportunity Report can be developed as a business attraction tool that “sells” the neighborhood to prospective investors. This report would highlight neighborhood characteristics, such as historical and cultural attractions, housing values, median income, consumer spending power, public transit, business data, key thoroughfares, and public amenities. This document should be easily accessible to anyone seeking to open a business within the area. Again, having strong local partnerships is important to help disseminate the information.

Property Showcase

GUCCDC should consider pursuing a vacant property showcase tour in which it coordinates site visits to multiple commercial properties on behalf of the owners. Typically, participating landlords will provide the development corporation with the key to their shuttered storefronts during organized showcase tours with entrepreneurs seeking a location for their businesses. Participants will be provided information about each site, such as size and rental costs. The showcase tour is also an ideal time to distribute the Neighborhood Retail Opportunity Report recommended above.

Potential Tenant Mix

The Germantown community is home to a wide range of income levels and the retail corridor must meet the needs of the population as a whole. During community planning sessions, businesses such as a farmers market, cafe, bike shop, sit-down restaurants, and entertainment businesses (such as a bowling alley or roller skating rink) were identified as preferences. Many of these businesses can serve as economic generators because they appeal to consumers throughout the broader Philadelphia community. They can also keep business activity going into the evening to avoid the desolate feel and appearance of West Cheltenham Avenue during the evening hours. Attracting shoppers from outside areas will bring vibrancy and new resources to the community. However, the community also needs local retail anchors serving neighborhood residents, such as bakeries, hardware stores, electronics, and apparel businesses. While commercial revitalization efforts have good intent, the approach to economic growth must be carefully planned to ensure that it is serving the entire community. Extensive local engagement should be incorporated in the planning process. However, the key to accurately determining the optimal tenant mix will be the retail market analysis.

Assuming the GUCCDC is the entity spearheading the revitalization efforts, it must build and maintain a strong relationship with property owners within the target area. Collaboration is needed between these stakeholders to have a united goal and common vision for the corridor. For the purpose of having a healthy mix of retail businesses, the GUCCDC can work with landlords to identify ideal commercial tenants that are in sync with the overall vision for the study area. Many property owners may be willing to lease their retail space to the first prospect that shows interest, regardless of whether that incoming business is deemed to have a positive impact on the community. As part of the relationship that the GUCCDC can establish with property owners, it should convince them to take into consideration community impacts when recruiting commercial tenants.

Pop-Up Retail

Commercial property owners should be encouraged to explore the retail pop-up concept. This approach can be a win-win for the property owner, a merchant seeking a temporary space within a limited time frame, and the community as a whole. There are many reasons why a commercial space may be vacant, but sometimes the market dynamics are not in place to match landlords with tenants. The pop-up concept allows landlords to have a rent-paying tenant for a predetermined time period (normally a few weeks to a few months, and in most case less than a year), while the merchant gets the opportunity to test a business venture without the burden of a long-term commercial lease. The landlord receives some rent revenue that would not have been otherwise available, but still has the flexibility to seek the desired level of rent from the next tenant. The community benefits by having one less vacant storefront and an additional option to shop for goods or services.

District Marketing

To maximize economic potential, a commercial district must attract shoppers from outside of the neighborhood. The current retail environment on West Cheltenham Avenue is not a shopping destination. Instead, local residents and workers primarily frequent the businesses. As the community progresses with its revitalization efforts, it can incorporate a district marketing strategy to help brand the district and build on neighborhood pride.

A district marketing campaign can include the development of a visual theme or logo that can be branded on decorative street banners and gift items. A shopping guide listing all existing businesses and websites is a good way to attract visitors. Social media platforms can be used to promote community events and special business offers. Merchants can coordinate promotional events during the holidays or seasonal changes to cross-promote and attract large numbers of shoppers. Street festivals and artists showcases are traffic generators that help to create a sense of place and build the neighborhood brand. The community can work together to think of creative ways to celebrate its rich history and local presence to establish a positive perception of the commercial district that is inviting and brings excitement to consumers. The GUCDC should play a key coordinating role with such efforts.

Concept Plan Implementation

As the public has been told several times throughout this planning process, rarely is a community plan fully implemented and rarely is a community plan not implemented at all. Typically, it is a matter of degree. However, as a general rule, the more stakeholder involvement and support for the planning process, the more success with eventual implementation. Thus, it is important that the GUCDC keep stakeholders fully engaged in the years to come, including residents, property owners, business owners and operators, public officials, institutional representatives, the real estate community, and others.

Public Policies

The development of policies for implementation of the concept plan will consist primarily of a level of self-imposed standards by property and land owners, the enforcement of existing development or regulatory policies, and/or the amendment of existing development standards to achieve concept plan goals. The most likely success may require a combination of all three alternatives.

Storefront Improvement Program

Public policy is just that, standards imposed by some level of government involvement—hopefully with a high degree of community input and acceptance. In the case of this concept plan, many recommendations focus on improving the appearance and function of the public realm. While the city currently has programs that will facilitate this concept plan, such as the Storefront Improvement Program, such a program requires voluntary participation by the property owner in exchange for the financial support.

Design Overlay Districts

Often no single owner wishes to become “the first one in” when attempting to revitalize even a one-block area unless there is a level of comfort that complementary future development will likely occur. The adoption of a design overlay district has the potential to achieve some of the design objectives of this concept plan with respect to privately owned land. The principle behind overlay districts is to provide additional standards within a particular area that do not require more far-reaching zoning or development policy amendments for the entire city. This approach achieves two objectives: greater acceptance by the governing body because it is locally supported, and a more fine-grained tailoring for the unique design characteristics found in the given district. While there may be future potential for the application of such a district to the study area, it is not recommended as a near-term goal unless substantial property owner support develops.

Tax Increment Financing

The city of Philadelphia has a great number of capital assistance and incentive programs available to the Germantown community. This plan recognizes the opportunity for the TIF program a major tool to finance capital improvement projects and hard development cost (primarily infrastructure) for private projects as a major opportunity to partner with the private sector. The fundamental principle behind TIF is the receipt of appreciated revenues from a frozen tax base. A TIF district is created by the governing body and the district property value is frozen at a certain point at a designated point in time. As new development and the appreciation of existing development occurs, the “increment” over the frozen tax base value can be used as revenue for capital projects or funding to assist a developer in the hard cost of developing a project, such as demolition or an intersection improvement. Under Pennsylvania law, projects allowed under TIF funding are new construction, building rehabilitation, site improvements, machinery and equipment acquisition, and limited settlement and processing fees. The Philadelphia Industrial Development Corporation is granted the authority to purpose any area in Philadelphia for a TIF program.

Future Public Policies

An essential facet of effective future public policies is ensuring that the policies align with the goals of this concept plan and any additional planning documents created in support of the project area. Having a total understanding of the principles of the policy and how it relates to the Germantown community will bring greater acceptance and support to implement the plan. As the study area stakeholders pursue new policies necessary for the improvement of the community, having a positive engagement with the relevant elected officials is extremely important. The GUCDC and allied groups must understand and have a willingness to explain the intent of the proposed amended or new public policies rather than assuming that elected officials understand what is being sought.

Priorities and Responsibilities

Because this concept plan was prepared for the Germantown United Community Development Corporation, and because GUCDC is the most logical existing entity, it is recommended that GUCDC be the primary organization responsible for implementing this concept plan. However, recognizing that the GUCDC has no regulatory authority, limited financial resources, and a relatively narrow focus, it cannot be directly responsible for the ultimate implementation of many of this concept plan's ideas. Instead, it should view their organization as a catalyst for positive change toward making the plan a reality. Other key parties for implementation include the city, other community development corporations active in the area, and private business and property owners, to name just a few. Among the key implementation strategies that should be considered are the following:

Initial Geographic Focus

One question raised by the public regarding concept plan implementation has been “where do we begin?” As a general rule of thumb, if a relatively small area comprised of one or two blocks can be revitalized to become vibrant and a destination that draws a strong market for dining, shopping, and living, much less effort is later required for that success to spread to adjacent areas because positive market forces will begin to take over. That said, selecting the optimal target area is typically driven by the place having the greatest inherent strengths, such as high-quality historic buildings, intact streetscapes, and a preexisting critical mass of shopping and dining. However, since the subject study area has no particular place that stands out in this regard, it is recommended that the concept plan be used to leverage action from relevant property owners. For example, if a funding source can be identified to implement streetscape and intersection improvements per this plan, it should be targeted to areas where property owners agree, through negotiations spearheaded by the GUCDC, to improve or redevelop their properties. A binding agreement is likely not possible to obtain, but even a simple gentleman's agreement is preferable to beginning efforts in a random location. Thus, rather than simply giving away streetscape improvements, it can be used to leverage adjacent private-sector redevelopment.

Leverage the SEPTA Rail Station

One particular existing strength of the study area to leverage for implementing this plan is the SEPTA rail station. Although the four entrance areas are in need of physical enhancement, the station still serves as a tremendous draw for residents who may want to live nearby because of highly accessible transit. In fact, transit-oriented developments (TODs) have become a very popular new development type in urban areas throughout the country. There is even an organization known as the Transit Oriented Development Institute (see Figure 61) that certifies and promotes TODs. Many city governments are commissioning plans to increase the residential density and to attract dining and shopping around transit stations, making them a focal point for future growth. The existing SEPTA rail station on Cheltenham should likewise be leveraged for future growth.



Figure 61: Transit Oriented development Institute logo.

Quick-Victory Approach

One approach often used to kick off the implementation of a community plan is to identify a “quick-victory project.” Such a project should have high visibility, high odds of success, and serve as low-hanging fruit that is relatively easy and cost-effective to implement. While there are multiple ideas within this plan that could serve as the quick-victory project, perhaps the most viable is the Coleman Library Plaza project. It is technically just to the east of the three-block study area, but its enhancement could still benefit the West Cheltenham corridor greatly. It would only require coordination with the public library system, and the improvements should not be very costly (removal of the fence, replacement of the bulky tree with a shade tree, and the addition of more seating). Another option that would be more costly and complicated is the proposed Cheltenham Green on the south side of Cheltenham between Wayne and Pulaski. Whichever project is selected, its success needs to be celebrated in a manner that garners strong publicity, and the same should be done with any other victories along the way—even small ones.

Appendices

Appendix A: Picture Gallery



Top: APA President Carol Rhea, FAICP, and Chief Executive Officer Jim Drinan, JD, were in Philadelphia the night of the Germantown CPAT's final presentation. From left: Juan Ayala; Philip Walker, AICP (team leader); Ralph Moore; Carol Rhea, FAICP; Nikolas Davis, ASLA; Ricardi Calixte; Jim Drinan, JD; and Ryan Scherzinger (APA programs manager).

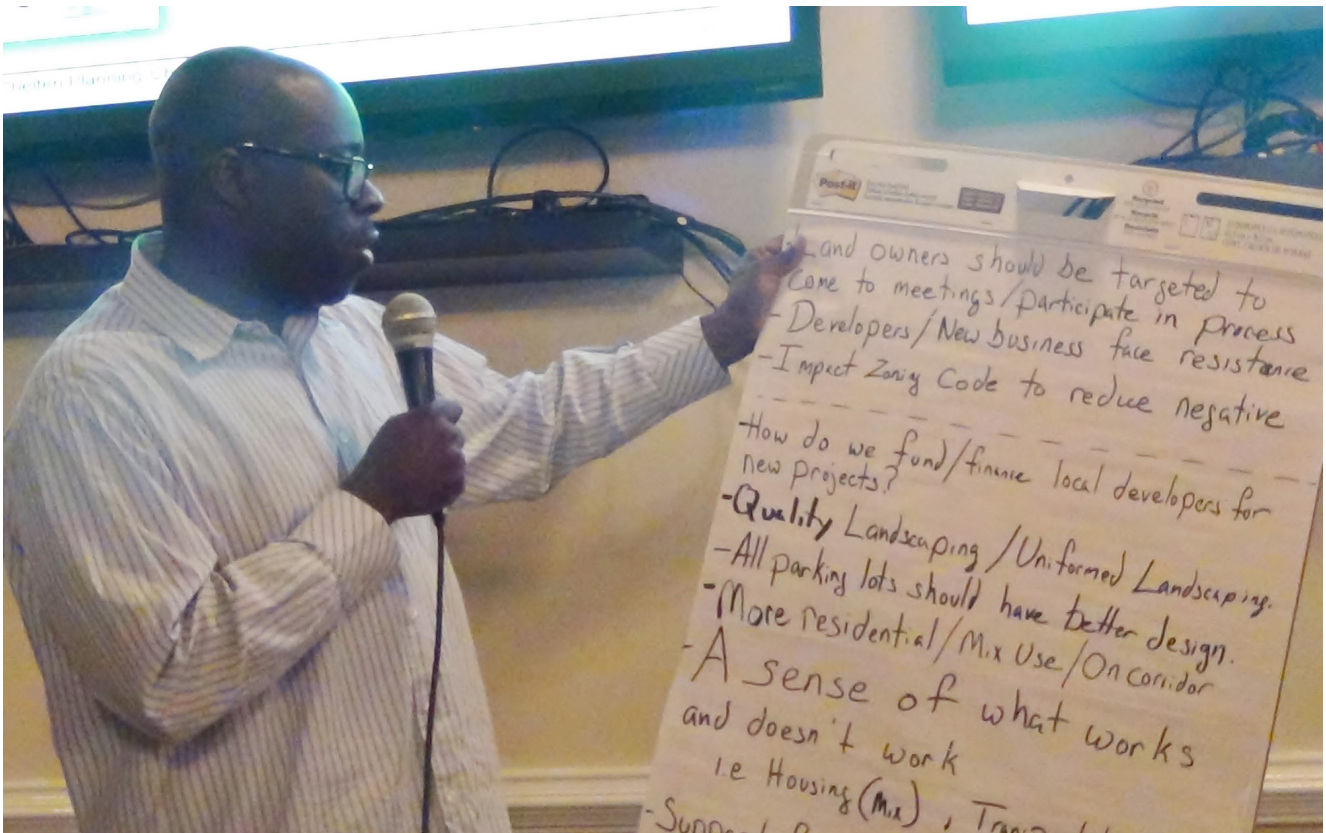
Middle: Team leader Philip Walker, AICP, and APA Programs Manager Ryan Scherzinger conducted a preliminary site visit in September to tour the neighborhood and discuss the project ahead of the full team's visit. From left: Philip Walker, AICP; Garlen Capita (GU CDC board president); Emaleigh Doley (GU CDC corridor manager); and Andy Trackman (GU CDC executive director).

Bottom: The team worked at the Imperfect Gallery, conveniently located on Greene Street just a block from West Cheltenham Avenue. From left: Nikolas Davis, ASLA; Ricardi Calixte; Ralph Moore; Juan Ayala; and Philip Walker, AICP.





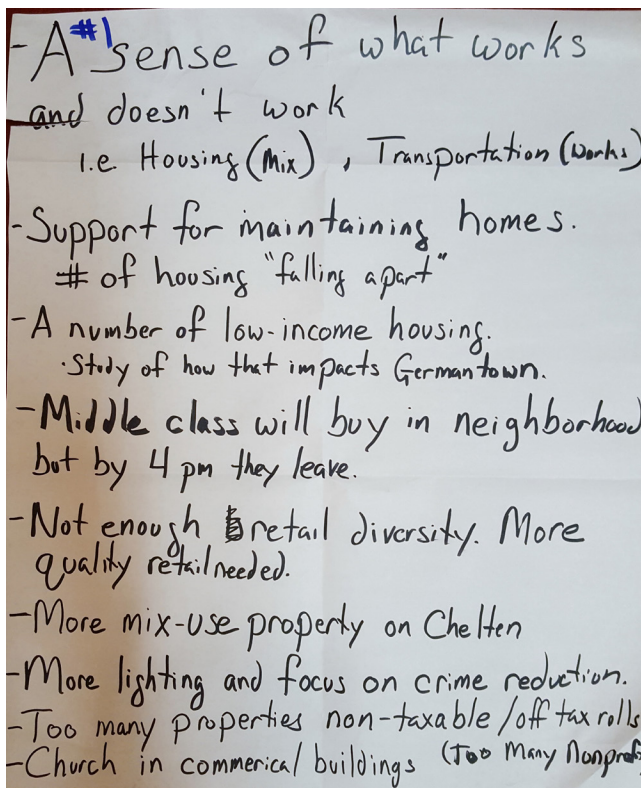
Top: Workshop participants on Monday, May 16, worked in breakout groups to develop their own plans for the study area. Bottom: Participants at the public workshop reported a summary of their groups' discussions.



Appendix B: Germantown CPAT Schedule

Germantown Community Planning Assistance Team Schedule		May 15–20, 2016
Day/Times	Activity	Location
Sunday, May 15, 2016		
Evening	Team members arrive	Airport, hotel
Monday, May 16, 2016		
9:00–10:00 a.m.	Meet with GUCDC staff; background presentation and discussion of project	Imperfect Gallery
10:00 a.m.– Noon	Tour of study area and select areas of Germantown community	Vehicle and walking
Noon–1:00 p.m.	Lunch	TBD
1:00–6:00 p.m.	Tour debrief and preparations for public workshop	Imperfect Gallery
6:30–8:30 p.m.	Public workshop	Pegasus Room
9:00 p.m.	Team debriefing dinner	Restaurant
Tuesday, May 17, 2016		
9:00–10:30 a.m.	Team meeting with GUCDC staff/board members to discuss preliminary ideas	Imperfect Gallery
10:30 a.m.–Noon	Team working session (as needed: discussion; revisit study area; drop-by stakeholder meetings)	Imperfect Gallery
Noon–1:00 p.m.	Lunch	Restaurant
1:00–Evening	Team working session	Imperfect Gallery
Wednesday, May 18, 2016		
9:00 a.m.–Noon	Team working session	Imperfect Gallery
Noon–1:00 p.m.	Lunch with GUCDC staff/board members for status update and feedback	Imperfect Gallery
1:00 p.m.–Evening	Team working session	Imperfect Gallery
Thursday, May 19, 2016		
9:00–10:00 a.m.	Team review of public presentation	Imperfect Gallery
10:00 a.m.–Noon	Team working session	Imperfect Gallery
Noon–1:00 p.m.	Lunch with GUCDC staff to review the final presentation and get feedback	TBD
1:00–5:00 p.m.	Additional work on plan concepts, presentation, final report, etc.	Imperfect Gallery
5:30–7:00 p.m.	Public presentation of draft concept plan; additional input from attendees	Pegasus Room
Friday, May 20, 2016		
9:00–10:00 a.m.	Team debrief and wrap-up with GUCDC staff; discuss community feedback from presentation; discuss next steps for final report	Imperfect Gallery
10:00 a.m.–Noon	Team works to finish first draft of final report; homework assignments for team members	Imperfect Gallery
Noon	Team departs	Airport; train station

The following are the notes and maps breakout groups created during the public workshop held on Monday, May 16, 2016.



SHAPE WEST CHELTEN AVENUE RAPID PLANNING PROJECT BASE MAP

#2

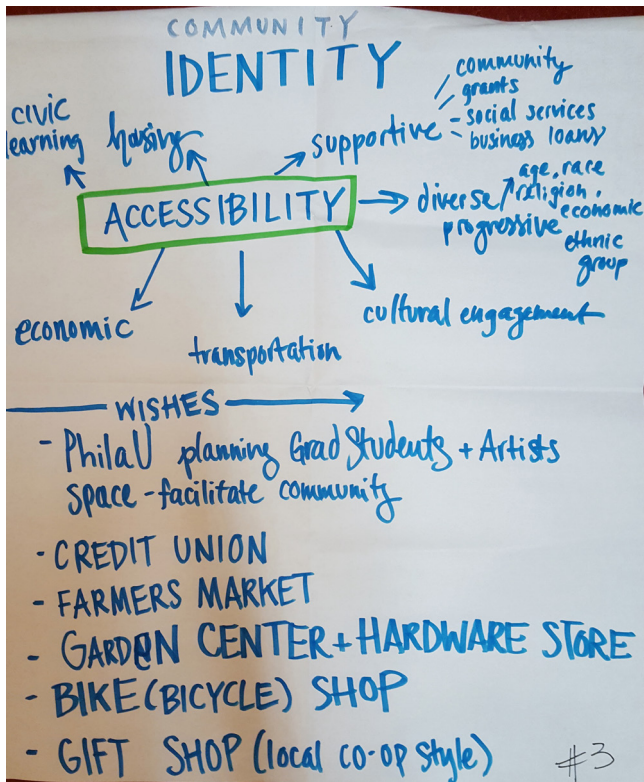


#2

- Bike Rental (INDIGO STATION)
- Wiss. Trail signs
- Highlight Historic Buildings
- NYC Bike lanes
- Better communication between businesses
- Form alliances as a block
- PAINT BIKE LANE FOR BETTER DEFINITION.
- Mural Arts Program
- Uniformity of signs and store fronts
- Green up parking lots
- splash playground
- improve w/ uniform light post/upgrade
- speed cushions
- More sit down eateries
- outdoor seating
- more trees

#3

SHAPE WEST CHELTEN AVENUE RAPID PLANNING PROJECT BASE MAP



WISH LIST

- post office (public or private - UPS/Fedex)
- office supplies + printers
- pocket park/green space @ Mastery along Chelten Ave.
- higher density around train stn.
- comfortable updated bus shelters
- Basketball court w/ lights/roofs along Chelten
- Security Gates removed + businesses provided w/ security systems
- ARTS/CULTURAL VENUE

Appendix A: Meet the Germantown CPAT



Philip Walker, AICP | Team Leader

Phil Walker has more than 30 years of experience in community planning. His public-sector experience consists of serving as the executive director of the Pensacola (Florida) Downtown Improvement Board and city planning director for Natchez, Mississippi. He also spent two years serving as the part-time interim director of the Two Rivers Company, Clarksville, Tennessee's downtown and riverfront revitalization entity. His private-sector experience includes positions with Hintz-Nelessen Associates, Christopher Chadbourne and Associates, and Looney Ricks Kiss Architects. Since establishing The Walker Collaborative in 2002, he has led award-winning planning projects. Walker has consulted to the National Main Street Center and numerous local Main Street programs, and is a speaker at national and regional conferences. He is also an instructor with the University of North Alabama's continuing education program for planning officials.



Juan Ayala

Juan Ayala is cofounder and managing principal of GRID Design Studios LLC. He has 22 years' experience leading projects from small towns and resorts to large mixed use urban development and redevelopment. His recent design projects include a university campus, part of a 1,300-acre city master plan, and a concept design of a 10,000-seat sports arena for Fordham University in New York City. He is also assistant professor of practice in urban design for the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy. He teaches urban design skills and the application of graphic communication to planning, implementation, urban design, architecture, and visioning. His research interest is an expansion of his professional experience—to discover meaningful ways to achieve design solutions through logic, reasoning, science and technology. Ayala is a registered candidate of the National Council of Architectural Registration Board.



Ricardi Calixte

Ricardi Calixte serves as deputy director of the Queens Economic Development Corporation, a private nonprofit organization providing economic development services in Queens County, New York for over 35 years. He manages business development and commercial revitalization initiatives, primarily focusing on low- and moderate-income communities. Recent projects include the development and management of a public pedestrian plaza, coordination of a multiyear graffiti removal program, implementation of a retail market analysis and business attraction plan, and successful creation of multiple merchant-based organizations. He has more than 10 years of experience working in neighborhood economic development. He has a BA in Economics, a master's degree in African American studies, and MRP in urban planning from the State University of New York at Albany. He is also a recipient of the Coro Neighborhood Leadership Training Program Certificate.



Nikolas Davis, ASLA

Nikolas Davis has more than 10 years of professional design and planning experience specializing in urban design, landscape architecture, site plan development, streetscape design, sustainability planning, graphic design, and visualizations. As a senior associate at Houseal Lavigne Associates, he manages much of the firm's versatile studio work, where he provides the connection between the plan-making process and document creation using software tools and drafting techniques. Prior to joining Houseal Lavigne Associates, Davis worked for consulting firms specializing in urban design, landscape architecture, streetscape design, zoning, and development planning. He has a bachelor's degree in landscape architecture from Purdue University. He is a member of the American Society of Landscape Architects, and some of his past work has been awarded recognition in both sustainability and environmental stewardship.



Ralph Moore

Ralph Moore is the executive director of the Memphis Area Association of Governments, a multistate (Tennessee, Arkansas, Mississippi) development district responsible for the planning and economic development coordination of six counties and 44 cities. In addition, Moore and his team are responsible for identifying and managing state and federal grants for member cities and counties. Previously he was director of planning in Newnan, Georgia, and owner of the consulting firm Caram & Associates. He served as mayor of Union City, Georgia, from 1993 to 2014. Moore holds a bachelor's degree in sociology from Marian College and has a master of city planning degree from Texas Southern University.



Ryan Scherzinger | APA Project Manager

Ryan Scherzinger is programs manager for APA in Chicago. He's worked extensively on the Community Planning Assistance Teams program, providing direct technical assistance to communities around the country and abroad with multidisciplinary teams of experts. He has managed myriad programs and special projects for APA for over eight years, including community workshops, case studies, federal grants, symposia and lecture series, study tours, international events, allied outreach and coalitions, and interactive public exhibits. He holds a Master of Arts degree in public anthropology from American University.