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# Part One: The Plan for West Philadelphia

WEST PHILADELPHIA TODAY

**W**est Philadelphia is a vital, richly textured community. Today, 220,000 people, or 13.9 percent of the City's population, live, shop, and in many cases work in West Philadelphia. These residents share many experiences, some of them unique to West Philadelphia: riding the trolleys into Center City, shopping at 52nd Street (West Philly's Main Street), picnicking and playing ball in Fairmount Park, driving between the support columns of the Market-Frankford El, tending neighborhood garden plots, participating in community meetings or school functions, attending



the annual May Fair at Clark Park, and keeping up their houses.

For residents of other parts of the region and for visitors, West Philadelphia is experienced as a drive along West River Drive, a concert at the Mann Music Center, a move into a dormitory room by a college freshman, a trip to the Philadelphia Zoo, visiting a relative at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, enjoying the annual Flower Show at the Civic Center, or taking an AMTRAK train from 30th Street Station.

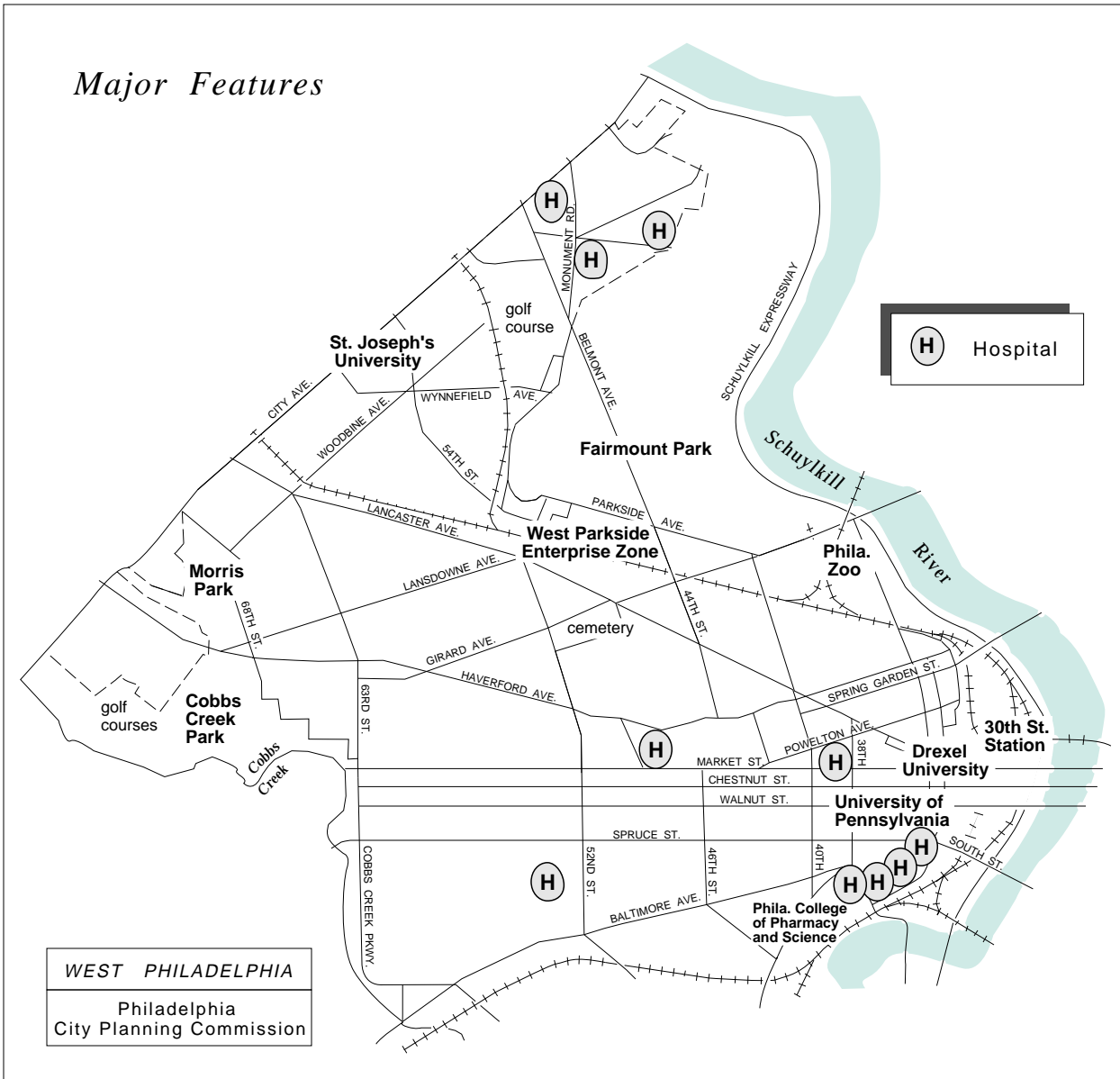
Notwithstanding the many positives, some West Philadelphia neighborhoods suffer the same ills that affect other older urban areas. Over the last several decades there has been a substantial loss of middle class population, widespread poverty, property deterioration and abandonment, main streets that have declined and don't present the best face of the community, deteriorating infrastructure, and too many incidents of crime against people and property that have had devastating impacts in certain neighborhoods. These trends, although not pervasive, are persistent and have affected the quality and the perception of life in the larger West Philadelphia community. The trends that contribute to these negative perceptions must be halted and reversed if West Philadelphia is to sustain itself as a viable urban community.

West Philadelphia's place in the city today is characterized by its role as a residential community. Ever since significant portions of the area were developed, West Philadelphia has functioned mostly as a place to live. It was one of the city's first bedroom communities. This makes West Philadelphia different than North Philadelphia, where the development of major industrial centers created a need for nearby worker housing.

A related function of West Philadelphia is to supply labor for the city's myriad businesses.

The area originally was an important housing resource for workers employed in the city's thriving industrial centers. Today, workers living in West Philadelphia increasingly reflect white collar occupations (managerial, professional, technical, sales and clerical) and public service employment.

West Philadelphia abounds in educational and health care institutions. The University City section of West Philadelphia is a remarkable concentration of universities, colleges, schools, major hospitals and research facilities. Among the many benefits that the city derives from these institutions are accessible health care, enhanced



culture and entertainment opportunities, and a diverse and international population mix. The employment opportunities generated by these institutions are substantial. The universities' 23,000+ employees and 40,000+ students contribute residents, shoppers and taxpayers to the city, as do the more than 4,000 hospital employees of University City. Most importantly, as our economy becomes increasingly based in technology and information, and as the health care industry continues to grow, West Philadelphia's institutions have become crucial to Philadelphia's future economic competitiveness.

An outstanding transportation system is another of West Philadelphia's important assets. In addition to the network of trains, buses and light rail vehicles that serve the area, West Philadelphia's most prominent public transportation facility is 30th Street Station, which is a center for inter-city, regional/commuter and rapid transit rail lines. This is the nation's second busiest train station (behind New York's Penn Station), and its beautifully restored waiting room welcomes visitors to our city in grand style.

West Philadelphia makes a major contribution to recreation resources of both the city and the region. The largest and most intensely developed section of Fairmount Park is located here. West Park, at 1,276 acres, contains two of the park's most popular destinations: the Philadelphia Zoo and the Mann Music Center. Cobbs Creek Park, a linear park at the western edge of the district, serves many residents from West Philadelphia and nearby Delaware County and Montgomery County neighborhoods.

Yet despite all of its assets, West Philadelphia also reflects some of the most serious problems facing the City. There are severely deteriorated neighborhoods in West Philadelphia, along with declining commercial strips, poorly maintained playgrounds, and streets and bridges

that need repair. Some of West Philadelphia's neighborhoods are devoid of major private investment, and unemployment is extremely high in certain areas. Underlying these weaknesses are social problems that are even more difficult to deal with, such as poverty, drugs, lack of education, crime and domestic abuse.

In some neighborhoods, West Philadelphia's problems can seem so overwhelming that the observer wonders which trend will prevail: deterioration and abandonment, or stability and growth. This plan is based on the premise that the many strengths in the West Philadelphia of today can serve as a foundation for a much brighter future.

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#### GOALS FOR WEST PHILADELPHIA

How can we state goals that are far-reaching and ambitious when the city has such limited financial resources?

Goals are essential to planning; without a plan, little can be achieved. Goals are needed to guide decision-making in the near term, and to provide for the longer term future. In the near term, they establish a district-wide context for day to day City government and private sector decisions on matters concerning development, investment, zoning, budgeting, legislation and redevelopment. These incremental decisions can over time make a significant contribution to long term improvements of the area if they are made within the framework of a comprehensive plan.

Goals are also important in the long term. Citizens and government officials need to think beyond immediate problems and crises and consider how the city should change over an extended time period. Our vision of the future of West Philadelphia should not be constrained by current limitations.

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## Goals

### *Maintain and Revitalize West Philadelphia's Neighborhoods*

Since West Philadelphia's primary role in the city is to house people, it follows that the first goal is to maintain and revitalize its neighborhoods. Healthy neighborhoods must be maintained; the characteristics that make these neighborhoods desirable places to live must be protected and enhanced. Deteriorated neighborhoods need to be revitalized, and the priorities for accomplishing revitalization must be established.

#### *Maintaining Neighborhoods:*

Most West Philadelphians live in well-kept row-house neighborhoods where the majority of the homes are owner-occupied. They live in pleasant, healthy surroundings but there is the occasional vacant house or store nearby. Many homes are owned by senior citizens who are finding it difficult to manage the household on a fixed income.

These residents are proud of their block and their neighborhood. However, they often realize that the major, more commercial streets that they use to get to and from their own neighborhood are deteriorated; the condition of these streets gives a false impression that belies the strengths within these neighborhoods, creating a negative image. Unfortunately, that is the image that will be remembered by most visitors to the area.

In response to this situation, the goal for many West Philadelphia neighborhoods is to preserve and maintain the high quality of the housing stock by focusing on the rehabilitation of scattered vacant buildings, by facilitating upkeep and repair of occupied homes, and by addressing deterioration along the major streets.

#### *Revitalizing Neighborhoods:*

Other West Philadelphia neighborhoods have

severe problems with large numbers of vacant, deteriorated homes, vacant lots, poverty, drugs and crime. Residents of these areas have watched most of the more prosperous families move away, their houses successively being reoccupied by families with lower and lower incomes who are unable to adequately maintain them. Eventually, many of these properties have become abandoned. The remaining residents have witnessed the closing of corner stores, pharmacies and dry cleaners, and they know that drugs are sold openly on nearby street corners.

In response to these challenging circumstances, the goal is to revitalize these deteriorating neighborhoods through targeted housing rehabilitation, retail commercial development, constructive use of vacant land, new housing construction, improved playgrounds, and in tackling the unmet social needs that are the root cause of most of the physical problems in the neighborhoods. The focus of this revitalization will be to benefit people currently living there: families and individuals with low to moderate incomes.

#### *Enhancing Neighborhoods Through New Development:*

New development opportunities exist in almost every West Philadelphia neighborhood. These opportunities, some of which can be undertaken by local non-profit development corporations, should be promoted to the benefit of each neighborhood and for the overall improvement of West Philadelphia. New development that is compatible with existing uses, and thoughtfully designed and executed, can positively impact a residential area. Promoting and guiding the design of new development will be a continuing part of the effort to protect and enhance West Philadelphia's neighborhoods.

***Expand And Strengthen The Diverse Economic Base That Exists In West Philadelphia.***

This goal encompasses the desire to (1) accommodate the growth of West Philadelphia's universities, hospitals and research park, to (2) promote private investment in the retail commercial strips and office commercial zones, to (3) encourage industrial development in the Parkside Enterprise Zone, and, (4) for the entire district, to establish development guidelines and urban design policies which ensure that new construction is well-designed and compatible with the surroundings.

***Accommodating the Growth of Institutions:***

West Philadelphia's greatest economic asset, and its largest category of employers, is the concentration of universities and hospitals of University City. The location of these institutions in one small area of West Philadelphia which has a distinctive campus flavor is unique in the Philadelphia region. However, many of these facilities must continue to grow to remain competitive. Therefore, another objective of this plan is to encourage and facilitate the expansion and continued competitiveness of University City's institutions. But the growth and success of these institutions must be accomplished in accordance with the needs and aspirations of surrounding neighborhoods.

The same goal and the same principles pertain, of course, to the important institutions located outside University City such as Misericordia Hospital, Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine, City Avenue Hospital, Jefferson Park Hospital, St. Joseph's University, the Urban Education Foundation and the Institute of Pennsylvania Hospital. Many of these facilities are also experiencing growth pressures whose impact on the surrounding community must be carefully considered.

***Promoting Private Investment in the Retail Commercial Strips:***

The availability of retail services is not one of West Philadelphia's strengths. Residents who rely on neighborhood shopping areas often cannot find the goods they need, and they do not always have the opportunity to shop in a clean, safe environment. West Philadelphia residents who have a car at their disposal often travel relatively long distances to attend to daily shopping needs. For all families, having access to a broad range of goods and services is essential to satisfaction with their neighborhood. The plan will focus on ways to improve West Philadelphia's retail commercial services.

***Promoting Investment in the Office Commercial Sector:***

West Philadelphia's office employment will never rival that of Center City. However, office activity and new opportunities for office development exist in West Philadelphia near 30th Street Station, at the University City Science Center and in other parts of University City, at 46th & Market Streets and along the City Avenue corridor.

In view of these opportunities, the goals for improving the service sector of the economic base in West Philadelphia are: to promote office growth by providing information about the advantageous business environment and office development opportunities in West Philadelphia; to devise land use and development strategies that reinforce emerging office zones and, most importantly, to identify ways to improve the way these office districts function. This last objective involves several considerations: improving the experience of arriving by foot or by transit, dealing with traffic and parking issues, and helping to create a proper environment for office buildings -- by having appropriate retail services available to employees and by helping create

safe and aesthetically pleasing surroundings for employees, customers and clients.

*Encouraging Industrial Development in the West Parkside Enterprise Zone:*

Manufacturing activity continues to be on the decline in Philadelphia, but West Philadelphia can contribute to the industrial job base through continued development of the Parkside Industrial Park and continued support for the businesses in the larger West Parkside Enterprise Zone. The State Enterprise Zone initiative, which provides a variety of low-interest loans, state tax credits, security rebates, utility discounts and job-training and placement services, increases West Philadelphia's potential for future job growth and will also improve that area's physical appearance.

*Planning for Quality and Compatibility of New Construction:*

Supporting new development and new construction is another objective that The Plan for West Philadelphia will seek to achieve. There is much capacity for growth through new construction — the Planning Commission has identified 70 major parcels of land that await development. Realizing quality development on these parcels must be integral to efforts to strengthen the neighborhoods, commercial areas and institutions of West Philadelphia. Greater awareness of the opportunities for new development can be promoted through the information contained in this plan, and standards for the quality of new construction will be recommended.

*Create A More Attractive Urban Environment In The Neighborhoods And Public Areas Of West Philadelphia.*

This goal relates to how West Philadelphia is experienced by both residents and visitors; specifically, how its streets, sidewalks and other

public spaces contribute to the quality of the urban environment.

*Enhancing the Pedestrian Experience:*

Walking through the 52nd Street commercial area is an interesting and often stimulating experience, but walking from 30th Street Station to an office at the University of Pennsylvania can be a battle against traffic, wind, nondescript buildings and visual monotony. Strolling past the renovated storefronts of Lancaster Mews in Powelton is a delight, but walking out of City Avenue Hospital to go to lunch at a restaurant is the start of a much less pleasant journey for the pedestrian. A vibrant pedestrian experience should be an inherent advantage of a city, and it is a goal of the Plan to recommend ways to realize this potential in West Philadelphia.

*Improving "Gateways" and Image-Making Locations:*

It is also a goal that visitors to West Philadelphia will be greeted with positive and pleasant images at the point of entry. An attractive "gateway" can be as grand as 30th Street Station or as simple as the new identification signs in the Overbrook Farms neighborhood. However, entering the city by driving through a littered section of parkland or past a graffiti-strewn bus shelter is an unpleasant experience. People coming to West Philadelphia should be welcomed by the physical environment they encounter. The first impression is a lasting impression. Creating positive gateways often involves only inexpensive improvements, regular maintenance, and attention to detail. Recommendations in this plan will also focus on public art, landmarks and important intersections inside West Philadelphia in relation to the image they project to both residents and visitors.

*Preserve Individual Buildings and Areas of West Philadelphia that are Architecturally or Historically Valuable:*

The Planning Commission will continue to support and encourage the preservation of historic buildings and the establishment of districts. In West Philadelphia, historic preservation initiatives have benefitted residents of all income levels by spurring housing rehabilitation. Saving distinctive architecture and providing new housing and commercial space through historic preservation is an important goal of The Plan for West Philadelphia.

***Meet The Human Service Needs Of Low And Moderate Income West Philadelphians.***

A general improvement in the physical and economic conditions in West Philadelphia will not necessarily produce a concomitant improvement in the quality of life for low and moderate income West Philadelphians. West Philadelphia has a high concentration of people in poverty, and others with special needs, such as female headed households, recent immigrants and the elderly poor. High quality and affordable public services and facilities are important to all residents, but for these highly vulnerable populations, they can be the difference between life and death, success or failure. Accordingly, special efforts must be made to meet the human service needs of low income West Philadelphians through the improvement in the quality of individual services and through the coordination of service delivery.

***Foster Improvements in the Quality of Public Education***

Like all citizens, West Philadelphians must be well educated to function as effective citizens and to hold meaningful employment. Thus, great attention must be paid to improving the public school system. Initiatives to improve learning

outcomes for all students should be supported. Families and the broader community should be encouraged to participate in the life and operation of the schools, and school facilities should be made available to the community during off hours. Finally, collaborative efforts between the schools and business should be strengthened.

***Promote Programs that Encourage a Healthy Lifestyle***

In West Philadelphia, there is a strong correlation between poverty and poor health. Programs designed to prevent illness through the maintenance of a healthy lifestyle should be a major focus, with emphasis on particularly vulnerable populations (teenagers, pregnant women, young children and the very old) and on especially needy communities, such as Mantua and East Parkside. The City's limited resources dictate that we make maximal use of available federal and state dollars and that citizens be encouraged to use existing resources efficiently. West Philadelphia's two public District Health Centers have a major role to play in ensuring that residents have access to quality health care.

***Assist Private Efforts at Human Resource Development***

Reinforcing the well established network of community organizations and other resources in West Philadelphia is a high priority, as they have proven to be a cost-effective way to reach and help people. The City must support these organizations and assist their efforts to get financial help from other levels of government and the philanthropic community.

Given the extent of unemployment and under-employment in West Philadelphia, job training and referral programs must receive a higher priority with areas of greatest need to be targeted by the Private Industry Council (PIC) for these services. The City should distribute

information on these programs throughout the community on a continuing basis.

In recent years, little attention has been paid to planning for human resource development. The Planning Commission should take the lead in planning a more comprehensive system for the delivery of human resource programs in West Philadelphia that can serve as a model for the City.

#### ***Increase Public Safety***

Few issues tear at the fabric of urban life more than the fear for personal safety. The Police Department is faced with almost insurmountable obstacles in its efforts to prevent crime and apprehend criminals. Yet, with the Community Policing Program and community-based Town Watch organizations, the effectiveness of the Police Department can be improved and progress can be made. Programs that focus on children, youth and families can prevent crime, and are also a priority. Finally, the City must continue efforts to improve the criminal justice system, including the courts, prisons and the probation system.

#### ***Provide Improved Recreation Opportunities***

The City must maintain its existing good network of active and passive recreation facilities. Private institutions, like the universities, should be encouraged to share their resources with the public, and public institutions, like the public schools system, should maximize the use of their facilities by the broader community. Finally, The City must provide opportunities for the community use and management of open space for passive recreation use that can be developed from the vacant land that has resulted from population loss.

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#### WEST PHILADELPHIA TOMORROW

Consider the outsider's view of West Philadelphia. What does a Philadelphia area resident associate with West Philadelphia? These landmarks would probably be mentioned: the University of Pennsylvania, Drexel University, the Philadelphia Zoo, 30th Street Station. In the future, another major landmark will be mentioned in the same breath: the spectacular new development over the rail yards at 30th Street Station.

Once transformed, this 60-acre site will be an extension of higher density, mixed use development to the west bank of the Schuylkill River. Envisioned are a dozen high rise buildings including office towers, hotels, apartments, and shops, along with low-rise housing and a generous allowance of open space that will buffer the impact of this development from the neighborhoods nearby and provide a recreation resource for these communities. Over 20,000 people could be employed here, with development occurring on a platform which allows the rail movements to continue below. The Schuylkill River bridges will be dramatically illuminated at night. The Schuylkill West Bank, located near Philadelphia's most heavily used rail terminal and abutting the Schuylkill and Vine Street Expressways, will be a beacon for West Philadelphia, for the City and for the entire region.

Another future landmark is gradually taking shape at the intersection of Civic Center Boulevard and University Avenue, where a health care campus of national importance continues to expand. In the future, the existing medical and research complex (which includes the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, Children's Seashore House and the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center) is expected to expand

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*A plan is set forth for the development and beautification of an important new district -- the Schuylkill West Bank.*

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*The Philadelphia Civic Center will be sold and redeveloped. The 19.5-acre site is expected to become part of the City's largest health care complex.*

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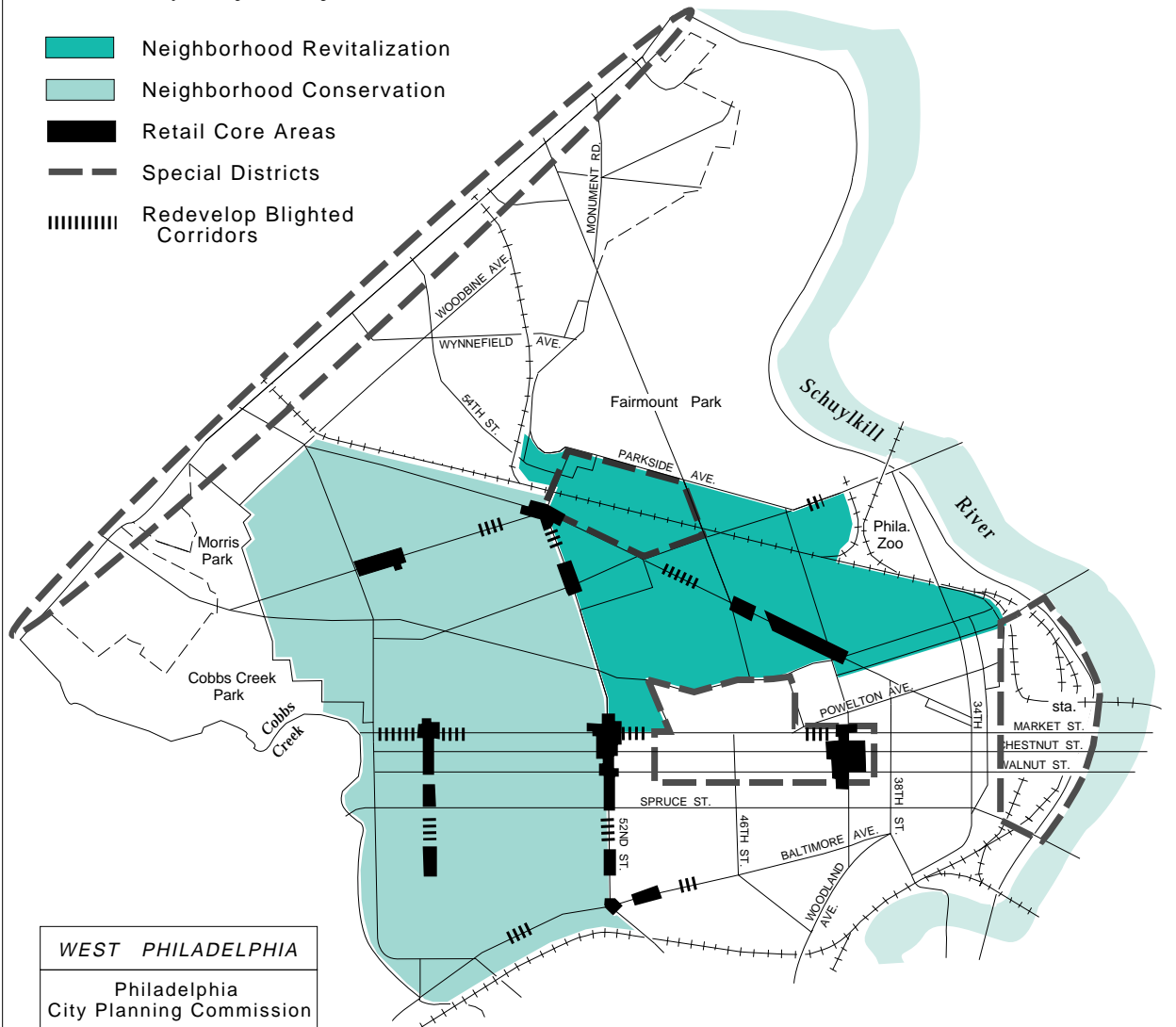
onto the 19.5-acre Civic Center site. The City-owned Civic Center will be sold for private health care related development, providing a new land resource for the renewal and expansion of the health care facilities. This evolving medical campus is a prime economic asset for the City of Philadelphia. Jobs, investment and construction

are concentrated here; and this activity should increase in a planned and coordinated manner in the years ahead.

These high-profile projects are very important to the city's economic future, and they will be recognized by people in all parts of the Philadelphia region. However, the Plan for West

### Summary Of Major Recommendations

- Neighborhood Revitalization
- Neighborhood Conservation
- Retail Core Areas
- Special Districts
- Redevelop Blighted Corridors



Philadelphia focuses most closely on the residents of West Philadelphia and their quality of life. Accordingly, the living environment for West Philadelphia's residents will be renewed so that the neighborhoods of West Philadelphia will be healthier and more attractive in the future.

North of Market Street and east of 52nd Street (the neighborhoods between Mantua and West Parkside), the trend of deterioration will be reversed. Parkside Avenue, along the edge of Fairmount Park, is already well on its way to becoming a model for historically renovated housing for low and moderate income households. The Parkside Industrial Park will increase its importance as a hub of activity and employment. Mantua's main street, Haverford Avenue, will become a lively and attractive Town Center. In the Belmont neighborhood, the blighting influence of a vacant mid-rise hospital complex is being turned into a community asset as a full city block is developed as new and rehabilitated housing. In the Cathedral Park neighborhood along the Girard Avenue trolley route, an area of high residential vacancy can become a housing and recreation resource and a neighborhood strength. Lancaster Avenue's busy commercial strip will function even better with the addition of convenient, safe parking for shoppers. The beneficiaries of these initiatives will be low and moderate income residents.

Improvements to the natural environment and improved utilization of existing parkland are also part of West Philadelphia's future. Vacant lots can become private yards or community gardens, and classic neighborhood parks such as Black Oak and Carroll Parks will be made safer and more inviting. In Cobbs Creek Park, a new bicycle and exercise trail will be used by residents of many Philadelphia and suburban neighborhoods; while along the Schuylkill, an expanded system of pedestrian paths will serve West Philadelphians.

The neighborhoods of Cobbs Creek and Haddington, stable communities with well-maintained housing, will benefit in the future from the renewal of properties along Market Street and 52nd Street which create deteriorated edges to these neighborhoods at the present time. The landscape and streetscape of these key image-making streets will also be improved; an example that will be particularly uplifting to these neighborhoods is the future refurbishing of the Market-Frankford Elevated structure with brightly colored paint, graphics, architectural lighting and improved street lighting. Homeowner support programs (home improvement loans and grants, street improvements and scattered new development projects) will also be targeted for these neighborhoods and for Carroll Park and Overbrook in particular.

While historic preservation, zoning protection and traffic flow improvements will be the goals for most of the City Line area, there are major changes in store for the Wynnefield Heights / Wynnefield area. New development must occur in a manner that enhances the surrounding neighborhoods. At City and Monument Avenues, a new retail complex will complement the offices, hotels and restaurants that already characterize the area. Another hotel will be added along City Avenue in response to the area's extensive employment base and its proximity to the Schuylkill Expressway. At City Line near 54th Street, the campus of St. Joseph's University will be significantly expanded according to a master plan, without encroaching on the nearby residential community. On Conshohocken and Ford Roads, large vacant institutional properties will be developed in a way that is appropriate for the surrounding residential area; and traffic congestion at Ford & Conshohocken will be eased with a reconfigured intersection.

University City's neighborhoods will contin-

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*Targeted Action is recommended for the most blighted neighborhoods. Recommendations will guide the use of CD-funded housing programs.*

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*A festive Town Center will be created in Mantua.*

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*An Open Space Strategy is proposed for Mantua, Belmont and Mill Creek.*

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*The campuses of the University of Pennsylvania and Drexel University will expand in an easterly direction, toward the Schuylkill.*

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*The blighted highway corridors will be revitalized. These major corridors tie the neighborhoods together and shape the image of West Philadelphia.*

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ue to attract professional families, and the character and integrity of those neighborhoods will not be threatened by expansion of the universities. Instead, the University of Pennsylvania and Drexel University will direct their largest expansion projects to the east, taking advantage of larger real estate opportunities and avoiding neighborhood conflicts. Again, economic growth will be accomplished in a manner that is compatible with the neighborhoods. Fortieth Street (from Locust to Market) will be the center of a larger retail, restaurant and entertainment area, while new development will replace obsolete commercial uses on Market Street west of 40th.

Major changes will occur in the heart of West Philadelphia near 46th & Market Streets, where new houses and stores will be constructed. These projects will enliven an area that is presently barren and underutilized except for the magnificent gold-domed Urban Education Foundation building which will be the centerpiece of the new development district. The effect of this development combined with all the other changes will be to give West Philadelphians a new image of their area and renewed pride in their surroundings.

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#### BACKGROUND

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#### **The Purpose of a District Plan**

A district plan such as The Plan for West Philadelphia establishes an area-wide context and helps guide future decisions about how a section of the city can change and develop. In particular it will guide official Planning Commission recommendations about zoning, urban renewal, capital spending, legislation as well as broader city policies and public and private investment decisions that affect West Philadelphia.

Topics that can be addressed in a district

plan include physical development, human needs, economic development, neighborhood planning and urban design. The plan can be as general as talking about the “image” or public perception of West Philadelphia or it can be as specific as recommending the best use for a single parcel of land in one of the neighborhoods.

District Plans were first published by the Philadelphia City Planning Commission in 1963, when a Center City Plan was released, followed in 1964 by a West Philadelphia Plan. During the 1980’s, the Planning Commission has re-established the practice of preparing district plans by releasing plans for Roxborough-Manayunk, the Delaware and Schuylkill Riverfronts, and most recently for North Philadelphia and Center City.

There has been broad-based public participation both in the preparation and in the implementation of these plans. While the Planning Commission staff prepares the plan and is responsible for its content, the plan development process involves extensive discussion with citizens, community groups, business groups, local institutions, developers, elected officials and other governmental agencies.

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#### **The Process**

A district plan is typically prepared through a process that always begins with the establishment of goals and objectives. Then, historical background and existing characteristics of the area are researched. Next, the very important identification and detailed study of the issues occurs. Then the district is analyzed in terms of its problems, needs and constraints; and conversely, in terms of its strengths, opportunities, unique resources and advantages.

Finally, the district plan makes recommendations for actions or policies to achieve the stated goals. Recommendations can be phrased in general or specific terms, and they can be firm or flexible. They can apply to the district, a neigh-

borhood, a highway corridor or a specific site. Recommendations can also be made for a particular topic or function such as recreation, transportation or municipal budgeting.

### ***The West Philadelphia Planning Process, 1990 to 1994***

The final Plan for West Philadelphia is the third in a series of publications resulting from the West Philadelphia planning process.

The Planning Commission staff began assembling district-wide background information for West Philadelphia in 1989, and in April 1990 a Working Paper was published, entitled, West Philadelphia District Plan: Starting the Process. Almost one thousand copies of this publication were distributed to community groups, businesses and institutions, developers, public agencies and interested citizens during the following year. The purpose of the 1990 Working Paper was to invite public participation in setting goals for the plan, to discuss the issues that should be addressed by the Plan, to provide valuable background information, and to encourage broad community participation in the planning process.

After extensive community meetings and staff research, the draft version of The Plan for West Philadelphia was completed in December, 1992. Again, about one thousand copies of this publication were printed and distributed followed by a second series of community meetings and discussions. With the draft Plan, the public could respond to actual recommendations and strategies. The staff of the Planning Commission listened carefully to the community, documented all of the comments, and incorporated many of them into this final version of the Plan. This document is therefore the culmination of a complex process.

### ***Community Participation***

In April 1990, the staff initiated an intensive effort to involve the West Philadelphia community in this plan. The staff met with 23 community groups and business groups, some more than once, and with executives from 10 leading institutions in West Philadelphia. Meetings were held with the West Philadelphia Partnership and the West Philadelphia Coalition of Neighborhoods and Businesses, with a special planning task force established by those two groups, and with the West Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce.

Presentations of the Plan were made at each of these meetings, and civic leaders reacted with a broad range of comments and concerns. In separate meetings the Mayor and affected district Councilpersons were briefed by the staff.

A total of five larger Town Meetings were also arranged by the Planning Commission staff. These public meetings were advertised in local newspapers. Each Town Meeting was attended by at least 50 persons, and each meeting involved lengthy questions and comments from the audience.

Since this planning process began at the Planning Commission, the community has also engaged in significant planning activity of its own. Prominent in this activity are the plans that were prepared by West Philadelphia community groups since 1990. These plans were reviewed and commented on by the Planning Commission staff:

(1) The Strategic Community Development Plan for West Philadelphia (West Philadelphia Coalition of Neighborhoods and Businesses)

(2) Plans for the "Westbank Greenway" (Powelton Village Civic Association)

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*A district plan guides future decisions about how a section of the city can change and develop over the long term.*

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*Citizen participation has been a major element of this planning process. The staff held formal meetings about the Plan with 23 community groups and hosted five Town Meetings which were open to the public and advertised in local newspapers.*

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(3) The Walnut Hill Strategic Neighborhood Plan (Walnut Hill Community Association and the West Philadelphia Partnership Community Development Corporation)

Another locally-initiated plan that was reviewed by the staff is the West Philadelphia Landscape Plan. It was prepared by the University of Pennsylvania's Department of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning.

These community-generated plans stand as independent statements about the future of West Philadelphia, and many of their recommendations are reflected in the Planning Commission's proposals.

The Philadelphia City Planning Commission and its staff want to thank all those who communicated with us during the preparation of this Plan - whether those communications took the form of formal plans, correspondence or oral comments.

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*The Plan for West Philadelphia continues in Part Two, which describes existing conditions in the planning area. The Plan recommendations are contained in Parts Three, Four and Five of this report.*

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