



Delaware County 2035 | Central Places

Downtown Upper Darby

Vision Plan



May 2018

Downtown Upper Darby Vision Plan

May 2018

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Downtown Awakening is a multi-phase program to help municipalities stimulate reinvestment in Delaware County's Central Places. This project is a part of the initial phase of the program to create a series of long-range vision plans, each with a specific and coordinated strategic action plan for implementation. This program is an implementation effort of Delaware County 2035, the County's comprehensive plan.

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION



Section I: Introduction

This plan will outline a vision for downtown Upper Darby based on community input and provide a detailed implementation strategy. It is important to note that this plan is intended to build on recent efforts and current momentum in the community – not replace it. The history of the study area, summary of recent planning efforts, and a review of current trends at the national level will provide important insight to accomplish this effectively.

STUDY AREA

The study area (see Map 1 and Map 2) is located in the eastern portion of Upper Darby Township, immediately south of 69th Street Transportation Center. As such, the study area serves as a regional transportation hub and includes the eastern terminus of West Chester Pike and Garrett Road. It is also a cultural destination due to the Tower Theater. The study area includes a mix of commercial and residential uses. Many of the structures, particularly the residential units, were constructed in the 1920s. The residential units are generally single-family attached with some single-family detached units. There are also several 3-5 story apartment buildings in the study area. Many single-family residential units have since been converted to professional office space or divided into small apartment units. The commercial buildings, which are located primarily facing onto 69th Street, Market Street, and Garrett Road are generally 2-4 stories tall, but are quite variable (as tall as 10 stories).

Context

The neighborhoods immediately surrounding the study area are comprised primarily of residential uses, mostly single-family attached and detached housings. As Garrett Road extends farther west out of the study area, it includes a variety of commercial uses.

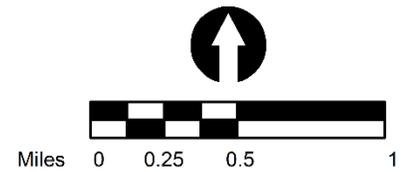


Figure 1: The study area focuses on 69th Street and includes portions of Market Street and West Chester Pike.

Map I: Study Area



-  Study Area
-  Municipal Boundaries



Map 2: Study Area Aerial



 Study Area



Feet 0 125 250 500

HISTORY OF THE STUDY AREA

In the 1800s, Upper Darby Township consisted largely of farmland, and most of the area around what is now 69th Street was part a 325-acre estate/farm owned by Thomas H. Powers. The development pattern of the County began to change as advances in the technology of the textile industry throughout the nineteenth century resulted in small to medium factories along creeks throughout the region. These mills acted as employment centers, and small mill towns began to develop around them. Additionally, many wealthy residents of Philadelphia built summer retreats in Upper Darby and eastern Delaware County in the late 1800s and into the early 1900s. The eastern reaches of the County provided respite from the sweltering heat and grime of the City in the summer.

While mills influenced the growth of many areas of the County, the study area was largely influenced by the development of the 69th Street Terminal. The station opened in 1907 as the junction of multiple lines of transit. It provided unprecedented access to downtown Philadelphia, Chester, Media, and West Chester. The station eventually served as a major bus hub, connecting to many smaller towns across the County.

John H. McClatchy, a major developer in the region, purchased much of the former Thomas H. Powers estate/farm in the early twentieth century. McClatchy began to develop the area with commercial buildings, apartments, and single-family attached and detached housing. McClatchy widely

advertised this new development and the homes for sale throughout the 1920s, touting the walkability of the area and incredible access to the region via 69th Street Terminal. He also built the Tower Theatre, which opened in 1928, to serve as a cultural attraction, and the McClatchy Building at the corner of 69th and Market Streets – both of which still remain in use today. In several advertisements, McClatchy referred to

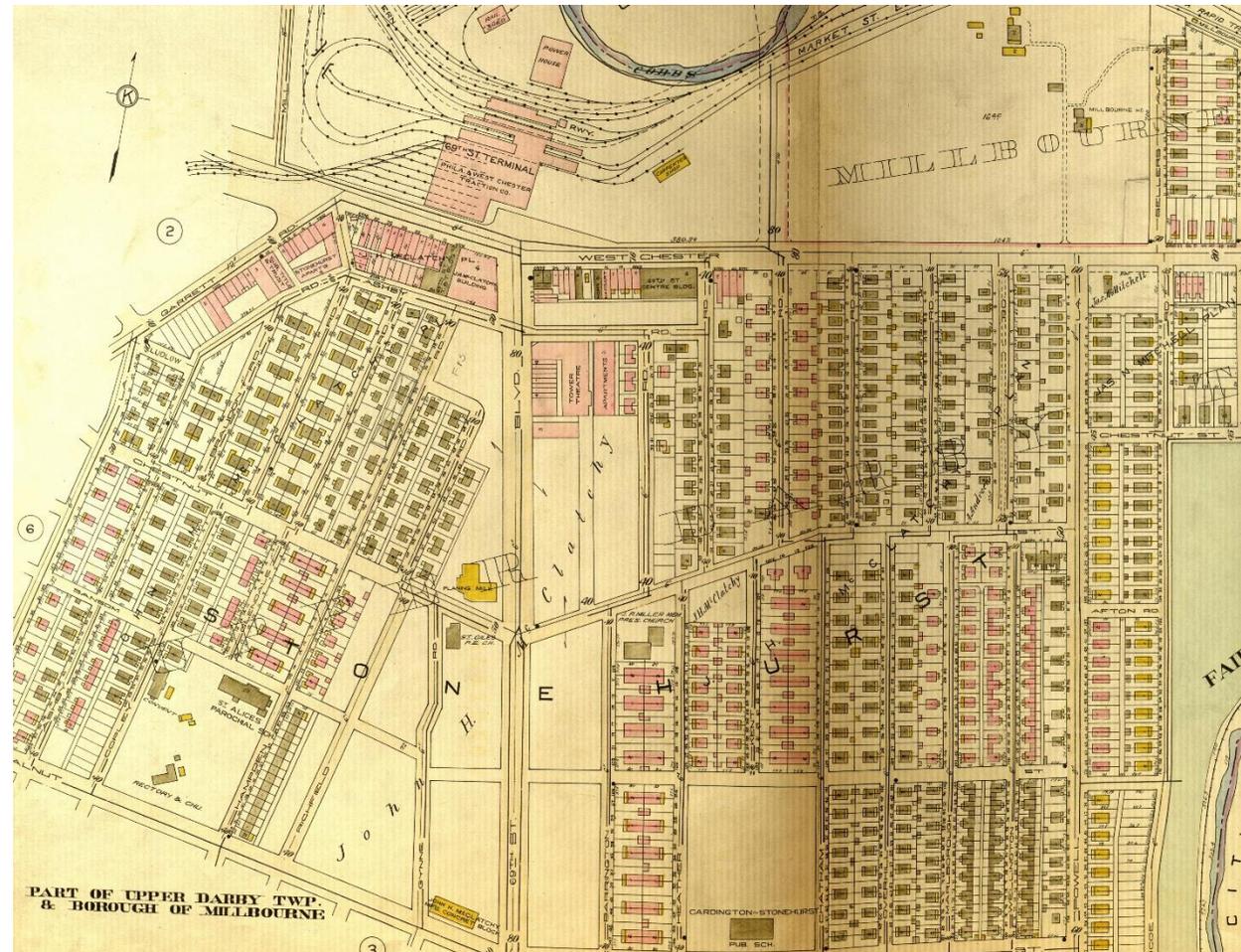


Figure 2: This historical map shows the building pattern in 1929; note that few of the commercial buildings on 69th Street were constructed at this time (Image source: Sanborn 1929).

this area as “69th Street Centre.” Many of McClatchy’s commercial buildings were particularly well-designed with the contemporary art-deco style of the time. This is clearly evident in the McClatchy building.

In 1958, Gimbel’s opened a large department store at 69th and Walnut Streets. This store was built with a significant amount of parking, including a multi-level parking deck (located in the rear), to attract shoppers from the newer, car-oriented developments popular of this time. This store served as a major anchor for the northern end of 69th Street. The store eventually closed and was replaced with a Sear’s department store which relocated from nearby 63rd Street in Millbourne Borough in 1988. The Sear’s store closed in 2012 as part of a nationwide downsizing by the company. The Sears site has been targeted for a mixed-use development, including a potential hotel, in recent years.

McClatchy’s work to develop a mixed-used downtown is something that many developers of today are attempting to mimic through lifestyle centers or town centers. In fact, many of the main assets marketed in



Figure 3: This post card image from 1935 shows some of the original ornate façade details (image source: DelawareCountyHistory.com).

the 1920s and 30s are touted in developments of today – a walkable area with great shops, a cultural attraction such as the theatre, and access into center city. This historical development pattern of the downtown area puts it in great position to strive in the changing markets of the twenty-first century.

Only 2 LEFT

69th St. BOULEVARD HOMES

2 Blocks from 69th St. Terminal
...where 20 Transit Lines meet!

ROCKLYNN ROAD
at
69th and Walnut **\$6650**

English Types	ULTRA-MODERN HOMES WITH KELVINATOR-ELECTRIC REFRIGERATION	Colonial Types
---------------	--	----------------

Think what it means to live within two blocks of the “I.” Terminal and all the advantages of the 69th Street Centre—with the Marshall Road buses only a few steps away. That’s location! These are **BIG** homes, with every room of generous size and well lighted. Tile bath with stall shower. Fireplace in living room. Furnished breakfast room. Heated garage. Carrying charges are only \$27.50 a month, plus \$11 saving to pay off B. and L. Come out in “I.” to 69th St. Terminal, and walk two blocks south to 69th and Walnut. Or take Marshall Road bus on Walnut Street and get off at 69th Street Boulevard—homes are but a few steps away. Look for our signs. Richly furnished sample home open daily until 10 P. M.

Figure 4: An advertisement from April 1929 highlights access to the station and refers to the area as “69th Street Centre” (image source: Bryn Mawr College).

RELATED PLANNING EFFORTS

Upper Darby Township Comprehensive Plan

The most recent comprehensive plan for Upper Darby Township is set to be adopted in spring 2018. The planning process for the comprehensive plan update included significant public outreach and community discussion. The new plan emphasizes the important of the 69th Street business district and calls for specific improvement plans that outline a vision and strategy for moving forward. It also identifies the important of transit and the need for community marketing. It specifically calls for promoting and encouraging high density, compact development around 69th Street Transportation Center. The plan includes a list of actions for implementation, including amending the zoning ordinance to focus pedestrian-scale development around transit stations, identifying historic districts, and installing wayfinding signage.

Zoning Ordinance

The Zoning Ordinance for Upper Darby Township was adopted in 2010. This ordinance is a modern example of zoning that encourages and attracts development and redevelopment that fits within the character of the area and goals identified in the township's comprehensive plan.

The study area is primarily zoned C-3 Traditional Downtown Business District. According to the ordinance, this district “encourage[s] development that is compatible with the historical character and scale of the Traditional Downtown Business District with respect to uses, building dimensions, building design and functions and to encourage development/redevelopment of existing buildings and properties for mixed uses, including, office, retail, residential and service uses.”

Small portions of the study area are zoned a mix of R-3 Residential District and C-1 Traditional Neighborhood District. The C-1 district is intended to serve the immediately surrounding residents with a mix of commercial uses. The R-3 district covers an area comprised of primarily single-family and two-family attached and detached dwellings. The intent

of the R-3 district is to maintain this medium density use to transition between single-family units and multi-family units.

The neighborhoods immediately surrounding the study area are also zoned a mix of R-3 and C-1, in addition to C-4 Commercial Industrial District. Some of the surrounding area, particularly those parcels zoned R-3 on blocks immediately abutting the C-3 district, also include a Residential Office Overlay District. This overlay allows for the conversion of residential units to offices due to its proximity to the central business district.

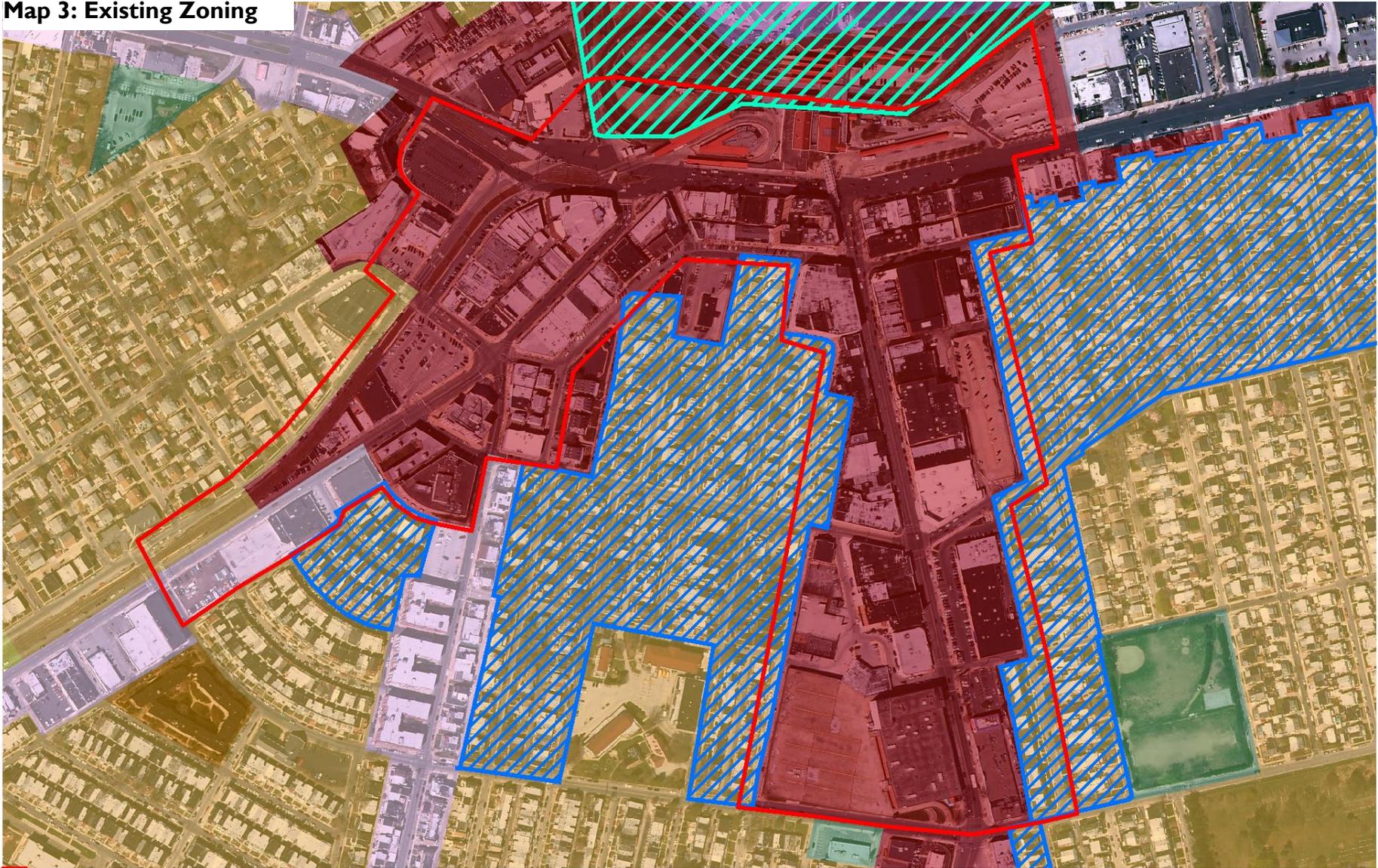
Market Street Gateway

The Market Street Gateway Plan was completed in 2003 to “reshape Market Street as the gateway to Philadelphia and the suburbs.” The study recommended streetscape improvements, many of which were implemented, and potential redevelopment sites around Market Street. The potential redevelopment projects identified included several office buildings with parking garages and small-scale housing.

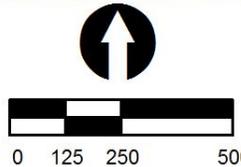
Garrett Road Corridor Study

In anticipation of SEPTA's trolley modernization project, which will involve reconstruction and potential relocation of trolley stations, Upper Darby Township is examining options to improve the safety and efficiency along Garrett Road for all users. The study also includes identification of sidewalk improvements and review of existing land uses to determine the most appropriate and desired uses. The Garrett Road study is being completed at the same time as this downtown Upper Darby Study.

Map 3: Existing Zoning



 Study Area	 R-C Residential District	 REC Recreation District
ZONE	 R-2 Residential District	 C-1 Traditional Neighborhood Commercial District
 Hospitality Overlay District	 R-3 Residential District	 C-3 Traditional Downtown Business District
 Residential Office Overlay District	 R-4 Residential District	 C-4 Commercial Industrial District



West Chester Pike Study

Upper Darby Township recently completed a road improvement plan for West Chester Pike. This plan identified pedestrian safety improvements and proposed a multi-use trail in the planted media. The plan also calls for the realignment of Victory Avenue to cross West Chester Pike at the same point as Brief Avenue. This would create a safer, more efficient intersection at Garrett Road and Market Street/West Chester Pike and provide more redevelopment space for sites along Victory Avenue.

West Chester Pike Bus Improvements

Although not directly in the study area, several studies examining improvement to bus service on West Chester Pike have been completed. It is important to consider these studies due to the fact that bus routes along this corridor terminate at the 69th Street Transit Center in the east and West Chester Borough in the west.

The studies examine the potential for creating rapid bus transit system along the length of West Chester Pike to improve service; increasing connections to bus stops by installing and improving crosswalks and sidewalks; and enhancing the comfort of existing stops by installing bus shelters and better signage.

The “West Chester Pike Coalition,” comprised of municipalities, public agencies, and major employers and businesses, was created as a result of these studies and to help guide implementation of recommendations from these and other studies.

It is important for downtown Upper Darby that West Chester Pike functions as effectively as possible. The ease of access to and from other destinations will help attract people and employers to the study area.

Historical Planning Efforts

There were several large revitalization/redevelopment planning efforts undertaken for the study area in the 1970s. While much of the information is out of date, these reports provide insight into the problems of those times and steps taken (or planned) in an attempt to

correct these issues. Review of these planning efforts also provides awareness into the long-range vision for the study area at that time. Several studies emphasized complete redevelopment of the study area, even including an enclosed mall bridged over 69th Street.

Together, this information provides context into how the issues and opportunities of today came to be. This provides the opportunity to examine the effectiveness of various efforts over the years to inform the recommendations of this study.

1971 Upper Darby Township Comprehensive Plan

The 1971 Upper Darby Township Comprehensive Plan was organized into two parts; Volume I: The Township – Problems and Potentials analyzes trends and identified issues and opportunities while Volume II: A Plan for Community Enhancement makes specific recommendations to address the issues and opportunities.

Volume II placed particular emphasis on the 69th Street Transportation Center and surrounding SEPTA property, stating the proposals for these lands “*constitute the single most significant set of recommendations with respect to the economic vitality of the retail area and the fiscal stability of the township.*” As such, the policy of this document was to “undertake a bold and creative approach” to the revitalization of the study area. This included significant expansion of parking facilities and even elevating the trolley lines over West Chester Pike.

The Comprehensive Plan recommended pedestrian bridges over West Chester Pike at 69th Street to improve the flow of traffic and enhance the safety of pedestrians. A bridge from the station to the southwestern side of 69th Street was eventually built.

Central Business District Revitalization Plan

The Central Business District Revitalization Plan, created in 1977, included a physical design plan and recommendations for the staged revitalization of the entire Central Business District (CBD). The plan called for large transportation improvements around the station; construction of a two-level, enclosed mall on the northern half of 69th

Street; a new office building and parking structure next to the station; and the complete reconstruction of the station.

69th Street Terminal Property Study

The 69th Street Terminal Property Study was completed in the 1970s to facilitate implementation of the CBD Revitalization Plan. This study identified three alternatives for complete reconstruction of the station property. All three alternatives included additional parking and significant space for commercial, retail, and office use.

Other Efforts

While there have been several attempts to redevelop the station, changing market conditions have stalled many significant projects over the years. Prior to the 1971 Township Comprehensive Plan, there were several private efforts. A major shopping center called “Red Arrow Center” was proposed in 1958 to be built over the subway tracks. This proposal called for the abandonment of all rail service into the station except for the Market-Frankford Line.

In 1965, John McClatchy proposed a 16-story office building be built in place of the Terminal Theatre. This proposal would not have removed any transit service at the station.

Summary

The importance of the 69th Street Transportation Center is evident in the number and scale of studies for the redevelopment of the site. It is often seen as the key to what will happen in the study area.

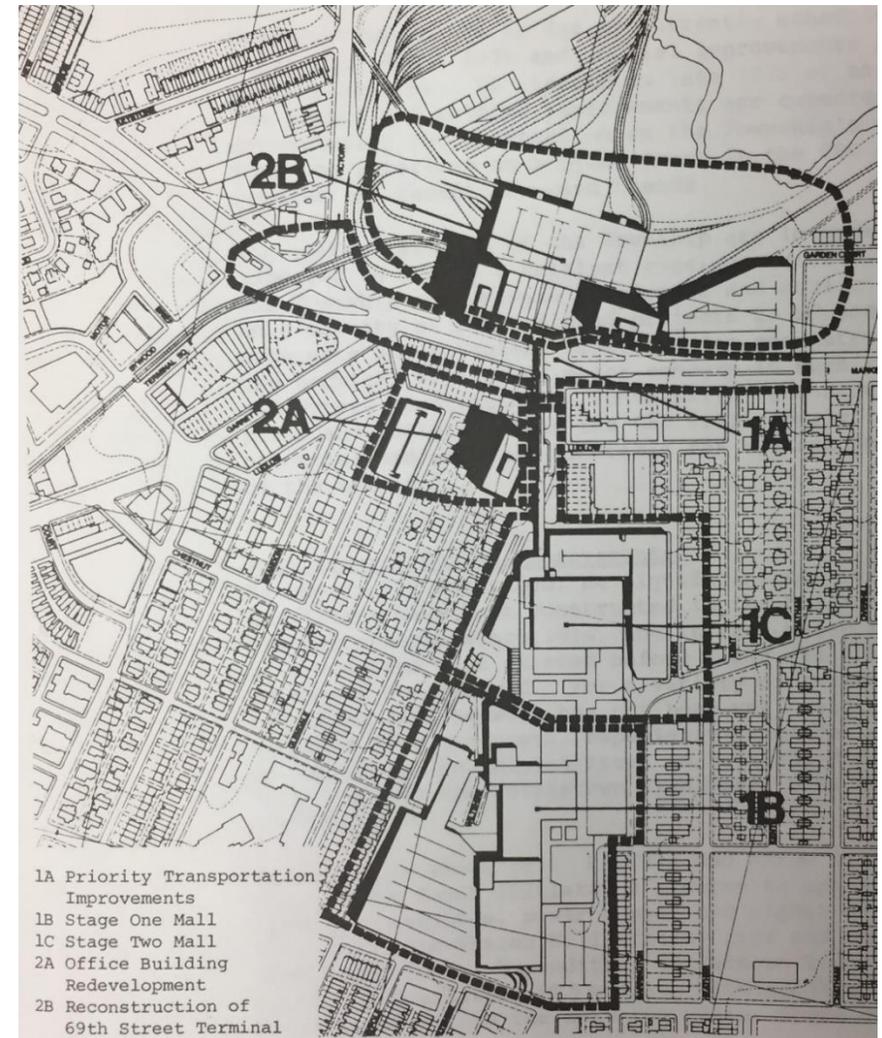


Figure 5: The result of one study for 69th Street called for closing down much of the street and converting it into an indoor shopping mall.

NATIONAL TRENDS

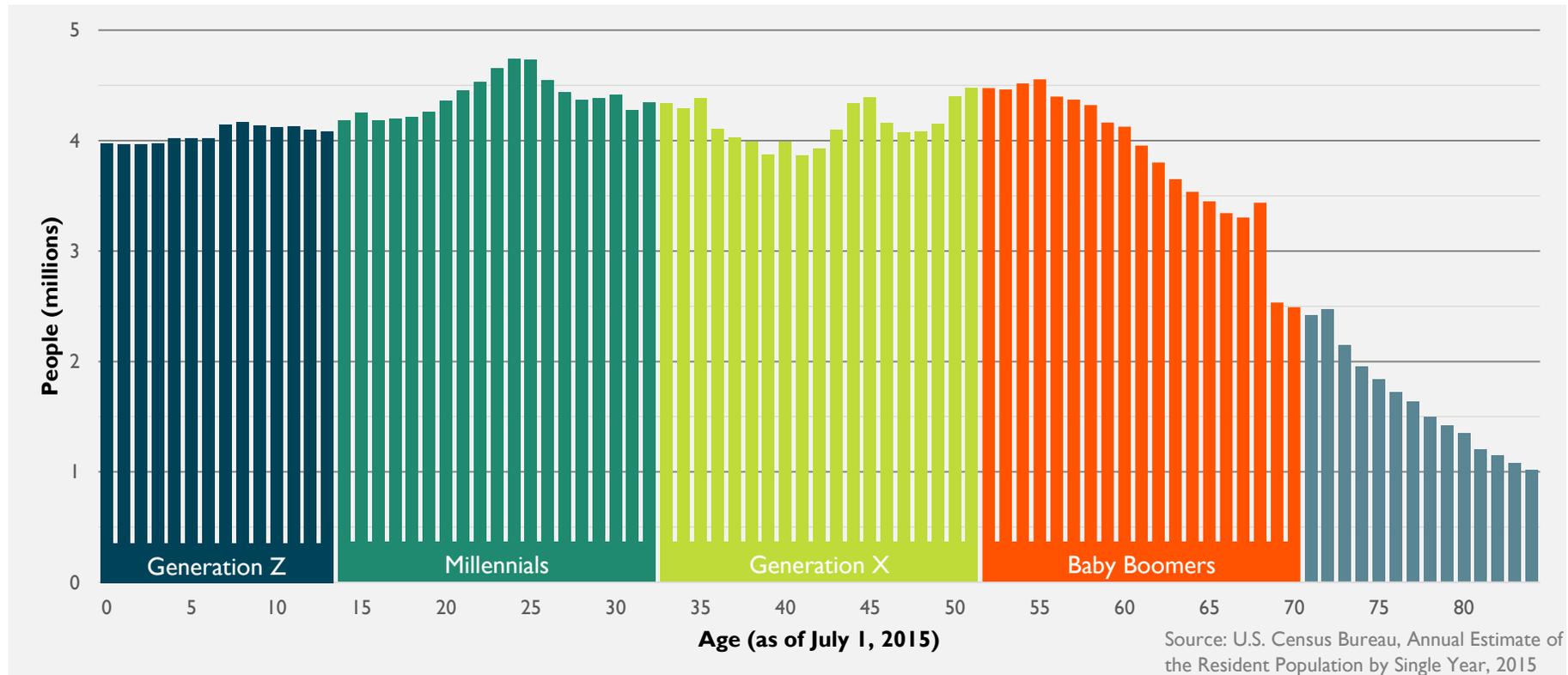
Research on trends occurring nationwide helps to provide insight into changing patterns and attitudes locally. It also helps to predict future pressures that may affect local communities. As such, it is important to have a broad understanding of several key national trends to understand the context of local trends.

Changing Population

Grouping population by age cohorts, commonly referred to as generations, helps to make trends appear more clearly. These cohorts, which are used commonly in demographics and marketing, consist of population groups that generally come of age during similar circumstances and go through major life events at relatively the same

time. As such, individuals within a cohort mostly have similar preferences and tendencies that are often evident in market driven indicators, such as how many single family homes were constructed in a given year.

Currently, millennials and baby boomers are the two largest generations and both are entering into important and unique stages of life that are likely to have an impact on society in general in the coming decades. Baby boomers are entering into retirement age while millennials are in the early years of their careers and family formation. As each cohort progresses through the stages of life, its preferences and needs change, and these changing preferences drive market forces that affect the way society lives and spends its money.



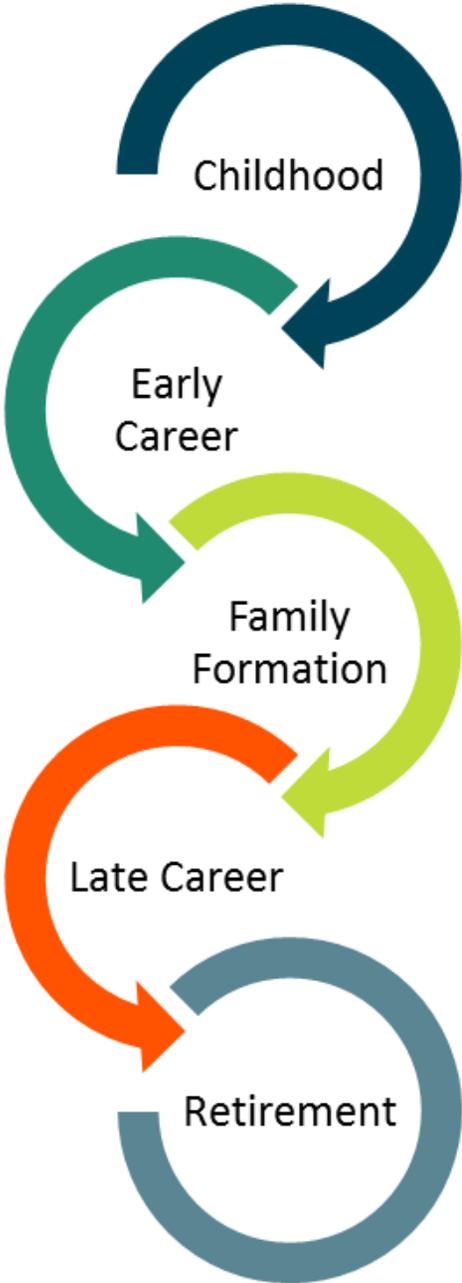
Generation Z: Generally born after 2001 (approximately 73.6 million people); the oldest of this generation are in college now. At this time, much is still unknown about this cohort because of its relatively young age; however, this will change rapidly. They are growing up as the most connected generation to-date and do not know a world without high-speed internet.

Millennials: Generally born between 1983 and 2001 (approximately 75.3 million people); account for the largest generation. Broadly speaking, they are more educated and more diverse than any previous generation; however, they have a substantial amount of student loan debt. This is significantly influencing how they live out early-adulthood and delaying major purchases, such as home-buying.

Generation X: Generally born between 1964 and 1982 (approximately 65.7 million people); they grew up during a time of rapidly increasing labor-force participation by women (i.e., their mothers). Many purchased single-family homes during the housing boom of the 1990s and early 2000s. They were subsequently affected heavily by the housing crash then following in the mid- to late-2000s.

Baby Boomers: Generally born between 1945 and 1963 (approximately 74.9 million people); many were born as veterans returned from World War II. It was the largest generation until approximately 2015. Many grew up during and/or led the significant cultural changes of the 1960s and 70s. They are entering into retirement age, changing the workforce and consumer market.

Silent Generation: Generally born prior to 1945 (approximately 26.4 million people); they grew up during two of the most influential time-periods in U.S. history – the Great Depression and World War II. Many went on to serve in World War II and are often referred to as “The Greatest Generation.” Both of these events immensely influenced how they lived and the value they placed on community.



Housing

With significant changes in the age of population comes a need for different housing types. As the number of people 65 years and older continues to grow rapidly, there is more demand for smaller housing units with less maintenance. At the same time, millennials entering the workforce are looking for high-quality units in locations that provide good access to jobs and flexibility in case they need to move for another job.

Ten to fifteen years ago this demand may have been met through the construction of age-restricted housing and single-family homes. In the post-recession market, however, it has been increasingly in the form of “age-targeted” luxury apartments. Age-targeted apartments are designed to accommodate boomers looking to downsize as well as millennials who are not yet ready to purchase a house. Age-targeted apartments are often built with high-end fixtures and common space amenities that frequently include gyms, pools, and club rooms. Most residential units only have one or two bedrooms.

Homeownership

The economic recession that hit the country in 2008-09 has created a vastly different housing market than earlier years. Homeownership, which hit an all-time high in the early- to mid-2000s, has dropped off significantly and is at the lowest rate across the country in decades. This was the result of both the economy and shifting cultural preferences. As mentioned above, rental units are attractive to many boomers who are looking to downsize and desire no-maintenance living. At the same time, many millennials came of age during the economic recession and are hesitant to commit to long term mortgages. Many live at home with parents longer than previous generations while others prefer rental units that are more affordable than buying a home and provide greater flexibility. Due to these shifts, an increase in rental properties is a national trend and decreasing homeownership numbers should not necessarily be seen as a negative indicator for a community.

Chart I: Homeownership Rate



Workforce

The cultural shifts that are occurring as a result of the economic recession and changing population of the country are significantly altering the workforce. Even though millennials are presently the largest generational cohort and are just starting their careers, it is likely that there will be a labor shortage in the near future as boomers continue to retire. As such, wages will likely increase, particularly for the younger generations, as employers strive to remain competitive in order to keep talent. Since millennials are on the verge of comprising the largest portion of the workforce, employers will also locate offices and employment centers in areas where millennials want to live and work – namely areas with a mix of uses and access to transit. As competition for talent between employers continues to grow, it is likely that the younger generations will continue to switch jobs much more frequently than any previous generation.

Coworking

The changing economy is also affecting the types of jobs that people have. Many people are self-employed or work on a contractual basis for larger companies. As a result, more flexible office and workplaces have become more popular. Coworking spaces provide space available for short-term rent/leases (from as short as a few hours to as long as several months). Delaware County has partnered with HeadRoom, a coworking space in Media and Wayne, and SCORE, an organization of experienced volunteers dedicated to providing free counseling and seminars to help small businesses grow. The County sponsors qualifying start-ups and small businesses to use HeadRoom's facilities to incubate and develop their businesses. Makerspaces are similar to coworking spaces but emphasize sharing tools and space to create products or prototypes.

Retail

It is widely understood that the retail industry has been changed by the exponential growth of online shopping over the past decade. Many nation-wide retailers have started to close physical stores to devote

more resources to online commerce. At the same time, however, some online retailers have also started to develop physical stores. Online retail is changing the perception of in-store shopping from a 'chore' to a 'leisure experience' to be enjoyed. As millennials are less likely than boomers to spend on houses, cars, and other big expenses, they have more expendable income, feeding into their preference for spending more for higher quality and better experiences. At the same time, boomers entering retirement have more time for leisure activities.

Younger generations place greater emphasis on product reviews, the quality of goods, and the word of friends and family. Because of this, millennials have a sense of "brand loyalty." Many retailers are focusing their marketing efforts on becoming cultural icons. They often concentrate high-quality stores in locations of cultural significance in order to help build their brands, as with amazon books. Millennials also prefer brands that are socially conscious, so charity and giving back to the community are valuable branding opportunities.

Lifestyle Centers

Lifestyle centers function as outdoor malls and consist of stores built around pedestrian spaces. Often times, they include specialty stores anchored by movie theaters or similar entertainment destinations. These key features try to cater to the new trend of shopping as a leisure experience.

Transportation Disruptors

New technologies in the twenty-first century are poised to significantly alter the way that people get around. Perhaps the most disruptive change is the invention of autonomous vehicles. While these are still in a developmental stage, it is increasingly likely that they will become mainstream in the coming decades. At this time, it is unknown what the real impacts of autonomous vehicles will be. In the meantime, transportation network companies (TNCs), such as Uber and Lyft, offer rides as a service. They act similar to a taxi, except that they are hailed via a mobile phone application. Due to their ease of use, many

communities will see an increase in drop-off/pickup traffic. In fact, this is already noticeable in several communities, particularly those with a high concentration of restaurants/bars or larger cultural attractions such as a theater. Continued increase of TNCs may also decrease some pressure on downtown parking while increasing the need for designated drop-off areas.

The increase in online retail and changing shopping patterns is also changing freight movement as high volumes of smaller consumer goods and local deliveries are necessary. This changes the amount, types, and frequency of freight vehicles that are making downtown and neighborhood deliveries, particularly in higher density areas. Many freight companies are increasingly using smaller vans to provide more frequent delivery service throughout the day. As this continues to progress, it may have impacts on required delivery locations and loading zones.

Alternative Transportation

Many boomers and millennials prefer housing that is located within walking distance to shopping, dining, and other cultural attractions. Millennials, in particular, emphasize proximity to transit as being important in housing location. As a result, both boomers and millennials emphasize access to transit and other amenities when selecting a place to live. Increasing walkability and developing complete streets will help to make communities more attractive to potential renters and buyers.

Summary

It is clear that changing demographics are already significantly influencing communities across the country. An increased market for experiences is likely as boomers continue to enter retirement and millennials have more expendable income. Demand for apartments and smaller housing units, particularly in walking distance to transit, shopping, dining, and cultural attractions will continue to push development back toward downtown areas. Retailers will continue to emphasize online retail;

however, many will also invest heavily in storefronts that highlight their brands as cultural icons. As part of a long-range vision plan, it is important to consider and prepare for the potential impacts of these overarching trends. Communities will need to remain flexible in identifying goals and implementation strategies as the impacts of these trends continue to change over time.

SECTION 2: INVENTORY + ANALYSIS



Section 2: Inventory and Analysis

In order to identify a long-range vision for downtown Upper Darby, it is crucial to first understand the existing conditions and opportunities. This section will review the physical, demographic, and economic conditions of the study area. Together, this information will help to guide the specifics of the action plan.

In addition to the conditions of the study area, there are several large projects in the region that may impact downtown Upper Darby and should be considered while reviewing the inventory and analysis.

SEPTA and its partners are actively planning an extension of the Norristown High Speed Line (NHSL) to King of Prussia. Since the NHSL terminates at the 69th Street Transportation Center, an increase in ridership through the Transportation Center is anticipated. Further, the King of Prussia area has been undergoing significant growth, driven by the King of Prussia Mall which is a national shopping destination. The Village at Valley Forge, a mixed-use development adjacent to the King of Prussia Mall, aims to bring a ‘downtown’ atmosphere to sprawling King of Prussia.

The City of Philadelphia, Amtrak, SEPTA, and Drexel University are together working towards making the 30th Street Station District into “Philadelphia’s next great neighborhood” by adding 18 million square feet of new development and up to 10,000 new residents.

While these other projects in the region may mean more competition for businesses and residents, it also means an increased market for downtown Upper Darby. The 69th Street Transportation Center will serve as an important ‘pivot’ point between these two developments, with nearly unparalleled access to jobs and destinations throughout the region.

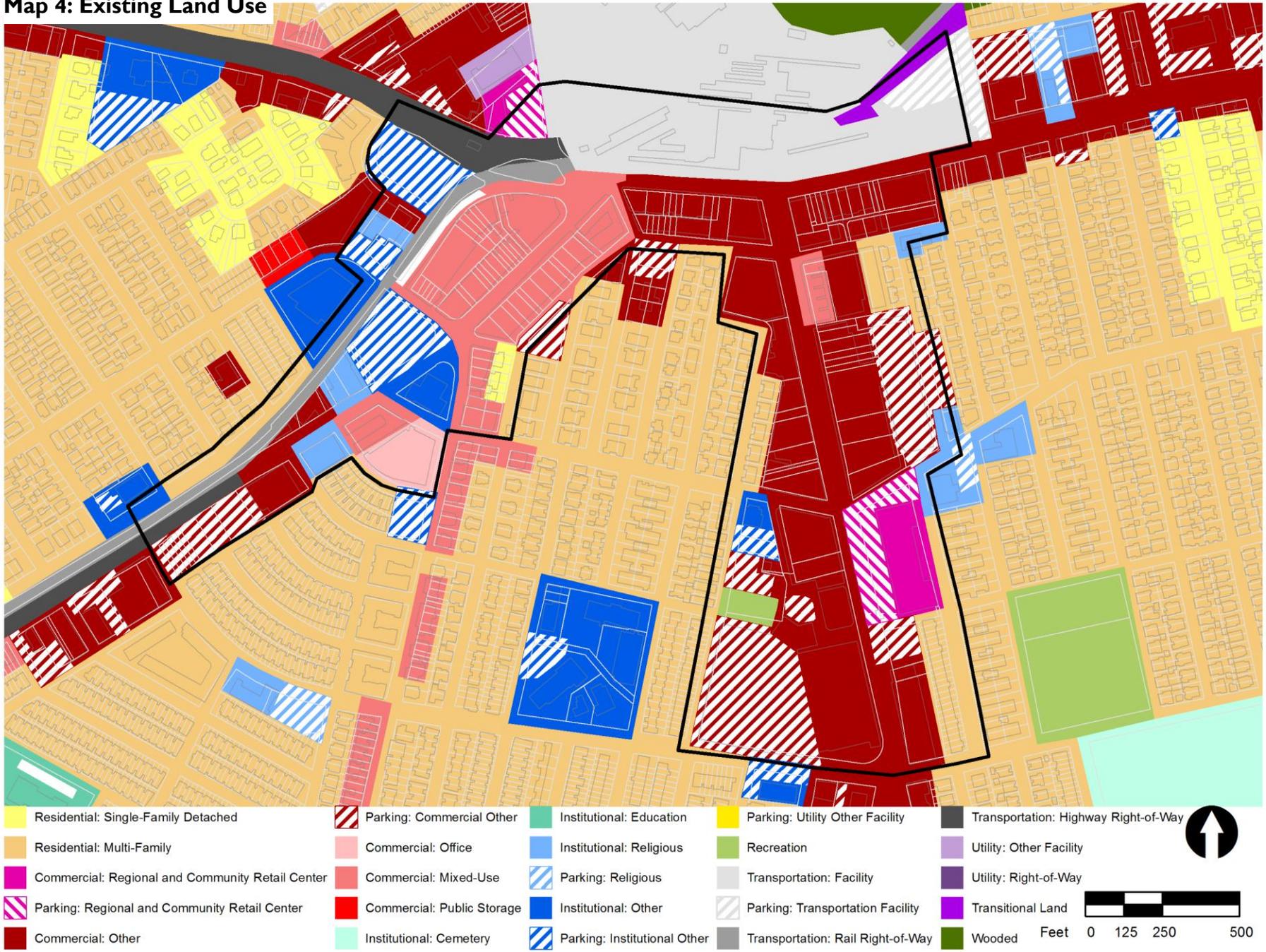
LAND USE

The existing land use of the study area provides an overview of the types of uses downtown. Since different uses have unique peak and off-peak visit times and levels, the different uses affect the days of the week and times of day that visits occur. These patterns affect the liveliness of the streetscape, traffic, and the need for parking. Some uses, such as the Tower Theater, may have irregular schedules that have significant impacts on activity levels in the study area. Other uses may have specific peak times during the day (e.g., food establishments) while others see a relatively low, but steady level of visits (e.g., a bank).

The information in Map 4 is based on the current use of the site according to the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission 2015 land use data which was collected using 2015 aerial imagery and online virtual field surveys.

The existing land use in the study area is largely “Commercial” and “Commercial Mixed-Use” (note: “Commercial Mixed-Use” is defined as buildings that are 2-4 stories high with residential dwelling units above commercial units for the purposes of the land use dataset). Parking for commercial uses is relatively concentrated in a few areas, as opposed to being located on each parcel. There are also several parcels that are occupied by “Institutional: Other,” particularly in the northwestern portion of the study area. This includes municipal buildings and municipal parking.

Map 4: Existing Land Use



CIRCULATION

The safe and efficient movement of people to, from, and within the study area is vitally important to the economy. People will limit their visits if there is not adequate parking, an uncomfortable or unsafe pedestrian environment, or if the roads are simply too congested to drive. A proper approach to vehicular, pedestrian, and transit movement will balance the need for access and parking with the importance of the pedestrian environment in maintaining the character of the downtown.

Future Influences

Before discussing the existing circulation network, it is worth noting potential changes in way people move around. Any improvements or alterations to the circulation system should consider the potential growth of Transportation Network Companies (TNCs), such as Uber and Lyft, and autonomous vehicles. The growth of TNCs may have a particularly significant impact on the study area, with regional destinations such as the 69th Street Transit Center and the Tower Theatre.

As businesses in the study area continue to grow, vehicular and pedestrian traffic will increase and movement patterns may shift. Similarly, as different types of businesses locate in the study area, movement patterns throughout the day will change. Outside influences, such as TNCs, may change the need for parking. If TNCs continue to grow, there will be a significant increase in the number of people getting dropped off in the study area, particularly at the station and for entertainment events.

Road Network

The study area is the confluence of several major roads that developed to provide access to and from 69th Street Transportation Center. As other communities farther out from the city developed and ownership of automobiles became more prevalent, the volume of traffic increased. Several roads were widened in the mid- to late-twentieth century to

accommodate this increased traffic. Market Street, which begins at the terminus of West Chester Pike and Garrett Road, is a major east-west corridor into the city.

The arterial roadways (e.g., Market Street and 69th Street) are wide, four- or six- lane roadways. These roads carry the majority of the traffic to and through the study area. Collector roadways (e.g., Chestnut Street and Walnut Street) carry traffic between local communities and arterials. Collector roads are relatively wide two-lane roads. The local streets within and surrounding the study area are narrow with parking on one side of the street, and, as a result, many are one-way only.



Figure 6: Market Street carries a very high volume of traffic between Philadelphia and the western suburbs.

Map 5: Road Network



 Study Area



Feet 0 125 250 500

Sidewalk Network

Sidewalks, particularly in the study area, provide important connections to shopping, schools, and transit. They also play a substantial role in creating a unique place for the community; the placemaking ability of sidewalks is discussed in more detail in the Streetscape section on page 52. The study area and surrounding neighborhoods have a significantly complete sidewalk network with no meaningful gaps. See Map 6 for the sidewalk network.

Sidewalks along the primary commercial corridors (i.e., 69th Street and Market Street) are generally wider than typical sidewalks and experience a high volume of pedestrian movement. Sidewalks along the residential streets experience a much lower volume of pedestrian movement.



Figure 7: Typical sidewalk along Garrett Road.



Figure 8: Typical sidewalk along 69th Street.

Crosswalks

Overall, crosswalks are found at nearly all intersections and several midblock points along 69th Street. While most of the crosswalks are painted in the “standard” style, there are a significant number of “continental” crosswalks, particularly at high-volume intersections and on state-owned roadways.



Figure 9: Standard crosswalk (top) and continental crosswalk (bottom)

Crosswalks – Why Paint Matters

The most common method of delineating crosswalks is the use of paint or liquid applied thermoplastic. Paint is generally more economical upfront but requires routine maintenance, while liquid applied thermoplastic is more expensive upfront, but it has a longer life expectancy.

Perhaps the most important aspect of a painted crosswalk, however, is the pattern used. The “standard” or “transverse” style consists of two 6” parallel lines that demarcate the outside edges of the crosswalk, parallel to the pedestrian path of travel. Other styles, such as “continental” and “zebra,” typically consist of 12”-wide bars perpendicular to the pedestrian path of travel. See Figure 10 below.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) studied the visibility of several typical crosswalks and found that a midblock crossing with the “continental” style crosswalks were detected at about twice the distance than the standard crosswalk, which is commonly used across the country. This means that **on a road with a 30 mph speed limit, the driver detected the continental crosswalk 8 seconds before the standard crosswalks** (FHWA, 2010).

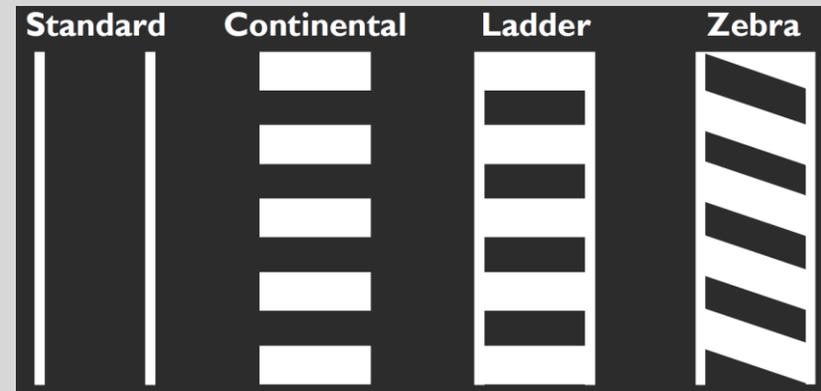


Figure 10: Typical crosswalk styles (image source: DCPD 2018).

Additionally, there are several high-visibility crosswalks along 69th Street that use decorative paving materials to identify the crosswalk. These crosswalks (see Figure 11) were installed as part of the Gateway Project in the early 2000s to create a highly-visible crossing and contribute to the unique sense of place in downtown Upper Darby. However, the materials used have not withstood the test of time and do not provide the same level of visibility as when they were first installed.

Many cities and towns across the country have started to limit the use of pavers in crosswalks because they are susceptible to settling and damage and can become uncomfortable/unsafe for pedestrians.



Figure 11: Decorative crosswalk at the intersection of Ludlow and 69th Streets.



Figure 12: Some of the decorative crosswalks have faded since installation.

Section 2: Inventory and Analysis

There are also several mid-block crossings along 69th Street that provide convenient crossing points for pedestrians. They include curb extensions (or “bump-outs”) that shorten the crossing distance for pedestrians and make them more visible to drivers. The narrower roadways also serve as a traffic-calming measure to slow down vehicles. These crossings use the same decorative pavers as other crosswalks along 69th Street. Additional signage at the midblock crossing increases the visibility and alerts drivers.



Figure 13: Mid-block crossing along 69th Street

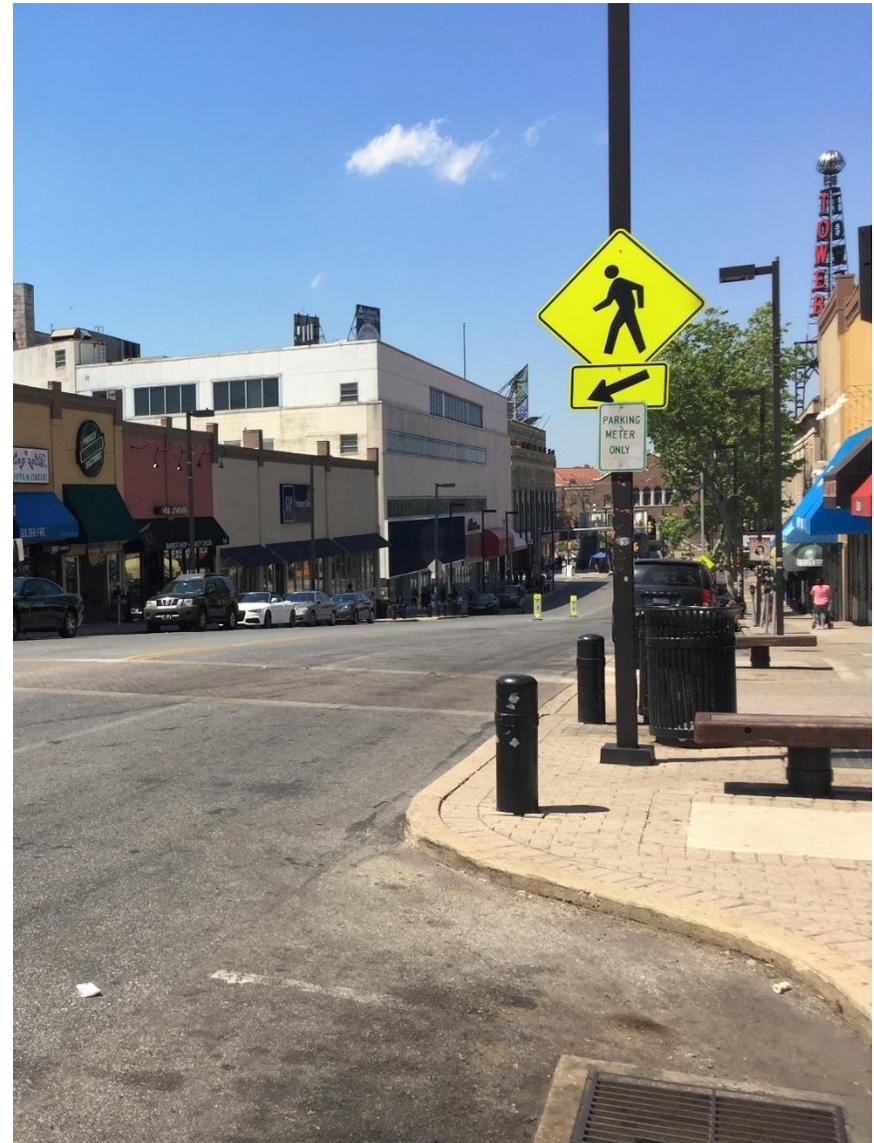


Figure 14: Increased signage at mid-block crossing.

Map 6: Sidewalk Network



- Sidewalks
- Mid-block Crossing
- Study Area
- Pedestrian Overpass



Feet 0 125 250 500

Parking

There is large demand for parking in the study area as visitors drive here for shopping, entertainment, and business. Additionally, the station acts as a park-and-ride for many commuters into the city. There are several lots of varying size and ownership throughout the study area. While there may be a demand for more parking, it is important that any additional parking is added to the study area in a manner that does not detract from the downtown character that makes this area unique (i.e., first floor retail and limited surface parking). Map 7 shows the location and approximate amount of parking available.

Municipal Parking

The township owns and operates several surface lots in the study area. Some spaces are used for township fleet vehicles while others are reserved for nearby stores or are available at a small cost.

SEPTA Commuter Parking

SEPTA has a surface lot on the eastern side of the station with approximately 182 daily parking spaces available to commuters at a small cost. There are currently plans to improve this site with a four-story parking structure with over 400 spaces, though there is no set timeline for construction.

Private Parking

There are several privately-owned surface lots that are available for customers of the adjoining businesses. Two of these lots are adjacent to banking facilities, two are adjacent to relatively small shopping strips, and one is adjacent to the McDonald's. There is also a small surface lot on the east side of Heather Drive that is available for anyone shopping along 69th Street.

There are also two parking decks located in the study area; both of which are privately owned. The Chestnut Street Parkateria is a four-story garage with over 500 spaces and is located at the intersection of Chestnut Street and Heather Road, immediately behind the stores on 69th Street. This garage is owned and maintained by the same company

that owns much of the retail space along 69th Street. Spaces in this garage are available for free to shoppers. Pedestrian access to 69th Street is available from the southern edge of the garage along Chestnut Street and via a pedestrian access alley south of Ludlow Street on the north end of the garage.

The second, located along Walnut Street between 69th Street and Richfield Road, was built for the now vacant Sear's building. Due to the condition of this garage, it is no longer open.

On-Street Parking

On-street parking is prevalent throughout the study area, including along the main commercial streets. Parking along residential streets is not generally considered for this study as visitors to the businesses in the study area should be discouraged from parking here.

On-street parking along the main commercial streets is intended for relatively short trips (less than two hours) to encourage regular turnover of parking spaces. In theory, this provides readily available parking spaces for other visitors making quick trips (e.g., getting coffee or picking up food). Regular turnover, which increases the available parking spaces, is enforced by setting appropriate time limits on metered parking spaces.

Map 7: Parking



- Study Area
- Municipal Parking Lot
- Private Parking
- On-street Parking (approximate)
- SEPTA Commuter Parking
- Private Parking (closed)



Feet 0 125 250 500

Transit

Transit access is one of the study area’s strongest assets; it has direct access to and from major cultural destinations, employment centers, and world-class universities via multiple SEPTA routes. As described in Section I, the 69th Street Transportation Center was the main driving factor in the development of this area. While the service (and providers) has changed over the years, the station remains a crucial gateway between the City of Philadelphia and surrounding suburbs. The station serves as a pivot point for riders transferring between lines. Approximately 35,000 people travel through the station each day.

Market-Frankford Line (MFL)

The Market-Frankford Line (MFL) is the east-west subway corridor for SEPTA; it travels from 69th Street through University City (University of Pennsylvania, University of Pennsylvania Hospital), and Drexel University), Center City, and Old City before traveling north and ultimately terminating at Frankford Transportation Center. The MFL provides frequent and quick access to destinations and jobs along this corridor. Trains operate at approximately five-minute intervals during peak commute times.

Norristown High Speed Line (NHSL)

The 69th Street Transportation Center is the eastern terminus of the Norristown High Speed Line (NHSL) and serves as the transfer-point for riders commuting between the NHSL and points in Philadelphia. The NHSL travels through many residential neighborhoods, downtowns, and office parks and with its northern endpoint at the Norristown Transportation Center. Trains operate at approximately five- to ten-minute intervals during peak commute times.

There are currently plans to extend the NHSL to King of Prussia; if constructed, it would stop at King of Prussia Mall and nearby business parks. This would significantly increase transit access to jobs and shopping from Upper Darby. In the same manner, it could increase the market for businesses surrounding the 69th Street Transportation Center as residential development around King of Prussia continues to

grow. The 69th Street Transportation Center’s role as a gateway for travelers between the city and surrounding suburbs would increase.

101 and 102 Trolleys

The 101 and 102 trolleys stop at the west end of 69th Street Transportation Center. These two trolley lines use the same route, commonly referred to as the “trunk line,” for approximately two miles before the station. The trunk parallels Garrett Road before the 101 and 102 split in Drexel Hill. The 101 and 102 trolleys each operate at approximately twenty-minute intervals during peak commute times.

The 101 trolley travels west through the Drexelbrook and Drexelline areas in the western edge of Upper Darby through Springfield and Nether Providence before terminating in downtown Media Borough. In recent years, Media Borough has seen a strong resurgence of its restaurants and new development, including a large apartment complex expected to open in 2018. There are also efforts to encourage growth of retail and restaurants at several stations in Springfield. The 102 trolley travels south through dense residential neighborhoods in Clifton Heights, Aldan, Collingdale, and Sharon Hill.

Bus Routes



Figure 15: Terminal locations at 69th Street Transportation Center.

The 69th Street Transportation Center is a major bus hub, with 17 bus routes connecting to/from the station. There are also several stops throughout the study area, particularly along 69th Street. Bus routes

connect to the station at three main points: West Terminal, North Terminal, and South Terminal.

West Terminal

The West Terminal, located east of the Market Street and Victory Avenue intersection, includes the 104, 107, 109, 110, 111, 112, 120, and 123 bus routes. These routes travel west along West Chester Pike, Garrett Road, and Long Lane.

North Terminal

The North Terminal includes the 30, 65, 103, 105, and 106 bus routes. These routes generally travel north through Cobbs Creek Park before traveling either east into West Philadelphia or west towards Lancaster Avenue (Route 30).

South Terminal

The South Terminal includes the 21, 108, 113, and 116 bus routes. These routes travel east along Market Street into Philadelphia and south on 69th Street to southern Delaware County.

Access Times

The location of the 69th Street Transportation Center and high frequency of service provides regular, short trips to communities across the region. Map 9 shows areas that are accessible from the study area via transit at approximately 10, 20, 30, and 40-minute intervals of travel time.

Center City Philadelphia and much of eastern Delaware County, even some points as far west as Media Borough and the former Granite Run Mall site in Middletown Township, are accessible within 30 minutes. Norristown Borough and points farther north and south in Philadelphia are accessible within 40 minutes of the study area.

While transit access is often seen as where people can get from a point, it is important to consider that it also represents how quickly people can travel to the study area. Good transit access not only benefits people living in the study area now, it helps to attract economic

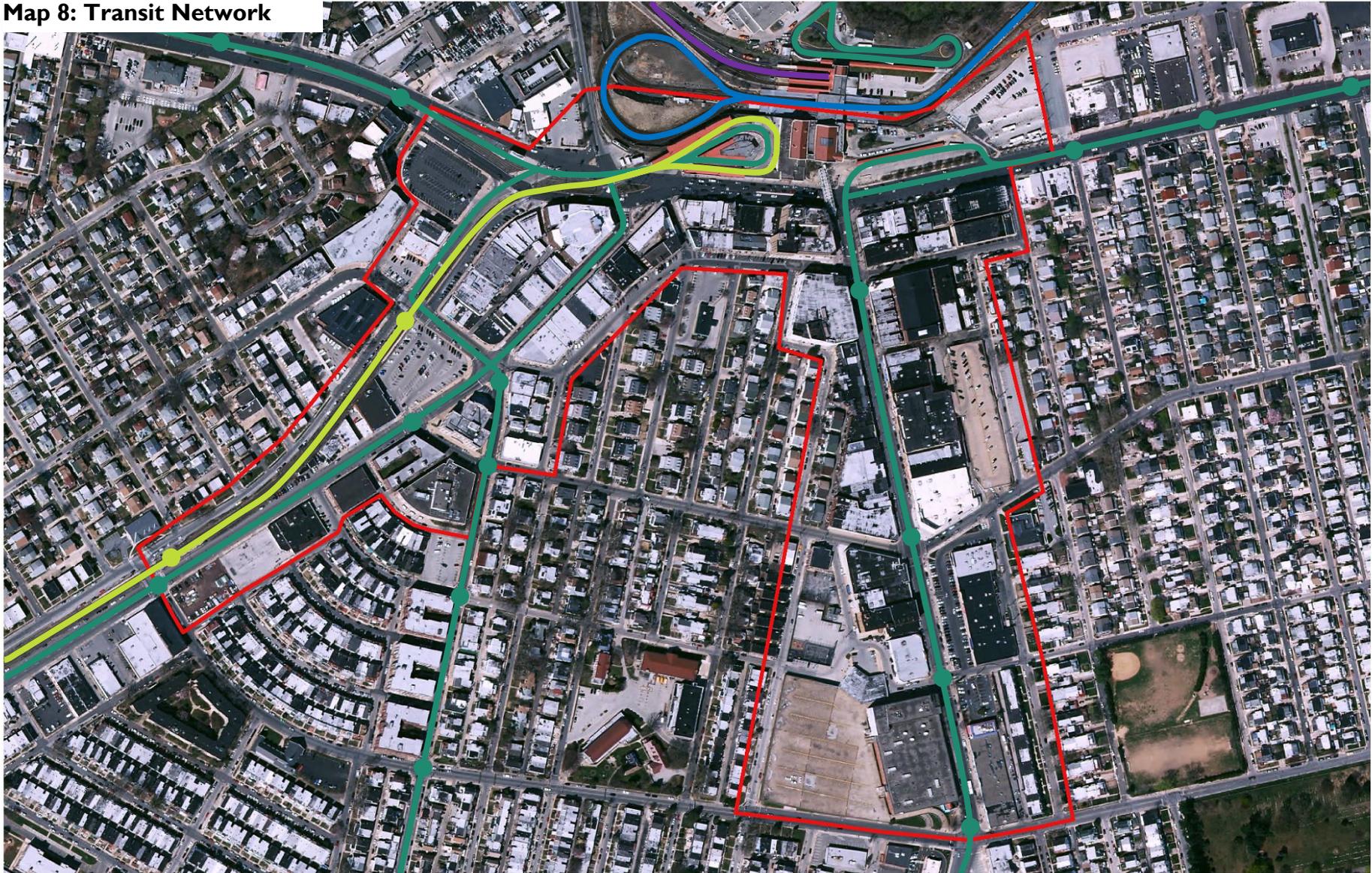
investment, such as employers looking for transit friendly office space or retailers looking at potential consumer markets.

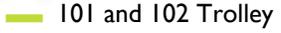
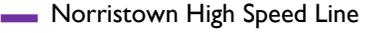
They are several ongoing efforts that may affect this in the coming years. Trolley modernization for SEPTA's 101 and 102 trolley fleet is expected to reduce travel time along the route by several minutes. This is due to potential stop consolidation and faster/easier boarding process for riders. The potential extension of the NHSL to King of Prussia would decrease the trip time to/from the study area, which currently requires with the NHSL and a bus, or a bus.

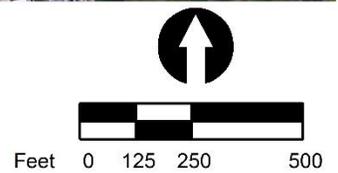


Figure 16: Bus stop at corner of 69th and Chestnut Streets.

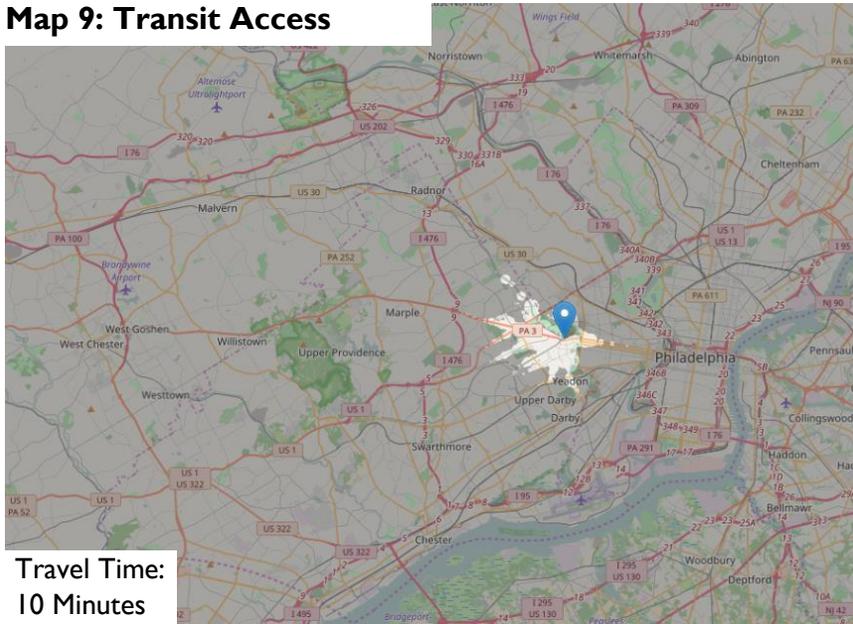
Map 8: Transit Network



-  Study Area
-  I01 and I02 Trolley
-  Bus Routes
-  Norristown High Speed Line
-  Market-Frankford Line



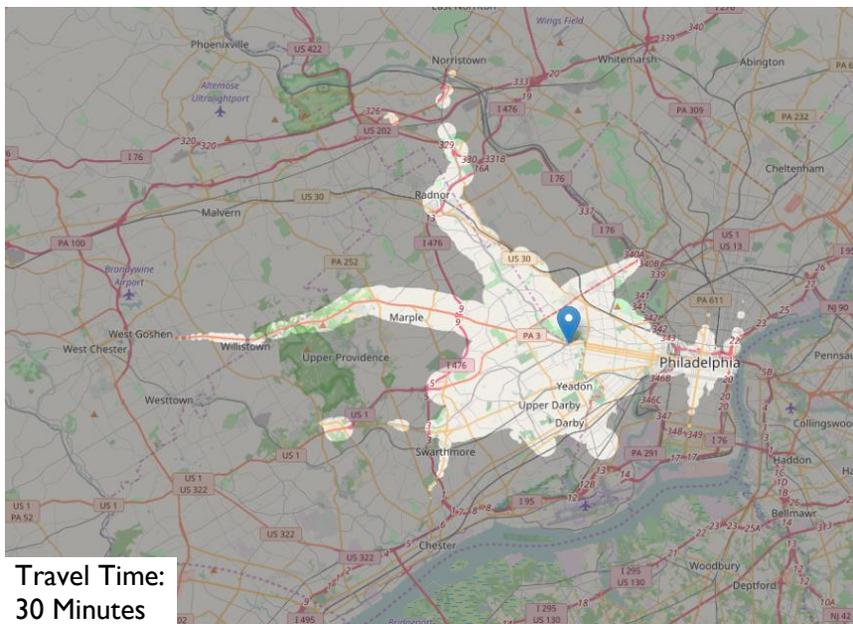
Map 9: Transit Access



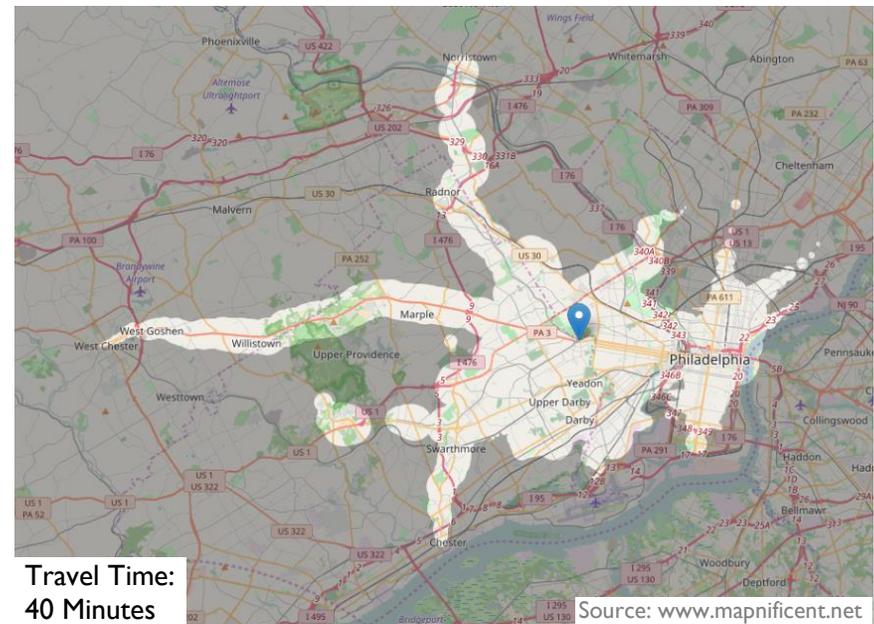
Travel Time:
10 Minutes



Travel Time:
20 Minutes



Travel Time:
30 Minutes



Travel Time:
40 Minutes

Source: www.mapnificent.net

Circulation Conflicts

There are many intersections within the study area where high volume vehicular and pedestrian traffic cross. In order to remain safe, these crossings need to be designed to maximize visibility and provide adequate warning for all users. Many intersections within the study area have already been improved to reduce circulation conflicts. Pedestrian bump-outs and clearly marked crosswalks increase visibility.



Figure 17: Mid-block crossing on 69th Street with bump-out, signage, and clearly marked crosswalk.



Figure 18: Crosswalk with pedestrian refuge island at Bywood and West Chester Pike clearly directs traffic and increases visibility of pedestrians

While there are many good examples of reduced circulation conflicts, there are several intersections that may require additional improvements. Some may have been upgraded before, but changing transportation and behavior patterns (as discussed in the “National Trends” section on page 12) have resulted in a need address these intersections again. Additionally, many drivers for Transportation Network Companies (TNCs), such as Uber and Lyft, are not professional drivers and, as such, may not have the experience or familiarity with areas to understand the safest and most efficient methods for pick-up/drop-off of passengers.



Figure 19: Pedestrians are not able to legally cross the intersection of Garrett Road and West Chester Pike, which also includes a trolley crossing.

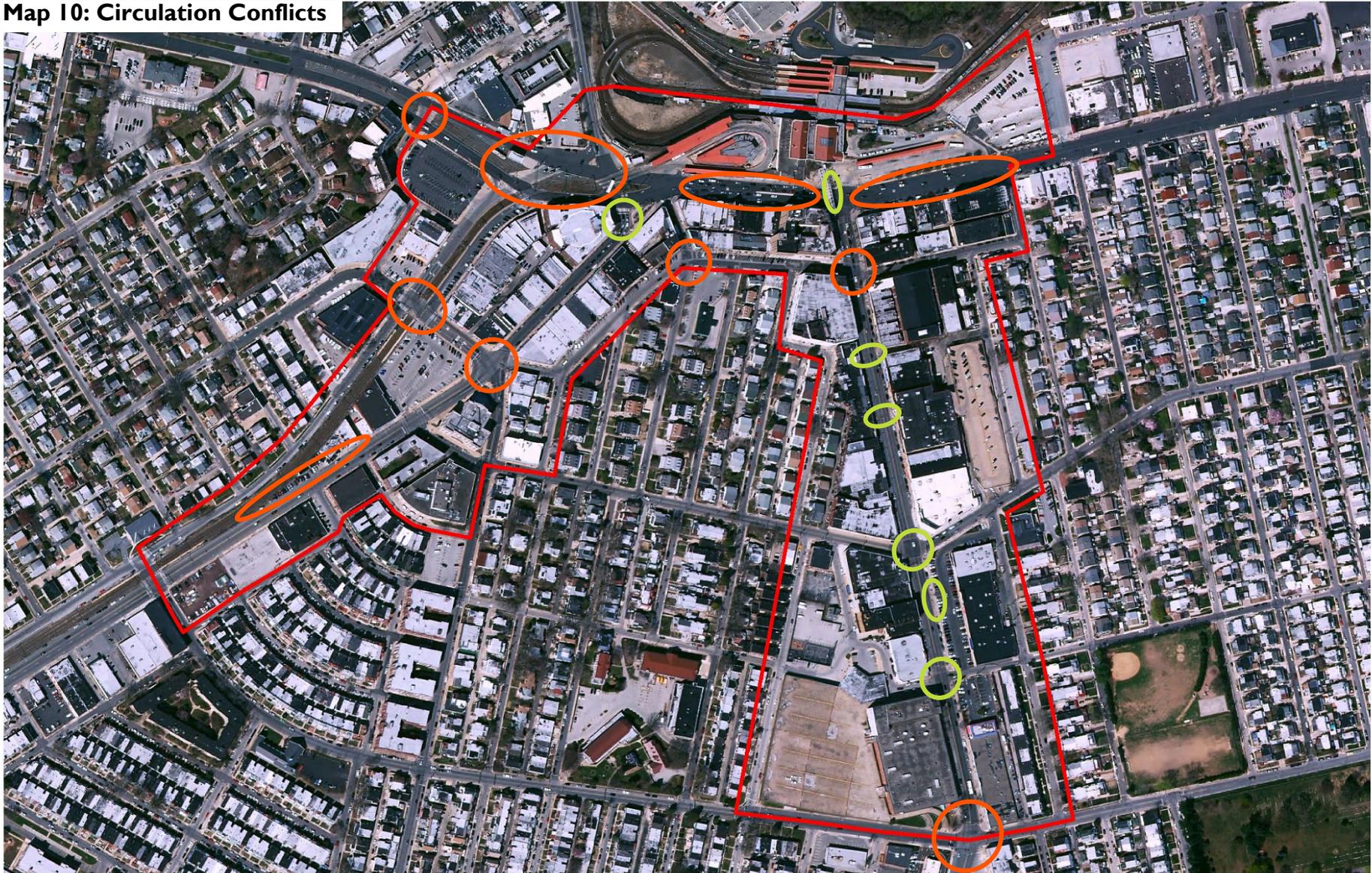


Figure 20: The five-point intersection in front of the Township Building creates long crossing distances for pedestrians.

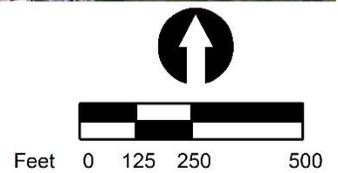


Figure 21: The intersection of Market and 69th Streets experiences a high volume of both pedestrians and vehicles, though the crosswalks are limited to the south and west sides of the intersection. Though there are sidewalks, there are no crosswalks along the bus terminal exit.

Map 10: Circulation Conflicts



-  Study Area
-  Reduced Circulation Conflicts
-  Circulation Conflicts



GATEWAYS

Gateways serve as the entrance point into a downtown or neighborhood. They should be thought of as the “front door” and, as such, should be welcoming and create a noticeable threshold for visitors to recognize that they are entering a distinct area. A gateway can also set the tone for expectations for an area. A gateway can be achieved through a variety of methods, including signage, streetscape design, and building design. There are several gateways into downtown Upper Darby (identified in Map 11).

Garrett Road Gateway (#1)

The Garrett Road gateway carries a medium volume of vehicles that parallels the SEPTA 101/102 trolley line. While the study area begins at the intersection of Garrett Road and Walnut Street, the ‘gateway’ on this corridor does not appear until after the Upper Darby Township Building at the intersection with Long Lane. From this direction, the township building serves to effectively ‘hide’ the downtown area resulting in a dramatic ‘revealing’ effect as smaller, two-story structures with first-floor commercial use come into view. However, due to the number of streets at this intersection, pedestrians can feel separated from the rest of downtown.



Figure 22: Garrett Road - Gateway #1.

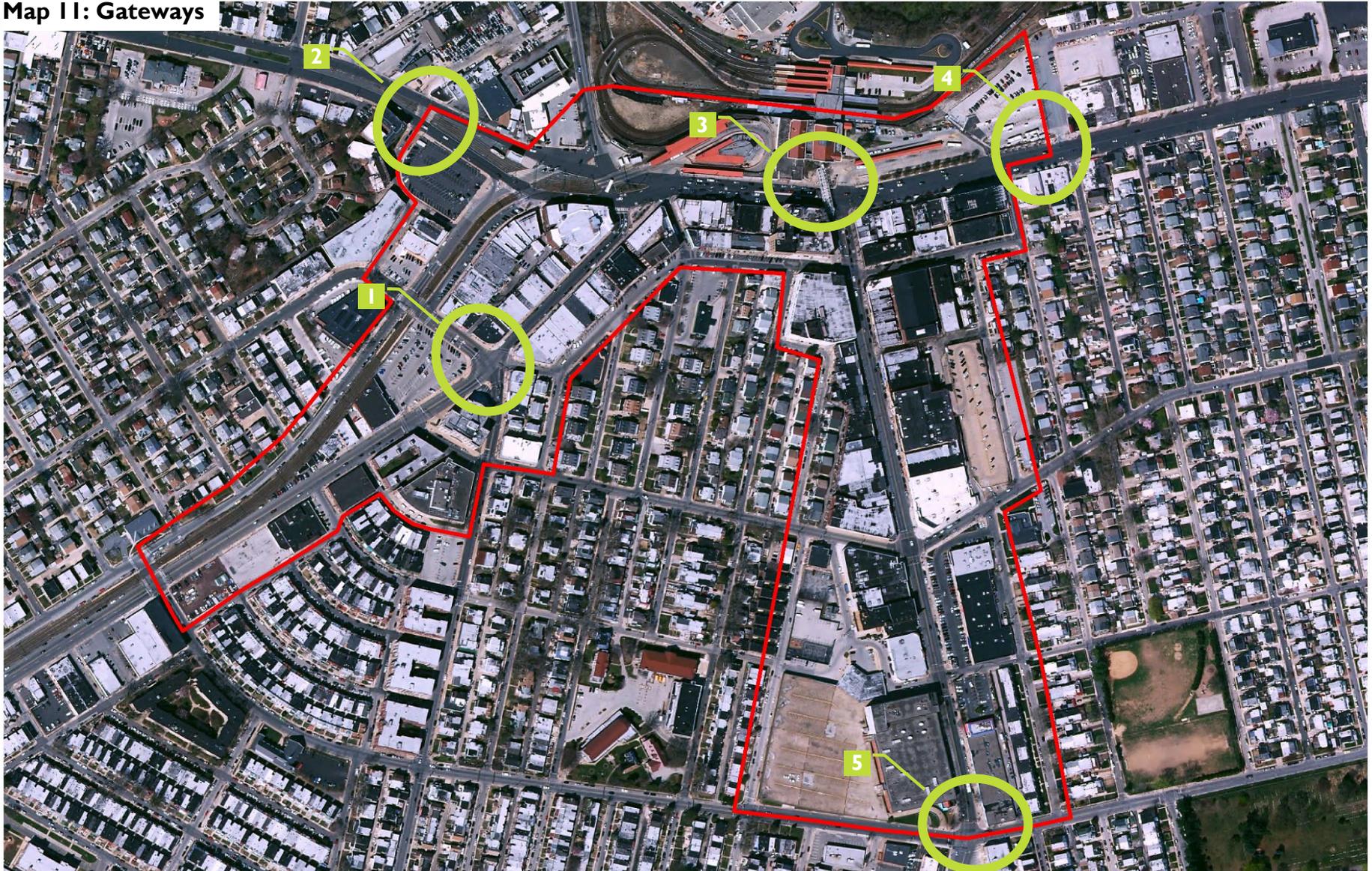
West Chester Pike Gateway (#2)

West Chester Pike carries a significant volume of vehicles, including several high-ridership bus routes, and is an important pedestrian connection to 69th Street Transportation Center. Visitors traveling along this corridor must pass through a busy intersection with Bywood Avenue/Terminal Square before reaching downtown. This intersection also includes SEPTA trolley lines and associated overhead utilities. As visitors approach Terminal Square and Garrett Road, the density of buildings begins to change significantly, creating a ‘street wall’ with buildings built up to sidewalk. Additionally, the 69th Street pedestrian bridge becomes visible as users move through the Garrett Road intersection. The combination of building design, enhanced streetscape with tree plantings, and unique design feature of the bridge creates a strong threshold.

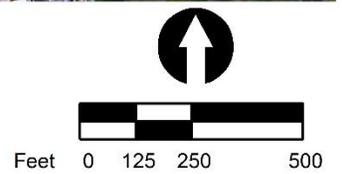


Figure 23: West Chester Pike - Gateway #2.

Map 11: Gateways



-  Study Area
-  Gateway



69th Street Transportation Center Gateway (#3)

The 69th Street Transportation Center gateway is an extremely unique entrance into the study area. Approximately 35,000 people travel through the station every day – many of which do not leave the footprint of the station as they are simply transferring routes. For those riders only passing through, the station is their only experience of the study area. As such, the station itself can be seen as an important gateway that sets the perception of the area for thousands of people every day.

For those leaving the station, the main entrance at 69th and Market Streets serves as the main gateway into the downtown area. Many visitors exiting that station at this point utilize the 69th Street pedestrian bridge. The bridge serves as a marker for other gateways, but the experience itself of using the bridge enhance the gateway effect at this location.

The large volume of traffic at the intersection of Market and 69th Street creates a perceived barrier between the station and downtown. Beyond the traffic, there is a relatively clear view up a tree-lined 69th Street with wide sidewalks and active storefronts. Unique architectural elements, such as the elaborate façade of the McClatchy Building and the Tower Theater entrance provide visual focal points from this gateway and draw pedestrians in. However, the bridge obstructs some of these focal points from the ground. Visitors that choose to use the pedestrian overpass are welcomed with a unique view from above 69th Street and adjacent to the ornate façade of the McClatchy Building and H&M window displays.



Figure 24: 69th Street Transportation Center - Gateway #3.

Market Street Gateway (#4)

As travelers along Market Street cross Chatham Road, several four- to six-story buildings create a dramatic series of focal points. The stature of the buildings and street edge created by the street-trees visually guides visitors to the McClatchy Building and 69th Street pedestrian bridge. Additionally, the 69th Street pedestrian bridge is clearly visible for much of this approach, creating a 'destination' point marking the entrance to downtown.

The right-hand side of the street is used for an at-grade SEPTA parking lot. While there is no structure here, the street trees help to create a partial visual barrier and redirect attention to the left-hand side of the street.



Figure 25: Market Street - Gateway #4.

69th and Walnut Street Gateway (#5)

Entering into the downtown area from the south along 69th Street and Rocklyn Road provides a different perspective from the other gateways. The intersection of 69th Street, Rocklyn Road, and Walnut Street is wide and not very comfortable for pedestrians. The left-hand side of the intersection is currently dominated by the former Sear's/Turf Club property. Further, most of other the buildings are one-story structures that do not create a street wall similar to the other gateways. However, the wider sidewalks and street trees help to distinguish the area.

The intersection is slightly downhill from the high point of 69th Street, which occurs at the intersection of Sansom and 69th Streets. As visitors approach Sansom Street, the movie theater, Tower Theater, and station come into view.



Figure 26: 69th and Walnut Street - Gateway #5.

NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER

The combination of building styles, sizes, and locations, along with public infrastructure such as sidewalks and streets, create a unique character. This character directly impacts the experience of users and how they perceive a neighborhood. Understanding the existing character is important in order to be able to best identify opportunities and appropriate actions for achieving the community’s vision.

Buildings

As discussed in Section 1, much of downtown Upper Darby was built in the 1920s and 1930s, particularly along 69th Street; however, there is an incredible mix of architectural styles from that time period forward.

Most of the storefronts cater towards the pedestrian and are approximately 20 to 30-feet wide, with the vast majority between 24 and 26-feet wide. However, some storefronts are as narrow as 18ft and others, such as the GAP store on 69th Street, can be as wide as 60-feet. The gross floor areas for stores range greatly, as the depth of stores can be anyway from 50 to 150 feet. With the exception of most of 69th Street, which has many one-story buildings, the majority of the buildings are between three and five stories tall.

Although not all buildings may be considered “high design” at first glance, many contribute to the underlying character of downtown Upper Darby. This is particularly true for buildings with art deco features, a very unique aesthetic in this area.

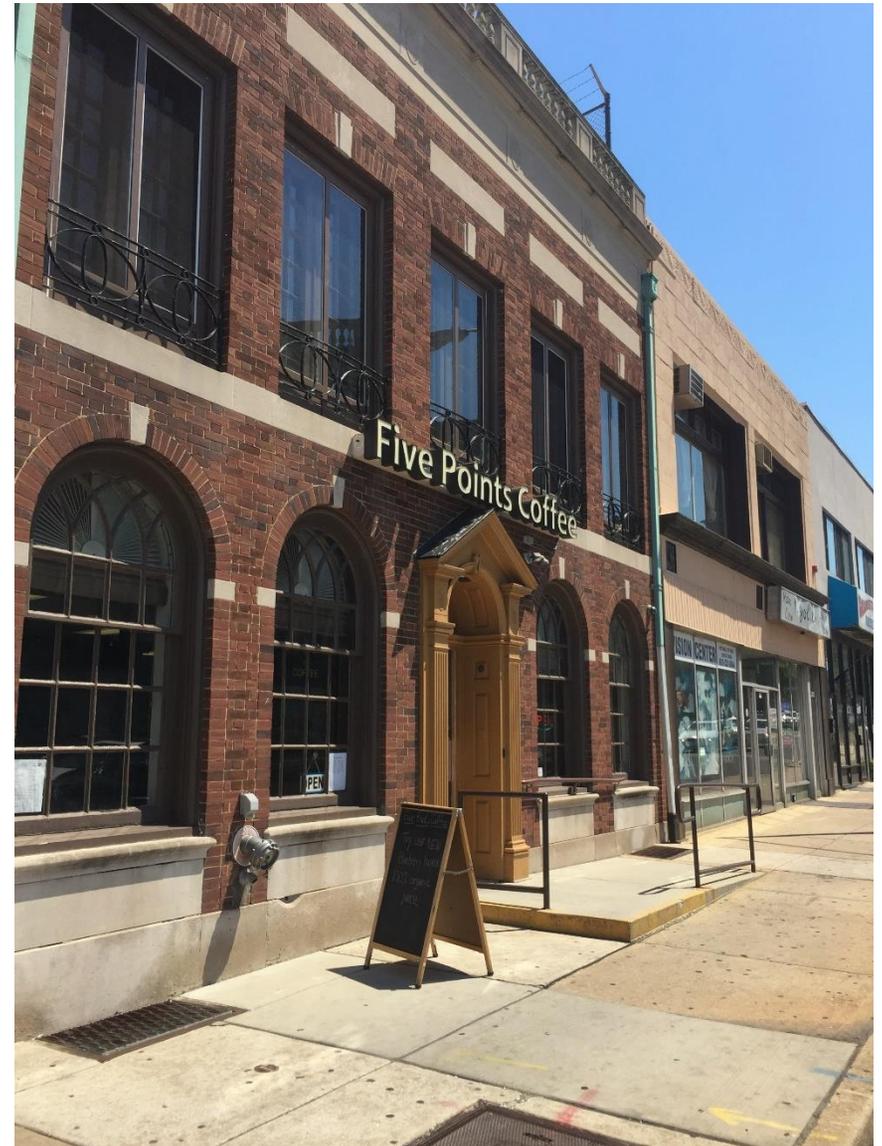


Figure 27: The façade for Five Points Coffee on Long Lane retains many of the original architectural details.

There are several very large structures in downtown Upper Darby, particularly the Tower Theater and Studio Movie Grill. While many of the large structures are multi-story, mixed-use facilities, these two buildings contain a single use. However, neither building dominates the street front. The Tower Theatre building, which opened in 1928, has prominent corner access to 69th and Ludlow Streets, but the majority of the building is set back behind a stretch of three-story buildings that include first-floor commercial space with housing above. Together, this maintains an active façade for pedestrians and avoids “blank walls” that can make it less appealing for people to spend time. Additionally, the structure has a large wall facing Ludlow Street that includes architectural details and the emergency access doors to make the otherwise blank wall more appealing.

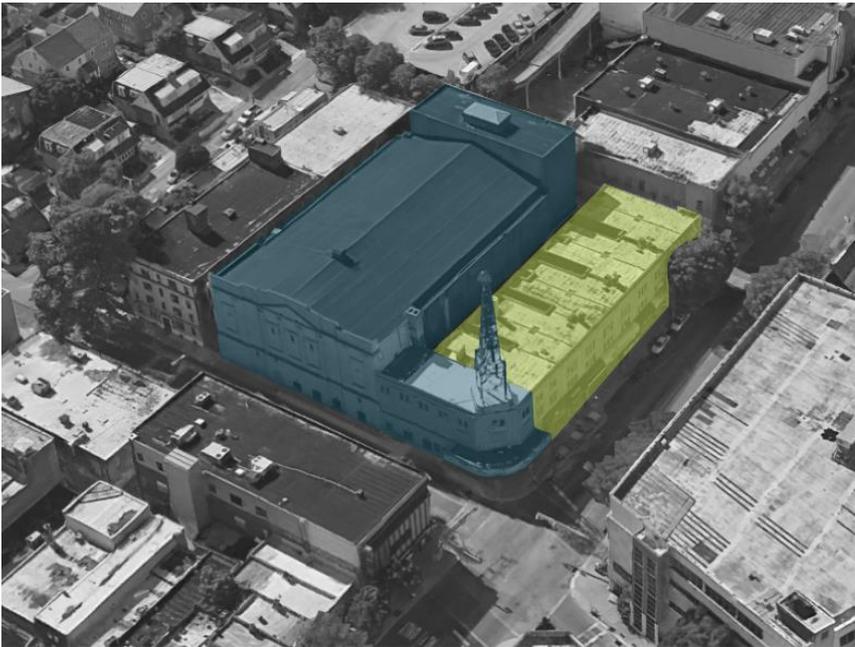


Figure 28: The Tower Theater is a large structure (in blue) “wrapped” in smaller storefronts (in yellow).

Studio Movie Grill is also wrapped in smaller stores but features a prominent street front presence, as seen in Figure 29 below. The façade was recently updated prior to the reopening of the theater; however, it maintained the original art deco style in shape/form. The Tower Theater and Studio Movie Grill are great examples of maintaining an active street for pedestrians while accommodating larger buildings.



Figure 29: The Studio Move Grill has prominent entrance and focal point on the facade along 69th Street, but much of the interior space (in blue) is located on the second floor and behind stores (in yellow).



Figure 30: The McClatchy Building from the intersection of 69th and Ludlow Streets.

The terra cotta style façade of the McClatchy Building makes it one of the most unique structures in the region; it is widely recognized as an art deco masterpiece for its originality. One of the most unique elements of the building was the lighting that highlighted the intricate façade at night, including stained-glass pilasters lit from within. There was even a 10-minute light show that played off the features of the façade. The lower floors of the structure are occupied by H&M, a fast-fashion retailer, which maximized the use of the large windows and plays off the interior style of the building.



Figure 31: The McClatchy Building's ornate facade is one of the best examples of Art Deco design in the region.



Figure 32: The H&M store uses the large second story windows of the McClatchy Building for product displays and brand signage.

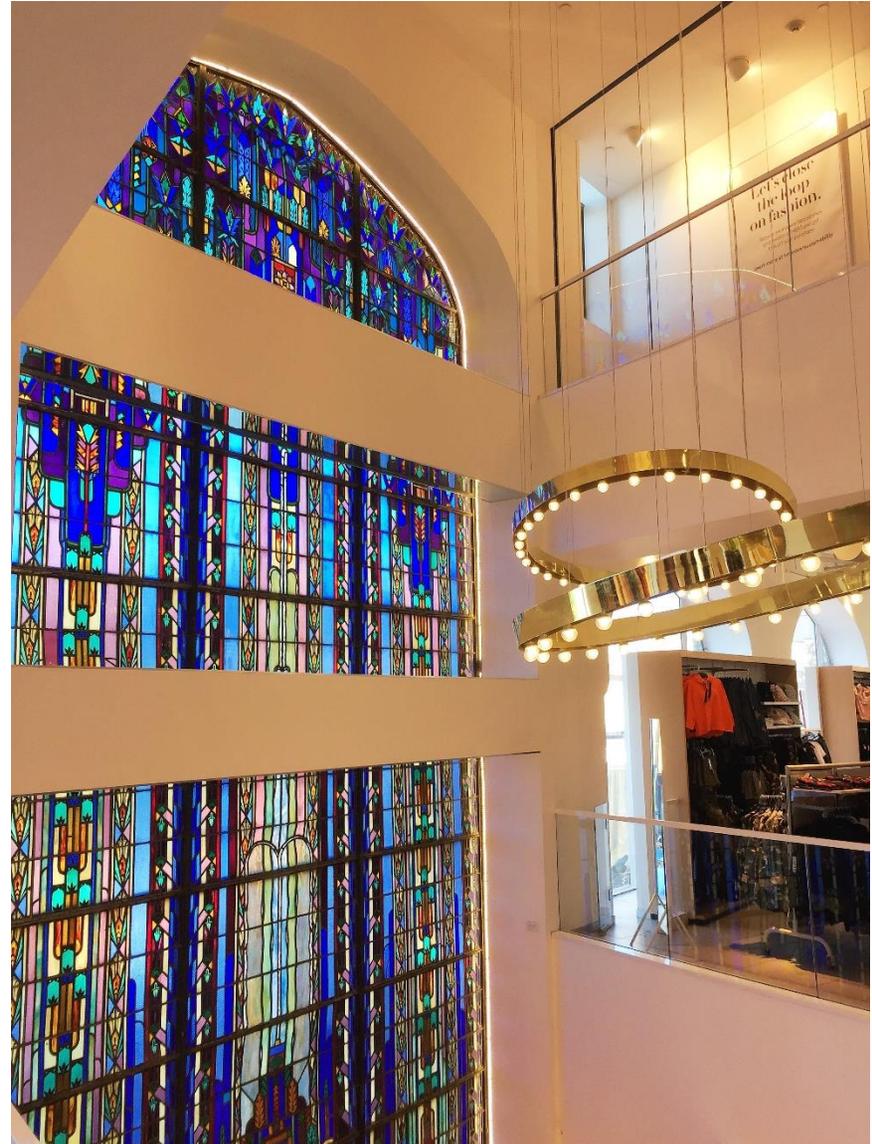


Figure 33: The H&M store highlights the design features of the McClatchy Building on the interior, including the large stained-glass windows.



Figure 34: The Tower Theater is one of the most prominent buildings in downtown Upper Darby.

The Tower Theater is a vernacular combination of Italianate and Art Deco architectural styles and occupies a significant portion of 69th Street at the intersection with Ludlow Street. The three-story structure includes the four-story namesake tower that sits atop the building at the corner of 69th and Ludlow Streets. The tower is visible along much of 69th and serves as an icon of downtown Upper Darby. The corner of the building faces directly towards 69th and Market Streets – an iconic and welcoming view for people.



Figure 35: The Tower Theater is wrapped in smaller storefronts with first floor retail and associated signage and dwelling units on the second and third stories.

Many other medium to large-size buildings in downtown Upper Darby feature ornate architectural treatments on the façade.



Figure 36: Ornate doorway trim and ironwork over the windows create a unique visual experience for pedestrians.



Figure 37: Details are visible to pedestrians without reducing transparency of the first floor.

The former Horn & Hardart building located at 6828 Market Street, Upper Darby is one of relatively few remaining Horn & Hardart market buildings in the region. It contains much of the original façade, including the neon letter signage on the parapet and significant art deco design features.



Figure 38: Graphic depiction of the Horn and Hardart Building (Image source: Preservation Alliance of Greater Philadelphia).



Figure 39: Much of the Horn & Hardart Market facade remains intact today.

SEPTA's 69th Street Transportation Center was originally built in 1907 in the Romanesque style and has undergone several substantial renovations and additions over the past century. It was one of the very first structures built in what is now downtown Upper Darby. The building retains much of the original design features, although some now obscured by modern infrastructure.



Figure 40: The 69th Street Transportation Center shortly after it was built in 1907 (image source: U.S. Library of Congress).



Figure 41: The 69th Street Transportation today.

Section 2: Inventory and Analysis

While many building facades have been modified over the year, most retain their original architectural forms. Some buildings, such as a stretch of structures along Garrett Road (see Figure 42), maintain detailed design elements, such as the roofline and tile features on the pilasters, but some have been painted with schemes that do not emphasize these features.



Figure 42: Several buildings on Garrett Road maintain some of the original art deco details.



Figure 43: Many structures contain similar roofline patterns, most notably the decorative projecting cornices which can be found on different building styles throughout downtown.

Facades for many of the stores on 69th Street underwent a major renovation recently; the facades were previously white with green and pink accents. The storefronts are mostly neutral and tan colors with some larger stores (e.g., Modell's) getting special façade color treatments. Many of these facades also include projecting cornices.

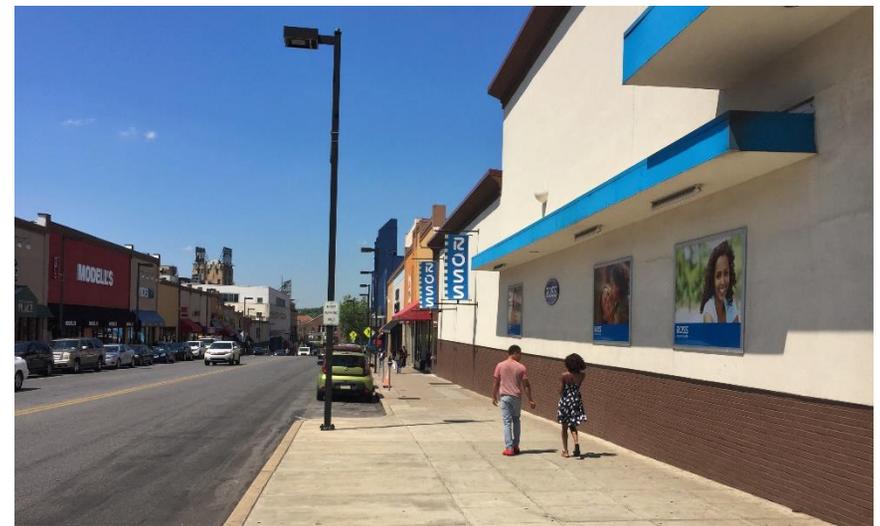


Figure 44: The new Ross store on 69th Street has largely blank walls with some advertisement posters; this creates very limited interest for pedestrians.

Historic District

The 69th Street Terminal Square Shopping District (see Map 12 on the following page) is considered eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places for its significant architecture (particularly the unusually high number of Art Deco buildings). As mentioned above, several iconic structures serve as architectural anchors for downtown Upper Darby; however, many other structures contribute to the unique architectural character that create the historic district. The Historic Resource Survey Form, available from the Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission (PHMC) records, emphasizes the distinctive architecture and intimate scale of Garrett Road. The PHMC survey form also notes that the areas south of Ludlow Street were excluded from the district due to significant modifications to the facades and character of the streetscape.

PHMC records indicate that the district is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places for two main reasons:

“its significant role in the commercial development near the 69th Street transportation hub, especially just prior to and after the Depression years”; and

“a fine collection of eclectic commercial buildings, some of which were designed by regional preeminent architects, including Hodgens & Hill, McIlvain & Roberts, Ritter & Shay, Ralph B. Bencker, and others”.

Since the district is eligible for listing in the National Register, the impact to the site is given specific consideration during projects with federal funding (this remains true if/when a district is formally listed).

There are 62 properties located within the proposed district boundary. Buildings that were constructed at one time with individual party walls (as opposed to load-bearing walls) were considered one property for the purpose of the PHMC tally. Of these properties, 41 properties are considered contributing and 11 are considered non-contributing.



Figure 45: The Tower Theater is individually eligible for listing.

What is the National Register of Historic Places?

The National Register is the official Federal list of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture.

What are the benefits of listing a district?

In addition to honorific recognition, listing in the National Register has the following results for historic properties:

- Consideration in planning of federally assisted projects
- Eligibility for certain investment tax credits for certified rehabilitation of income-producing structures
- Qualification for federal grants, when available

What are the restrictions of listing a district?

Under Federal Law, the listing of a property in the National Register places no restrictions on what a non-federal owner may do with their property up to and including destruction, unless the property is involved in a project that receives Federal assistance, usually funding or licensing/permitting.

Source: National Park Service, 2018

Map 12: Historic District



-  Study Area
-  Buildings
-  69th Street Terminal Square Shopping District



Signage

Signage on buildings can have an oversized impact on the experience of people downtown; they can detract from the architectural details of buildings, distract from window displays, and make it difficult to identify which signs and information actually matter. The signage in downtown Upper Darby ranges greatly from simple, flat lettering on building facades to overwhelming backlit neon awnings. Appropriate signage, such as the Studio Movie Grill and Modell's Sporting Goods Store, should fit the scale of the façade and be oriented towards the pedestrian.



Figure 46: The Studio Movie Grill includes an oversized sign that fits within the character of the façade as a focal point for the street.



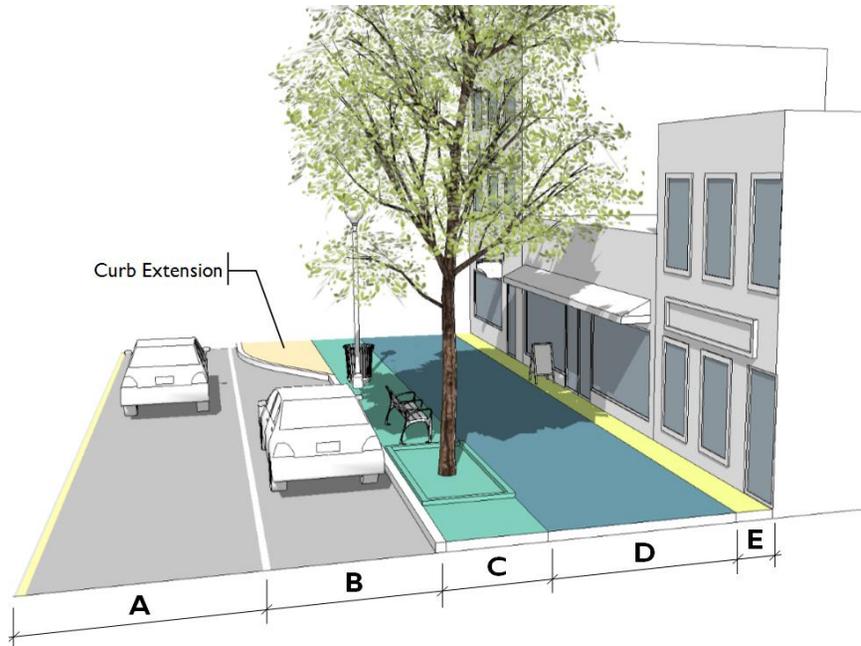
Figure 47: The signage on the Modell's Sporting Goods storefront includes a vertical blade sign, flat sign, and awning with simple letter - all appropriately-sized for the storefront.

Streetscape

In any downtown area, a safe, complete, and attractive sidewalk network is an important factor in its economic vitality. Not only does the sidewalk network provide important connections (see page 23 above for discussion of the sidewalk network), it also creates a community space and opportunity for storefronts to reach new customers.

As discussed in Section 1, people are treating shopping as more of an experience – that is they will spend time browsing and walking around. As a result, the streetscape plays an increasingly important role in the downtown areas. The streetscape should be considered a “place” in and of itself, going beyond a simple transportation utility.

While each streetscape is unique, there are several common components that play an important role, including: benches, waste receptacles, lights, trees, planting, and signage. Together, these items create an experience for people and should be managed as such.



To understand the function of a streetscape, it is important to first understand the various items that create a full streetscape.

- A. Travel Lane:** Designated for movement of motor vehicles and bicyclists; care should be taken to design crossings as safe for all users.
- B. Extension/Parking Zone:** Space for on-street parking or bulb-out of the sidewalk to provide for safer pedestrian crossings at intersections or mid-block points.
- C. Furnishing Zone:** A designated space that serves as a buffer between the pedestrian zone and vehicular movement; includes space for street trees and furnishings such as benches, trash cans, lights, and other utilities.
- D. Pedestrian Zone:** Space to remain clear of obstructions for pedestrian movement.
- E. Frontage Zone:** Space immediately adjacent to the building that acts as the transition between internal uses and the pedestrian zone; may include small, pedestrian scale signage or planters.



Section 2: Inventory and Analysis

The streetscape on 69th Street is relatively consistent, with an approximately two-foot-wide furnishing zone, a frontage zone that is well used for small “sandwich board” signs and similar advertisements, leaving approximately six feet of space for the pedestrian zone. The furnishing zone includes parking meters for each space, some regulatory signage for vehicular movement, and street lights. In some areas, there are also street trees. Precast concrete pavers were installed to differentiate this zone. A natural color poured-in-place concrete was used for both the pedestrian zone and frontage zone. There are several areas of sidewalk along 69th Street (e.g., between Market and Ludlow Streets) that use precast concrete pavers for the entirety of the sidewalk. While there is a relatively limited number of materials used in the study area; they are not used in a consistent manner. For example, the sidewalk on the west side of 69th Street just north of Ludlow Street uses both cast-in-place concrete and precast concrete pavers. The width of the sidewalk on other streets, including Market Street and Garrett Road, varies greatly.



Figure 48: The sidewalk on 69th Street includes approximately two feet for both the furnishing zone and frontage zone, leaving about six feet for the pedestrian zone.



Figure 49: The use of materials is not consistent throughout downtown.



Figure 50: The street furnishing throughout downtown Upper Darby varies; for areas that were not included in the Market Street Gateway project, the materials are generally older.

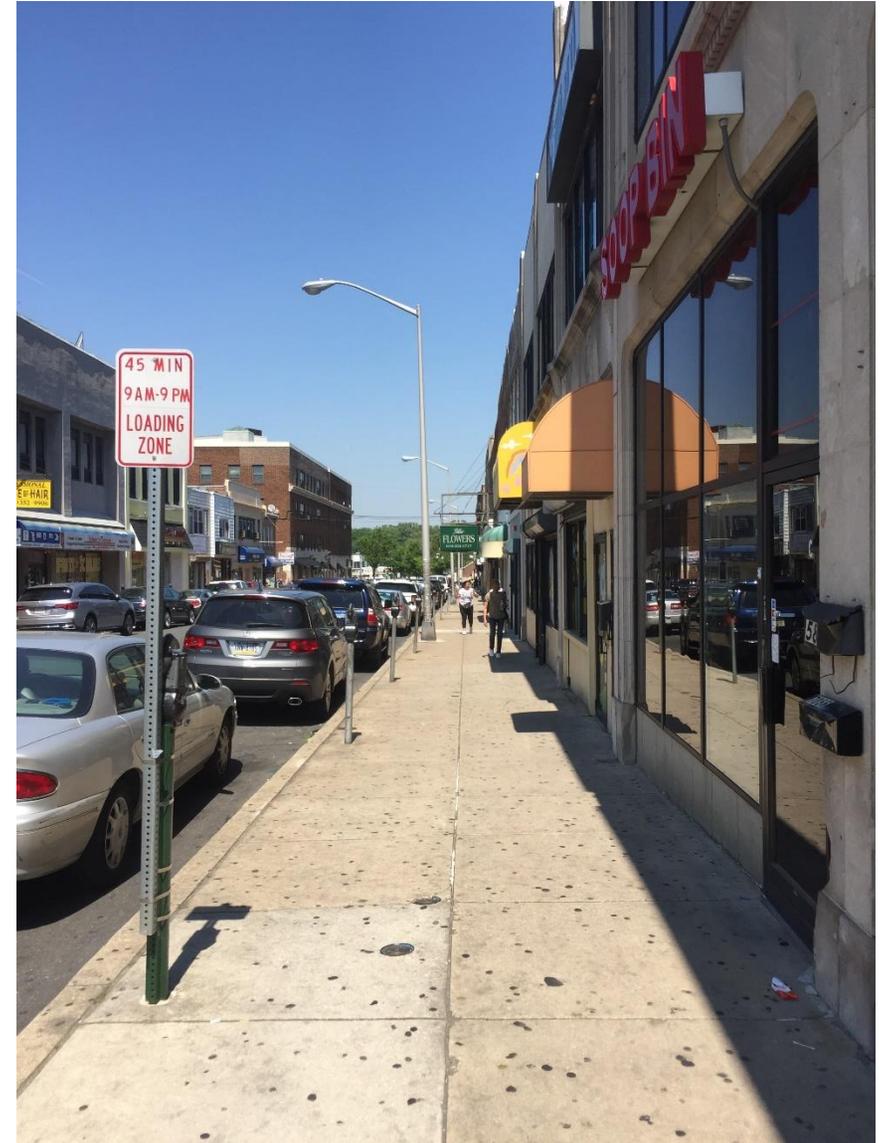


Figure 51: The sidewalk along Garrett Road is slightly narrower than 69th Street, with fewer amenities.



Figure 52: There is a relatively low amount of street furniture downtown; the furnishing that remains along Market Street is a unique blue color that provides distinct character but is difficult to maintain and replace in-kind.



Figure 53: Much of the sidewalk along Market Street includes concrete pavers and street trees in the furnishing zone.

Public Spaces

Public spaces play an important role in the community; they provide a gathering space for community events, a place to relax, and contribute to the unique sense of place overall. People often immediately think of parkland and formal plazas as the only public spaces within a community; however, it is important to recognize the role of sidewalks too. Many large downtowns have limited amounts of parkland and not all have formal plazas; as such, wider sidewalks tend to serve as a gathering space.

There are several small public spaces in the study area, most of which serve as extensions of the sidewalk. A small gathering space with trees, planters, and benches was created when the intersection of Garrett Road and West Chester Pike was realigned in 2004. This is a great example of improving the safety and traffic flow at the intersection while also adding a local community asset with improved public spaces.



Figure 54: A plaza at the intersection of Garrett Road and Market Street/West Chester Pike includes trees and small seating areas.

The west side of 69th Street between Market and Ludlow Streets has an extremely wide sidewalk, approximately 35-feet from the curb to the building edge. This space functions as an open public plaza, with people gathering and the occasional vendor. Additionally, the bridge crossing itself serves as public space with unique views of downtown Upper Darby.



Figure 55: The plaza outside of the McClatchy Building includes a significant amount of space that can be better utilized to promote an active downtown.

There are several small seating areas on both sides of 69th Street, particularly at corners and mid-block crosswalks. Again, these spaces are extensions of the sidewalk and are used intensively throughout the study area and function as community gathering spaces - they provide a place to see and be seen in the community. This functionality of the sidewalk is a local asset that can serve as the foundation for a great downtown. The seating areas are heavily used, particularly by workers from nearby businesses on breaks and visitors waiting to meet others.



Figure 56: Small seating area near the intersection of 69th Street and Ludlow Street.

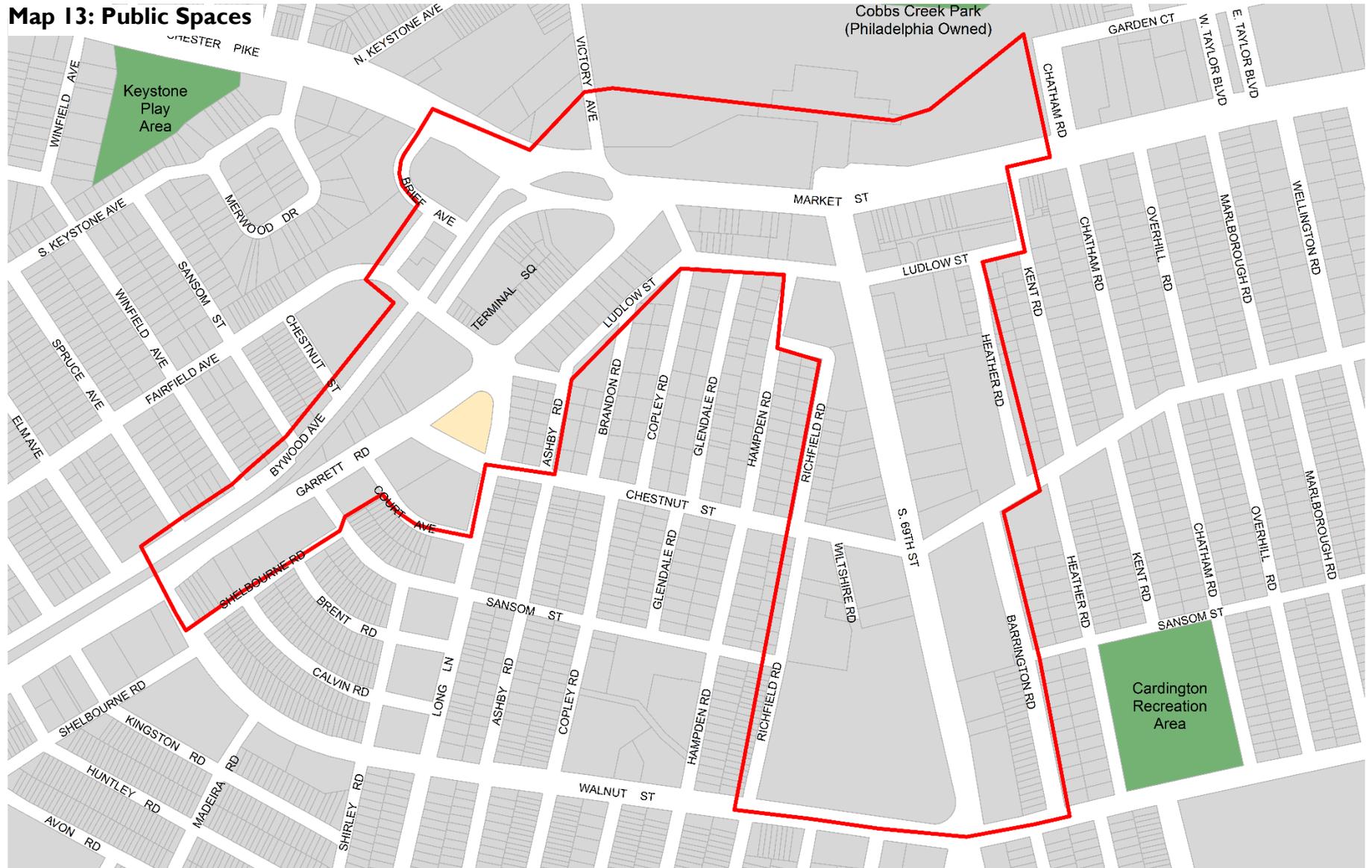
In recent years, there has been a 're-greening' trend that converts public spaces along sidewalks into park-like gathering spaces. Some projects even use one or two on-street parking spaces. These projects are designed to increase foot traffic by making the area more attractive and comfortable for people to stay longer. They are often tested on a short term or seasonal basis as relatively inexpensive options to test the feasibility and use.



Figure 57: A temporary gathering space was created in portions of a surface parking lot in Lansdowne Borough.

While there are no park spaces in the study area, there are two parks within walking distance. The Cardington Recreation Area is the most accessible park to most of the study area and includes a baseball field, soccer/football multi-purpose field, and a small playground.

Map 13: Public Spaces



-  Municipal Building
-  Parks
-  Study Area



Feet 0 125 250 500

DEMOGRAPHICS

Statistics relating to the population of the study area (see Maps 1 and 2) provide some context for both the inventory and analysis and the visioning process.

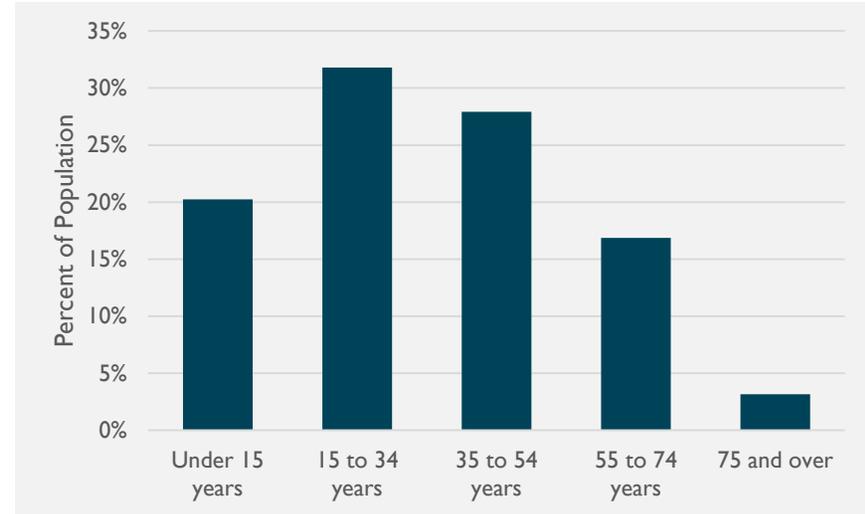
Population

The current population of the study area and immediately surrounding neighborhoods is 17,227 according to 2015 American Community Survey (ACS) Five-Year Estimates. The population has remained relatively stable in recent years, and represents about 21% of the total 82,878 township residents. According to regional population forecasts by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) in 2000, the township was expected to lose more than 12% of its population by 2025. However, it did not come to reality so far and is no longer projected. The population of the township according to 2010 U.S. Census was 82,795, approximately 1% more than the year 2000 (U.S. Census 2000). Further, the most recent forecast released by DVRPC in 2016 projected a 5.2% *growth* for the township to over 87,000 people between 2015 and 2045. This reflects the rapid change in consumer preferences resulting in an increasing desire to live in walkable and transit-friendly communities, such as Upper Darby as discussed in Section I.

Age

As discussed in Section I, much of the country’s population is concentrated in the age cohorts referred to as Millennials (those generally born between 1983 and 2001) and Baby Boomers (those generally born between 1945 and 1963). The study area and surrounding neighborhoods have a relatively young population compared to this national trend. Approximately 32% of this area is represented by millennials while baby boomers comprise only 17%; nationally, millennials and baby boomers each consisted of about 22% of the U.S. population. Upper Darby Township in its entirety has a similar age distribution to the study area.

Chart 2: Study Area Age Distribution

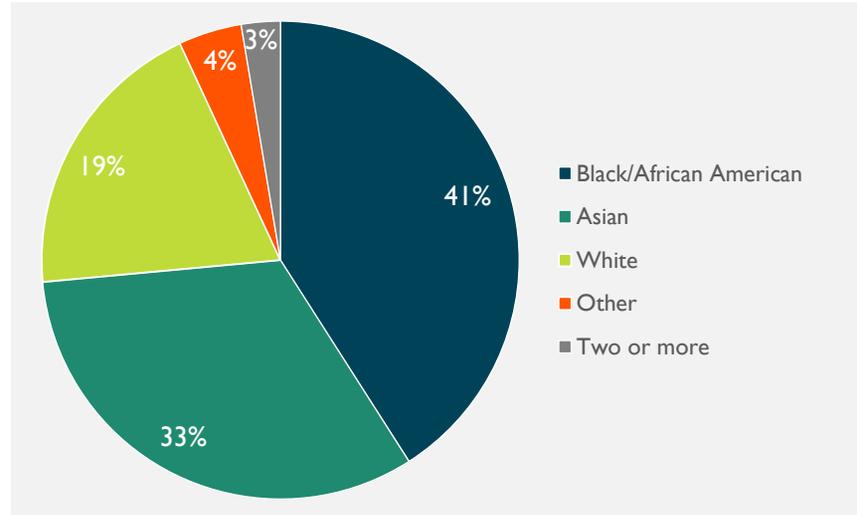


Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2010-2014 Five-Year Estimates

Race/Ethnicity

The racial diversity of the population in the study area and surrounding neighborhoods is an important factor in the character of this community. It helps to foster a unique mix of restaurants and stores that make this area special. More than 40% of the area’s population identifies as Black or African American and one-third identifies as Asian. Additionally, 10% of the population in the study area and surrounding neighborhoods identifies as Hispanic, compared to 5% in the entire township.

Chart 3: Race

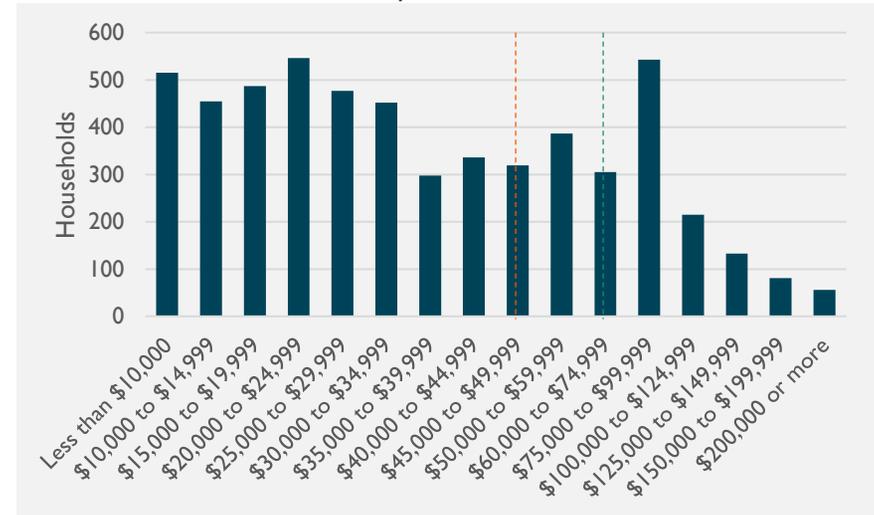


Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2010-2014 Five-Year Estimates

Income

The household median income for the study area is slightly lower than the township’s median household income (\$49,783) and the County (\$65,123).

Chart 4: Household Income in Study Area



----- Median Income for Upper Darby Township
 - - - - - Median Income for Delaware County

Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2010-2014 Five-Year Estimates

Housing Data

Housing Occupancy

Out of the total estimated 6,494 housing units in the study area and surrounding neighborhoods, currently about 86% of them are occupied while 14% are vacant. This is a relatively high vacancy rate, especially considering that the township as a whole has a vacancy rate of 11%, and Delaware County has a vacancy rate of 8%.

Housing Tenure

The study area and surrounding neighborhoods have more renters than homeowners, with 58% of occupied housing units being renter-occupied and 42% being owner-occupied. This is the exact reverse of the township as a whole, where 42% of occupied housing units are renter-occupied and 58% are owner-occupied. Delaware County has a much higher homeownership rate, with 70% of occupied housing units being owner-occupied and only 30% being renter-occupied.

Chart 5: Housing Tenure

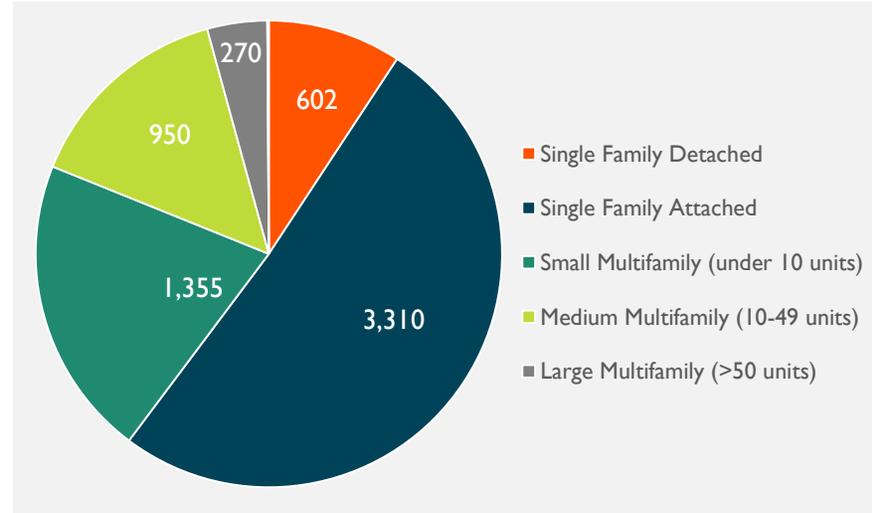


Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2010-2014 Five-Year Estimates

Units in Structure

Given the dense, urban character of the study area and surrounding neighborhoods, it is not surprising that the most common housing type is single family attached, at over 51% of total housing units. These could be twins or row houses. The next most common housing type is small multifamily, or structures with fewer than 10 housing units, at 21% of total housing units. Only about 9% of the study area and surrounding neighborhoods' housing units are single family detached. Upper Darby Township as a whole also has a large proportion of single family attached with 43% of housing units being of this type. However, the township has a greater percentage of single family detached, at 26% of total housing units. By contrast, 45% of total housing units in Delaware County are single family detached, and 31% are single family attached.

Chart 6: Housing Unit Type

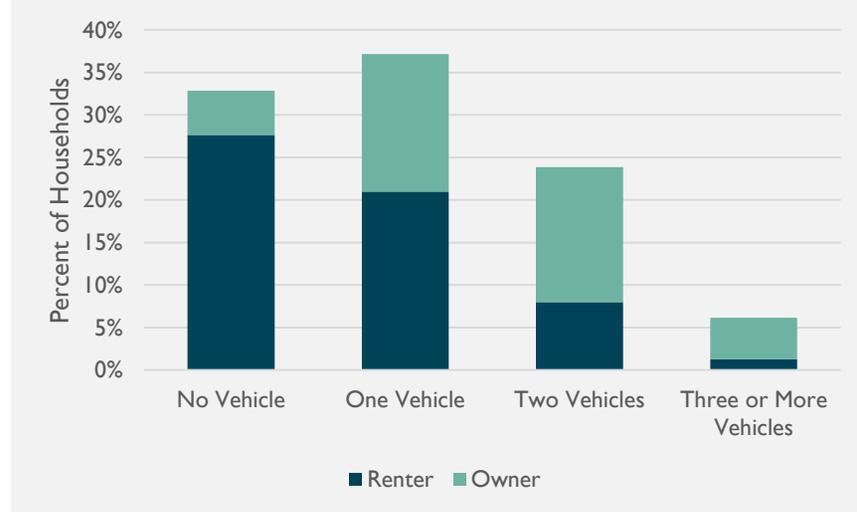


Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2010-2014 Five-Year Estimates

Vehicle Ownership

A third of households in the study area and surrounding neighborhoods do not own a vehicle. In a dense, walkable, transit-connected area like this, it is not necessary to own a vehicle. Approximately 84% of the households that do not own a car are renters. There may also be economic issues at play in many cases, as the median household income is lower than average for the both the township and the County. By comparison, only 18% of households in Upper Darby Township and 11% of households in Delaware County do not own a vehicle.

Chart 7: Vehicle Ownership

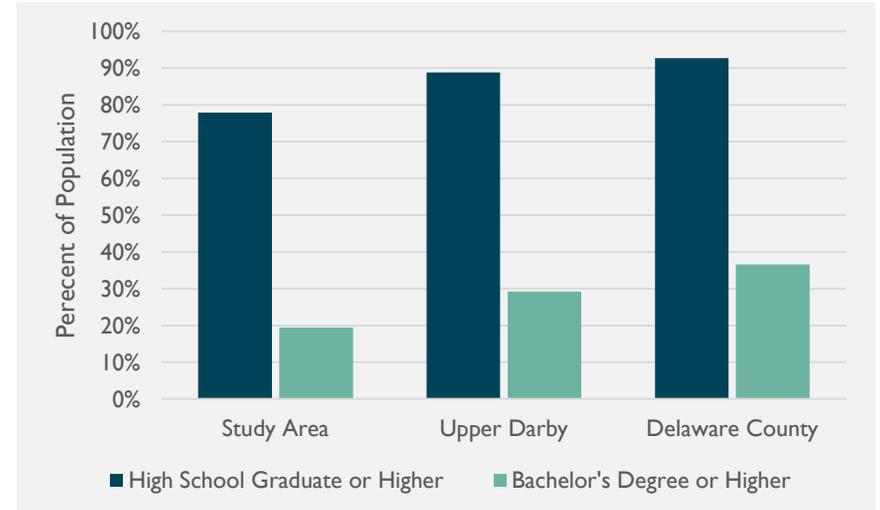


Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2010-2014 Five-Year Estimates

Education

Close to 78% of the population in the study area and surrounding neighborhoods has at least a high school degree, while 19% of the population has a bachelor's degree or higher. This is lower, however, than the township as a whole, where 89% of the population has at least a high school degree and 29% of the population has a bachelor's degree or higher, and significantly lower than the County as a whole where 93% of the population has at least a high school degree and 37% have a bachelor's degree or higher.

Chart 8: Educational Attainment



Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2010-2014 Five-Year Estimates

JOBS

National Establishment Time-Series (NETS) data on employment in the study area is available for 2013. While NETS data is often considered the best available source for this type of data, it is important to note that the data includes a number of businesses that may locate jobs in other areas (e.g., temporary staffing agency, in-home nursing, etc.). Additionally, the data includes several limited-liability corporations (LLCs) which list one or more employees; the reality is that many of the businesses are simple holding businesses that do not have employees. Specific numbers are not listed due to the accuracy concerns; however, this data can help provide general insight into the number and types of jobs in the study area.

As expected, the majority of the jobs in the study area are in the retail industry (approximately 400 jobs). There is also a similar number of professional services located in the study area, such as financial advisors, real estate agents, and including public government employees (both Upper Darby and Delaware County have offices in the study area). Restaurants and similar eating places (including takeout eateries) account for approximately 150 jobs in the study area. Additionally, there are over 200 jobs in the healthcare and social services industry; this includes: medical doctors; dentists; chiropractors; mental health centers; substance abuse centers; and child day care services. There are several educational support and training institutions with centers in the study area that together employ more than 50 people.

It is worth noting that some employers have headquarters in the study area with employees working off-site. SEPTA, for example, employs hundreds of people at the 69th Transportation Center, including the fleet services facilities located behind the station. While these jobs may not be located in the study area all day, many workers start and end their day here – an important opportunity for downtown Upper Darby.

DIRECTION FOR VISIONING PROCESS

Based on the inventory and analysis of downtown Upper Darby, it is clear that much of the infrastructure to support a thriving downtown is in place. As such, the community-driven visioning process will explore what it is that people would like to see happen here. This information will help to guide the community in creating a realistic action plan to achieve the community vision.

Delaware County 2035 | Central Planes
Downtown Upper Darby
June 15, 2017



SECTION 3:

VISIONING PROCESS

3 69TH STREET + MARKET STREET

4 COMMUNITY PREFERENCES - PICK YOUR TOP TWO!

5 COMMUNITY PREFERENCES - PICK YOUR TOP TWO!

6 COMMUNITY PREFERENCES - PICK YOUR TOP TWO!

Section 3: Visioning Process

The primary methods of public outreach for this project included an open house-style event in June 2017 followed immediately by an online survey open to the public. These efforts provided community members the opportunity to voice opinions early in the process, prior to the development of potential improvements.

OPEN HOUSE EVENT

A public open house event was held on June 15, 2017 at Beverly Hills Middle School in Upper Darby. The event was advertised through flyers handed out by Upper Darby Township and announcements by local organizations and their social media accounts (see Appendix A). The event was organized into an open house style meeting, with several “stations” setup throughout the school’s auditorium for visitors to offer input. Visitors were allowed the opportunity to markup aerial maps and photographs of the study area to highlight issues and opportunities and vote on potential priorities. Additionally, a brief presentation followed by a question and answer session provided a project overview. The event was well attended, with dozens of local community members taking time to voice opinions.

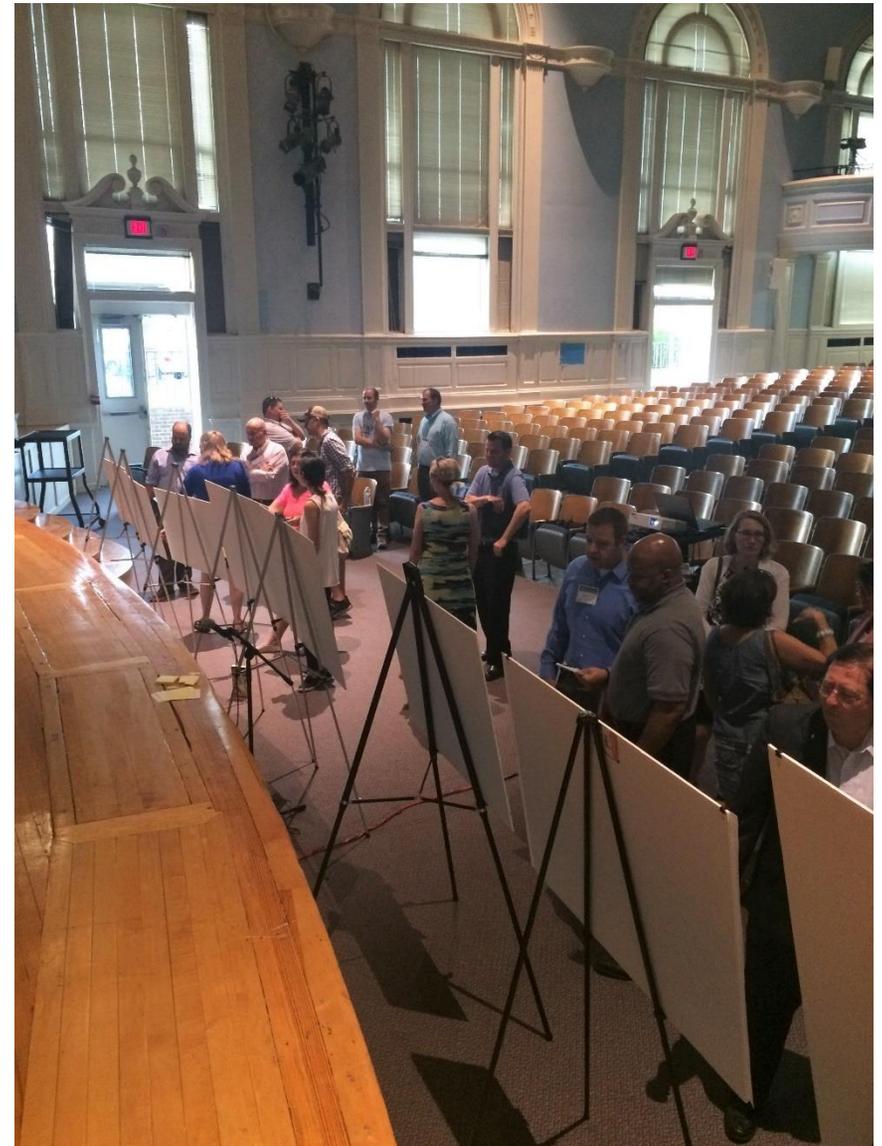


Figure 58: Dozens of community members attended the open house event and provided feedback through several poster stations.

Community Preference Boards

Additional feedback was gathered through “Community Preference Boards,” which allowed community members to prioritize types of improvements by “voting” with stickers. Potential improvements included outdoor dining space, bicycle lanes, and special events. The project planning team walked community members through options and described the potential benefits. This community input was used to guide the recommendations and prioritization of the action plan.



Figure 60: Posters allowed community members to provide input for a variety of topics throughout the open house event.

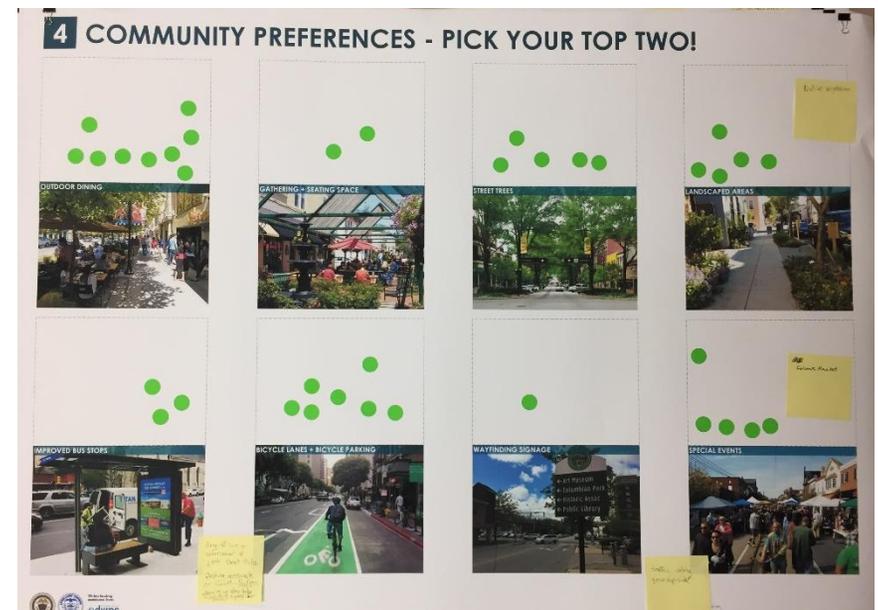


Figure 61: Community members voted to prioritize certain types of improvements based on opportunities they felt were important.

SURVEY AND RESULTS

An online public survey was made available immediately following the open house event on June 15, 2017 and remained open through July 31, 2017. It was widely advertised, particularly through various social media accounts and email newsletters (see Appendix B).

SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

Gender

Female: 60.73%

Male: 39.27%

Zip Code

Drexel Hill (19026): 41.39%

Upper Darby (19082): 29.31%

Clifton Heights (19018): 4.23%

Lansdowne (19050): 3.93%

Springfield (19064): 3.02%

Miscellaneous: 18.12%

In the end, 331 people participated in the online survey. The majority of the participants were residents of the surrounding neighborhoods (Drexel Hill and Upper Darby). There were also a significant number of participants from other communities in Delaware County and across the region; this reflects the potential for downtown Upper Darby to continue growing as a regional center.

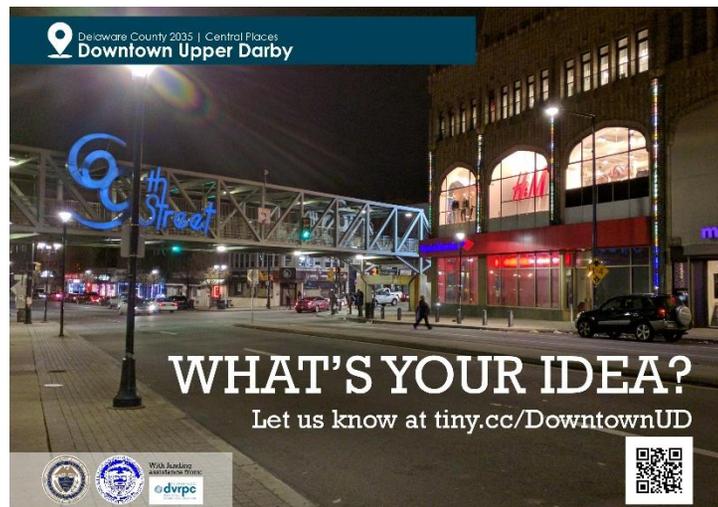


Figure 62: Graphics were used to help grab attention for the survey.

3 → For this next section, please rate how much you would like to see each of the following ideas in Downtown Upper Darby.

a. Outdoor dining*



1	2	3	4	5
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No thanks, there are more important things.

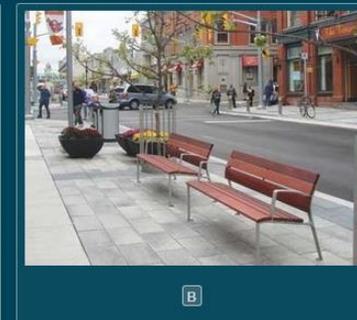
I would love outdoor dining!

4 → For this section, please select the image that best fits what you would like to see in Downtown Upper Darby.

a. Street furniture*



A

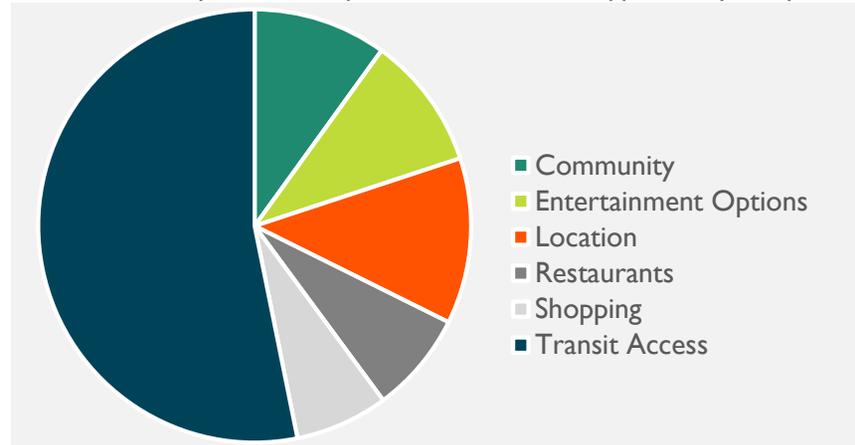


B

Figure 63: The online survey allowed participants to voice their opinion in a user-friendly manner.

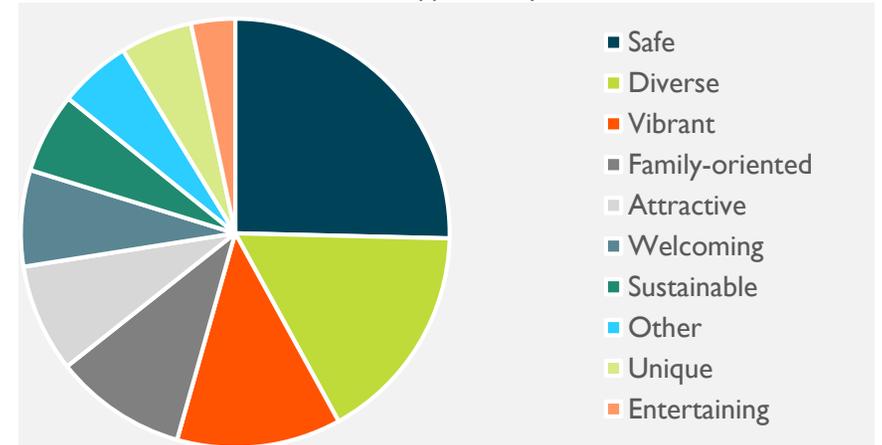
The survey began by asking participants to identify their favorite part of downtown Upper Darby. “Transit Access” was selected by a significant number of participants (53%); this is extremely noteworthy as increasing transit access is often costly. The existing transit infrastructure provides a true advantage for downtown Upper Darby. Transit access was followed by “Location” (12%), “Community” (10%), Entertainment Options” (10%).

Chart 9: What is your favorite part about downtown Upper Darby today?



To gauge what participants felt downtown Upper Darby should be, it asked how the participants would like to describe downtown Upper Darby in the future. The three standouts, which attributed for nearly 55% of the total choices, were “Safe” (25%), “Diverse” (17%), and “Vibrant” (12%). It is clear that participants feel that consistent entertainment and activities are important in making downtown Upper Darby successful.

Chart 10: In the future, downtown Upper Darby is...



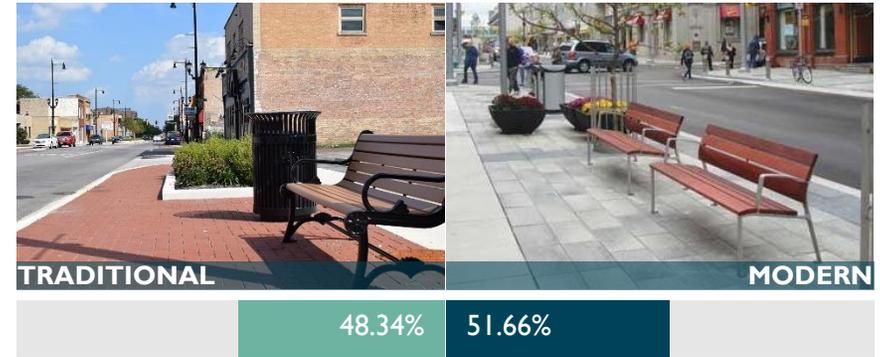
Participants were also asked to weigh in on the importance of certain factors commonly found in successful downtown communities (see following page). While participants largely felt that all of these elements were very important (“5” was the most selected choice for all elements), there was some distinction in the distribution of votes. For instance, over 85% of participants rated special events as a “4” or “5.” Other elements were more evenly distributed, with approximately 40% of participants rating bicycle lanes and parking as a “4” or “5.”

Select the image that best fits what you would like to see in downtown Upper Darby.

Building Design



Street Furniture



Building Height



Sidewalk Design



The chosen preferences were split relatively evenly between the provided options. Though there is a tendency towards a “modern” style in some instances (building design and street furniture), it was not overwhelming. Additionally, it is likely that the propensity towards “modern” design is attributable towards a desire by participants to see the area “updated,” a common comment during the open house event. Participants were generally supportive of taller buildings, implying that participants understood (and appreciated) that this area is a “downtown” and high density development is appropriate and can contribute to the desired vibrancy.



SECTION 4:
VISION SUMMARY

Section 4: Vision Summary

The vision presented in this section is intended to be used as a guide for creating the type of downtown experiences that community members desire, rather than be specific. It is important to recognize that this is a long-range vision that looks at the next 30 to 40 years and progresses naturally over that time period. The Action Plan (See Section 5) details out the strategy for working towards this vision while remaining flexible to inevitable changes.

The long-range vision is organized into three main components:

The **Vision Statement** serves as the overarching goal of this plan.

The **Vision Themes** serve as the guiding principles – not specific actions or projects – for working towards the community vision. As needs and market demands change over time, so too will the projects; the Vision Themes provide broad principles to help decision-makers remain flexible while still building out the community vision.

The **Vision Realized** section shows examples of what downtown Upper Darby can become based on the community vision. These examples are not explicit projects; rather, they are intended to summarize the ideas and desired experiences of the community vision.

VISION STATEMENT

Downtown Upper Darby is a 20th Century success REIMAGINED into a 21st Century LEGACY as the VIBRANT and DIVERSE hub for the regional economy.

Downtown Upper Darby was developed in the early 20th century as an innovative transit-oriented community and flourished throughout much of the 1900s. It weathered the flight of many commercial stores to more suburban-style (i.e., car-centric) shopping malls and strip malls. Today, ironically, it stands as a prime example of the type of dense, walkable development pattern many others are trying to replicate while retrofitting shopping malls.

The emphasis for downtown Upper Darby is to strengthen its position in the next century by reimagining itself and creating an experience that is unique and fosters innovation. This will allow it to be continuously reimagined as community needs and market demands change and maintain pace with ever-advancing technological opportunities. Together, these elements will forge downtown Upper Darby into an even stronger regional hub.

VISION THEMES

Tell the Story



The positive perception of downtown Upper Darby is a vital element to its success. The story told about downtown Upper Darby should portray it as a vibrant and distinct experience in the region. The built environment should support this narrative by creating positive focal points.

Build on Strengths



The variety of entertainment options draws visitors from across the region for shows, concerts, and movies. Attracting uses that support these entertainment options, such as restaurants, will contribute to the experience and entice retailers looking to enter into markets that take advantage of the trend toward shopping as an entertainment experience.

Curate an Experience



Online retail has changed the way that people shop; in-store shopping is now seen as a leisure “experience” to be enjoyed rather than a chore. Unique shops and special events should be encouraged to draw people downtown where the streetscape becomes a community focal point – the place to see and be seen.

Protect Signature Features



The unique art deco design style that is prevalent in the built environment of downtown Upper Darby distinguishes it from similar commercial districts in the region. Iconic structures, such as the McClatchy Building and Tower Theater, serve as celebrated features in the community. Together, these elements contribute to a unique sense of place that cannot be mimicked.

Embrace the Heritage



The diverse cultural background of the Upper Darby community contributes to the distinct mixture of shops and restaurants that make the downtown special. It is a welcoming environment for residents and visitors alike that embraces unique heritage and cultural traditions.

Foster Local Business



The local business community serves as a strong foundation for growth of the downtown economy. Local businesses are invested in the future of Upper Darby and are a crucial component of the community vision for a diverse and vibrant economy. The community should support local and small businesses to ensure it remains the footing of the local economy.

Streamline Access



Downtown Upper Darby is surrounded by dense residential development with tens of thousands of people traveling through it every day. Simplifying multimodal access is essential to effectively capturing this market. Emphasizing pedestrian comfort and safety in downtown as the top priority will encourage people to spend more time here.

Capitalize on Assets



The dense urban fabric of downtown Upper Darby produces a walkable community with a mix of housing options that supports a range of age-groups and economic backgrounds. It has transit access that is nearly unparalleled in the region. The existing scale of development sustains a variety of uses and creates a vibrant downtown throughout the day; underutilized sites should be redeveloped to reinforce this.



Tell the Story

The positive perception of downtown Upper Darby is a vital element to its success. The story told about downtown Upper Darby should portray it as a vibrant and distinct experience in the region. The built environment should support this narrative by creating positive focal points.

The way that people perceive downtown Upper Darby directly impacts the experience that is created. It is important that the community and local businesses work together on targeted outreach across the region to tell the right story.

Messaging should represent the experience of downtown Upper Darby as a diverse and vibrant hub for the regional economy. It should evoke the energy of a downtown that is moving forward in the 21st Century by building around a diverse community of residents and businesses. It should highlight the existing strengths and assets, such as the transportation access and entertainment options. The branding and design should play off of the significant features, art deco design, and diverse heritage that make downtown Upper Darby unique.

The message portrayed to people should be supported in the built environment. High impact areas, such as main gateways (entrance points), should be carefully designed and maintained. Gateways should have a unique sense of arrival for visitors and serve as ‘billboards’ that set the tone for what to expect. They should be clear and welcoming while projecting a vibrant downtown. High impact and relatively low-cost options can help early on in the process to change perceptions and build positive momentum.



Figure 64: High impact areas, such as main gateways, set the tone for visitors and should be treated with particular emphasis.





Build on Strengths

The variety of entertainment options draws visitors from across the region for shows, concerts, and movies. Attracting uses that support these entertainment options, such as restaurants, will contribute to the experience and entice retailers looking to enter into markets that take advantage of the trend toward shopping as an entertainment experience.

The current strengths of downtown Upper Darby provide an important and sound foundation for future growth. The entertainment options attract a significant number of people downtown; few commercial districts have this regular draw of visitors and it cannot be easily replicated.

The Tower Theater is a world-class concert venue that hosts approximately 80 events throughout the year. Each event represents an influx of visitors and should be treated as ‘open houses’ for downtown Upper Darby with the community making efforts to highlight all of the good that is happening.

Many of these visitors are here for entertainment options – downtown should build on this by pulling the ‘entertainment’ features throughout the district by creating a unique experience in the public realm (that is, the streetscape). This should include attracting and encouraging uses that support the entertainment options, such as local restaurants (chain restaurants can be found elsewhere and do not necessarily support people spending more time downtown), a unique mix of stores, and high-quality public spaces. This is particularly important as retailers look to locate stores in more experiential settings – that is, where people treat shopping as a leisure experience or activity. The hours of operations for stores and restaurants should also take into account the timing of large events. While many retailers may close before a concert is finished, restaurants and bars can remain open to crowds leaving the venue. Markets and special events at night, such as food trucks, can

provide interests after large events when many stores and restaurants may have closed for the day.

Attracting supporting uses for the entertainment options will get some of these visitors to start spending more time downtown before or after a show. This creates a vibrant and active downtown that will attract additional stores, restaurants, and people to extend the time and frequency of visits.





Curate an Experience

Online retail has changed the way that people shop; in-store shopping is now seen as a leisure “experience” to be enjoyed rather than a chore. Unique shops and special events should be encouraged to draw people downtown where the streetscape becomes a community focal point – the place to see and be seen.

Online retail has significantly changed the shopping patterns of people; many people now treat in-person shopping as a leisure activity rather than just a chore. This is particularly true in downtowns across the country and also in standard shopping malls as they try to reinvent themselves as more of a traditional neighborhood downtown. People are looking for an experience that cannot be found everywhere else, with unique things to do and see. A mix of local stores and restaurants, special events, pop-up markets, and use of the sidewalk space can create this experience for people. Stores and restaurants should embrace the public realm with outdoor dining and transparent storefronts that pique interests of passers-by.

The sidewalk should become a community gathering point – the place to see and be seen, not just a means of getting from one point to another. It should be comfortable and appealing for people and encourage them to spend more time downtown. Since downtown Upper Darby is rather large, creating ‘nodes’ of activity spread around downtown can help to draw people through the site. That is, as visitors walk through the site and approach one ‘node,’ a second node comes into view that attracts people. Nodes will serve as smaller ‘destinations’ throughout the site and serve as landmarks and natural gathering spaces for people. They may be as formal as a large plaza or as casual as midblock crossing with a concentration of streetscape furniture.

Special events, such as festivals, are an important component of curating an experience for people. They help to create a vibrant and active downtown that attracts people. Regularly scheduled events, such as

farmers’ markets, contribute similarly. There was a nightly light show on the façade of the McClatchy Building when it first opened – reviving this sort of program can help to attract people while drawing attention to the unique structure.

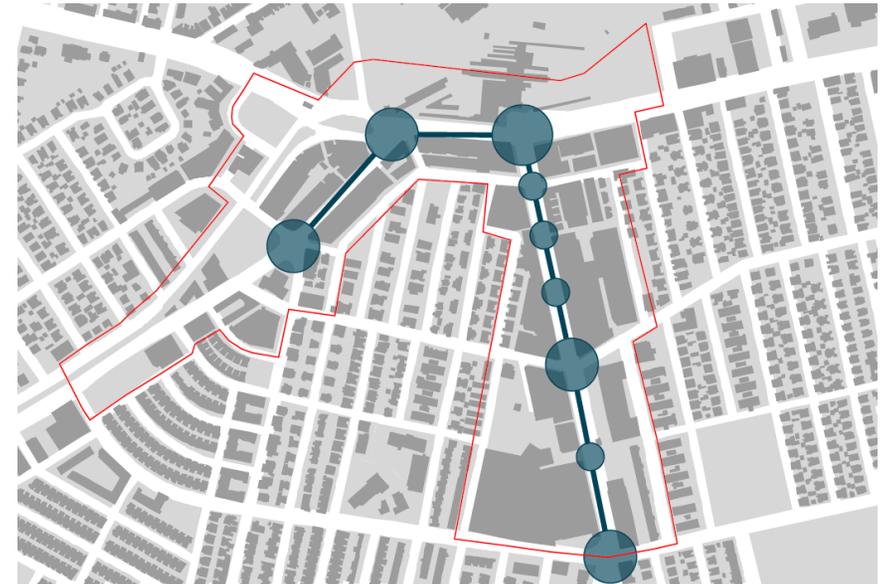


Figure 65: Activity nodes throughout downtown Upper Darby will help to draw people through the site.





Protect Signature Features

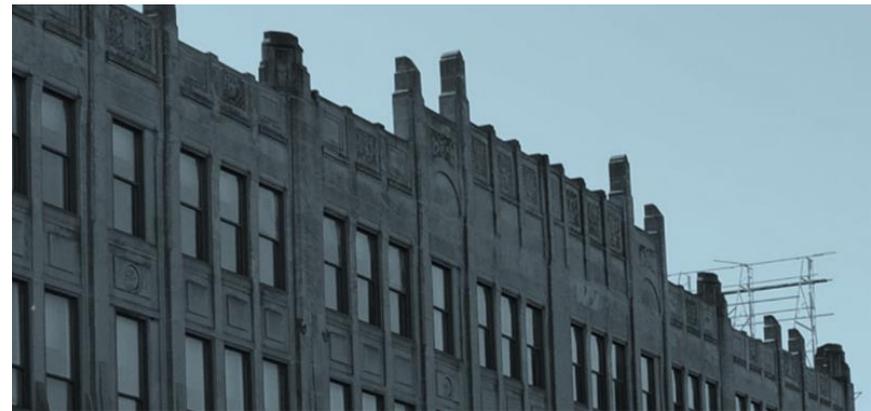
The unique art deco design style that is prevalent in the built environment of downtown Upper Darby distinguishes it from similar commercial districts in the region. Iconic structures, such as the McClatchy Building and Tower Theater, serve as celebrated features in the community. Together, these elements contribute to a unique sense of place that cannot be mimicked.

The sense of place is an important aspect of getting people to want to spend more time in downtown Upper Darby. Significant Features, such as prevalent design features and iconic structures, create a unique look and feel that contributes to the experience.

Perhaps the most iconic structures in downtown Upper Darby are the McClatchy Building and the Tower Theater. Other prime examples including the Horn and Hardart Market building on Market Street and the office building at 6800 Market Street. These structures give an iconic feel to the architecture of downtown Upper Darby and serve as landmarks for people, not just as a backdrop to the activity below.

While certain structures may represent these design features clearly, more subdued art deco design fabric is prevalent across many of the structures in downtown Upper Darby. It contributes to the district's unique design feel and character, even on buildings that may not be considered "high-design." For example, the rooflines of many structures incorporate decorative projecting cornices. While many of these features may have been covered with modern materials, the pattern remains an important feature; as future renovations occur, care should be taken to build on the art deco design style by re-incorporating materials that highlight the art deco design. Additionally, many structures have ornamental details around doors and windows, including stone and ironwork that pull this character to the pedestrian level. Even the tree grates installed as part of the Market Street Gateway project incorporate art deco-style linework.

Significant features should be protected and carried forward through the 21st century. This does not necessarily mean that everything should follow art deco design principles; rather, the community should encourage good, high-quality design for buildings and public spaces – this is one of the original values that downtown Upper Darby developed around in the early 20th century. Contemporary designs can reflect the art deco style prevalent without necessarily mimicking it directly. Public spaces should incorporate this emphasis on high-quality design while embracing iconic structures as focal points for the community.





Embrace the Heritage

The diverse cultural background of the Upper Darby community contributes to the distinct mixture of shops and restaurants that make the downtown special. It is a welcoming environment for residents and visitors alike that embraces unique heritage and cultural traditions.

The sense of community in downtown Upper Darby, and throughout the township, is part of what makes it so special. The community has always embraced the diverse background of its people; there are dozens of languages spoken and food offerings from around the world. This heritage makes downtown Upper Darby stand out from other downtowns in the region, particularly the new “town center” developments that do not have a strong sense of community.

It is important that this connection to the diverse heritage of the community is not lost or exploited as the community progresses. It helps to create a mixture of stores and restaurants and an uncommon experience for visitors. Most importantly, though, is that it creates a welcoming environment for people of all backgrounds. The community should continue to celebrate it through special events and programs, such as the International Festival, which highlights the various cultural traditions celebrated in Upper Darby.

Many existing businesses along Long Lane, Terminal Square, and Garrett Road have unique and authentic cultural dining and shopping experiences. Connecting and promoting these diverse businesses will help downtown Upper Darby embrace its unique heritage while improving business opportunities to local merchants.





Foster Local Business

The local business community serves as a strong foundation for growth of the downtown economy. Local businesses are invested in the future of Upper Darby and are a crucial component of the community vision for a diverse and vibrant economy. The community should support local and small businesses to ensure it remains the footing of the local economy.

Local businesses are an important part of the sense of community in downtown Upper Darby. As such, they should be involved in the organizations and agencies that will work towards implementing the community vision. Further, the local business community should work together to determine the best approaches to address common issues and work towards mutual goals.

Encouraging a mix of local businesses will create a unique blend of storefronts and restaurants that are not located everywhere; this contributes to a vibrant and diverse downtown experience that will attract visitors from across the region. Many of the local businesses are closely related to the heritage of the community; supporting these businesses will help to ensure the heritage is embraced as the community moves forward.

The community should support local businesses by creating and continuing incentives for local businesses to invest in downtown Upper Darby. This may be in the form of mini-grants for façade improvements or organizing joint-marketing campaigns. It may also include working with business owners to help them understand what is allowed under current zoning laws and streamlining the review and permitting process for projects that contribute to the community vision and experience, such as outdoor dining.





Streamline Access

Downtown Upper Darby is surrounded by dense residential development with tens of thousands of people traveling through it every day. Simplifying multimodal access is essential to effectively capturing this market. Emphasizing pedestrian comfort and safety in downtown as the top priority will encourage people to spend more time here.

According to SEPTA, an estimated 90% of transit riders who travel through 69th Street Transportation Center simply transfer services - it is not the destination. It is important that these riders see downtown Upper Darby as a destination unto itself – not just a point along a journey. As the Transportation Center is designed now, there is very little visual connection to downtown; it is as if the downtown is not there to many of these riders. Increasing the ‘transparency’ between the station and downtown will help to reduce the separation many people perceive and help to better incorporate the station into the community.

Emphasizing pedestrian and bicycle access into surrounding neighborhoods will make it easier and more comfortable for local residents to travel downtown without driving. People will generally walk about 10-20 minutes (approximately 0.5 miles to 1 mile) to destinations such as a transit stop of downtown; increasing safe and comfortable bicycle access can extend this distance to up to 3 miles. These connections will reduce the need for parking downtown while also embracing connections to the surrounding community. While there are sidewalks and crosswalks throughout downtown and into the surrounding communities, they should be enhanced where possible to increase the comfort level of pedestrians and cyclists. Similarly, the comfort of pedestrians while downtown should be the priority for all public realm improvements – if people are not comfortable, they will not spend time downtown.

There are several public and private parking areas downtown; these should be coordinated with consistent wayfinding signage and

identification to help visitors easily navigate. Downtowns often suffer from a perceived lack of parking that discourages visitors. Wayfinding signage is often a cost-effective way of highlighting existing parking while longer-term solutions, such as a larger parking garage, progress through the planning and development process.

For a regional destination such as downtown Upper Darby, it is also important to consider the potential impacts of transportation network companies (TNCs) such as Uber and Lyft. These ride share companies essentially serve as on-call rides for mobile users and are widely used. Downtown Upper Darby may see an influx of users on nights with large events at the Tower Theater or in the city as users get rides to/from the Transportation Center. Embracing these technologies can help to reduce on-site parking demand downtown and improve the experience of visitors who use this travel method. Common approaches include designating areas for pick-up/drop-off to avoid blocking traffic and confusion.

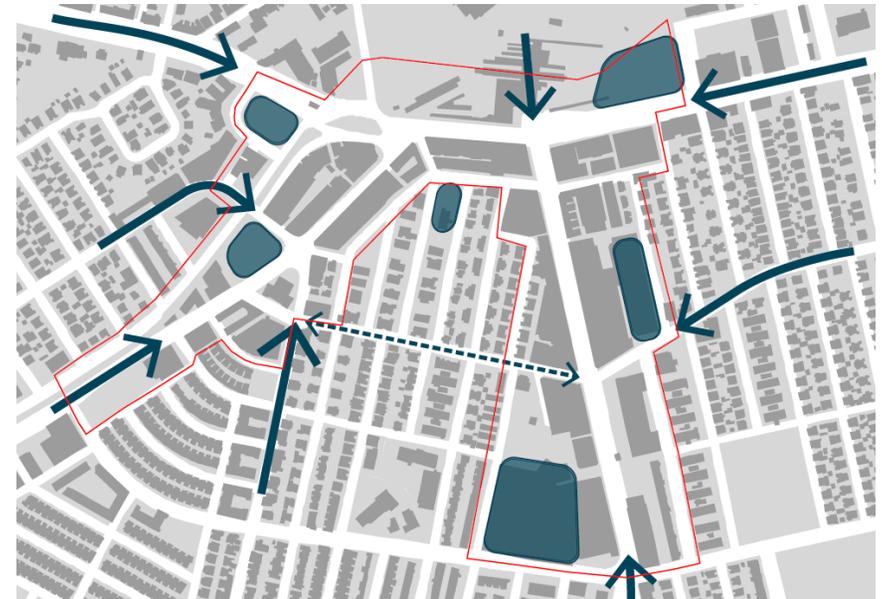


Figure 66: Improving multimodal access at certain points and concentrating parking improvements on the edges of downtown will streamline access.

Capitalize on Assets



The dense urban fabric of downtown Upper Darby produces a walkable community with a mix of housing options that supports a range of age-groups and economic backgrounds. It has transit access that is nearly unparalleled in the region. The existing scale of development sustains a variety of uses and creates a vibrant downtown throughout the day; underutilized sites should be redeveloped to reinforce this.

The existing built environment of downtown Upper Darby is primed to take advantage of recent market trends. The diversity of housing stock can help to attract and support a range of age groups and economic backgrounds, and the transit access provides consistent access to jobs across the region. The community should work to build around this transit and attract the users that travel through this area every day.

The commercial and mixed-use buildings create a truly walkable community that reduces the need to drive everywhere. New projects and developments should further support the patterns of the existing built environment by maintaining the dense scale of development and pedestrian orientation. This is particularly true for larger sites that may be less inclined to prioritize pedestrians.

There are several sites downtown that are currently underutilized, such as surface parking or one-story buildings, representing an untapped tax base for the municipality. Although an appropriate level of parking is necessary downtown, surface parking does not offer any interests to pedestrians and detracts from the overall experience. Parking should be concentrated in garages located behind (or above) other uses when possible. One-story buildings may be oriented towards pedestrians but the low-density development often does not bring enough visitors to support an active downtown. The community should continue to work with redevelopment partners to ensure these sites are contributing properly to the community vision and pedestrian experience.



VISION REALIZED

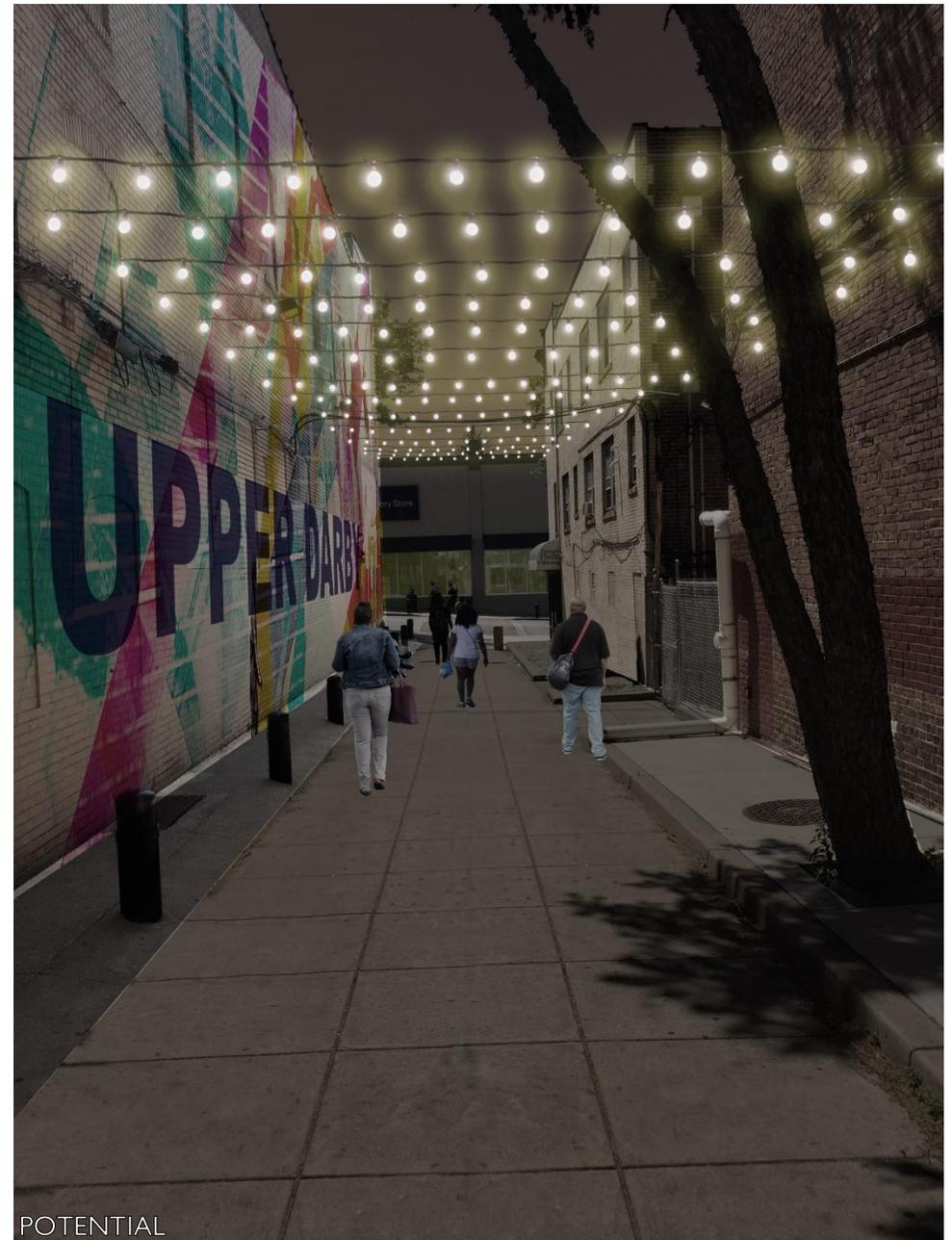
The plan calls for efforts focused on creating unique experiences along the streetscape for pedestrians, including special events and a mix of stores and restaurants. These types of projects, centered around people and experience, will bring renewed activity and a dynamic feel to downtown Upper Darby.

Gateway Features

Gateways to downtown set the tone for what type of experience people should expect. Special treatments, such as a mural, signage, or lighting, can create a unique sense of arrival for visitors. Many of these potential improvements are relatively low cost, but can have a long-lasting impact on the perception of the area. It is worth noting that these improvements, as with any meaningful change, would need to involve a partnership with private property owners.



EXISTING



POTENTIAL



POTENTIAL

Plaza Spaces

Wide sidewalks provide the opportunity to host smaller events, such as a farmers' market, in highly visible and highly trafficked locations to create activity downtown. The existing space can be used to minimize effects on parking and traffic. These events can contribute to a vibrant and active streetscape environment downtown.



EXISTING



POTENTIAL



EXISTING

Activity Nodes

Some spaces can be enhanced to increase the comfort of people and create greater visual distinction – this will create natural gathering spaces and “landmarks” for people. These “activity nodes” are an important element in drawing people through different areas of downtown Upper Darby.



POTENTIAL

Street-level Activity

The temporary use of on-street parking for outdoor dining can provide additional space for local businesses without reducing the sidewalk space for pedestrians. This use of additional space and visual interest on the ground floor of buildings will make it comfortable for people to spend time walking around downtown.



EXISTING

DESIGN GUIDELINES

These design guidelines are intended to summarize standards for future improvements and treatments that fit within the community vision. The information contained in this section does not constitute a complete set of guidelines; rather, it serves as a starting point for implementing more comprehensive guidelines. It identifies some of the major points that developed during the visioning process (e.g., building height) and other design elements that significantly impact the experience of pedestrians downtown. Some elements, such as building height, can be codified and regulated in the zoning ordinance. Other features will need to be regulated through the permitting or licensing process, as is the case with interim use of a parking space for seating or dining.

Interim Use of Parking Space

Many commercial areas across the country have had success in converting on-street parking spaces into dining or seating areas on an interim basis. The business owner is responsible for “renting” the parking space for the designated period of time and installing and maintaining all necessary improvements.

It is important to set clear requirements. This is best accomplished through a guideline document that is publicly available so that it is easy for interested parties to adhere to regulations. Important considerations include:

- Emergency access
- Access to utilities
- Existing drainage patterns
- Compliance with ADA
- Buffering from traffic and adjacent parking



Figure 67: Example of parklet seating in parking space (source: City of Minneapolis).

Sidewalk Materials

Type: Poured-in-Place Concrete with Dark Pigment

Size: From curb to building line based on surrounding context

Concrete with dark pigment will provide a unique feel to downtown Upper Darby while also allowing the surface to age and color more gracefully over time; the dark color helps to hide surface blemishes/stains. It will also help to reduce the reflective glare that can make typical concrete uncomfortable for those with sensitive eyes, such as the elderly.

Use of standard concrete in the furnishing zone (rather than decorative pavers) allows the space to easily be used for sidewalk cafes, seating areas, etc. without additional maintenance or concern over accessibility.

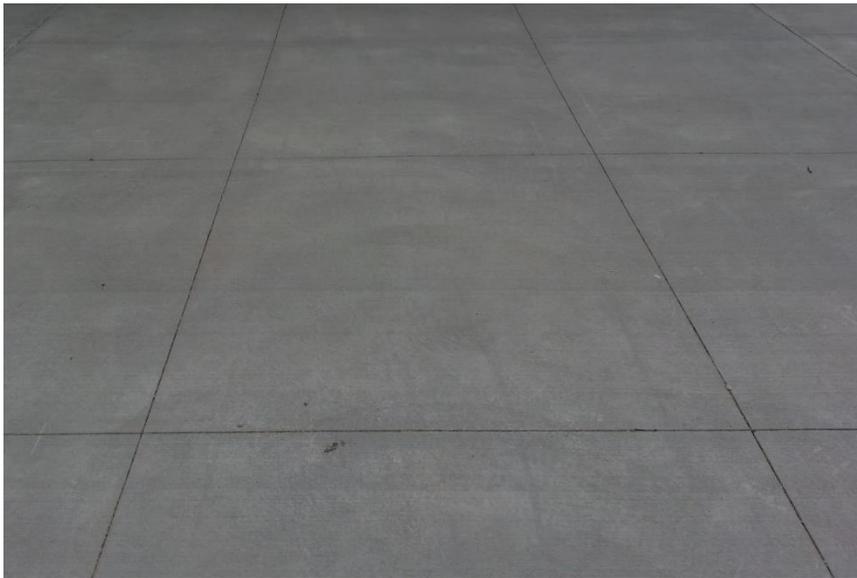


Figure 68: Example of concrete sidewalk with dark pigment.

Crosswalks

Type: Continental Style

Size: Follow most recent MUTCD Standards.

Thermoplastic paint should be used when possible.

Avoid 'decorative' crosswalks that consist of pre-cast pavers and other surface treatments. While these unique treatments may be more attractive at first, they cannot withstand the wear and tear of a typical downtown and prove to be a significant maintenance concern.



Figure 69: Example of continental style crosswalk.

Building Height

	Minimum	Maximum
Zone A:	30 feet	50 feet
Zone B:	40 feet	75 feet
Zone C:	50 feet	100 feet

The building height establishes the street wall, enclosure, and the shared public space of downtowns and main streets. Specifying building height maximums and minimums can ensure new development is compatible with the existing and desired scale and character of downtown.

The maximum height allowed in southern portions of downtown should be lower to limit the impact on adjacent residential areas. Additionally, the topography of downtown Upper Darby is such that Market Street serves as the low point, and all buildings to the south will feel taller to pedestrians near Market Street, particularly when looking down 69th Street.



Figure 70: Zones for building heights and setbacks requirements.

Upper-Story Setback

	Height Point	Setback Angle
Zone A:	35 feet	20-degrees
Zone B:	55 feet	20-degrees
Zone C:	80 feet	20-degrees

Upper-story setback requirements can help to mitigate the effects of taller buildings and maintain a traditional architectural pattern (particularly the roofline) while still allowing greater density. The limits should affect the side of the building that faces pedestrian-oriented streets. The point at which the setback angle is measured from should be adjusted in relation to the maximum building height allowed in each zone.

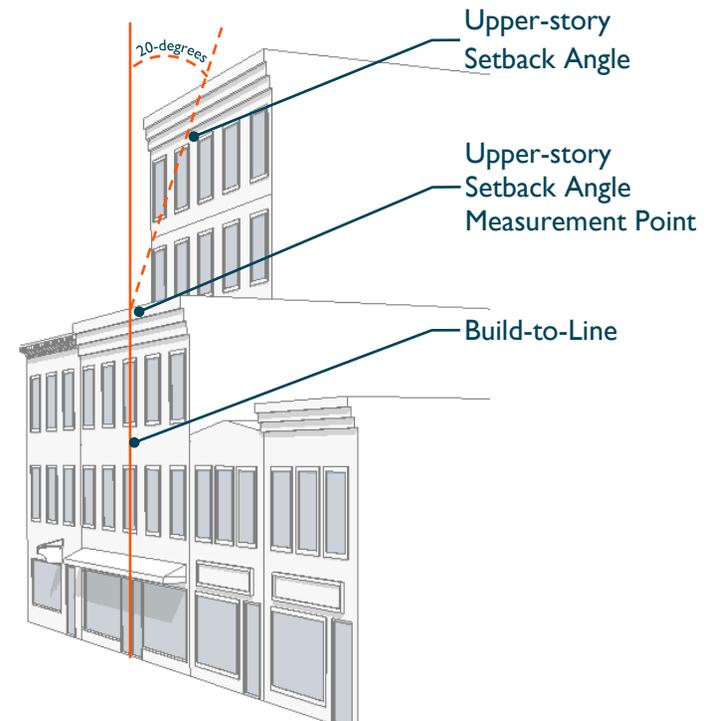


Figure 71: Diagram of upper-story setbacks.

Transparency

Ground Floor: Minimum 60% transparency

Second Floor and above: Minimum 35% transparency

Blank, solid walls along building frontages should be avoided downtown. Building frontage should contain the principal entrance to a building as well as windows to create visibility into downtown establishments.

A minimum percentage of the area of building frontage should contain windows. The transparency created connects the activity inside of a building to pedestrians outside. This helps draw pedestrians into businesses and creates an interesting and inviting streetscape for people.

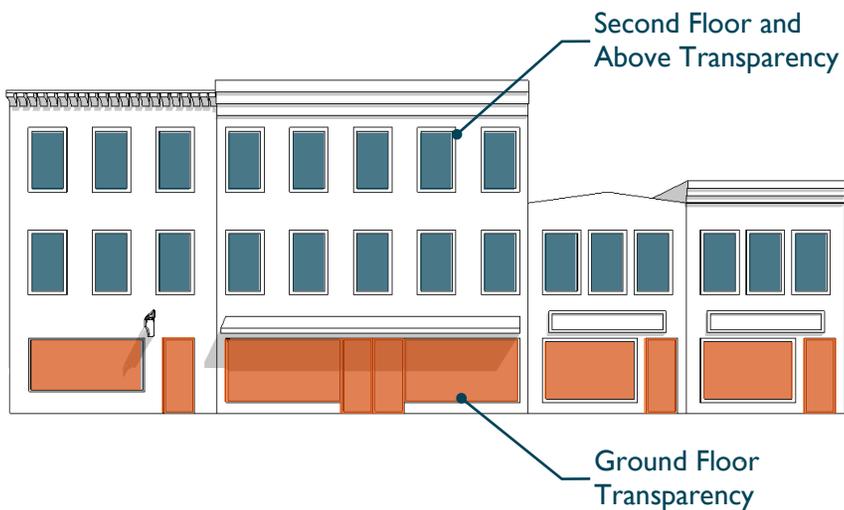


Figure 72: Diagram of building transparency.

Frontage

Maximum frontage: No single storefront should occupy more than 75-feet of frontage.

Encourage relatively small storefronts to maintain an active façade for pedestrians and avoid “blank walls” that can make it less appealing for people to spend time. Larger buildings should be set back behind smaller storefronts. For example, the Tower Theatre building has prominent corner access to 69th and Ludlow Streets, but the majority of the building is set back behind a stretch of three-story buildings that include first-floor commercial space with housing above.

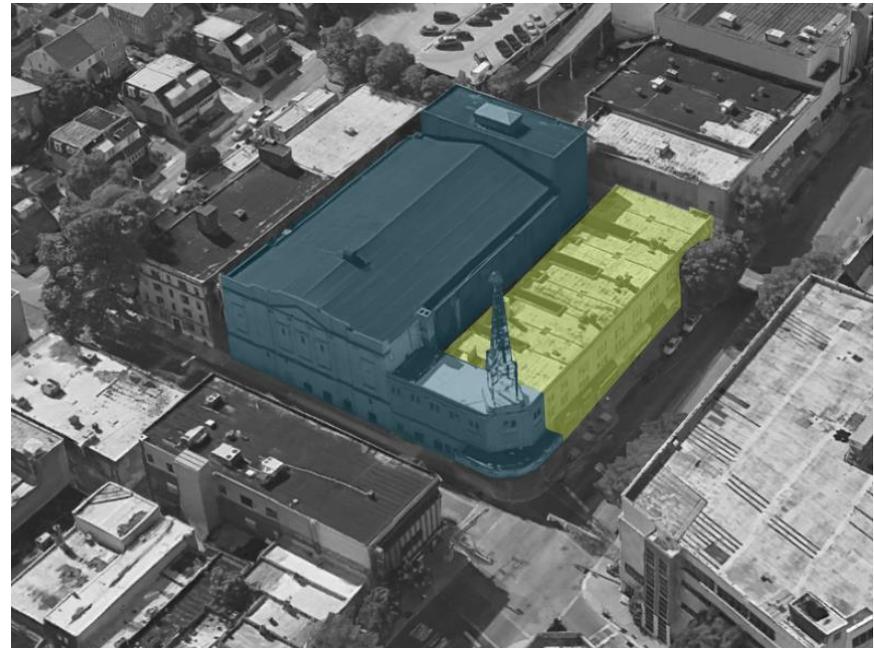


Figure 73: Tower Theater is a great example of pedestrian-scale frontage.

SECTION 5: ACTION PLAN

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Section 5: Action Plan

The Downtown Upper Darby Vision Plan represents a unique summary of what the community believes will make downtown Upper Darby thrive in the 21st Century. The strategic action plan that follows will guide the community in achieving this long-range vision. It will require a long-term, coordinated effort that involves many public, private, and non-profit partners that should remain flexible over time.

The action plan is organized by overarching and interacting projects, each representing an issue or opportunity identified through the community visioning process. The projects are broken down into more actionable phases that represent the next steps. These phases become more general as time progresses, providing flexibility in later years when they should be guided more by the effects and actual implementation timing of earlier action items. In fact, the strategy recommends an update to this action plan be completed around 2030. This update can review previous efforts and adjust the action plan based on the impact of changing trends, such as housing affordability, market updates, and business mixes.

Project 1: High Impact Changes/Catalyst Projects

There are several relatively low-cost actions that can begin immediately and have a very high positive impact on the experience in downtown Upper Darby. These sorts of actions can go a long way in changing the perception of the area and showing people that the community is committed and ready to work together towards the long-range vision.

Lead Agency: Upper Darby Township

Partners: SEPTA, PennDOT, Businesses

Funding: Local

Vision Themes:



Phase 1: Maintenance “Blitz”

Coordinate efforts across the township, PennDOT, and SEPTA to simultaneously and aggressively perform routine maintenance and inspections such as crosswalk painting, sidewalk cleaning, and code enforcement.

Phase 2: Rideshare Stations

Work with TNCs, such as Uber and Lyft, to designate specific ride-share pick-up/drop-off “stations” to streamline movement, particularly around large events (e.g., concert) or rush hour.

Phase 3: Pedestrian Signals

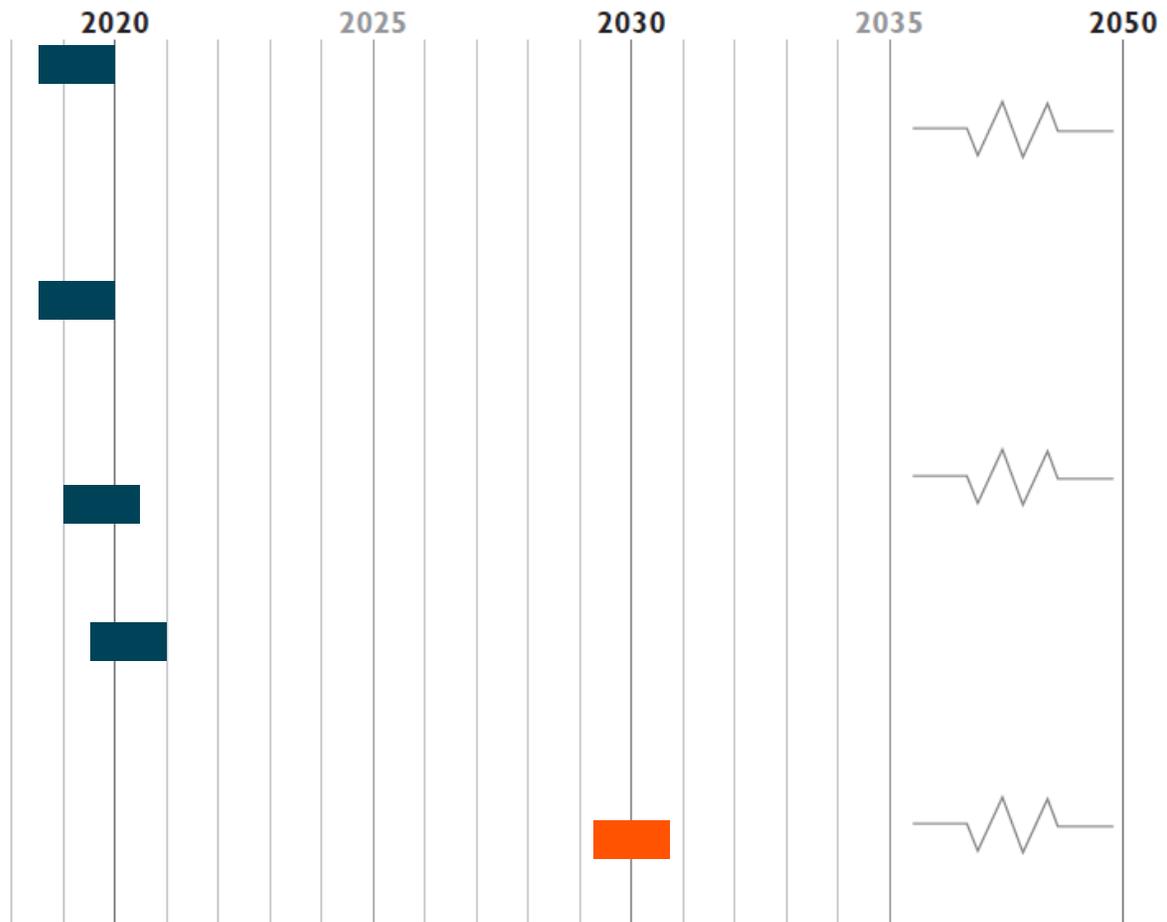
Work with PennDOT to implement leading pedestrian intervals at signalized intersections.

Phase 4: Alleyway Enhancements

Work with private property owners to install additional lighting and a mural on the building wall along the alley between the 69th Street Parkateria and 69th Street.

Strategic Action Plan Update

Update the Strategic Action Plan based on the effects of implementation efforts and new trends.



Project 2: Community Messaging

It is important that the community works together to tell a story that accurately represents the experience of downtown Upper Darby because the perceptions can directly impact the experience of visitors.

Lead Agency: Upper Darby Township

Partners: Businesses

Funding: Local and grant funding

Vision Themes:



Phase 1: Community Branding

Create a community branding design guide to include a logo, slogan, signage design, and marketing campaign materials to attract both visitors and businesses.

Phase 2: Marketing Campaign

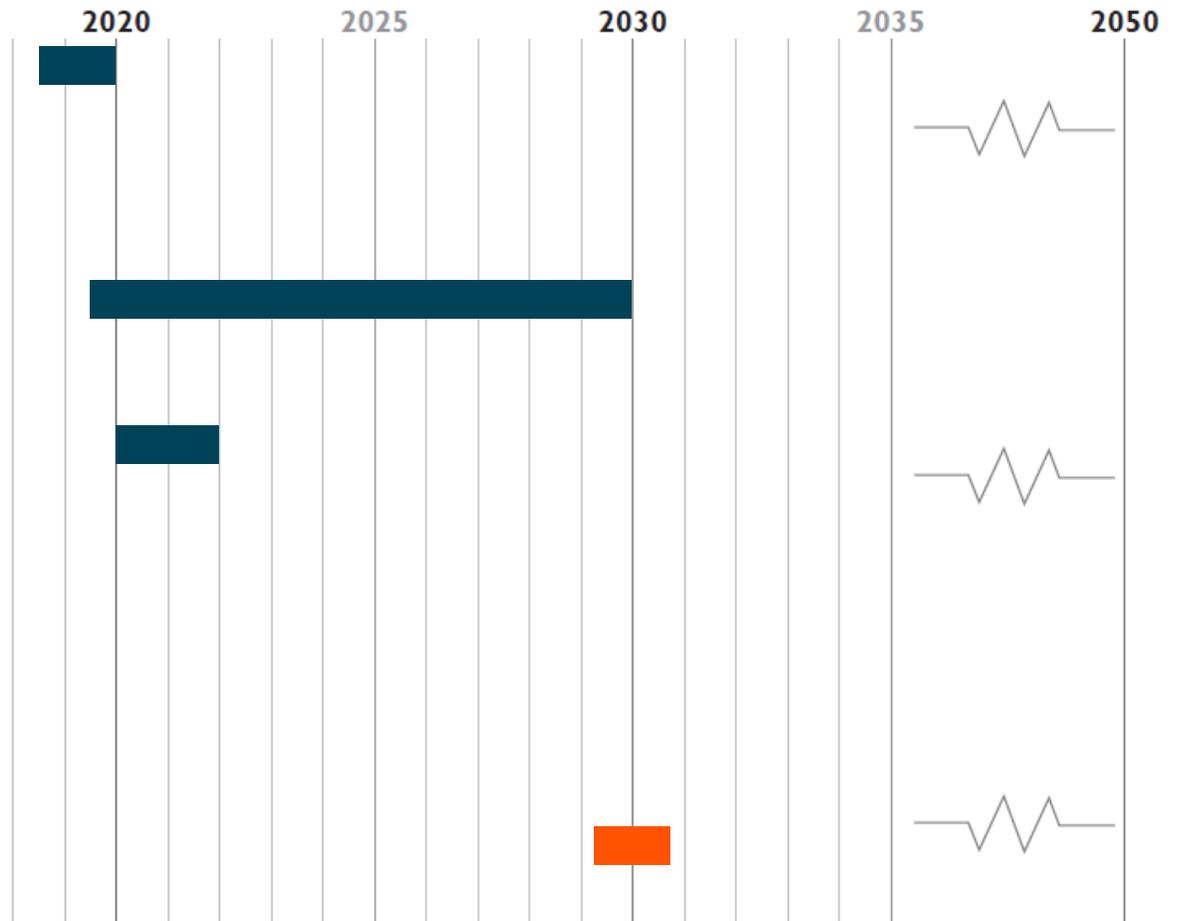
Implement the marketing campaign strategy.

Phase 3: Signage System

Fabricate and install gateway and wayfinding signage throughout downtown Upper Darby.

Strategic Action Plan Update

Update the Strategic Action Plan based on the effects of implementation efforts and new trends.



Project 3: Parking Strategy

While there is tremendous transit access to downtown Upper Darby, many visitors drive from across the region. As such, parking should be available at appropriate levels in order to not discourage visitors while still encouraging use of transit. Further, on-street parking should be carefully managed to promote regular turnover of spaces.

Lead Agency: Upper Darby Township

Partners: SEPTA, PennDOT, Businesses

Funding: Local and grant funding

Vision Themes:



Phase 1: Parking Analysis

Conduct a technical review of existing parking quantities and locations to determine appropriate improvements, including proper pricing for parking. This should closely involve local business owners to determine the best solution.

Phase 2: Install Parking Kiosks

Remove individual parking meters and install kiosks to increase user-friendliness, clean up sidewalk space, and streamline maintenance.

Phase 3: Implement Analysis Results

Adjust the downtown parking strategies based on the recommendations of the parking analysis (Phase 1).

Phase 4: Commuter Garage

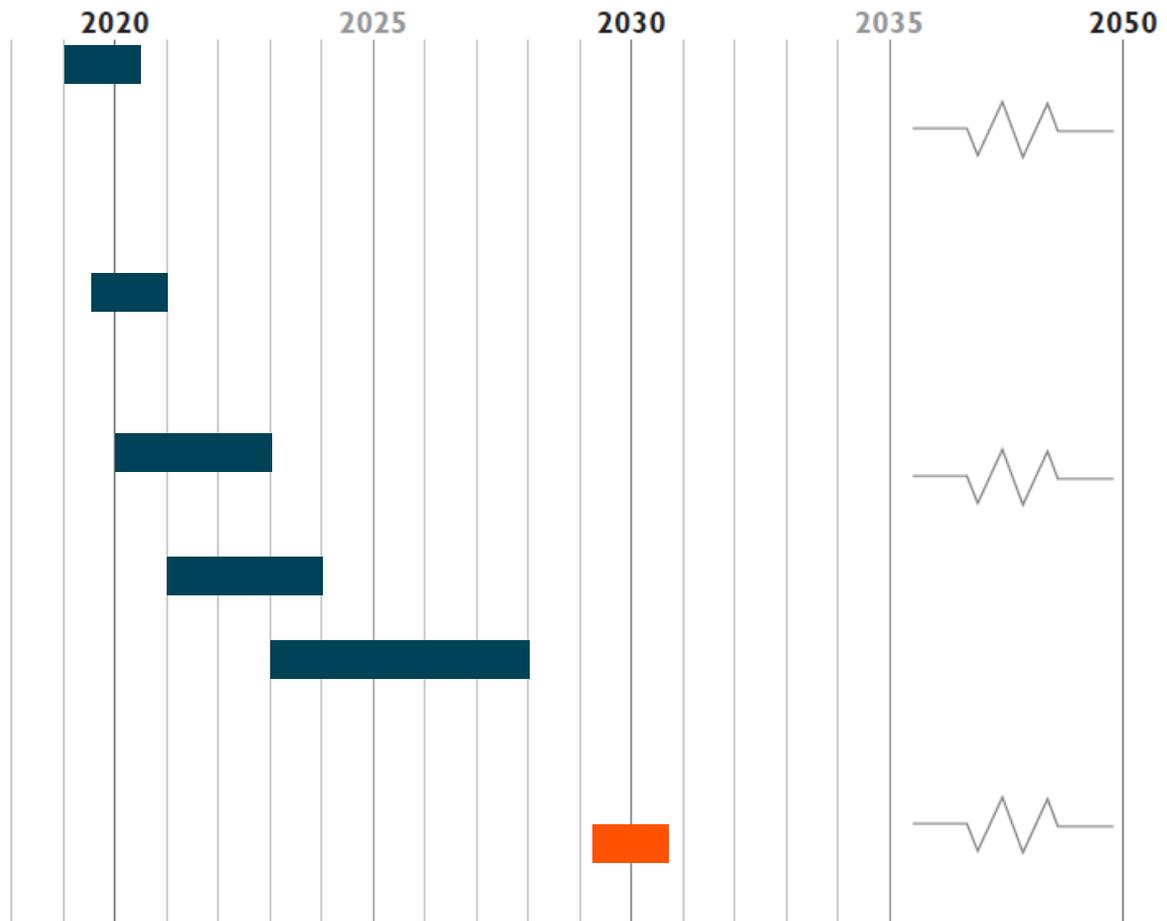
Construct SEPTA commuter garage along Market Street.

Phase 5: Public Garage

If supported by the results of the parking analysis (Phase 1), construct a parking garage on an existing municipal surface lot with first floor space designated for pedestrian-oriented uses.

Strategic Action Plan Update

Update the Strategic Action Plan based on the effects of implementation efforts and new trends.



Project 4: SEPTA 69th Street Transportation Center

In many ways, the 69th Street Transportation Center serves as an important anchor for the community. With tens of thousands of people traveling through the station, it is often the first (and sometimes only) impression of downtown Upper Darby. As such, the Transportation Center should reflect the same values as downtown Upper Darby. Further, the entire site represents a large tract of land downtown, portions of which may be viable development sites that incorporate or improve existing transit service.

Lead Agency: Upper Darby Township

Partners: SEPTA, PennDOT

Funding: Local and grant funding

Vision Themes:

Phase 1: Cosmetic Fixes

Undertake cosmetic fixes, such as fresh paint, to improve station appearances. SEPTA can also work with local businesses to update advertising within the station, such as posters for upcoming Tower Theater events.

Phase 2: Station Market Study

Work with SEPTA to complete a market study for short-term use of vendor spaces within the station and long-term redevelopment of the site.

Phase 3: Station Master Plan

Work with SEPTA to identify the best long-term use of the entire site with a focus on improving operations, the user experience, and increasing its connection with downtown Upper Darby.

Phase 4: Implement Market Study

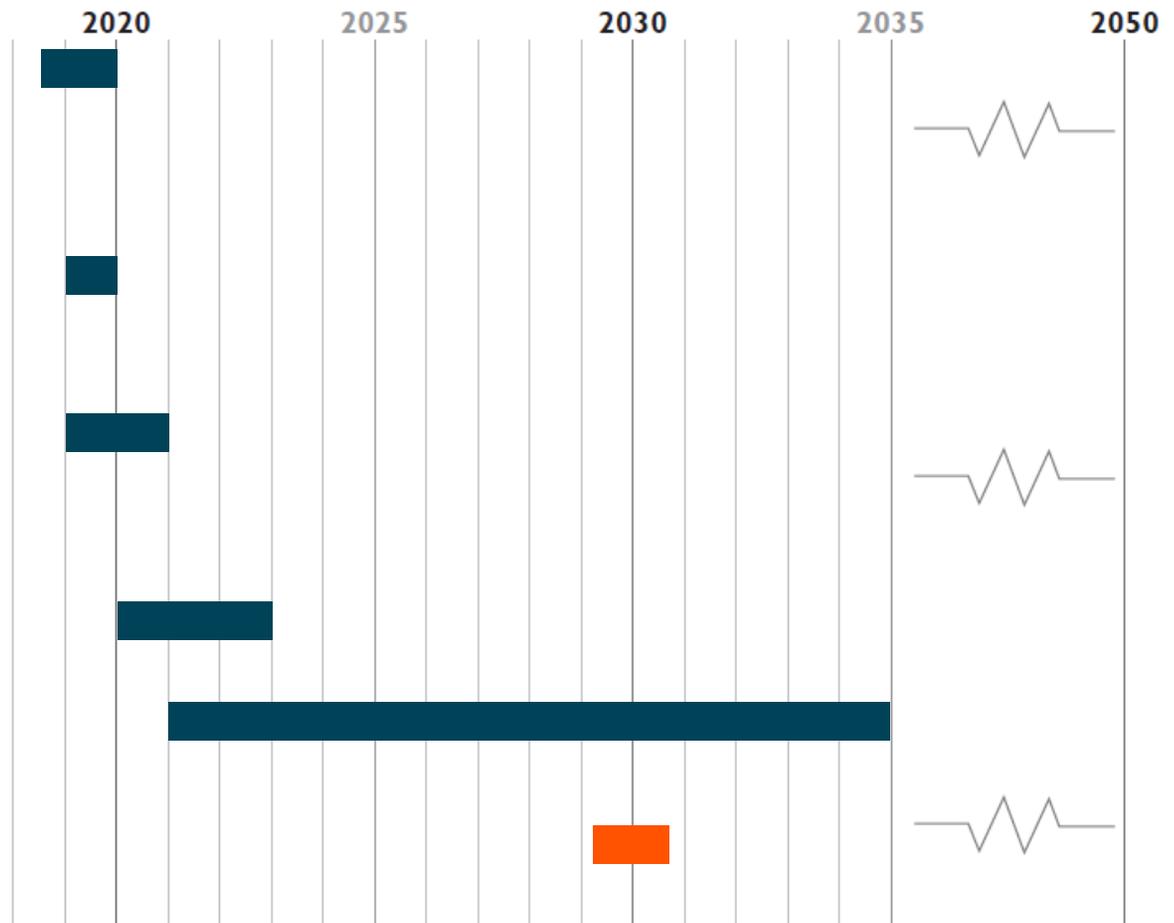
Implement the results of the short-term market study.

Phase 5: Implement Master Plan

Implement the results of the long-range Station Master Plan and long-range Market Study.

Strategic Action Plan Update

Update the Strategic Action Plan based on the effects of implementation efforts and new trends.



Project 5: Downtown Management Entity

Many downtowns throughout the region have found great success in using special management entities to continue coordination among businesses and spearheading implementation of plans. These entities, such as a business association, main street organization, or special district, may lead a range of efforts from street cleaning to joint marketing campaigns. Downtown Upper Darby should explore the potential of creating a similar organization to coordinate common efforts.

Lead Agency: Upper Darby Township

Partners: Businesses

Funding: Local and grant funding

Vision Themes:



Phase 1: Explore Management Options

Work with local businesses, property owners, and other stakeholders in the community to explore the option of creating a downtown management entity.

Phase 2: Organization Strategic Plan

If created, the newly formed management entity should develop a strategic action plan to outline appropriate objectives and actions.

Phase 3: Special Events

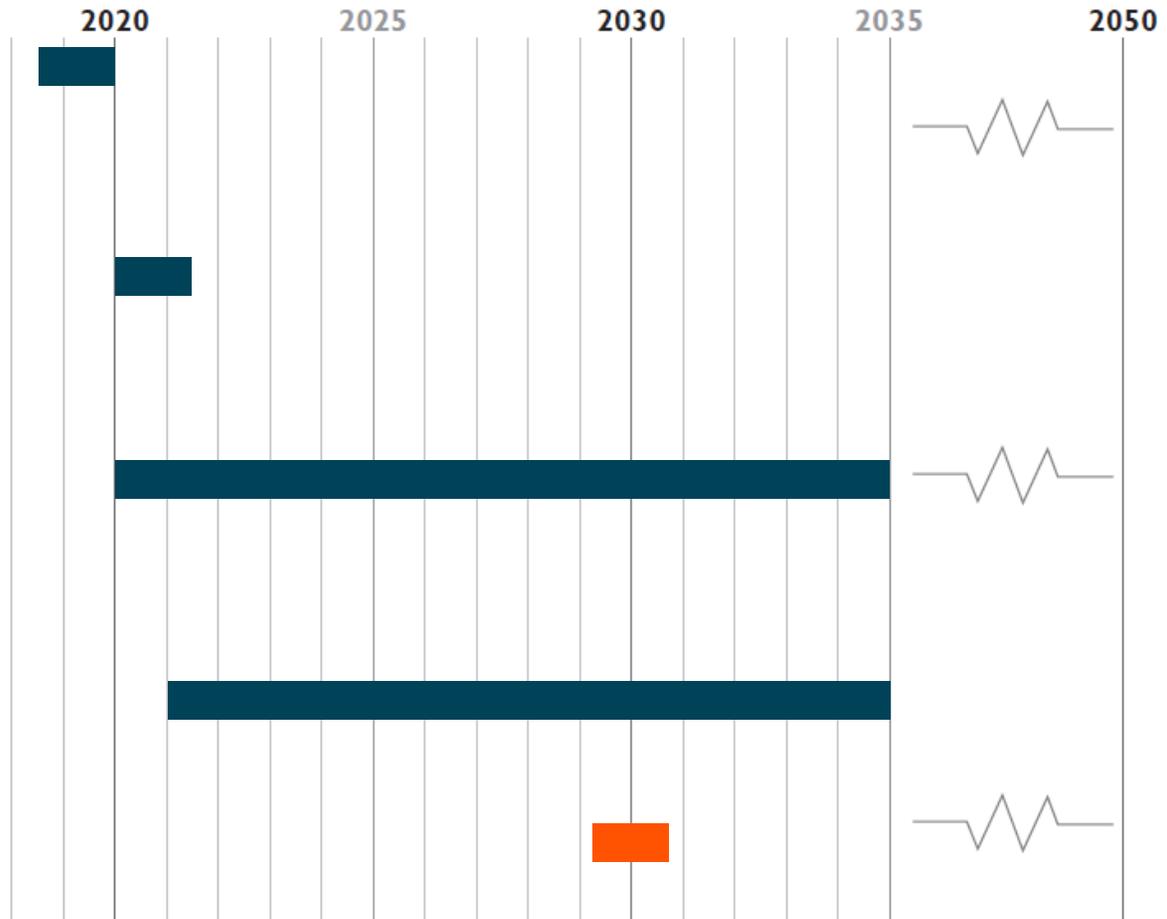
Continue hosting special events and programs, such as street fairs and festivals, with a particular focus on events around times that take advantage of large audiences in town for different events (e.g., concerts).

Phase 4: Regularly Scheduled Events

Host smaller, more regularly scheduled events such as farmers' markets and outdoor dining events.

Strategic Action Plan Update

Update the Strategic Action Plan based on the effects of implementation efforts and new trends.



Project 6: Historic Resources Protection

The historic architecture contributes immensely to the character of downtown Upper Darby, and the signature buildings should be protected to ensure that they carry this forward. A balance of reuse of historical structures and redevelopment of other sites can provide for new growth while protecting the signature features of downtown Upper Darby.

Lead Agency: Upper Darby Township

Partners: Businesses

Funding: Local and grant funding

Vision Themes:



Phase 1: Enact Protections

Formalize the Historic 69th Street Terminal Square Shopping District to protect the major signature buildings and the historic fabric of downtown Upper Darby.

Phase 2: Historic Design Guidelines

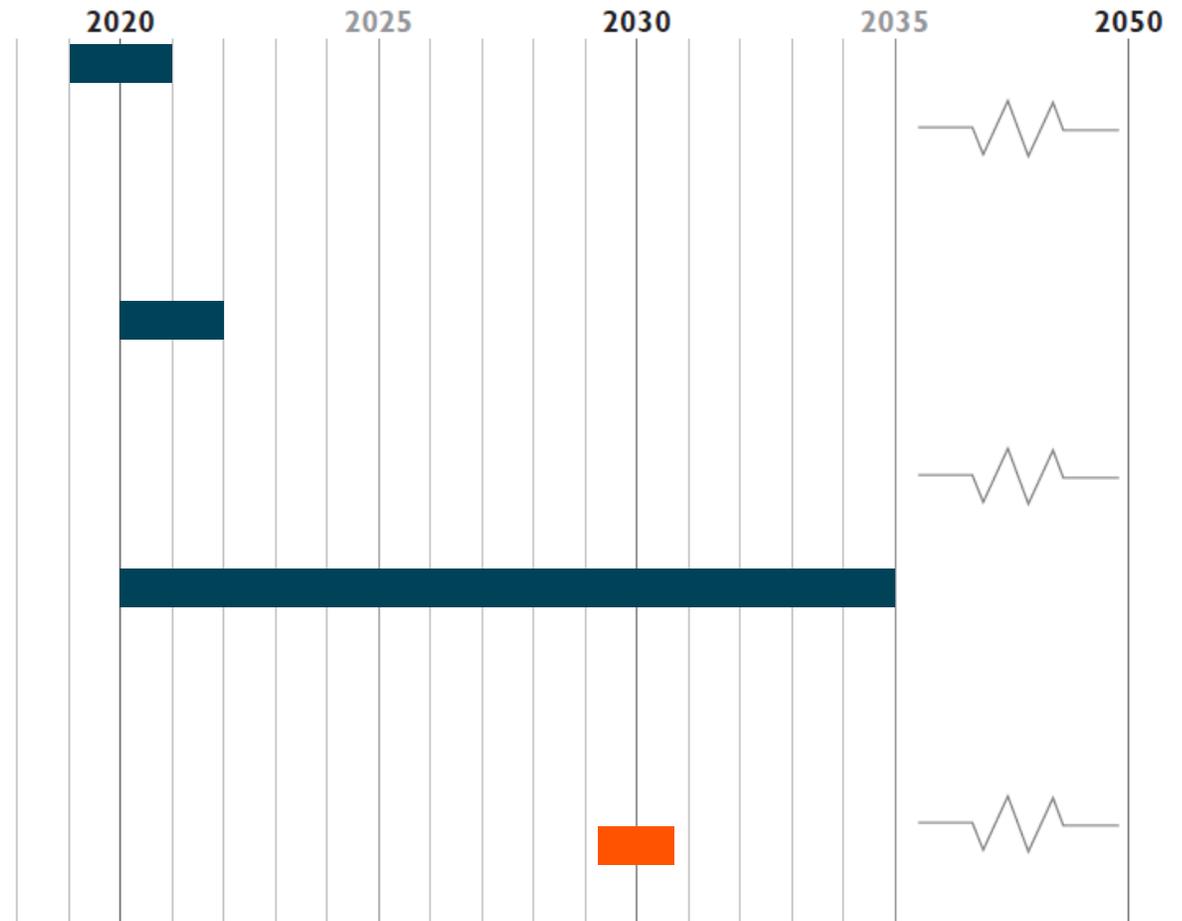
Create formal historic design guidelines to ensure rehabilitation and new construction projects fit within the desired character for downtown.

Phase 3: Adaptive Reuse

Coordinate with property owners to reuse or market historic structures in an appropriate manner.

Strategic Action Plan Update

Update the Strategic Action Plan based on the effects of implementation efforts and new trends.



Project 7: Streetscape Enhancements

In any downtown area, a safe, complete, and attractive streetscape is an important factor in its economic vitality. Not only does the streetscape network provide important pedestrian connections, it also creates a community space and opportunity for storefronts to reach new customers.

Lead Agency: Upper Darby Township

Partners: SEPTA, PennDOT, Businesses

Funding: Local and grant funding

Vision Themes:



Phase 1: Tactical Placemaking

Work with local high schools, colleges, and technical schools to experiment with placemaking strategies, such as outdoor dining areas, to determine what works (and what doesn't) before committing to permanent improvements. Begin with experimenting in "high-impact" areas, not the entirety of downtown at once.

Phase 2: Streetscape Engineering

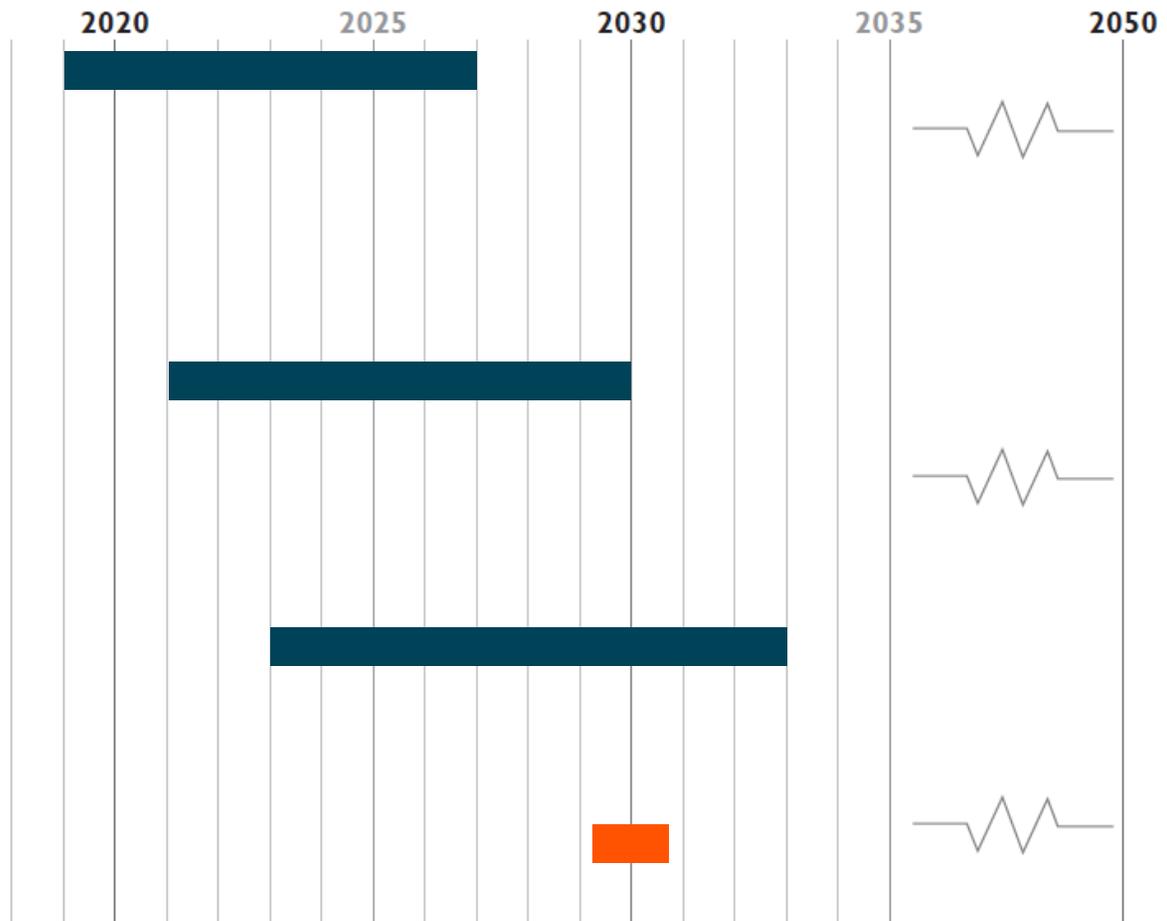
Complete detailed, phased engineering plans for permanent improvements based on feedback from the tactical placemaking efforts in Phase 1 above.

Phase 3: Streetscape Construction

Implement the streetscape designs in appropriate phases.

Strategic Action Plan Update

Update the Strategic Action Plan based on the effects of implementation efforts and new trends.



Project 8: Administrative Updates

While many of the projects in this action plan are public facing, there are also several “back-end” processes that can help to encourage private investment downtown. The township has done a good job at streamlining the permitting and development review process with developers, and these efforts should continue to evolve.

Lead Agency: Upper Darby Township

Partners: Businesses

Funding: Local and grant funding

Vision Themes:



Phase 1: Zoning Update

Update the zoning for downtown Upper Darby to incorporate form-based provisions and design guidelines to focus development at a pedestrian scale in-line with historic character and the urban fabric of downtown.

Phase 2: Zoning Outreach

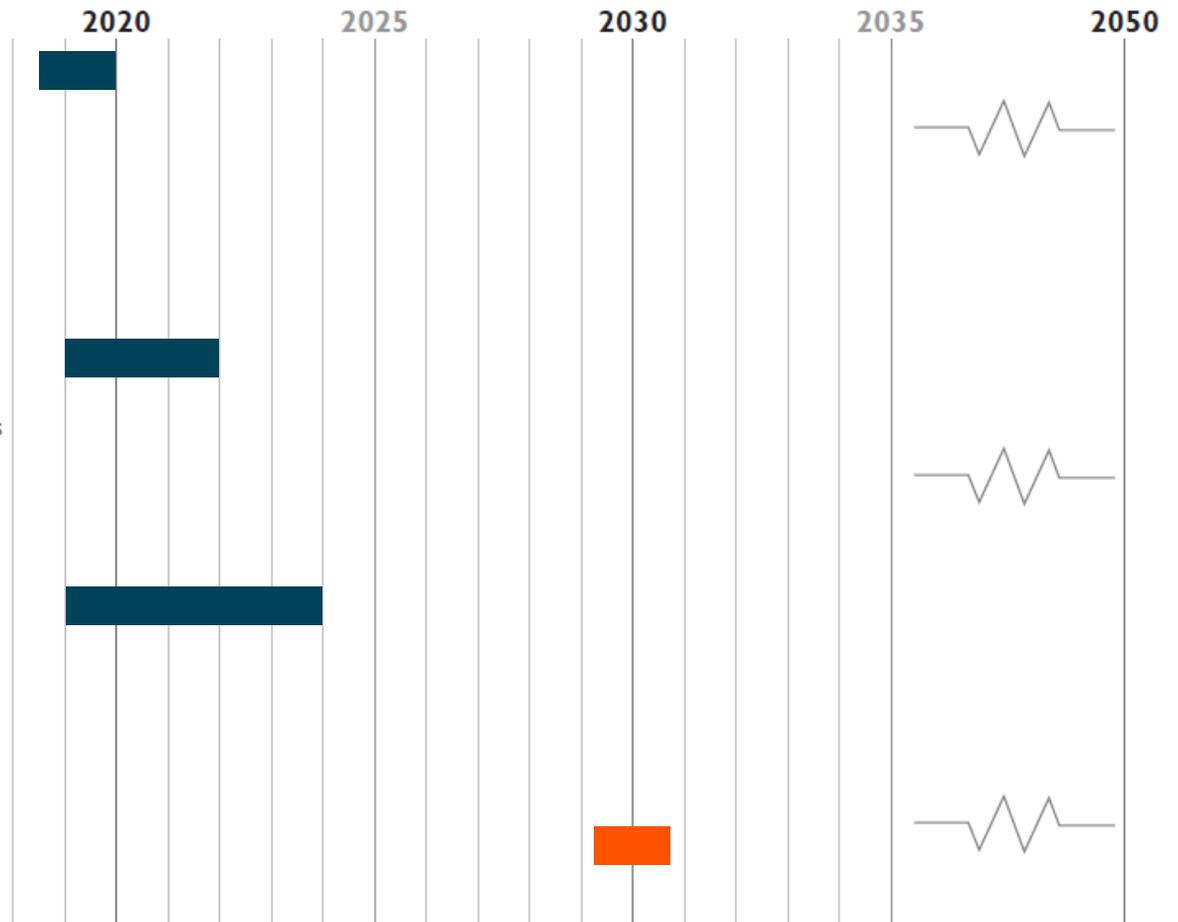
Work with property owners to increase awareness regarding what is allowed under current ordinances, such as sidewalk cafes.

Phase 3: Streamline Permitting

Continue efforts to coordinate the permitting process to encourage desired and supporting uses, such as restaurants and outdoor dining.

Strategic Action Plan Update

Update the Strategic Action Plan based on the effects of implementation efforts and new trends.



Project 9: Redevelopment Initiatives

While private investment is largely based on market conditions, there are specific steps that can be taken by the community to incentivize and encourage private investment in downtown Upper Darby. These steps, in conjunction with the other actions outlined in this plan, will help to attract investment.

Lead Agency: Upper Darby Township

Partners: SEPTA, Businesses

Funding: Local and grant funding

Vision Themes:



Phase 1: Façade Improvements

Work with local property owners to improve facades, potentially through the use of a mini-grant program and/or streamlining permitting to incentivize private investment.

Phase 2: Business Recruitment

Utilize the results of the community branding design to actively recruit businesses and development, particularly those that support the variety of existing entertainment options and promote a vibrant downtown throughout the day.

Phase 3: Identify Development Sites

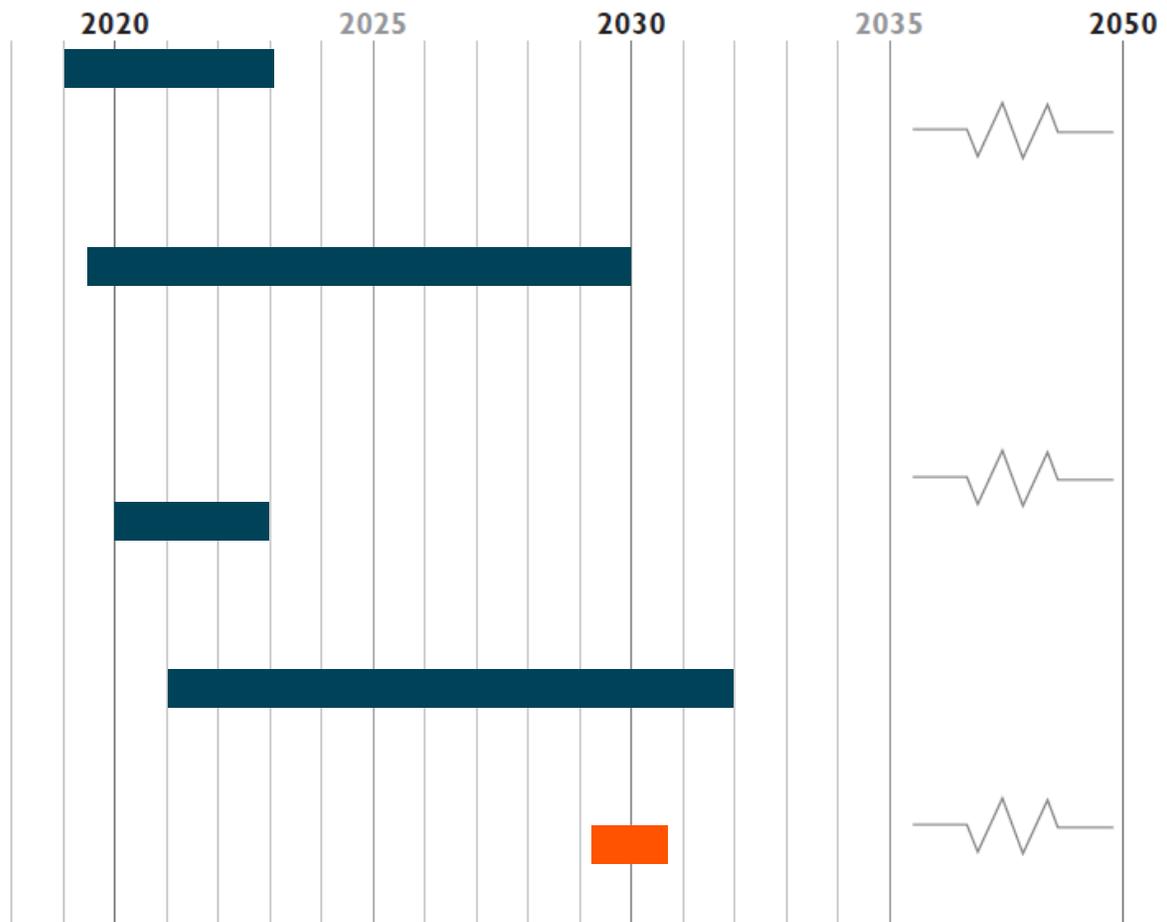
Work with property owners to identify potential redevelopment sites in downtown Upper Darby.

Phase 4: Market Development Sites

Work with willing property owners to market sites for redevelopment partnerships.

Strategic Action Plan Update

Update the Strategic Action Plan based on the effects of implementation efforts and new trends.





SECTION 6:
APPENDICES

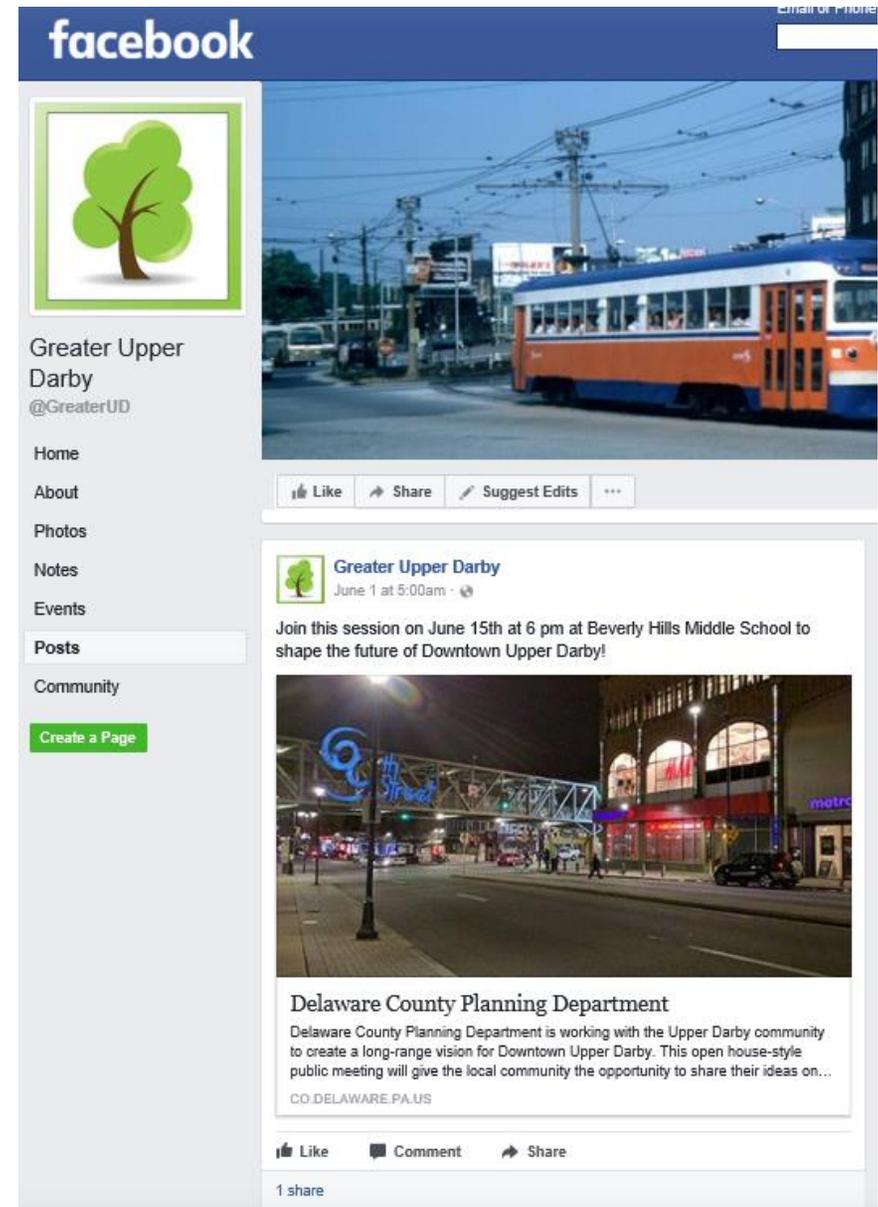
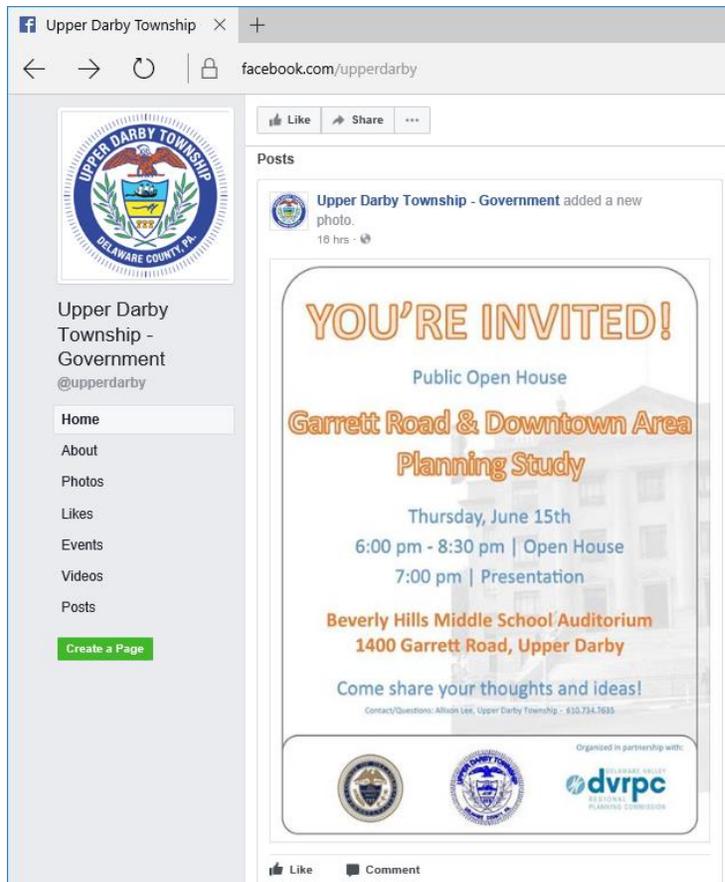
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Section 6: Appendices

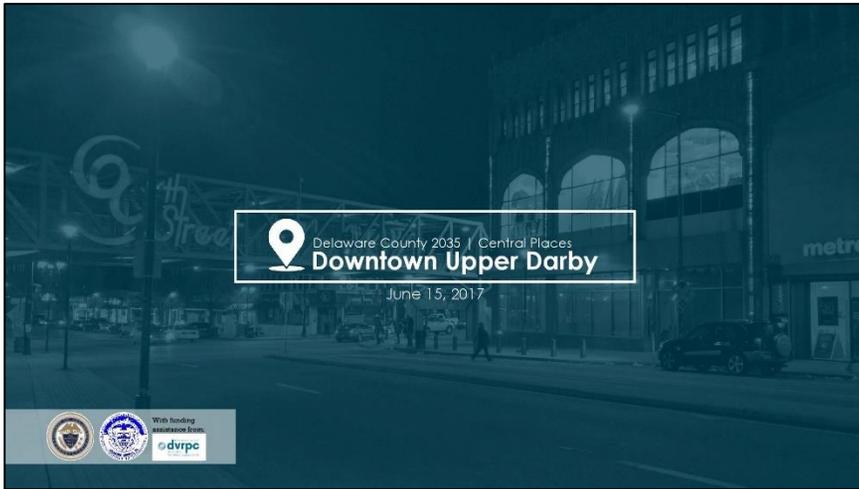
Appendix A: Open House Meeting

A public open house was held from 6:00pm to 8:30pm on June 15, 2017 at the Beverly Hills Middle School.

The event was advertised widely on social media, with many local groups and organizations helping to spread the word about the event. Additionally, Upper Darby Staff handed out over 700 flyers downtown and along Garrett Road and it was advertised on the County Planning Department webpage.

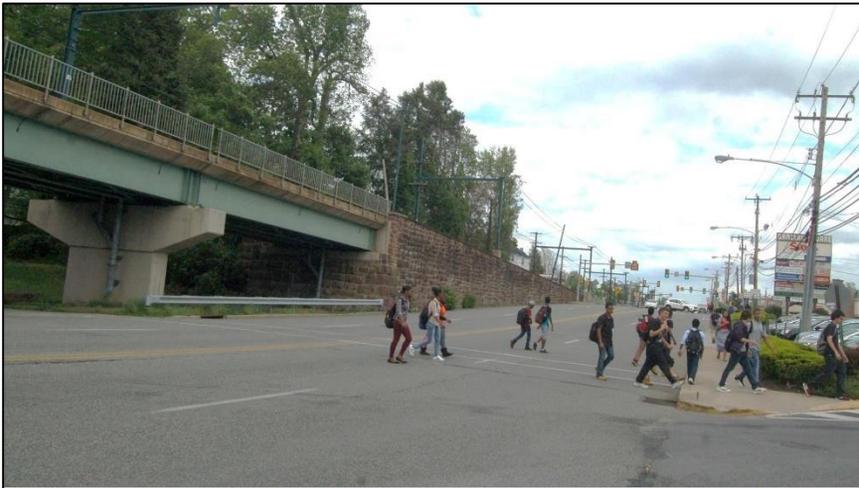


Presentation:



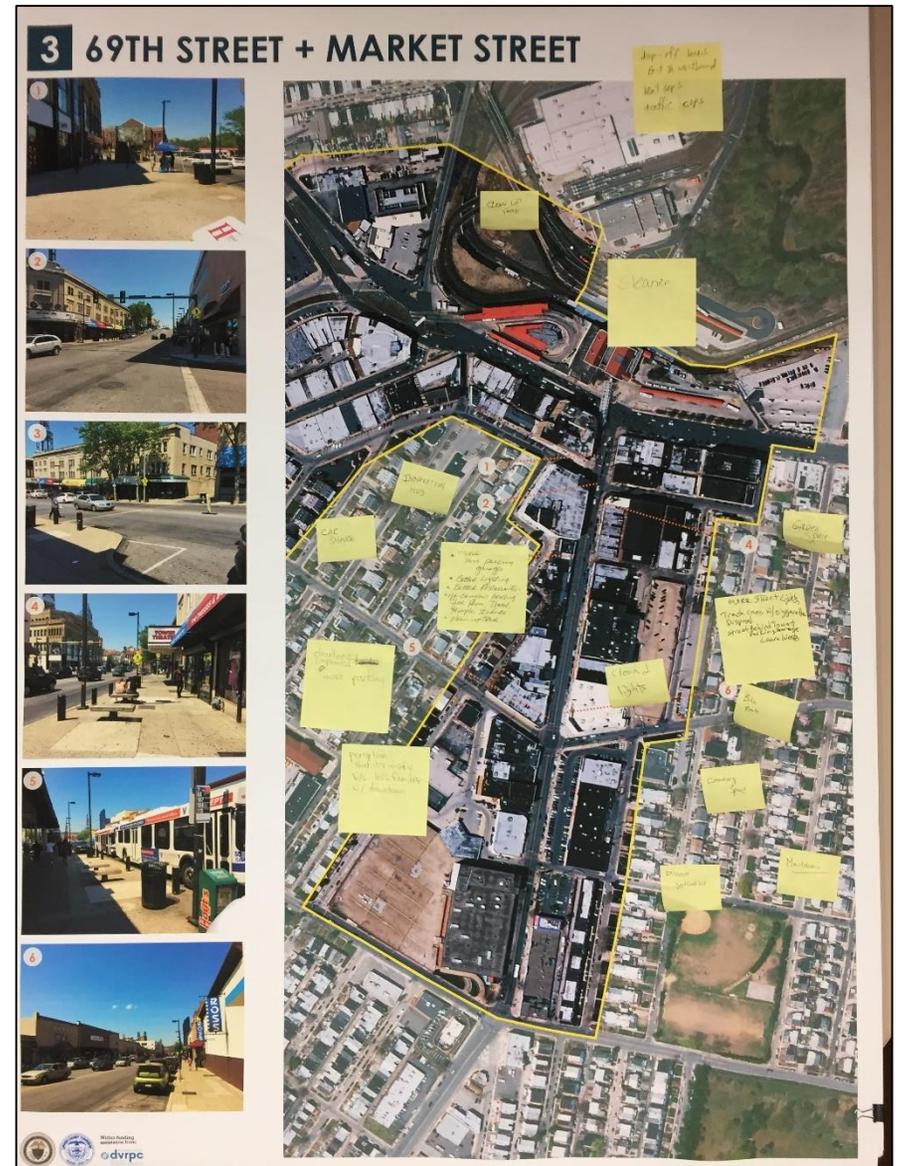








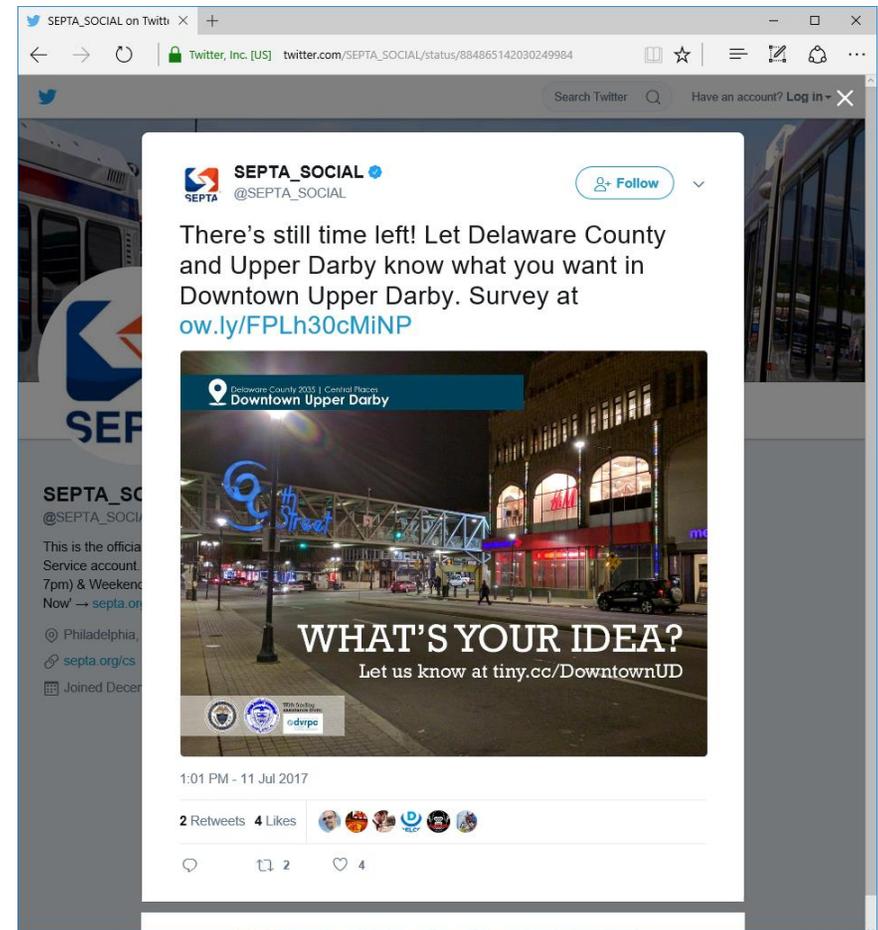
Poster Boards:





Appendix B: Public Survey

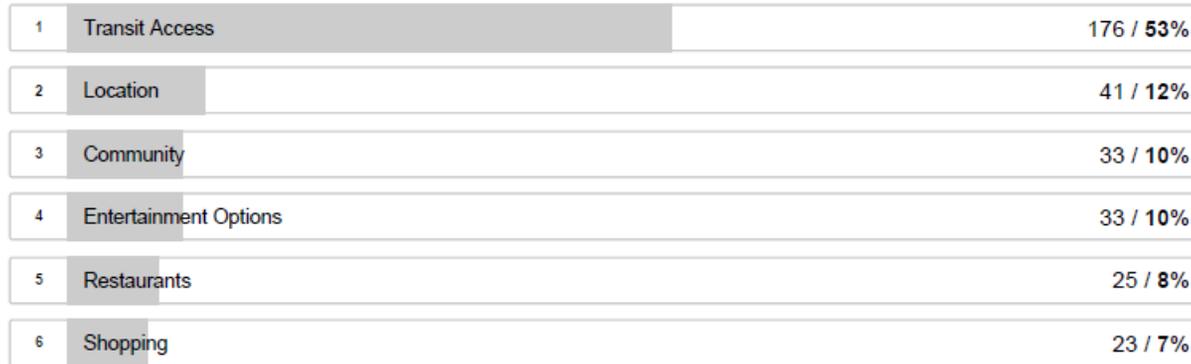
A public survey was available online between June 15, 2017 and July 31, 2017. It was advertised widely on social media, with many local groups and organizations helping to spread the word about the survey. There were 331 participants who completed the survey.



Survey Results:

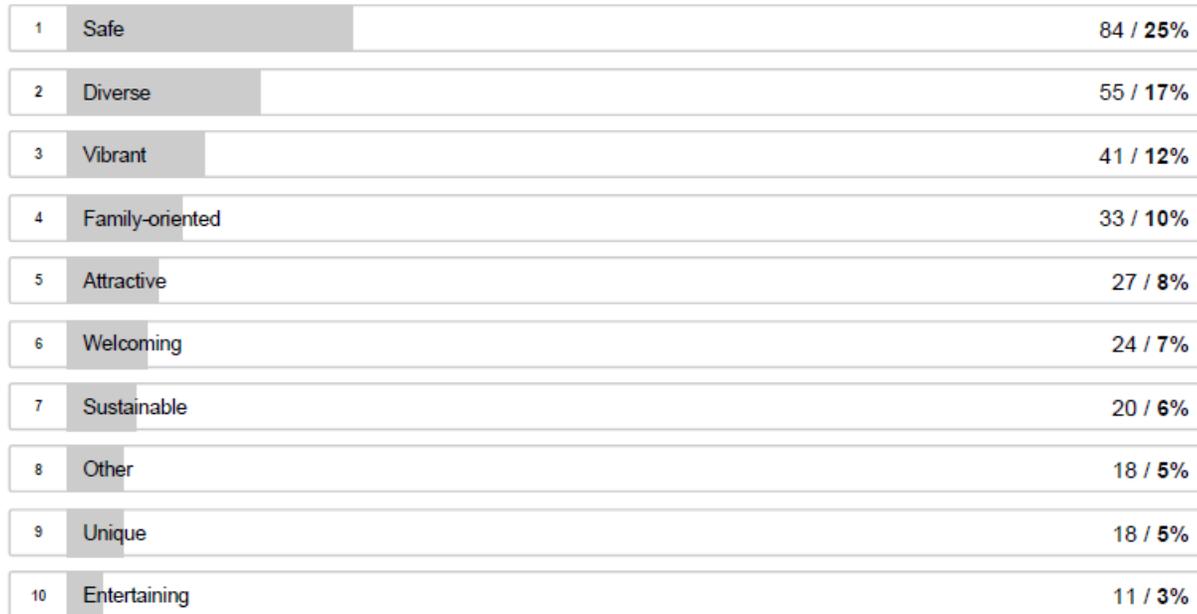
What is your favorite part about Downtown Upper Darby today?

331 out of 331 people answered this question



In the future, Downtown Upper Darby is...

331 out of 331 people answered this question



Outdoor dining

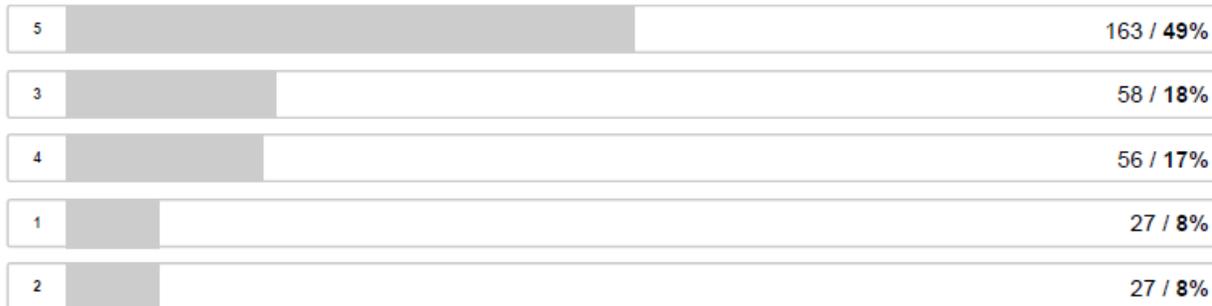
331 out of 331 people answered this question

Average: 3.91



No thanks, there are more important things.

I would love outdoor dining!



Gathering and seating space

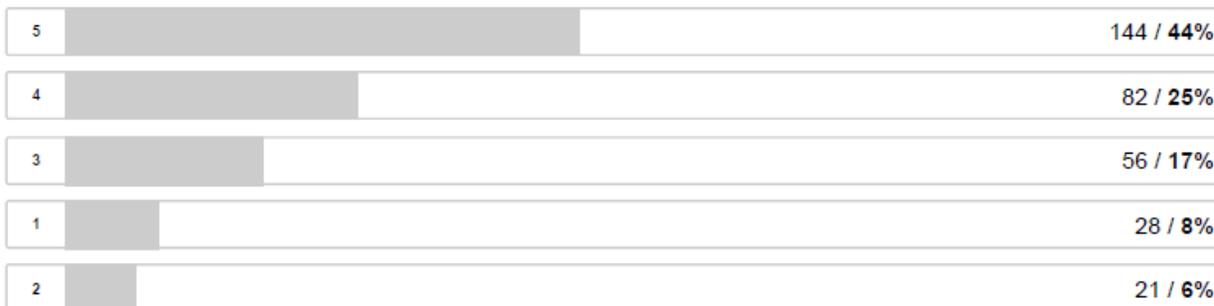
331 out of 331 people answered this question

Average: 3.89



No thanks, there are more important things.

We need some more seating areas!

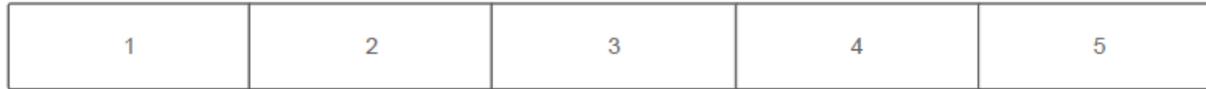


Section 6: Appendices

Street trees

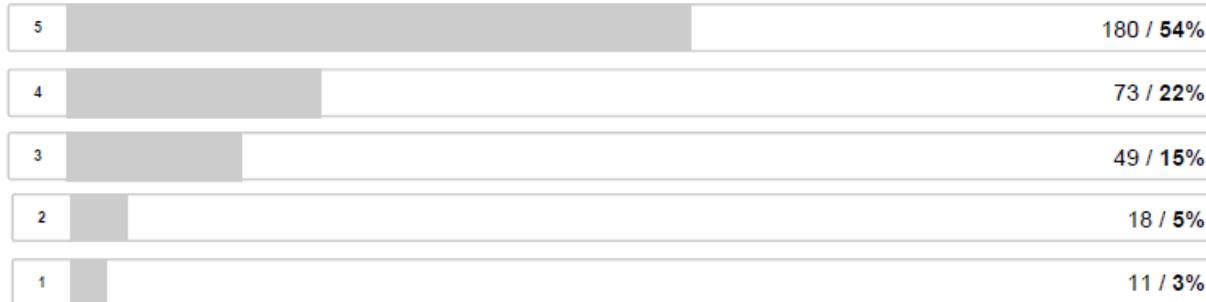
331 out of 331 people answered this question

Average: 4.19



No thanks, there are more important things.

I would love more street trees!



Landscaped areas

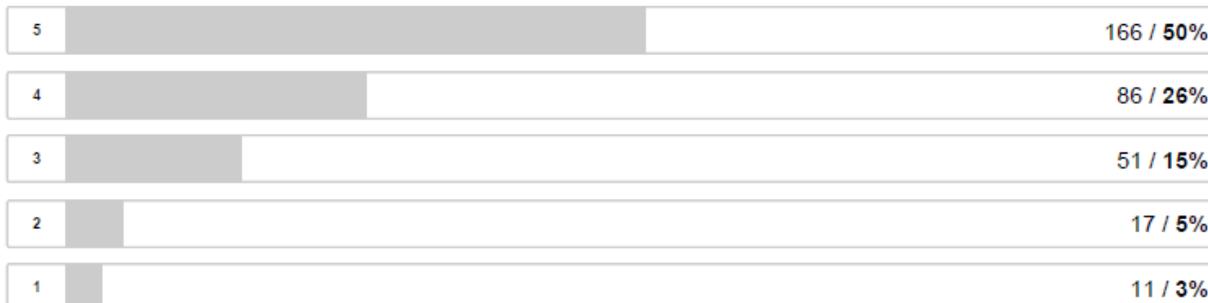
331 out of 331 people answered this question

Average: 4.15



No thanks, there are more important things.

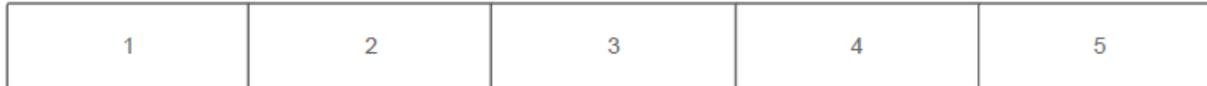
I would love more of this!



Improved bus stops

331 out of 331 people answered this question

Average: 3.74



No thanks, there are more important things.

This bus stop would be great!



Bicycle lanes and bicycle parking

331 out of 331 people answered this question

Average: 3.47



No thanks, there are more important things.

I would love some bike lanes!



Section 6: Appendices

Wayfinding signage

331 out of 331 people answered this question

Average: 3.62



No thanks, there are more important things.

I would love more of this!



Special events such as street festivals or farmers' markets

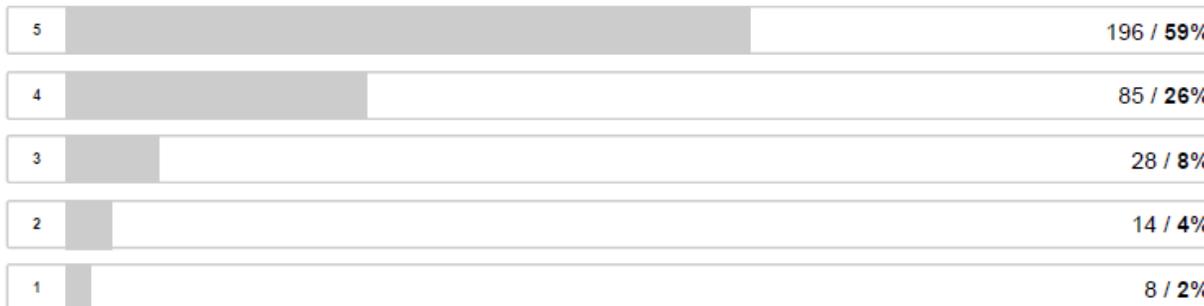
331 out of 331 people answered this question

Average: 4.35



No thanks, there are more important things.

These sound fun!



Street furniture

331 out of 331 people answered this question



Building design

331 out of 331 people answered this question



Building height

331 out of 331 people answered this question



Sidewalk design

331 out of 331 people answered this question



Which one improvement would you emphasize for Garrett Road?

331 out of 331 people answered this question

1	Attracting additional businesses	141 / 43%
2	Relieving congestion	65 / 20%
3	Improving pedestrian safety	60 / 18%
4	Calming/slowing-down traffic	36 / 11%
5	Improving parking	29 / 9%



delaware county
planning department

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