



Delaware Valley
Regional Planning
Commission

2006

DEVELOPING AROUND TRANSIT

TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT
(TOD) PLANS for...

SEPTA BROAD STREET LINE
ELLSWORTH-FEDERAL

SEPTA R5
NORTH WALES

SEPTA R2
WARMINSTER



DRAFT



Delaware Valley
Regional Planning
Commission

2006



DEVELOPING AROUND TRANSIT

TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT
(TOD) PLANS for...

SEPTA BROAD STREET LINE
ELLSWORTH-FEDERAL

SEPTA R5
NORTH WALES

SEPTA R2
WARMINSTER

Developing Around Transit

**Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Plans for
SEPTA Broad Street Line Ellsworth-Federal
SEPTA R5 North Wales
SEPTA R2 Warminster**



**Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
190 North Independence Mall West
8th Floor
Philadelphia PA 19106-1520
www.dvrpc.org**

September 2006

Created in 1965, the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) is an interstate, intercounty and intercity agency that provides continuing, comprehensive and coordinated planning to shape a vision for the future growth of the Delaware Valley region. The region includes Bucks, Chester, Delaware, and Montgomery counties, as well as the City of Philadelphia, in Pennsylvania; and Burlington, Camden, Gloucester and Mercer counties in New Jersey. DVRPC provides technical assistance and services; conducts high priority studies that respond to the requests and demands of member state and local governments; fosters cooperation among various constituents to forge a consensus on diverse regional issues; determines and meets the needs of the private sector; and practices public outreach efforts to promote two-way communication and public awareness of regional issues and the Commission.



Our logo is adapted from the official DVRPC seal, and is designed as a stylized image of the Delaware Valley. The outer ring symbolizes the region as a whole, while the diagonal bar signifies the Delaware River. The two adjoining crescents represent the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the State of New Jersey.

DVRPC is funded by a variety of funding sources including federal grants from the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the Pennsylvania and New Jersey departments of transportation, as well as by DVRPC's state and local member governments. The authors, however, are solely responsible for its findings and conclusions, which may not represent the official views or policies of the funding agencies.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
Introduction	3
Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Principles	3
Ellsworth-Federal TOD: Becoming a New Urban TOD	9
North Wales: Creating a North Penn TOD Network	39
Warminster: Repositioning an Industrial Suburb	65
Acknowledgements	85
Bibliography	87
<u>Maps</u>	
Map 1: Ellsworth-Federal Existing Uses	10
Map 2: Ellsworth-Federal Land Use (2000)	17
Map 3: Ellsworth-Federal Zoning	21
Map 4: North Wales Existing Uses	38
Map 5: North Wales Land Use (2000)	44
Map 6: North Wales Zoning	47
Map 7: Warminster Existing Uses	64
Map 8: Warminster Land Use (2000)	70
Map 9: Warminster Zoning	73
<u>Figures</u>	
Figure 1: Land Uses and Enterprises in the Ellsworth/Federal TOD Study Area	19
Figure 2: Traffic Counts for Ellsworth-Federal Study Area	28
Figure 3: Traffic Counts for North Wales Study Area	58
Figure 4: Traffic Counts for Warminster Study Area	78

Executive Summary

The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) has produced several studies and station area plans that support transit-oriented development (TOD) in its nine-county region. By encouraging development around rail and bus facilities, DVRPC hopes to bring new investment to older communities, while also promoting increased transit ridership.

Included in this document are TOD plans for three SEPTA stations in Southeastern Pennsylvania: Ellsworth-Federal, a station on the Broad Street subway line in the City of Philadelphia; North Wales, a Montgomery County stop on the R5 Regional Rail line to Doylestown; and Warminster, the northern terminus of the R2 Regional Rail line in lower Bucks County. Recommendations cover areas including, but not limited to, land use, comprehensive plans/master plans, zoning, development opportunities, and access. The framework of the three case studies is oriented toward an asset-based approach that capitalizes on the existing strengths of each community.

Introduction

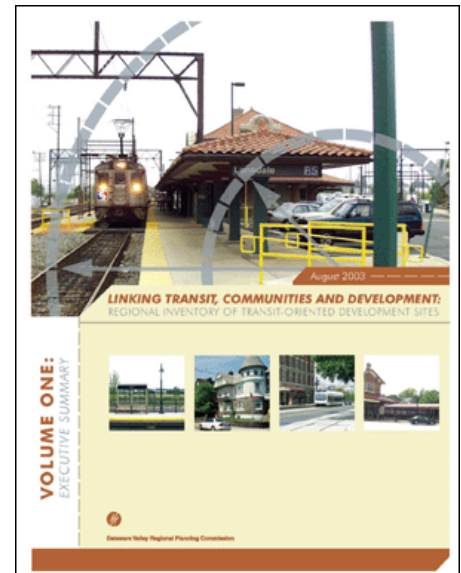
DVRPC has been involved in planning for transit-oriented development for several years. Past studies have produced station area plans for transit stations along New Jersey Transit's River Line and the proposed SEPTA/BARTA Schuylkill Valley Metro. This document, *Developing Around Transit: Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Plans for SEPTA Broad Street Line Ellsworth-Federal, SEPTA R5 North Wales, and SEPTA R2 Warminster*, grew out of the work done on *Linking Transit, Communities and Development: Regional Inventory of Transit-Oriented Development Sites*, published in 2003. The Regional Inventory determined a priority list of "Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Opportunity sites," in furtherance of the goals and policies of DVRPC's *Destination 2030* long-range plan. Forty-five stations were chosen out of a universe of 340 as those that held the most potential for TOD.

Several stations were chosen for more in-depth study, resulting in December 2004's *Four TOD Plans for Girard, Lansdale, Thorndale, and Woodbury*. This report carries that work further, by offering three more TOD plans, for stations in Philadelphia (Ellsworth-Federal), Montgomery County (North Wales), and Bucks County (Warminster). All three stations are served by SEPTA.

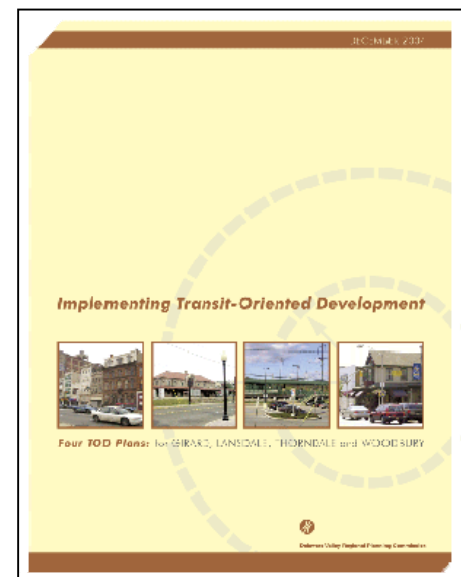
Recommendations included in this study cover such areas as zoning, land use, comprehensive plans/master plans, access, and development opportunities, among others. The framework is oriented toward asset-based plans that build off the existing strengths of each community.

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Principles

While the region has more than 340 fixed-rail stations, the majority of them have transit-adjacent developments (TADs). Transit-adjacent development is development that is physically near transit but fails to fully capitalize on its proximity, both in promoting transit ridership and as an economic and community development tool. Many of the fixed-rail stations in the region lack pedestrian and bicycle access; lack land uses that complement the station, such as consumer services; and lack building design and orientation that serve the rail user. Transit-oriented development (TOD), by contrast, is development that is mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly, and promotes transit ridership. Through redevelopment, TADs can become TODs.



Published in 2003, *Linking Transit, Communities and Development: Regional Inventory of Transit Oriented Development Sites* identifies opportunities for TOD at 45 stations located throughout DVRPC's nine-county service area.



Four TOD Plans: Girard, Lansdale, Thorndale and Woodbury, released in 2004, includes in-depth case studies of selected stations from DVRPC's Regional Inventory.

Transit-oriented development is intensified development around a transit facility that is compact, mixed-use, and pedestrian-friendly, and which is intended to encourage transit ridership. It is most often moderate to high density, and can be either new construction or redevelopment. Buildings are designed and oriented to facilitate transit usage. While the automobile is accommodated, bicycle and pedestrian access is given equal importance to encourage multimodal access.

Lansdale Borough, Montgomery County



The image above illustrates the current land use conditions around the Lansdale Rail Station. Below, a photo simulation by Brown & Keener Urban Design shows how the development of transit-supportive uses near the rail line could bring new life to the borough's downtown area.



In urban settings, TOD may be focused around a few properties or even integrated with the transit station (e.g. The Gallery shopping center in Philadelphia, which is built over the Market East rail and subway transportation center). In suburban settings, TOD usually encompasses a broader area, generally focused within a quarter-mile (or up to a half-mile) radius around the transit facility, based on a comfortable pedestrian walking distance. In this case, TOD may be created by the planned interrelationship of different development projects and existing uses. Inappropriate land uses can detract from the TOD and weaken the linkage between the transit facility and the community.

Implementing TOD requires a concerted effort by local governments to amend their comprehensive plan and zoning ordinance to add or refocus on those uses and development patterns that are “transit supportive.”

Transit-Friendly Land Uses

Uses that are transit supportive include those that cater to convenience goods and service needs of residents, employees, and transit station users. This can include: food markets, restaurants, salons, dry cleaners, newsstands, bookstores, hardware stores, and other retail uses. Uses that entertain or create activity on the street – or attract day and night activity – are all transit supportive, such as movie houses or professional theaters, sidewalk cafes, and other arts venues.

Uses that are not transit supportive are those that detract from, or interrupt the flow of, interesting pedestrian-generating uses along the street, such as: surface parking lots, gas stations, car washes, large auto repair shops, and drive-through fast food restaurants. Uses that specialize in large bulky items, businesses that require excessive space, or that have few employees per square foot (such as big box retail and warehousing) do not attract pedestrians or transit-oriented patrons.

Benefits of TOD

Transportation Benefits

- Increases transit usage, by providing higher density housing along the rail line, and by improving the aesthetic environment of the station area
- Decreases amount of trip making by allowing for trip chaining, or accessing multiple destinations in one trip, through mixing land uses (allows residents who commute on the rail line to access goods and services near a station all in the same trip)
- Reduces auto use and lessens dependence on the automobile
- Diminishes the need for road widening or large investments in highway repair and building

Environmental Benefits

- Preserves land resources and diminishes storm water runoff (by developing in centers or redeveloping existing buildings)
- Minimizes the need for the expansion of sewer systems, and maximizes existing capacity
- Lessens dependence on domestic and imported oil, by reducing auto dependence
- Improves air quality at a regional level, by reducing auto usage

Economic Benefits

- Saves tax dollars by using the existing infrastructure more efficiently
- Raises local tax revenues by promoting infill and redevelopment of parcels along the transit corridor
- Increases land and home values
- Increases disposable household income, by reducing automobile dependence and the resulting costs of owning and repairing a car; thus, by buying “less car,” one can buy “more house”

Quality-of-Life Benefits

- Provides walking and transit options for commuting, errands, and entertainment; can also lead to better health
- Improves the identity of a corridor or area
- Enhances the sense of community, and may become or reinforce town centers, where people meet and interact
- Promotes tourism opportunities
- Creates continuous activity near the station (as a result of mixed land uses), which provides less opportunity for crime

Beverly City, Burlington County



In 2002, as Beverly City prepared for the opening of NJ Transit's River Line, Brown & Keener Urban Design illustrated how the new rail service might encourage the reuse of several underutilized buildings in the station area.



TOD in the Delaware Valley

Many municipalities in the Delaware Valley region have completed TOD studies in the last five years, either as an individual study of their specific transit station, or as part of a larger study of the entire transit line. These studies are either done in-house or through a consultant, or may be completed by the county planning commission, DVRPC, or the transit agency itself.



Completed by DVRPC in 2002, Transit Village Design in Burlington County promoted ridership and community revitalization by encouraging transit-oriented development around the stations served by NJ Transit's River Line.

DVRPC's Transportation and Community Development Initiative (TCDI) has given grants to communities to undertake TOD studies since 2002. These include grants to Beverly City, Burlington City, and Riverside Borough in Burlington County; City of Trenton in Mercer County; Marcus Hook Borough, Yeadon Borough, and Upper Darby Township in Delaware County; Cheltenham Township (for Glenside station), Lower Merion Township (for Ardmore and Bryn Mawr stations), Lansdale Borough, Conshohocken Borough, and North Wales Borough, in Montgomery County; Downingtown Borough in Chester County; and the Mount Airy neighborhood, Frankford Avenue corridor, and West Market corridor in the City of Philadelphia.

Other communities that are moving forward with TOD plans or projects include Haddonfield and Collingswood boroughs in Camden County; Ewing Township (for West Trenton station) and West Windsor Township (for Princeton Junction station) in Mercer County; Upper Gwynedd Township, Lansdale Borough (for Pennbrook station), and Ambler Borough in Montgomery County; Tredyffrin and Willistown townships (for Paoli station), and the City of Coatesville in Chester County; and Allegheny West, Girard, and Temple University stations in the City of Philadelphia.



TRANSIT VILLAGE INITIATIVE
Through its Transit Village Initiative, NJ Transit supports revitalization and redevelopment activities around transit facilities.

Both PATCO and NJ Transit also have studies underway or completed that look at TOD opportunities along their transit lines. NJ Transit offers technical assistance to communities through their Transit Friendly Communities Program, while NJ DOT designates Transit Villages. A community may be recommended for designation as a transit village by an interagency task force where there is a demonstrated commitment to revitalize the area. The designated Transit Villages in our region include Riverside and Collingswood, New Jersey. Designation brings prioritized funding and technical assistance from state agencies, as well as eligibility for grants.

Transit Revitalization Investment Districts (TRID)

Act 238, the Transit Revitalization Investment District (TRID) Act, was enacted by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in February 2004, and became effective in February 2005. The Act empowers municipalities and counties to establish “Transit Revitalization Investment Districts,” and encourages cooperation with public transit agencies to promote economic development around train stations. The TRID, once established, allows transit agencies to share in the real estate tax revenues generated by new development near the transit station, in order to then reinvest that revenue in capital projects and/or maintenance of the TRID area. An in-depth TRID plan and agreement must be prepared with input from the municipality and transit agency. The Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development offered grants up to \$75,000 (with a 25 percent local match) to communities to undertake TRID studies in 2006. The four communities in our region that recently received TRID grants include Marcus Hook Borough (Marcus Hook Regional Rail Station), Bristol Township (Croydon Regional Rail Station), and two in the City of Philadelphia (Temple University Regional Rail Station and the 46th Street Station on the Market-Frankford Line).

Marcus Hook Borough, Delaware County



One of the first municipalities in Pennsylvania to receive a TRID grant, Marcus Hook plans to redevelop a large, vacant parcel north of its rail station. The area's current conditions are pictured above. A photo simulation by Kise Straw & Kolodner, below, illustrates how the site could be redeveloped with more transit-friendly uses.



Ellsworth-Federal: Becoming A New Urban TOD

Snapshot

The area surrounding Ellsworth-Federal is an ideal location for transit-oriented development, given its excellent transit and highway access, proximity to downtown Philadelphia, location along the Avenue of the Arts, and residential density. There are several large development sites within the study area that are prime opportunities for encouraging transit-oriented development.

The Philadelphia region is currently experiencing a renaissance in infill housing, particularly in Center City and adjacent neighborhoods, including the study area. Center City is home to approximately 88,000 residents, making it the third largest downtown residential population in the U.S. Anecdotal evidence indicates that over 9,000 new residential units, representing over 120 separate projects, are proposed or underway, not including the numerous small infill projects of 1 to 3 homes throughout the city. New infill is being built at a rapid pace. It stands to reason that this wave of development will change the appearance of the city greatly, though there is little planning for it. Given this boom, fueled by low interest rates, 10-year tax abatement on new construction, an undervalued real estate market, and the mayor's Neighborhood Transformation Initiative (NTI), Philadelphia's rowhouse blocks are in a dynamic state of flux.

Study Area

The study area is comprised of a quarter-mile radius surrounding the Ellsworth-Federal station on SEPTA's Broad Street Subway in South Philadelphia. Between a quarter- and a half-mile is the distance most people are willing to walk to access transit. The study area roughly extends from 17th Street to the west, 11th Street to the east, Montrose Street to the north, and Reed Street to the south. Although an eighth-mile is sometimes considered a more appropriate radius for urban TOD studies, people are often willing to walk longer distances to access transit if the walk is pleasant. Ellsworth-Federal is an example of a city transit stop that is easily accessible from a larger area; thus, this study considered both an eighth-mile and a quarter-mile "ped shed." The Ellsworth-Federal stop is approximately one mile directly south of City Hall, and two miles north of



View from subway station looking north toward Center City.



Entrance to subway from Broad and Ellsworth.



Marine Club Apartments, formerly the Marine Corps Supply Activity Quartermaster's Depot, at Broad and Washington, soon to become condominiums.

Map 1

Map 1 Legend

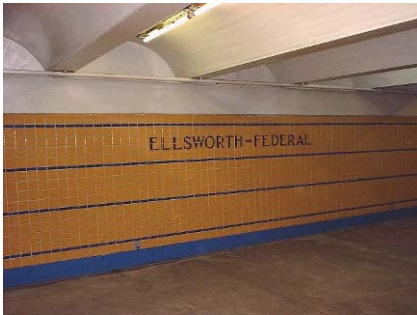
the Pattison station at the southern end of the line. See **Map 1: Ellsworth-Federal Existing Uses** for an overview of the study area.¹

Transit

The Ellsworth-Federal subway station is located at the intersections of Ellsworth, Federal and Broad streets. The Broad Street Subway is a 12-mile line extending from Fern Rock Transportation Center in North Philadelphia to Pattison Avenue and the sports complex in South Philadelphia. The Broad Street Subway connects to the Market-Frankford Line and subway-surface trolleys, to the Broad-Ridge Spur, as well as the PATCO Hi-Speedline to New Jersey. Ellsworth-Federal is a local stop. Limited-stop trains, known as “specials” and primarily used for supplementary service during sporting events, run from the Walnut-Locust station to the Pattison Avenue station, bypassing all stations in between, including Ellsworth-Federal.



The Broad Street Diner is a transit-supportive use, at the corner of Broad and Ellsworth.



Interior of Ellsworth-Federal Station, with yellow and blue tile.



Entrance to subway from Broad and Federal streets.

SEPTA bus route 64 runs east-west along Washington Avenue, from Parkside Avenue and Belmont Avenue in West Philadelphia to Pier 70 on Columbus Boulevard in South Philadelphia, serving the big box businesses and Riverview movie complex on Columbus Boulevard. Route 64 was rerouted in June 2006 to run exclusively on Washington Avenue, rather than turning onto Ellsworth Street (to serve the station).

East of the station, SEPTA bus route 23 runs along 11th and 12th streets, from South Philadelphia to Chestnut Hill. This route was formerly a trolley route that was temporarily converted to bus service in 1992, much like the Route 15 Girard Avenue service that reopened as a trolley route in September 2005. Trolley service on the 23 was supposed to be upgraded and restored within five years, by 1997. There is no specific timetable for the return of trolley service on the Route 23, though there is interest in many of the neighborhoods. Just as the Girard trolley has spurred redevelopment along its line, the same may be true for the Route 23 trolley. To the west of the station, SEPTA bus route 2 runs along 16th and 17th streets. The “C” bus runs along Broad Street. Additionally, bus route 27 from Plymouth Meeting operates along Broad Street from I-676 to a terminal loop at Broad and Washington. Bus route 32

¹ Throughout this report, the aerial photographs used for the existing uses and zoning maps date from Spring 2005. The land use maps, however, utilize images from Spring 2000. As a result, minor discrepancies may exist between the maps that appear in each chapter.

from Roxborough operates along Broad Street from Arch Street to the terminal loop at Broad and Washington.

History

Washington Avenue has historically been an industrial corridor with factories, coal yards, and freight trains, which then gave way to warehousing, wholesaling, and retail. It is a busy seven-lane street (two parking lanes, two eastbound lanes, two westbound lanes, and a center turn lane). Today there are still many warehouse uses, though this is changing, with more restaurants opening, such as several new Mexican and Asian sit-down restaurants, and the conversion of the old Curtis Publishing Company warehouse to the Lofts at Bella Vista (by Metro Development).

Many of the homes in the area were built in the late 1800s. Significant institutions include the Shrine of St. Rita of Cascia, the old Ridgway Library (now the High School of Creative and Performing Arts), the Pennsylvania Ballet (now the Rock School), the old Marine Corps Supply Activity Quartermaster's Depot (now the Marine Club Apartments), and many factories, such as Maggio's and Rosa Foods (recently razed to make way for new homes).

This area served as a rail hub for soldiers shipping off to the Civil War, with sailors coming off boats on the Delaware River at Washington Avenue, then traveling down Washington Avenue to the depot of the Philadelphia, Wilmington & Baltimore Railroad at Broad and Carpenter, to take a train west across Gray's Ferry to Gettysburg. The shed portion of the old rail depot still remains at Broad and Carpenter, though it is currently used for warehousing and most neighbors or those walking by would fail to notice it, though it is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Many immigrants to Philadelphia also arrived by boat on the Delaware River, disembarking at Washington Avenue, and settling in the area.

The neighborhood was also home to the famous and fortress-like Moyamensing Prison, on the 1100 block of Reed Street, which has since been torn down and the site is now an Acme Supermarket.

The neighborhoods in the study area are ethnically, racially, culturally, and economically diverse. Major groups include Italian-American, African-American, Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Mexican with smaller numbers of Greeks, Jews, and Lebanese. Many interesting murals can be found in the area, thanks to the city's Mural Arts Program. The



Almost all homes in the neighborhood are attached rowhomes.



Attractive townhomes along Broad between Reed and Dickinson streets.



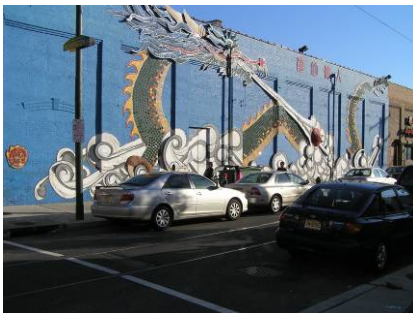
Avenue of the Arts has installed public art and signage along Broad Street.



The High School for Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA) is located at Broad and Carpenter, in the former Ridgway Library.



Washington Avenue has been repaved, with bike lanes and curb bulbouts.



A new mosaic tile mural on the Wing Phat Plaza building at Washington and South 12th Street pays homage to the area's Asian population and stores.



Auto repair centers along Broad Street are not transit-supportive and detract from the overall streetscape. At the very least they should have landscaping or attractive fencing along the frontage to retain the street wall.

Italian Market is just to the east, along 9th Street, and continues to expand south of Washington Avenue, to the famous cheesesteak corridor between Federal and Wharton. Cheesesteaks are now joined by Mexican tortas and Vietnamese ban me (Vietnamese hoagies).

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT Analysis)

Strengths

- Good transit service along the Broad Street Subway.
- Proximity to Center City makes these neighborhoods attractive.
- Lower-than-Center City home prices make living here attractive to first-time homebuyers.
- Washington Avenue is a major commercial corridor and provides access to I-95 and I-76.
- The station is located on Broad Street, a major north-south street in the city, also known as the Avenue of the Arts. The city encourages the redevelopment of Broad Street as the major cultural destination in the city, and has done several planning studies that support this vision.
- The City Planning Commission has enacted Special Controls for the Center City Commercial Area, which includes Broad Street from Penn Square to Washington Avenue. The intent of the controls is to improve the retail and pedestrian environment along South Broad Street. The ordinance specifies what land uses are appropriate, along with bulk, height, and setback controls. This ordinance only applies to Broad Street from Washington Avenue northward, leaving Broad Street south of Washington Avenue without these protections.
- Community groups and neighborhood associations in this area are active and well-organized.

Weaknesses

- The subway station is in need of additional amenities to make the transit riding experience as safe, efficient, and enjoyable as possible. These include the installation of token machines, restrooms, and an elevator.
- While Broad Street can still be considered an attractive street, with grand homes and cultural institutions along its route, a significant number of the retail uses are less than transit supportive.
- Broad Street also has some auto-oriented fast food and drive-through businesses, detracting from the

overall pedestrian experience. While the retro McDonald's at Broad and Carpenter is more attractive than your typical McDonalds and is built to the street with parking in the back and along the side, it still has drive-through service and elements of an auto-oriented site design.

- Residents frequently complain about the level of trash in the neighborhood, along streets and sidewalks and in empty lots.

Opportunities

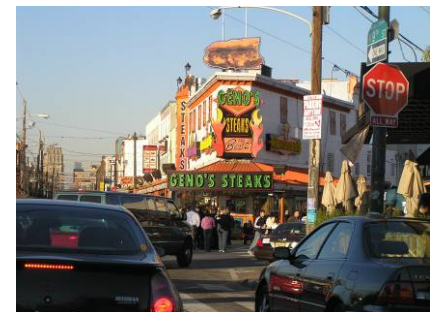
- Major residential development is occurring in the area, which, if done right, can strengthen this area's image and TOD potential.
- Two large development sites are available, both of which are at Broad and Washington. The opportunity for developments that support TOD and urban site design should not be lost.

Threats

- Broad Street in this area is not a vital shopping district or destination, and could decline if there is no one marketing this area. There needs to be some sort of management entity, such as a BID or special services district that can provide needed security, cleaning, and business attraction and retention to make this area as vital as it once was. The city once provided such services, but many neighborhoods do not wish to rely on the city to perform these functions, and are willing to support a separate entity to protect their interests.
- Some new infill homes are poorly designed, in terms of building construction, and use of materials. New infill homes with front-loading garages detract from the pedestrian experience and streetscape, while removing on-street parking.
- The aging infrastructure of the neighborhood (roads, sewers, other utilities) may not be able to handle the level of building in the neighborhoods. The city's water department already has an active upgrade/replacement program, though the scale, difficulty, and expense make any comprehensive corridor-wide or area-wide replacements prohibitive.
- Suburban site design of new retail and commercial land uses is a threat. The Wing Phat mini-mall at 11th and Washington recently added a new section of shops (Dung Phat) that presents a blank concrete block wall to 11th Street, and whose overall scale is not respectful of its residential neighbors.



There are several billboards along Broad Street, detracting from the overall aesthetic of one of Philadelphia's grandest streets.



South Philadelphia, specifically the Passyunk Square neighborhood, is known for its Philly cheesesteaks, and increasingly its Vietnamese hoagies and authentic Mexican cuisine.



The Italian Market, an open air produce market on S. 9th St., is located in the Bella Vista and Passyunk Square neighborhoods.



A former Armory of the Pennsylvania National Guard, located on South Broad between Federal and Wharton, is now a bingo hall.



St. Rita of Cascia Church on Broad Street at Ellsworth is a national shrine.



A gas station at Broad and Wharton is not a transit-supportive use. The Frank Sinatra mural represents the neighborhood's Italian heritage.



Christopher Columbus Charter School at 13th and Wharton.

Demographics

The study area contains portions of four census tracts, but most of the area is contained within tracts 22 and 23, which are representative of the study area. The following data is from the 2000 census.

Population and Race

The total combined population of these two tracts is 4,662. These tracts have a racial profile very similar to Philadelphia as a whole. Forty-three percent of residents are African-American alone; white alone is the second largest demographic with 42 percent; Asians are 14 percent, and residents who identify themselves as “some other race alone” make up 1 percent. The City of Philadelphia, by comparison, is 45 percent white, 43 percent African American, 4 percent Asian, 5 percent “some other race alone” and 2 percent “two or more races.”

Housing Characteristics

These two tracts combined have 2,517 housing units with a 20 percent vacancy rate compared to 11 percent in Philadelphia. Of the vacant housing units in the combined tracts, 3 percent are for rent, 2 percent are for sale, 2 percent are sold or rented and not occupied. Three percent are for seasonal or recreational use and 1 percent are for migrant workers.

Median Household Income

The median household income of \$29,981 in 2000 is just a little lower than Philadelphia’s median income of \$30,746.

Travel Mode

While car, truck or van was the largest modal share for the tracts at 48 percent, this is less than the 62 percent share for the city. Some of this difference is created by a 30 percent share of public transportation for the tracts and 25 percent for the city. Eighteen percent of residents take the bus, 9 percent take the subway and 2 percent take Regional Rail. The 9 percent subway ridership is almost double the 5 percent share for the city, though it seems low for an area in such close proximity to the subway. Interestingly, 14 percent of workers walk to work, as compared to 9 percent for the city, and 5 percent rode a bicycle, as compared to 1 percent for the city. Clearly this is an area where one can walk, bike, or take transit fairly easily.

Map 2

Land Use

The predominant land uses within a quarter-mile of the station are commercial and rowhome residential (see **Map 2: Ellsworth-Federal Land Use**). Broad Street, otherwise known as the Avenue of the Arts, has a few cultural institutions near the station, such as the High School for the Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA), the Rock School (dance), and the Parlor (performance space). Other institutional uses include the Hawthorne Community Center, St. Rita of Cascia Church, Annunciation School, Jackson School, Baratt School, Christopher Columbus Charter School, Mt. Hebron Baptist Church (from 1829), and a historic Jewish cemetery. The only nearby recreation area is the Columbus Square playground along the 1200 block of Wharton.



Many new BYOB restaurants have opened in South Philadelphia, including August at the corner of 13th and Wharton.



Mario Lanza, the famous opera singer and movie star, grew up in the neighborhood and is immortalized in this mural on South Broad Street.



On-street angle parking is available on S. 11th Street, near many new Asian restaurants, such as Café de Laos, Porky and Porkie, Nam Phuong, and Yummie Chinese Seafood.

The commercial uses in the station area include a mix of convenience goods, shopping goods, other retail, and services. Convenience goods include three grocery stores, two of which are large Asian supermarkets; several sit-down restaurants, such as the Broad Street Diner and August; several limited-service restaurants, such as McDonald's, Dunkin' Donuts, and Crown Fried Chicken. Just outside the quarter-mile radius on 11th Street between Washington and Ellsworth are several more sit-down restaurants, which have all opened within the last two to three years. These include Porky and Porkie Korean BBQ, Yummie Chinese Seafood, Nam Phuong (Vietnamese), and Café de Laos (Laotian-Thai). Farther east on Washington are several new Mexican restaurants, and 11th Street also has two well-known Italian restaurants, Felicia's and Kristian's. Farther east on 9th Street is the Italian Market, an open-air produce market that also offers numerous restaurants and food purveyors. Ninth Street really serves as the commercial spine in the eastern section of the study area rather than Broad Street.

Shopping goods in the area are extremely limited, other than a dance supplies store next to the Rock School of Dance. The Italian Market area contains a few more "shopping goods" stores, such as a used bookstore, gift shop, a thrift store, and a specialty kitchen wares store.

Other retail uses in the area include wholesale building suppliers, two auto repair shops, a specialty tire store (Big Boys Toys), a self-storage facility, and Nardello Fuels, selling home heating oil.

Service uses in the station area include a bank, a car wash, a dry cleaners, and Enterprise Car Rental.

“Philadelphia Beacons” is a public art project that consists of four decorative light poles at Washington Avenue and Broad Street, marking the entrance to the Avenue of the Arts. The light poles are both aesthetic and functional, with benches for sitting at their bases.

The study area encompasses portions of four neighborhoods: the “South of South” neighborhood to the northwest (South of South Neighborhood Association), Hawthorne to the northeast (Hawthorne Community Development Corporation), Point Breeze to the southwest (Point Breeze Community Development Corporation), and Passyunk Square to the southeast (Passyunk Square Civic Association).

Parts of South of South, Hawthorne, and Point Breeze are Neighborhood Transformation Initiative (NTI) areas, where the city has been working on selective demolition, encapsulation, cleanup of vacant lots, streetscape improvements, land assembly, commercial development, and social services, among other improvements.

Hawthorne, in particular, has seen major changes since the demolition of the Martin Luther King Homes in 1999, a large multiple high-rise public housing project. In its place is rising a new neotraditional affordable housing development surrounding a neighborhood park, designed by Torti Gallas & Partners of Maryland, as part of the federal government’s HOPE VI program. This program’s goal is to eradicate severely distressed public housing. The new homes are designed with a variety of materials, cornices, rooflines, and other details. HOPE VI also provides social and community services to address resident needs. These rowhomes also are some of the best-looking new homes in the city, even compared with market-rate homes. The neighborhood park has not yet been completed, and the city may choose to build more homes on the original park site. However, the neighborhood association, the Hawthorne Empowerment Coalition, disagrees with this approach.

Housing in the station area is mostly in two- or three-story attached brick rowhomes, most of which were built in the late 1800’s. The last few years have seen more infill homes being built throughout the study area. The hot real estate market and expansion of Center City have helped housing values in the area. Many homes have been renovated over the last few years. The only large rental apartment building in the area is the Marine Club Apartments at Broad and Washington, in the former Marine Corps quartermaster’s supply depot. The seven-story building has 300 apartments.

Figure 1: Land Uses and Enterprises in the Ellsworth/Federal TOD Study Area

Food/Beverage:

McDonald’s
Dunkin Donuts
Sav-On Foodmarket
Chinese food (several)
Crown Fried Chicken
Broad Street Diner
Wing Phat Plaza
El Jarocho (Mexican)
August

Clothing/Sporting Goods/Appliances:

Avenue of the Arts Dancewear
Torre Men’s Wear
Doors and Windows/Contractor Supplies

Auto-Oriented Uses:

Big Boys Toys (tires)
Auto parts/repair (3)
Car Wash
Enterprise Car Rental

Personal Services:

Bank
Dry Cleaners (2)
Home Heating Oil Sales
Personal Storage
United Check Cashing

Institutions:

CAPA, numerous schools
The Rock School (dance)
St. Rita of Cascia (National Shrine and Church)
Funeral Home
The Parlor (performance space)
Emmanuel Chapel

Housing:

Marine Club Apartments/Condominiums

Source: DVRPC, 2006

The building will be converted to condominiums over the next three years.

Planning Environment

Comprehensive Plan

There is no specific Philadelphia City Planning Commission (PCPC) plan for this area, though several special studies have been done over the years (see the following pages).

Zoning

The zoning in the station area is quite varied, with a range of commercial (C-1, C-2), multistory office (C-3), single-family twin/row residential (R-10A), multi-family twin/row (R-10), limited industrial (L-4, L-5), heavy industrial (G-2), and recreation (REC). See **Map 3: Ellsworth-Federal Zoning**.

Most of the corner stores in the area are Commercial C-1 and C-2 (without parking), while some of the mall-like development on Washington Avenue (the Wing Phat Plaza, for instance) is zoned C-3, which while labeled multistory office, is really a larger commercial entity with surface parking.

C-1 allows retail, personal services (barber, tailor, etc.), business or professional offices, banks, florists, laundromats, and funeral parlors. Height regulations must conform to the most restrictive bounding residential district, in this area, mostly R10A and R10. Residential uses are allowed, also based on those allowed in the most restrictive bounding residential district.

C-2 allows a greater variety of establishments than, and inclusive of, those in C-1. Such uses include farmers markets, post offices, printers, private open-air parking lots, repair shops, and animal hospitals. With an additional ZBA certificate, arcades, heaters, billiards, garages, and package stores, among others, are allowed. Residential uses “permitted in any residential district” are also allowed. There are no lot size requirements, but structures cannot exceed three stories or 35 feet in height.

C-3 allows the same permitted uses as C-2, but with fewer restrictions. Wholesale uses are also allowed. There are no listed limits on building height. The majority of the residential zoning in the area is for single-family rowhomes (R-10A), followed by multifamily rowhomes (R-10).



There are several storefronts along Broad Street that would benefit from a façade enhancement program.



The use of pull-down security grates on storefronts should be discouraged, as they detract from the streetscape, such as this store at Broad and Ellsworth.



Many homes in the area have been recently renovated, such as this home on S. 12th Street.

Map 3



On-street parking is allowed on most streets in the neighborhood.



A vacant former country-and-western bar is a development opportunity, given its location next to the subway station. Effort should be made to restore the unique “Boot and Saddle” sign.



Car washes are not transit supportive uses, particularly at the corner of Broad and Reed.

R-10 allows for single, two-family, and multifamily, attached or detached units, with a minimum lot width of 16 feet, and a minimum lot size of 1,440 square feet, with no setback or minimum depth of front yard, and a height limit of 35 feet.

R-10A allows for single-family, attached or detached units, with the same dimensional requirements as R-10.

With every single-family and duplex dwelling erected in any residential district in the city after 1968, one parking space for each family is required, either in a garage or open area, with adequate access to a street or driveway connecting with a street. An exception is made where four or fewer new dwelling units are constructed in R-9, R-9A, R-10 and R-10A Residential districts, adjacent to and within a row of existing attached dwellings where the proposed dwellings do not have access to a rear street or driveway and where the adjacent dwellings do not contain parking on the lots.

The large vacant parcels on the northeast and northwest corners of Washington and Broad are listed as G-2 or Heavy Industrial, though the Special Control Overlay (see below) would influence any future development, which would be mixed-use, not industrial.

G-2 Heavy Industrial allows only such uses as the manufacturing, compounding, processing, packing and treating of products previously prepared. It prohibits residential developments, hotels, libraries, galleries, hospital and indoor and outdoor theaters. One off-street parking space is required for each 1,000 square feet of building area, unless the use is storage or warehousing, which requires one off-street parking space per 3,000 square feet of building area.

L-4 and L-5 Limited Industrial allows building material storage, laboratories, manufacturing of a wide variety of products, and any use allowed in a commercial district. The height limit is 60 feet. L-4 does not require off-street parking. L-5 requires one off-street parking space for each 2,000 square feet of floor area in a building, for new buildings erected or extended after 1980.

The City of Philadelphia Zoning Ordinance has designated **Special District Controls**, also known as Zoning Overlays, which limit uses that would normally be allowed in the C-Commercial land use classification. The overlay is relevant to any new development on the Avenue of the Arts. Section 14-1607, Special District Controls, is specifically related to

new development on Avenue of the Arts South (Broad Street), though this only extends as far south as Washington Avenue. Limits on development are stricter than the underlying zoning. The controls apply to all commercially zoned properties with frontage on the Avenue of the Arts. The purpose is to maintain the street scale, historical character and pedestrian-friendly atmosphere as future development and redevelopment progresses along Broad Street. Prohibited uses include drug stores, groceries, general merchandise, delis, bakeries, pet stores, animal boarding, and utility substations. Also prohibited are automobile repair shops, automobile sales lots, bottling or distribution of liquids for human consumption, and restaurants with take-out windows or drive-in service.

Restaurants, cafes (including sidewalk cafes) and coffee shops are allowed, and do not require a Zoning Board of Adjustment certificate, making it easier to open these establishments.

New or altered building facades and new signage must be reviewed. Developers must obtain a variance to override the special controls.

Point Breeze Avenue between Wharton and Dickinson streets is a **Designated Neighborhood Commercial Revitalization Area**. Although outside the study area, it provides a nearby example of a designated corridor. Several commercial corridors have been designated over the years, to encourage the revitalization of deteriorating neighborhood commercial areas and to improve the aesthetic quality of these areas. The regulations provide a reasonable degree of control over the design, construction, alteration and repair of signs located in designated neighborhood commercial revitalization areas, in order to prevent further deterioration and blight. Areas are chosen based on the potential of the district for revitalization, the size and density of the commercial area, the range of store types, the size and purchasing power of the population served, the interest of merchants within the commercial area, and the degree of physical and/or economic deterioration evident in the district.

Special Studies

South of South Community Plan (July 2005) by the Philadelphia City Planning Commission, is a neighborhood plan for the South of South neighborhood, from South Street to Washington Avenue, from Broad Street west to the Schuylkill River. Their recommendations for the neighborhood that apply to the TOD study area include:



This auto parts store at Broad and Carpenter does not support the goals of the Avenue of the Arts Inc., nor the creation of a world-class Broad Street. This use would be better accommodated on a secondary street.



The Rock School of Dance is located at the corner of Broad and Washington, next to two large developable parcels.



Attractive new infill townhomes are being built where the MLK public housing towers once stood, in the Hawthorne neighborhood, as part of HUD's HOPE VI program.



These newer infill homes in the Point Breeze neighborhood blend in well with the surrounding uses.



These new homes in Point Breeze are semidetached, with side yards and carports, introducing a more suburban site design.



These HOPE VI homes in Hawthorne are some of the nicest new homes being built in South Philadelphia, often more attractive than much more expensive market-rate homes.

- Eliminating vacant housing and encourage a broad mix of housing types, including rental and ownership, affordable and market-rate.
- Capitalizing on the rich history of the neighborhood, by renovating the Royal Theater, supporting the Avenue of the Arts, and celebrating historic figures that lived in the area, such as Marian Anderson.
- Encouraging new commercial uses where it supports residential activity, such as corner stores.
- Maintaining streetscape work that has been done on South Street, Broad Street, and Washington Avenue.
- Buffering incompatible land uses from residential areas, particularly along Washington Avenue.
- Examining zoning along Washington Avenue and at the river’s edge, particularly those properties zoned industrial.
- Marketing Washington Avenue as the “Avenue of Applied Arts” or a “Design Zone,” given the large number of design, construction, and craft-related businesses. This would lend an identity to the area.
- Increasing green and open space, and preserving existing open space (such as community gardens) through land acquisition, where appropriate. Greening the area with street trees, planters, and flower boxes.
- Retaining on-street parking, particularly in cases where front-loaded garages consume the on-street space.
- Enforcing parking and loading regulations, and exploring traffic calming strategies.

New Century Neighborhoods (July 2001) by the Philadelphia City Planning Commission presents a market-oriented framework to help create residential “products”—homes, apartments, city blocks and entire communities—that more effectively attract and retain households. The report highlights the need to update residential choices in the city to meet the demands of present and future generations.

Extending the Vision for South Broad Street (October 1999) by the Avenue of the Arts, Inc. and the Philadelphia City Planning Commission, envisions development priorities and opportunities along South Broad Street, from City Hall to Washington Avenue. It illustrates the broader plans and goals of the entire Avenue of the Arts. The goal of the Avenue of the Arts organization is to make the entire length

of Broad Street a walkable, high-density performing arts district.

The study recommends several development strategies, which are:

- There is not enough activity, new development, or people to sustain the energy of the Avenue of the Arts below South Street. Density must increase. *The assessment of the current study in 2006 is that the level of infill construction and redevelopment below South Street in the Hawthorne, Bella Vista, and South of South neighborhoods, and the expansion of Center City over the last few years has given new energy to the area below South Street.*
- Development sites that could be acquired for low-density commercial development need to be preserved for higher-density mixed-use development. *Special Zoning Controls have since been adopted and it appears the city will not allow a more suburban style retail or low-density housing at this intersection.*
- The Broad and Washington focus area has not yet taken advantage of its accessibility to the South Philadelphia market for shopping, dining, entertainment and housing. Most new retail in South Philadelphia has been shopping plazas and big box strip centers. *The findings of the current study in 2006 support the view that there has not been significant retail development along Broad Street or Washington Avenue, particularly for shopping goods. In addition, there exists a strong local market for such goods and services as clothing, books, music, furniture, florists, pet supplies, garden centers, computers and software, sporting goods, etc.*

The study recommends the following ideas for several parcels at Broad and Washington:

- Create an Arts Square, a public square across from the High School for Creative and Performing Arts. Estimated development cost is \$4 million.
- Preserve the historic Philadelphia Wilmington and Baltimore train shed, at an estimated development cost of \$3-5 million.

Three alternative scenarios for development of the entire area include:

- Develop an Arts Square Apartment District, with market-rate rental housing, mid-rise (8-to-10 story) apartment buildings fronting Broad Street, along



South Broad Street has wonderful views toward downtown and Liberty Place. Efforts should be made to maintain the street trees and expand greening efforts. South Philadelphia has less than one percent tree coverage, according to the region's TreeVitalize program.



The northeast corner of Broad and Washington is one of the largest developable sites in the city, and should serve as a key gateway to the Avenue of the Arts.



An Asian supermarket, Hoa Binh Plaza, at 16th and Washington is one of several along Washington Avenue.



Interior of Broad Street Subway car.



Broad Street subway train and platform.



Ellsworth-Federal subway platform.

with retail and townhomes. Estimated development cost is \$60 million.

- Develop a Film and Music Production District, with a mix of housing and retail, at an estimated cost of \$20-30 million.
- Create an entirely New Residential Community of lower to medium density townhomes and four- to five- story apartment buildings with retail. Estimated development cost is \$40-50 million.

All of the above ideas still have merit, particularly the development of new housing in the neighborhood, which is happening already due to the strong market. Less realistic is the conversion of two of the very successful Asian supermarkets into townhouse developments, though other semi-industrial and storage uses, such as those on the south side of the 1200 block of Washington might be able to be phased into residential. Washington Avenue is envisioned as a boulevard with a central median with trees, similar to Spring Garden Street. This could be a very attractive thoroughfare, particularly if new construction is built to the street line. The Film and Music Production district recommendation was based on speculation over the Will Smith development, and while that is no longer an active proposal, it remains a good idea for this area. The city has plans for a mixed-use development at Broad and Washington, which should support much of what is recommended by this study and the Avenue of the Arts plan.

Access Subway Station

The Broad Street subway station is accessible from both the east and west sides of Broad Street, at Ellsworth and Federal streets. The stairways and entrances are not well lighted, and not well marked, so they are easy to miss. A more distinctive subway entrance and wayfinding signage would make these entrances easier to find and more attractive for riders and residents. Although SEPTA has made improvements to the station in recent years, an elevator is still needed to make the platform wheelchair accessible. The station does not sell tokens or passes, nor does it have machines that do so. (Ellsworth-Federal station lacks token machines due to its comparatively low ridership.) There are no restrooms.

Transit Level of Service and Ridership

The Broad Street subway operates from approximately 5:00 a.m. until midnight, with Night Owl shuttle bus service provided between midnight and 5 a.m. on Broad Street,

serving subway station locations only. Weekdays, from 5 a.m. to 7 p.m., trains run every 7 to 10 minutes northbound and southbound. From 7 p.m. to midnight, trains run every 8 to 12 minutes northbound and southbound. Weekend service headways generally average 12 minutes or less.

Ridership at the Ellsworth-Federal station in 2005 was 2,737 boardings per weekday, and 2,351 alightings per day.

Bus Lines

SEPTA bus routes C, 27, 32, 64, 23, and 2 serve the Ellsworth and Federal station area. These routes were discussed in the Transit summary earlier. Bus service runs from approximately 5:00 a.m. to 2:30 a.m.

Parking

There is no SEPTA parking at this location, given the nature of the mostly walk-up foot traffic. A private surface parking lot recently opened on the east side of Broad Street between Ellsworth and Federal streets, offering daily and monthly parking. There is a parking lot at the Broad Street Diner for patrons only. Free on-street parking is available on neighborhood streets, though availability is limited. There is two-hour parking from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. along portions of Broad Street. Cars also frequently park in the middle lane of Broad Street overnight. Some area residents complain about commuters driving to stations along the Broad Street line and parking along residential streets. Just beyond the study area, neighbors on the 1200 block of Ellsworth recently instituted a permit parking system on their block to prevent the use of residential spaces by commuters. The Wing Phat Plaza Asian supermarket, located at 11th and Washington, also attracts shoppers from throughout the region, particularly on weekends, who drive and park in the neighborhood.

Car Sharing

PhillyCarShare has one of its many locations next to Passyunk Square on South 12th Street between Reed and Wharton streets (its closest location to the Ellsworth-Federal subway station.) PhillyCarShare is a nonprofit organization dedicated to reducing automobile dependence in the Philadelphia region through community-based car sharing.

Sidewalks, Trails, Bike Lanes, and Accessibility

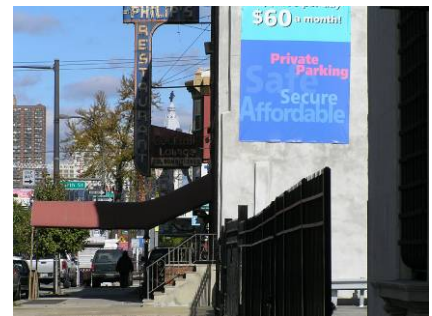
The station is well-served by sidewalks on all city streets. Bike lanes are located on Washington Avenue and along 11th Street. There is one bike rack at the station.



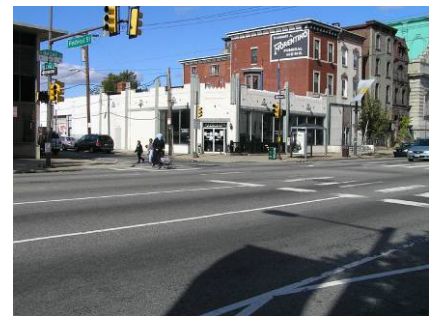
This fenced surface lot along Broad Street should be developed with a transit-supportive use, such as retail.



Two-hour parking from 8 a.m. until 8 p.m. is allowed on sections of South Broad Street.



Secure, affordable, private surface parking is available for \$60 a month on South Broad just south of Ellsworth Street.



Broad Street, once a street of many grand homes, still has many distinctive buildings, including this corner building at Broad and Federal.

Traffic Volumes

DVRPC counts traffic on major roadways throughout the nine-county region. “Annual Average Daily Traffic” (AADT) represents an estimate of all traffic counted for a 24-hour period at the location indicated. The year and segments of the roadway counted may differ.

Figure 2: Traffic Counts for Ellsworth-Federal Study Area

Road Name	From	To	Date	Direction	AADT
Broad Street/611	Arch Street	Pattison Avenue	2003	Total	21,093
Broad Street/611	Dickinson Street	Carpenter Street	2003	Total	21,829
Broad Street/611	Passyunk Avenue	Dickinson Street	2002	Total	26,615
Broad Street/611	Snyder Avenue	Passyunk Avenue	2002	Total	24,023
15 th Street	Walnut Street	Washington Avenue	2002	Total	3,960

Source: DVRPC, 2005.



Above are two views of the Philadelphia, Wilmington & Baltimore train shed, which currently houses a produce distributor, but could be a development opportunity.



The northeast corner of Broad and Washington is a vacant parking lot, and occasional host to special events, such as Cirque du Soleil.

Pending Transit Agency or DOT Improvements

There are no projects included in the DVRPC Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) in the study area.

Development Opportunity Areas

There are several excellent development opportunities in the study area. Many infill homes have been built in the Hawthorne neighborhood by Universal Companies, as well as in Point Breeze, such as new homes along South 16th Street between Ellsworth and Federal streets.

Northwest Corner of Broad and Washington

The northwest corner of Broad and Washington is currently a large, fenced, surface parking lot. It is owned by Philadelphia Industrial Development Corporation (PIDC). PIDC issued a Request for Proposals for this site in early 2005, and has short-listed six development teams. It is a 2.5 acre parcel, with an existing produce distributor in the historic Philadelphia, Wilmington & Baltimore train shed on the site. Each developer proposed a mixed-use center that includes residential, retail, and a cultural component. They include: Dranoff Properties and Universal Companies; K. Hovnavian Homes and Moreland Development; Matrix

Development Group; Metro Development; Pitcairn Properties and Pulte Homes; and Toll Brothers. Teams were to submit their development proposals by the end of September, and PIDC recently short-listed two teams: Pitcairn (now teamed with Synterra Partners not Pulte Homes) and K. Hovnavian Homes and Moreland Development.

As referenced earlier in this report, Avenue of the Arts Inc. proposed three alternative proposals for this site. The first is the Arts Square residential community, with a mix of mid-rise apartment (8- to 10-story buildings), townhomes, train shed retail reuse, retail along Washington Avenue, and an Arts Square public park. The second alternative would be to develop the parcels as film and music production studios, along with some mid-rise housing and preservation of the train shed. A third possibility is to create a new lower to medium density residential community, consisting of apartment buildings (four- to five- story) and townhomes. This new residential community would extend beyond Broad Street to include Washington Avenue from 11th to 16th streets.

Northeast Corner of Broad and Washington

The northeast corner of Broad and Washington is also currently a large, fenced, surface parking lot. It is owned by members of the Holt family, also known as Broad + Washington Corporation, and is approximately five acres. The city has used the lot for special events and festivals over the last several years, particularly month-long Cirque du Soleil residencies, with nightly performances under the big top. Ideas for this parcel are contained in the discussion on the Avenue of the Arts study, namely either housing, retail, production studios, or some combination of the above.

Northeast Corner of 13th and Washington

This surface parking lot has been used in the past as overflow parking for Cirque du Soleil, as well as parking for U-Haul and the self-storage facility on the same block. It is also owned by Broad + Washington Corporation.

Self-storage Facility on 1200 Block of Washington and U-Haul on 1100 Block of Washington

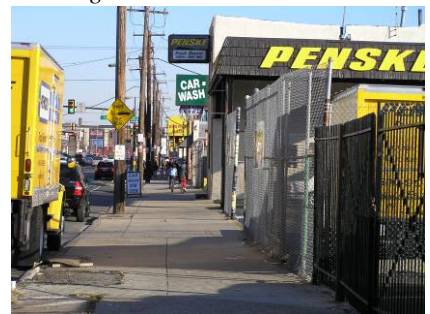
Given the adaptive reuse of the Curtis Publishing Company warehouse on the 1100 block of Washington into the Lofts at Bella Vista, it is possible that with rising real estate values the self-storage facility and U-Haul facility might convert to loft-style apartments.



Another view of the northeast corner of Broad and Washington, a major development opportunity on the Avenue of the Arts.



Above, the surface parking lot at 13th and Washington; below, a possible development opportunity along Washington Avenue.



South Side of 1200, 1300, 1500, 1600 Blocks of Washington Avenue and North Side of 1500 Block of Washington Avenue



Above, more warehousing and light industrial uses along Washington Avenue.

Although Washington Avenue is changing, many uses along Washington Avenue are still warehousing, light industrial, or wholesale sales. These uses include home heating oil sales, a car wash, car rental, construction supplies, among others, and such uses continue down Washington Avenue to the west. In general, such uses are not considered transit-supportive, though they do provide a useful resource for the area, but also attract large trucks into residential areas. Avenue of the Arts Inc. recommends a mix of housing and retail for these areas, to better serve the surrounding neighborhoods. The city and neighborhoods must decide whether these uses make the most sense here; though the market may decide beforehand if owners can sell to developers for a profit as land values rise. Clustering these land uses into a more cohesive “Design Zone” or “Applied Arts Avenue” is an interesting idea.

Though the Avenue of the Arts Inc. plan recommends housing where the existing Asian supermarkets are located, this is unrealistic given the success of these markets. This study recommends that the city urge the owners of these facilities to better address site planning, landscaping, and trash, traffic and parking impacts. As these facilities expand, such as the new Dong Phat Plaza at the existing Wing Phat mini-mall, neighborhood residents must be consulted concerning the design of the facility, and the rise in traffic and lack of parking in the area. Many users of the supermarket plazas drive to the area, and there is insufficient parking at Wing Phat.

Market Potential

The assessment of market potential is based on anecdotal evidence and published data. A full market analysis would require separate study and is beyond the scope and budget of this work.

Housing Market

The market in the study area for housing is strong, reflecting national, regional, and citywide trends, as well as a 10-year tax abatement on new residential construction in the city. Significant private investment is occurring in the areas closest to Center City. As Center City becomes more desirable, so do the neighborhoods surrounding it. Philadelphia overall has been considered an undervalued market by national real estate publications. Many new infill homes have been built; both single-family attached and loft



Home values in the area have risen dramatically over the last seven years.

condominiums over the last five years. Of the four neighborhoods, Point Breeze (west of Broad) contains South Philadelphia's most significant "problem areas," according to the city's Neighborhood Transformation Initiative, having experienced dramatic population decline. This area has the greatest need of the four neighborhoods for addressing blight and socioeconomic distress.

According to a home price analysis published by *The Philadelphia Inquirer* in 2004, median home prices between 1998 and 2003 in the combined neighborhoods of Bella Vista and Southwark (for this study, the northeast and southeast quadrants of the study area, roughly Bella Vista, Hawthorne, and Passyunk Square) rose 122 percent. Their median home price of \$50,000 in 1998 rose to \$125,000 by 2003. For Schuylkill/Southwest Center City (the northwest quadrant of our study area, including the South of South neighborhood) the median home price rose 126 percent, from \$48,000 in 1998 to \$121,750 in 2003. For Point Breeze (the southwest quadrant of the current study area), the median home price rose only 2 percent, from \$25,000 in 1998 to \$28,800 in 2003. There is some anecdotal evidence that this neighborhood's home prices are now rising at a higher rate.

Anecdotal evidence and resident interviews revealed a dramatic increase in home values over the last five years, particularly in the Passyunk Square, Hawthorne, and South of South areas. Homes that were priced between \$80,000 - \$120,000 are now going for \$130,000 - \$300,000+, depending on the level of renovation. Several new projects are under construction in the study area, including Rosa Court, 17 single-family luxury townhomes being built on the old Rosa Foods site at Federal and Juniper, a half block east of Broad Street. The developer is Killian Properties, with homes starting at \$499,000. New homes at the Lofts at Bella Vista, also by Killian Properties, range from \$600,000 to \$1 million. Many new single-family rowhomes are priced above \$400,000.

Retail Market

It would appear that the area is under-retailed for shopping goods, with residents having to travel to Center City, Delaware Avenue big box establishments, or suburban shopping locales to buy such items as clothing, furniture, sporting goods, books, music, housewares, gifts, etc.



The former printing facility of the Curtis Publishing Company (publisher of the Saturday Evening Post), at 11th and Washington, will soon become the Lofts at Bella Vista, 78 for-sale condominiums.



These self-storage facilities on Washington Avenue are ripe for redevelopment.



The former Rosa Foods plant at Federal and Juniper will soon become Rosa Court, 17 luxury townhomes, with parking along a rear alley.



A building being renovated on South Broad Street features large first-floor windows, presumably for retail use, with loft living above.

Recommendations

Market/Land Uses



Columbus Square, otherwise known as Passyunk Square, a neighborhood park at 12th and Wharton, will soon have a new recreation building.



Columbus Square features a playground, ball fields, and some benches, but needs more areas for adults to use.



Broad Street has on-street parking, wide sidewalks, street trees, subway and bus service, but no bike lanes and few bike racks.

1. **Attract more retail uses**, particularly shopping goods to South Broad Street. A continuous retail corridor should be strengthened along Broad Street, even if only for a few blocks surrounding the intersection of Broad and Washington. The new mixed-use project to be built on the northwest corner of Broad and Washington should include ground-floor retail to bring life and activity to both streets.
2. **Market Washington Avenue as the “Applied Avenue of the Arts”** or the “Design Zone/District.” Attract other compatible design uses to this area. While many of these uses, such as building supplies, are not traditionally seen as transit supportive, if a certain amount of “sell to the public” stores can be created, they would be more transit supportive.
3. **Convert upper floors of retail and office buildings on Broad Street to apartments or condominiums**, if they are not already. Discourage storage. This will provide greater housing choice, more affordability, and higher densities to support shops.
4. **Create and protect neighborhood green space, parks, and community gardens.** While the neighborhoods have several recreation centers and ballfields, there are few green spaces that are designed for adults, for strolling, picnics, and passive recreation. Recent efforts by Passyunk Square Civic Association to install more street trees in the neighborhood should be supported and expanded.

Access

1. **Improve the Ellsworth-Federal subway station.** The Broad Street Subway dates to 1928, and its aging infrastructure is apparent. While some cosmetic work, such as painting, has been done over the years and even recently, the station and older subway cars need to be better maintained. The subway entrances are also unattractive, and should be replaced with a more attractive glass shed, much like ones at Walnut-Locust.

2. **Improve fare collection system.** SEPTA does not offer token or pass sales at the station. SEPTA should continue to explore an enhanced fare system that allows easy connections with other transit systems, such as PATCO.
3. **Improve security at subway station.** Security at the station should be improved during evenings and weekends when there are often fewer riders, and therefore fewer “eyes on the subway.” Having closed-circuit cameras and a better-lighted station area could attract more riders.
4. **Install more bike lanes and bike racks/parking.** Explore an adopt-a-rack program.
5. **Investigate the restoration of the Route 23 Trolley** on 11th and 12th streets. This could spur even greater redevelopment in the study area, similar to the restored Girard Avenue Trolley’s revitalization momentum.

Regulatory

1. Adopt a **sign ordinance** and offer small grants as an incentive for owners to invest in attractive signage. Limit billboards in the area.
2. Adopt **design guidelines** and offer design assistance.
3. Enforce **building codes** to eliminate illegal conversions and provide for proper upkeep of buildings.
4. **Enforce the Special Controls District**, which limits certain types of new commercial development that fronts on Broad Street north of Washington Avenue. The purpose of the overlay is to maintain the street scale, historical character and pedestrian-friendly atmosphere as future development and redevelopment progresses along Broad Street. Prohibited uses include automobile repair shops, automobile sales, bottling or distribution of liquids for human consumption, and restaurants with take-out windows or drive-in service. The review of new or altered building facades and new signage is required. Developers must obtain a variance to overrule the special controls.



Neighborhood design guidelines or design review might have prevented the removal of the second-story window in this renovation.



Better controls over signage and/or grants to upgrade retail signage would improve the overall image and retail competitiveness of the neighborhood.

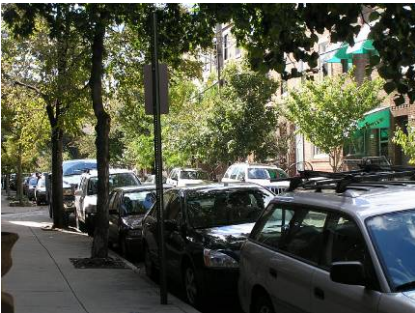
5. **Extend Special Controls** similar to those on Broad Street north of Washington Avenue to Broad Street south of Washington Avenue. Consider Special Controls for Washington Avenue as well.
6. Set up a **façade improvement grant program** for the neighborhood. Encourage large windows and changing storefront displays to attract customers. Encourage shop owners to illuminate their stores at night, for safety, window shopping, and street presence.



New homes with front-loaded garages detract from the pedestrian experience and remove on-street parking spaces.



Design guidelines for storefront signage could help make the retail district more attractive.



13th Street is one of the most attractive streets in the area, mainly due to its mature street trees.

Physical

1. **Require more urban site design.** The majority of new infill townhomes in the city are built with a front-loading garage, detracting significantly from the streetscape, pedestrian experience, and removing on-street parking. Oftentimes owners of these new homes will use the garage for parking, then park another car in the “driveway” of the home, which also serves as the sidewalk, causing pedestrians to have to walk into the street. With a front-loaded garage, there is no room for first-floor windows, so there are fewer “eyes on the street,” i.e., people looking out their front windows, so security is diminished.

Developers of fewer than four dwelling units do not have to include garages, according to the city’s zoning code (see earlier reference). By requiring those building more than four new homes to do so, the city is encouraging car ownership, rather than transit usage. Developers should investigate building homes with and without garages, leaving that choice to the consumer, or garages in the back, along alleys, along the side, or in community lots nearby. More innovative parking solutions and the encouragement of transit are vital. Unbundling parking, particularly in condo and loft developments, will make such housing more affordable to the average worker. If each new home brings one, two, or more cars into the area, congestion will rise.

2. **Require better streetscaping.** Developers should be required to plant street trees, which significantly improve the streetscape, shield pedestrians from cars, save homeowners on heating and cooling costs, and increase home and neighborhood value. Careful attention should also be paid to the

placement of utility boxes in the front of homes, which detract from the overall streetscape.

Programmatic

1. **Host neighborhood events for citywide exposure.** The neighborhood associations regularly host events, and these should be continued and expanded in partnership with local institutions.
2. **Encourage businesses to stay open later in the evening,** to serve evening commuters, night-shift workers at the hospital, and those coming to the area for arts or cultural attractions.
3. **Strongly consider forming a South Broad Street Business Improvement District (BID) or Neighborhood Improvement District (NID).** Special service districts offer supplementary services such as trash collection, security, retail district promotion, above and beyond what a cash-strapped city can offer. They are usually financed by an additional yearly tax assessment of area businesses. Local examples include the highly successful Center City District, the Old City District, and the University City District. South Philadelphia has a serious trash issue due to a number of factors, including a disbanded street cleaning program, flyering in the neighborhood from area businesses, illegal dumping in empty lots, littering, improper storage of trash by some residents and businesses, trash picking, indifferent sanitation workers, and the lack of public trash cans. Center City once had trash-strewn lots and sidewalks, until the Center City District was formed and provided street sweeping and graffiti removal.
4. **Establish a greater identity for the overall area,** and specific identities for the commercial subdistricts, such as South Broad Street, Point Breeze Avenue, Washington Avenue (“Applied Avenue of the Arts District”), and Passyunk Avenue.
5. **Create a dedicated source of state-level funding** to support TOD initiatives across Pennsylvania. Such a resource could provide grants and/or loans to communities that want to add new vitality to the areas that surround their transit facilities.



A business improvement district could help promote a high-quality streetscape through trash removal, maintenance, and landscaping.



The neighborhood still retains many beautiful buildings, such as these on Broad Street, at a density that can support transit.



South Broad Street has many mansions that have been converted into apartments, offices, funeral homes, and storefront retail. Some stores could benefit from façade enhancement.

Conclusion

The neighborhoods surrounding the Ellsworth-Federal station already are TODs; however, much work still needs to be done to truly make the area a first-class transit-supportive neighborhood.

North Wales: Creating a North Penn TOD Network

Snapshot

The Borough of North Wales, Pennsylvania, can be characterized as an older suburban area with a traditional downtown. Covering just seven-tenths of a square mile, or nearly 100 acres, the tiny borough is home to a typical “Main Street” business district that extends along several blocks just south of the Regional Rail station. North Wales has a population of 3,342 (2000 U.S. Census) and its business community consists primarily of professional offices and small stores. Merchants in the downtown shopping district provide local residents with many basic goods and services; however, the area lacks an overall shopping image. There is little destination retail, only a few stores stock a significant amount of merchandise, and dining options are limited. Industry, which once heavily supported North Wales, has moved to surrounding municipalities where more land is available for expansion. Today the borough is essentially built-out, as evidenced by the few residential building permits (16 single-family housing units) authorized between 2000 and 2005. Redevelopment of existing sites is really the key to the future of North Wales.

North Wales is located in a section of Montgomery County that is commonly referred to as North Penn. The area is currently growing in population and jobs, and land and home prices are appreciating as well. The portion of SEPTA’s R5 Regional Rail corridor that extends through North Penn, from North Wales to Lansdale, has considerable potential as a TOD network. The area’s historic business districts and neighborhoods, growing economy, opportunities for infill construction and easy rail access to Center City Philadelphia combine to make it an ideal location for investment in new development that is oriented toward transit.

In December 2004, DVRPC published a transit-oriented development plan for the Lansdale train station in Lansdale Borough (*Implementing Transit-Oriented Development: Four TOD Plans for Girard, Lansdale, Thorndale and Woodbury*). Lansdale, situated two stops north of North Wales on SEPTA’s R5 Regional Rail line to Doylestown, is not as densely developed as North Wales, although it retains many of the same elements common to older suburban areas. These include a pedestrian-friendly downtown area and attractive building stock.



A consignment shop occupies an attractive historic building in North Wales.



Main Street in downtown North Wales.

Between Lansdale and North Wales, at the Pennbrook Regional Rail station, the construction of significant, new, transit-supportive development is well underway. In 2005, Dewey Commercial of Wayne, Pennsylvania, broke ground on Station Square, a 34-acre site that will eventually include 346 apartment homes, 50,000 square feet of retail and commercial space, and three village greens. Station Square is also located across from Pennbrook Business Center, a Dewey-owned complex that includes 550,000 square feet of office space and a 170-room Homewood Suites hotel.

Without doubt, significant redevelopment efforts are currently underway in North Penn. By implementing some of the recommendations outlined in this chapter, North Wales has the potential to speed its own revitalization while extending the reach of North Penn's emerging TOD network.

Study Area

The study area is comprised of a quarter-mile radius surrounding the North Wales SEPTA Regional Rail Station in the Borough of North Wales, which is in north-central Montgomery County, Pennsylvania. Part of the station area is located in Upper Gwynedd Township, also in Montgomery County. The station is situated between Beaver and Walnut Streets, between 5th and 6th streets, and the study area extends from Main Street to the south, Fitzpatrick Containers to the north, the Merck campus to the west, and the intersection of Church Street and Fourth Street to the east. See **Map 4: North Wales Existing Uses**.

Transit

The North Wales train station is served by SEPTA's R5 Regional Rail line to Doylestown and is close to SEPTA bus route 96, which also stops at the Norristown Transportation Center, the Montgomery Mall, and in several other nearby municipalities.

History

On August 20, 1869, North Wales became the first borough created by the Montgomery County courts. The borough's land area was taken from what was then Gwynedd Township. The name itself is a translation of the Welsh name Gwineth, of which Gwynedd is a corruption. Prior to North Wales' incorporation, there was so little development in the area that the county map of 1849 displayed only two farms in the borough. It was not until the latter half of the 19th century, following the arrival of the railroad, that North Wales truly began to develop.



North Wales SEPTA station.



A rehabilitated historic building in North Wales.

Map 4

Map 4 Legend

The year 1857 saw the completion of the North Pennsylvania Railroad. North Wales benefited from its advantageous location between Philadelphia (20 miles) and Bethlehem, Pennsylvania (35 miles), and became a thriving community. In 1867, David Moyer laid out the borough, which, 140 years later, remains largely unchanged. The finished railroad line essentially divided North Wales in half and its downtown business district grew up to the south of the station along several blocks of Main and Walnut streets.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT Analysis)

Strengths

- The station is within walking distance of North Wales' downtown business district.
- Housing densities near the station area are relatively high and supportive of transit.
- North Wales' housing stock is economically diverse and includes several attractive residences.
- A pub, convenience store and a few other neighborhood-oriented commercial uses are located in close proximity to the train station.
- The municipal building, located within the study area, was recently renovated.
- The borough is located in one of the future development "hot spots" identified in the Montgomery County Comprehensive Plan.



The intersection of Main and Walnut streets in downtown North Wales.

Weaknesses

- The Merck complex in Upper Gwynedd Township is located more than a half-mile from the train station and is not served by a pedestrian-friendly street network.
- The station building is older and in need of some repairs.
- Commercial/retail space located in the station building (formerly occupied by a restaurant) is vacant.



Merck's expanding facilities in Upper Gwynedd Township.

Opportunities

- A pedestrian-friendly route connecting the Merck complex to the train station could increase Regional Rail ridership and boost foot traffic in North Wales' downtown area.
- Vacant and underutilized land to the west of the station (Upper Gwynedd Township) could be redeveloped with transit-supportive uses.
- Vacant buildings surrounding the train station could be rehabilitated.

- The section of Walnut Street that connects the station area to downtown North Wales is ripe for rejuvenation.
- Streetscape and façade improvements on Walnut and Main streets have the potential to transform several blocks of older commercial and mixed-use development into an attractive and cohesive business district.



Land uses that are not supportive of transit, such as the storage lot pictured above, occupy several properties to the north and west of the station.

Threats

- Transit unsupportive land uses, including a garage and a fuel and oil retailer, are located to the northwest of the train station.
- The east side of Walnut Street and both sides of Beaver Street near the station lack sidewalks.
- Several properties to the west of the station are occupied by warehouses – a use that is not typically associated with supporting TOD.

Demographics

As described above, the study area is a quarter-mile radius surrounding the North Wales train station. Unfortunately, census tract borders do not correspond precisely with this defined geography. That said, the demographic data described below is for the entire Borough of North Wales, which is roughly triple the size of the study area. Although a portion of the study area lies within the municipal boundaries of Upper Gwynedd Township, this section is largely comprised of vacant land and industrial properties and was therefore not included in the following analysis.

Population and Race

The population of the Borough of North Wales at the time of the 2000 census was 3,342 with 1,302 total households. Ninety-two percent identified themselves as White, 5 percent as Black, and 3 percent as Asian. Less than 1 percent identified themselves as a combination of two or more races.

Housing Characteristics

In 2000, North Wales had a total of 1,330 housing units, about 2 percent of which were vacant. This figure is just slightly higher than Montgomery County's average vacancy rate of less than 1 percent, and significantly lower than nearby Philadelphia County's vacancy rate of 11 percent. Of North Wales' 1,299 occupied units in 2000, 926 (71 percent) were owner-occupied and 373 (29 percent) were renter-occupied. These figures almost paralleled the Montgomery County-wide rates of 73 percent and 26 percent respectively. Again as a comparison, housing units



Historic homes line many residential streets in North Wales.

in Philadelphia County were 60 percent owner-occupied in 2000 with the remaining 40 percent occupied by renters.

Median Household Income

The median household income for the Borough of North Wales was \$54,605 in 2000. This figure was 10 percent lower than Montgomery County's 2000 median household income of \$60,829.

Travel Mode

In 2000, 92 percent of North Wales' employed residents used a car, truck, or van as their primary means of transportation to work. This figure includes 84 percent who drove alone and 8 percent who carpooled. Only 3 percent of residents utilized some form of public transportation on their daily commute (2.5 percent traveled by rail and half a percent rode a bus). A combined total of about 3 percent walked, bicycled or used some other mode of transportation, and nearly 2 percent worked from home.

Land Use

The study area has an interesting mix of land uses. Properties to the west and northwest of the station are largely industrial in character. A few parcels that appear to be vacant are also located in this area. Merck's expansive office complex is located about a half-mile west of the station. In contrast, the blocks that run south from the rail line extend through the densely developed commercial center of downtown North Wales. Main Street is about a quarter mile south of the station and, while small, has several pedestrian-scale retail uses. To the east and northeast of the station, the study area encompasses a residential neighborhood of mostly single-family detached homes. Another small pocket of single-family residential properties – including both detached units and semidetached twins – is located to the southwest of the rail line, between downtown North Wales and the municipal boundary with Upper Gwynedd Township. The borough's newer municipal offices are also found in this area.

Overall, North Wales is a densely settled municipality with little vacant land. In contrast, the portion of Upper Gwynedd Township that stretches from the rail line to the Merck complex includes a number of large, underutilized properties. This dichotomy of uses offers a unique opportunity to implement a transit-oriented development plan that incorporates rehabilitation, revitalization, in-fill



The SEPTA parking lot at the North Wales rail station is well utilized by commuters.



In Upper Gwynedd Township, underdeveloped properties extend along the rail line.

Map 5

building and new construction elements. See **Map 5: North Wales Land Uses**.¹

Downtown and Station Area Retail Mix

Downtown retail uses are found on Main Street (Sumneytown Pike in Upper Gwynedd Township) and along the section of Walnut Street that connects Main Street with the station area. Transit-supportive uses include the following food and beverage businesses: two taverns, a water ice stand, two pizzerias, a Tex-Mex restaurant, a sandwich shop, a beer distributor, and a coffee shop. Transit-supportive service uses include a dry cleaner, a Laundromat, a pharmacy, two banks, and two hair salons. Shopping goods appear to be underrepresented, with only a running shoe store and two consignment/thrift stores. (The Montgomery Mall is the closest major shopping center, and downtown Lansdale is also nearby.) The multiple professional offices in downtown North Wales specialize in fields such as law, insurance, construction, optometry, and dentistry. There is also a performing arts academy and two martial arts schools. Immediately across from the station are an auto mechanic, a tile and stone business, and two locations for fuel and oil sales, none of which are transit-supportive uses. To the north of the station are a post office and a Wawa convenience store. Although both of these uses are transit-supportive, neither is easy to access by foot from the station.



The Shearer Square shopping complex on Main Street in North Wales.

Planning Environment

Comprehensive Plan

North Wales' most recent Comprehensive Plan was completed in 1998. The primary issues discussed in this document are the provision of adequate and accessible parking, and the need for a business organization. Just prior to the plan's adoption, the borough completed a number of reconstruction projects and streetscape enhancements along Main Street. The business image of North Wales is that of a small town, as North Wales is largely residential (75 percent of the land area is single-family homes) and close to more suburban commercial centers like Montgomeryville. Still, the stability of North Wales' commercial district, which is located around the intersection of Main and Walnut streets, remains important to the overall health of the borough.



Landscaped open space along Walnut Street.

¹ As noted previously, the land use maps that appear in this report utilize images from Spring 2000. As a result, some of the recent development in the northwest quadrant of the North Wales study area does not appear on the land use map at left.

North Wales is currently in the process of drafting a new Comprehensive Plan, which will ultimately replace the 1998 document described above.

Zoning

The station is located in North Wales Borough in a CR Commercial-Retail district and surrounded in large part by C Residential and RM Multifamily Residential zones. See **Map 6: North Wales Zoning**. The zoning code was last updated in the mid-1990s, although minor revisions have been incorporated in recent years.

The residential districts allow a fairly dense mixture of housing, ranging from six dwelling units per acre up to 12 dwelling units per acre. The actual built density of North Wales Borough is four dwelling units per acre, less than what is allowed.



Single and multifamily housing lines a residential street near the North Wales rail station.



A Mexican restaurant in downtown North Wales.

- C Residential district. Permits single-family detached and semidetached, duplex/two-family, and two-family semidetached homes. Minimum lot size is 7,000 square feet for single-family detached units and 3,500 square feet for other dwellings. Maximum building height is 35 feet.
- CBD Commercial district. Permits a wide variety of businesses and services that are in character with the existing mixed commercial uses that are considered necessary for the function and convenience of residents and employees within the borough. Residential uses are also allowed, and accessory apartments are permitted by special exception.
- CR Commercial-Retail district. The zoning code does not list specific permitted uses for this district; however, the stated goal of CR zones is to provide locations for retail, wholesale, automotive, office, and other commercial uses in order to meet the shopping and service needs of residents.
- GP Government-Public district. Allows for governmental/public uses, such as government buildings, schools, libraries, public offices, and public utility stations. Minimum lot area is 40,000 square feet; maximum height is 35 feet or three stories.

Map 6

OR Office-Residential district. Permits business and professional office and limited business uses, thereby encouraging the overall revitalization of the borough's business district along Main Street. Prohibited uses include industries, warehouses, storage yards, Laundromats, drive-in eating establishments, service stations, auto sales, auto repair, wholesale trade.

RM Residential Multifamily district. Permits uses allowed in the C residential district. Also allows multifamily dwellings, small/ground-floor professional offices, off-street parking, and delivery/collection facilities. For garden apartments, the minimum lot size is 20,000 square feet with a minimum lot width of 200 feet and a maximum density of 12 units per acre. For multifamily or quadraplex units, the minimum lot size is 3,000 square feet with a minimum lot width of 30 feet and a maximum density of nine units per acre. For townhouses, the minimum lot size is 2,000 square feet. Lots must be at least 20 feet wide and accommodate a building density of no more than eight units per acre.



A single-family residence in North Wales.



Older row homes located near the Merck complex.

In 1999, North Wales Borough Council also adopted a Historic Preservation district, which essentially functions as a zoning overlay for the downtown area. Under the terms of the district's authorization, a Historical Architectural Review Board (HARB) was established to review construction permit applications and give recommendations to the borough council regarding "the erection or razing, alteration, restoration, reconstruction or demolition of any building within the district." Although obtaining a certificate from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission that recognizes the historical significance of North Wales was an expressed goal of the borough council when it created the Historic Preservation District, the borough's downtown area is not yet listed among Pennsylvania's entries on the National Register of Historic Places.

As noted elsewhere in this chapter, a portion of the study area is also located in Upper Gwynedd Township. Much of this section is zoned LI Limited Industrial; however, it also includes and/or borders residential, institutional and professional business districts.

LI Limited Industrial District. Permits nonpolluting industry, office, agricultural and certain manufacturing operations. Requires a minimum lot area of 43,560 square feet and a minimum lot width of 200 feet. Principal and accessory buildings may not occupy more than 40 percent of a lot's land area, and all buildings must be located at least 200 feet away from any residential development.

I Institutional District. Allows for a range of educational, municipal, nonprofit, health (hospitals, nursing homes, etc.) and religious uses. Age-restricted housing for residents 55 and older is the only form of housing permitted in this zone. No lot within this district may be less than four acres in size. The minimum lot width is 200 feet and the maximum building height is 40 feet, although towers constructed as part of a religious facility may rise 100 feet.

BP Business Professional District. Provides appropriate locations for professional offices, and allows for the conversion of residential properties to office or restricted commercial uses. Professional and business offices (includes offices occupied by doctors, attorneys, architects, real estate sales professionals, insurance companies and travel agents, among others) as well as single-family detached homes are permitted on lots of at least 20,000 square feet. Lots that exceed 40,000 square feet may also be occupied by financial institutions, childcare facilities, funeral homes, and outpatient medical clinics that house laboratories. No building in this zoning district may exceed 35 feet in height.

R-2 Residential District. Allows single-family detached homes on large lots, and municipal and recreational uses. The minimum lot size is 21,780 square feet and no more than 20 percent of the land area of a lot may be occupied by buildings. Lots must be at least 120 feet wide and buildings must be set back at least 50 feet from the street.



St. Luke's church on Main Street in North Wales.



New residential construction in nearby Montgomeryville.

R-4 Residential District. Permits single-family detached and semidetached housing, as well as age-restricted single-family attached housing (for residents aged 55 and older). At least one-third of the total dwelling units located in an R-4 zone must be single-family detached. The minimum lot size for single-family detached homes is 11,000 square feet (80-foot minimum width) while the minimum lot size for a single-family semidetached dwelling is 9,000 feet (65-foot minimum width). The maximum allowable density for age-restricted attached housing is four units per acre. Such units must also comply with a height limit of 20 feet. All other residential units may rise up to 28 feet.



The implementation of a TOD zoning overlay would encourage the development of transit-supportive land uses near the North Wales station.

Upper Gwynedd's zoning ordinance also includes a TOD Transit-Oriented Overlay District that was created for the area around the Pennbrook train station. Among other things, the overlay permits residential densities of up to 11 units per gross acre, and requires that 15 to 20 percent of the area of all development tracts be devoted to nonresidential uses, including mixed-use projects. An opportunity exists for the township to replicate this effort by creating a similar overlay for the area west of the North Wales train station. This portion of Upper Gwynedd, which includes several large underutilized properties, is currently zoned LI for limited industrial uses.

Special Studies

North Wales Community Revitalization Plan, by the Waetzman Planning Group, was adopted in April 2003. The recommendations outlined in the plan include the following:

- Maximize the supply and exposure of off-street parking serving the business community.
- Increase publicity about the town.
- Monitor vacancies in the downtown area.
- Make the train station a focal point of the community.
- Improve pedestrian access between the residential area and the train station.
- Create a business association (which has subsequently been established).
- Improve the mix of businesses in the downtown area.



A vacant residential building near North Wales' downtown area.

Waetzman Planning Group also recommended that North Wales apply for a Main Street Community Grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED), if the borough was determined to meet the eligibility requirements of the program. A grant would provide North Wales with a five-year stream of funding to offset the cost of hiring a full-time, professional Main Street manager. To be designated a “Main Street Community” by DCED, municipalities must have a critical mass of at least 65 commercial establishments within a single business district, and a population of between 3,000 and 50,000 residents. In addition, the existing commercial district must be pedestrian-oriented and include older buildings that may be eligible for a local or national historic register. Designated Main Street Communities must also agree to raise \$90,000 in local matching funds over five years. Municipalities that do not meet these requirements may still be eligible for assistance under the Main Street Affiliate and Main Street Achiever programs, which provide more limited levels of support.

Other recommendations in Waetzman Planning Group’s *North Wales Community Revitalization Plan* included installing an information kiosk to advertise civic events and other promotions (which has been installed); developing a master plan for the Wawa Triangle that emphasizes the addition of retail and office space; rezoning Main Street to promote a better mix of businesses; and amending the zoning code to expand the range of allowable uses in the central business district. The study also suggests that the borough create a façade improvements fund, improve lighting downtown, and enhance the streetscape near the train station. The study also suggests that the borough acquire vacant or undeveloped parcels for public parking, which they have subsequently done. North Wales used county revitalization funds to acquire a fire-damaged house at the corner of East Walnut and Second streets in 2004, demolished what was left of the structure, and created a public parking lot that is used by Bank of America and North Wales Running Company customers.

Finally, the plan also recommends that the borough work with SEPTA to improve parking and circulation on the inbound side of the train station by preparing a site plan for the redesign of the parking area and School Street alignment. According to Waetzman Planning Group, North Wales should consider a one-way street pattern to create more on-street parking and improve traffic flow. To encourage increased transit use, they suggest the borough partner with Partnership TMA to create a shuttle network, and collaborate with Merck on this and other revitalization



Historic buildings along Main Street in North Wales.



SEPTA parking lots at the North Wales rail station.

efforts. The Borough has discussed a shuttle service connecting North Wales to the Souderton-Telford area, but projected ridership was considered too low for implementation.

The Montgomery County Planning Commission's *Land Use Plan – Shaping Our Future* makes many of the same recommendations as the *North Wales Community Revitalization Plan*. The Montgomery County plan categorizes North Wales as an “Existing Older Area” and outlines a set of recommendations called the “Older Developed Area Enhancement Plan.” Many of the recommendations related to downtown and Main Street revitalization are particularly applicable to North Wales.

According to *Land Use Plan – Shaping our Future*, an essential component of making North Wales an active place is to attract and retain downtown businesses. This can be achieved through the use of tax incentives and subsidies such as Keystone Opportunity Zones and Community Development Block Grants. These tools can be utilized to help maintain current businesses and attract new anchor tenants that have the potential to make the downtown area more of a regional destination. As most of North Wales' current tenants are small businesses, it is also important to provide them with access to small business programs that are tailored to their specific needs. One source of support – the Small Business Administration – offers a variety of programs, loans, and grants, and oversees three Small Business Development Centers at universities around the region.



Main Street in downtown North Wales.

Land Use Plan – Shaping our Future also outlines a series of physical improvements that could be applied in North Wales to enhance the vibrancy and functionality of the borough's downtown area. The following general recommendations, which are included in the Montgomery County Planning Commission's plan, are among those that might be most appropriate and beneficial for North Wales:

- Install streetscape improvements
- Apply traffic calming tools and techniques
- Expand historic preservation activities
- Establish façade improvement programs
- Require good sign design
- Initiate way-finding
- Improve housing
- Address broken window syndrome
- Provide adequate municipal services
- Improve pedestrian access
- Assemble industrial land for development



Warehouse properties dominate several of the blocks that surround the North Wales rail station.

Lastly, a third plan, prepared by Temple University urban planning students and entitled *North Wales Parking and Pedestrian Study*, was published in May 2004. The plan recommends actions that can be taken to address short-term issues dealing with parking and pedestrian access. There are numerous private parking lots in the borough, most within one to two blocks of Main or Walnut streets. They include:

- Shearer Square, a small shopping complex on South Main Street with 40 spaces.
- Dry cleaner/pharmacy, also on South Main Street, with more than 30 spaces.
- McKeever's Bar, located at the intersection of 6th and Walnut, with 30 spaces.
- Speedwash Laundry, on East Walnut Street, with 25 spaces.
- Local churches, including St. Peter's and St. Luke's, which generally own between 25 and 35 parking spaces. As these church-owned lots are mainly used on Sundays, they offer additional capacity that could be utilized by commuters and shoppers during the rest of the week.



Public parking lots in downtown North Wales are often underutilized on weekdays.

The parking facilities listed above are all free lots, as there is no paid parking in North Wales. The Temple study found that while there is a perception that the borough suffers from a lack of parking, existing lots are rarely filled to capacity on weekends or weekdays. To address this, the study recommends uniform signage to direct drivers to these lots. Clear designations of employee parking versus customer parking should also be provided.

North Wales has no public parking lots, though on-street parking is available on Main and Walnut streets downtown. The report recommends creating shared parking in the private parking lots, allowing some of these spaces to be public spaces, and possibly adding two-hour parking meters for customer parking that could generate revenue for the borough. The on-street parking downtown consists of about 105 free spaces on Main Street from Walnut to Prospect streets, most with a two-hour limit. On-street parking is not allowed on the segment of Walnut Street that extends from Beaver Street to Pennsylvania Avenue.

To prevent SEPTA rail commuters from utilizing resident parking, North Wales residents living within a two-block radius of Walnut Street generally have one-side permit parking. More than two blocks off Walnut Street, free parking spaces that do not require a permit are available on



Residential properties surround the SEPTA parking lot at the North Wales rail station.

both sides of the street. Many homes in the borough do not have driveways or garages, making on-street parking all the more important. The Temple study recommends eliminating the on-street parking spaces on the north side of Main Street to allow for a bike lane. The Borough does enforce parking regulations and issues violations for improper parking in permit parking areas or in the SEPTA lot, for example.

In terms of pedestrian improvements, the Temple study found that many of the students at North Wales Elementary School walk to school, and the Montgomery County Association of the Blind's offices are also in the borough at School and Main streets. This TOD study also notes that many social service organizations and group homes are in the borough, presumably many of the users of these services and group home residents are transit-dependent or would benefit from having the choice to walk to destinations. Pedestrian improvements recommended by the Temple students include: streetscaping (benches, trash receptacles, hanging flowers or flower pots); painting white lines around the brick crosswalks to improve visibility of the crosswalks to drivers; extending Main Street-type streetscape improvements along School Street and Walnut Street to the train station; improving the sidewalk along the west side of Walnut Street (currently had broken and uneven pavement); adding crosswalks along Walnut at 2nd, 4th, and 5th streets; and providing better lighting overall along Walnut Street. The study also examined trails, parks, and recreation centers. The plan also recommended that the borough purchase the Wish's Water Ice stand at the corner of Second and Montgomery for use as an information stand and rest stop for bicyclists and trail users, with public restrooms included.



An office building on Main Street in downtown North Wales.

Access

Regional Rail Level of Service and Ridership

North Wales is the last Zone 4 stop along SEPTA's Regional Rail R5 line to Doylestown; Zone 5 begins at the Pennbrook station. The North Wales station building is an old brick structure on the inbound side of the rail line. A simple shelter, similar to what one might see at a bus stop, is located at the outbound platform. Until recently, a portion of the station was occupied by a barbecue restaurant called The Hickory Pit. Although the station building is in fair condition, some moderate renovations could make it more attractive to waiting SEPTA passengers and potential commercial tenants. North Wales is considering leasing the



The North Wales rail station and inbound platform.

station building from SEPTA, perhaps in exchange for maintaining the building and sub-leasing it to a tenant.

In the spring of 2007, SEPTA plans to begin work on a number of improvement projects at the North Wales station. These include the installation of new high-level platforms and ramps that will make the station fully accessible to passengers in wheelchairs. The station building may also be replaced.

The existing North Wales station has ticket machines and a ticket office that is open on weekdays. Other amenities include a waiting room, one bike rack, and restrooms.

On weekdays, 38 trains run inbound to Philadelphia and 37 run outbound. This translates to about one train in each direction every 30 minutes. During peak service hours, trains run every 10 to 15 minutes. Weekend service is approximately hourly with 17 to 19 trains running in each direction per day. Ridership in 2005 averaged 710 boardings and 701 alightings per weekday.

Bus Lines

SEPTA bus route 96 connects North Wales to Norristown – the Montgomery County seat – as well as to the Norristown Transportation Center, where passengers may transfer to SEPTA’s R6 Regional Rail and Route 100 light rail lines. Route 96 also travels north to the Montgomery Mall, Lansdale, Hatfield, Souderton, and Telford. Within North Wales, the bus provides service to both the train station and the downtown area, including Main Street and Walnut Street.

Parking

At the North Wales station, SEPTA owns, leases, and manages a total of 393 parking spaces, including 167 daily fee spaces and 226 permit fee spaces. On weekdays, the daily spaces are generally 100 percent occupied while the permit spaces have an occupancy rate of about 96 percent. SEPTA would like to expand the station’s parking facilities; however, the Borough of North Wales does not share its interest. In particular, municipal officials are concerned that the creation of additional parking facilities will increase traffic congestion on local roads and have negative environmental impacts on the surrounding community. Thus, at the current time, no parking expansions or improvements are planned.

Although parking spaces are often available at the nearby Pennbrook and Lansdale train stations (also located on



SEPTA parking lot at the North Wales rail station.



On-street parking near the rail line in North Wales.

SEPTA's R5 Regional Rail line), both are situated in Zone 5, which makes them a more expensive option for commuters traveling to and from Center City Philadelphia. As a means of accommodating the North Wales station's ample commuter traffic, the Temple University study recommends that SEPTA lease spaces from downtown merchants located a few blocks away. These could include McKeever's Bar (daytime spaces available as the business operates mostly in the evening), North Wales News and Pharmacy, as well as Merck-owned land along Beaver Street. North Wales News is now a hair and nail salon with apartment living above, so these parking spaces are well used. However, the feasibility of this proposal remains uncertain.

For further information about the availability of public, private, and on-street parking in the study area, see the "Special Studies" section of this chapter.

Sidewalks, Trails, Bike Lanes, Accessibility

Sidewalks are located on most streets in the borough and some have tree lawns or grass buffers that separate pedestrians and vehicles. Overall, however, pedestrian crosswalks are not well demarcated. There are critical gaps in the sidewalk infrastructure directly north of the station on Beaver and Walnut streets, as well as south of the station on Walnut and School streets. The sidewalks on Walnut Street leading to Main Street are substandard, with some cracked pavement and missing curbs. While much work has been done to improve the Main Street streetscape, improving Walnut Street should also be a priority. Walnut Street presents a particular challenge as it is very narrow, buildings come up to the street line, and there is not much room to expand sidewalks.

The pedestrian connection to Upper Gwynedd Township directly west of the station has been improved in the last few years, as the new Merck facility has built sidewalks that help to connect its property to the station area. The aerial used in **Map 4: North Wales Existing Uses** is from 2000 and, though outdated, illustrates nicely how the area west of the station has changed.

According to the *North Wales Parks and Trails Pedestrian Map*, prepared by the Montgomery County Youth Council and Partnership TMA, the county-wide Liberty Bell Trail is planned to traverse the borough. The on-street route would extend along Walnut Street, Beaver Street, Montgomery Avenue, Main Street, and part of Seventh Street to connect downtown to Walnut Street Park and the train station.



Warehouse property on Walnut Street in downtown North Wales.



Mature trees add distinction to North Wales' residential areas and green spaces.

Another proposed trail would further connect these areas to Wee Whalers Park, Swartley and Montgomery Avenue Park, Weingartner Park, Hess Park, A Child's Garden, the Ninth Street Park, and small green spaces at Montgomery Avenue and Church Street, and at Second and Prospect streets. This proposed trail would run along Eight Street, Fourth Street, Second Street, Pennsylvania Avenue, Center Street, Montgomery Avenue, Church Street, Summit Street, Prospect Avenue, and Highland Avenue. This combined trail would connect all of North Wales' parks and green spaces.

Currently there are no on-street bike lanes in North Wales, although the Temple study recommends the addition of a bike lane on Main Street. According to the Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia's regional bicycle map, Main Street, Walnut Street/North Wales Road, and Beaver Street are all average for bicycling conditions. As Main Street continues east and west and becomes Sumneytown Pike, it is rated below average. These cycling-condition ratings are determined using a combination of traffic volumes, roadway geometry, and field observations.

As noted above, the North Wales train station is not currently wheelchair accessible. The closest SEPTA rail station that is fully accessible is Pennbrook, which is located one stop north on the R5 Regional Rail line.

Street Network

Overall, the borough's street network was laid out in a grid pattern, with short frequent blocks, narrow roads, and east-west streets numbered. Northeast of Beaver Street there are few streets, as this land has mostly been developed as an office park. As the rail line bisects the town, there can be difficulty going from east to west over the rail line, or with certain streets dead-ending at the rail line, including School Street and 5th Street. The main entrance for the Merck facility, a major employer in the area, is on Sumneytown Pike, over a quarter mile away from the station.

The City of Philadelphia is approximately 25 miles southeast with easy access by way of the Pennsylvania Turnpike, Schuylkill Expressway, Interstate 476, and routes 202 and 309. The area is well served by existing roadways.

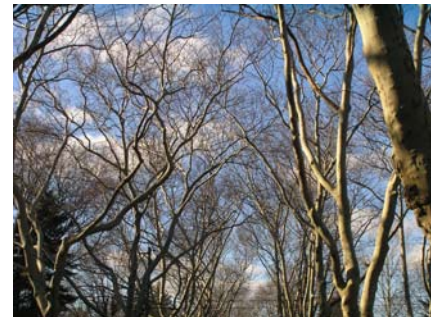
Roadways

Traffic Volumes

DVRPC counts traffic on major roadways throughout the nine-county region. "Annual Average Daily Traffic"



At present, the North Wales station and platform are not fully accessible to individuals in wheelchairs. Construction of planned accessibility improvements is scheduled to begin in 2007.



Older trees line many of North Wales' residential streets.

(AADT) represents an estimate of all traffic counted for a 24-hour period at the location indicated. The year and segments of the roadway counted may differ.

Figure 3: Traffic Counts for North Wales Study Area

Road Name	From	To	Date	Direction	AADT
Walnut Street	3 rd Street	8 th Street	2000	Total	9,061
Main Street	Walnut Street	Summit Street	2000	Total	13,010

Source: DVRPC, 2005.

Pending Transit Agency or DOT Improvements

Two projects included in DVRPC’s FY2005 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) may help to improve access to the station from the south. Note: Walnut Street is the name assigned to the section of North Wales Road that lies within the municipal boundaries of North Wales Borough.

- *Intersection Improvement at Morris Road and North Wales Road.* This project involves aligning the intersection of North Wales Road with Morris Road, installing a traffic signal, and providing left-turn lanes on all intersection approaches. This intersection straddles the border of Worcester Township, Whitpain Township, and Upper Gwynedd Township. This project anticipates construction funds in Fiscal Year 2006 of \$1.15 million.
- *Bridge Replacement over SEPTA’s R5 Regional Rail Line at Pennsylvania Avenue.* The existing bridge was originally two lanes, but was reduced to one lane due to deteriorated sidewalks. Part of the roadway has been separated with “jersey barriers” and is currently serving as the sidewalk. The new bridge will have two lanes and a sidewalk on one side. This project anticipates construction funds of \$207 million in Fiscal Year 2005.



A law office occupies a converted house near the rail line in North Wales.



Vacant and underutilized properties near the rail line could be redeveloped into more transit-supportive uses.

Recommendations

Market/Land Uses:

1. **Encourage a wider mix of retail uses downtown,** to include more restaurants and shopping goods.
2. **Develop a marketable image for the downtown shopping district.**

3. **Redevelop underutilized or vacant industrial/warehouse properties** in the borough into transit-supportive uses, such as housing, retail, or office. Given the growth in the surrounding areas and the location of Merck nearby, new housing or loft development may be very marketable. Such parcels might include the container site and the old lumberyard.

4. **Encourage a transit friendly business to move in to the train station** in the space previously occupied by The Hickory Pit barbeque restaurant. Such uses could include a coffee shop, café or restaurant, bank, or florist. Such rail station establishments cannot rely on commuters alone, however, and must find ways to attract customers in the non-rush hour time periods, such as through serving lunch or offering evening entertainment (in the case of a café or restaurant). Any new business must work out a business plan that would work with the uniqueness of the station setting. For example, since the station's parking is heavily utilized by commuters during the day, most of the daytime customers must come from walk-ups, though parking would be available in the evenings. Another example is that since most commuters have a very short window to wait at the station, businesses that encourage browsing or lengthier visits, such as bookstores and gift shops, may not be the most viable option.

5. **Consider establishing a station concierge service**, similar to the Maplewood Concierge Company at New Jersey Transit's Maplewood Station. The Maplewood Concierge Company is an independent service corporation organized by Maplewood businesses under the auspices of the Maplewood Chamber of Commerce. A concierge attendant booth at the train station takes orders each morning from commuters for services such as dry cleaning, drug store pickups, take-out food, florists, shipping and mailing needs, film developing, and video rental. In the evening, these same commuters pick up their completed requests from the booth. The concierge only uses local businesses, boosting area sales and strengthening downtown businesses. Professional and trade services also advertise at the concierge service. Maplewood also offers some municipal services at their train station through the



The Hickory Pit, a barbeque restaurant, once occupied the North Wales station building.



The Maplewood Concierge Company is housed at the New Jersey Transit station in Maplewood, New Jersey. Photo courtesy of New Jersey Transit.

conciierge, including parking permits, pool badges, and dog licenses.

Access:

1. **Upgrade and enhance the safety of the station area.** The passenger shelter on the outbound side of the rail line is similar to what one might find at a bus stop, and is walled with black glass. Only one covered bench is available for passengers.

Recommended improvements include upgrading or replacing the shelter on the outgoing side of the rail line, and enhancing the overall look of the station area through the installation of public art, display maps of downtown North Wales, and/or other place-making tools.



Improving sidewalks along Walnut Street would help improve the environment for pedestrians in downtown North Wales.

2. **Construct and improve sidewalks** along Walnut Street and Beaver Street in order to enhance the pedestrian linkage between the station area and Main Street.
3. **Create a safe, attractive pedestrian path** that links the Merck complex to the train station.
4. **Redesign Wawa Triangle** to provide for safer movement for vehicles, pedestrians and bicyclists through the area, and to discourage traffic from using the Wawa parking lot as a cut-through. A traffic signal is currently planned for the intersection of Beaver and East Walnut streets, which is located in Upper Gwynedd Township. North Wales Borough has received a TCDI grant from DVRPC to study what other improvements are needed in the the Wawa Triangle area.
5. **Advertise/market the available shared parking lots downtown to customers.**
6. **Extend Merck shuttle service to the train station to serve employees.** Merck currently runs a shuttle service between its facilities in Upper and Lower Gwynedd townships, but it is unclear if this also serves the train station. Merck does encourage employees to carpool.



A bank with drive-through facilities on Main Street.

Regulatory:

1. **Amend (as necessary) and apply the TOD Transit-Oriented District Overlay** that Upper

Gwynedd created for the Pennbrook station area to the portion of the township that is close to the North Wales station.

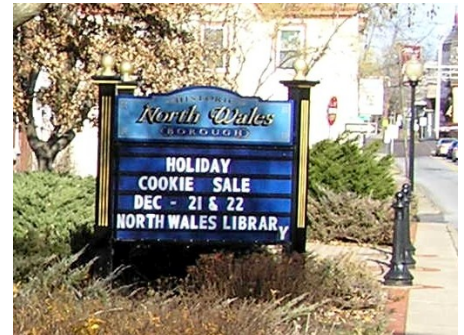
2. **Remove auto-oriented uses** (like auto body shops and drive-through businesses) from the CR Commercial-Retail District Zoning district in North Wales.

Physical:

1. **Extend the streetscape improvements** (lights, street trees) made along Main Street to include the blocks of Walnut Street that connect the station area to North Wales' commercial district.
2. **Rehabilitate and/or preserve historic structures** in downtown North Wales. Connect property owners with technical assistance resources, and consider offering grants for maintenance and façade improvements. Implement stronger demolition controls in order to limit teardowns.

Programmatic:

1. **Create a dedicated source of state-level funding** to support TOD initiatives across Pennsylvania. By providing grants and/or loans to communities, [a program of this sort](#) could help revitalize older areas and encourage the development of new, transit-supportive uses.
2. **Improve and expand the information available at the train station** for those entering the borough by rail. Maps, brochures, signage and marketing materials could all help to enhance the experience and local knowledge of visitors.
3. **Host festivals, farmers markets, concerts and other public events** in the station area, station parking lot, and downtown North Wales. The Borough has held events such as these in the past, including a flea market and movie nights, with varying levels of attendance. Other ideas include using the lot for recycling drop offs, paper shredding events, or other public services. These and other activities will help to elevate North Wales' profile throughout the region and bring additional visitors to the area.



An announcement board for local community events in downtown North Wales.



Single-family residences in North Wales.

Conclusion

Surrounded by dense, historic housing stock and adjacent to a pedestrian-friendly commercial district, the North Wales station benefits from its location among a range of transit-supportive land uses. In addition, large tracts of underutilized property in nearby Upper Gwynedd Township offer opportunities for new, mixed-use development that is oriented toward transit. By implementing the revitalization recommendations included in this study, North Wales Borough and Upper Gwynedd Township will help stimulate new investment in this area, and begin to realize North Penn's potential as a vibrant and successful TOD network along SEPTA's R5 Regional Rail line.

Warminster: Repositioning an Industrial Suburb

Snapshot

The Warminster train station is located at the northern terminus of SEPTA's R2 Regional Rail line in lower Bucks County. Surface parking, light industrial properties, small strip mall shopping establishments, vacant land, and single-family detached homes comprise much of the study area. Limited sidewalks make the station difficult to access by foot. See **Map 7: Warminster Existing Uses**.

Currently, none of the land uses that immediately surround the Warminster station could be classified as "transit-oriented." Few, if any, are transit-supportive, and none appear to have capitalized in any way on their proximity to passenger rail. Passengers wishing to cross the rail line by foot must walk more than a quarter-mile north to Street Road, which is a busy arterial roadway with fast-moving traffic and only limited sidewalks. Jacksonville Road, which links Street Road to the Warminster station, is lined with industrial properties and big-box retail uses, with limited retail uses. The land uses here are truly transit-adjacent, not transit-oriented.

Study Area

The study area is comprised of a quarter-mile radius surrounding the Warminster SEPTA R2 Regional Rail Station in Warminster Township, Bucks County, Pennsylvania. The study area extends from Madison Avenue to the west, State Route 332/Jacksonville Road to the east, Street Road to the north, and Van Horn Drive to the south.

Transit

The Warminster train station is located at the intersection of Station Drive and Jacksonville Road, in an auto-oriented area of industrial parks, offices, and strip commercial land uses. Street Road just to the north is a major east-west arterial. The station is the terminus of SEPTA's R2 Regional Rail line, and is close to several bus lines.

History

Warminster Township was officially established in 1711, although the name appears in records as far back as 1685. It was



A single-family residence in Warminster.



Warminster SEPTA station.

Map 7

Map 7 Legend

named after a Warminster in West Wiltshire, England. The area of Warminster was originally part of a land purchase William Penn made from the Turtle Tribe of the Lenni Lenape Native American Nation in 1683. For over 200 years following its founding, Warminster served a primarily agricultural purpose. Many private, religiously affiliated schools thrived in Warminster. Log College, founded by Reverend William Tennent, was attended by the eventual founders of Princeton University. Warminster is also associated with the Revolutionary War. The Battle of Crooked Billet ended in Warminster and General Washington's army passed through in 1777.



Several office parks and industrial facilities surround the Warminster rail station.

In 1878, the railroad arrived in neighboring Southampton, and Warminster experienced significant growth. Accessibility to Philadelphia allowed industry to flourish. After World War II, Bucks County became one of the fastest growing areas in Pennsylvania. Warminster continues to thrive because of its proximity to major metropolitan areas and accessibility to regional highway and transit systems.

SEPTA passenger service from Warminster to Philadelphia began in 1974 as an extension of the existing Hatboro line. The track continues beyond Warminster as the single-track New Hope and Ivyland line. The New Hope-Ivyland Railroad functions mainly as a tourist train, though occasionally it provides freight service to some customers along the line in Warminster.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT Analysis)

Strengths

- Strong residential growth in Bucks County overall. The county's population grew by 10 percent between 1990 and 2000, making it the third fastest growing county in the DVRPC region, after Chester and Gloucester counties, in that time period. Bucks County's population is forecasted to grow by 27 percent by 2030.
- The ongoing redevelopment of the nearby Warminster Naval Air Warfare Center (now the North American Technology Center) is adding tax ratables to the township, attracting residents (Ann's Choice community), and adding to the overall economic health of the area.



Large building setbacks and parking lots dominate many of the properties located near the rail line.

Weaknesses

- The station building is in need of some updating and repairs.
- Poor site planning in the overall area, with too many large front setbacks and surface parking lots.

- The presence of several industrial and big-box retail uses detracts from the streetscape.

Opportunities

- Vacant and underutilized industrial properties along Jacksonville Road could be cleaned up and redeveloped.

Threats

- Jacksonville Road does not have sidewalks on the west side of the street, and is lined with uses that are not transit-friendly, including big-box retail stores, strip shopping centers, and light industrial facilities.
- The rail line crossing nearest to the station is at Street Road/PA 132, a busy commercial arterial more than a quarter-mile to the north.
- Warehouses occupy several properties to the west of the rail line – a use that is not typically associated with supporting TOD.



Big-box retail stores and auto-oriented businesses at the intersection of Jacksonville and Street roads.

Demographics

The study area is comprised of small portions of two census tracts: 1016.05 and 1016.03. These tracts contain considerably more land area, housing units, and residents than the study area alone. However, the following demographic assessment, which includes data drawn from the full area of both tracts, should reasonably reflect the station’s immediate surrounding community and current ridership.

Population and Race

The total combined population of tracts 1016.05 and 1016.03 is 7,271. In comparison to the whole of Bucks County, these tracts have a less diverse racial profile. Within the selected tracts, 78 percent of the population is White, 8 percent are Black, Asians comprise 3 percent of the population, and residents who identify themselves as “some other race alone” make up 8 percent. Bucks County, in comparison, is 65 percent White, 13 percent Black, and 4 percent Asian, with another 13 percent defining them as “some other race alone.” Within the studied tracts, 3 percent identify themselves as a combination of “two or more races.” The countywide figure is 2 percent.

Overall, Warminster Township lost population between 1980 and 2000, as many other older, built-out communities in the Delaware Valley region did as well. Warminster’s population was 35,540 in 1980; 32,832 in 1990; and 31,383 in 2000, representing a loss of almost 12 percent over two decades. One group that experienced significant population decline was young adults aged 25 to 34, which fell from 17 percent of Warminster’s population in 1990 to 13 percent in 2000.



Like several other older, developed communities in the Delaware Valley, Warminster has experienced population loss in recent decades.

The average age increased from 21.3 in 1970 to 37.9 in 2000, indicating an aging population.

Housing Characteristics

In 2000, the studied tracts had a combined total of 2,871 housing units, 6 percent of which were vacant. This figure is double Bucks County's overall vacancy rate of 3 percent. Of Warminster's total occupied housing units, owner-residents inhabited 43 percent. This figure was significantly lower than the countywide owner-occupancy rate of 77 percent.

Although Warminster has experienced population loss in recent decades, its total number of housing units has grown. This anomaly may be explained by a decrease in the township's average household size, which is part of a larger national trend. Between 1980 and 2000, Warminster's total number of housing units increased by approximately 9 percent even as its total population fell by nearly 12 percent. Most of these new homes were single-family detached units, although some apartment complexes and townhome developments were also completed during this time.

Median Household Income

The median household incomes for the two studied census tracts are quite different. In 2000, tract 1016.03 had a median household income of \$51,938. This figure is 63 percent higher than the household median of \$32,286 that was calculated for tract 1016.05. Nonetheless, the median household incomes of both studied tracts remained lower than Warminster Township's overall median (\$54,375), and also Bucks County's (\$59,727).

Travel Mode

In the studied tracts, automobiles (cars, trucks and vans) were the primary mode of travel to work for almost 92 percent of residents. This figure includes 73 percent who drove alone and 18 percent who carpooled. Only 3 percent of residents utilized some form of public transportation (2 percent traveled by rail; 1 percent rode a bus). Another 3 percent walked, 1 percent bicycled, and 2 percent worked from home. These numbers generally mirror the overall figures for Bucks County, with the exception of the percent of residents who carpool, which is more than twice as high in the study area than in the county.

Land Use

The predominant land use in the immediate station area is light industrial, followed by residential single-family detached, then vacant land. See **Map 8: Warminster Land Uses**. The station is located off of Jacksonville Road/State Route 332, and is surrounded on the east side by a large, SEPTA-owned parking



Multifamily housing in Warminster Township.



More than 90 percent of the residents of the study area utilize automobiles as their primary mode of travel to work.

lot. The station is not accessible from the west side of the rail line.

On the east side of the station, south of the SEPTA parking lot, is a large tract of fenced-off vacant land behind the Drager Medical Building. The closest shopping near the station is on Jacksonville Road, within walking distance, and consists of a small older strip mall with parking in front. This mini-mall contains a Dunkin Donuts, a pizzeria, a car wash, a dry cleaner, a barbershop, and a check-cashing establishment. Next to the strip mall is an auto body shop. Many more strip-shopping establishments are located along Street Road to the north, though most are not within comfortable walking distance. Also on Jacksonville Road in the station area are several light industrial and office buildings, such as GE Storage, Cardinal Financial, Transcontinental, Datavision-Prologix, and Genesis Asset Protection. At the southeast corner of Jacksonville and Street roads are a Wal-Mart and a Sunoco station. Also on the east side of the station, in Warminster Heights, is a small residential community comprised of a few short blocks of twins and quads. Most of these homes are modest, and parking is located in rear alleys and in end-of-block spaces. There are few sidewalks in this area.

On the west side of the station along Park Avenue is the PECO Warminster Service Center, with a large, private, employee parking lot. A PECO utility field is located next to the service center, and south of this is the W. Atlee Burpee Company, a seed manufacturing facility and garden store. To the north and west of this light industrial area is a neighborhood of older single-family detached homes known as the Speedway neighborhood. Most of these streets have no sidewalks or street lighting, and while physically close to the station, lack a connection over the rail line to access the station. Madison Avenue, which runs through this neighborhood, has several bars and restaurants.

Across the street from the Wal-Mart, at the northeast corner of Street and Jacksonville roads, is the former home of the Warminster Naval Air Warfare Center. In the 1940s, it was home to Brewster Aviation, which designed and manufactured military aircraft during World War II.

After the war, the base was taken over by the Navy and became the Naval Air Warfare Center. In the 1950s, the base served as a training center for astronauts in the Mercury and Gemini space programs. The base later served as a development center for aircraft safety systems, navigation and antisubmarine warfare. Laboratory space at the facility eventually totaled more than a



An older strip mall on Jacksonville Road, just south of the Warminster rail station.



The W. Atlee Burpee Company, a major seed manufacturer, is located near the station on Park Avenue.

Map 8

million square feet, including what was in 1952 the world's largest human centrifuge. The base was Warminster's largest employer. The center was closed in 1996 under the federal base relocation and closure process, and has been redeveloped into a variety of uses, including a modern 850,000-square-foot business and industrial park; the 250-acre Warminster Community Park; and Ann's Choice Retirement Community, a 2,500-unit senior living complex. Ann's Choice opened in August 2003 on a 103-acre "campus," which features two clubhouses, a performing arts center, a spa, and three restaurants. The community offers maintenance-free apartments for adults 62 and over. It is being built in phases, and at final build-out will have 2,500 units. Ann's Choice runs shuttles to supermarkets and shopping malls four to five times per day, and uses a taxi service to the train station.



Ann's Choice Retirement Community occupies a portion of the former Warminster Naval Air Warfare Center site.

Retail Mix

Street Road, to the north of the station, functions as the area's major commercial arterial. In addition to the Wal-Mart, this street is lined with older strip malls, surface parking lots, and office/industrial parks.

Density

Warminster Township has a population density of 3,074 persons per square mile, a gross housing density of 1.7 units per acre, and a net housing density of 3.3 units per residential acre. Although not a densely developed community, Warminster Township is built up in a more concentrated manner than most of Bucks County, where the average net housing density is just 2.1 units per residential acre. This could be due to Warminster's older housing stock.

Planning Environment

Comprehensive Plan

The Bucks County Planning Commission has recently updated Warminster's comprehensive plan. As part of the background research for the new plan, residents were surveyed and asked to identify the top issues facing the township. The most common responses were the image of the township, traffic congestion, and stormwater management. Given that vacant land comprises only 5 percent of Warminster's total area, encouraging infill development that complements the existing fabric of the township is a focus of the new plan.

The comprehensive plan recommends better landscaping at the Wal-Mart, and developing ideas for its eventual reuse if economic conditions change. The township would like to limit the size of big box retailers in the future, and not to expand retail zoning into other areas of the township. The plan recommends



Warminster's comprehensive plan recommends curtailing the amount of big box retail in the township, and supports the construction of more mixed-use and pedestrian-friendly development.

constructing offices in a more mixed-use, human scale design so single-use areas are not vacant at night and on weekends. The plan encourages renovation of older shopping centers and the redesign of surface parking lots.

Economic development is also an issue, as the township lost 3,000 local jobs with the closing of the Naval Air Warfare Center.

Zoning

The Warminster train station is located in an I Industrial zone. The remainder of the study area is comprised of INST Institutional, R3 Residence, C Commercial, MF-2 Multifamily, and SC Shopping Center districts. Small pockets of P Professional and O Office zoning are also located near the station. Warminster Township's zoning map was last revised in May 2002, but is currently being reviewed to further the new comprehensive plan's goals. See **Map 9: Warminster Zoning**.



Industrial properties occupy much of the land along the rail line and Jacksonville Road.



Located to the southeast of the rail station, Warminster Heights is a small residential community for low- and moderate-income families.

- I Industrial district. Permits industrial and manufacturing facilities, construction-related businesses, laboratories, rail and bus stations, parking lots and auto-oriented enterprises, offices, and other commercial uses. Lots within this zoning district must be at least one acre in size. Principal and accessory buildings, and outside storage of materials and products, may not occupy more than 50 percent of a lot's total area.
- INST Institutional district. Allows a range of educational, religious, medical and recreational uses. The minimum lot size for all uses is 40,000 square feet, and buildings may not occupy more than 20 percent of the total area of any lot.
- MF-2 Low and Moderate Income Multifamily district. Permits low- and moderate-income housing, including single-family homes, duplexes, apartments, townhouses, and other forms of housing that are eligible for rental subsidies from the U.S. Department of Housing and Development. Some institutional and recreational uses are also permitted within this district. Any parcel of land to be developed for multifamily housing within an MF-2 zone must contain at least 100 acres. The minimum lot size for single-family dwellings located within such a parcel is 6,000 square feet. Single-family semi-detached units must have an individual lot area

Map 9



A single-family home west of the rail line in Warminster Township.



A strip shopping center on Street Road.

of no less than 5,000 square feet. No more than 20 percent of the area of any residential lot may be occupied by buildings.

- R3 Residence district. Permits single-family detached and semidetached dwelling units, public recreational facilities, and some agricultural uses. The minimum lot size for single-family detached dwellings is 9,000 square feet. Two-family dwelling units must have a combined lot area of no less than 13,000 square feet. Buildings may occupy no more than 25 percent of the area of any residential lot.
- C Commercial district. Allows a wide range of commercial, institutional, recreational, entertainment and professional uses. The minimum lot size for all uses is 10,000 square feet, and buildings may not occupy more than 25 percent of the total area of any lot.
- SC Shopping Center district. Permits a variety of commercial, institutional, recreational, entertainment and professional uses. New development must be constructed in accordance with an overall plan, and designed as a single architectural unit with appropriate landscaping. Buildings must be arranged in a group or groups, and may not occupy more than 20 percent of a lot's total area.
- P Professional district. Allows single-family detached homes, and offices for administrative, executive and professional uses that do not involve the storage, exchange or delivery of merchandise on their premises. A minimum lot area of 10,000 square feet must be provided for each principal use, and buildings may not occupy more than 25 percent of the area of any lot.
- O Office district. Permits a variety of institutional, municipal and professional uses. The minimum lot size within this zoning district is 20,000 square feet, no more than 25 percent of which may be occupied by buildings.

Warminster Township's zoning ordinance does not permit accessory apartments or other flexible housing arrangements. As the population ages, this will present a challenge to those

wanting to care for older relatives in their homes. The township recently changed the zoning ordinance to allow the retirement community of Ann's Choice (CCRC – Continuing Care Retirement Community), however, no zoning is in place allowing age-restricted over-55 communities, a growing need.

Special Studies

DVRPC's long-range plan, *Destination 2030*, designates Warminster/Hatboro as a revitalizing center. Revitalizing centers are compactly developed, mixed-use communities that have served as focal points for employment, services, or cultural activities, but now require concerted action to renew and stabilize neighborhoods and reverse the trend of declining population and/or jobs. Strategies for revitalizing centers include concentrating new development within existing or emerging centers and along transportation corridors, such as the regional rail line. Providing new housing in Warminster would decrease the need for development in nearby rural areas.



Vacant properties along the rail line offer opportunities for infill development.

Access

Regional Rail Level of Service and Ridership

Warminster is served by SEPTA's R2 Regional Rail line. The station is a brick building, with a ticket office that is open Monday through Friday from 5:30 a.m. until 11:50 a.m. There are no ticket machines. There is a waiting room – though it is older and in need of some renovation – restrooms, and one bike rack. The station is wheelchair accessible and compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The parking lot could use landscaping or a redesign to offer a better pedestrian environment. Possible track and signal construction work by SEPTA, which is currently the early stages of planning, may include additional improvements to the station area.

Warminster station is located in Zone 4, thus peak fare to Center City Philadelphia is \$5.00, and off-peak is \$4.25.

A total of 42 trains stop at the Warminster station per weekday, and 17 per weekend day. Trains depart Warminster approximately every half hour during the weekday morning peak period, and hourly during nonpeak weekday service. Trains arrive in Warminster approximately every half hour during the evening peak period, and hourly during nonpeak weekday service. Train service is hourly on weekends.

Ridership in 2005 was 874 boardings and 969 alightings per day.

Bus Lines

SEPTA bus route 22 and the Warminster RUSH serve the Warminster station. From Warminster, the 22 bus travels



Platform of the Warminster rail station.

through Bucks and Montgomery counties via Easton and York roads. The route terminates at the Olney Transportation Center in Philadelphia, where travelers can catch the Broad Street Subway into Center City.

The Warminster RUSH is a successful, peak-hour shuttle service that links area businesses to the Warminster train station and SEPTA bus route 22. The Bucks County Transportation Management Association (BCTMA) operates it. Its route includes several stops along Jacksonville and Almshouse roads, which serve residents and workers in Warminster Township, Northampton Township, Ivyland Borough, Richboro, and Upper Southampton Township. At Davisville Center, the Warminster RUSH also connects with certain Street Road RUSH shuttles. The Warminster RUSH operates Monday through Friday from approximately 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m., and from 2:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Parking

SEPTA owns and manages the station lot, which includes 548 daily fee spaces and 125 daily free spaces, for a total of 673 spaces. On weekdays, the lot is at 100 percent capacity.

There are a number of large surface parking lots in or near the station area, associated with many of the office and light industrial uses. Many of these appear to be underutilized, even during the day. There may be an opportunity here for SEPTA to operate some remote shared parking, or for future TOD uses to share parking with these lots. However, no parking expansions or improvements are currently planned.

Sidewalks, Trails, Bike Lanes

The station area does have some sidewalks, along Station Drive, portions of Jacksonville Road, and Madison Avenue. The overall suburban design of the area, however, with large setbacks, higher-speed roads, parking fronting the street, and the land use mix of light industrial, office, and strip commercial, does not favor pedestrian activity.

There are no bike lanes or bike trails in the station area. DVRPC's *Southeastern Pennsylvania Bicycle and Pedestrian Mobility Plan* (1995) designates Street, York, and Jacksonville roads as bicycle facilities within the right-of-way. According to the Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia's regional bicycle map, Jacksonville Road (from Street Road south to York Road), Maple Avenue and Madison Avenue are average for bicycling conditions. This means the roads are moderately suitable for on-road cycling. Cyclists of lesser skill and experience riding in traffic may find conditions unfavorable. Street Road and Jacksonville Road (north of Street Road) are below average for



The SEPTA parking lot at the Warminster rail station.



No bike lanes or bike trails exist in the station area, and the presence of sidewalks is inconsistent.

bicycling. These roads are least suitable for on-road cycling. While riding on these roads may not be pleasant, they may be the best direct route between two points. These cycling-condition ratings are determined using a combination of traffic volumes, roadway geometry and field observations.

The station is only accessible (by any means) from the east side, so the residences located within walking distance on the west side in the Speedway neighborhood must walk north to Street Road and over to Jacksonville Road to get to the station – a significant detour. Most of the residential streets west of the station have no sidewalks, forcing residents to walk in the street. Park Avenue also does not have any sidewalks. While it is physically possible to access the station on foot, it is unsafe and doubtful that anyone would attempt it willingly or regularly. It is possible that employees of the local businesses on Jacksonville Road might commute to the station and walk to their places of employment, or connect to buses on Jacksonville Road.

Street Network

There are relatively few streets in the station area and Street Road/PA 132 is the only one that crosses the rail line. Street Road is the area's main commercial thoroughfare and Jacksonville Road and Park Avenue serve as the primary access roads for the industrial and warehouse properties that comprise much of this section of Warminster. Blocks are only short and frequent in the small residential neighborhoods located to the southeast and west of the station.

Roadways

Major arterials include Jacksonville Road/PA 332 – a two-lane, north-south road with some center turn lanes – and Street Road/PA 132, with five lanes (two running east, two running west, with a center turn lane). Park Avenue is a two-lane road running north-south along the west side of the rail line. Madison Avenue is a two-lane local street running north-south. Station Drive is an unstriped two-lane road whose sole purpose is to access the station and its parking lot.

Traffic Volumes

DVRPC counts traffic on major roadways throughout the nine-county region. “Annual Average Daily Traffic” (AADT) represents an estimate of all traffic counted for a 24-hour period at the location indicated. The year and segments of the roadway counted may differ.



View of the rail line from the Warminster station platform.



Jacksonville Road near the entrance to the SEPTA parking lot at the Warminster rail station.

Figure 4: Traffic Counts for Warminster Study Area

Road Name	From	To	Date	Direction	AADT
Jacksonville Road /Route 332	Van Horn Drive	Steam Boat Drive	2000	Total	17,497
Jacksonville Road /Route 332	Van Horn Drive	Steam Boat Drive	2003	Total	15,200
County Line Road	Blair Mill Road	York Road	1999	Total	37,153
Street Road/Route 132	St. Mary Street	Madison Avenue	2000	Total	31,684
Street Road/Route 132	St. Mary Street	Madison Avenue	2003	Total	33,437

Source: DVRPC, 2005.

Pending Transit Agency or DOT Improvements

DVRPC's Fiscal Year 2005 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for Pennsylvania includes the following projects:

- *ADA Accessibility Program (MPMS# 60271)*. This project will provide support for ongoing efforts to improve system access at selected SEPTA rail stations, including Warminster. Between 2005 and 2008, the effort will receive a total of \$20 million in funding. SEPTA's Advisory Committee (SAC), which is an independent, citizen-run group comprised of consumers who are disabled and disability advocates, is actively engaged in the station selection process.
- *York Road Center Turn Lanes (MPMS# 12782)*. In Fiscal Year 2005, \$2.85 million was allocated to provide center left-turn lane areas and/or median barriers along two sections of Old York Road. One of these sections, which stretches from County Line Road to Henry Avenue, is located west of the rail line and just outside the study area for this report. Old York Road is a heavily traveled street that runs through the center of the township.
- *County Line Road Signals (MPMS# 57640)*. Between Fiscal Years 2005, 2006 and 2007, a total of \$2.7 million in funding will be allocated to implement a closed loop system that will improve progression, reduce delays to



DVRPC's Fiscal Year 2005 TIP for Pennsylvania includes funding to make Warminster station more accessible to the disabled.

side street traffic, and generally enhance safety along the corridor. Located just south of the study area, County Line Road intersects with Jacksonville Road.

Development Opportunity Areas

The study area includes several industrial and commercial buildings on enormous lots. A significant amount of vacant land is also located in close proximity to the station – particularly around the SEPTA parking lot and along the eastern edge of the rail line. If redeveloped or reconfigured, these properties could accommodate a significant amount of new construction.

Two Superfund sites are also located within a half-mile of the station: the Naval Development Center, and the Fischer and Porter Company. Cleanup has been completed at the 840-acre Naval Development Center, which is located at Street Road and Jacksonville Road, and a portion of the site has been redeveloped as the Ann’s Choice assisted living facility. The six-acre Fischer and Porter Company site, which is located at the intersection of Jacksonville Road and Potter Street, is still an active industrial site.



Large-lot industrial and commercial development on Jacksonville Road.

Market Potential

In Warminster Township, 8 single-unit residential building permits were issued in 2000, 17 single units in 2001, 5 single units and 205 units in multiple unit buildings in 2002, 7 single units and 339 units in multiple unit buildings in 2003, 7 single units and 319 units in multiple unit buildings in 2004, and 157 single units and 109 units in multiple unit buildings in 2005. This represents a total of 1,173 new housing units authorized in the township between 2000 and 2005, with 80 percent in apartment or multi-unit buildings.

Recommendations

Market/Land Use:

1. **Redevelop former vacant industrial buildings or parcels that abut the train tracks**, either into more TOD-friendly uses, or, if remaining industrial or light industrial, enhance streetscape and pedestrian and transit connections to these properties. Market these properties as ones with expedited approval processes.
2. **If the PECO Warminster Service Center or the Burpee plant are ever sold, these should be redeveloped into TOD-friendly uses**, such as housing or a mixed-use community, given their close proximity to the station.



Vacant and underutilized properties along the rail line could be redeveloped into more transit-friendly uses.

3. **Encourage TOD uses and TOD design** in the major redevelopment underway **at the former Naval Air Warfare Center**. At the very least, good physical connections should be made between there and the train station.
4. **Plan for the redevelopment of the older strip shopping centers along Street Road**. Given the number of these, many of which may eventually be greyfields, the township should be prepared with ideas for their reuse, including financing and marketing strategies.



The John Fitch Industrial Park on Jacksonville Road.



The construction of a pedestrian overpass would provide neighborhoods west of the rail line with access to the Warminster SEPTA station.

Access:

1. **Reduce cut-through traffic and excessive speeding** in the Speedway neighborhood (for traffic avoiding congestion on York Road and/or Street Road) by installing traffic calming measures. Such physical measures that might work well in this specific neighborhood include speed tables (flat-topped speed humps), small roundabouts, and curb extensions. Other techniques that can be used in tandem (or in place of, depending on budgets and the overall strategy) are educational campaigns and increased police enforcement.
2. **Construct a pedestrian overpass** that crosses the rail line and connects the station to the western portion of the study area.
3. **Build sidewalks and bike lanes along Jacksonville and Street roads** to enhance pedestrian and bike access to the station area.
4. **Implement traffic calming measures on Jacksonville and Street roads** that make these roadways safe and attractive for all users, not just motorists. Street Road could be redesigned as a landscaped boulevard to add value to the entire area.
5. **Install signage** along Street, Jacksonville and County Line roads that effectively directs drivers, cyclists and pedestrians to the station area.
6. **Consolidate private on-site and off-site advertising signage** along Street Road to improve the aesthetics and safety along the corridor.
7. **Improve intersections along Street Road** for easier pedestrian crossings. Make it easier for adjacent

neighborhoods to access commercial developments along Street Road.

8. **Develop an access management plan** for the commercial corridors in the township, particularly those with multiple small strip shopping centers, to reduce curb cuts and encourage better functioning of arterial roadways. Study whether truck traffic is properly routed along major roadways in the township.
9. **Improve the SEPTA station parking lot with landscaping, medians with trees, and internal sidewalks.**

Regulatory:

1. **Rezone the Institutional, Industrial, Shopping Center, Commercial, Office, and Professional districts** located near the station to allow for higher density and mixed-use development. Consider implementing a **transit-oriented development zoning overlay** to coordinate and encourage the placement of transit-supportive land uses and densities in the station area. Or, if industrial zoning is to remain, amend the district to include more uses that would allow greater flexibility at these sites.
2. **Adopt design guidelines** and offer design assistance to developers that are interested in building near the station.
3. Township officials should consider **applying for a Transit Revitalization Investment District (TRID) planning grant** from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development to reinforce TOD planning and implementation activities.
4. **Explicitly state the rationale** and benefits of transit-oriented development **in the township's comprehensive plan.**

Physical:

1. **Improve the streetscapes along Street and Jacksonville roads.** Install tree lawns and/or other plantings to create a buffer between pedestrians and automobile traffic. Screen the surface parking lots with trees, landscaping, and/or low brick or stone walls or wrought-iron fencing.



Rezoning some of the single-use districts near the rail line would encourage the placement of denser and more transit-supportive uses around the station area.



Streetscape enhancements along Jacksonville Road would improve the environment for pedestrians.

Programmatic:

1. **Create an image and “brand” for Warminster, through celebrating the town’s heritage with one or multiple themes.** Such themes could include Warminster’s early agricultural days, to its Revolutionary War history, to the history of space travel and the Cold War. Such themes could appear on gateway points into the township, on banners, light poles, advertising, public art, signage, landscaping. Use iconic images of space travel, such as the astronaut or spacecraft, in public art or in new development in the township. Few visitors to the area presently know about this interesting contribution to U.S. history.
2. **Celebrate the heritage of the Naval Air Warfare Center in particular,** through gaining designation on the National Register of Historic Places for the three buildings currently eligible at the center. Develop a tour program for the center, and/or a museum highlighting its history.
3. **Host events, farmers markets, concerts, other events celebrating Warminster’s history** at the new park located in the Naval Center, or at the train station to activate the area.
4. **Create a dedicated source of state-level funding** to support TOD initiatives across Pennsylvania. Through the provision of grants and/or loans to communities like Warminster, such an initiative could help stimulate new investment in older and underutilized areas.



The parking lot of the Warminster rail station could play host to a farmers market and community events.

Conclusion

Warminster’s train station area faces a unique TOD challenge: whether to stay a “node” or become a “place.” To become a place, the station must do a better job of connecting to neighborhoods, surrounding retail, and employment near the station. Wide arterial roadways must be tamed, surface parking lots must be redesigned, and a more urban site design of new or redeveloped properties must be encouraged.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the following individuals for their assistance with this study:

David Fogel, SEPTA
Anne Leavitt-Gruberger, Montgomery County Planning Commission
Susan Patton, North Wales Borough Manager
Anthony Santaniello, Philadelphia City Planning Commission
Judith Smith, Warminster Township Manager
Barbara Sultzbach, Warminster Assistant Township Manager
David Zipf, Bucks County Planning Commission

DVRPC Staff:

Karin Morris, AICP, Manager, Office of Smart Growth, Project Manager
Richard G. Bickel, AICP, Director of Planning
Sara Belz, Regional Planner
Sean Lawrence, GIS Analyst
Glenn McNichol, GIS Analyst

All photos by DVRPC unless otherwise noted.

Bibliography

Avenue of the Arts, Inc. and Philadelphia City Planning Commission. *Extending the Vision for South Broad Street*. October 1999.

City of Philadelphia. *The Philadelphia Code and Charter, Title 14: Zoning and Planning*. 2004.

Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission. *Destination 2030 Long Range Plan*. 2005.

Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission. *Southeastern Pennsylvania Bicycle and Pedestrian Mobility Plan*. 1995.

Montgomery County Planning Commission. *Land Use Plan—Shaping Our Future*. 2005.

Montgomery County Youth Council and Partnership TMA. *North Wales Parks and Trails Pedestrian Map*. Summer 2004.

North Wales Borough. Prepared by Waetzman Planning Group. *North Wales Community Revitalization Plan*. 2003.

North Wales Borough. *North Wales Comprehensive Plan*. 1998.

North Wales Borough. Prepared by Temple University. *North Wales Parking and Pedestrian Study*. May 2004.

Philadelphia City Planning Commission. *New Century Neighborhoods*. July 2001.

Philadelphia City Planning Commission. *South of South Community Plan*. July 2005.

Warminster Township. *Warminster Comprehensive Plan*. 2003/2004.

Developing Around Transit: **Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Plans for SEPTA Broad Street Line Ellsworth-Federal, SEPTA R5 North Wales, and SEPTA R2 Warminster**

Publication Number: Pending

Date Published: September 2006

Geographic Area Covered: City of Philadelphia; North Wales Borough, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania; Upper Gwynedd Township, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania; Warminster Township, Bucks County, Pennsylvania.

Key Words: transit-oriented development (TOD), access, zoning, TOD overlay district, land use, development opportunities, station concierge, site design, design guidelines, traffic calming, access management, transit revitalization investment district (TRID), streetscapes, SEPTA, Broad Street Subway, Regional Rail R2, Regional Rail R5, Warminster, North Wales, Ellsworth-Federal, development opportunities

ABSTRACT:

This document, *Developing Around Transit: Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Plans for SEPTA Broad Street Line Ellsworth-Federal, SEPTA R5 North Wales and SEPTA R2 Warminster*, grew out of the work done on *Linking Transit, Communities, and Development: Regional Inventory of Transit-Oriented Development Sites*, published in 2003. The Regional Inventory determined a priority list of "Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Opportunity Sites," in furtherance of the goals and policies of DVRPC's *Destination 2030 Long Range Plan*. Forty-five stations were chosen out of a universe of 340 as having the most potential for TOD. Three stations were chosen for more in-depth study, in South Philadelphia, North Wales Borough, and Warminster Township. Recommendations included in this study cover such areas as zoning, land use, comprehensive plans, access, and development opportunities. The study is oriented toward asset-based plans that build from the existing strengths of each community.

Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
190 N. Independence Mall West
8th Floor
Philadelphia PA 19106-1520

Phone: 215-592-1800
Fax: 215-592-1925
Internet: www.dvrpc.org

Staff Contact: Karin Morris, AICP, Manager, Office of Smart Growth
Direct Phone: 215-238-2858
Email: kmorris@dvrpc.org



Delaware Valley
Regional Planning
Commission

190 N. Independence Mall West
8th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19106-1520
P: 215.592-1800
F: 215.592.9125
www.dvrpc.org