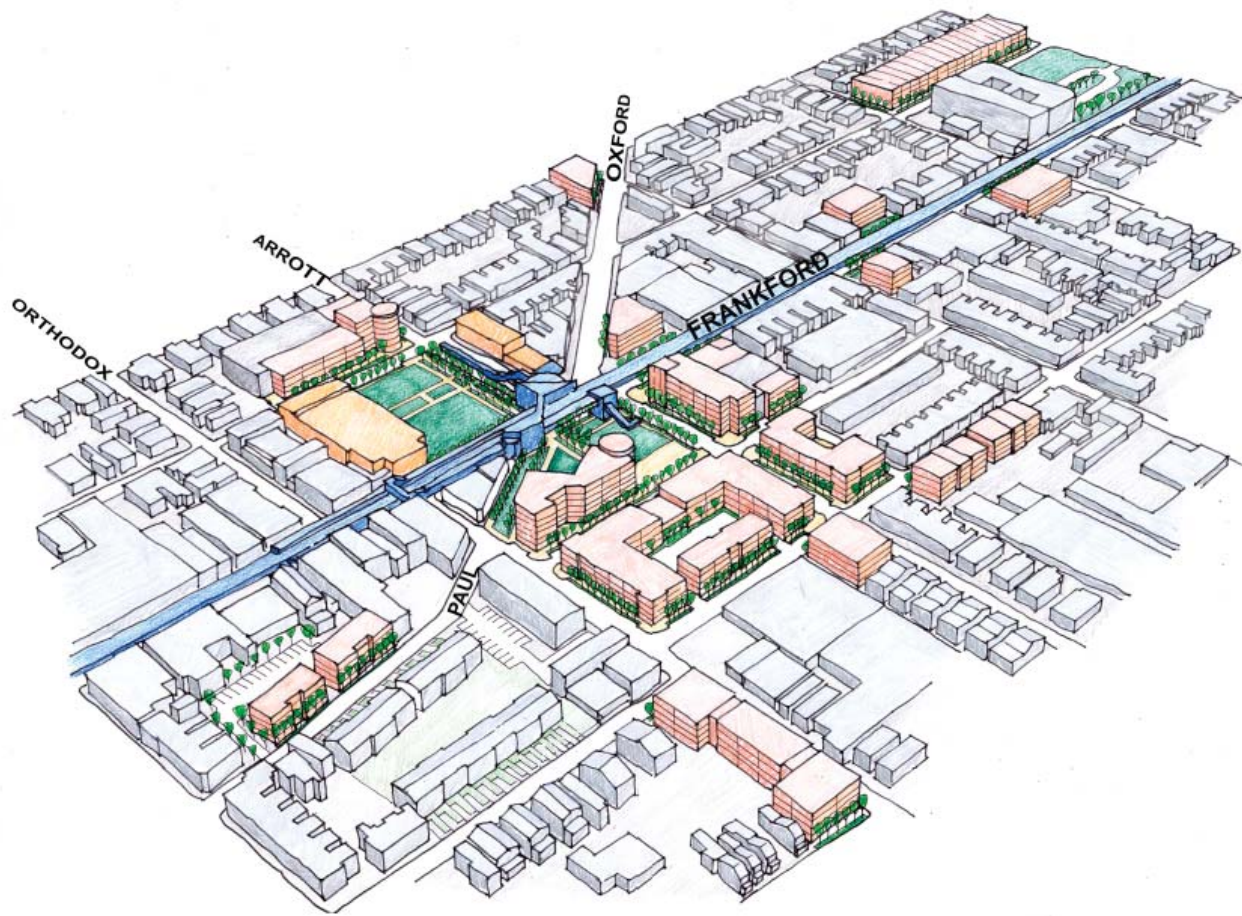


Frankford Avenue Corridor - Transit Oriented Development Plan

Transportation and Community Development Initiative (TCDI) Studies

Philadelphia City Planning Commission, Philadelphia, PA



DRAFT

June 2006

Transit Oriented Development along the Frankford Avenue Corridor

Transportation and Community Development Initiative (TCDI) Studies
Philadelphia City Planning Commission, Philadelphia, PA

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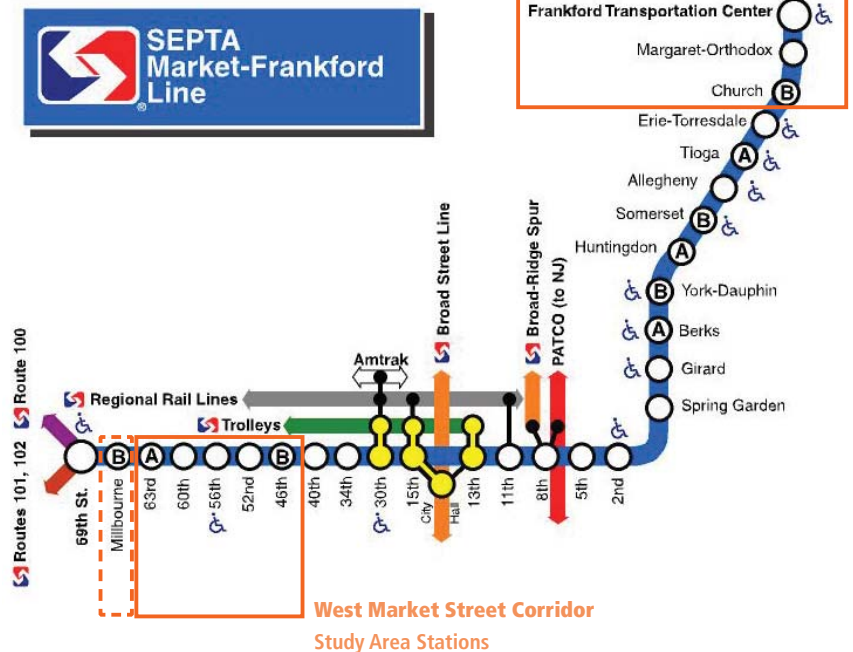
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1.0 Introduction

Philadelphia has the advantage of being well connected through a variety of transit options. The City's transit network consists of approximately 400 miles of heavy rail, sixty-five bus lines, nine trolley lines, and three subway/elevated trains. Three separate transit agencies operate within the City, including the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA), the Port Authority Transit Corporation (PATCO), and New Jersey Transit. SEPTA is the primary transit operator in the City, with approximately 1.5 million commuters using its transit system everyday.

SEPTA's Market-Frankford Blue Line (the El), an elevated/subway train that provides service between the 69th Street Terminal in Upper Darby Township and the Frankford Transportation Center in Northeast Philadelphia, is one of the most heavily used transit lines in the network. The El is the primary transit connection between the western and northeastern parts of the City, providing key transfer points with other major transit lines, including the Broad Street line, regional rail

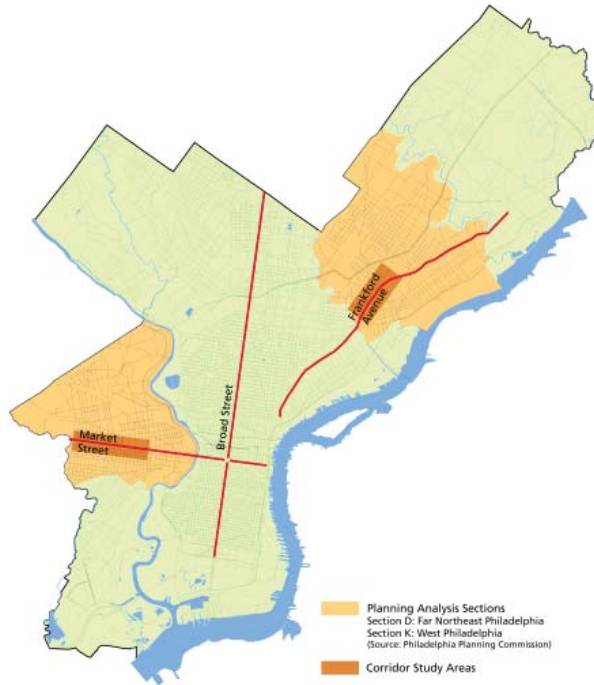
SEPTA Market-Frankford Blue Line
Route map (Source: SEPTA)



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City, Neighborhoods and Study Area Corridors



City, Neighborhoods and EL



lines, trolleys, and bus and light rail service to the suburbs via the 69th Street Terminal. On the western end of the line, the El travels along the West Market Street Corridor, through University City and multiple other neighborhoods in the West Philadelphia section of the City, terminating at the 69th Street Terminal. On the northeastern end, the El travels along Frankford Avenue, terminating at the Frankford Transportation Center in the Frankford neighborhood of Northeast Philadelphia.

The El is the City's oldest high speed line, with public service beginning in 1907 between 69th Street and 15th Street. The immediate success of the line promulgated an extension from 15th Street to 2nd Street in 1908, with additional service extensions to South Street which were later discontinued. The line operated as an elevated train between 69th Street and a point just east of the Schuylkill River until 1955, and later ran underground. The Frankford Avenue line was constructed by the City of Philadelphia in 1915 and opened for public service in 1922, providing the current direct connection with the Market Street Subway, elevated east of 2nd Street, and the Frankford Elevated Terminal at Bridge Street.

The aging infrastructure of the western-most portion of the El prompted SEPTA to embark on a major multi-year replacement of the 100-year old structure and station renovation projects for 46th Street, 52nd Street, 56th Street, 60th Street, 63rd Street and Millbourne stations. Construction of this project began in 2003 and it is expected to be completed by 2008. In early 2004, SEPTA constructed a new terminal building and El realignment at

the Frankford Transportation Center. SEPTA plans to open a new parking garage and complete renovation of the Bridge Street Terminal building by September 2006.

The El reconstruction projects in both corridors have created disruption and inconvenience to the local residents and businesses. The disruption has been exacerbated by delays in construction, particularly in the West Market Street corridor. However, when completed, the new El structure on Market Street is expected to significantly improve neighborhood conditions for residents and businesses, including reduced noise and allowance of more light to reach the sidewalks. In addition to SEPTA's investments, the City's Streets Department plans to reconstruct Market Street with wider sidewalks and pedestrian friendly bulb-outs at major intersections. These improvements are planned throughout the West Market Street Corridor from 44th Street to the 63rd Street. In Frankford, the new terminal building and realignment of the El structure along the section of Frankford Avenue has improved noise reduction and sunlight conditions for the businesses near the terminal. The new concrete El support structure has also improved noise reduction along the rest of Frankford Avenue.

SEPTA's El reconstruction project will result in quieter operation and a less obtrusive structure, thereby improving conditions in the neighborhoods surrounding the West Market Street and Frankford Avenue transit corridors. The neighborhood improvements anticipated by the reconstruction project and the significant number of vacant properties near transit stations in both the corridors provide opportunities for new development and



Newly built Frankford
Transportation Center



Realigned El structure
and Frankford Avenue

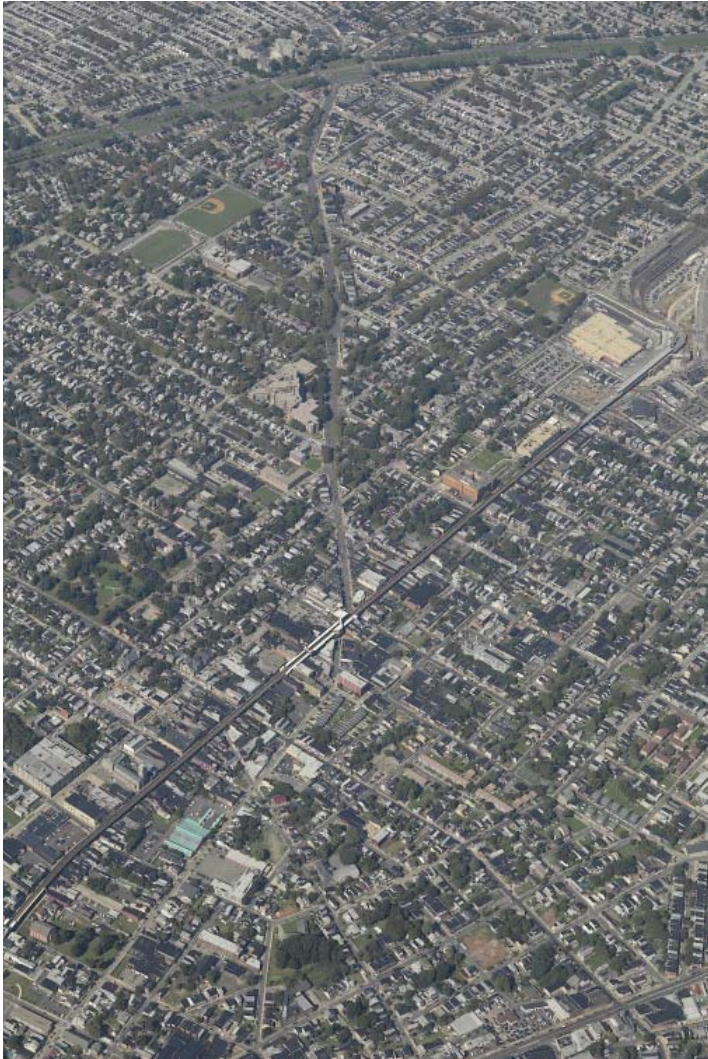


Construction of new parking garage by SEPTA
Bustleton Ave. near FTC

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Aerial view of Frankford Avenue Corridor (Source: PCPC)



redevelopment that is designed around and reinforced by the transit stations. This concept, commonly known as Transit Oriented Development, or TOD, will enable the areas surrounding the two El corridors to maximize the economic and community benefits from the ongoing transit improvements.

The SEPTA investments and opportunities for community development in these significant transit corridors require sound planning to ensure that the surrounding neighborhoods and the City as a whole are achieving maximum benefits. As part of the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission's (DVRPC) Transportation and Community Development Initiative (TCDI) grant, the Philadelphia City Planning Commission (PCPC) selected Wallace Roberts and Todd, LLC (WRT) and their team of sub-consultants, Nelson Nygaard and Real Estate Strategies (RES), to prepare TOD studies for the West Market Street and Frankford Avenue corridors. The Market–Frankford TOD Plan focuses on eight El stations along the corridors, including the 46th, 52nd, 56th, 60th and 63rd Street stations on the West Market Corridor and the Church Street, Margaret Orthodox, and Frankford Transportation Center Stations on the Frankford Avenue corridor.

1.1 The TOD Concept

TOD refers to a compact, walkable mixed use development within an easy walk of a transit station. Its pedestrian-oriented design encourages residents and workers to use transit.

TOD communities are usually characterized by moderate to high density development and a mix of residential, commercial, office, and institutional uses.

TOD development can provide multiple benefits to a community, including reduced dependence on automobiles and reduced household expenses, reduction in traffic congestion, enhancing accessibility to non-drivers (e.g. elderly, disabled, youth, low income residents), enhancing pedestrian activity, and economic development.

What makes a TOD successful depends on a variety of characteristics. Simply locating development next to a transit stop does not qualify as TOD. TOD is development designed to create connections between neighborhoods and transit in a way that encourages transit use and pedestrian movement, usually with activity taking place around the station area at least 16 hours per day, 7 days per week. This level of activity is best achieved through a mix of residential, office and retail uses as well as entertainment destinations. TOD should also be well integrated with other modes of transportation, such as bus, bicycle, and even automobile traffic.

A well designed TOD will display the following physical characteristics:

- Mix of uses
- Compact form of development with higher densities
- A recognizable place and center of activity
- Easy accessibility to all modes of transportation
- Pedestrian friendly and bicycle friendly

The existing Philadelphia urban fabric and high density residential development surrounding the El transit corridor would presumably act as a de facto TOD. However, with the exception of the Center City stations and the 69th Street Terminal, most of the stations along Frankford Avenue and the West Market Street Corridor do not currently operate as transit oriented developments. Despite two commercial corridors on West Market Street and a neighborhood “Main Street” on Frankford Avenue, the connections between existing development and the stations are disrupted by heavy automobile traffic, vacant and underutilized properties and a poorly designed and often unsafe pedestrian environment.

To qualify as a successful TOD, development and redevelopment plans require a good pedestrian oriented design, a strong retail market, transit friendly zoning regulations and public and private investment.

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The Urban Land Institute (ULI) published the *Ten Principles for Successful Development around Transit*, a report that defines the following ten principles to achieve a successful TOD:

- Make it better with a vision
- Apply the power of partnership
- Think development when thinking about transit
- Get the parking right
- Build a place, not a project
- Make retail development market driven not transit driven
- Mix uses but not necessarily at the same place
- Make buses a great idea
- Encourage every price point to live around transit
- Engage corporate attention

(Source: Dunphy, Robert, Deborah Myerson, and Michael Pawlukiewics. *Ten Principles for Successful Development around Transit*. Washington D.C. ULI – the Urban land Institute, 2003).

For existing neighborhoods with transit, TOD can provide a catalyst for redevelopment and renewal that takes advantage of the existing infrastructure while remaining sensitive to the surrounding context. A number of case studies are available in planning litera-

ture that illustrates the success stories of TOD in achieving neighborhood renewal. Several national and international “Best Practices” examples relevant to the study areas are included in the appendix of this report.

1.2 Study Purpose

The purpose of the Market–Frankford TOD Study is to look at strategies to stabilize and revitalize two important urban corridors, West Market Street and Frankford Avenue, and their surrounding neighborhoods by capitalizing on the existing transit infrastructure and SEPTA investments for transit oriented development.

With the existing public transportation infrastructure a significant asset in the study areas, the potential transit and transportation related benefits of the study and its recommendations include:

1. Increased transit ridership and fare revenue.
2. More transportation options for those who prefer to take fewer automobile trips.
3. Improved safety for transit customers, pedestrians, bicyclists, residents and workers.
4. Increased public receptiveness to transportation-efficient land uses.
5. Increased private reinvestment and higher property values near transportation facilities.
6. Community design that maximizes connections amongst and between transportation centers, residential neighborhoods, stores and institutions.
7. Greater market support for preservation of historic properties near transportation centers.

1.3 Study Objectives

The objectives of the study include:

- To encourage new private investment by maximizing the study area's strengths.
- To develop land use concepts and redevelopment guidelines that will encourage and facilitate transit oriented development.
- To maximize the economic, social and environmental benefits of the transit infrastructure and the major public investment in the El reconstruction project.
- To recommend strategies that will enhance competitiveness of existing commercial corridors and community activity centers.
- To maximize the efficient use of the existing transportation infrastructure by making them attractive for residents and visitors.
- To analyze "Best Practices" examples relevant to the study areas.

1.4 Planning Process

Although the general purpose and objectives of the Market-Frankford TOD Study are similar for both corridors, the corridors and their individual station areas possess characteristics, issues, and goals that are unique to the particular area. The differences in community needs require separate and distinct planning and design approaches that address specific issues for each station area, yet include similar generalized goals and objectives common to successful TOD planning.

The final results of the study are presented as two reports, one for each transit corridor, that reflects both the common TOD principles and objectives adopted for the study and a three-phase planning process for each of the corridors. The three-phase process includes the following:

Phase I – Data Gathering and Analysis:

A visual survey and data analysis of existing conditions along the West Market Street Corridor and Frankford Avenue was conducted in Phase I to assess the current situation with regard to land use, zoning, vacancy, building conditions and public ownership information. Review of recent relevant revitalization strategies and a demographic analysis of neighborhoods adjacent to the corridors were also conducted in this phase.

Phase II – Existing Conditions Analysis and Alternative Concept Development

Phase II consists of detailed analysis of the relevant issues of each corridor, including market conditions, traffic and transportation conditions, urban design and susceptibility to change analysis and identification of opportunity sites within the station areas. The issues and opportunities identified within the station areas, as well as the objectives of the TOD study, form the basis for the development of planning and design principles and initial land use concepts.

This phase also consists of a "Best Practices" analysis, which examines case studies of successful application of TOD in other communities around the globe and their relevance to the West Market Street and Frankford Avenue corridors.

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Phase III – Key Development Sites and Implementation Strategies

Phase III consists of applying the analysis performed in the previous two phases and identifying key strategic development sites in the two corridor study areas. Illustrative site plans were subsequently developed for each station area to demonstrate, through the application of recommended redevelopment guidelines, how the station areas could be developed to fulfill both the community goals and objectives and common TOD principles. Recommended implementation strategies and related transportation improvements were provided in this phase.

To ensure consistent guidance and support from community stakeholders and residents, advisory committees were established in each corridor to guide the consultants and provide feedback throughout the planning process. The Advisory Committee members consisted of neighborhood residents, community leaders, city officials and staff from the elected representative's offices. Three Advisory Committee meetings were held at the completion of each phase of the study in the respective study areas to obtain comments and feedback on the progress of the project. Consultations with city officials, community-based organizations, community leaders, elected officials and representatives of other affected municipalities outside the study area, including Upper Darby Township and Millbourne Borough were also conducted to obtain additional input. The consultant team also met regularly with the project manager of the Philadelphia City Planning Commission to review the progress of the project.

Additional feedback was elicited through a stakeholder survey that was mailed to Advisory Committee members. Unfortunately, the survey did not yield a significant response, with only four responses from the Market Street Corridor and 14 from the Frankford Avenue corridor. A copy of the survey and a summary of the answers are included in the Appendix.