



Schuylkill Valley Metro Corridor
Station Area Planning and Implementation Study

Station Areas Technical Report

52nd Street Station

Valley Forge Station

Pottstown Station

Phoenixville Station

Douglassville Station



Prepared for:  Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission

Prepared by:  Wallace Roberts & Todd, LLC

with: Parsons Brinckerhoff Quade & Douglas, Inc.
Hammer Siler George Associates, Inc.
Beach Advertising, Inc.
ArchPlan Inc./Philipsen Architects

Date: April, 2003



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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. This study was funded by a Transportation and Community and Systems Preservation Pilot Program grant from the Federal Highway Administration. The authors, however, are solely responsible for its findings and conclusions, which may not represent the official views or policies of the funding agencies.

SVM Station Area Report

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Executive Summary

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Schuylkill Valley Metro (SVM) is a proposed 62-mile rail line connecting Reading and downtown Philadelphia. The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, with representatives from the region, sponsored the *Schuylkill Valley Metro Corridor Station Area Planning and Implementation Study* for five of the proposed station areas. These stations are: 52nd Street in Philadelphia, Valley Forge and Pottstown in Montgomery County, Phoenixville in Chester County and Douglassville in Berks County.

The purposes of the study were three: 1), to explore the advantages of transit-oriented development (TOD) in each station area; 2), to work with local representatives to identify and capture the best potential of transit service, including TOD supportive changes to development regulations; 3), to support federal funding for implementation of the SVM.

Analysis of the real estate market concluded that transit friendly improvements would result in dramatic increases in likely future development: over 2 million square feet of office space, 615,000 square feet of retail space, 1,550 residential units and 1,200 lodging rooms in the five station areas. Highlights for each station follow.

- **52nd Street Station, Philadelphia** – Residential and commercial uses are mixed to support and take advantage of increased access. A SVM plaza facilitates intermodal transfers while related street changes calm traffic in residential areas.
- **Valley Forge Station, Montgomery County** - Station area development includes over 200 housing units, 360,000 square feet of office space, a 200-room hotel and joint use parking facility with pedestrian connections to the Schuylkill River Greenway, high density residential, Valley Forge National Park and a large mixed-use development proposed across the Schuylkill River.
- **Phoenixville Station, Chester County** - The plan solves the problem of phasing multiple uses over time by breaking the elements into manageable, but physically linked, construction packages. The new buildings can be compatible with the historic buildings across the creek, while creating an exciting and lively SVM station experience. The landowner is proceeding with plans to develop the first phase of this mixed-use station development.
- **Pottstown Station, Montgomery County** - Reuse of the historic train station will support continued downtown revitalization. Pedestrian paths will connect transit users to retail and government, Montgomery County Community College, redevelopment of the former Mrs. Smith's Pies complex, a shared parking facility, the River Front Park and Schuylkill River Greenway.



- **Douglassville Station, Berks County** – The plan recreates the historic town core by moving all highway traffic to the current westbound U.S. Route 422 right-of-way. The road segment thus freed becomes the community “Main Street” and setting for the SVM station and mixed-use development linked to a historic district.



Introduction

INTRODUCTION

STUDY BACKGROUND

The Schuylkill Valley Metro (SVM) is a proposed 62-mile rail transit corridor connecting Reading and downtown Philadelphia with the regional rail transit system, as illustrated on the *Schuylkill Valley MetroRail Corridor System* map.

The idea for the corridor was developed in response to increasing transportation demands along the Schuylkill River Valley. The opportunity to use existing railroad right-of-way for a new suburban transit corridor offers tremendous potential to meet such demands while reducing automobile dependency. A 1998 feasibility study of the SVM yielded several alternatives for a successful rail system. As a result, the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, in conjunction with representatives from the region, has taken further steps to ensure the success of the SVM by sponsoring a Transit Oriented Development (TOD) study for five of the proposed stations along the corridor. These stations are 52nd Street in Philadelphia, Valley Forge (formerly named Port Kennedy) and Pottstown in Montgomery County, Phoenixville in Chester County, and Douglassville in Berks County.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the *Schuylkill Valley Metro Corridor Station Area Planning and Implementation Study* is to explore the advantages of transit-oriented development in the Delaware Valley and Reading regions. TOD may be viewed as both a way to take advantage of superior transit accessibility while reducing the need for automobile use and as a way to foster investment in relatively close proximity to a transit station. Therefore, the specific goals of the study are to:

- Build consensus in each community for zoning and other regulatory changes that will facilitate implementation of transit oriented development close to the proposed station sites.
- Support continued federal funding for implementation of the SVM by demonstrating private sector interest in more intense development in the station areas, thereby providing increased revenue for the host municipalities and reductions in auto dependency throughout the region.

It is anticipated that the knowledge gained through the study and development of TOD strategies for the five selected stations will better equip local officials and residents to shape expected growth around their station areas.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

The overall station area planning and implementation process was guided by the Program Management Team (PMT), composed of the following program partners:



- Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
- Berks County Planning Commission
- Philadelphia City Planning Commission and Mayor's Office of Transportation
- Chester County Planning Commission
- Montgomery County Planning Commission
- Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority
- Berks Area Reading Transportation Authority
- Pennsylvania Environmental Council.

In order to gain community support for TOD along the corridor, a Community Task Force (CTF) was formed for each station area at the initiation of the respective City or County planning agency. The CTFs include one or more representatives from the following: the local municipal governing body, planning commission, neighborhood group or civic association, chamber of commerce or economic development agency, and other pertinent representation as determined by the local community. The CTFs were actively involved in work sessions with the study team, bringing study information to their communities and local insights and ideas to the team. One goal of the process was for each CTF to become the advocate for their respective station area plan in their community.

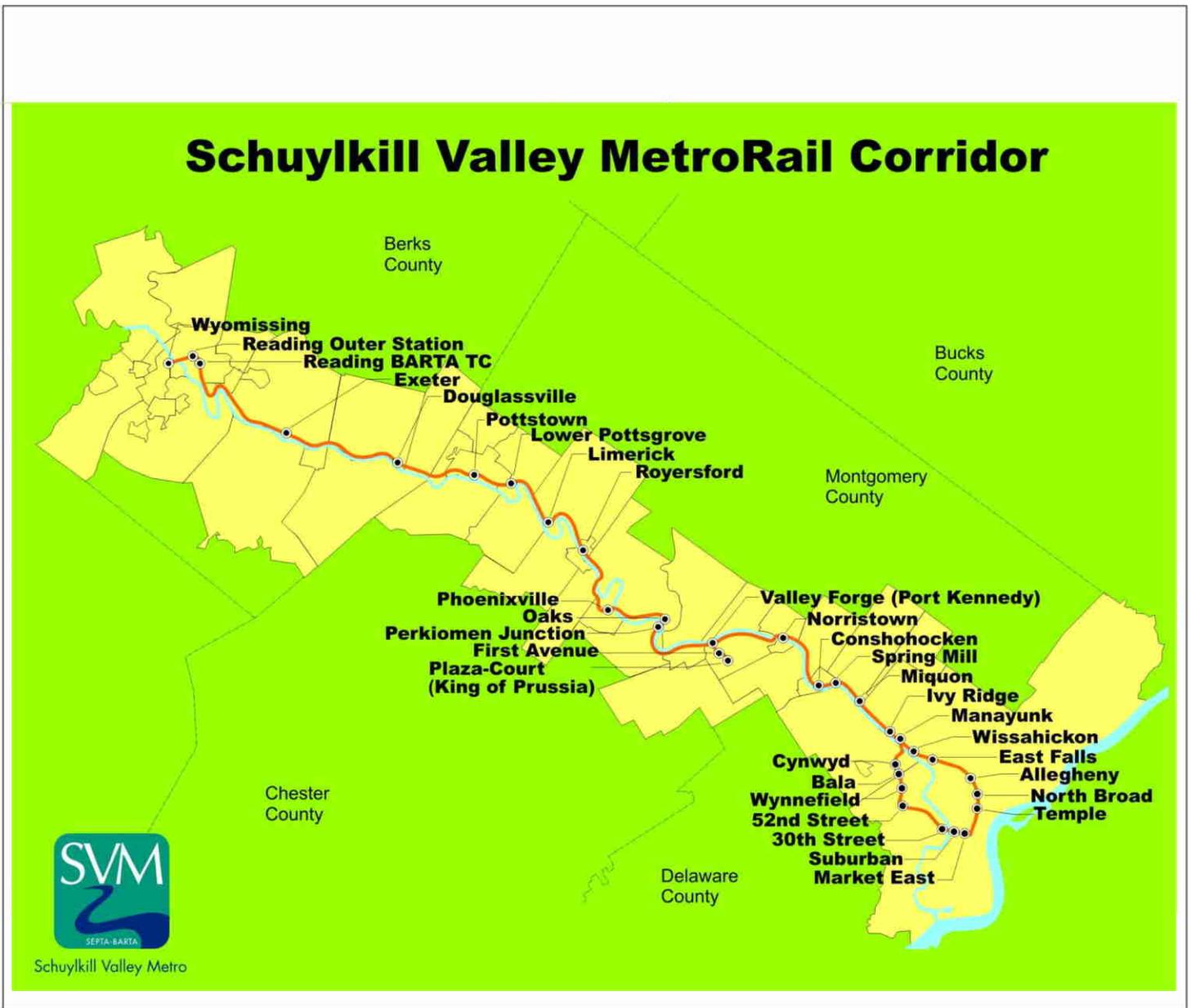
The study began in the fall of 2000 with data collection and analysis, including preparation of a public involvement plan and a background study of economic and market conditions. The next step in the process was to identify a focused geographic area around each proposed station location for which to perform TOD suitability analysis. In the United States, experience shows that people will walk up to approximately ¼ mile to a transit station. As a consequence, the first step in preparing station area conceptual plans was to examine existing conditions within ¼ mile and, more generally, within ½ mile of each of the proposed station locations. Through a series of public work sessions with each of the CTFs, the specific station study areas were further defined according to the conditions surrounding each station location. The presence or absence of barriers to movement and/or lack of developable land, as well as other factors shaped each station's area of influence. Consequently, the station study areas vary among the five stations as local circumstances dictate.

Once the study areas were defined, opportunities and constraints to TOD were identified for each proposed station area and presented to the respective CTFs. Input from the CTFs provided a framework upon which to prepare a series of draft development plans based on locally desired concepts for transit-oriented development around each station. These were the basis for station area plans and recommended implementation activities.

REPORT ORGANIZATION

This report is organized to provide a step-by-step description of the planning process and results for each of the five station study areas, starting from the east with 52nd Street and continuing westward to Douglassville. For each, the work is summarized in sections





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addressing existing conditions, the station area plan and implementation recommendations.

The process began with an analysis of existing conditions surrounding each station area, including land use, transportation systems, zoning, demographics, plans and proposals, and issues and opportunities related to TOD. A preliminary market analysis was prepared for each of the five station areas to determine the potential to support new development for four land uses, including office, multi-family residential, retail, and lodging. The document analyzed market conditions for each station area under two different scenarios, the Trend Scenario and the Opportunities Scenario. The Trends Scenario was based strictly on trend analysis using census population and employment data, county and regional population and employment forecasts, and real estate development trends. The other analysis, the Opportunities Scenario, was a more optimistic approach in which development potential was predicated upon the assumption that certain factors would make each station area more attractive to real estate investors. These factors included, but were not limited to, the implementation of the SVM, demolition of deteriorated structures, parcel assembly, and infrastructure improvements. The timing of future investments is subject to significant and unpredictable change due to many factors. Such changes may speed up or slow down the pace of development. The Opportunities Scenario for all five station areas is presented in the table below.

OPPORTUNITIES SCENARIO LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL BY USE, 2007-2025

Station Area	Office Space	Retail Space	Multi-Family Units	Lodging Rooms
52 nd street	140,000	120,000	200	150
Valley Forge	1,100,000	45,000	800	400
Phoenixville	500,000	250,000	300	300
Pottstown	170,000	50,000	150	200
Douglassville	100,000	150,000	100	150

Source: Hammer, Siler, George Associates

The next section describes and illustrates development plans for each station area, beginning with a generalized conceptual diagram, upon which a more specific illustrative plan has been developed. Finally, the report concludes with a framework for implementing the proposed development plans, which may include recommended comprehensive plan and zoning amendments to encourage and facilitate TOD for each station area.

It should be noted that the analysis and planning circumstances vary significantly from station to station. For instance, in Phoenixville, a developer has already prepared a master development plan covering most of the station area, including a thorough analysis of existing conditions. For this reason a station area analysis of existing conditions was not prepared for this station as it was for the others. This study treated that plan as a given and focused upon the specific parcel and station design initially prepared by the developer.



52nd Street Station

52nd STREET STATION

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Station Area Description

As illustrated on the *Aerial View* map, the 52nd Street station study area is bound by 49th Street to the east, Harlan Street to the south, 54th Street to the west, and Parkside Avenue to the north. The study area encompasses approximately 200 acres of land, including a portion of the Keystone Opportunity Zone (KOZ), the West Philadelphia Retail Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district, the West Parkside neighborhood, and a portion of the Overbrook neighborhood along Lancaster Avenue. The proposed station site is located north of the 52nd Street and Lancaster Avenue intersection. The tracks are elevated above 52nd Street on a bridge crossing the street.

Land Use

The *Existing Land Use* map indicates that the study area consists of a relatively even distribution of residential and commercial uses, each making up about 30 percent of the land area, with some recreational and institutional uses mixed in. The residential areas are concentrated in neighborhoods of row house units. The largest of these residential areas is the West Parkside neighborhood located between the railroad tracks and Fairmount Park. The northern portion of this neighborhood is located directly across Parkside Avenue from Fairmount Park. However the southern part is wedged between the railroad tracks and the former rail yard, which is now vacant and within the West Philadelphia Retail TIF.

The other residential area includes a portion of the Overbrook neighborhood, located south of Lancaster Avenue. The Overbrook neighborhood is adjacent to the commercial corridor that runs along Lancaster Avenue. This corridor consists primarily of small local businesses, with the exception of two high volume gas stations at the intersection of 52nd Street and Lancaster Avenue. There is also a significant amount of building vacancy, approximately 24 percent, in the study area. The aforementioned former railyard located just east of the Philadelphia Business and Technology Center, now referred to as the West Parkside Industrial Park, is the focal point of a major redevelopment effort discussed further in the *Plans and Proposals* section below.

Transportation

Roads

Lancaster Avenue (Route 30) is the major arterial traversing the study area. The Avenue connects the neighborhoods of West Philadelphia and also carries a large volume of commuter automobile traffic, mostly between Center City and residential "Main Line" suburbs. In addition, there is a fair amount of truck traffic along the Avenue. The average daily traffic count on Lancaster Avenue was 14,300 vehicles (near 59th Street) in 1996. The two-way, two-lane road is generally 100 feet wide and includes a travel lane with trolley



tracks, a parking lane, and a bike lane on each side. In most areas, on-street parking is allowed on both sides of the street, although spaces are not marked. 52nd Street is also heavily used and is very congested during rush hour.

Most of the other roads in the study area are two-lane, two-way, with the exception of 53rd Street, which is one-way northbound, and 54th Street, which is one-way southbound. On-street parking is available on most streets.

Rail

The station site is located to the north and below the elevated alignment that supports the SEPTA R-5 and R-6 and Amtrak.

Transit

Until the 1970s, the study area was served by commuter rail via a station at 52nd Street. Today, SEPTA's R5 commuter trains do not stop between 30th Street Station and Overbrook. SEPTA's heavily used Route 10 Subway Surface Trolley runs along Lancaster Avenue from Center City to 52nd Street, where it turns onto Lansdowne Avenue and terminates in Overbrook. Bus Route 52, which runs along 52nd Street, provides service between Wynnefield and Woodland Avenue in Southwest Philadelphia. Additional bus service in the area includes Routes 15, 38, 40, 43, and the G bus, providing access to North Philadelphia, Center City, and South Philadelphia.

Parking

On-street parking is available throughout the study area. In addition, several large commercial businesses have off-street parking lots to serve their facilities.

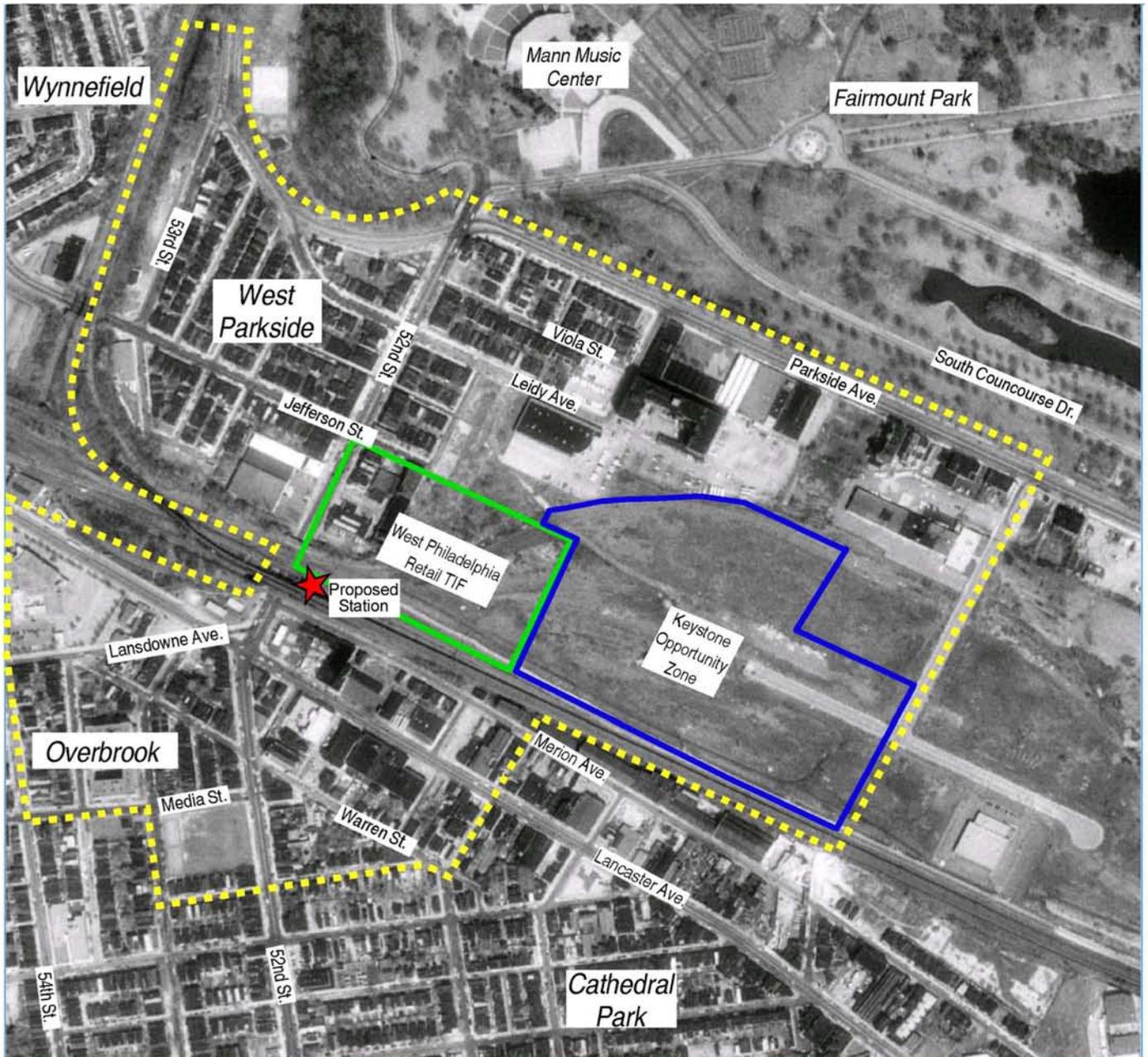
Pedestrian Accessibility

Nearly all streets in the study area provide sidewalks for pedestrians and bicycle lanes are marked on both sides of Lancaster Avenue. Along most streets, sidewalks are in standard condition. On Lancaster Avenue, however, sidewalks are generally in poor condition, overgrown, or nonexistent. Crossing the Avenue is dangerous or at best inhospitable in most places, as there are few crosswalks and traffic is heavy, fast, and noisy.

Zoning

As illustrated on the *Existing Zoning* map, most of the study area is zoned for industrial or light industrial uses. The portion of land within the KOZ, which includes some of the largest parcels within the study area, is zoned primarily G2 Industrial. This zoning district permits almost any land use except residential dwellings, automobile repair facilities, hotels, libraries and museums, hospitals, and indoor or outdoor theaters. A smaller portion of the KOZ, which includes the Philadelphia Business and Technology Center, is zoned for light industrial uses. The L3 and L4 light industrial districts can also be found along a section of the north side of the Lancaster Avenue commercial artery. The south side of the artery is zoned C-2 Commercial, which allows storefront commercial use on the ground floor of the building with apartments or commercial uses on the upper floors.





LEGEND

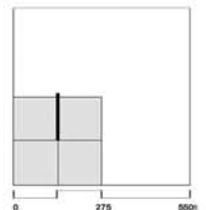
-  52nd Street Station Study Area
-  Keystone Opportunity Zone
-  West Philadelphia Retail TIF

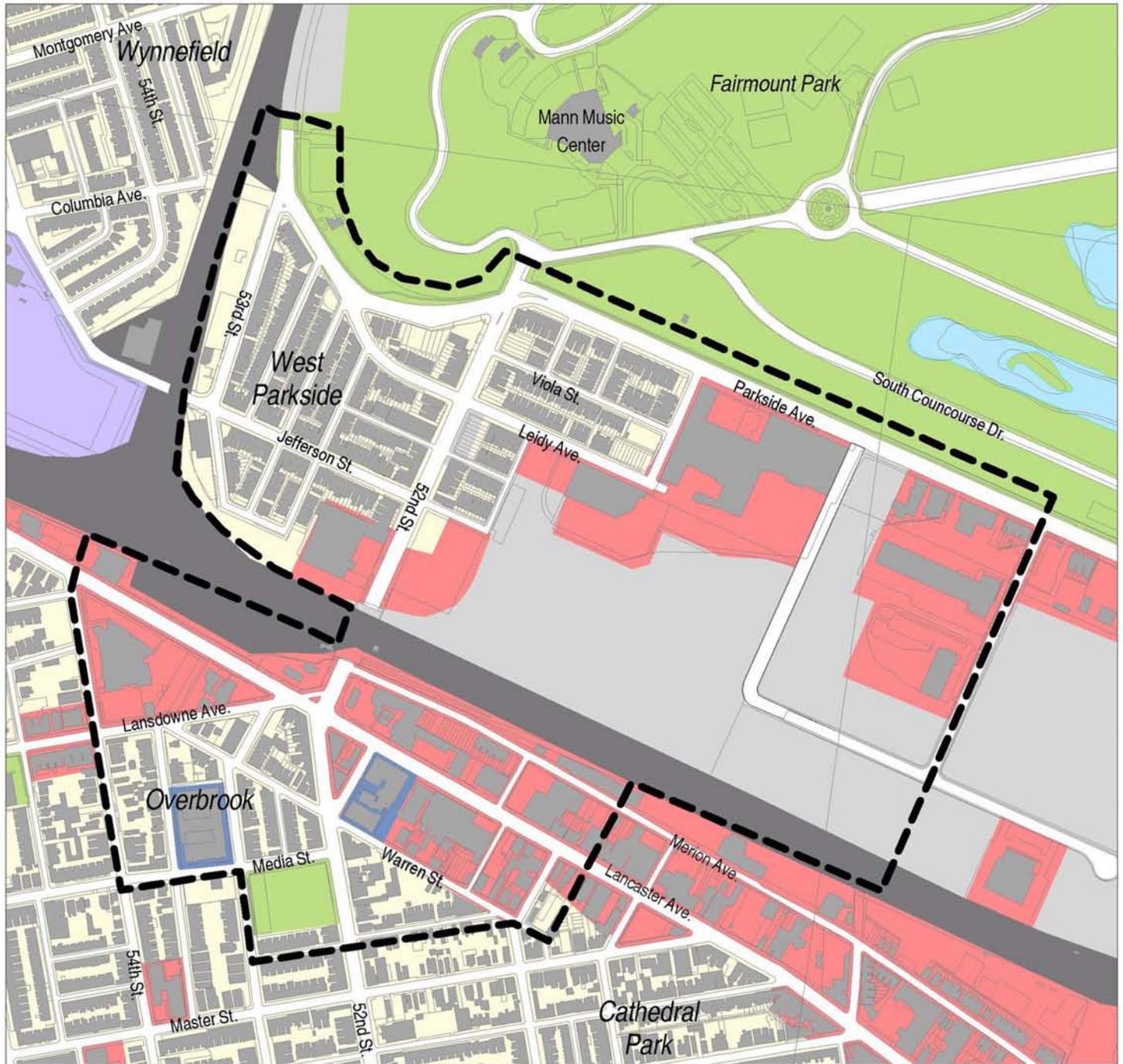


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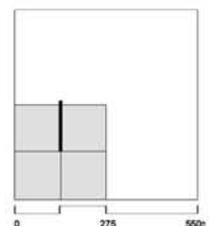
- Station Study Area
- Park
- Residential
- Institutional
- Commercial
- Light Manufacturing
- Utility
- Vacant

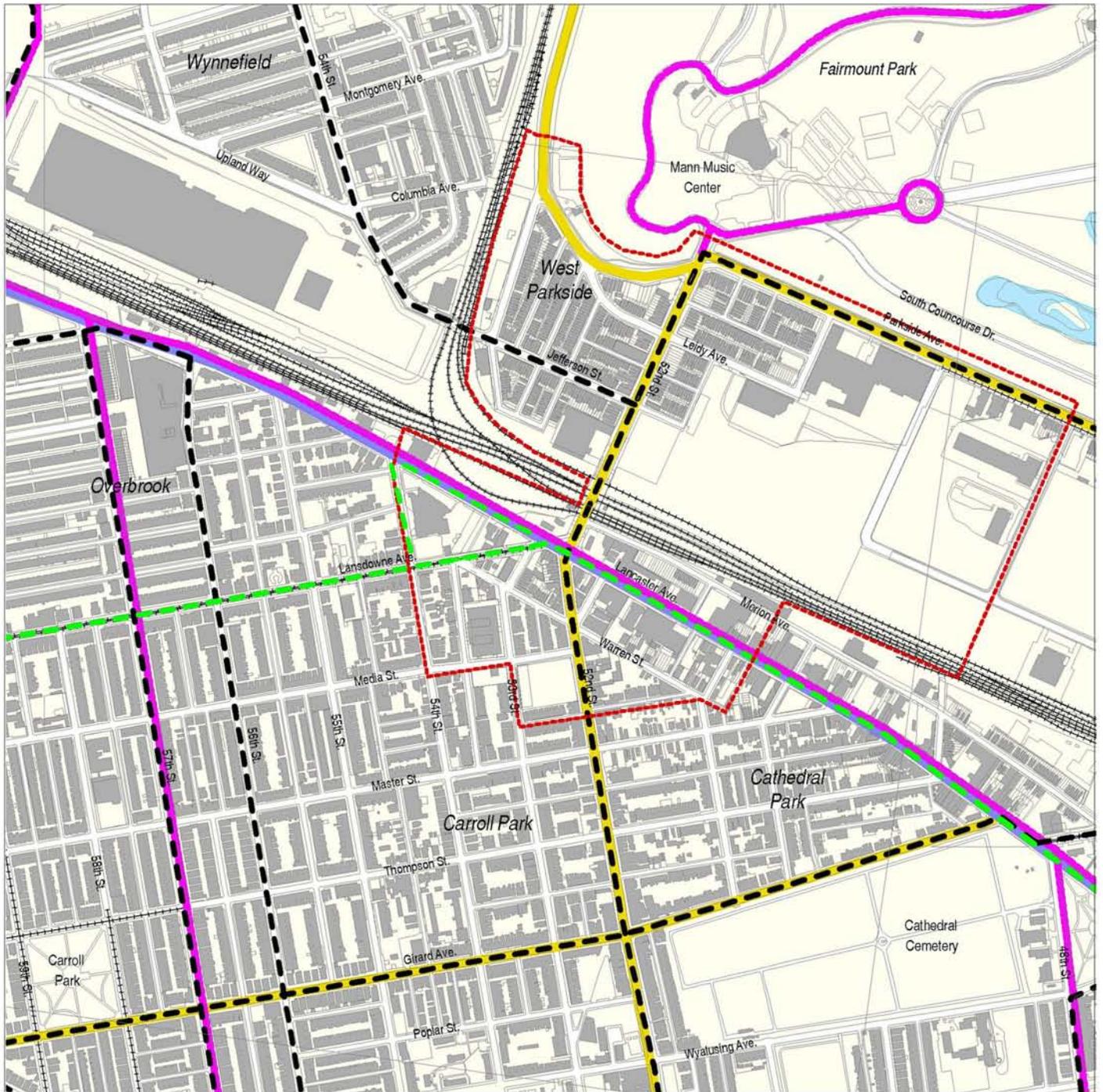


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LEGEND

- Study Area
- Roads
- Railroad / Trolley
- Buildings
- Parcels
- Parking Lot
- SEPTA Bus Routes
- SEPTA Trolley
- Arterial
- Primary Collector
- Existing Bike Lane



**Schuylkill Valley Metro
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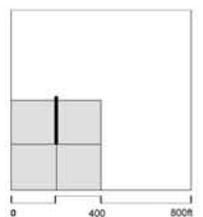
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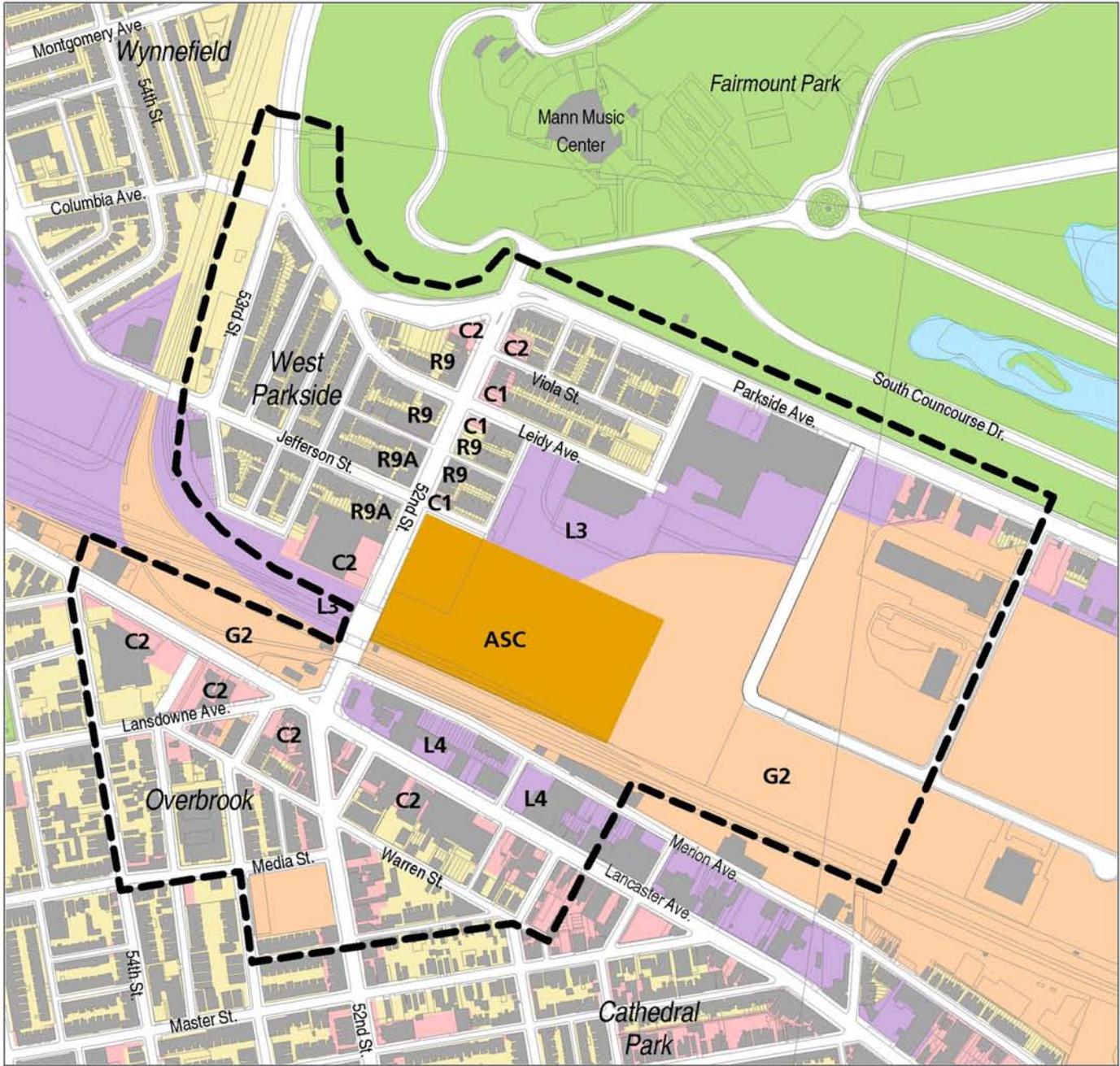
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52nd STREET STATION West Philadelphia

Existing Zoning



LEGEND

Station Study Area

- REC Recreation
- G2 - Industrial
- R5, R9, R10 Residential
- ASC Area Shopping Center
- C1, C2, C3 Commercial
- L3, L4 Light Industrial



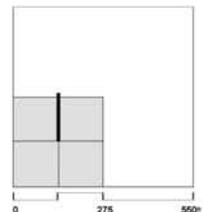
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Another commercial district, the Area Shopping Center District (ASC) includes the entire West Philadelphia Retail TIF, which was rezoned specifically for the proposed shopping center development described in the *Plans and Proposals* section below. Uses permitted within the ASC are intended to provide large-scale retail services to an area beyond the local neighborhood.

The rest of the study area, specifically the West Parkside and Overbrook neighborhoods, is zoned for residential use. The residential zones include R-5, R-9, and R-10. Each residential district has slightly different lot dimensional requirements, but all permit moderate to high density, single family and multi-family housing.

Demographics

The 52nd Street study area encompasses the three Census Tracts listed in the table below. All of the tracts have lost a significant amount of population between 1990 and 2000, especially tract 111, which encompasses most of the study area. As the table indicates the immediate study area has lost significantly more population compared to the rest of West Philadelphia and the City as a whole.

Census Tract	Area (acres)	1990 Population	2000 Population	% Change
111	325.4	5,333	4,204	-21.17%
118	231.9	7,059	5,987	-15.19%
119	171.8	6,302	5,596	-11.20%
Total	729.1	20,684	17,787	-14.01%
West Philadelphia	--	219,713	209,130	-4.82%
City	--	1,585,577	1,517,550	-4.29%

Plans and Proposals

The 1994 *Plan for West Philadelphia* recommends improvements to certain areas within the 52nd Street station area, including general plans for rehabilitation and infill of the residential neighborhoods north of the railroad bridge and south of Lancaster Avenue. The plan also recommends general streetscape and beautification of the Lancaster Avenue corridor and more specific improvements at the intersection of 52nd Street, Lancaster Avenue, and Lansdowne Avenue. Proposed improvements at this intersection, which is considered a "Gateway and Image-Making Location" include attracting modern facilities through land assembly and redevelopment for auto-oriented retail uses such as family restaurants or discount variety/department stores. Proposed physical improvements include widening of the sidewalk for the entire block on the inbound side of Lansdowne Avenue and the consolidation of transit stops near the intersection of 52nd Street, Lansdowne Avenue, and Lancaster Avenue. Ironically, the *Plan for West Philadelphia* recommends replacement of the 52nd Street train station structure with a narrower, single level bridge to reduce the blighting effect of the tunnel beneath the bridge. Clearly,

reestablishment of train service at the 52nd Street station had not been anticipated when the *Plan for West Philadelphia* was published in 1994.

The 60-acre West Parkside Industrial Center is the centerpiece of the West Parkside Enterprise Zone and KOZ. The property, which is delineated on the *Plans and Proposals* map, is owned and managed by the Philadelphia Industrial Development Corporation (PIDC). It contains prepared building sites for light industrial or office development. At this time, proposed businesses within the study area portion of the KOZ include a high technology manufacturing plant and some smaller commercial uses.

The site directly west of the Industrial Park, located just north of the railroad tracks and fronting along 52nd Street, is in the conceptual stage of a major development project that includes a retail shopping center with a supermarket anchor. This site is owned by PIDC and was recently established as the West Philadelphia Retail TIF by the Philadelphia Authority for Industrial Development (PAID) to foster redevelopment in the area. The TIF was created specifically for retail development because retail uses are not eligible within the KOZ. The properties within the district were consolidated by PAID and sold to an affiliate of the West Philadelphia Financial Services Institute (WPFSI). WPFSI, the lending entity of the West Philadelphia Community Trust Board, is partnering with a developer chosen through a request for proposal process to develop an 80,000 to 160,000 square foot retail and commercial center. The project will likely include a supermarket, drug store, restaurant, and several small retail shops, possibly a community center, and surface parking for 320 to 640 cars.

Directly north of the proposed shopping center site, another private developer is reported to be negotiating with the owner, GSA, to acquire the 35-acre site for development of big box retail.

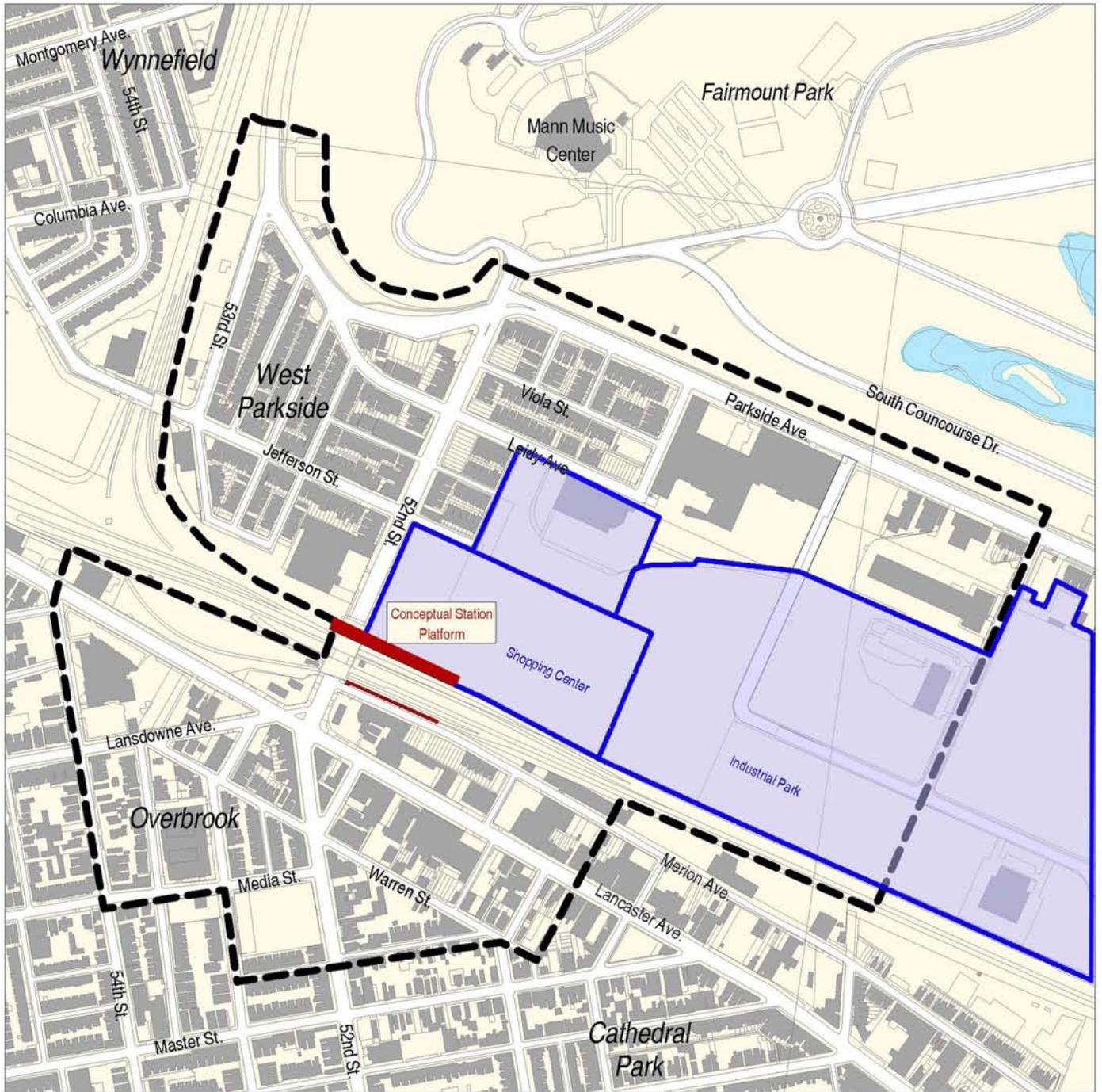
Market Potential

Trends Scenario

Under the Trends Scenario, the 52nd Street station area doesn't fair well. As described in the *Demographics* section above, the station area lost over 14 percent of its population between 1990 and 2000, more than three times the population loss of the City of Philadelphia.

The table below is a summary of development program potential for the 52nd Street station area prepared by Hammer Siler George, Associates, the project marketing consultants. The table lists the market potential for each of the four land uses under the Trends Scenario between 2000 and 2025.





LEGEND

Station Study Area

Proposed Development Plan



**Schuykill Valley Metro
Corridor Station Area Planning and Implementation Study**

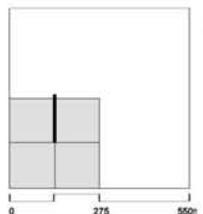
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Prepared by:



Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
Wallace Roberts & Todd, LLC

With: Parsons Brinckerhoff Quade & Douglas, Inc.
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LONG TERM DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL – 52ND STREET STATION

TRENDS SCENARIO	2000-2010		2011 - 2025		2000 - 2025
	52nd Street	5-Station Total	52nd Street	5-Station Total	
Office Space, sq. ft.	9,440	94,440	58,970	589,730	10%
Retail Space, sq. ft.	480	7,170	9,680	80,270	12%
Multi-family, number of units	0	69	50	251	17%
Lodging, number of rooms	0	0	0	350	0%

Source: Hammer, Siler, George Associates, 2001.

Between 2000 and 2025, 52nd Street market is expected to be able to support up to 68,410 square feet of office space, about 10 percent of the five-station total. The retail potential is even lower, with less than 480 square feet projected by 2010 and less than 10,000 square feet between 2011 and 2025. The market study under the Trends Scenario predicts a very small potential for multi-family units and no market for lodging development.

Opportunities Scenario

Under the Opportunities Scenario, much more rapid growth would occur in the station areas than under the Trends Scenario. The Opportunities Scenario assumes that with the combination of the new transit station and government redevelopment initiatives, such as the Keystone Opportunities Zone (KOZ) and the West Philadelphia Retail TIF, most of the supply of land in the station area could be developed by 2025. The table below indicates the long-term development potential for the 52nd Street station area between 2007 and 2025.

LONG TERM DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL – 52ND STREET STATION

OPPORTUNITIES SCENARIO	2007-2025		
	52nd Street	5-Station Total	% of Total
Office Space, sq. ft.	140,000	2,010,000	7%
Retail Space, sq. ft.	120,000	615,000	20%
Multi-family, number of units	200	1550	13%
Lodging, number of rooms	150	1200	13%

Source: Hammer, Siler, George Associates, 2001.

The market report indicates that the 52nd Street neighborhood could turn around economically with the improved transit service and other initiatives, such as development of the KOZ and the TIF. In addition, the Mann Center for the Performing Arts is a special destination that could provide an anchor to attract new private investments.



Issues and Opportunities

As documented on the *Issues and Opportunities* map, there are few physical constraints to development within the study area. The site is already densely developed with good pedestrian and vehicular connections. The physical barrier of the elevated railroad tracks separating the neighborhoods across Lancaster Avenue is the most prominent physical constraint, although 52nd Street does provide a sufficient connection under the bridge. Enhancement of the corridor and preservation of the viewshed towards Fairmount Park will be important to the success of station area development.

Development constraints in the study area are primarily economic. As noted in the *Market Potential* section, the study area is characterized by significant loss of population, vacancies, and deteriorated building conditions. There are several development plans in progress that presumably will improve economic conditions in the area. These include the retail shopping center in the West Philadelphia Retail TIF district and the proposed light industrial park in the KOZ.

Several redevelopment opportunities are present in the study area. The previously mentioned industrial park and retail sites are the largest opportunities, however there are several small, underutilized properties that have excellent redevelopment potential. In particular, the property located across 52nd Street from the supermarket site is an underutilized, 4 story commercial building. Currently, only the first story is occupied and the parking area is used as a used car lot.

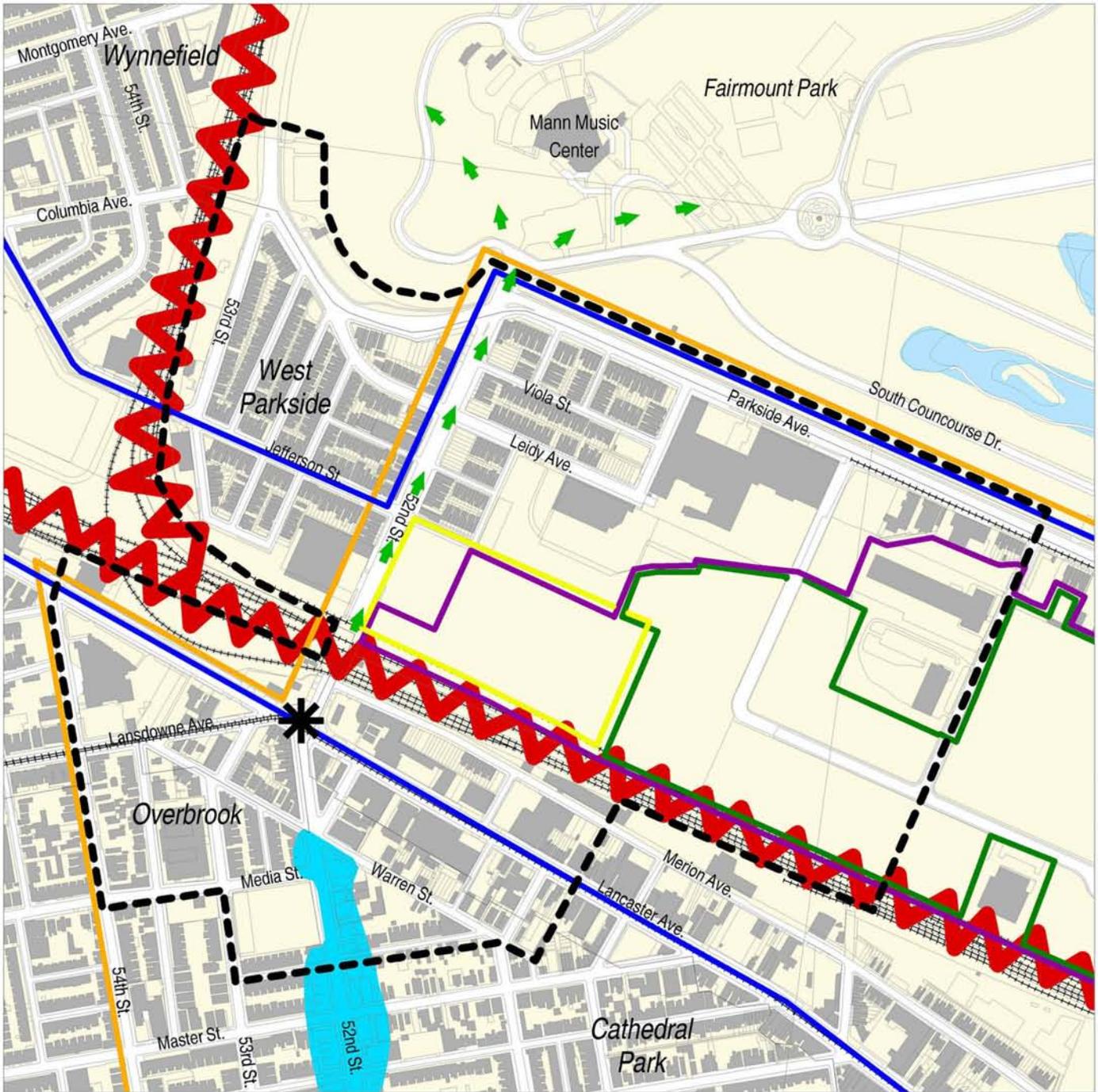
There is a real opportunity to take advantage of the multi-modal environment of the station area. Currently, the area is served by buses, trolley, and good pedestrian and bicycle connections. In addition, a possible light rail connection, called the City Branch, may be developed along either Girard Avenue or Parkside Avenue to complement and connect other parts of the City with the SVM.

Economic Development Districts

A total of five economic development districts cover the majority of the study area. Several of these have overlapping boundaries as illustrated on the *Issues and Opportunities* map. The first, the West Philadelphia/Parkside Empowerment Zone includes a portion of the study area to the south of the rail right-of-way and to the east of 54th Street. This zone is a federally funded urban initiative focusing on economic and community development activities.

The second special district is the 180-acre West Parkside Enterprise Zone, designated in 1983, and generally bounded by Lancaster Avenue, Girard Avenue, Belmont Avenue, Parkside Avenue, and 52nd Street. The Enterprise Zone is a Commonwealth of Pennsylvania program intended to assist and promote business expansion. The general intent is that the neighborhoods surrounding the Enterprise Zone supply the labor that will meet the needs of local employers and residents. Businesses in the zone are eligible for special financial incentives provided by the Commonwealth. Job training and placement programs are also provided in the zone.





LEGEND

Station Study Area

ISSUES

- Physical Barrier
- High Vacancy Area
- Hazardous Intersection

OPPORTUNITIES

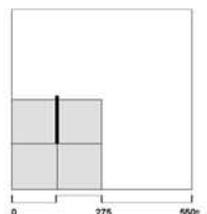
- West Parkside Enterprise Zone
- West Philadelphia Empowerment Zone
- Parkside-Lancaster Blight Recertification Area
- West Parkside Industrial KOZ
- West Philadelphia Retail TIF
- Important Viewshed



Schuykill Valley Metro Corridor Station Area Planning and Implementation Study

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The third district is the West Parkside Industrial Keystone Opportunity Zone (KOZ). The KOZ provides tax exemptions until 2011 for businesses that locate within the zone. Tax relief includes exemption from local business privilege tax, real estate tax, use and occupancy tax, and sales tax on purchases used and consumed by businesses in the zone. Businesses in the zone are also exempt from state corporate net income tax, capital stock and foreign franchise tax, personal income tax and state sales tax.

Because the KOZ is also within the state Enterprise Zone and federal Empowerment Zone, firms are eligible for subordinated financing packages for property acquisition, construction and related costs.

The fourth economic development district is the Parkside-Lancaster Blight-Recertification District. The purpose of the recertification district is to establish a study area to review existing conditions in relation to seven criteria used to determine whether blight exists in an area. The criteria are set forth in the Pennsylvania Urban Redevelopment Law, which stipulates that only one of the criteria need be met to declare an area blighted. The seven criteria are as follows:

1. Unsafe, unsanitary, inadequate, or overcrowded conditions
2. Inadequate planning
3. Excessive land coverage
4. Lack of proper light, air and open space
5. Faulty street and lot layout
6. Defective design and arrangement of buildings
7. Economically or socially undesirable land use

An area determined to be blighted may be made the subject of redevelopment proposals formulated by the Redevelopment Authority. According to the recertification study performed by the City in 1997, the study area meets numbers 1. and 7. of the criteria, making it eligible for blight certification.

The fifth and most recently established district is the West Philadelphia Retail Tax Increment Financing District (TIF). As discussed in the *Plans and Proposals* section, the TIF consists of approximately 13.5 acres of mostly vacant land. The objective of the TIF is to foster redevelopment by authorizing targeted use of certain incremental increases in the district's tax value over a term of twenty years to fund project costs. For example, the WPFSI will lend money to the project according to an estimate of how much tax revenue will be generated by the project in the form of property tax, use and occupancy tax, wage tax, business privilege tax, and sales tax, at the end of twenty years.

STATION AREA PLAN

The station area plan presents the proposed TOD development strategy based on the preferred development concept prepared in concert with the 52nd Street Community Task Force (CTF). This development strategy is described through concept diagrams, an illustrative site plan, and the proposed transportation plan for the 52nd Street station study area.



Development Concept

The planning team worked cooperatively with the CTF and other interested participants through a number of public meetings to develop the station area concept. The team developed alternative approaches to station area development and discussed and critiqued them with the CTF, which gave direction for subsequent ideas and review. During these discussions the CTF applied a set of objectives to narrow the options and reach the selected concept presented in this report. These included the following:

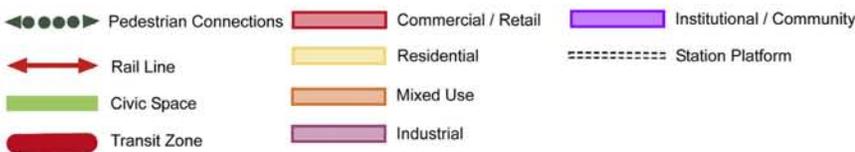
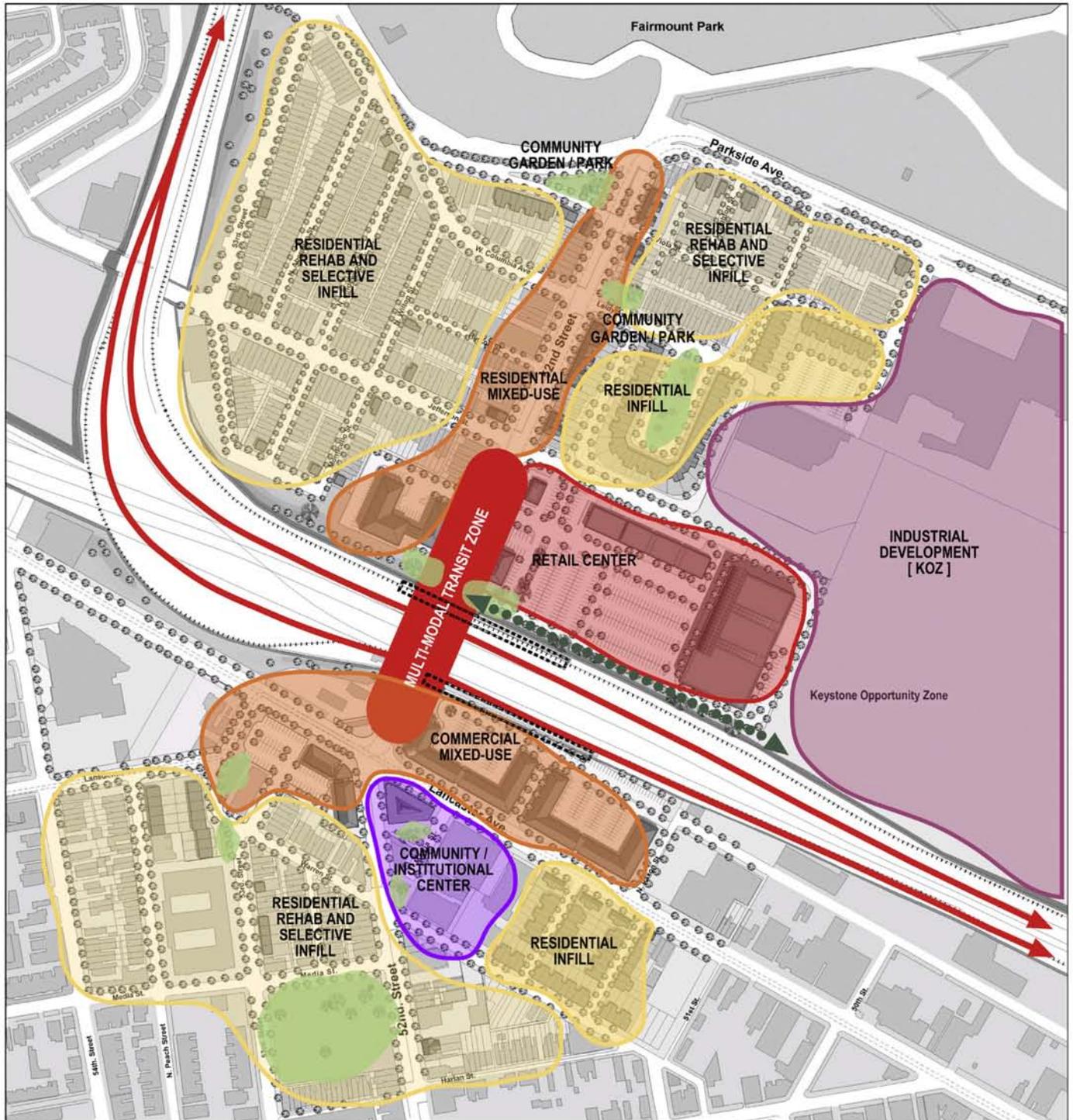
- Manage residential development – concentrate on infill development and rehabilitation of the already densely developed residential portions of the area rather than redevelopment.
- Focus commercial development – locate commercial development on Lancaster Avenue and 52nd Street. Permit mixed live/work development on 52nd Street.
- Focus employment – provide employment opportunities in the industrial area to the east of 52nd Street.
- Preserve open space – preserve the existing community park on 52nd Street as well as a community garden.
- Improve transit options – bring all transit and movement modes together at 52nd Street to permit easy access and transfers.
- Security – improve security generally and specifically under the railroad bridge and along Merion Avenue, the small street south of the railroad embankment.
- Pedestrian environment – improve the pedestrian environment along 52nd Street and at its intersection with Lancaster Avenue.

The station area development concept is described below in terms of its overall land use, specific development components, and the transportation/circulation systems.

Concept Plan

The conceptual land use plan presents a general description of the proposed land use and general pattern of development around the station area. As illustrated on the *Concept Plan*, the intention is to build on the existing mixed-use character of the station area. The West Parkside neighborhood is envisioned as a revitalization and infill area, maintaining the existing medium density character along the edges fronting Parkside Avenue. A strip of small-scale mixed commercial and residential uses is strategically placed along 52nd Street, the primary pedestrian route between the station and the Mann Center for the Performing Arts. The West Philadelphia Retail TIF site just north of the proposed station is envisioned as the commercial center of the station area. Some additional retail directly across 52nd Street could complement the commercial center by providing some smaller scale, more transit-oriented retail services, plus providing a transition between the train tracks and the adjacent residential areas. The residential area to the southeast of 52nd Street and Parkside Avenue will be a focus of rehabilitation and reinvestment. South of the rail line, a large part of the Overbrook neighborhood along Lancaster Avenue is envisioned as a significant infill and redevelopment area with small scale improvements to strengthen the existing neighborhood.





**Schuylkill Valley Metro
Corridor Station Area Planning and Implementation Study**

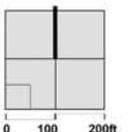
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Illustrative Plan

The *Illustrative Plan* presents a more detailed description of proposed development and improvements in the station area. The study area is divided into seven development subareas, beginning with the immediate station area.

SVM Station Area

The station is located on the north and south sides of the elevated railroad bridge crossing 52nd Street. Access to the outbound train platform would be gained from the north side of the bridge using stairs and/or elevators on either side of 52nd Street. Access on the east side of 52nd Street would be provided through a pedestrian plaza that also provides access to the proposed retail center. Access to the inbound train platform would be gained from the south side of the bridge on the east side of 52nd Street. This area functions as a multi-modal transit zone in which patrons may transfer between buses and trolleys. The details of how this zone would function are presented in the *Transportation Plan* section below.

52nd Street North of Railroad Bridge

Infill development is proposed for most of the parcels fronting 52nd Street. There are many vacant parcels and deteriorated buildings which present an opportunity to revitalize the area. Based on some successful existing mixed development on the street, the proposal includes approximately 20 mixed use or live/work buildings in scale with the current building pattern. These are buildings with some business or commercial use on the ground floor and apartments above. As development takes place over the long term, there is strong potential for current users to move into rehabilitated or new buildings along the street. These will provide a transition between the more intense activity of 52nd Street and the residential neighborhoods behind.

The plan proposes a new apartment building on the west side of 52nd Street just north of the railroad embankment. This building could have some retail on its first floor. Surface parking is provided for 80 cars behind the building to maintain a pedestrian environment on 52nd Street.

West Philadelphia Retail Center

The West Philadelphia Retail TIF site represents a significant development opportunity in the 52nd Street station area. The plan proposes approximately 160,000 square feet of retail space and 325 parking spaces. The design of the retail center is intended to incorporate the large scale character of modern retail facilities with the condensed, pedestrian scale of TOD. The primary purpose is to shield the parking area from sight along 52nd Street, while maintaining visibility for businesses, particularly the anchor store on the eastern portion of the site. This is accomplished by fronting smaller scale businesses along 52nd Street and widening the entrance drive to provide a visual corridor into the site. A focal point of the development includes a pedestrian plaza at southwest corner of the site to provide "gateway" access from the station platform to the retail center.



Development East of 52nd Street

The focus of the residential neighborhood north of the rail line and east of 52nd Street is on reinvestment and infill of the existing housing stock. In West Parkside, vacant tracts just north of the retail center can accommodate approximately 55 new townhouse units in two clusters. The street pattern is modified to create a semi-private loop road south of Leidy Avenue to serve the larger development of 36 houses. These houses are also served by an alley which, with fences, separates them from the extension of Jefferson Street serving the retail center. Additional infill housing, of a scale compatible with existing houses, can be accommodated on vacant parcels scattered throughout the area.

The plan proposes that light industrial and other employment-generating uses be located in the Keystone Opportunity Zone directly east of the retail center. This area has access from Parkside Avenue and is relatively isolated from existing and new residential uses as noted above.

Development West of 52nd Street

Infill housing is proposed on seventeen scattered vacant parcels throughout this area. Viola Street would need to be extended to the west across 52nd Street to create a safer location and provide access to twelve of the proposed infill houses. Homes are located along this block to take advantage of the views across Parkside Avenue of the Mann Center for the Performing Arts and Fairmount Park. Another aesthetic component of this area is the proposed community garden/park, nestled between the intersection of Parkside Avenue, 52nd Street, and the new Viola Street extension. The community garden/park also serves as a buffer between existing and proposed residences and the heavily travelled Parkside Avenue.

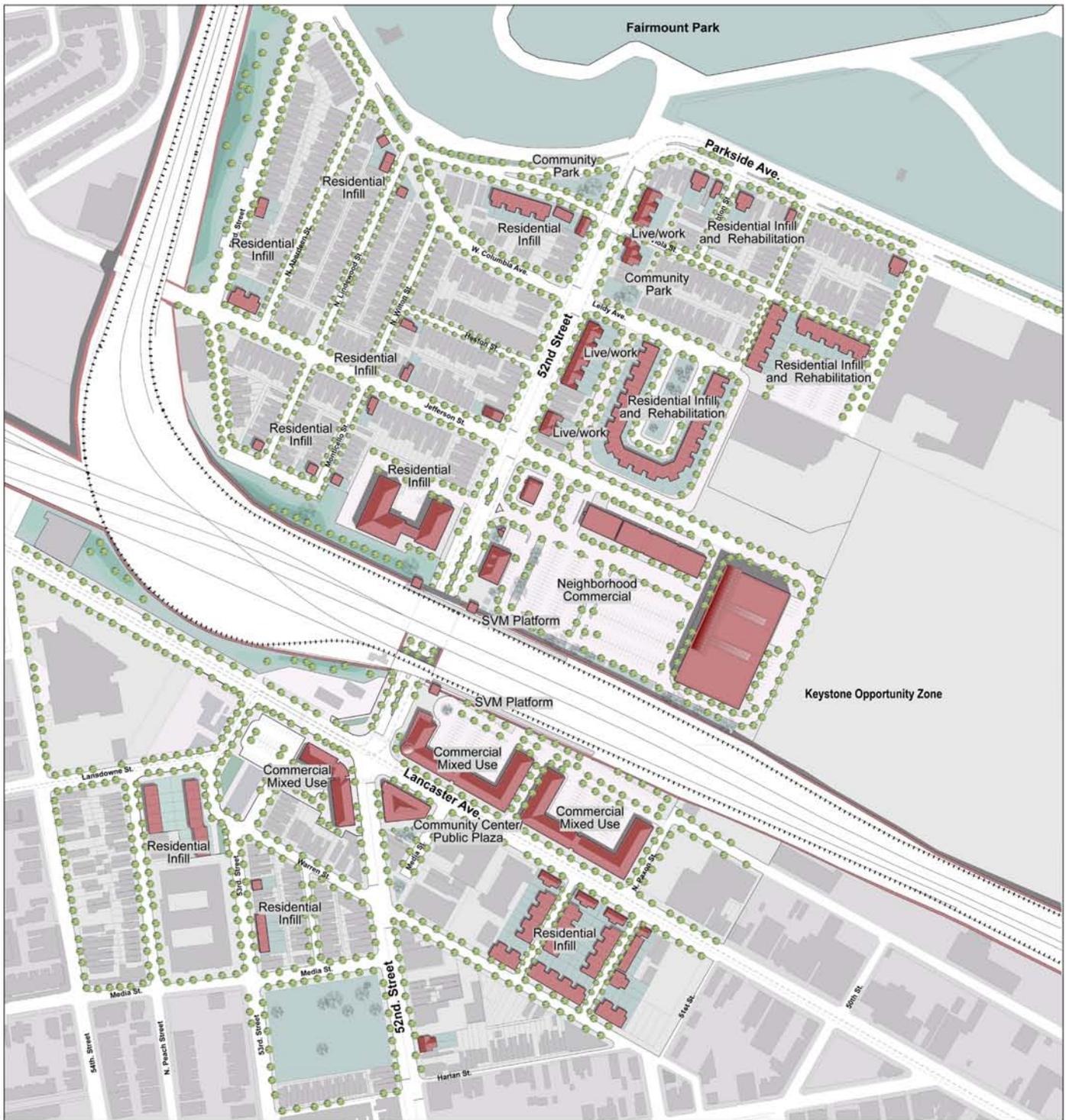
Potential development in this area also includes a proposed 80 unit apartment building with first floor retail and parking for 80 cars on the existing used car lot located across 52nd Street from the retail center. The parking lot is located behind the building to maintain a pedestrian scale along 52nd Street.

Lancaster Avenue Corridor

Lancaster Avenue is a major commercial corridor in West Philadelphia. In the 52nd Street station area, however, much of the commercial viability has deteriorated as a result of disinvestment. There are some viable businesses on Lancaster Avenue, however many of the structures are vacant and some are in very poor condition. The SVM station area plan proposes to stimulate reinvestment along the commercial corridor through rehabilitation of existing structures, replacement of deteriorated structures, and relocation of businesses that are incompatible with the TOD concept.

The latter strategy includes possible relocation of the existing New Deal Lumber facility to the nearby KOZ. The plan proposes to replace the lumber facility and the adjacent Mobil gas station with approximately 140,000 square feet of office space. The proposed office development is designed to enhance the pedestrian scale of Lancaster Avenue, with parking areas located behind buildings and direct pedestrian linkages to the train station.





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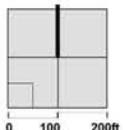
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A portion of the parking area would be converted from an underutilized and often dangerous section of Merion Avenue.

Directly across Lancaster Avenue from the proposed office development, a community center with a public plaza is proposed to replace the dilapidated structures on the corner property at Lancaster Avenue and 52nd Street. To improve this corner, Media Street would be closed at Warren Street to remove cut-through traffic from Lancaster Avenue to 52nd Street. The existing commercial mews at the intersection of Lancaster Avenue, 52nd Street, and Lansdowne Avenue is proposed to be rehabilitated into small scale mixed-use units with retail on the ground floor and apartments above. A new parking area is proposed behind the buildings with access from 52nd Street. To complement this commercial corner, a new retail facility is proposed to occupy the vacant corner property at the intersection of Lancaster and Lansdowne Avenues.

South of Lancaster Avenue

Nineteen new residential units are proposed to replace the mostly vacant and delapidated structures between Lansdowne Avenue and Shoemaker Elementary School. To provide a more cohesive residential pattern, Warren Street is closed at 53rd Street so that it does not cut off the block. More new residential development is proposed on the site of the existing Schnyder Plumbing and Heating facility. It is recommended that this facility be relocated to a better location in the nearby KOZ, thereby making room for approximately 50 new townhouses. Residential infill development in both the Overbrook and West Parkside neighborhoods is expected to reinforce and enhance the stability of the neighborhoods while stimulating reinvestment in less stable areas.

Transportation and Circulation Plan

The transportation plan for the station area addresses the immediate environment of the SVM platform, including its access points, as well as the larger systems of transit, automobile, bicycle, and pedestrian circulation in the context of the proposed development program.

Station Configuration

SEPTA has proposed the 52nd Street station as a side-loaded platform, as illustrated in the Study Background, with access to outbound trains on the northernmost rail alignment and inbound access on the southernmost alignment. The SVM alignment will consist of new tracks. Between the inbound and outbound SVM tracks are, from north the south, the outbound R-5 Local, the outbound Amtrak and R-5 Express, and the inbound Amtrak and R-5 lines. An existing outbound R-6 alignment, located just north of the inbound Amtrak and R-5, will be abandoned when the SVM is operational. At this time, none of these existing trains stop at 52nd Street.

The proposed station platforms will be located on the elevated bridge and embankment above 52nd Street. Consequently, improvements to the platform are not likely to have a direct impact on the surrounding circulation system. It is possible that preliminary engineering will identify a need to widen the platform area on the south side, perhaps



resulting in a footprint that is larger than the existing. Access to both platforms from the 52nd Street sidewalk level will be provided via stairs and elevators on the east side of 52nd Street.

Proposed Traffic Pattern

The proposed traffic pattern is presented in the accompanying *Proposed Traffic Pattern* diagram. Overall, the pattern remains largely the same as it is now, with some minor alignment changes, directional changes, and street closings. A significant addition to the current transportation pattern includes the proposed Route 10 trolley and City Branch light rail vehicle alignments. The latter is proposed to operate on Parkside Avenue, turn south on 52nd Street and join the Route 10 trolley at Lancaster Avenue.

As illustrated on the Proposed Traffic Pattern diagrams, primary modifications to the existing traffic pattern are proposed in the following four locations:

- Around the proposed retail center
- 52nd Street and Parkside Avenue
- 52nd Street and Lancaster Avenue
- The section of Merion Avenue that abuts the railroad right-of-way

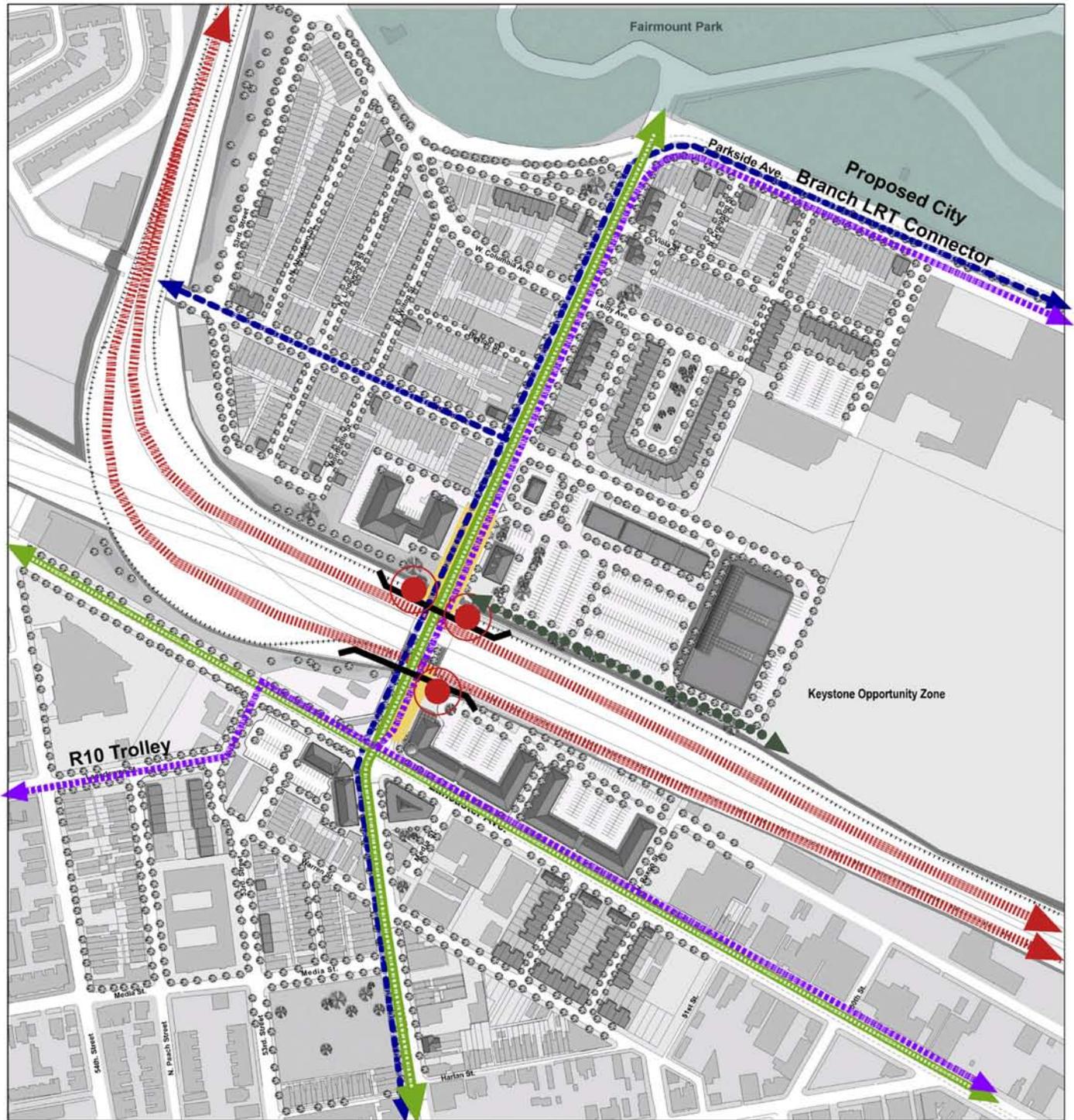
The retail center is proposed to have vehicular access from 52nd Street north of the SVM transit plaza. It will also have access on Jefferson Street, primarily for service and autos using potential drive-through retail facilities.

The plan proposes modifications at 52nd Street and Parkside Avenue to address safety and quality of life issues. Currently, as illustrated on the *Existing Transportation* map, eastbound traffic on Parkside Avenue is able to use Columbia Avenue as a high speed short cut to southbound 52nd Street, negatively impacting residential properties on Columbia Avenue. To mitigate this problem, it is recommended that Columbia Avenue is converted into a narrower, eastbound one way street. The current traffic pattern also encourages dangerous turning movements on Columbia and Parkside Avenues. The proposed traffic pattern addresses these issues by creating an enhanced intersection with a community garden/park serving as a buffer between the road and residential properties. Medians are also proposed on Parkside Avenue to channel traffic away from the neighborhood.

Traffic pattern modifications are also proposed in the 52nd Street and Lancaster Avenue area to improve safety and quality of life for residents and businesses. The current five point intersection of 52nd Street, Lancaster Avenue, Lansdowne Avenue, and 53rd Street will be improved by closing 53rd Street at Lancaster Avenue and relocating it to a midblock section on Lansdowne Avenue. This change, in conjunction with some signalization and pedestrian timing improvements, will simplify the intersection, improve the environment for residents and businesses, and create several additional lots for infill development. The pattern change also allows better and safer access to the mixed use development facing the 52nd Street and Lancaster Avenue intersection. To the east of 52nd Street, the plan proposes the partial closure of the portion of Media Street between Lancaster Avenue and

52nd STREET STATION West Philadelphia

Proposed Transportation Circulation Plan

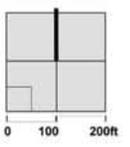


- ◄●●●► Special Pedestrian Path
- Trolley Line
- Bike Lane
- Bus
- Rail Line
- Bus Stop
- Station
- Civic Space

SVM
Schuylkill Valley Metro
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52nd STREET STATION West Philadelphia

Proposed Traffic Pattern



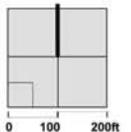
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52nd STREET STATION West Philadelphia Proposed Traffic Pattern Change

52nd Street and Parkside Avenue



Existing Condition



Proposed Traffic Pattern



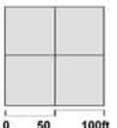
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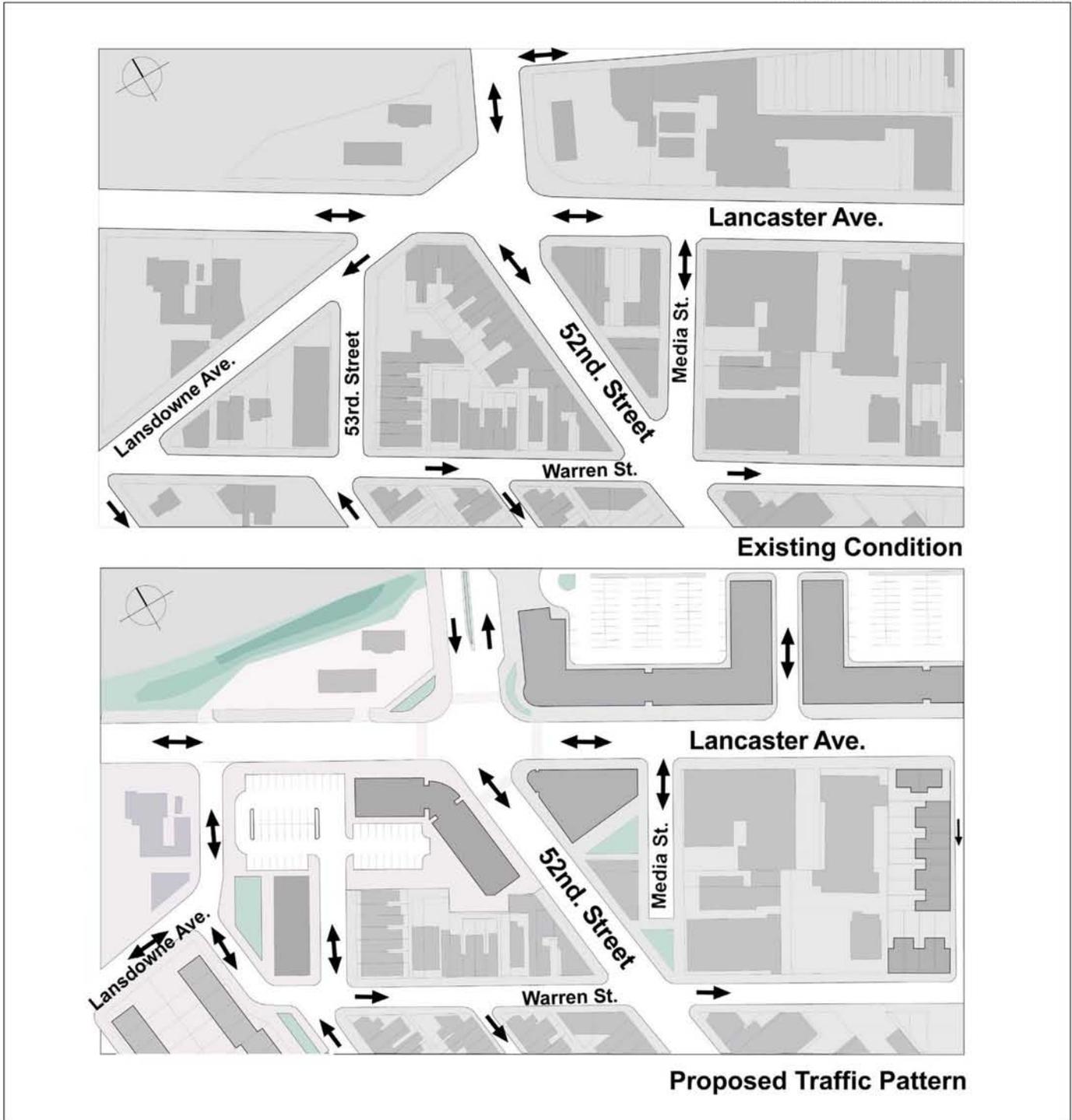
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52nd STREET STATION West Philadelphia Proposed Traffic Pattern Change

52nd Street and Lancaster Avenue



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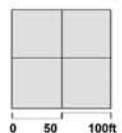
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Warren Street to remove cut through traffic to 52nd Street, thereby improving conditions for a plaza at the proposed community center.

Finally, the transportation plan proposes conversion of a portion of Merion Avenue to use for parking to support the new commercial/office buildings on Lancaster Avenue. This change will remove an area of low security without impeding traffic flow.

Transit Station Area Circulation

The transit zone circulation concept is presented on the accompanying street section diagram. A section key map presents the location of the sections, A through F, that illustrate how the different traffic and circulation movements can be integrated with pedestrian movement and adjacent land uses within the available public right-of-way. The maps show the location of proposed trolley/light rail and bus stops as well as access points to the SVM station platforms. The stretch of 52nd Street from Lancaster to Parkside Avenue will function as a transit transfer facility. Most of this activity will take place in smaller areas on either side of the bridge. In addition, pedestrian and bicycle movements are accommodated in a manner designed to minimize conflicts among the different modes of movement. Street Section diagrams A through F present more detailed views of the proposed manner of accomplishing this in sections along the street. In addition to the trolley/light rail facilities a series of streetscape and bicycle lane improvements are proposed.

Generally, the improvements include a proposed trolley line, referred to as the City Branch line, as a major component of multi-modal connections to the SVM station. To accommodate trolley service, new track would be laid within the outer curb side traffic lanes on 52nd Street. To the south, the trolley would connect with the existing tracks at Lansdowne and Lancaster Avenues, following the loop and continuing north. The northbound trolley would connect to existing track on Parkside Avenue, continuing to Center City. Bus service is currently provided along 52nd Street. Bus pull-off lanes are proposed to accommodate connection to the train station.

The existing sidewalk along 52nd Street is 19 feet wide, which provides enough room for pedestrian movement, landscaping, and exclusive bicycle lanes. Along most of the corridor, proposed bicycle lanes accommodate a straight, unobstructed path, except where bus pull off lanes are located, at which point, as illustrated on Street Sections D and F, bicycle movement must shift away from the bus lane.

The 52nd Street station area consists of an urban street pattern with a predominantly pedestrian scale. Therefore SEPTA has not proposed parking for the train station. The parking that has been provided in the development plan is intended for the use of the proposed retail, commercial, and office developments. However, because of the pedestrian context of the station area, it is likely that a shared parking agreement will be needed.



IMPLEMENTATION

As part of the analytical process, the existing comprehensive plan, area plans, and zoning regulations were examined to determine whether the current policy would facilitate implementation of the recommended development plan. It was determined that while the existing plans and regulations are for the most part consistent, a few discretionary amendments are necessary to achieve an optimal implementation strategy. The following recommends specific amendments to the comprehensive plan and zoning ordinance to effectively implement the 52nd Street station development plan.

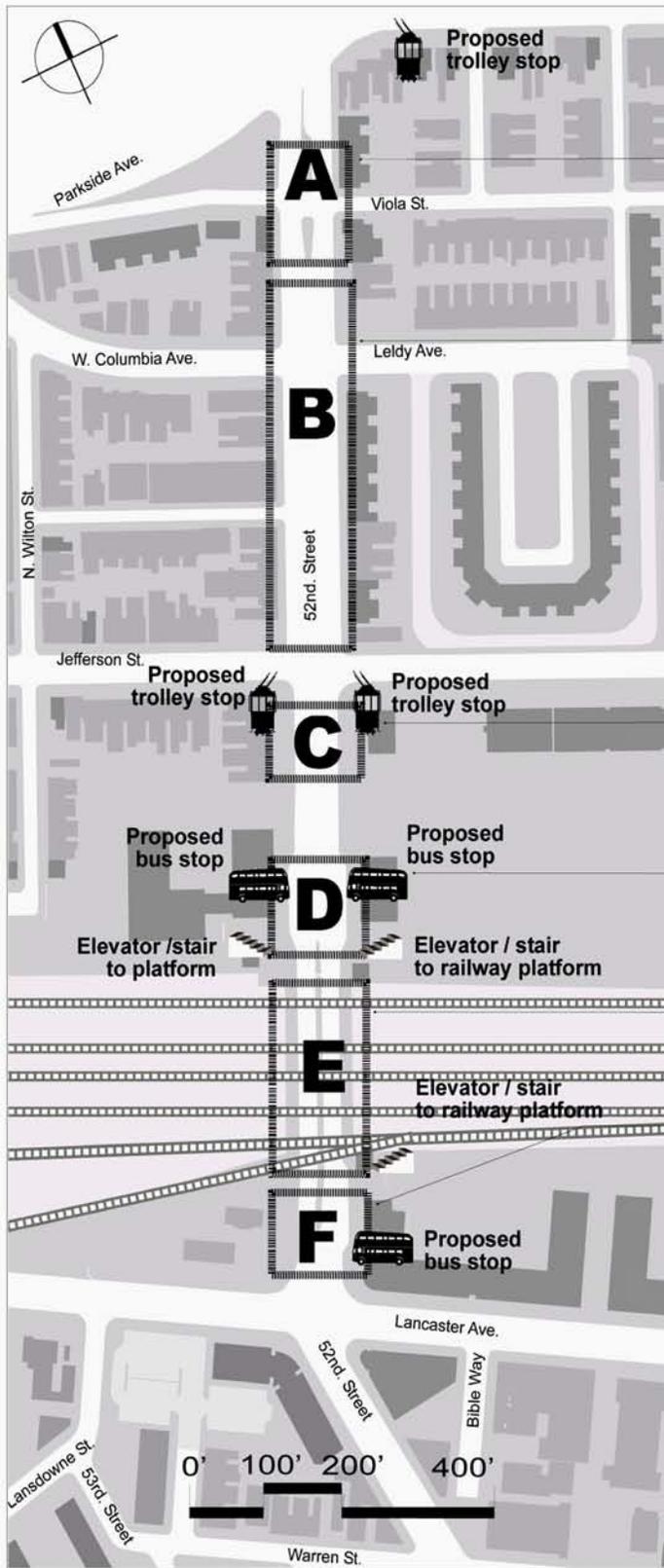
Recommended Comprehensive Plan Amendments

Three major area plans have been published that incorporate the 52nd Street station study area, including *The Plan for West Philadelphia, Lancaster Avenue: Strategies for Corridor Revitalization*, published by the Philadelphia City Planning Commission and *The West Parkside Transit Center: Project Identification Findings*, published by the Philadelphia Department of Commerce.

The *West Parkside Transit Center* plan is the most relevant and the most consistent with the proposed station area plan. However, *The Plan for West Philadelphia* should be the focus of any amendments since it is a component of the official comprehensive plan for the City of Philadelphia. *The Plan for West Philadelphia* includes plans and recommendations for the intersection of 52nd Street and Lancaster Avenue under the section entitled "Gateways and Image-Making Locations." These recommendations include redevelopment of commercial establishments, improvement of the rail yard, and consolidation of transit stops for the Route 10 trolley and Route 52 bus line, which are generally consistent with the proposed SVM development plan. However, a significant inconsistency includes the recommended redevelopment strategy to demolish the existing train station without plans to reestablish commuter rail service. Since the plan was published prior to planning for the SVM, it will require some amendments to bring it consistent with current planning initiatives. Specifically, this section of the plan should be amended to include elements of the West Parkside Transit Center plan that recommend replacing the existing station with a newly constructed one. Therefore, Part Four of *The Plan for West Philadelphia*, under the section "Gateways and Image-Making Locations – 52nd and Lancaster," the amendments to the third paragraph should read as follows:

Immediately north of Lancaster Avenue, there once were active rail yards to the east and west of the 52nd Street, connected by an extra wide bridge. Adjoining that bridge was a multi-level passenger station, also on a structure above the street. Once a vital hub for local passenger transportation in the West Parkside area, the station serving Philadelphia and its western suburbs fell into disuse and eventually was closed. Since the 1970's, the facility gradually grew dilapidated and finally became a hazard. The negative impression left by the decaying station also contributed to the deteriorating image of West Parkside. One of the first positive developments in the long





Section A
North end of 52nd Street from Parkside Avenue to below Viola Street.

Section B
Below Viola Street to Jefferson Street.

Section C
Below Jefferson Street.

Section D
Below Jefferson Street to railway bridge.

Section E
Under railway bridge.

Section F
Between Lancaster Avenue and railway bridge.

52nd St. Street Section Diagram



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Section A

LOCATION:

North end of 52nd Street from Parkside Avenue to below Viola Street.

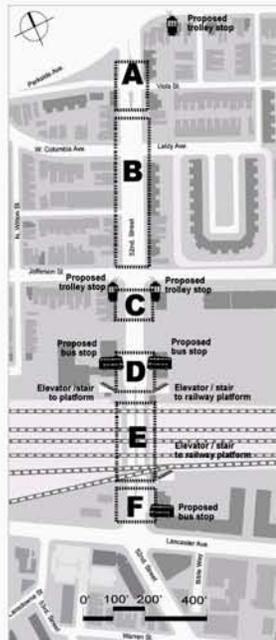
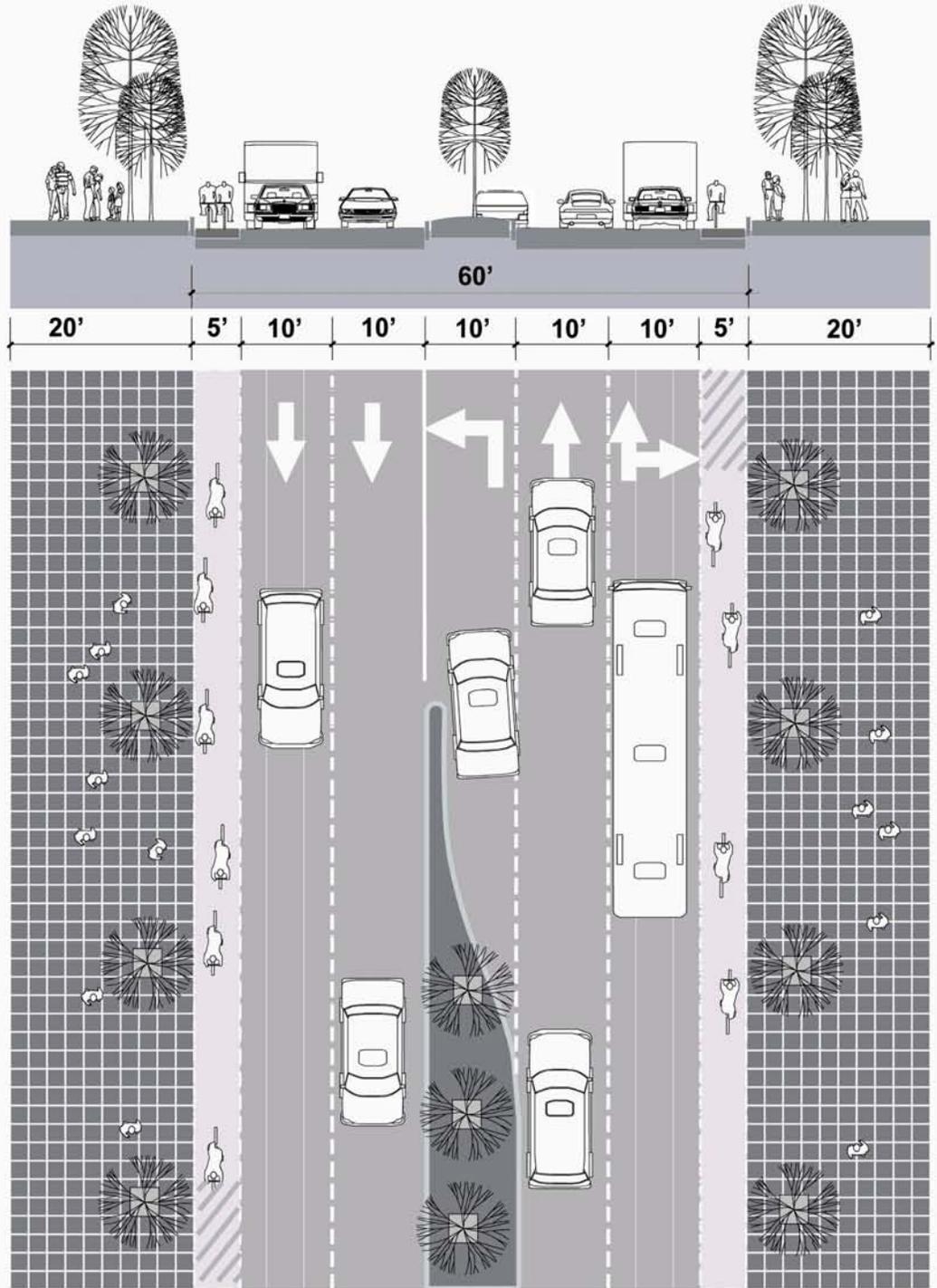
STREET DESIGN:

Southbound Direction:

1. 20' wide pedestrian area with street trees and furniture.
2. 5' wide bicycle lane on the road next to curb with striped trolley and bus stop zones.
3. Two 10' wide travel lanes.
4. Trolley in curbside lane.
5. 10' wide landscaped median with turn lane.
6. No on-street parking.

North Direction:

1. 20' wide pedestrian area with street trees and furniture.
2. 5' wide bicycle lane on the road next to curb with striped trolley and bus stop zones.
3. Two 10' wide travel lanes.
4. Trolley in curbside lane.
5. 10' wide landscaped median with turn lane.
6. No on-street parking.



Schuykill Valley Metro Corridor Station Area Planning and Implementation Study

Prepared for: Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission

Prepared by: Wallace Roberts & Todd, LLC

With: Parsons Brinckerhoff Quade & Douglas, Inc.
Hammer Siler George Associates, Inc.

Beach Advertising, Inc.
ArchPlan Inc. / Philipsen Architects

Section B

LOCATION:

Below Viola Street to Jefferson Street.

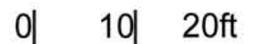
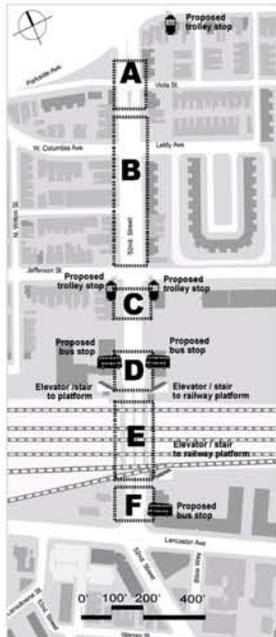
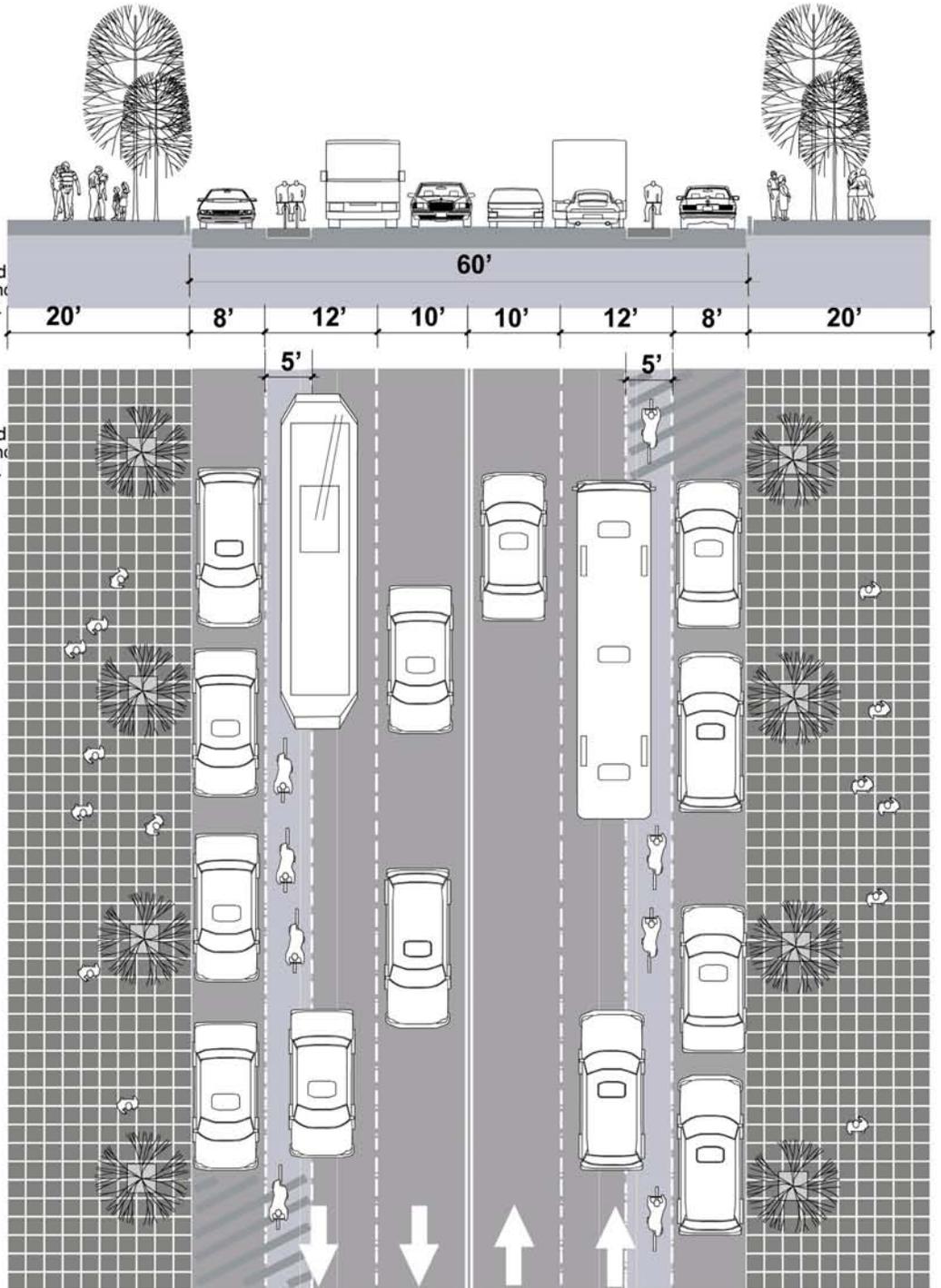
STREET DESIGN:

Southbound Direction:

1. 20' wide pedestrian area with street trees and furniture.
2. 8' wide parking lane.
3. 12' wide travel lane with 5' stripped bicycle lane on curbside, trolley and bus stop zone.
4. 10' wide travel lane.

Northbound Direction:

1. 20' wide pedestrian area with street trees and furniture.
2. 8' wide parking lane.
3. 12' wide travel lane with 5' stripped bicycle lane on curbside, trolley and bus stop zone.
4. 10' wide travel lane.



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Section C

LOCATION:

Below Jefferson Street.

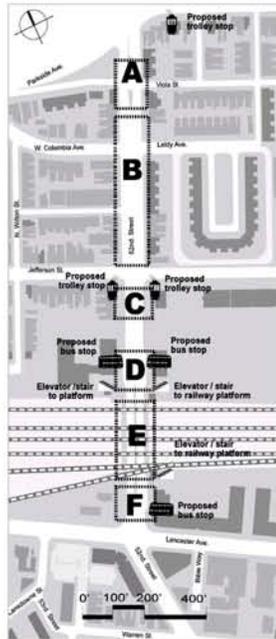
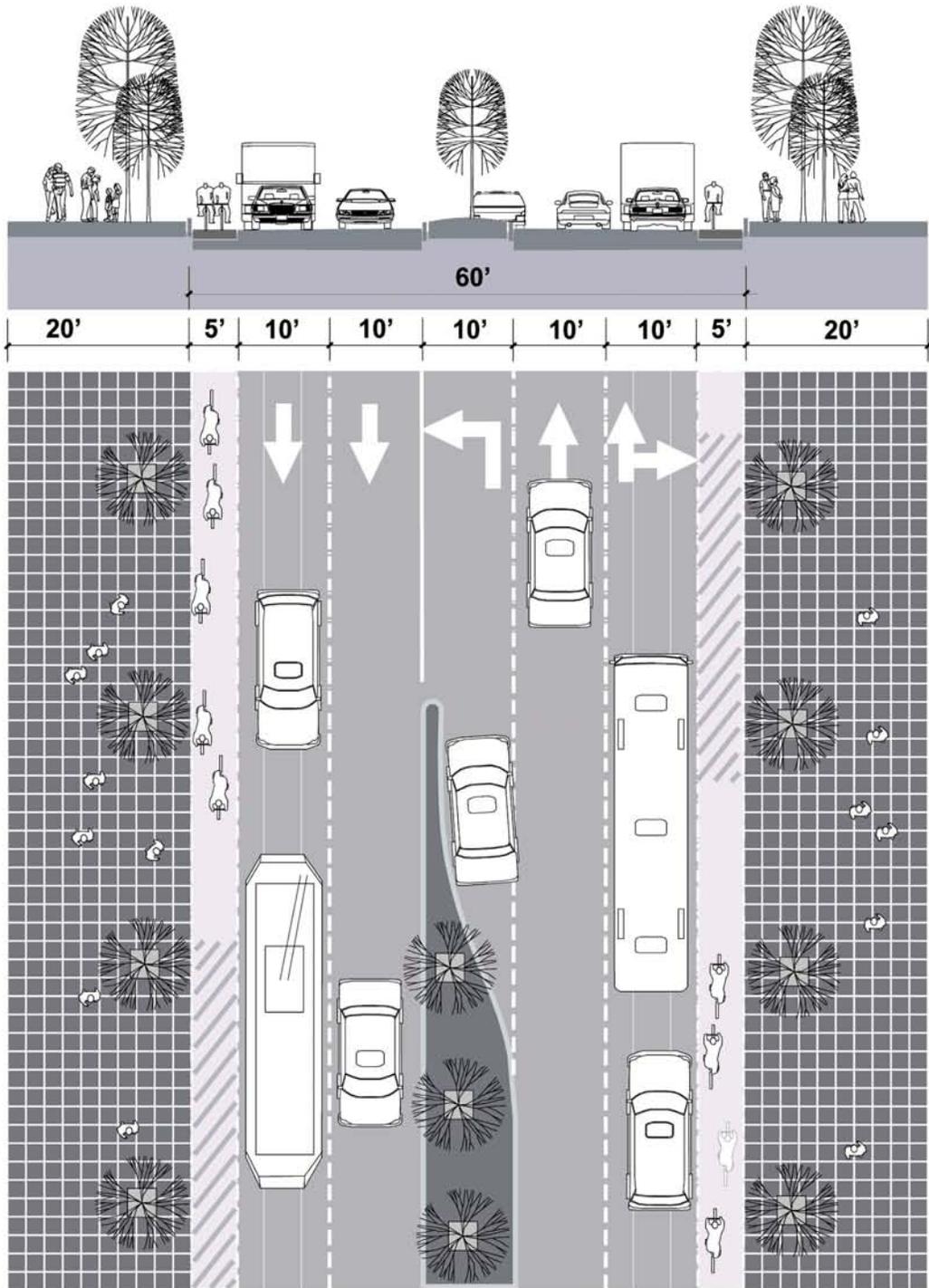
STREET DESIGN:

Southbound Direction:

1. 20' wide pedestrian area with street trees and furniture.
2. 5' bicycle lane on the road next to curb with striped trolley and bus stop zone.
3. Two 10' wide travel lanes.
4. Trolley lane in curbside lane.
5. 10' wide landscaped median with turn lane.
6. No on-street parking.

Northbound Direction:

1. 20' wide pedestrian area with street trees and furniture.
2. 5' bicycle lane on the road next to curb with striped trolley and bus stop zone.
3. Two 10' wide travel lanes.
4. Trolley lane in curbside lane.
5. 10' wide landscaped median with turn lane.
6. No on-street parking.



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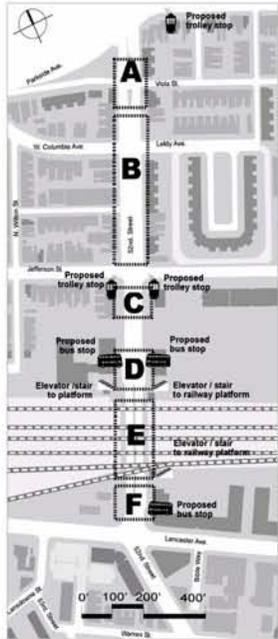
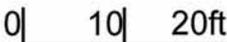
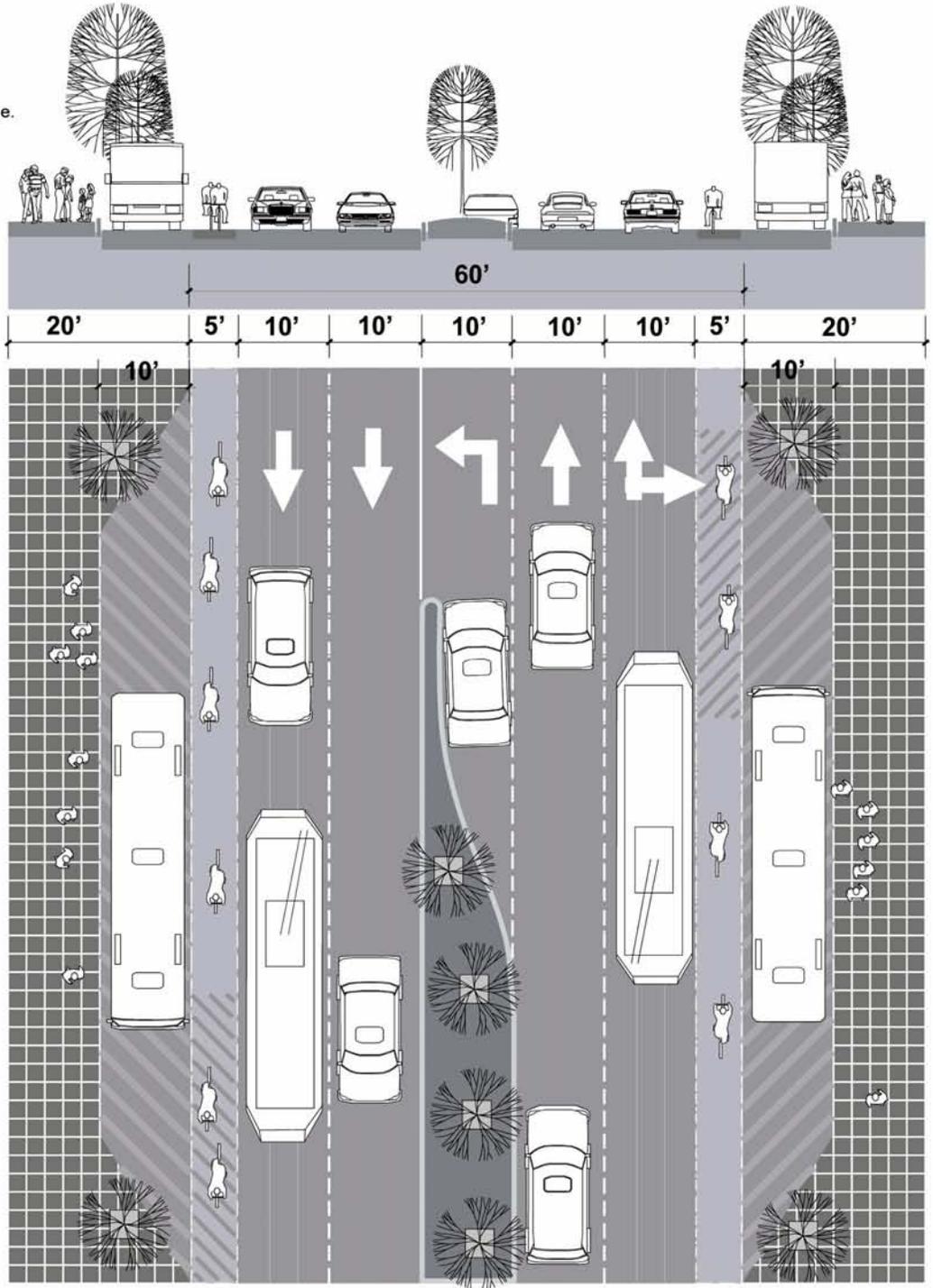
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Section D

LOCATION:
Below Jefferson Street to railway bridge.

- STREET DESIGN:**
- Southbound Direction:**
1. 10'-20' wide pedestrian area with street trees and furniture.
 2. 10' wide bus pullover area.
 3. 5' wide bicycle lane on the road next to curb with striped trolley stop zone.
 4. Two 10' wide travel lanes.
 5. Trolley in curbside lane.
 6. 10' landscaped median with turn lane south of driveways.

- Northbound Direction:**
1. 10'-20' wide pedestrian area with street trees and furniture.
 2. 10' wide bus pullover area.
 3. 5' wide bicycle lane on the road next to curb with striped trolley stop zone.
 4. Two 10' wide travel lanes.
 5. Trolley in curbside lane.
 6. 10' landscaped median with turn lane south of driveways.



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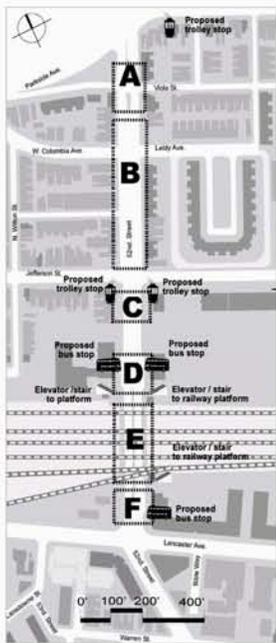
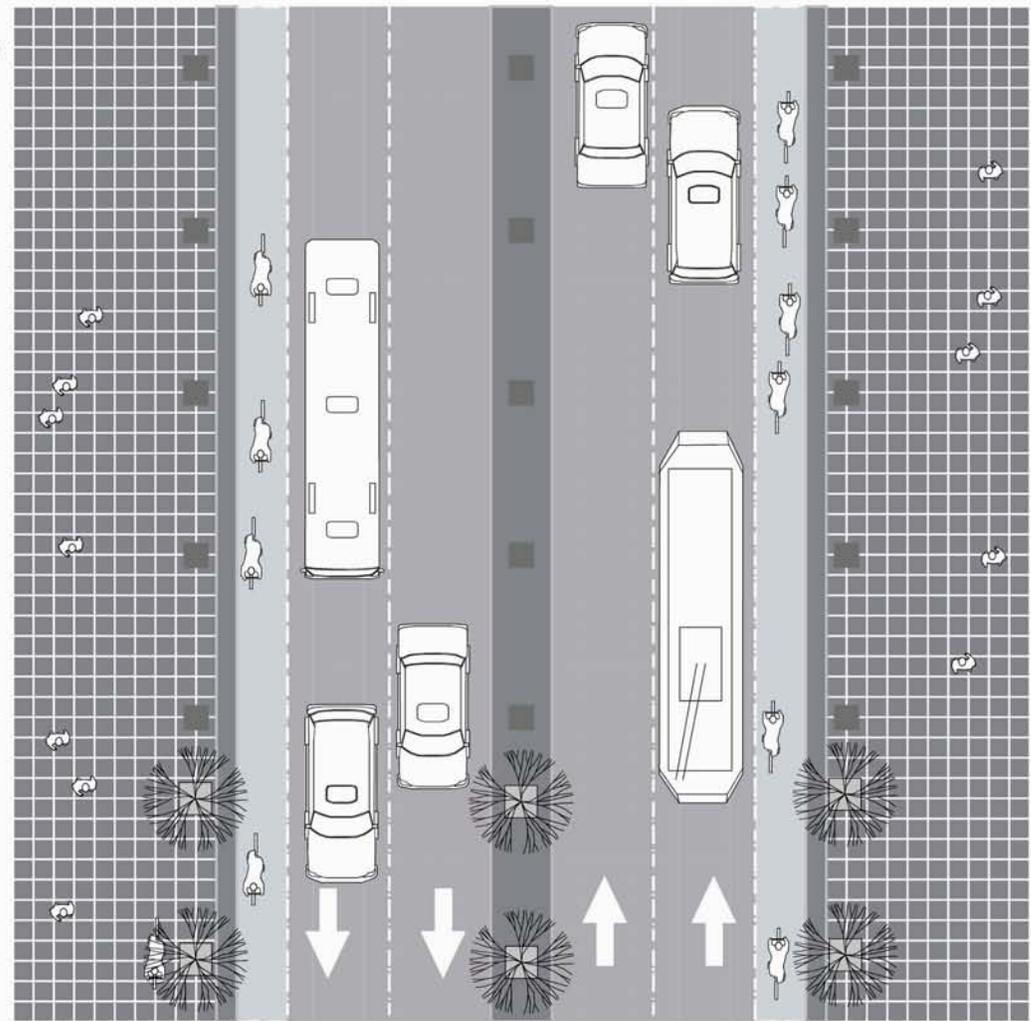
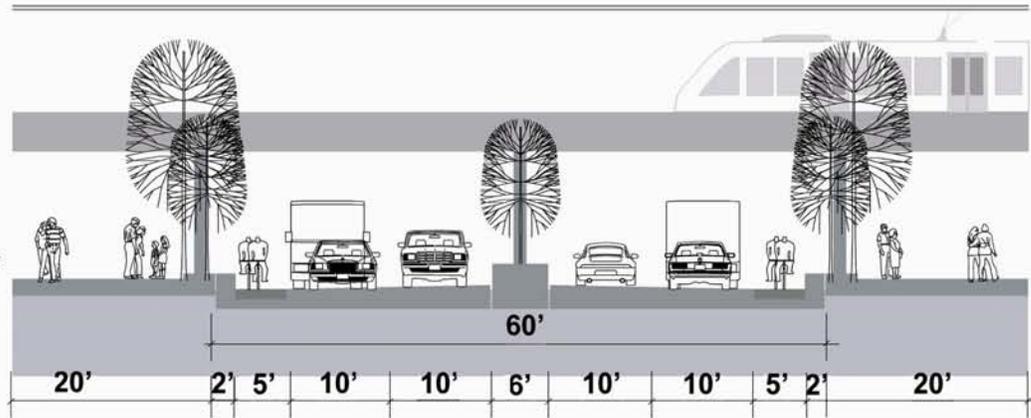
Beach Advertising, Inc.
ArchPlan Inc. / Philipsen Architects

Section E

LOCATION:
Under railway bridge.

- STREET DESIGN:**
- Southbound Direction:**
1. 20' wide pedestrian area with lighting and street trees (as possible under the opening in bridge).
 2. 5' wide bicycle lane on the road next to the curb.
 3. Two 10' wide travel lanes.
 4. Trolley in curbside lane.
 5. 6' median with concrete protection for bridge columns.
 6. No on-street parking.

- Northbound Direction:**
1. 20' wide pedestrian area with lighting and street trees (as possible under the opening in bridge).
 2. 5' wide bicycle lane on the road next to the curb.
 3. Two 10' wide travel lanes.
 4. Trolley in curbside lane.
 5. 6' median with concrete protection for bridge columns.
 6. No on-street parking.



Schuylkill Valley Metro Corridor Station Area Planning and Implementation Study

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Section F

LOCATION:

Between Lancaster Avenue and the bridge.

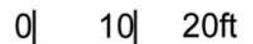
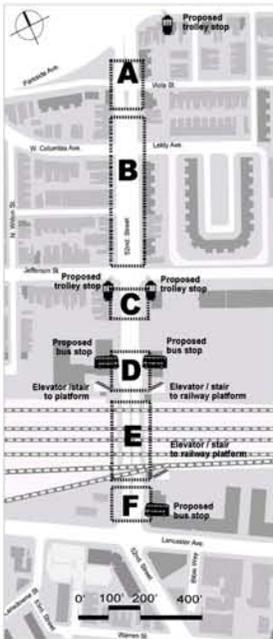
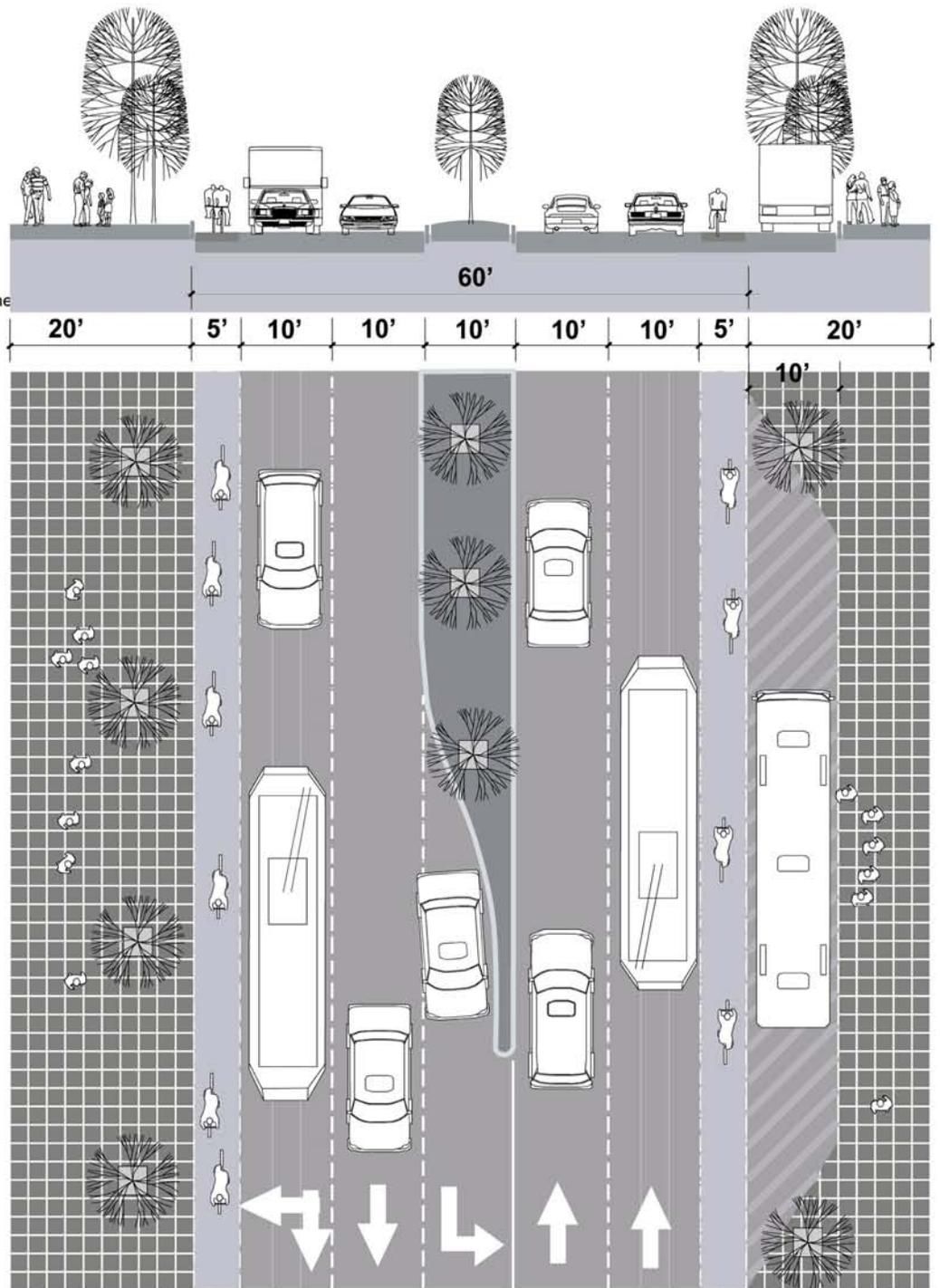
STREET DESIGN:

Southbound Direction:

1. 20' wide pedestrian area with street trees and furniture.
2. 5' wide bicycle lane on the road next to the curb.
3. Two 10' wide travel lanes.
4. Trolley in curbside lane.
5. 10' landscaped median with turn lane.
6. No on-street parking.

Northbound Direction:

1. 10'-20' wide pedestrian area with street trees and furniture.
2. 10' wide bus pullover area.
3. 5' wide bicycle lane on the road next to the curb.
4. Two 10' wide travel lanes.
5. Trolley in curbside lane.
6. 10' landscaped median.
7. No on-street parking.



Schuykill Valley Metro Corridor Station Area Planning and Implementation Study

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process of rebuilding the area was a study begun by SEPTA and BARTA in 1998 to provide commuter rail service between Philadelphia and Reading. The proposed rail line is called the Schuylkill Valley Metro and includes plans to reestablish service at the 52nd Street station with new and improved facilities.

Restored rail service to the area would generate a number of positive outcomes, including enhanced investment prospects for existing businesses as well as incentives for new development. Rail service would also stimulate renewed interest in nearby attractions such as Fairmount Park, the Mann Center for the Performing Arts, and the Philadelphia Zoo.

Recommended Zoning Amendments

Most of the study area is zoned appropriately for the proposed station area development plan. The minor exception is the proposed mixed-use strip along 52nd Street. Most of this area is zoned R-9 residential, except for a few areas of commercial zoning. R-9 zoning permits single family and multi-family residential uses, plus some office and institutional uses at the discretion of the Board of Adjustment. In order to accommodate the type of mixed-use character that would generate activity along the corridor, this area should be rezoned to R-C4 Residential. R-C4 permits a wide variety of uses at a scale that is appropriate for a residential area like West Parkside. In addition, *the Lancaster Avenue: Strategies for Corridor Revitalization* plan recommends rezoning the area along Lancaster Avenue from Industrial to C-7 Commercial to promote commercial development along the corridor. The plan also recommends establishing a "Special Controls District" overlay zone to add design controls along the corridor. The overlay zone would require all buildings to be built to the sidewalk, require additional landscaping, and prohibit billboards. Such zoning strategies are consistent with the SVM development plan and should be refined to incorporate design standards that strengthen the station as the focal point of the neighborhood.

For the 52nd Street station study area, a combination of two zoning techniques is recommended to facilitate implementation of the station area design concept. The first technique involves a remapping of the existing zoning districts. The remapping may include rezoning the properties fronting along 52nd Street, which includes mostly R-9 zoning with some small areas of C-1, C-2, and C-3 districts to R-C4 mixed residential. Also, the existing Light Industrial zoning along Lancaster Avenue should be rezoned to C-7 Commercial as recommended in the *Lancaster Avenue: Strategies for Corridor Revitalization* plan. R-C4 zoning will permit commercial and office development while prohibiting manufacturing and other industrial businesses along the corridor, which may be more appropriate in the adjacent KOZ.

The *Existing Zoning* and *Proposed Zoning* maps illustrate the remapping strategy recommend for the study area. In addition, the following table describes the regulations under the existing zoning districts versus proposed districts.



52nd Street Corridor

District	Existing Zoning			Proposed Zoning
	R9	C1	C2	RC4
Permitted Uses	Single family detached, semi-detached, attached houses; Multi-family detached, semi-detached, attached houses; places of worship, galleries, museums, libraries, railroad passenger stations.	Commercial activity is restricted to the first floor of the building. A limited list of retail and personal service commercial uses is permitted.	Residential uses, retail sales, restaurants, offices, automobile repairs, service stations, take-out restaurants, entertainment uses, outdoor uses; laundromat, dry cleaning by special exception.	Attached, semi-detached, and multi-family dwellings; retail sales, separately or in any combination, vendor carts or stands located within the public space of the premises and dealing directly with consumers; hotels as defined, except in attached buildings.
Min. Lot Area	1,440 sq. ft.	Equal to most restrictive abutting district	none	none
Min. Lot Width	16 ft.	"	none	none
Max Bldg. Coverage	70%	"	75%	80 to 100 %
Front Yard	8 ft.	"	none	varies
Side Yard	5 ft.	"	none	varies
Rear Yard	9 ft.	"	10% of depth of lot	varies
Bldg. Height		35 ft.	35 ft.	varies
Max. G.F.A. (% of Lot Area)	NA	NA	NA	500% + bonus

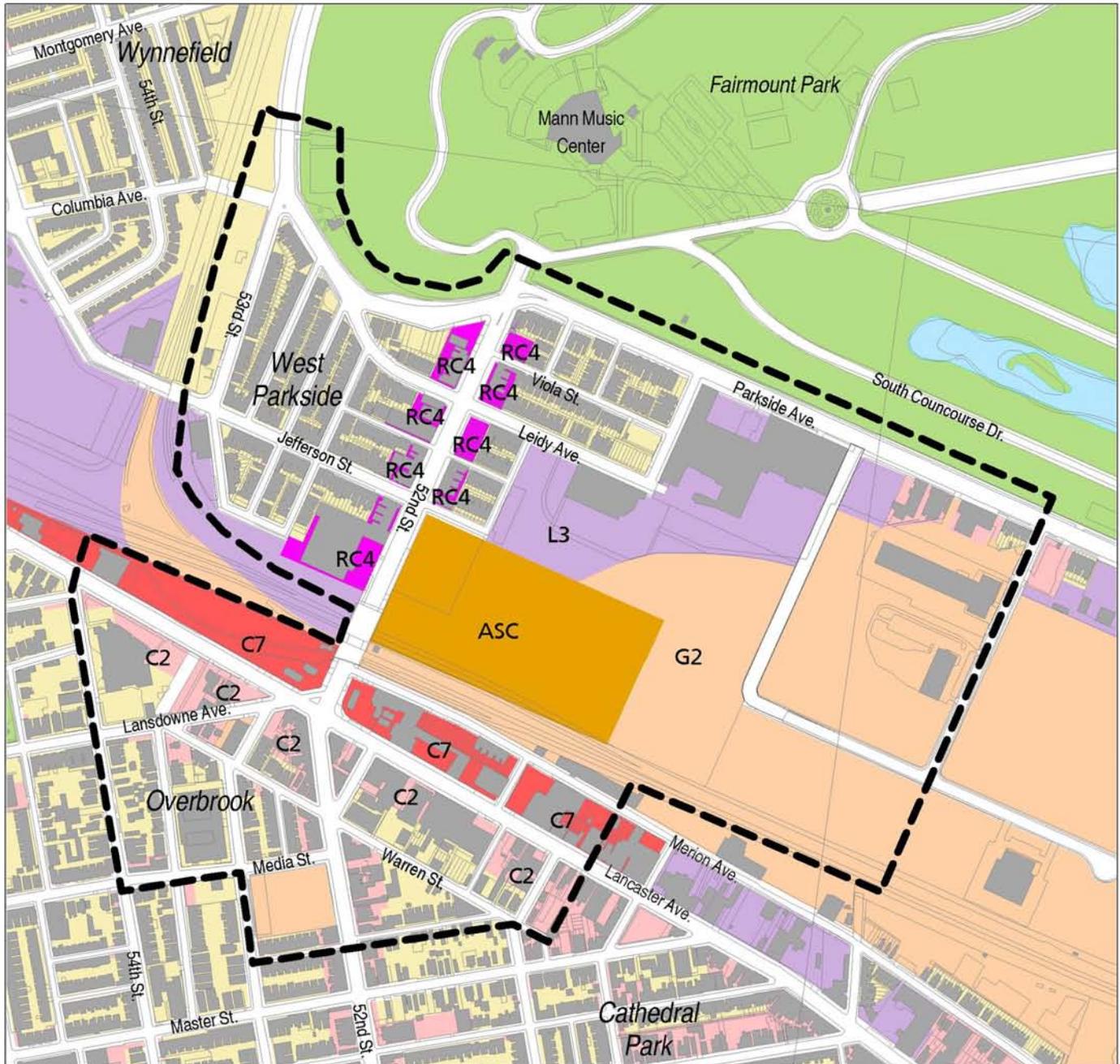
Lancaster Ave Corridor

District	Existing	Proposed
	L4	C7
Permitted Uses	Warehousing, distribution, truck terminals, food processing, and light manufacturing, commercial and office uses excluding restaurants and nightclubs.	Retail sales, restaurants, offices; auto repair, service stations, take-out restaurants and laundromats require ZBA approval
Min. Lot Area	none	5,000 sq. ft.
Min. Lot Width	none	50 ft.
Max Bldg Coverage	100%	60%
Front Yard	0	none
Side Yard	0	none
Rear Yard	0	none
Bldg. Height	60 ft.	35ft.
Max. G.F.A. (% of Lot Area)	5	0.75



52nd STREET STATION West Philadelphia

Proposed Zoning



LEGEND

Station Study Area

REC Recreation

R5, R9, R10 Residential

C1, C2, C3 Commercial

G2 - Industrial

ASC Area Shopping Center

L3, L4 Light Industrial

RC4 Residential

C7 Commercial

Transit Center Overlay Zone



**Schuykill Valley Metro
Corridor Station Area Planning and Implementation Study**

Prepared for:

Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission

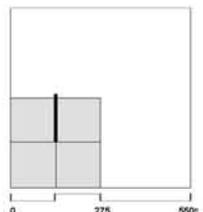
Prepared by:



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Design Guidelines

In addition to the remapping, a new overlay zone is recommended to include the following design controls to ensure a transit oriented development pattern.

A. Building Set-Back Line

1. Newly erected buildings shall have no front setback from the sidewalk.

B. Bulk and Height Controls

1. The maximum height of structures shall be 45 feet.
2. Limitations on floor area used for commercial purpose
 - a) The Gross Floor Area (as a percent of lot area) for non-residential structures shall be a minimum of 35% and a maximum of 200%.
3. Limitations on density for residential structures
 - a) Residential densities shall be a minimum of 9 units per acre and a maximum of 70 units per acre.

C. Building Orientation

1. Building Orientation – Front building facades and main entrances shall be parallel and oriented to the street.

D. Façade Treatment

1. For non-residential development, ground floor facades that face public streets shall be articulated to provide visual interest and a human scale consistent with the traditional character of the existing neighborhood. Such facades shall have arcades, display windows, entry areas, awnings, or other such features along not less than 60 percent of their length.
2. No facade shall exceed 50 feet of length uninterrupted by such features.

E. Off-street Parking and Loading

1. Locations
 - a) Surface parking lots shall be located behind buildings or in the interior of a block whenever possible.
 - b) Surface parking lots shall not occupy more than 33 percent of the frontage of a pedestrian-oriented street.
 - c) Loading and service areas shall not face a public street.
2. Structured Parking
 - a) Retail uses are encouraged on the first floor of street-side edges of parking structures.



- b) Portions of parking structures that do not have first level retail uses shall be articulated and otherwise have an appearance similar to the structure(s) it serves.

3. Configuration

- a) Parking lots for proposed developments requiring more than 100 parking spaces shall be broken into discrete areas separated by landscaped buffers, an internal roadway with a landscaped buffer on at least one side, or buildings.
- b) An internal path or sidewalk located within the landscape areas between and connecting the parking areas is strongly encouraged.

4. Shared Parking

- a) Joint parking usage is strongly encouraged for adjacent non-residential uses and apartment buildings.
- b) Shared parking areas should be conveniently located to all users, but do not need to be located on the same parcel.

5. Access

- a) To the maximum extent feasible, vehicular access to parking areas shall be gained from an arterial or collector street.
- b) The number and width of curb cuts should be kept to a minimum. Parcels with multiple buildings shall have unified/joint access.
- c) Adjacent uses should provide for vehicular and pedestrian circulation between their sites, through parking lot or alley connections, hard surface walkways, and similar measures.

F. Street Locations

- 1. Developments shall utilize and connect with existing street networks where available. Where an existing or planned network of streets does not exist, streets shall be laid out in a pattern that maintains connectivity while reflecting the existing street system.
- 2. Cul-de-sac and "dead end" streets shall be avoided as much as possible.

G. Open Space

1. Private Development Requirements

- a) A minimum of 10% of the buildable land area should be set aside as open space. For non-residential development, required open or public space should include any one or a combination of the following outdoor amenities:



- (1) Pedestrian plaza or patio area, with seating
- (2) Outdoor dining
- (3) Water feature
- (4) Landscaped green area

b) Public / Civic Open Space

- (1) Public parks and plazas should be centrally located and adjacent to public streets, residential areas, and retail and office areas.
- (2) Public parks should also contain any one or a combination of the following outdoor amenities:
 - i) Pedestrian plaza or patio area, with seating
 - ii) Water feature
 - iii) Landscaped green area

H. Streetscape

1. Street Trees

- a) Shade trees shall be planted along all existing and proposed streets.
- b) Street trees may be planted either within a planting strip at least 4 feet wide or directly within a sidewalk. If street trees are planted directly in the sidewalk, tree grates of acceptable quality should be installed for each tree and a minimum unobstructed width of 6 feet shall be maintained between the tree and the edge of the sidewalk.

I. Sidewalks/Pedestrian Access

1. Sidewalks are required along all road frontages.
2. Sidewalks shall be designed with a minimum width of 6 feet.
3. Pedestrian paths shall be provided to connect building entrances to the nearest transit street(s) or major pedestrian route.
4. Direct pedestrian paths from parking areas to front entrances of structures shall be provided. Such paths must be at least 5 feet wide and be separated from parking areas by grade, different paving material, or landscaping.

J. Medians

1. All proposed and existing medians shall be landscaped with grass and shade trees when dimensionally feasible.
2. Shade trees shall be spaced no further than 30 feet on center. A limited number of same species are permitted to be planted in the median.



K. Bike Lanes

1. Designated bike lanes shall be provided on transit route collector streets and should converge upon the transit center when feasible.
2. Bike routes are also encouraged on smaller residential streets, but designated lanes are not required.
3. Bicycle parking facilities must be provided in commercial, institutional, and office developments and at the commuter train station.

L. Transit Area

1. Transit areas must provide shelter for pedestrians, convenient passenger loading zones, and secure bike storage.

M. Landscape Buffers

1. Service Area

- a) A minimum 10-foot landscaped buffer area shall be provided between service and loading areas and the property line.
- b) Plantings within the buffer shall consist of a mix of tree species.
- c) Trees shall be spaced no further than 30 feet on center.

2. Parking

- a) A minimum 10-foot landscaped buffer area shall be provided between parking areas and the property line or public right-of-way.
- b) Plantings within the buffer shall consist of a mix of species.

N. Lighting

1. All parking lots shall include lighting that shall illuminate the entire parking lot and walkways with an overall minimum average level of illumination of not less than 2 horizontal foot candles.
2. The illumination shall be maintained throughout non-business hours with an overall minimum average level of illumination of not less than 0.3 horizontal foot candles.
3. The illumination shall be focused upon the lot so as to prevent glare upon the surrounding areas.

In addition to the above regulations, the City should undertake a street lighting plan for 52nd Street that is similar to the concept proposed in the *Plan for West Philadelphia*. In Part Four, "Gateways and Image-Making Locations," the plan recommends a lighting plan strategy for Schuylkill River bridges to provide well-designed accent lighting that would mark neighborhood gateways in a celebratory manner while providing a safe and pleasant pedestrian experience. A similar strategy should be applied to 52nd Street under the railroad bridge.



Development Strategies

A number of real estate development strategies should be explored for infill and land development in the station area. Beyond the investments of individual property owners, there are a number of roles the public and not-for-profit sectors may play. Some of the proposed commercial/mixed-use development at 52nd Street and Lancaster Avenue can only be accommodated by the relocation of existing uses. For example, the existing lumber company on the north side and the plumbing supply business on the south side of Lancaster Avenue may be encouraged by tax and other incentives to relocate to the Keystone Opportunity Zone. This is an area that is more appropriate for these uses while still being close enough to the station to benefit from the enhanced transit service. Their relocation would permit more intense and transit oriented development to take advantage of proximity to the station. The City or one of its departments may find it appropriate to assist in land assembly in these cases as well.

The City of Philadelphia is still developing its Neighborhood Transformation Initiative program. As currently described, this program will focus City efforts for infill and redevelopment in areas such as this station area. It is anticipated that a number of public sector tools may become available to support the development concept proposed in this plan. While the program has not been finalized, it is expected that some of the tools would include land acquisition, relocation, financial assistance and others.

There are a variety of City and not-for-profit sector entities and programs currently engaged in the area, including the following: West Philadelphia/Parkside Empowerment Zone; West Parkside Enterprise Zone; West Parkside Industrial Keystone Opportunity Zone; Philadelphia Industrial Development Corporation; Parkside-Lancaster Blight Recertification Area; Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority; Philadelphia Authority for Industrial Development; Philadelphia Financial Services Institute (lending arm of the West Philadelphia Community Trust), and others. The City of Philadelphia is the entry point for access to this range of assistance.

Current Status and Next Steps

The CTF is satisfied with its participation in the process and the manner in which its ideas were incorporated into the station area plan. Follow up discussions with key stakeholders would be useful to maintain the momentum developed during the study. Significant potential investments, particularly in the retail center, coupled with the City's Neighborhood Transformation Initiative could help to jump start plan implementation in advance of SVM construction. The City should work to adopt the plan elements as part of their strategies for area revitalization and amend the zoning ordinance accordingly.



Valley Forge Station

VALLEY FORGE STATION

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Station Area Description

As Illustrated on the *Aerial View* map, the Valley Forge study area is located in the northwest corner of Upper Merion Township in Montgomery County. The proposed station location is on a razed industrial site with a capped asbestos landfill, just west of the Trout Run Sewage Treatment Plant and just east of the US 422 bridge over the Schuylkill River. The study area is bounded by the Schuylkill River Trail to the north, the Valley Forge Towers to the west, State Route 23 to the south, and the existing rail line to the east.

Land Use

Development density throughout the study area is generally low. The major exception is Valley Forge Towers, located in the southwestern quadrant. The three connected 15-floor towers occupy approximately eight acres and house almost 800 units of upscale condominiums and apartments, with offices, retail shops, and professional services located on the ground floor.

The Trout Run Sewage Treatment Plant, owned and operated by the Upper Merion Township Municipal Sewer Authority, is located at the end of Mancill Mill Road, just southwest of the station site. The plant serves the western half of the township, treating an average of 2.8 million gallons of wastewater per day. Treated water is discharged into nearby Trout Creek, which flows into the Schuylkill River.

Located just north and over the ridge from the Valley Forge Towers lies an 11-acre tract of vacant land with an abandoned factory on its western edge. Just east of this property, the Trout Run Wastewater Plant occupies approximately eight acres at the end of Mancill Mill Road. East of the treatment plant and surrounding the station site lies a large wooded area that is owned by Upper Merion Township.

Located across the Schuylkill River from the proposed station site, in West Norriton Township, is a 63-acre former industrial site that is currently proposed for a large mixed-use redevelopment.

Transportation

Access to and within the station area is difficult. Route 23, while planned for realignment and improvement, currently provides the only significant access into the area along Mancill Mill Road which is a winding and very limited capacity road. Route 23 carries large traffic volumes and is routinely congested during rush hours. There are no sidewalks in the immediate area. The SVM tracks are located adjacent to the Schuylkill River at the lowest and currently most inaccessible part of the station area.



Zoning

Most of the study area, which is located within Upper Merion Township, is zoned SM and SM1– Suburban Metropolitan. These districts permit a variety of large scale commercial and office uses, including office buildings, laboratories, banks, hotels, restaurants, warehouses, some types of light manufacturing, passenger terminals for public transportation, and municipal purposes. The SM districts do not permit residential uses. A small portion of the study area that includes the Valley Forge Towers property is zoned HR-High Rise Multi-Family, which permits high rise apartments with limited support retail. There is also a small strip of Agricultural zoning within the railroad right-of-way.

The portion of the study area in West Norriton Township is zoned primarily industrial with a few parcels zoned R1 single family residential. However, the site has been rezoned to allow office, residential and hotel for the proposed Betzwood Park development, described in the *Plans and Proposals* section below.

Demographics

The Valley Forge neighborhood is located just north of the highly developed King of Prussia employment center. In 1990, the population in Upper Merion Township was 25,722. Population forecasts for the Township provided by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission estimate that the population will continue to increase slightly, with a population of approximately 26,400 persons by 2010.

Much more significant figures for growth are found in employment estimates. In 1990, there were approximately 46,428 employees in Upper Merion Township, and by 2010, the number of employees is expected to increase to 55,450 as retail establishments continue to expand in the Township. These growth trends are expected to result in 1,578 new dwelling units between 1990 and 2020.

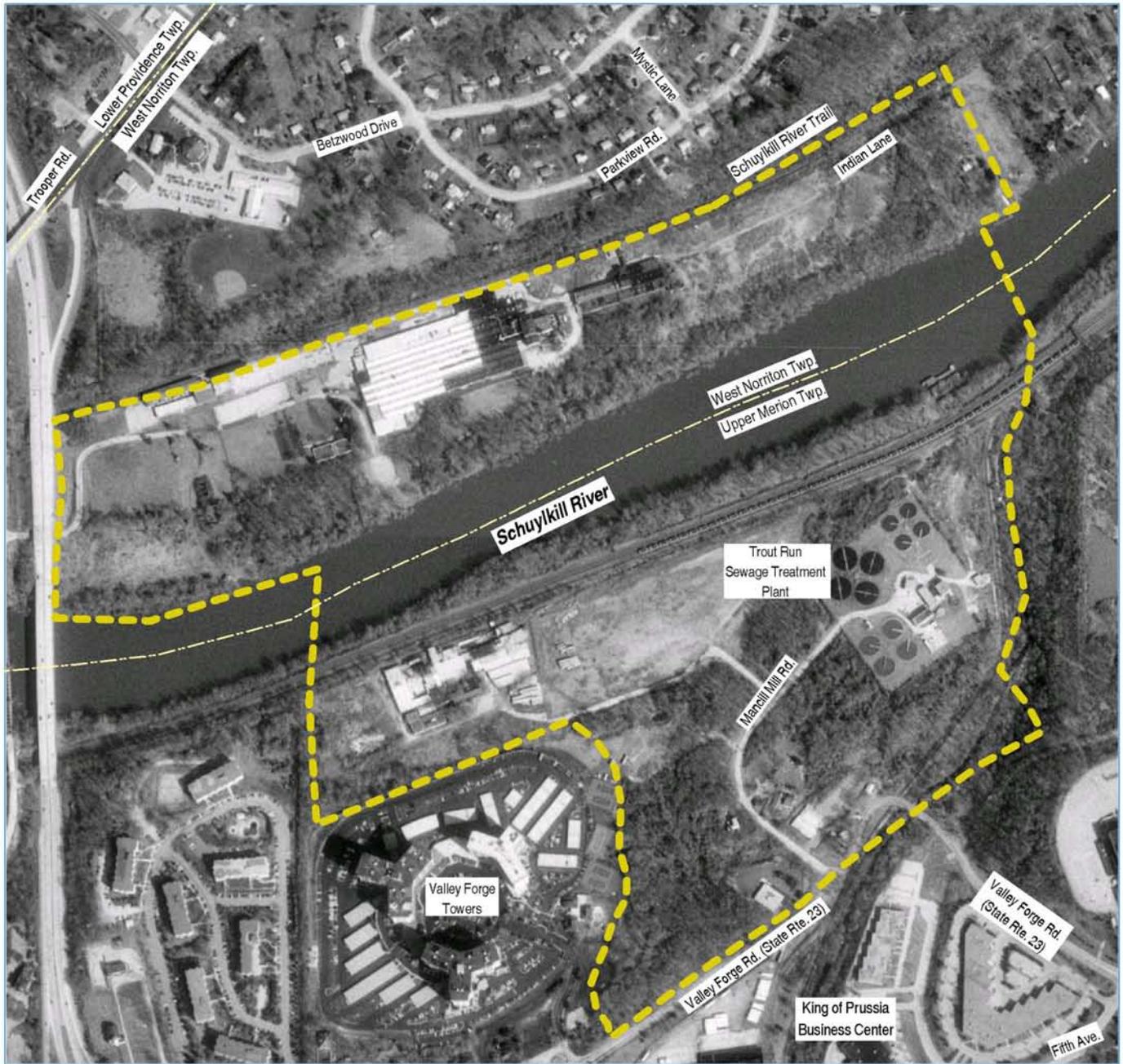
In 1990, the population in West Norriton Township was 15,209. By 2010 population is projected to decrease to 15,050. Employment in the Township, however, is expected to increase slightly, from an estimated 6,925 in 1997 to 7,250 by 2010.

Plans and Proposals

As indicated on the *Plans and Proposals* map, the current preferred concept for the station platform location is just west of the Trout Run Sewage Treatment Plant. The tracks are envisioned as looping around the treatment plant to connect with the previously proposed Cross County Metro line, which would run south of the station to King of Prussia. It has also been recommended that the Valley Forge Visitors Center be located next to the station platform.

In West Norriton Township, the 63-acre former industrial site just north of the conceptual station area is proposed for an office, hotel, and residential mixed-use development by O'Neill Properties. The plan includes office space, hotel, and residential apartments. If





LEGEND

 Study Area



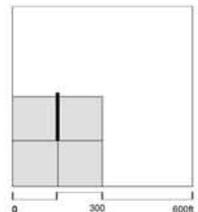
Schuylkill Valley Metro Corridor Station Area Planning and Implementation Study

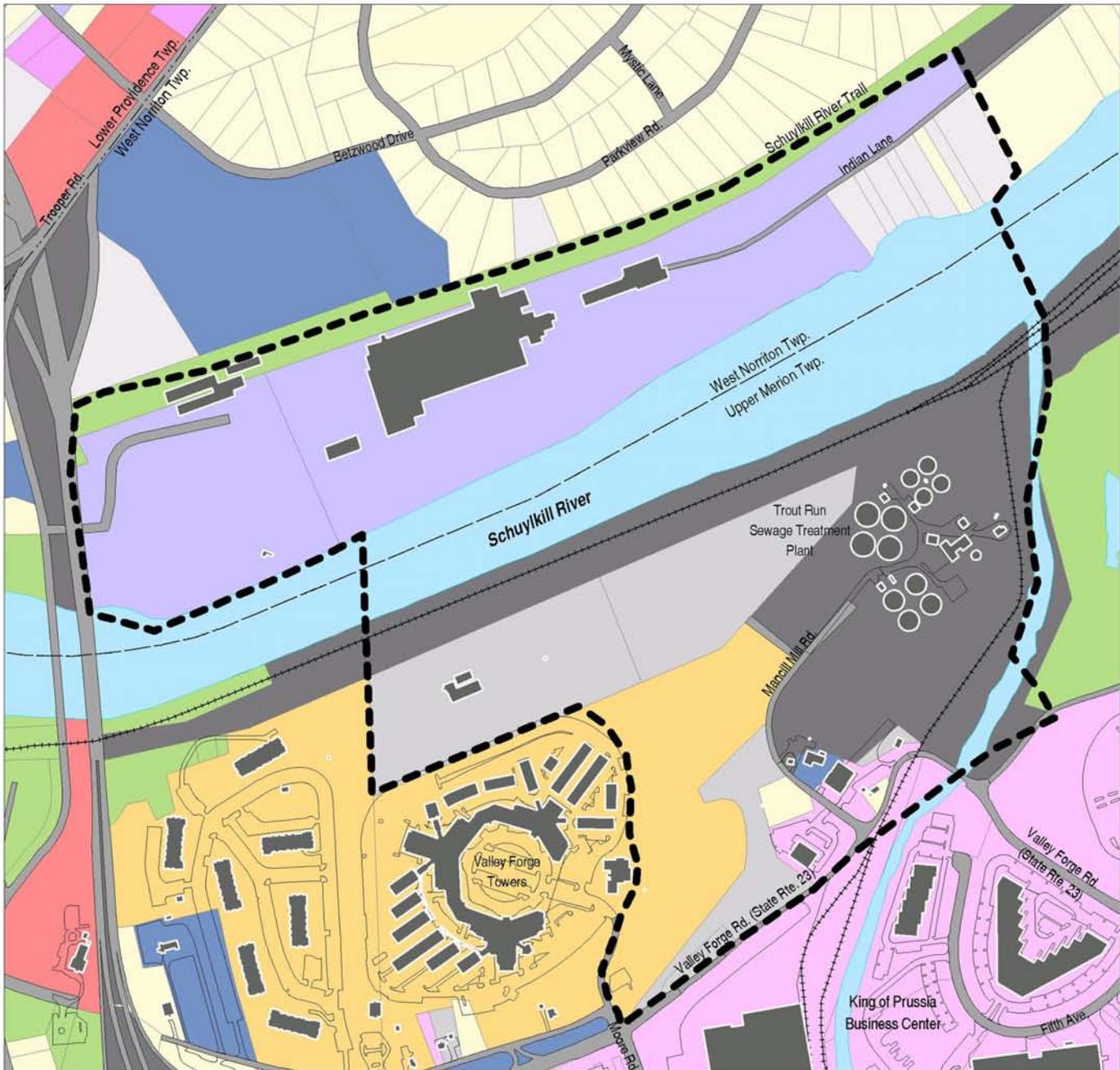
Prepared for: Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission

Prepared by:  Wallace Roberts & Todd, LLC

With: Parsons Brinckerhoff Quade & Douglas, Inc.
Hammer Siler George Associates, Inc.

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LEGEND

Station Study Area

Parks, Open Space

Industrial

Commercial

Institutional

Office

Single-Family Residential

Multi-Family Residential

Utility

Vacant



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Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission

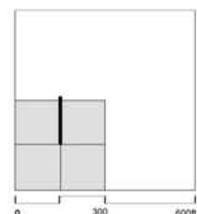
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LEGEND

- Study Area
- Roads
- Railroad / Trolley
- Buildings
- Parcels
- Arterial
- Highway
- Bus Routes

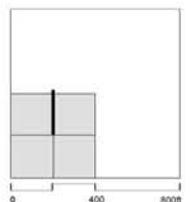


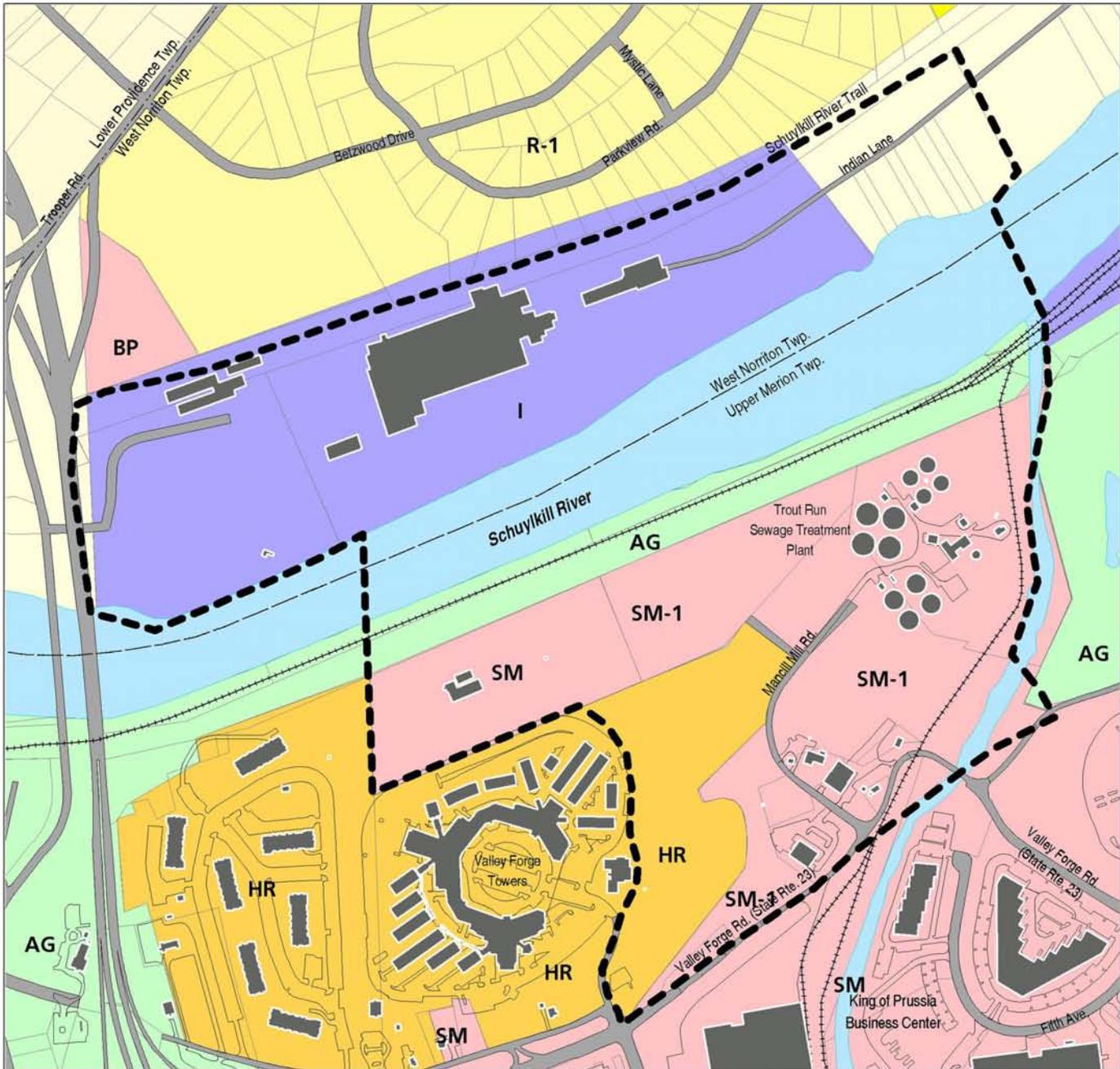
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LEGEND

Station Study Area

Upper Merion Zoning

- AG - Agricultural
- HR - High-Rise Multi-Family
- SM - Suburban Metropolitan

West Norriton Zoning

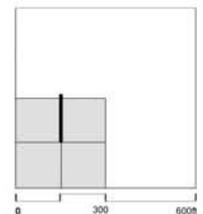
- RA - Rural Residence
- R1 - Single Family Residential
- I - Industrial

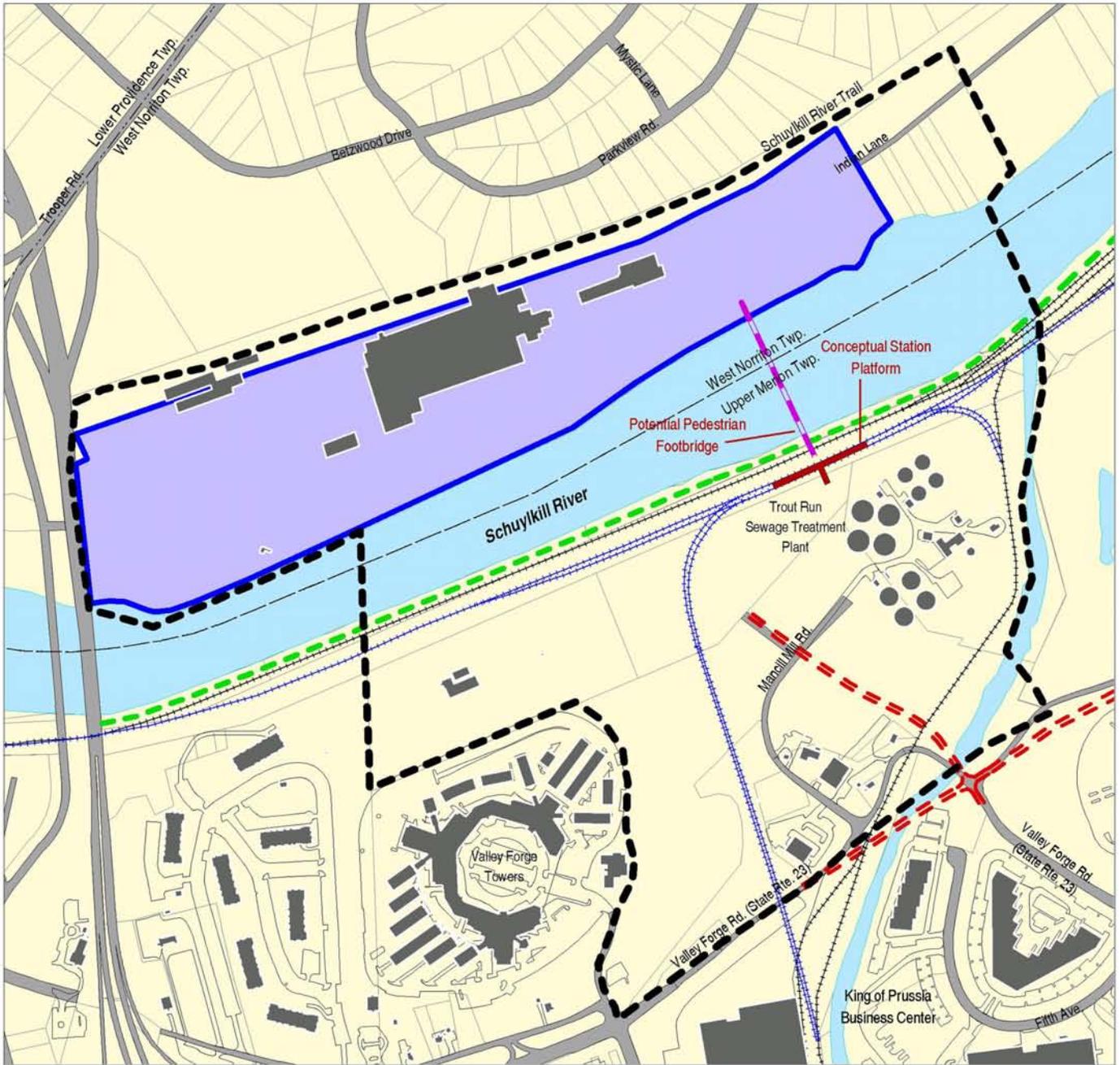


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LEGEND

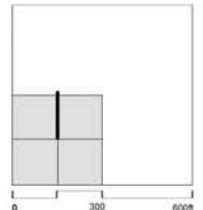
- Station Study Area
- Proposed Rail Alignment
- Proposed Route 23 Alignment
- Proposed Betzwood Park Mixed Use Development
- Proposed Trail



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approved, this development will be a significant contribution to the success of a Valley Forge TOD plan. A pedestrian connection across the river to the proposed station could enhance the success of both. Although a final plan has not been defined, the County has recommended construction of a pedestrian footbridge across the river to connect the O’Neill development to the proposed station.

Although there are no official development plans on the Upper Merion side of the study area, a significant transportation improvement is in the planning stage. Realignment of Route 23, as shown on the *Plans and Proposals* map, is on the State TIP. The relocated route would provide a more direct connection between US 422 at Valley Forge Road and Route 202 near the Dannenhower Bridge. Within the study area, one proposal shows the new route traversing the wooded area north of Beidler Road and providing a signalized intersection with Mancill Mill Road. The expected completion date for construction is 2007.

An extension of the Schuylkill River Trail has also been recommended as part of the *Schuylkill River Greenway Plan*, although there are no definite plans at this time. The existing trail, which runs along the north side of the Schuylkill River, would cross the river on Betzwood Bridge to provide access to Valley Forge National Historic Park. To complement the Greenway plan, the Upper Merion Township Parks and Recreation Department has recommended a trail along the southern side of the Schuylkill River.

Market Potential

Trends Scenario

Under the Trends Scenario, the Valley Forge station area has a very good outlook for development potential. As described in the *Demographics* section, population and employment surrounding the station area are expected to increase steadily over the next twenty years. The surrounding area has developed rapidly over the past twenty years, especially the King of Prussia Business Center directly south of the study area. This office complex is a major employment center in the Delaware Valley region. Despite the favorable market conditions, development potential in the study area is restricted by the adjacent wastewater treatment plant and the lack of access to key vacant land.

LONG TERM DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL – VALLEY FORGE STATION

TRENDS SCENARIO	2000-2010		2011 - 2025		2000 - 2025
	Valley Forge Station	5-Station Total	Valley Forge Station	5-Station Total	
Office Space, sq. ft.	28,330	94,440	176,920	589,730	30%
Retail Space, sq. ft.	2,840	7,170	24,080	80,270	31%
Multi-family, number of units	45	69	200	251	77%
Lodging, number of rooms	0	0	0	350	0%

Source: Hammer, Siler, George Associates, 2001.



The table above is a summary of Trends Scenario development program potential for the Valley Forge station area prepared by Hammer Siler George, Associates. The table lists the market potential for each of the four land uses under the Trends Scenario between 2000 and 2025. Between 2000 and 2025, the Valley Forge market is expected to be able to support up to 205,250 square feet of office space, about 30 percent of the five-station total. The retail potential is also the highest of the five stations with more than 27,000 square feet by 2025. The market study under the Trends Scenario also predicts a comparatively high potential for multi-family units, but no market for lodging development.

Opportunities Scenario

Under the Opportunities Scenario, more growth would occur in the station area than under the Trends Scenario. The Opportunities Scenario assumes that the new transit station and other transportation improvements will improve market conditions in the Valley Forge study area. The table below indicates the long-term development potential for the Valley Forge station area between 2007 and 2025.

LONG TERM DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL – VALLEY FORGE STATION

OPPORTUNITIES SCENARIO	2007-2025		
	Valley Forge Station	5-Station Total	% of Total
Building Use			
Office Space, sq. ft.	1,100,000	2,010,000	55%
Retail Space, sq. ft.	45,000	615,000	7%
Multi-family, number of units	800	1550	52%
Lodging, number of rooms	400	1200	33%

Source: Hammer, Siler, George Associates, 2001.

The market potential in Valley Forge is the strongest of the five stations under each scenario, with the exception of the retail component. However, it is likely that a great majority of this potential will be realized in the proposed development across the Schuylkill River from the station in West Norriton Township.

Issues and Opportunities

As illustrated on the *Issues and Opportunities* map, there are several physical constraints to development within the study area. The 100-year floodplain is present, but does not directly effect the immediate station area. Steep slopes, however, do restrict development potential in the study area. Other constraints include the physical barrier of the railroad tracks, hazardous intersections, and limited road access to vacant parcels.

Although there is not much vacant land in the Valley Forge area, there are a few vacant parcels available for development. The two most significant vacant parcels in the study area include a 24 acre tract owned by Vincent Piazza, located behind the Valley Forge





LEGEND

Study Area

Physical Barrier

Wetlands

STEEP SLOPES

15 - 25%

Hazardous Pedestrian Crossing

Floodplain

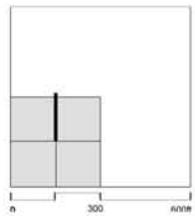
25% +



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Towers, and a 7.6-acre vacant parcel located just east of Valley Forge Towers owned by Remington Development Corporation.

The proposed Betzwood Park mixed-use development in West Norriton is a major opportunity for TOD development at the Valley Forge station. However, it is critical that the site be developed in a manner that takes advantage of and connects directly to the station area.

STATION AREA PLAN

The station area plan presents the proposed TOD development strategy based on the preferred development concept prepared in concert with the Valley Forge Community Task Force (CTF). This development strategy is described through concept diagrams, an illustrative site plan, and the proposed circulation plan for the station study area.

Development Concept

The planning team worked cooperatively with the CTF and other interested participants through a number of public meetings to develop the station area concept. The team developed alternative approaches to station area development and discussed and critiqued them with the CTF, which gave direction for subsequent ideas and review. During these discussions, the CTF applied a set of objectives to narrow the options and reach the selected concept presented in this report. These included the following:

- Develop the vacant Piazza tract as residential to be compatible with the Valley Forge Towers development.
- Utilize the proposed Mancill Mill Road realignment for access to the Piazza tract, to Provide pedestrian access to the train station across the Schuylkill River.
- Provide a buffer between the Valley Forge Towers and proposed development on Mancill Mill Rd.
- Screen and address potential odors at the Trout Run Sewage Treatment Plant.

Concept Plan

The concept plan presents a general description of the proposed land use and general pattern of development around the station area. The proposed land use plan for the Valley Forge station area builds on two major transportation improvements in the immediate area. These include the SVM and the realignment of Route 23. In combination, these improvements will permit the station area to support substantial mixed-use development. The Betzwood Park site, which will change from industrial to office/residential, will benefit from connection to the SVM station across the Schuylkill River.

As illustrated on the *Concept Plan*, the SVM tracks will divide the study into three development sections. The first section is the Piazza tract, which is located upstream from the loop tracks heading south to the King of Prussia Business Center and below the hill



upon which the Valley Forge Towers are sited. The second, the Mancill Mill Road section, is contained within the great loop of SVM tracks. Finally, the Valley Forge section is created by the loop tracks adjacent to the Valley Forge Towers property.

The Piazza tract is proposed for moderate density residential development consistent with the CTF objectives. Other issues to consider for development of the tract include site constraints of configuration, slope, and necessary stormwater management. The Mancill Mill Road section is proposed to include the SVM station, mixed office/hotel uses and shared parking. The Valley Forge section is proposed as a green buffer for the Valley Forge Towers because of its lack of road access, irregular shape and topography. Mancill Mill Road will be realigned as part of the Route 23 improvements and provide dramatically improved access to the station area and sewage treatment plant. An area to the east of improved Mancill Mill Road is reserved for treatment plant expansion. Pedestrian connections are proposed throughout the station area, across the Schuylkill River and along a new greenway trail on the south side of the river.

Illustrative Plan

The *Illustrative Plan* presents a more detailed picture of proposed development and improvements in the station area. The study area is divided into the aforementioned three development sections and includes a description of the detailed development plan.

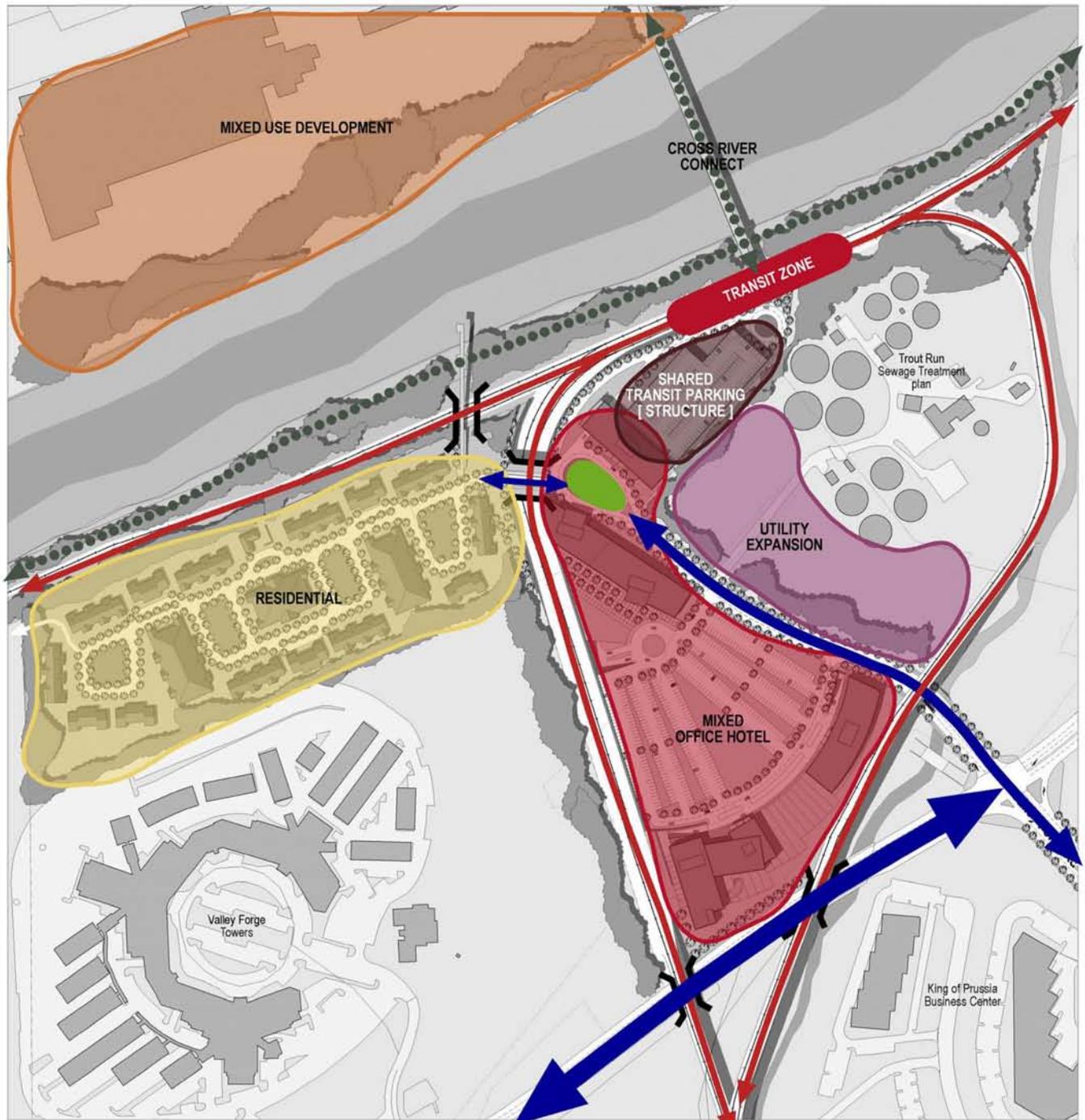
Piazza Tract

Proposed development on the 11 acre Piazza tract consists of a 110 unit condominium development with a net density of approximately 12 units to the acre. Access to the development will be gained from realigned Mancill Mill Road which crosses over the SVM tracks as they proceed south in a cut. Other key features of the plan include large sections of open space (also necessary for stormwater detention), a community center, and a pedestrian bridge over the railroad tracks for access to the river and the proposed river front trail. An important element of this plan includes extensive buffering from the rail lines. Pedestrian paths will connect the residential area to the SVM station, the riverfront trail, and adjacent development.

Mancill Mill Road

This tract can accommodate approximately 360,000 square feet of office space in three four-story buildings and a 200 room hotel along with the SVM station and shared parking. The plan takes advantage of changes in topography to tuck parking structures into hill sides, minimizing their visual presence. The portion of the area closest to Route 23 enjoys very high visibility on the road as well as efficient access through a new signalized intersection. Pedestrians would also be able to easily access the remainder of the site and the SVM station along sidewalk improvements on Route 23 and Mancill Mill Road. The two proposed office buildings along Route 23 would require the acquisition of four small existing office buildings and relocation of the Valley Forge Children's Academy, a small private pre-school and kindergarten.





- | | |
|---|---------------------|
| River Front Greenway / Pedestrian Connections | Commercial / Retail |
| Access | Residential |
| Rail Line | Transit Parking |
| Civic Space | Mixed Use |
| Platform Area | Industrial |

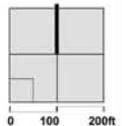


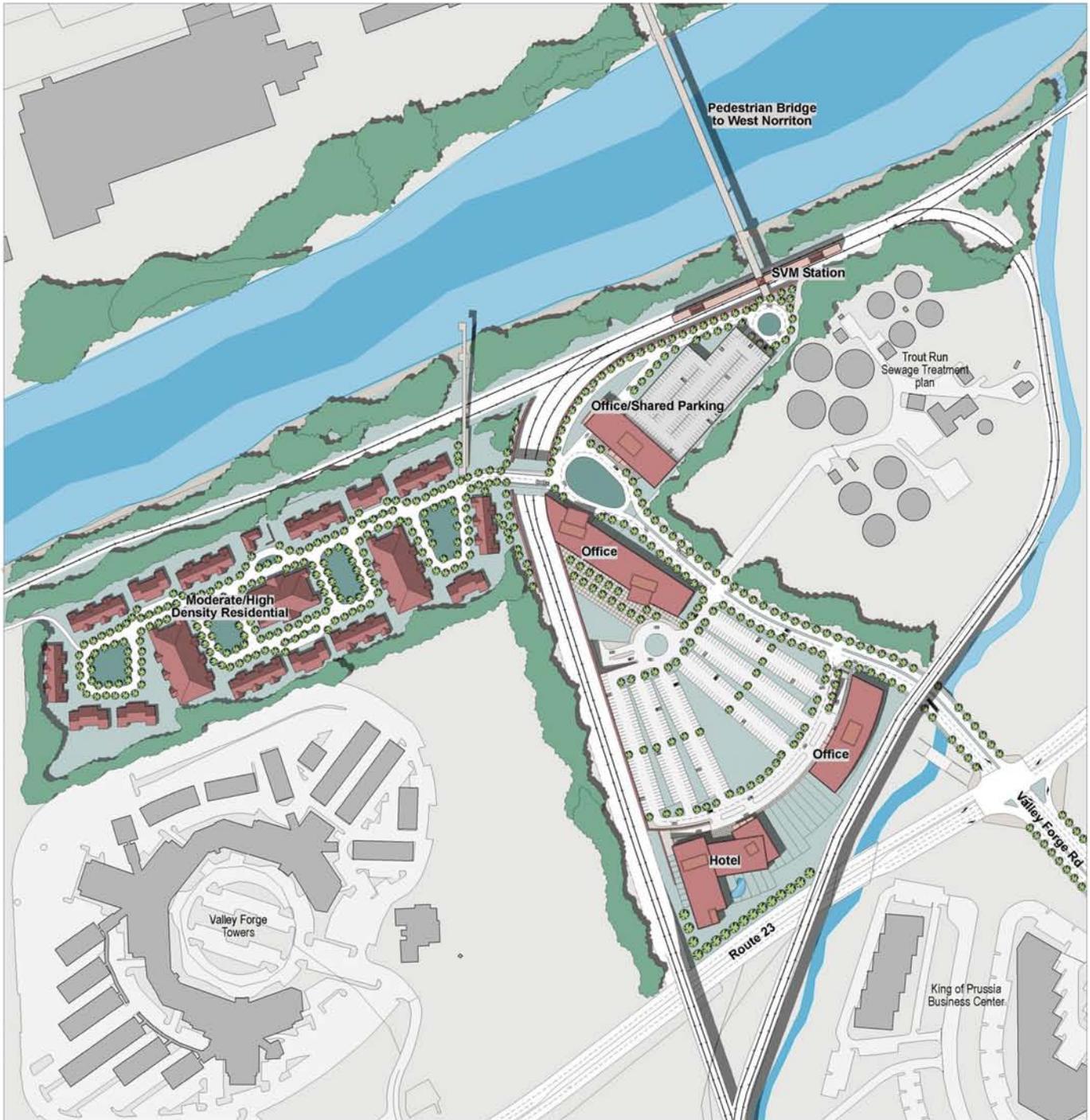
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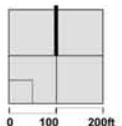




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The office/SVM portion of the tract is separated from the remainder by realigned Mancill Mill Road. It is a parking self-sufficient area with pedestrian access to the remainder of the station area and across the river.

The plan also proposes a buffer on the east side of Mancill Mill Road to separate the development from potential future sewage treatment plant expansion. It is also proposed that the treatment tanks be covered to mitigate odor impacts in the area.

Valley Forge Tract

The area west of the southbound SVM tracks is not readily developable and is proposed for green buffer between the tracks and development and Valley Forge Towers.

Transportation Plan

Station Configuration

SEPTA has proposed the Valley Forge station as a center-loaded platform. The SVM alignment will consist of new tracks located south of the existing Norfolk Southern tracks. A new spur will also be added for connection to the King of Prussia Business Center and Mall, south of the station.

The proposed platform is located at the extreme east end of the station area adjacent to the Trout Run Sewage Treatment Plant. Pedestrians may access the station from throughout the station area by sidewalks next to all roads as well as pedestrian paths from within the proposed residential development. Sidewalks are recommended along realigned Route 23 to permit access to the platform for pedestrians from outside the immediate station area. The proposed pedestrian bridge over the Schuylkill River will also provide access to the planned Betzwood Park mixed-use development across the river in West Norriton Township and to the trails on both sides of the River.

A roundabout is located before the road crosses the railroad tracks to slow and direct traffic to the station, or to office and residential destinations. Kiss-and-ride or park-and-ride passengers and office users would proceed to the east toward the station to drop off or pick up passengers and/or park in the structured deck that is jointly used by the station and the office building above it.

Station Area Access, Circulation and Parking

As illustrated on the *Proposed Circulation* plan, the realignment of Route 23 and Mancill Mill Road provides a direct and controlled path for access and circulation to the entire study area. The Piazza tract can be accessed by car and foot from the station and from Route 23 along the realigned Mancill Mill Road. The roundabout at the foot of the road separates the residential area from the commercial area, creating a "T" intersection for the residential street with Mancill Mill Road. The Mancill Mill tract is accessed directly by vehicle from Mancill Mill Road. Two drives are proposed to serve the upper and lower portions of this development tract. Pedestrian access and circulation follows sidewalks throughout the development and to the station and riverfront path.



IMPLEMENTATION

As part of the analytical process, the existing land use plan and zoning regulations were examined to determine whether current policy would facilitate implementation of the recommended development plan. It was determined that, while the existing plan is generally consistent, some discretionary amendments to the zoning ordinance are necessary to achieve an optimal implementation strategy.

Recommended Comprehensive Plan Amendments

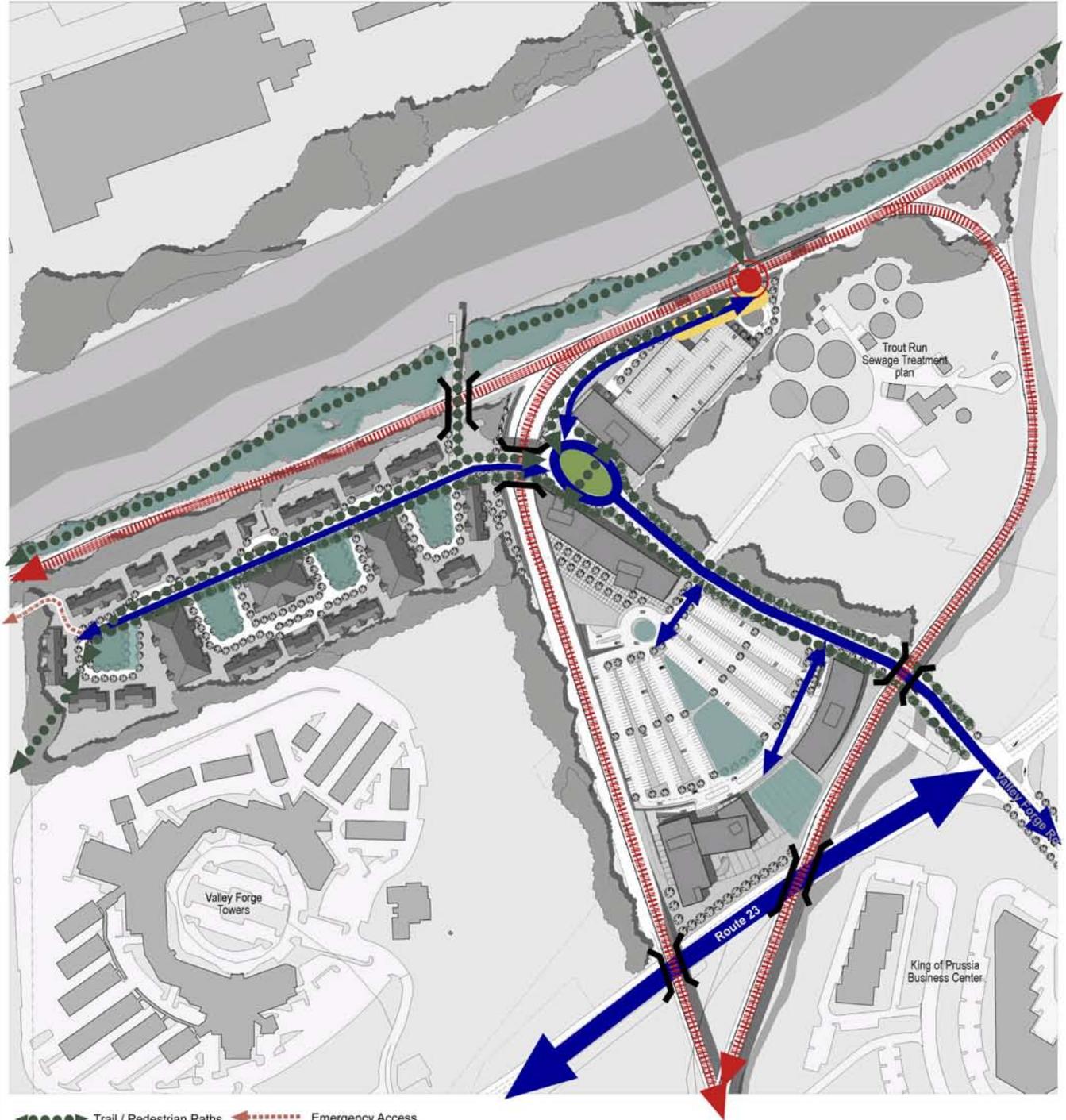
The current Comprehensive Plan for Upper Merion was adopted in 1986 and is now outdated, particularly because it does not include plans for train service in Valley Forge. In 1998, a draft update was developed that is still under review. The Upper Merion Township Draft Land Use Plan has incorporated the SVM in future land use plans and designated the Valley Forge area as a TOD neighborhood. The plan recommends High Density Residential (over ten dwelling units per acre) and Transit-Oriented Mixed-Use (including offices, hotel, housing and retail) for the station area. The development concept in this report is consistent with the goals of the Draft Land Use Plan. No amendments are recommended to the current draft Plan.

Recommended Zoning Amendments

As indicated on the *Existing Zoning* map, the Valley Forge station area is predominantly zoned SM and SM1 Suburban Metropolitan, which allow a variety of office and light industrial uses. These zoning districts do not permit residential uses as recommended by the draft Plan update or this station area plan. For instance, the Piazza tract, which is proposed for high-density residential development in the SVM plan, is not permitted under the current SM zoning. The rest of the study area has been proposed for transit oriented office development with hotel use, which is permitted in the current SM1 zoning district. However, the existing zoning also permits some uses that are not consistent with the transit station concept, including freestanding restaurants, manufacturing, and warehousing.

The CTF recommended that the proposed residential development on the Piazza Tract have a density of up to 20 units per acre and a height limit of four stories, and no more than 50 feet. The CTF also recommended that any retail proposed in the study area should be limited to support retail. To accommodate these recommendations, that is, to permit the proposed development plan while establishing limitations on bulk and use, a new TOD overlay district will need to be created in combination with rezoning strategies. The TOD overlay would provide additional design controls to ensure quality design and allow higher densities to better support TOD. In addition, it is recommended that certain tracts in the study area be rezoned to accommodate the recommendations made by the CTF. The recommended implementation strategy rezones the Piazza Tract to HR Residential and rezones the rest of the study area to AR-Administrative and Research. The TOD overlay design guidelines would still be applied, plus additional standards allowing only support retail use in the AR district.



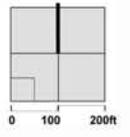


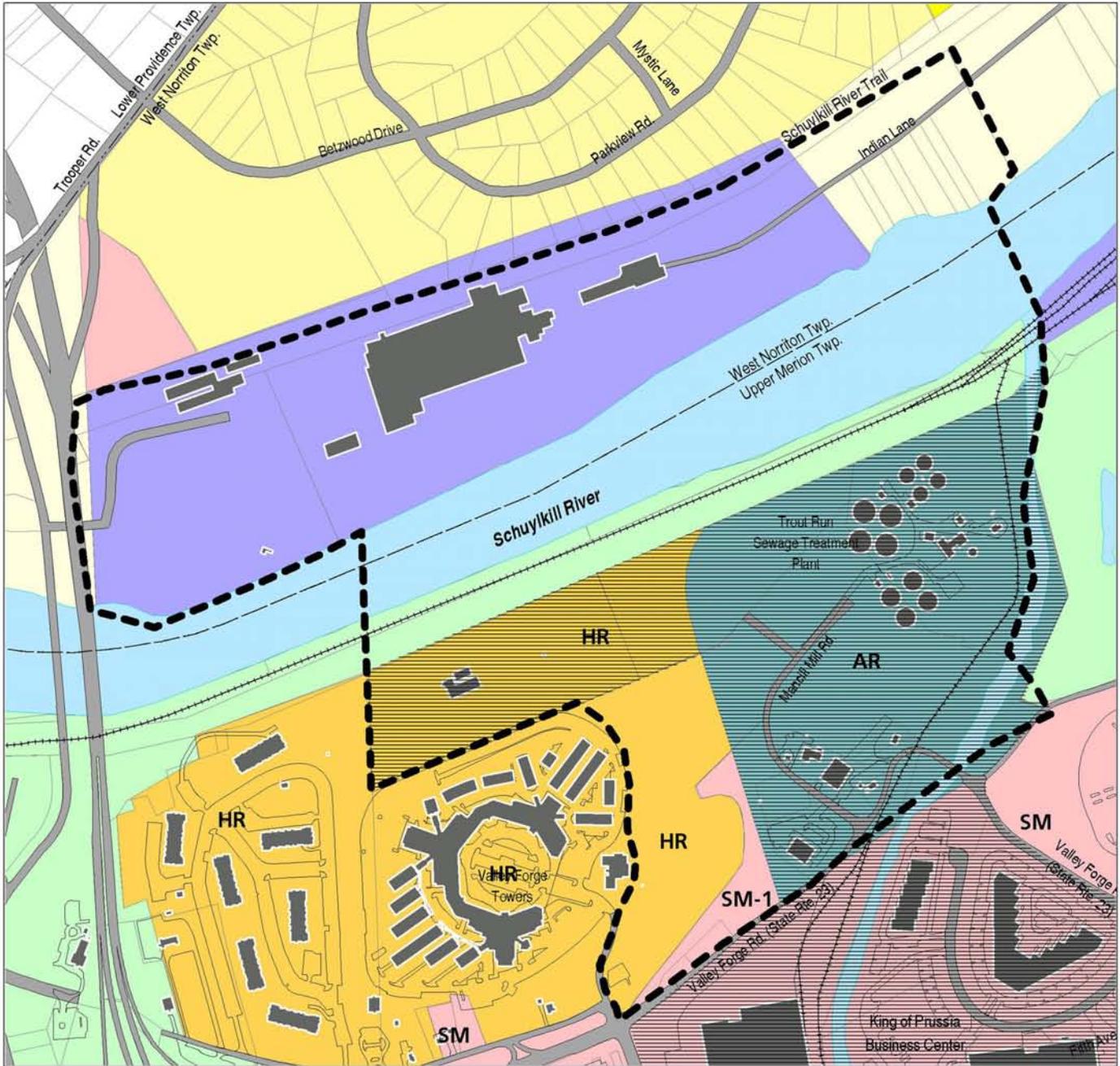
- Trail / Pedestrian Paths
- Major Access
- Primary Access
- Secondary Access
- Rail Line
- Emergency Access
- Bus Stop
- Station
- Civic Space
- Open Space

SVM
Schuylkill Valley Metro
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LEGEND

Station Study Area

Upper Merion Zoning

- AG - Agricultural
- HR - High-Rise Multi-Family
- SM - Suburban Metropolitan

- AR - Administrative and Research
- TOD - Transit Oriented Design Overlay

West Norriton Zoning

- RA - Rural Residence
- R1 - Single Family Residential
- I - Industrial



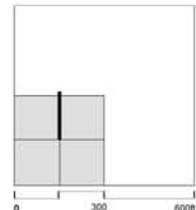
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The table below presents the use and bulk regulations for existing zoning districts, both those currently in place in the station area and those proposed.

District	Existing Zoning		Proposed Zoning	
	SM	SM1	HR	AR
Permitted Uses	Professional office, laboratory, bank, hotel, indoor athletic facility, eat-in restaurant, carry-out restaurant (no drive-through), wholesaling, warehousing, light manufacturing, municipal uses; personal care facilities as conditional use.	All uses permitted in SM.	Multi-family dwelling, municipal use, support commercial limited to 7% of gross floor area, personal care facilities as conditional use.	Professional office, laboratory, hotel/motel, municipal uses; personal care facilities as conditional use.
Min. Lot Area	2 acres	1 acre	None	5 acres
Min. Lot Width	200 ft.	None	None	300 ft.
Max. Bldg. Coverage	33.3%	50%	10%	25%
Front Yard	50 ft.	40 ft.	150 ft.	100 ft.
Side Yard	75 ft. aggregate	40 ft. aggregate	150 ft.	100 ft. aggregate
Rear Yard	20 ft./150 ft. from residential	20 ft./150 ft. from residential	150 ft.	50 ft./100 ft. when abutting a street
Bldg. Height	Max. 65 ft.	Max. 65 ft.	Min. 60 ft./Max. 85 ft.	Max. 50 ft.
Buffers	50 ft.	40 ft.	20 ft.	50 ft.
Max. Density	NA	NA	20 units/acre	NA
Max. Impervious	None	None	None	None



The recommended zoning action has a number of advantages and disadvantages to consider as follows:

Advantages: The Piazza Tract would be limited to high-density residential development as proposed in the SVM station area plan. The remainder of the station area would be limited to the office, hotel, and supportive retail uses proposed in the Plan.

Disadvantages: The HR District has a minimum 60' and maximum 85' height limit compared to the 50' height limit proposed in the plan. This would require modification. The very large setback requirements of the HR District would have to be reduced. This approach has some administrative complications due to the rezoning process.

The advantages and disadvantages associated with the recommended zoning amendment option will need careful consideration in order to refine the strategy that will best achieve the desired development pattern in the most efficient manner possible. The additional TOD overlay zone should include special use regulations as follows:

Use Regulations

All development shall be in accordance with the use regulations in the underlying zoning district, except that additional uses may be permitted according to the following requirements:

1. Support uses.
 - a) Additional activities shall be permitted in all non-residential zoning districts and in the HR district which support or are accessory to the permitted uses. When located in the same building with another permitted use, support uses shall not occupy more than 15 percent of the total leasable floor space of non-residential structures.
 - b) Support uses shall include concessions and services that are provided for the convenience of the occupants of the buildings, including but not limited to, restaurants, retail uses, fitness centers, and day care centers.
 - c) Support uses shall be located within a main building and there shall be no exterior evidence of such accessory uses such as signs or display windows.

Design Guidelines

It is recommended that the following design guidelines be applied throughout the TOD overlay zone:

A. Height Regulations

The maximum height of buildings erected in this district shall be 50 feet.

B. Area, width, yard, and density regulations

1. Minimum lot area and width. Lot area shall be a minimum of two acres. Lot width shall be a minimum of 100 feet at the building line.



2. Front yard. There shall be no minimum required front setback. The maximum front yard shall be ten feet in depth.
3. Rear yards. There shall be a rear yard on each lot the depth of which shall be not less than 20 feet.
4. Residential density. Residential densities shall be a minimum of 10 units per developable acre and a maximum of 20 units per developable acre.
5. Non-residential FAR. The floor area ratio for non-residential structures shall be a minimum of 0.5.
6. Impervious surface coverage. In no case shall more than seventy-five (75) percent of the lot area of any lot be occupied by buildings, parking area, driveways and other impervious coverage.

C. Building orientation and façade treatment

1. Building orientation. Front building facades and main entrances shall be parallel and oriented to the street and principal access point.
2. Façade Treatment. For non-residential development, ground floor facades that face public streets shall be articulated to provide visual interest and a human scale. Such facades shall have arcades, display windows, entry areas, awnings, or other similar features along not less than 80 percent of their length. No facade shall exceed 20 feet of length uninterrupted by such features.

D. Street Locations.

Developments shall utilize and connect with existing street networks where available. Where an existing network of streets does not exist, streets shall be laid out in a pattern that maintains connectivity while reflecting the existing street system.

E. Open space regulations

1. Private Development Requirements. A minimum of 10% of the buildable land area shall be set aside as open space. For non-residential development, required open or public space should include any one or a combination of the following outdoor amenities:
 - a) Pedestrian plaza or patio area, with seating
 - b) Outdoor dining
 - c) Water feature
 - d) Landscaped green area
2. Public / Civic Open Space. Public parks and plazas shall be centrally located and adjacent to public streets, residential areas, and retail and office areas. Public parks shall also contain any one or a combination of the following outdoor amenities:
 - a) Pedestrian plaza or patio area, with seating



- b) Water feature
- c) Landscaped green area

F. Streetscape regulations

1. Street trees. Shade trees shall be planted along all existing and proposed streets. Street trees shall be spaced no further than 30 feet on center and shall be located in minimum 6 foot wide planter strips. A limited number of the same species shall be planted along any single street.
2. Sidewalks/pedestrian access. Sidewalks are required along all road frontages. Sidewalks shall be designed with a minimum width of 6 feet. Pedestrian ways shall be provided to connect building entrances to the nearest transit street(s) or major pedestrian route. Direct pedestrian paths from parking areas to front entrances of structures shall be provided. Such paths shall be at least 5 feet wide and be separated from parking areas by grade, different paving material, or landscaping.
3. Medians. All proposed and existing medians shall be landscaped with grass and shade trees when feasible. Shade trees shall be spaced no further than 30 feet on center. A limited number of same species shall be planted in the median.
4. Transit Area. Transit areas shall provide shelter for pedestrians, convenient passenger loading zones, and secure bicycle storage.

G. Off-street parking regulations

1. Location. Surface parking lots shall be located behind buildings or in the interior of a block, whenever possible. In no case shall surface parking lots occupy more than 33 percent of the frontage of a pedestrian-oriented street.
2. Structured Parking. Retail uses shall be encouraged on the first floor of street-side edges of parking structures. Portions of parking structures that do not have first level retail uses must be articulated and otherwise have an appearance similar to the structure(s) it serves.
3. Configuration. Parking lots for proposed developments requiring more than 100 parking spaces shall be divided into discrete areas separated by landscaped buffers a minimum of 10 feet in width, an internal roadway with a landscaped buffer on at least one side, or buildings. Each parking area shall contain a maximum of 100 parking spaces. An internal path or sidewalk located within the landscape areas between and connecting the parking areas is strongly encouraged in cases where there are more than three (3) pods and/or the configuration of the pods make it difficult for pedestrians to access the building.
4. Shared Parking. Joint parking is strongly encouraged for adjacent transit and non-residential uses. Shared parking areas shall be conveniently located to all uses, but do not need to be located on the same parcel.
5. Access. To the maximum extent feasible, vehicular access to parking areas shall be gained from an arterial or collector street. The number and width of curb cuts shall be kept to a minimum. Sites with multiple buildings shall have unified/joint



access. Adjacent uses should provide for vehicular and pedestrian circulation between their sites, through parking lot or alley connections, hard surface walkways, and similar measures.

H. Landscape Buffers

1. SVM Rail right-of-way. Development adjacent to the rail line shall have a permanent landscaped buffer of at least 20 feet in depth from the rail right-of-way. Plantings within the buffer shall consist of a mix of species, 40% of which shall be evergreen. Trees shall be spaced no further than 30 feet on center.
2. Arterial / major access roads. Development adjacent to an arterial or major access road shall have a permanent landscaped buffer of at least 15 feet in depth from the right-of-way. Plantings within the buffer shall consist of a mix of species of shade trees. Trees shall be spaced no further than 30 feet on center.
3. Service area. A permanent landscaped buffer of at least 15 feet shall be located between service and loading areas and the property line, except where adjacent to a residential use, in which case the buffer area shall be increased to 25 feet in depth. Plantings within the buffer shall consist of a mix of tree species. Trees shall be spaced no further than 30 feet on center.
4. Parking. A permanent landscaped buffer of at least 10 feet in depth shall be provided between parking areas and the property line or public right of way. Plantings within the buffer shall consist of a mix of species.

Current Status and Next Steps

Upper Merion Township is continuing to review its zoning regulations to facilitate TOD in the Valley Forge station area. The Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors should prepare and adopt revised TOD-friendly ordinance language and modify their Comprehensive Plan accordingly. The Township and station area landowners have a series of logistical issues to address given the long-term implementation schedule of the SVM and the desire to develop at least part of the station area now. A cooperative effort to address staging of necessary road and other improvements should continue as a parallel track to the SVM.



Phoenixville Station

PHOENIXVILLE STATION

As noted in the Introduction, Phoenixville has unique circumstances and is therefore presented differently from the other station areas. The Borough's 2000 Comprehensive Plan is a public policy document supportive of TOD development in the French Creek corridor that contains the station site. A developer has already prepared a master development plan covering most of the station area, including a thorough analysis of existing conditions. Because these background studies and plan adoption activities have already been completed, a station area analysis of existing conditions was not prepared for this station as it was for the others. With the endorsement of the CTF, this study treats the Comprehensive Plan and developer plan as givens and focuses upon the specific parcel and station design initially prepared by the developer.

STATION AREA PLAN

Station Area Description

Formerly containing a steel mill which has been demolished and cleared, the master plan area is located in the French Creek valley and cuts an open space swath through the city. Phoenixville rises along hillsides on either side of the valley with residential blocks overlooking the site. The master plan proposes a significant amount of new office space, a restored foundry building and bridge, new housing, retail and a mixed-use rail station building. The station site proper (identified as Parcel N in the attached *French Creek Master Plan*) is located between Main Street to the east, the Gay Street Bridge to the west, the proposed East Boulevard to the south and a very steep slope to the north, rising to the rail bed and then on to the north side of the Borough.

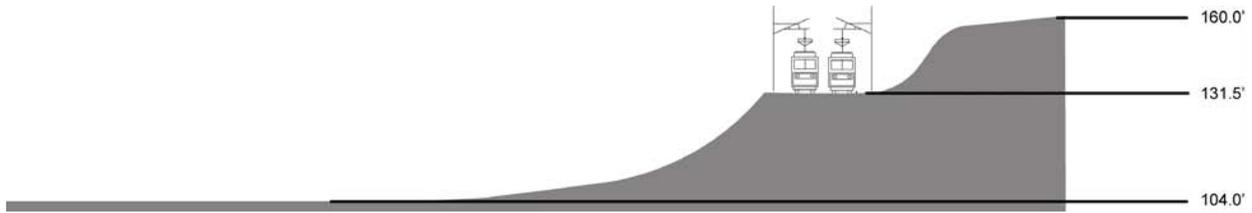
Concept Plan

As illustrated on the *Concept Plan*, the rail station is envisioned as a mixed-use activity center with retail, office space and adequate parking for both the railroad and other program elements. The original design prepared for the developer stacks office space above a parking deck and includes retail space at the ground level and platform level. The proposed program for the station includes 24,900 square feet of retail (18 stores), 88,500 square feet of office space and 474 parking spaces.

The site offers many challenges to the station design. The dimension of the parcel is over three times as long (over 500') as it is wide (approximately 150'). On the northern edge there is a severe grade change, partly taken up by a retaining wall separating the creek valley elevation (104.0') from the platform level (131.5') by nearly thirty feet. Beyond the rail right-of-way to the north is another grade separation of just under thirty feet.



Topographic Profile



Illustrative Plan

While being sensitive to the topographic and dimensional constraints of the site, the development concept employs the simplest development model by avoiding the stacking of uses and capitalizing on the long dimension of the parcel. In this scheme the transit access gallery, which links the drop-off area to the platform(s) with a tunnel and elevators, is constructed between a parking deck and an office building, as illustrated on the *Schematic Architectural Design*. This provides three discrete construction modules permitting a flexible phasing approach and the ability to utilize multiple developers. In order to maximize station activity, the gallery space is designed as a hub which focuses retail uses, transit access and the office building lobby on a single space.

Office Plan

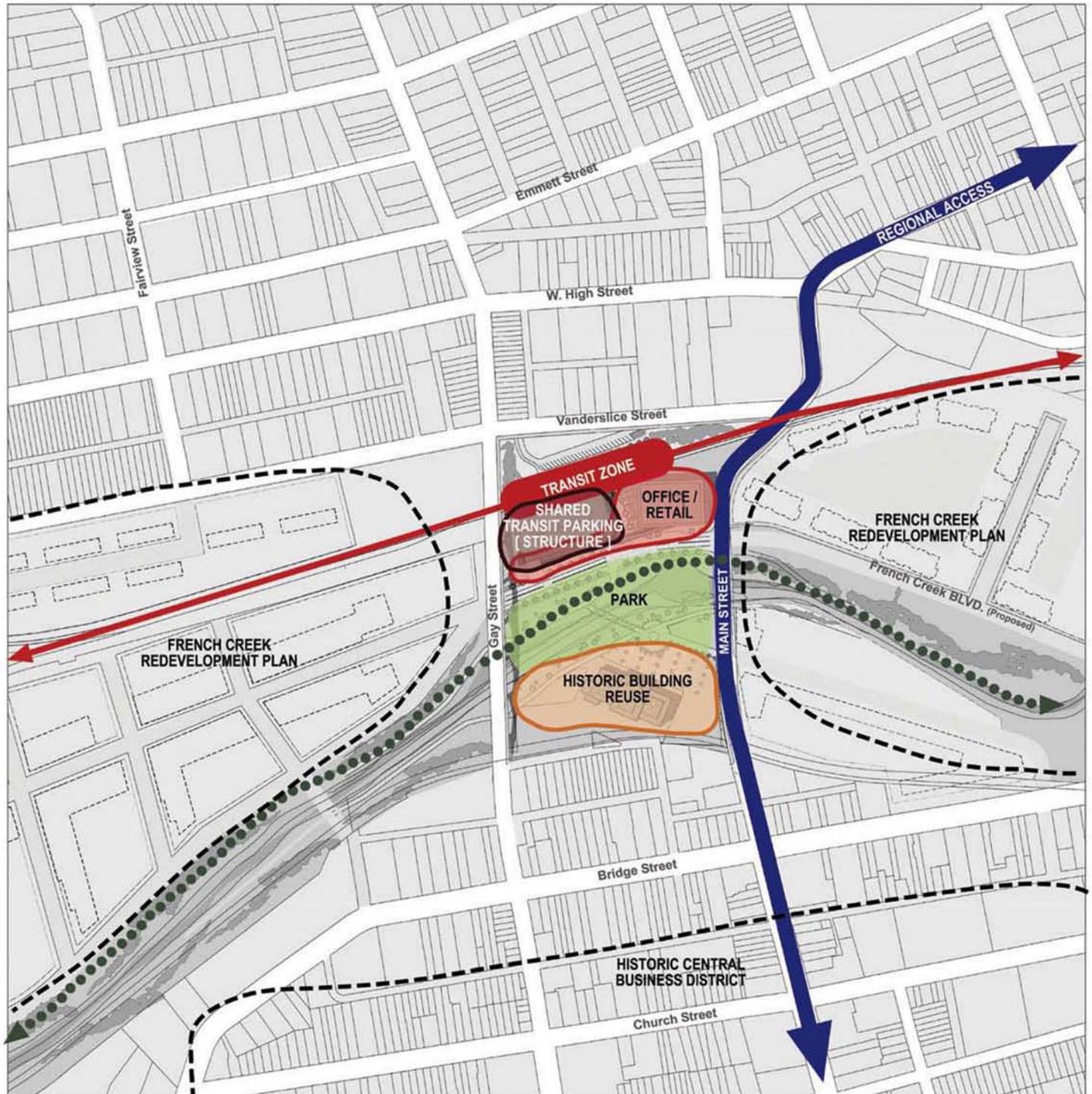
This scheme provides a dedicated portion of the site for office development, facilitating a conventional building. Entry to the lobby should be permitted through the gallery which will further enliven that space. As indicated on the *Concept Plan*, the building is sited at the corner of Main Street and East Boulevard, reinforcing the urban character of the master plan as well as permitting a service alley to the north between the building and railroad.

Retail Plan

A modest amount of retail is proposed which fronts along the transit gallery. It is possible that a food service tenant could populate part of the gallery with tables and chairs, serving as a convenient place for office workers to eat lunch and reinforcing the pedestrian activity of the space.

Phasing

If the station precedes the market for an office building on the site, the parcel is large enough to accommodate SEPTA's parking requirements (178 spaces) with a surface parking lot. When the office building is ready for development the parking structure would be constructed on the west side of the site followed by construction of the office building.

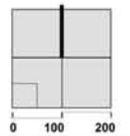


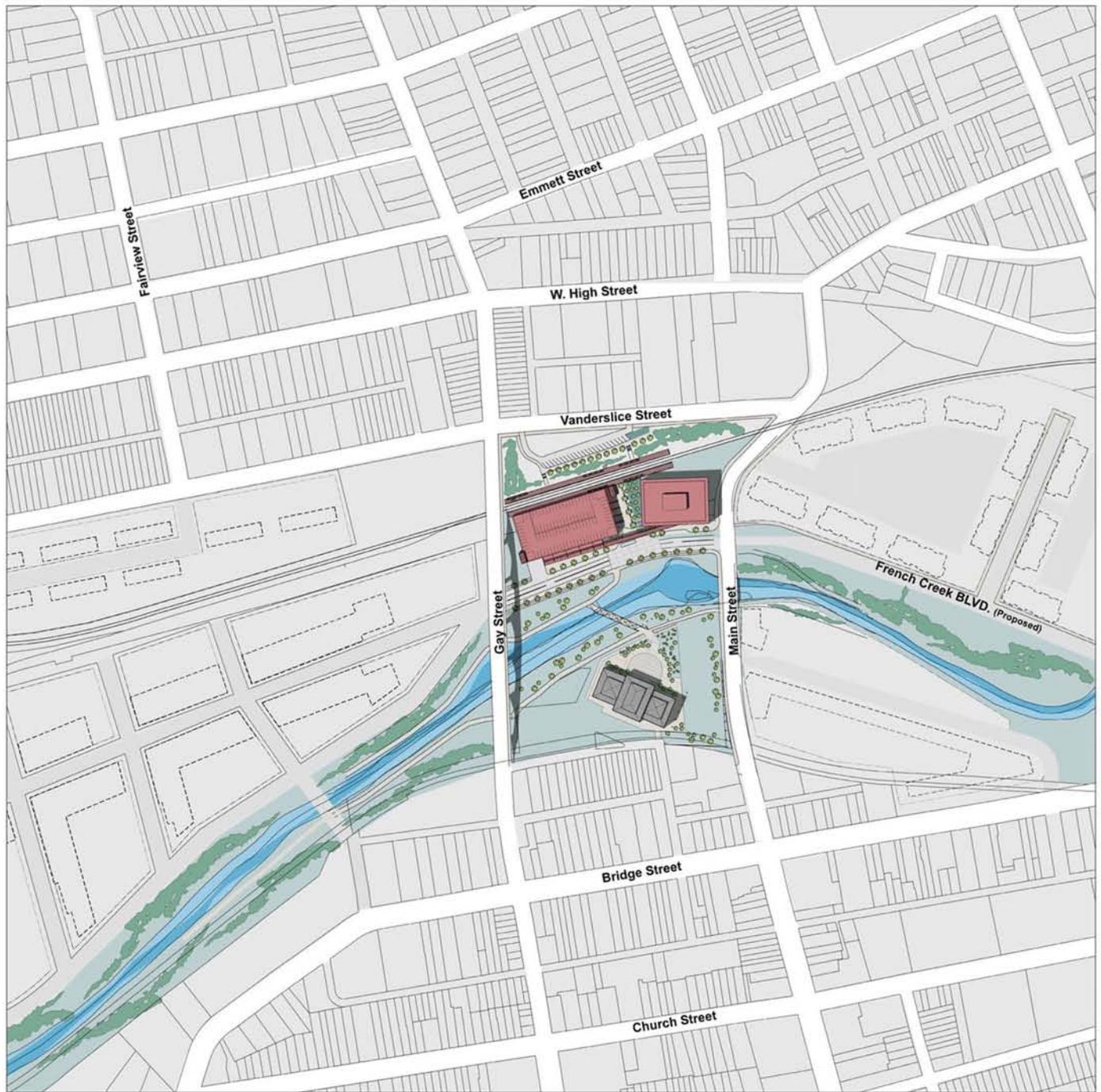
- ◄●●●●► Pedestrian Connections
- ↔ Access
- ↔ Rail Line
- ▬ Civic Space
- Platform Area
- Commercial / Retail
- Transit Parking
- Mixed Use



SVM
 Schuylkill Valley Metro
 Corridor Station Area Planning and Implementation Study

Prepared for: Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
 Prepared by: Wallace Roberts & Todd, LLC
 With: Parsons Brinckerhoff Quade & Douglas, Inc.
 Hammer Silver George Associates, Inc.
 Beach Advertising, Inc.
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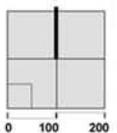
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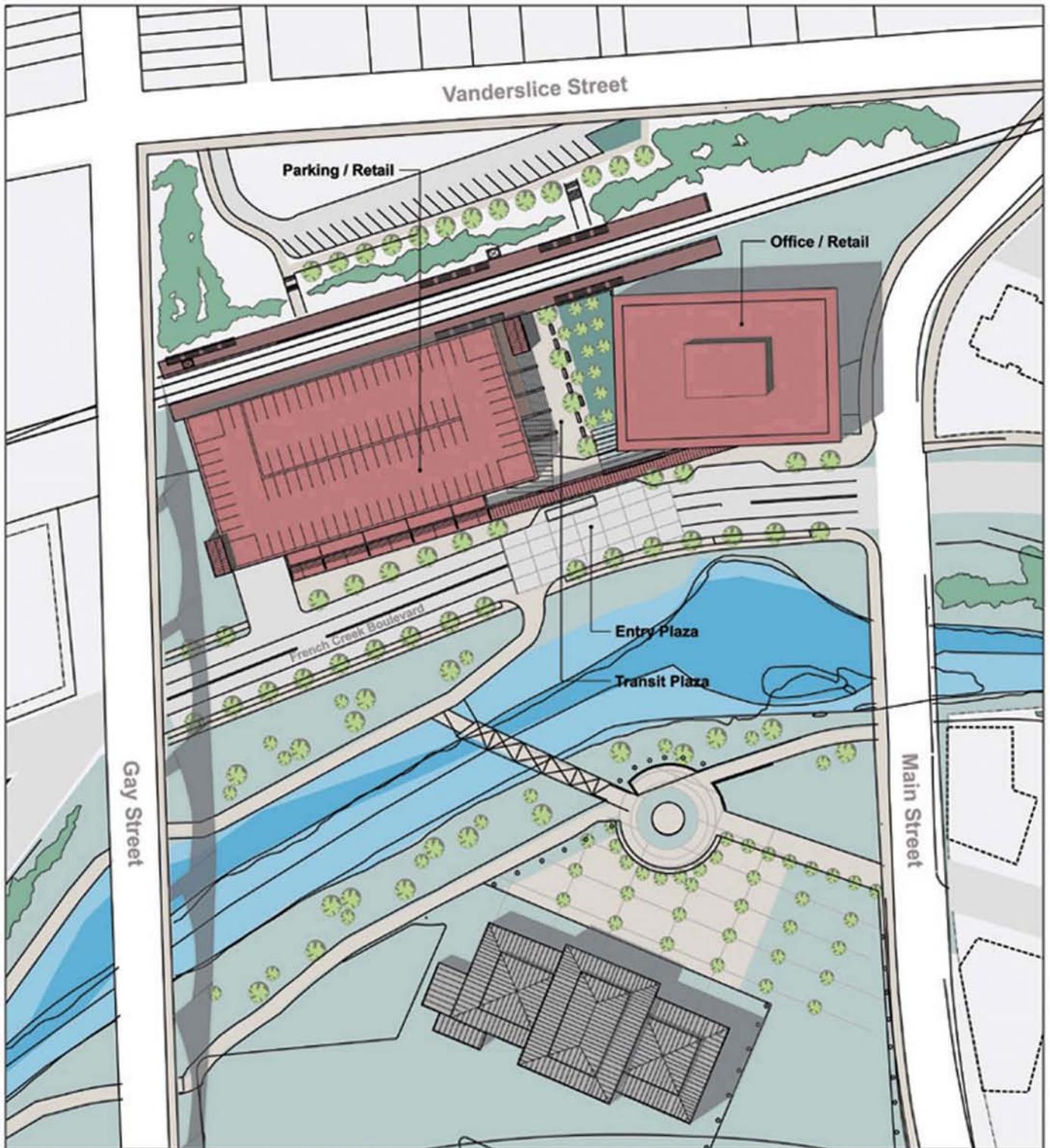
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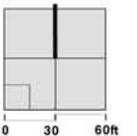


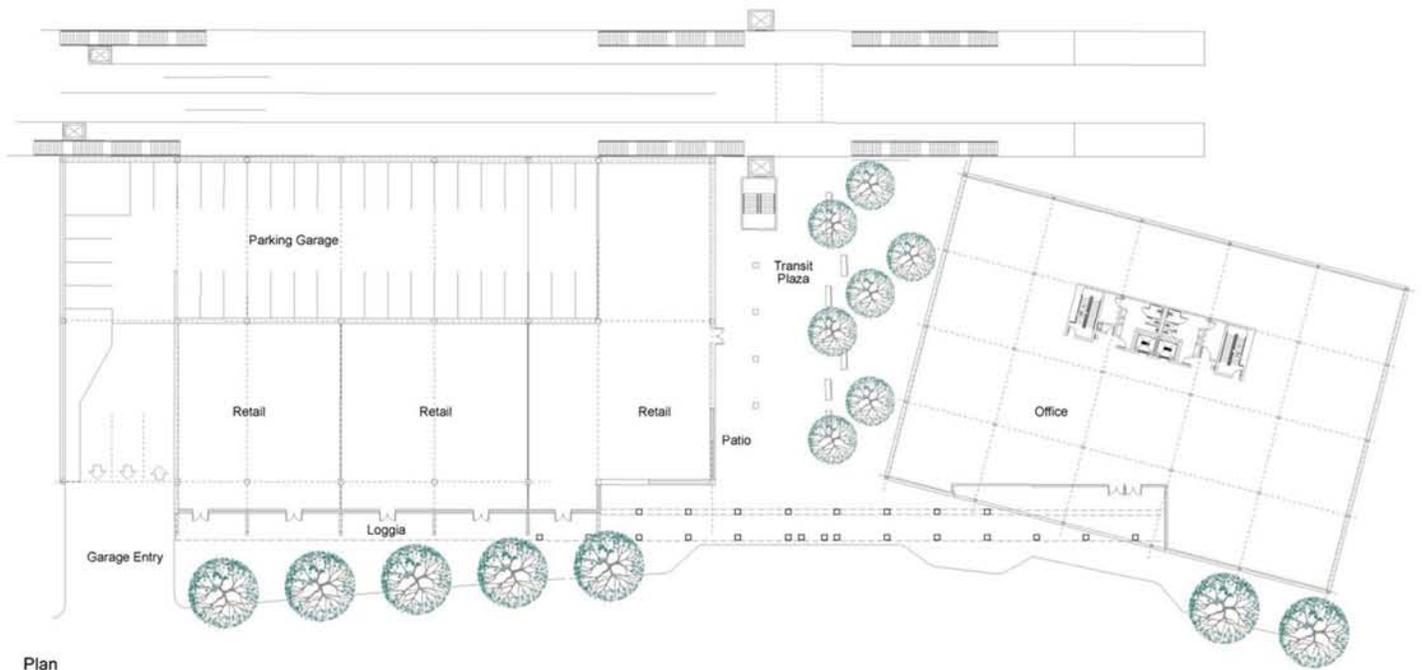
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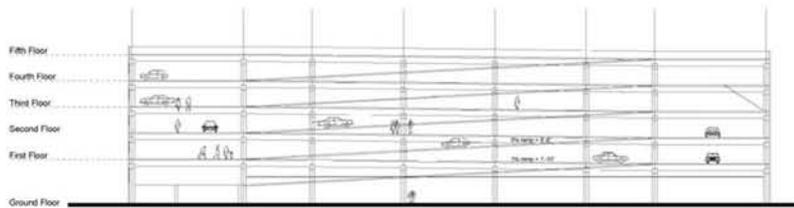
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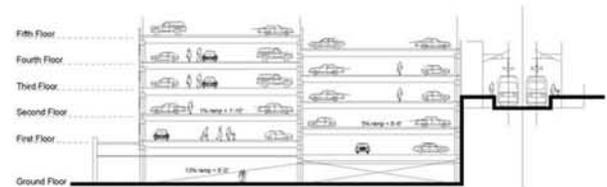




Plan



Longitudinal Section through Parking Deck



Transverse Section through Parking Deck



Elevation



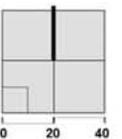
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Transportation Plan

SVM System Characteristics

The proposed station is designed so it can function with either a side or center loaded platform, depending on additional engineering analysis, including consideration of bridge pier clearance and topographic constraints.

Circulation, Access, & Parking

The circulation and access system, for the station uses the existing network of streets. Automobile access for the proposed development plan is taken from Main Street. A new access road, French Creek Boulevard, will be constructed to provide access from Main Street to the rest of the French Creek redevelopment area.

The station platform(s) will be accessed through the transit gallery. The gallery is envisioned as an architecturally unique, spacious, daylighted corridor connecting the drop-off area adjacent to East Boulevard with elevators and stairs to the platform level. There can be seating, vending and/or tele-kiosks for waiting transit customers.

A new pedestrian path will be constructed along the open space greenway along the French Creek. The pedestrian path will connect to the existing sidewalk along Main Street to provide access to the train station, the new office/retail development, and the Phoenixville Central Business District.

The proposed parking deck can maintain a very low profile as there are no retail or office uses to be accommodated within or on top of the structure. Two levels of parking can be dedicated to SEPTA users while the others provide enough spaces to serve the 100,000 square foot office building and modest retail program. The parking structure can be designed so the top level of parking is at the same elevation as the station permitting direct access to a side-loaded platform.



IMPLEMENTATION

Although the development pattern for the French Creek master plan has been mostly established, design guidelines should be written into the zoning code to ensure that the pattern remains consistent with the TOD concept by the time construction begins. The following design guidelines should be incorporated into a TOD overlay zone for the Phoenixville station area:

Recommended Zoning Amendments

Design Guidelines

A. Building

1. **Building Orientation** – Front building facades and main entrances should be parallel and oriented to the street.
2. **Setbacks** – Building setbacks from public streets should be minimized. “Build-to” lines should be established to bring buildings close to the sidewalk.
3. **Façade Treatment** – Ground floor facades that face public streets should be articulated to provide visual interest and a human scale. Such facades should have arcades, display windows, entry areas, awnings, or other such features along not less than 60 percent of their length. No facade should exceed 50 feet of length uninterrupted by such features.

B. Open Space

1. **Private Development Requirements** – For non-residential development, required open or public space should include any one or a combination of the following outdoor amenities:
 - a) Pedestrian plaza or patio area, with seating
 - b) Outdoor dining

C. Streetscape

1. **Street Trees** – Shade trees should be planted along all existing and proposed streets. Street trees may be planted either within a planting strip at least 4 feet wide or directly within a sidewalk. If street trees are planted directly in the sidewalk, tree grates of acceptable quality should be installed for each tree and a minimum unobstructed width of 6 feet should be maintained between the tree and the edge of the sidewalk.
2. **Sidewalks/Pedestrian Access** – Sidewalks are required along all road frontages. Sidewalks should be designed with a minimum width of 6 feet. Pedestrian ways should be provided to connect building entrances to the nearest transit street(s) or major pedestrian route. Direct pedestrian paths from parking areas to front entrances of structures should be provided. Such paths should be at least 5 feet wide and be separated from parking areas by grade, different paving material, or landscaping.



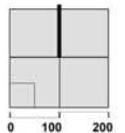


- ◄●●●●► Trail / Pedestrian Paths
- Bus Stop
- ▬ Major Access
- Station
- ▬ Primary Access
- ▬ Civic Space
- ▬ Secondary Access
- ▬ Open Space
- ▬ Rail Line

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3. Transit Area – Transit areas should provide shelter for pedestrians, convenient passenger loading zones, and secure bike storage.

D. Parking

1. Locations – Surface parking lots should be located behind buildings or in the interior of a block, whenever possible.
2. Structured Parking – Retail uses should be encouraged on the first floor of street-side edges of parking structures. Portions of parking structures that do not have first level retail uses must be articulated and otherwise have an appearance similar to the structure(s) it serves.
3. Configuration – Parking lots for proposed developments requiring more than 100 parking spaces should be broken into discrete areas separated by landscaped buffers a minimum of 10 feet in width, an internal roadway with a landscaped buffer on at least one side, or buildings.
4. Shared Parking - Joint parking use is strongly encouraged for adjacent non-residential uses and apartment buildings. Shared parking areas should be conveniently located to all uses, but do not need to be located on the same parcel.
5. Access –To the maximum extent feasible, vehicular access to parking areas should be taken from an arterial or collector street. The number and width of curb cuts should be kept to a minimum. Sites with multiple buildings should have unified/joint access. Adjacent uses should provide for vehicular and pedestrian circulation between their sites, through parking lot or alley connections, hard surface walkways, and similar measures.

E. Landscape Buffers

1. Arterial / Major Access Roads - A minimum 10 foot landscaped buffer should be provided between the right-of-way of any arterial or major access road and adjacent development. Plantings within the buffer should consist of mix of species of shade trees. Trees should be spaced no further than 30 feet on center.
2. Service Area – A minimum 10-foot landscaped buffer area should be provided between service and loading areas and the property line. Plantings within the buffer should consist of mix of tree species. Trees should be spaced no further than 30 feet on center.

Current Status and Next Steps

The station area plan is accepted and endorsed by official public policy. The property owner is pleased with the design advances made for the mixed use station area complex. Immediate next steps include refining the recommended zoning amendments for adoption and securing financing for design and construction of the first phases of the station area buildings.



Pottstown Station

POTTSTOWN STATION

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Station Area Description

The Borough of Pottstown is a densely developed, 250 year-old industrial town with a main street shopping district that has lost vitality over the years. The former Reading train station, which has recently been converted to a branch bank, is the location of the SVM conceptual station platform. The station is located in the center of the downtown, at the southern end of York Street on an active Norfolk Southern right-of-way. Major facilities in the immediate vicinity include Pottstown Borough Hall to the north, Montgomery County Community College West Branch to the west, the underutilized Mrs. Smith's industrial complex to the east, and Riverfront Park and the Schuylkill River to the south. The study area is bound by King Street to the north, the Manatawny Creek to the west, the Schuylkill River to the south, and Charlotte Street to the east.

Land Use

High Street in Pottstown is the quintessential "Main Street" in the Borough and also serves as the "downtown" for surrounding townships. High Street is an example of the older urbanized shopping districts that have suffered in competition with the King of Prussia Mall, Coventry Mall, Reading area outlet stores, and similar retail centers. There are a significant number of vacant or underutilized commercial properties, for-sale or for-lease, along High Street.

Mixed-use development at a fairly high density is prevalent within the Pottstown study area. A number of homes have been converted to businesses, particularly north of High Street. In the immediate station area, some recent adaptive reuse projects include the Roller Mill building, which has been converted to offices and apartments, and the former freight station at the intersection of Hanover and South has been adaptively reused for offices.

The Montgomery County Community College (MCCC) West Campus is the largest recent land development in the area. Additional expansion of the campus is in the preliminary planning stage. The construction of the new Pottstown Borough Hall, located just north of the former train station, is another major recent institutional development. The original Reading train station has been converted to a Security National Bank branch office and district justice offices.

Pottstown is rich in open space resources, especially within the study area. Pottstown Memorial Park, the borough's primary active recreation area, is located on King Street just north of College Park. Pottstown's most significant passive open space, Riverfront Park, connected to Memorial Park by the Manatawny Creek, currently stretches along the



Schuylkill River between Route 100 and Hanover Street. In addition, a key open space parcel situated on the south side of High Street between the former First Fidelity Bank Building and Pottstown Borough Hall was recently purchased by the Borough to preserve the viewshed between High Street and the historic Reading Train Station.

Transportation

Roads

In comparison to some surrounding towns, Pottstown has relatively few circulation problems, with some minor exceptions. Pottstown is fortunate to have a good regional highway network that takes much of the traffic burden off of the local streets and provides good access to the region. Pottstown is very accessible from US 422 via Hanover Street and from Route 100 via King and Manatawny Streets. High Street is the Borough's main commercial artery. Traffic in the area generally flows smoothly without excessive congestion or significant safety threats.

Much of the area's street pattern was laid out prior to the automobile, resulting in smaller blocks and a traditional grid pattern of intersecting streets. The dense street network slows traffic in these historic areas and naturally provides a walkable and pedestrian-friendly scale to the town.

The most significant circulation problems in the study area can be found at the intersection of College Drive and High Street and at the rail crossing on Hanover Street. Traffic movement is inefficient at the intersection of College Drive and High Street, where cars and buses are prohibited from turning right (east) onto High Street towards the downtown. This constraint forces all Community College and vicinity traffic destined for the downtown, Manatawny Street and West King Street to travel eastward on College Drive to Hanover Street. In addition, the rail crossing on Hanover Street is at-grade and causes delays for many College Drive motorists and creates safety hazards and inconveniences for pedestrians.

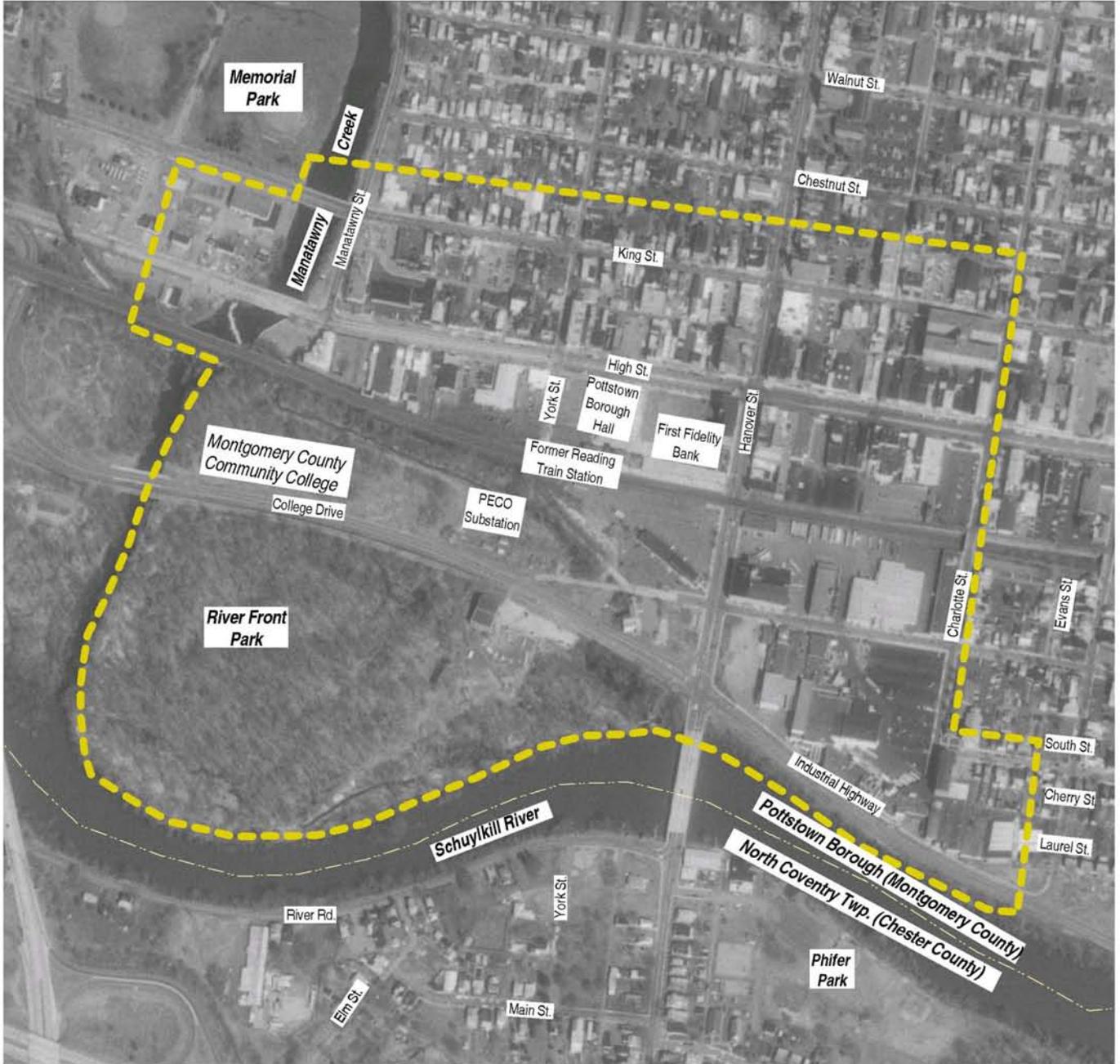
Rail

The only active train service in the study area is freight service on the Norfolk Southern right-of-way. Rail freight traffic moves via at-grade crossings across Hanover Street.

Transit Services

Several fixed bus routes provide service around the Pottstown station area. SEPTA provides long distance bus service on Routes 93 and 99. Route 93 runs between Pottstown and Norristown via Collegeville, and Route 99 provides service between Pottstown and Norristown via the King of Prussia mall. In addition, Pottstown owns its own transit system, which includes five bus routes operated under contract by Pottstown Urban Transit (PUT). As shown on the *Existing Transportation* map, PUT Route HI serves the High Street Corridor between West Pottsgrove and Lower Pottsgrove Townships; Route CM serves the Coventry Mall in North Coventry Township; Route BE serves Beech and Charlotte Streets between the Hanover/High intersection and Upper Pottsgrove Township; Route NL loops





LEGEND

Study Area



Schuylkill Valley Metro Corridor Station Area Planning and Implementation Study

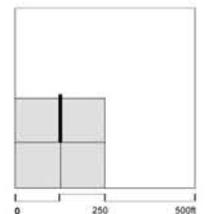
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POTTSTOWN Montgomery County

Existing Land Use



LEGEND

Station Study Area

Parks, Open Space

Industrial

Commercial - Mixed Use

Institutional

Office

Single-Family Residential

Multi-Family Residential

Utility

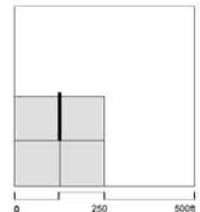
Vacant



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LEGEND

- Study Area
- Roads
- Railroad
- Buildings
- Parcels

- Parking Lot
- Bus Line
- Pottstown Urban Transit**
- HI - High Street
- BE - Beech Street
- CM - Coventry Mall
- NL - North Loop
- PC - Pottstown Center

SEPTA
 93 - Pottstown to Norristown via Collegeville
 99 - Pottstown to Norristown via King of Prussia

- Highway
- Primary Arterial
- Secondary Arterial
- Trail

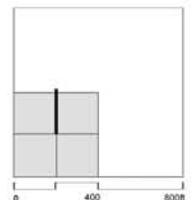


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through Charlotte and Beech Streets to State Road; and Route PC follows Manatawny Street into the Tri-County Business Campus in West Pottsgrove Township.

Parking

On street parking on High Street and off-street parking spaces between High Street and College Drive appear to be sufficient to meet peak period demands for current uses. However, new parking may be necessary if Borough redevelopment plans and MCCC expansion plans are realized. The Borough has targeted some vacant property between the PECO Substation and the railroad tracks, plus land just north and across the railroad tracks from the Mrs. Smith's property for potential parking areas.

Pedestrian and Bike Accessibility

New sidewalks along College Drive and older but adequate sidewalks throughout the Borough permit basic pedestrian circulation within the study area.

Currently, no convenient pedestrian walkways are provided between the Community College and downtown. Pedestrians tend to walk to and from the College via an indirect, inconsistent and confusing pathway on College Drive, through the public parking lot and on sidewalks along Hanover Street.

There are some existing trails in the River Front Park that provide a pleasant walking experience along the Manatawny Creek and the Schuylkill River, albeit for only a short distance.

Zoning

The *Existing Zoning* map shows the zoning districts within the study area for the Borough of Pottstown. Most zoning districts within the study area permit mixed land uses including a combination of commercial, office, industrial and higher density residential. The area surrounding the proposed station was recently rezoned from CB Central Business and IO Industrial Office to the recently adopted DG Downtown Gateway District. This new district encompasses most of the study area and is designed to encourage a mixed-use character and promote redevelopment of existing vacant industrial sites to compliment the adjacent downtown core.

The study area also includes the Office Residential (OR) District. The OR district allows for mixed office and residential development, permitting single-family semi-detached, single-family row homes, and limited multiple dwellings, as well as office and professional buildings built to the scale of homes common to the district.

There are only two residential zones located in the study area. The Residential High Density (RHD) and Residential Low Density (RLD) both encompass properties located in River Front Park. Residential development is not expected in these areas.



Demographics

In 1990, the population in Pottstown was 21,831. Population forecasts for the Borough provided by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission estimate that the population will continue to decrease slightly, to approximately 21,512 in 2010 and to 21,501 persons by 2020.

In 1990, the estimated employment in Pottstown was 14,766. By 2010, the number of employed persons in the Borough is projected to increase to 15,141 and to 15,587 in 2020, for an increase of 5.56 percent between 1990 and 2020.

In 1990, the mean household income in Pottstown was \$32,482. In comparison, the mean household income in Montgomery County was \$48,768 and \$45,234 in the entire SVM corridor.

Plans and Proposals

Currently, the most significant development plan in the Borough is the adaptive reuse of the Mrs. Smith's industrial complex, located in the area east of Hanover Street between South Street and the Industrial Highway. At this time, the developer does not have a specific plan for the site. The Borough has recently applied for funding from the Delaware River Port Authority to prepare a parking feasibility study for the Mrs. Smith's site.

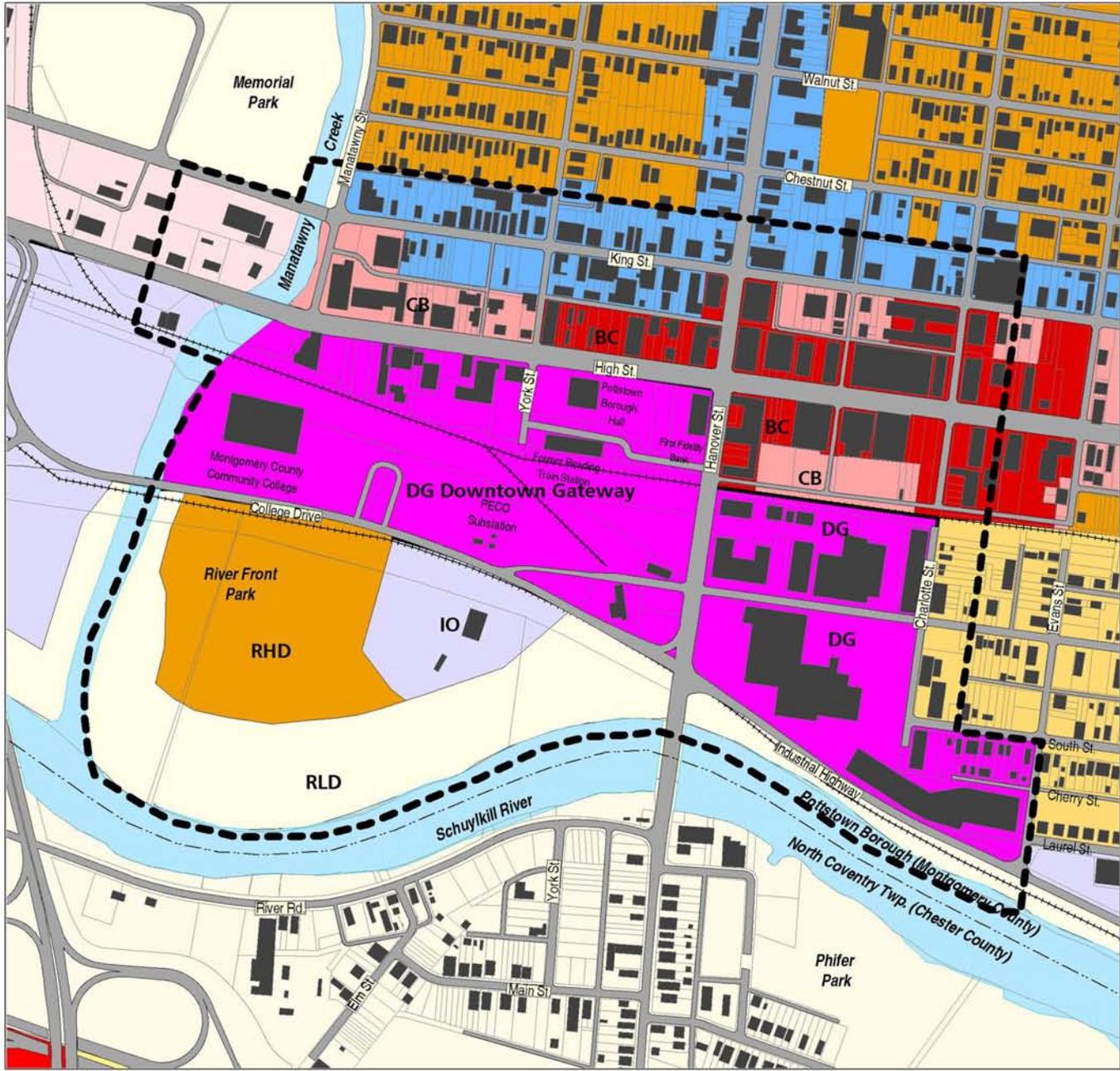
The former First Fidelity Building at High and Hanover Streets is a prime candidate for reuse. The non-profit Pottstown Historical Society has an option to purchase the building and is working with a private developer, who has announced his intention to purchase and renovate it.

Other plans in the Borough include major park improvements, including expansion of the River Front Park. The Borough has recently purchased the adjacent 60-acre PECO property to be improved as part of the existing park. The Borough has also purchased the vacant property between Borough Hall and the First Fidelity building for a public plaza.

Significant future plans under consideration in the study area include the expansion of the MCCC campus. At this time, MCCC is at capacity and would like to grow, but they do not know exactly how much expansion space is needed. MCCC's main objective is to be highly visible, which means being located as closely as possible to the intersection of High and Hanover Streets and to the proposed train station. They also know that they need more parking to serve not only future, but also existing demand.

At this time, there are several options for MCCC to expand within the Borough. The Nittany Warehouse on High Street, which has been offered for donation to MCCC by the Borough, is one option. The warehouse contains approximately 10,000 square feet, which alone would not be large enough to accommodate the College's plans. While the College does not know exactly how much they want to expand at this time, it will likely be more than 10,000 square feet. Other options include space in the First Fidelity Bank Building, the PECO industrial building within the River Front Park expansion area, and possibly





LEGEND

Station Study Area

- RLD - Low Density Residential
- RMD - Med. Density Residential
- RHMD - Med-High Density Residential
- RHD - High Density Residential
- OR - Office/Residential

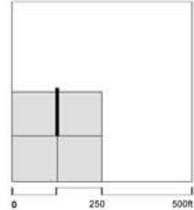
- DG Downtown Gateway
- BC - Business Core
- CB - Central Business
- HB - Highway Business
- IO - Industrial/Office
- HM - Heavy Manufacturing

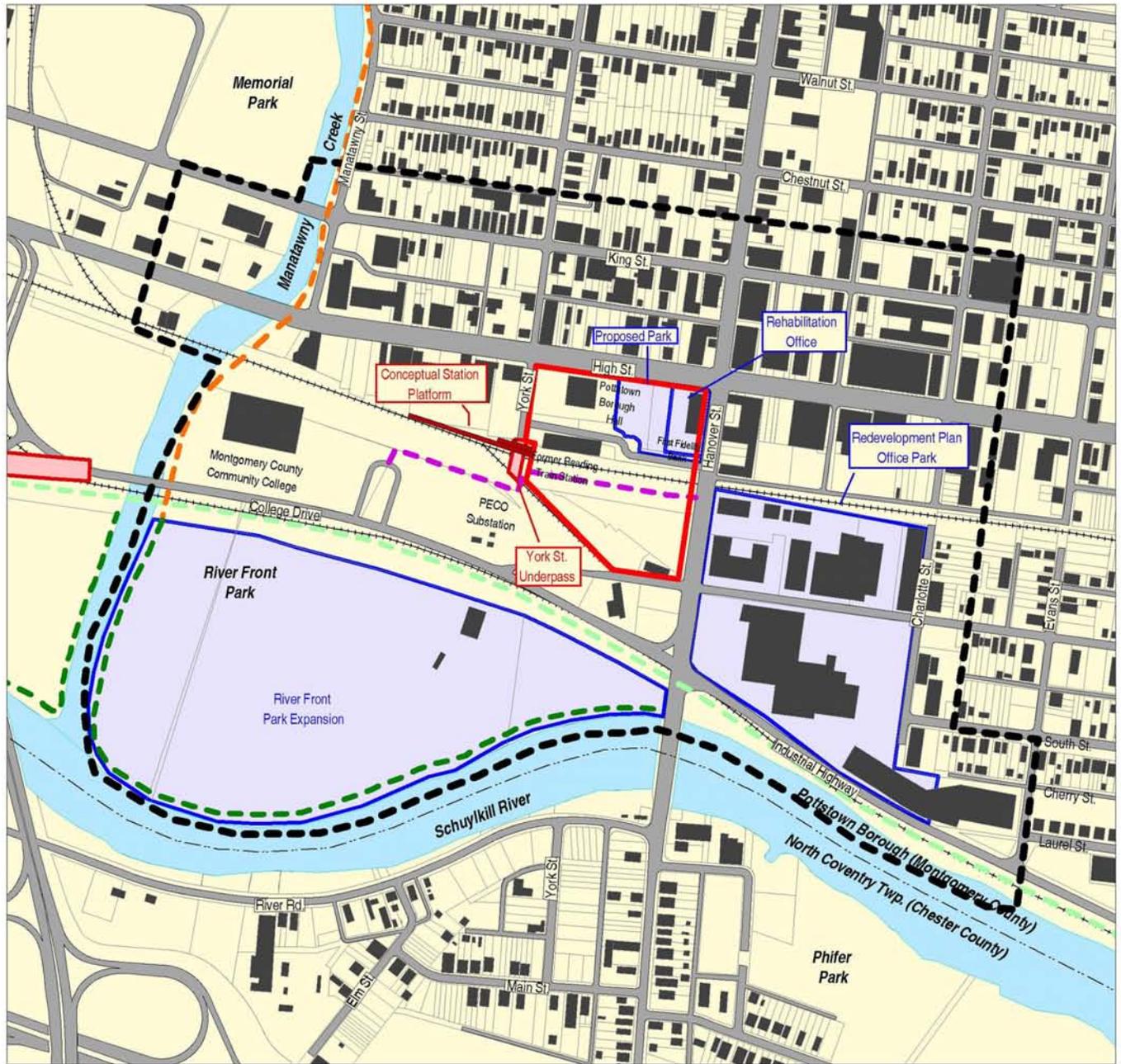


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LEGEND

Station Study Area

Proposed Development Plan

Proposed Town Center

Recommended Road Improvement

Existing Trail

Proposed Schuylkill River Greenway Trail

Proposed Pedestrian Promenade

Proposed Manatawny Greenway



**Schuylkill Valley Metro
Corridor Station Area Planning and Implementation Study**

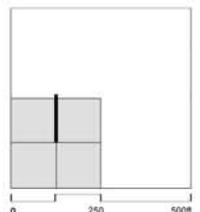
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Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
Wallace Roberts & Todd, LLC

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within the Mrs. Smith’s redevelopment. MCCC also has an option on a three-acre parcel located adjacent to the former PECO property and River Front Park expansion area that could be used for parking. MCCC has also considered purchasing the 6-acre vacant parcel across Manatawny Creek from the present college building for parking. At this time, however, the owner of the property, Norfolk Southern, is not interested in selling.

Market Potential

Trends Scenario

Under the Trends Scenario, the Pottstown station area has a fair outlook for development potential. As described in the *Demographics* section of the *Existing Conditions Briefing Book*, population and employment in Pottstown Borough are expected to increase steadily between 2000 and 2020. Pottstown is also located in the path of real estate development that is expected to continue west of Limerick Township. Significant new development anticipated in the station area includes the west branch of the Montgomery County Community College (MCCC). Further expansion plans for MCCC could improve the development market for downtown Pottstown, which must compete with abundant greenfields sites for new development.

The table below is a summary of Trends Scenario development program potential for the Pottstown station area prepared by Hammer Siler George, Assoc. The table lists the market potential for each of the four land uses under the Trends Scenario between 2000 and 2025.

LONG TERM DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL – POTTSTOWN STATION

TRENDS SCENARIO	2000-2010		2011 - 2025		2000 - 2025
	Pottstown Station	5-Station Total	Pottstown Station	5-Station Total	
Office Space, sq. ft.	18,890	94,440	117,950	589,730	20%
Retail Space, sq. ft.	1,160	7,170	15,230	80,270	19%
Multi-family, number of units	0	69	38	251	12%
Lodging, number of rooms	0	0	0	350	0%

Source: Hammer, Siler, George Associates, 2001.

Between 2000 and 2025 under the Trends Scenario, the Pottstown market is expected to be able to support up to 136,840 square feet of office space, about 20 percent of the five-station total. The retail market also looks good, with a potential for more than 16,000 square feet by 2025. The market study under the Trends Scenario also predicts a comparatively high potential for multi-family units, but no market for lodging development.



Opportunities Scenario

Under the Opportunities Scenario, more growth would occur in the station areas than under the Trends Scenario. The Opportunities Scenario assumes that the new transit station and other development, such as MCCC expansion and redevelopment of the Mrs. Smith's complex, will improve market conditions in the Pottstown study area. The table below indicates the long-term development potential for the Pottstown station area between 2007 and 2025.

LONG TERM DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL – POTTSTOWN STATION

OPPORTUNITIES SCENARIO	2007-2025		
	Pottstown Station	5-Station Total	% of Total
Building Use			
Office Space, sq. ft.	170,000	2,010,000	8%
Retail Space, sq. ft.	50,000	615,000	8%
Multi-family, number of units	150	1,550	10%
Lodging, number of rooms	200	1,200	17%

Source: Hammer, Siler, George Associates, 2001.

Issues and Opportunities

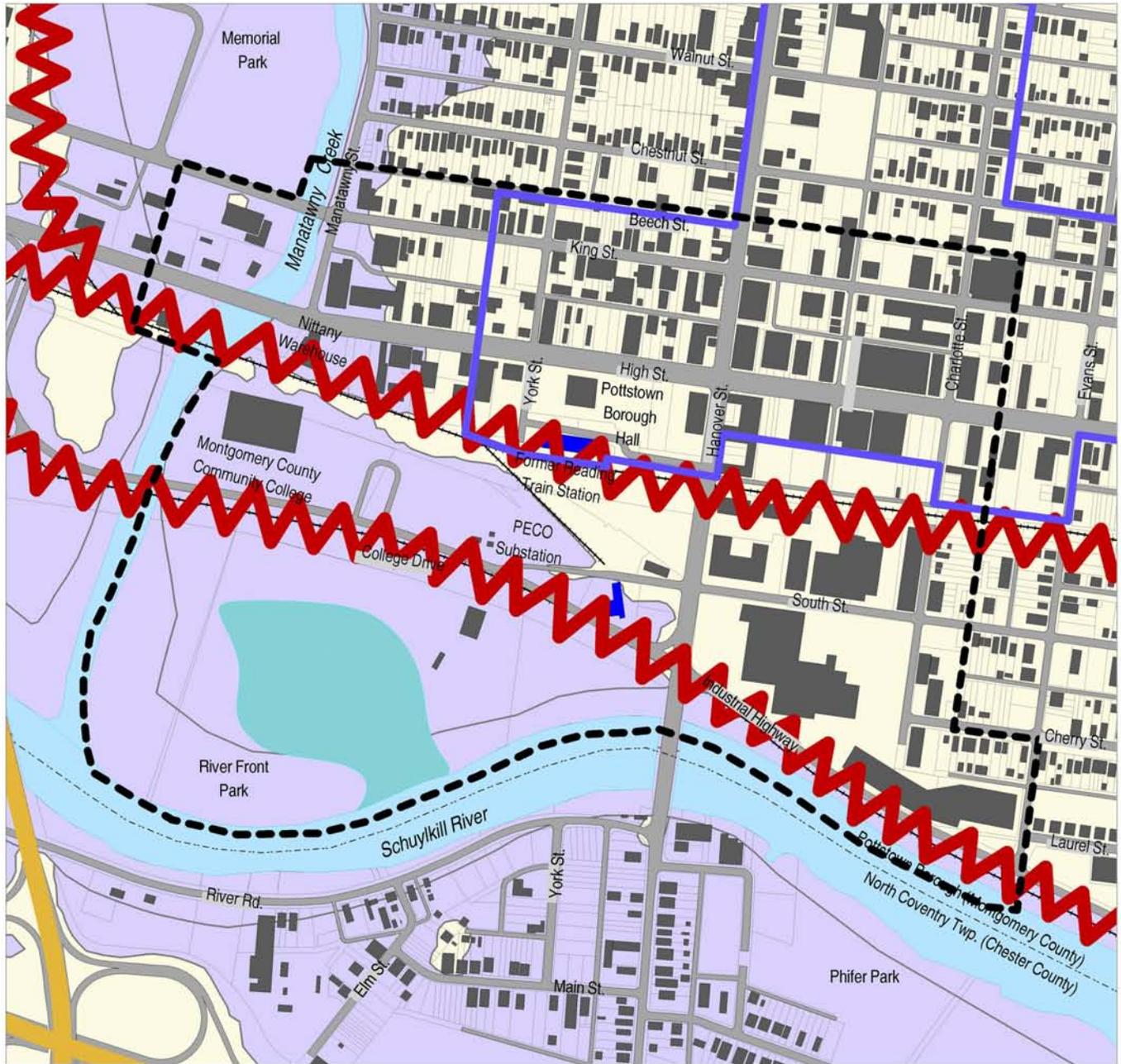
As illustrated on the *Issues and Opportunities* map, the most prominent physical constraint within the study area is the 100-year floodplain. Although the floodplain affects most of the study area, most of it does not extend into sections that have been targeted for development. There is also a very large wetland in the study area, however it is located within an area reserved for park expansion. The railroad tracks themselves present the most challenging constraint to proposed development. Grade-separated pedestrian connection between MCCC, the proposed station, and development south of the tracks may be desirable.

Due to the development constraints previously mentioned, as well as the limited amount of vacant land, most of the opportunities within the Pottstown study area will be limited adaptive reuse and infill of existing development. There are several opportunities for infill development within the study area, primarily in the center immediately surrounding the proposed station area and along High Street just west of Manatawny Creek. Redevelopment opportunities are plentiful in the Pottstown study area, particularly on the Mrs. Smith's site, as well as some smaller sites along High Street.

Pottstown also has an established Historic District, which adds to the attractiveness of the area. Several buildings within the study area are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, including the Roller Mill building and the old Reading Train Station.

Overall, the Pottstown area already has the characteristics conducive to TOD, including an established downtown, a dense development pattern and pedestrian friendly





LEGEND

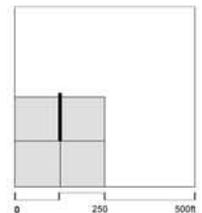
- Study Area
- Historic District
- Historic Building
- ⚡ Railroad Barrier
- Floodplain
- Wetlands



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environment. These features, combined with the many natural amenities, including the Schuylkill River, the Manatawny Creek, abundant parkland, and a trail system will contribute to a successful TOD.

STATION AREA PLAN

The station area plan presents the proposed TOD development strategy based on the preferred development concept prepared in concert with the Pottstown Community Task Force (CTF). This development strategy is described through concept diagrams, an illustrative site plan, and the proposed circulation plan for the Pottstown station study area.

Development Concept

The planning team worked cooperatively with the CTF and other interested participants through a number of public meetings to develop the station area concept. The team developed alternative approaches to station area development and discussed and critiqued them with the CTF, which gave direction for subsequent ideas and review. During these discussions the CTF applied a set of objectives to narrow the options and reach the selected concept presented in this report. These included the following:

- Preserve and renovate historically significant structures
- Extend the existing residential neighborhood to the east onto the site
- Provide mixed-use commercial development along Hanover Street
- Create an open space amenity which links and buffers the development

Concept Plan

The concept plan presents a general description of the proposed land use and general pattern of development around the station area. As illustrated on the *Concept Plan*, the station area is envisioned as a transit center utilizing the existing train station as a focal point. The existing platform location will be used to provide access to the entire study area. The central location of the existing train station provides a good connection with the proposed transit plaza on the vacant parcel next to Borough Hall. To the west of the station, along High Street, mixed commercial and live/work residential uses are proposed as an extension and revitalization of the historic central business district. In the area south of the station, MCCC expansion can be accommodated along Hanover Street, across from the Mrs. Smith's Pies complex, affording good visibility and connection with the train station. Parking for MCCC can also be provided on land surrounding the PECO substation, and in a new parking deck, located directly across from the train station. The parking deck could also accommodate SEPTA and BARTA riders. The Mrs. Smith's Pies complex is envisioned a major mixed-use redevelopment opportunity, including office, retail, and residential uses.



Illustrative Plan

The *Illustrative Plan* presents a more detailed picture of proposed development and improvements in the station area. The study area is divided into the following three development subareas and includes a description of the detailed development plan.

Historic Central Business District

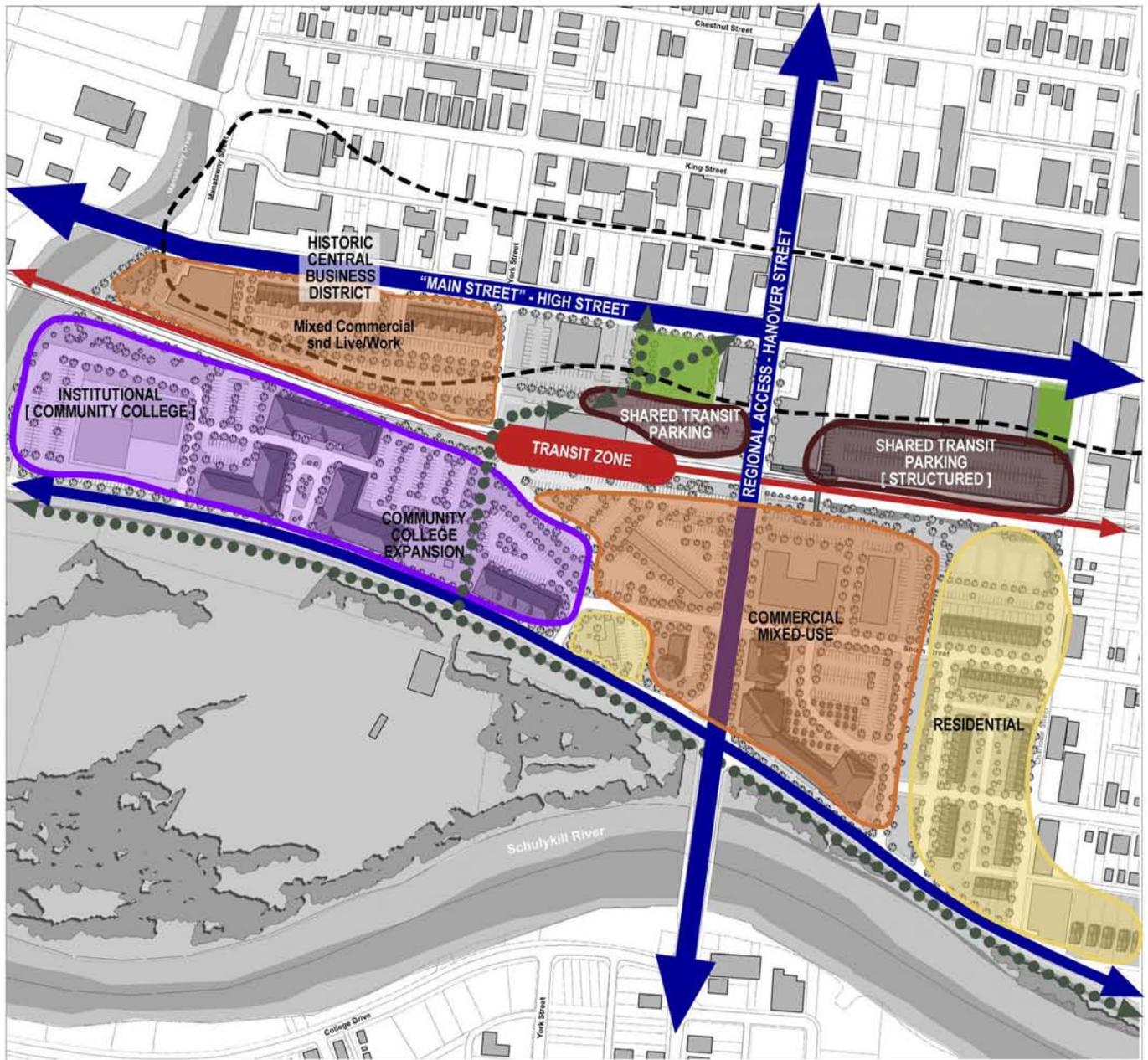
The spaces occupied by the existing Borough Hall, the former train station, and the vacant Fidelity Building are designed to form a town center, the focus of which will be a new civic square on the vacant parcel along High Street, between Borough Hall and the Fidelity Bank Building. The square could serve multiple functions in order to activate it throughout the day and evening. On the High Street side an area should be demarcated for bus riders who are departing and arriving. It is recommended that the renovated Fidelity Bank Building provide a commercial function at the plaza level with an outdoor presence, such as a dining patio for a destination restaurant. Also, the square should facilitate impromptu gathering and light recreation. The transit zone and shared parking are a link between the traditional downtown, MCCC, Riverfront Park, and redevelopment areas. To the west of the station area, new mixed-use units are proposed along High Street to revitalize the corridor and provide an extension of the existing historic central business. Proposed redevelopment also includes adaptive reuse of the historic Nittany Warehouse, which could be used for Community College expansion or offices. Approximately 128 parking spaces are proposed to serve this development

Community College Expansion

Montgomery County Community College is a significant asset to Pottstown and the SVM initiative. The College, located south of the proposed station along College Drive, has expressed the need to expand its campus facilities. An expanded campus stands to benefit from rail service as it will provide improved access for its students and likewise the station precinct will benefit as more pedestrians populate the area.

In its current location the College is somewhat disconnected from downtown as the building is located almost one half mile from Hanover Street, the nearest link to High Street. In order to bring the campus closer to the town center and increase visibility, the plan proposes eastward expansion towards Hanover Street. Approximately 100,000 (one story) additional square feet of Community College building expansion can be accommodated on the PECO property between the existing College building and Hanover Street. The site can also accommodate 450 additional surface parking spaces. More building square footage can be achieved by expanding vertically. This would require additional parking that could be accommodated in the proposed public parking structure located across South Street. As illustrated on the plan, the existing PECO substation can be incorporated into the design and screened with additional landscaping. The development can also incorporate the existing bus turnaround, which currently provides transit access for students. As illustrated on the plan, the turnaround could be integrated with a new college building to create an identifiable entry to the campus.





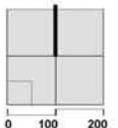
- Pedestrian Connections
- ↔ Access
- ↔ Rail Line
- Civic Space
- Transit Zone
- Historic Central Business District
- Residential
- Transit Parking
- Mixed Use
- Institutional

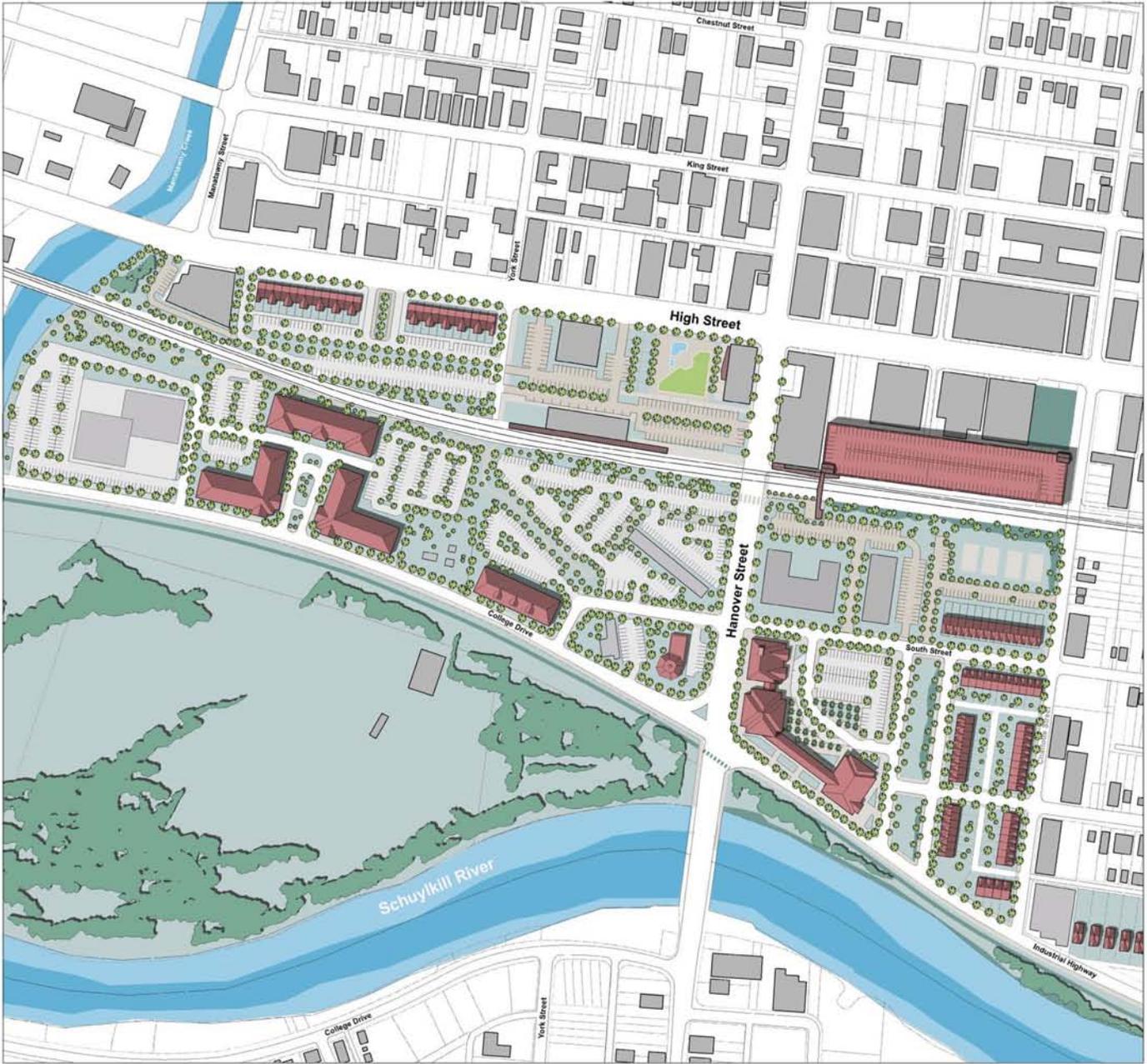


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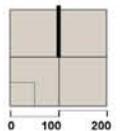
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Commercial Mixed Use Redevelopment Area

The proposed plan for this site includes approximately 270,000 square feet of mixed office and retail space (50,000 square feet in the reused warehouse building) on 7 acres of land located along Hanover Street and Industrial Boulevard. The plan includes 153 surface parking spaces and a proposed public parking structure located across South Street with 980 spaces.

To enhance the mixed-use character of downtown Pottstown, approximately 56 units of townhouse development is proposed as part of the redevelopment plan. The townhouses are located on 7.5 acres of land fronting Charlotte Street and Industrial Boulevard, for a density of approximately 7.5 units per acre. A significant amount of green space is well integrated into the plan to improve the residential quality of the new neighborhood and buffer it from commercial development

Transportation Plan

Station Configuration

SEPTA has proposed the Pottstown station as a side-loaded high level platform, although loading will take place from only one side. Due to limited space, SEPTA's conceptual design proposes a single track at the Pottstown station for both directions, switching to separate tracks at points further east and west of Pottstown. Headways will be scheduled to avoid conflicts. Supplemental improvements to the station area include a pedestrian underpass at the end of York Street to connect to the area south of the tracks, which includes a proposed drop off area and parking lot.

The proposed station area plan capitalizes on the visual symbol of the historic station building by slipping the SVM platform along the track side of the building and allowing the architecture to reassume its symbolic role. Given the modest service requirements for the station, the station building proper is not required to accommodate station-related functions. The station building is ideally positioned adjacent to the new Borough Hall, a proposed civic plaza, and the architecturally significant Fidelity Bank Building. In combination, these elements will create an identifiable activity center along High Street anchored by the new transportation amenity. It will enhance the perception of the Borough as existing residents will gain a new active urban space and riders of the SVM will identify a vibrant train station precinct as their image of Pottstown.

The train station platform is to be constructed behind the existing station building, extending beyond the building footprint along the tracks on both sides. The historic canopy should be preserved or re-used in whole or part. New drop-off areas are provided as well as a clearly defined parking area to the east. This parking area should include disabled parking for the station and the renovated Fidelity Bank Building. The current station building tenant could remain as the use is not incompatible with the proposed plan. However, it may be advantageous for the tenant to relocate to the Fidelity Bank Building or to other proposed development space along south Hanover Street. This would free up space for more transit oriented businesses, such as food service, newspaper/magazine stands, or other retail that directly caters to the atmosphere of the station and square.



Circulation, Access, & Parking

Though transit-friendly development intends to diminish the role of the automobile it still must accommodate it. The goal should be to integrate the automobile in ways that support alternative means of transportation, including pedestrian, automobile, bicycle, and transit.

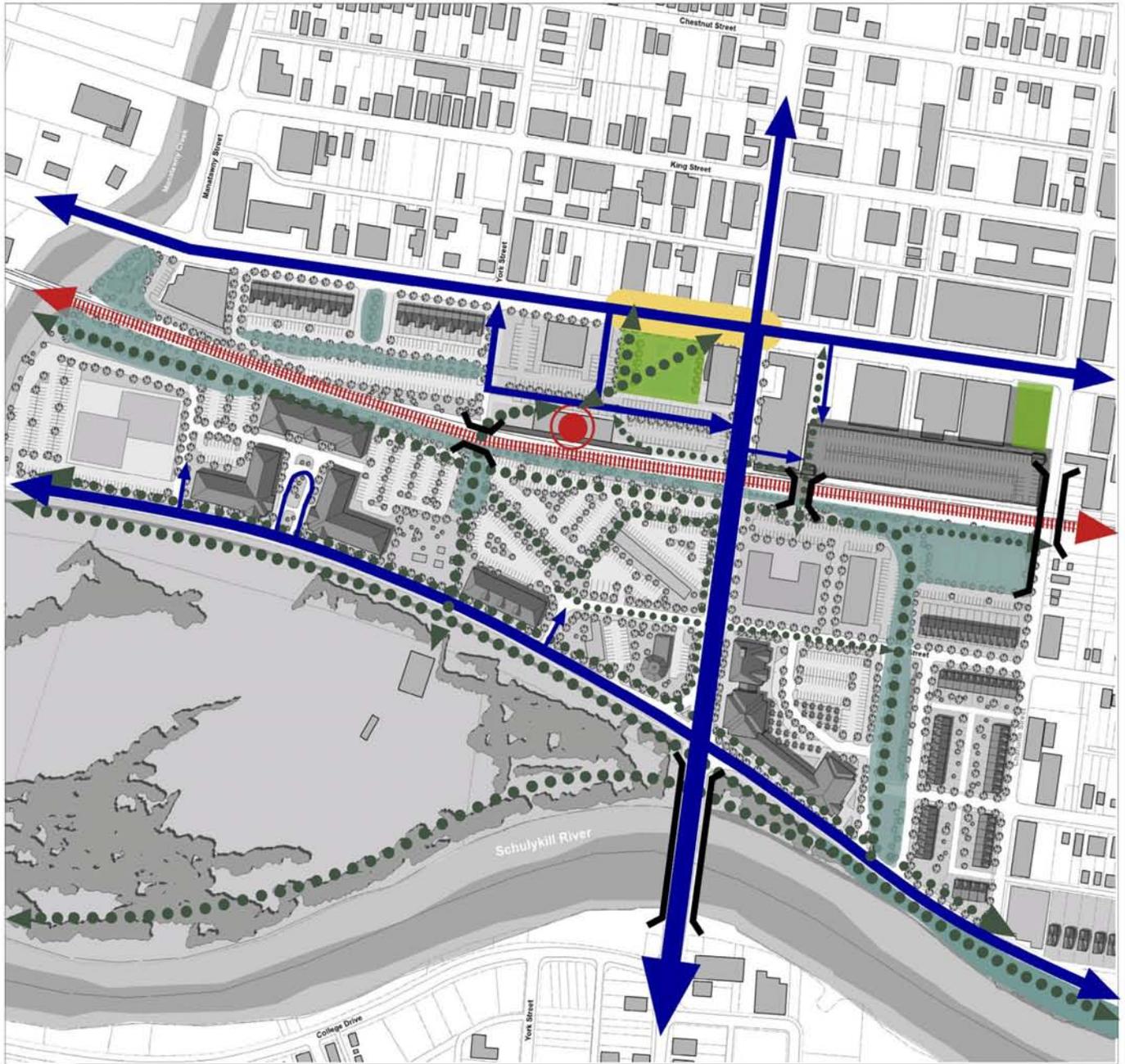
The study area for the station plan is small with very short walking distances throughout. However, many elements, particularly the community college and River Front Park feel 'cut-off' from each other and the downtown. The plan proposes a series of new pedestrian connections to mend these broken links. One such remedy includes activating an existing underpass at York Street as a pedestrian way connecting the expanded MCCC campus directly to the rail station and to High Street.

The existing railroad right-of-way is extremely broad between the Manatawny Creek and High Street. The plan proposes to recover approximately eighty feet of the right-of-way for a green pedestrian corridor linking the Mrs. Smith's Redevelopment site to the College. Within the corridor, recreational amenities could occur such as tennis and basketball courts.

Automobile access to the significant development areas, including the station, MCCC, and the Mrs. Smith's redevelopment are restricted to secondary collector streets. The station area can be accessed from either High Street or Hanover Street. The proposed parking structure has its primary access at either end of Hanover Street, through the reused fire station and from Charlotte Street at the second level. Automobile access is available from High Street as well. Automobile access to the community college is provided on College Drive and Hanover Street. Primary access for the Mrs. Smith's mixed-use development is from Hanover Street or Industrial Boulevard, although secondary access may be gained from Charlotte Street.

The strategy for the Pottstown station plan is to consolidate parking resources in a structure tucked on the inside of the block south of High Street, between Hanover Street and Charlotte Street. This facility should be sized to meet the demands of the new rail station, the renovated Fidelity Bank Building, the Mrs. Smith's redevelopment, some community college expansion, and the existing downtown parking surface lot it would replace.

MCCC has relied heavily on surface parking for their largely commuter student population. Expansion plans include approximately 450 additional surface parking spaces, however, an expansion effort should include a structured parking facility to relieve the consumption of valuable land near the station for parking. The parking deck could be inserted between the existing and new buildings when the new building is constructed or in a later phase.



- Trail / Pedestrian Paths
- Bus Stop
- Major Access
- Station
- Primary Access
- Civic Space
- Secondary Access
- Open Space
- Rail Line



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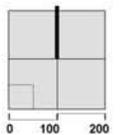
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IMPLEMENTATION

As part of the analytical process, the existing comprehensive plan, area plans, and zoning regulations were examined to determine whether current policy would facilitate implementation of the recommended development plan. It was determined that while the existing plans and regulations are for the most part consistent, a few discretionary amendments are necessary to achieve an optimal implementation strategy.

Recommended Comprehensive Plan Amendments

The current comprehensive plan for the Borough was adopted in 1986 and is outdated. The plan encourages redevelopment and growth of the downtown, but does not include plans for re-establishment of train service.

In June 2001, a draft plan was published that included the SVM study area. The *Western Riverfront District Redevelopment Draft Plan* includes proposed land use, zoning, and circulation plans for the area south of King Street, between the West Pottsgrove Township line and Charlotte Street.

The proposed land use plan is very general, but is consistent with the proposed SVM development plan. Specifically, the redevelopment plan proposes mixed uses between High Street and College Drive and between the Manatawny Creek and Charlotte Street. The proposed vehicular circulation plan is also consistent with the SVM plan, including the proposed Schuylkill Valley Metro line, the York Street underpass, and vacation of South Street west of Hanover Street. With the addition of the proposed SVM station location to the redevelopment plan it will be consistent with the SVM development plan.

Recommended Zoning Amendments

As previously noted, part of the Pottstown station study area has been rezoned from CB Central Business and IO Industrial Office to the recently adopted DG Downtown Gateway District. The DG district is designed to encourage a mixed-use character and promote redevelopment of existing vacant industrial sites to compliment the adjacent downtown core. Other zoning amendments proposed in the *Western Riverfront District Redevelopment Draft Plan* include the creation of two additional zoning districts. The proposed Riverfront Recreational District is intended to replace the Low Density Residential, High Density Residential, and Industrial Office zoning currently in place on the Riverfront Park site. Adoption of these proposed districts would also be consistent with the SVM station area plan.

Design Guidelines

While the standards and regulations in the DG District will permit development as proposed in the *SVM Station Area Report* for the Pottstown station area, several considerations should be addressed to ensure the desired development pattern. It is recommended that the following design guidelines be added to the adopted DG District:



A. Building Orientation and Entrances

1. Front building facades and main entrances shall be parallel and oriented to the public street if feasible. When buildings are located on corners, the entrance shall be located on the corner with appropriate building articulation, such as a chamfered corner, turret, or other similar feature.
2. Blank exterior walls are not permitted facing any street, parking area, or pedestrian area. Exterior walls shall have similar and compatible architectural treatments, including consistent style, materials, colors, and details.
3. Ground floor facades that face public streets shall be articulated to provide visual interest and a human scale. Such facades shall have arcades, display windows, entry areas, or other similar features along not less than 75 percent of their length. Window areas shall comprise no less than 35 percent and no more than 75 percent of the façade. Windows shall not be glazed with dark reflective glass. Interior window treatment shall not block views in from the exterior over more than 50 percent of the glazed area. No facade shall exceed 20 feet of length uninterrupted by such features. The above requirements shall pertain unless physical characteristics of the site make them infeasible.
4. Buildings located on arterials shall have any associated parking located to the rear of the building.

B. Street Locations

1. Development shall utilize and connect with existing public street networks where available. Where an existing or planned network of public streets does not exist, streets shall be laid out in a pattern that maintains connectivity while reflecting the existing street system.
2. Cul-de-sac and “dead end” streets shall be avoided.

C. Open Space

1. A minimum of 5 percent of the buildable land area shall be set aside as open space with location to be approved by the Borough. For non-residential development, required open or public space shall include any one or a combination of the following outdoor amenities:
 - a) Pedestrian plaza or patio area, with seating
 - b) Outdoor dining
 - c) Water feature
 - d) Landscaped green area

D. Transit Area

1. Transit areas, where appropriate, shall include shelter for pedestrians, convenient passenger loading zones, and secure bike storage.



E. Structured Parking

1. Retail, office, or other active uses shall be encouraged on the first floor of street-side edges of parking structures. Portions of parking structures that do not have first level active uses must be articulated and otherwise have an appearance similar to the structure(s) it serves.

F. Access

1. To the maximum extent feasible, vehicular access to parking areas shall be gained from side streets. The number of curb cuts should be kept to a minimum.
2. Sites with multiple buildings shall have unified/joint access.
3. Adjacent uses shall provide for vehicular and pedestrian circulation between their sites when possible, through parking lot or alley connections, hard surface walkways, and similar measures.

G. Landscape Buffers

1. Arterial / Major Access Roads - A minimum 6 foot landscaped buffer shall be provided between the right-of-way of any arterial or major access road and adjacent development. Plantings within the buffer shall consist of shade trees spaced no further than 30 feet on center.
2. Medians – All proposed and existing medians shall be landscaped with grass and shade trees when dimensionally feasible. Shade trees shall be spaced no further than 30 feet on center.
3. Service Area – A minimum 6 foot landscaped buffer area shall be provided between service and loading areas and the property line. The buffer shall contain a minimum 6 foot tall fence.
4. Parking – A minimum 5 foot landscaped buffer area shall be provided between surface parking areas and the property line or public right of way.

Current Status and Next Steps

The Borough Council has accepted the station area plan and will support SEPTA as appropriate to advance implementation of the SVM and its Pottstown station. The Borough is continuing to work with landowners to assist them to develop in a manner compatible with the plan. The Borough should consider adopting the 2001 draft Western Riverfront District Redevelopment Plan, or other public policy document supportive of TOD in the area. It should also consider for adoption the recommended zoning amendments to its DG district.

Doulassville Station

DOUGLASSVILLE STATION

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Station Area Description

The Village of Douglassville is located in Amity Township, Berks County, approximately 15 miles east of Reading. The currently proposed station location is on the north side of the Norfolk Southern right-of-way between Route 662 and Riverbridge Road. The SVM study area is bound by Leaf Creek to the east, the Schuylkill River to the south, Saint Gabriel Church to the west, with a northern boundary mid way between Postal Road and US 422.

Land Use

The current development pattern in Amity Township has resulted from the overlay of typical suburban patterns on historic rural land uses. Most of the recent development is disbursed throughout the Township along existing public roads with no other established patterns.

Several 18th and 19th century buildings remain in the historic village center of Douglassville on the north side of the proposed station site.

A variety of commercial establishments exist in the study area, mostly highway oriented businesses such as convenience stores, gas stations, banks, freestanding restaurants. One of the largest commercial properties located along US 422 consists of a bus depot. Most of the existing commercial land uses have developed adjacent to the Benjamin Franklin Highway (US 422) in a strip development pattern.

Industrial land use is principally limited to manufacturing operations, warehouse and storage facilities, wholesale and distribution. These establishments are also primarily located adjacent to the Benjamin Franklin Highway (US 422), as well as Old Swede Road (PA 662). The Amity Wastewater Treatment Plant is located between Old Philadelphia Pike and the Schuylkill River

A large portion of the station study area is comprised of woodlands and undeveloped open space. Most of the undeveloped land is not suited for development due to the physical limitations (steep slope and improper soil conditions) that are present within this locality.

The highest residential densities are found in and around the unincorporated village of Douglassville.



Transportation

Roads

Benjamin Franklin Highway (US 422) is the principal road through the station study area. US 422 is a regional arterial serving east-west traffic between Reading and King of Prussia. Within the study area, US 422 is a divided highway providing two lanes of travel in each direction. The alignment of the highway has created significant safety and capacity problems over the past ten years. These problems are expected to worsen as development pressures increase in Amity Township and the surrounding municipalities.

PA Route 662, also known as Old Swede Road, is another regional arterial carrying traffic north and south between the Fleetwood/Oley area and US 422. PA 662 provides one lane of travel in each direction within the study area.

Transit Services

Currently, there are no transit services in the area. BARTA operates bus service in the Reading area, however it currently does not extend as far to the east as Douglassville.

Parking

Public parking is not available within the station study area, although existing businesses have their own on-site parking facilities.

Pedestrian and Bike Accessibility

The Thun Trail is part of an abandoned railroad right-of-way, converted to pedestrian and bicycle use. It is located adjacent to the proposed SVM rail line that extends between Pottstown and Reading. Currently, the only portion actively used as a trail runs from Old Swede Road to the Exeter Township border. Future plans for the trail include extending it all the way to Pottstown as part of the Schuylkill Valley Heritage Park, a state heritage corridor that runs along the Schuylkill River from Philadelphia to Schuylkill County.

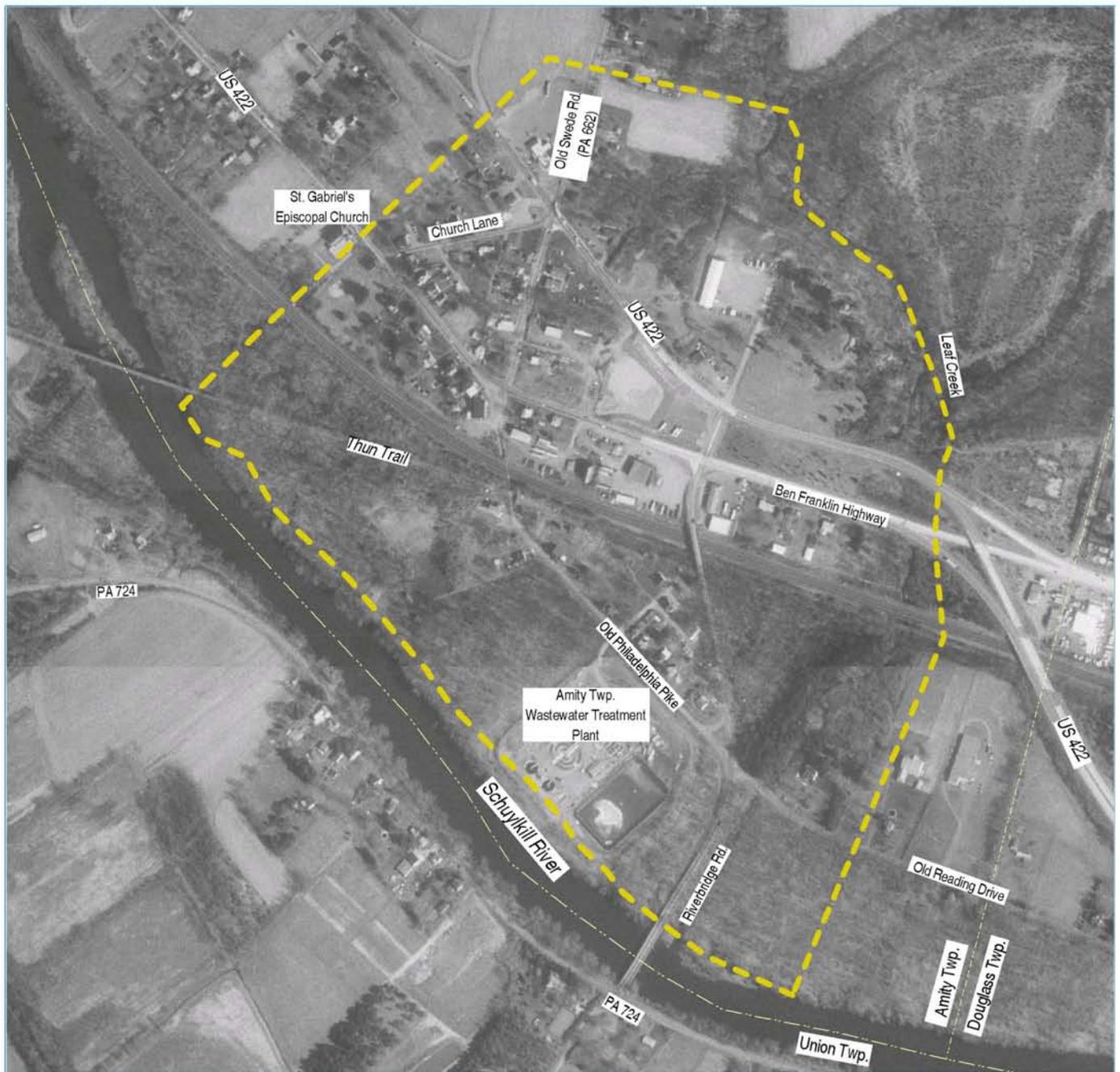
Sidewalks are not found anywhere within the study area except for a narrow walkway along Riverbridge Road. A pedestrian underpass currently exists under the Norfolk Southern right-of-way. The structure is in good condition and with rehabilitation could link both sides of the village through the new station. Pedestrian access from adjacent parking to the east could be routed adjacent to the Norfolk Southern right-of-way without negative impact on the village.

Zoning

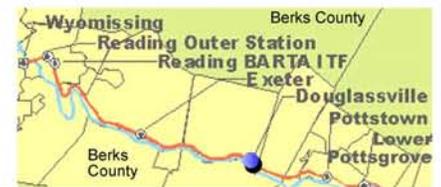
The Douglassville station study area is comprised of four zoning districts in Amity Township, including Rural Conservation (RC), Highway Commercial (HC), Shopping Center Commercial (SCC), and Light Industrial (LI).

The purpose of the RC district is to encourage woodland, agricultural and general open space conservation by preserving natural features and environmentally sensitive lands such as forests, water sheds, and water courses while perpetuating the rural atmosphere, open





 Study Area



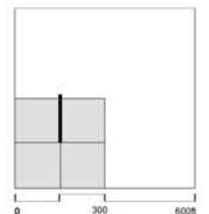
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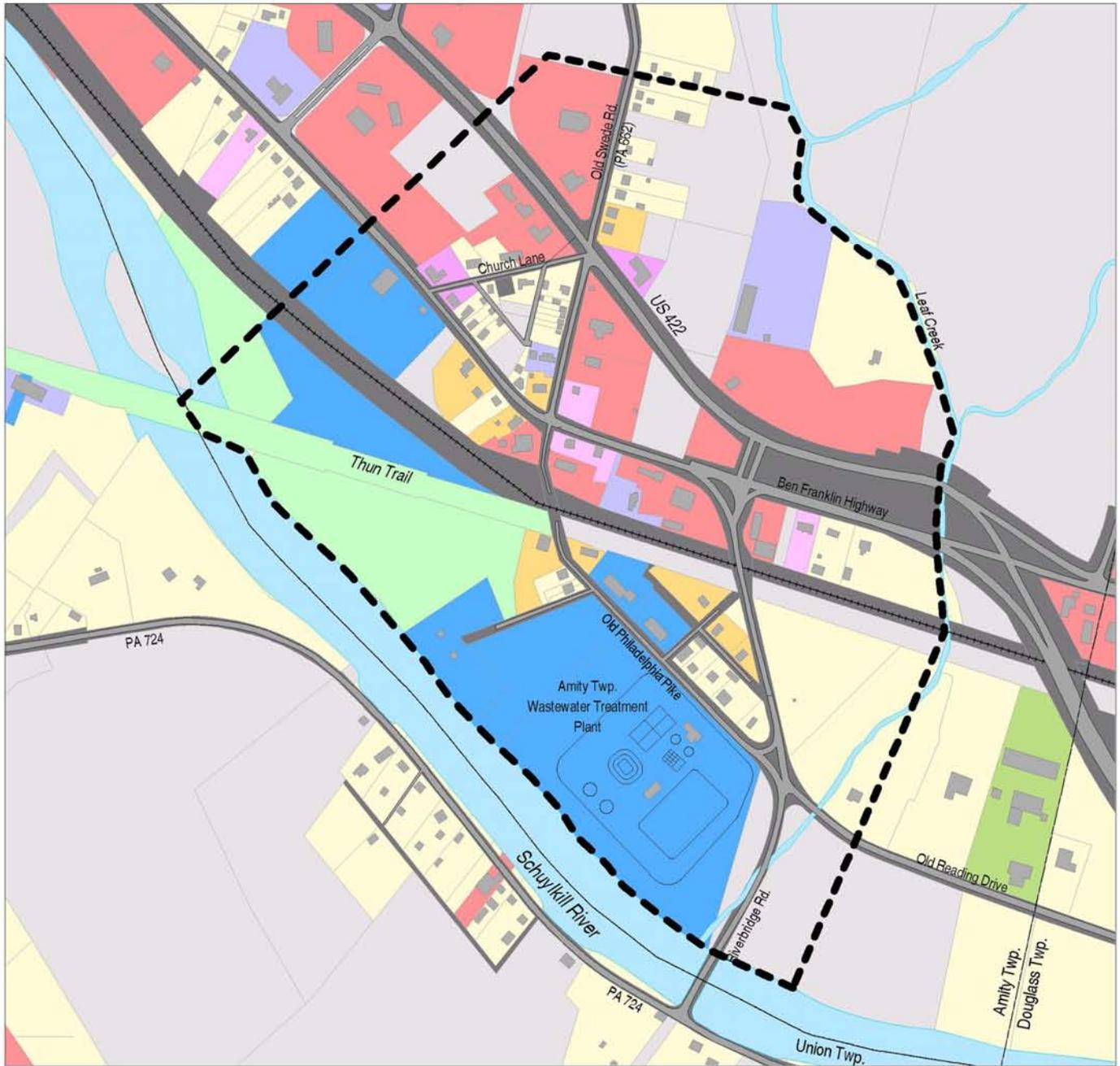
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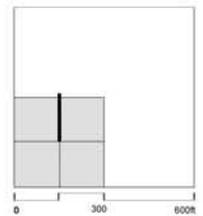
- | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|---------|
| Agricultural | Institutional | Utility |
| Recreation/Open Space | Office | Vacant |
| Industrial | Single-Family Residential | |
| Commercial | Multi-Family Residential | |



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LEGEND

- Study Area
- Roads
- Railroad / Trolley
- Buildings
- Parcels

- Existing Trail
- Existing Traffic Signal
- Existing Pedestrian Underpass

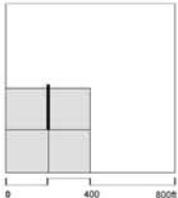
- Expressway
- Principal Arterial
- Minor Arterial

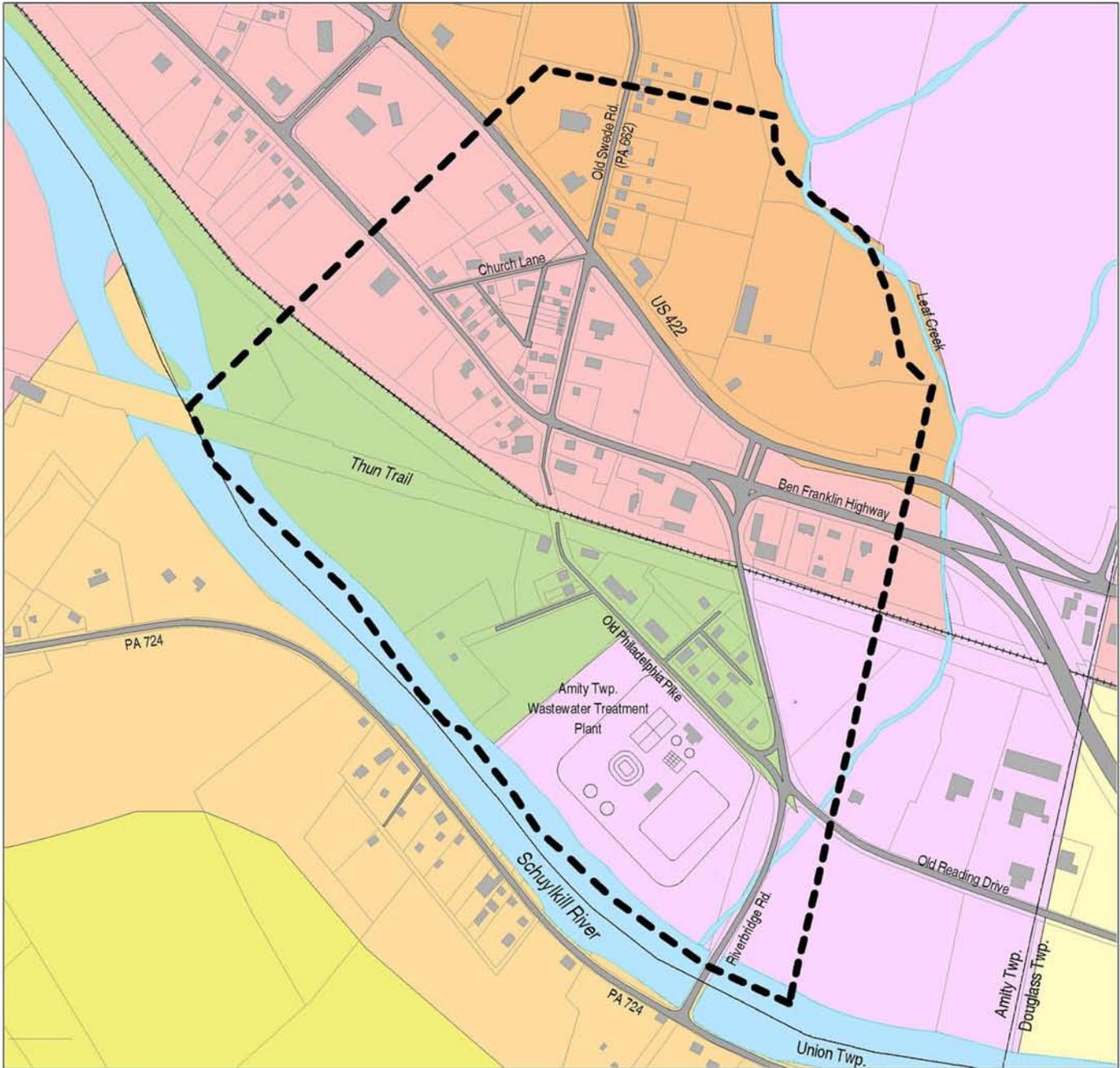


Schuylkill Valley Metro Corridor Station Area Planning and Implementation Study

Prepared for: Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
 Prepared by: Wallace Roberts & Todd, LLC
 With: Parsons Brinckerhoff Quade & Douglas, Inc.
 Hammer Siler George Associates, Inc.

Beach Advertising, Inc.
 ArchPlan Inc. / Philipsen Architects





LEGEND

Station Study Area

Amity Township

- RC - Rural Conservation
- SCC - Shopping Center Commercial
- HC - Highway Commercial
- LI - Light Industrial

Douglass Township

- R1 - Residential

Union Township

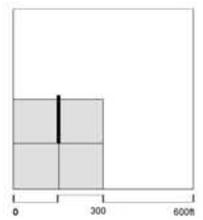
- VC - Village Commercial
- MDR - Med. Density Residential



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space and scenic landscape of the Township. The HC district, which runs along the US 422 corridor, provides for a variety of auto-oriented commercial land uses to serve the basic needs of surrounding residential communities. The SCC district is intended to provide for small, unified commercial shopping centers, while the LI district provides for general light industrial land uses.

Demographics

Population projections provided by the Berks County Planning Commission indicate that the Douglassville area will grow moderately, from 6,434 to 7,428 between 1990 and 2020. Amity Township performed their own long-term population projection to 2010 based on building permits issued between 1995 and November 2000. The Township projection estimates conflict significantly with those of the County, predicting a township population of 13,788 persons by 2010, more than twice the 1990 population.

Plans and Proposals

The 1990 *Amity Township Comprehensive Plan* envisions the portion of the study area north of the railroad tracks primarily as a concentration of highway commercial uses. The area south of the tracks is generally intended for open space and recreation, except that some land may be needed for expansion of the sewage treatment plant.

As indicated on the Plans and Proposals map, the Township has proposed a historic district in a significant portion of the study area. The historic district is envisioned as an area tourist attraction, possibly with renovated homes, small shops, restaurants, and other heritage-based commercial opportunities.

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, in cooperation with the Berks County Planning Commission, the Reading Area Transportation Study, and Amity Township have cooperated in studying the traffic issues involved with the US 422 corridor between the western end of the Pottstown Bypass and Monocacy Creek Road. The proposed station area lies within this zone. The March 2000 *Needs Analysis and Conceptual Alternatives Investigation* report presents a number of concepts for solution of these problems. Proposed improvements include a complete reconfiguration of the US 422 road system, including widening the westbound portion of US 422 to a two-way, six lane highway at the PA 662 intersection, transforming eastbound 422 to a two-way low speed corridor, and adding a reverse jug handle connector between US 422 and PA 662. The addition of sidewalks along all roads will be an important part of the transportation improvements. In particular, special design treatment should be prepared to accommodate pedestrian crossings at key intersections as shown on the concept diagrams. Proposed improvements also include the provision of road access to the area north and east of the US 422/PA 662 intersection from PA 662.

Market Potential

Trends Scenario

Under the Trends Scenario, the Douglassville station area has modest development potential. As described in the *Demographics* section, the population in the station area is expected to increase moderately, but not enough to sustain a significant amount of development. Current and projected employment in the Douglassville area is also substantially lower than any of the other TOD station areas. Other factors combine with slow population growth to hinder the market potential in Douglassville, including coverage of a large portion of the area by the 100 year floodplain, three large wetlands, and a transportation system that isolates portions of the station area.

The table below is a summary of development program potential for the Douglassville station area prepared by Hammer Siler George, Associates. The table lists the market potential for each of the four land uses under the Trends Scenario between 2000 and 2025.

LONG TERM DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL – DOUGLASSVILLE STATION

TRENDS SCENARIO	2000-2010		2011 - 2025		2000 - 2025
Building Use	Douglassville Station	5-Station Total	Douglassville Station	5-Station Total	% of Total
Office Space, sq. ft.	14,170	94,440	88,460	589,730	15%
Retail Space, sq. ft.	730	7,170	11,210	80,270	14%
Multi-family, number of units	0	69	25	251	8%
Lodging, number of rooms	0	0	0	350	0%

Source: Hammer, Siler, George Associates, 2001.

Between 2000 and 2025, the Douglassville market is expected to be able to support up to 102,630 square feet of office space, about 15 percent of the five-station total. The retail potential is considerably lower, with less than 800 square feet projected in ten years and less than 12,000 square feet in 25 years. The market study under the Trends Scenario predicts a very small potential for multi-family units and no market for lodging development.

Opportunities Scenario

Under the Opportunities Scenario, more growth would occur in the station areas than under the Trends Scenario. The Opportunities Scenario assumes that the new transit station and improvements to US 422 will improve market conditions in the Douglassville study area. The table below indicates the long-term development potential for the Douglassville station area between 2007 and 2025.

LONG TERM DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL – DOUGLASSVILLE STATION

OPPORTUNITIES SCENARIO	2007-2025		
	Douglasville Station	5-Station Total	% of Total
Office Space, sq. ft.	100,000	2,010,000	5%
Retail Space, sq. ft.	150,000	615,000	24%
Multi-family, number of units	100	1550	6%
Lodging, number of rooms	150	1200	13%

Source: Hammer, Siler, George Associates, 2001.

The market report indicates that the Douglasville market could improve with construction of flood barriers, provision of pedestrian walkways, and a reconfigured road network.

Issues and Opportunities

As illustrated on the *Issues and Opportunities* map, there are several physical constraints to development within the study area. The site south of Old Philadelphia Pike is dominated by the 100-year floodplain, and although development is not entirely precluded, the type of development permitted is seriously restricted. There are also a number of wetlands within the station area, which add to the development constraints.

The transportation system in the study area is also a major development constraint. The current configuration of the US 422 corridor presents a barrier to cross traffic and is hostile to pedestrian circulation. The high traffic speeds and volumes in the area make pedestrian crossing extremely dangerous, particularly at the intersections identified on the *Issues and Opportunities* map. The March 2000 study of short and long term improvements to the US 422 corridor and the US 422/PA 662 intersection makes short term recommendations and poses long term alternatives for improving traffic flow and safety.

The Douglasville study area contains a substantial amount of vacant land for new development opportunities, unfortunately, most of it is located within the floodplain. However, a significant number of properties are unconstrained and have been identified as having significant development potential, as illustrated on the *Issues and Opportunities* map. The Douglasville station area also includes approximately 30 acres of infill development potential along Benjamin Franklin Highway.

STATION AREA PLAN

Development Concept

The planning team worked cooperatively with the CTF and other interested participants through a number of public meetings to develop the station area concept. The team developed alternative approaches to station area development and discussed and critiqued them with the CTF, which gave direction for subsequent ideas and review. During these discussions the CTF applied a set of objectives to narrow the options and reach the selected concept presented in this report. These included the following:

- Preserve the rural nature of the township and the historic Douglassville area.
- Focusing denser, pedestrian oriented development near the proposed train station.
- Support proposed transportation improvements on US 422.
- A traditional “Main Street” development pattern.

Concept Plan

The conceptual land use plan for the Douglassville station area is based on a strong recommendation that all US 422 movements be consolidated in the current westbound right-of-way and the current eastbound right-of-way be converted to a “Main Street” character. It includes three different development areas that are integrated to form a transit-oriented pattern within a suburban context. The largest development area includes the large vacant tract north of US 422 and west of Leaf Creek. This site is proposed as a mixed medium density single family residential and office development. Office development is proposed along US 422 to provide a transitional buffer between the highway and the residential area. West of the proposed residential development, a commercial node is proposed that fills in the sparsely developed commercial parcels at the intersection of PA 662 and current westbound US 422. Highway-oriented commercial development should be concentrated in this area to avoid encroachment of strip development into the Township’s historic area. A new mixed-use center is proposed along the eastbound US 422 (Benjamin Franklin Highway), which, assuming implementation of transportation improvements described in the transportation section below, will become the “Main Street” and town center of Douglassville.

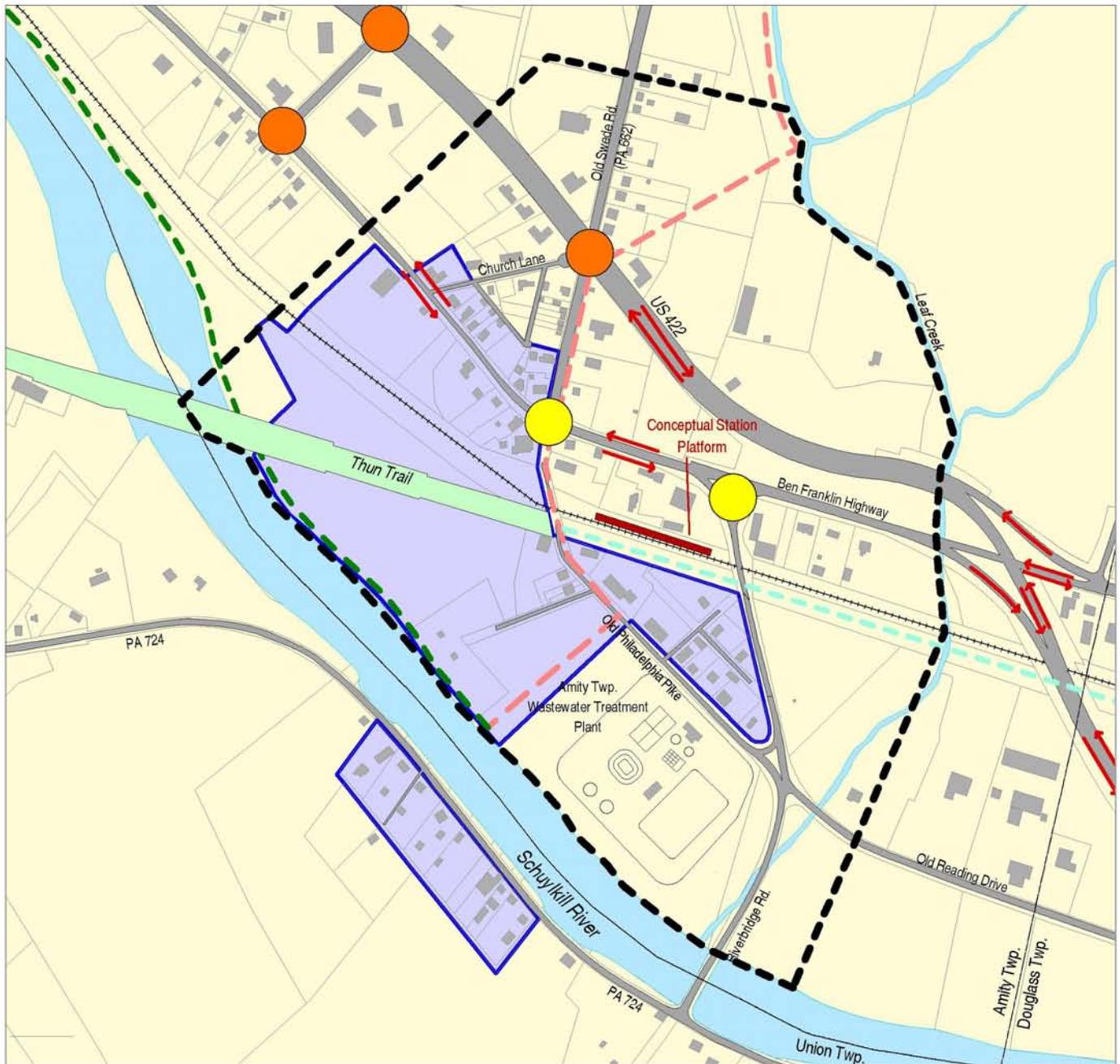
Illustrative Plan

The *Illustrative Plan* presents a more detailed picture of proposed development and improvements in the station area. The study area is divided into the following three development subareas and includes a description of the detailed development plan.

PA 662 and Leaf Creek Mixed Office/Residential Area

The proposed plan for the area north of US 422, between PA 662 and Leaf Creek consists of approximately 26 acres of mixed office and medium density residential development. Approximately 155,000 square feet of office plus 573 parking spaces would be developed along US 422, acting as a transitional buffer between the highway and an approximately





LEGEND

Station Study Area

Proposed Historic District

Existing Traffic Signal

Proposed Thun Trail Extension

Proposed Traffic Signal

Proposed Leaf Creek Trail

Proposed Schuylkill River North Bank Loop Trail



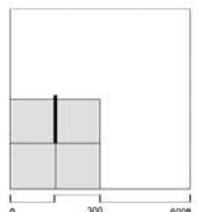
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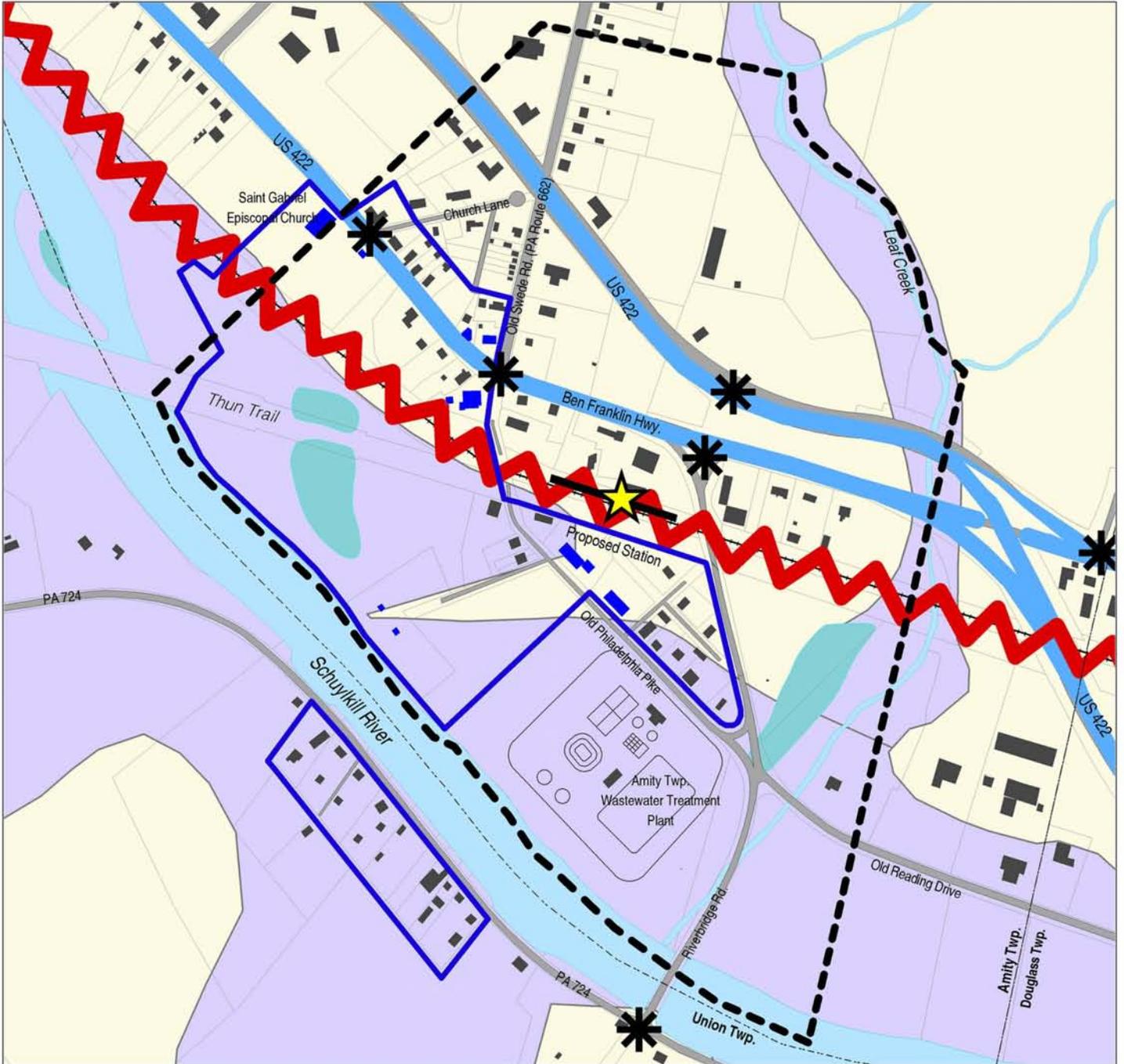
Prepared for:
Prepared by:



Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
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LEGEND

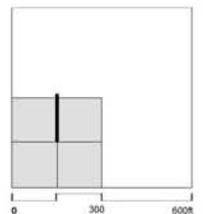
- Study Area
- Historic Building
- Hazardous Intersections
- Wetlands
- Proposed Historic District
- Railroad Barrier
- Floodplain
- High Volume Traffic

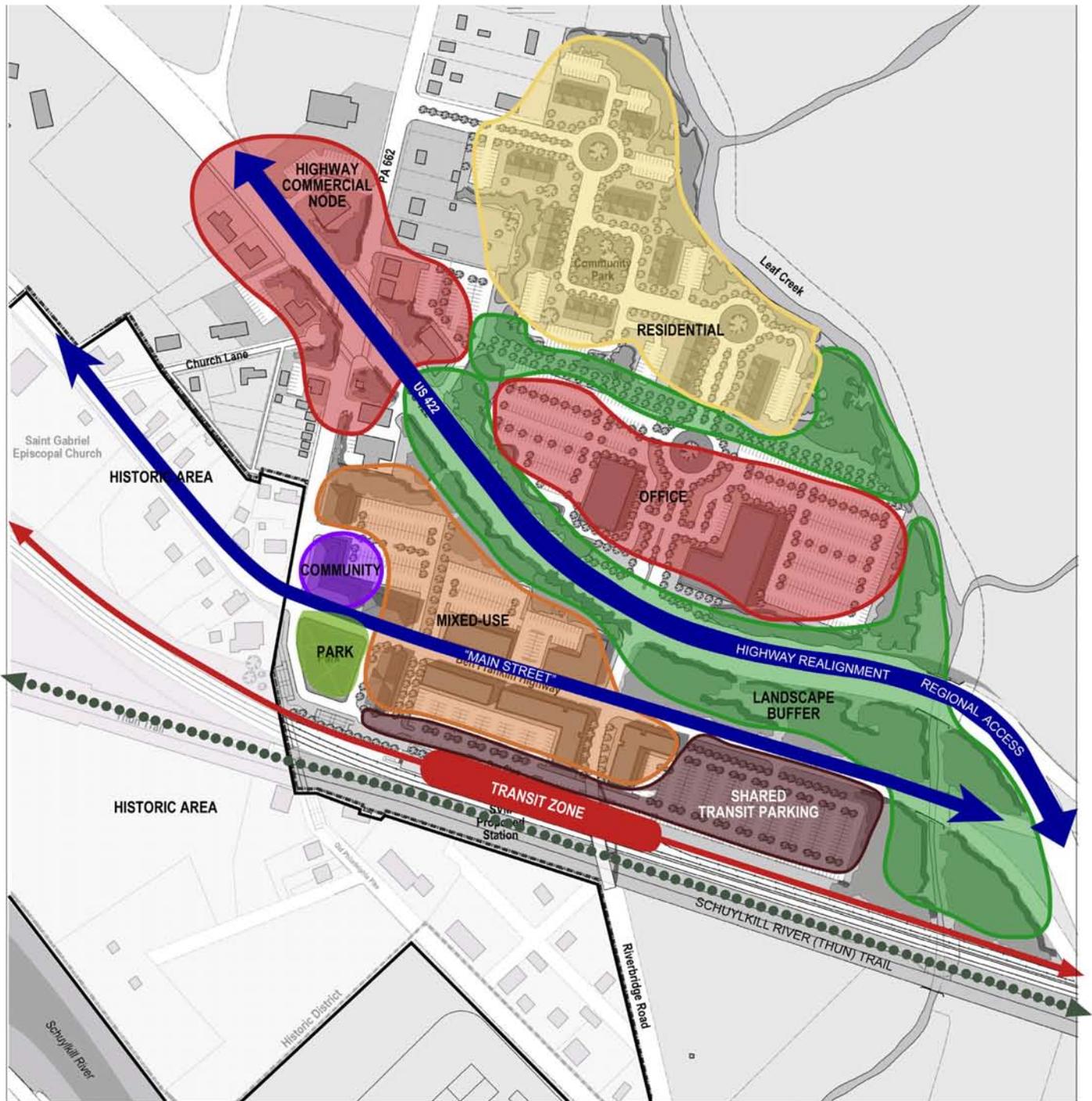


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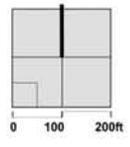


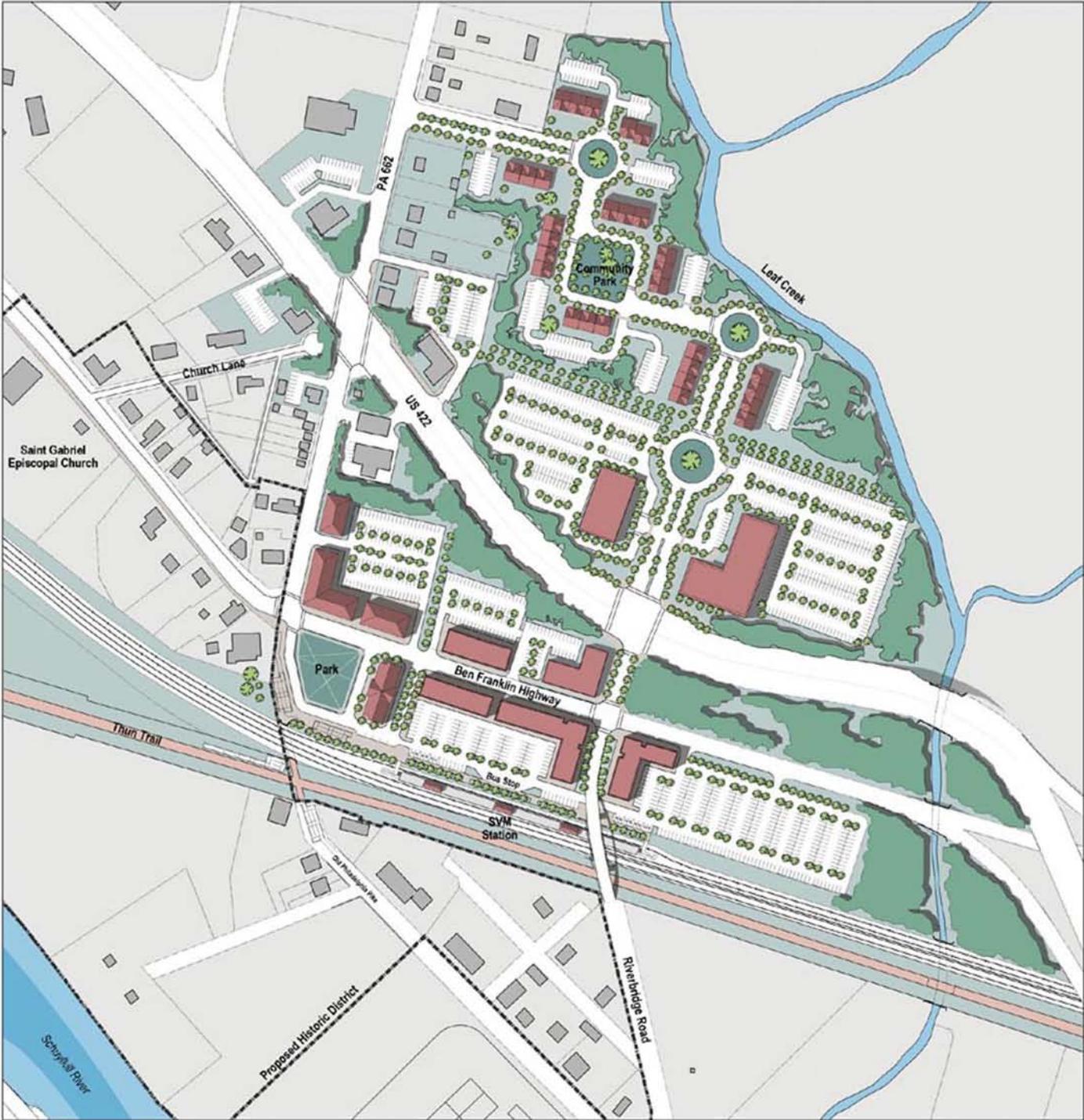
- Pedestrian Connections
- Access
- Rail Line
- Civic Space
- Transit Zone
- Commercial / Retail
- Residential
- Transit Parking
- Mixed Use
- Landscape Buffer
- Institutional / Community
- Historic Area

SVM
Schuylkill Valley Metro
Corridor Station Area Planning and Implementation Study

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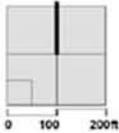
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11-acre residential area. Proposed residential development consists of 116 apartment units at an overall density of approximately 10.5 units per acre.

Benjamin Franklin Highway Corridor – “Main Street”

The proposed mixed use center consists of approximately 114,500 square feet of development with first floor office and retail, 52 units of second and third floor apartments, and associated parking on about 14 acres of land. The development plan also includes a civic square community park at the corner of PA 662 and Benjamin Franklin Highway. This area also contains the SVM station and parking for shared use by SVM patrons and Main Street users.

US 422 / PA 662 Commercial Node

This commercial node consists primarily of highway commercial businesses that are supported by improved landscaping and intersection improvements. Intersection improvements include dedicated turn lanes, marked pedestrian crossing lanes and signal improvements to facilitate pedestrian safety and traffic movement. The commercial node is intended to concentrate high volume auto-oriented commercial activity away from the Main Street area.

Transportation Plan

Station Configuration

SEPTA and BARTA have proposed the Douglassville station as a center-loaded platform. The SVM alignment will consist of new tracks located adjacent to the Norfolk Southern tracks. The proposed platform is located partially beneath Riverbridge Road bridge to provide a centralized location between the proposed surface park-and-ride facility south of Benjamin Franklin Highway. Pedestrian access to the platform from the parking lots will require an at-grade crossing of the railroad tracks. The platform can be accessed from the south side of the railroad tracks via an existing pedestrian underpass at the end of Old Philadelphia Pike. The east end of the station area can be accessed by pedestrians from a stairway on the Riverbridge Road bridge, which is recommended to be improved with wider sidewalks for safe pedestrian access.

Circulation, Access, and Parking

Regional automobile access to the station area will be provided along the existing westbound US 422, which is expected to be reconstructed as a two-way limited access highway. The primary local vehicular access to the station area is along the existing eastbound US 422, which is expected to become a three lane, two-way “Main Street” corridor. Access to the proposed residential area will be gained from new access drives from the realigned US 422 and from PA 662.

Pedestrian access will be provided throughout the study area via a system of sidewalks and trails. Currently, there are no sidewalks in the study area, however, once the US 422 realignment is implemented, new sidewalks should be constructed on Benjamin Franklin Highway, PA 662, and Riverbridge Road. The existing pedestrian underpass will also be



improved with paving and lighting to provide access to the train station from both sides of the tracks. A system of trails is currently in the planning stages to connect to the existing Thun trail, including a path along Leaf Creek, which could pass under the US 422 bridge and connect to the Thun trail. This path would require small pedestrian bridges across the creek for access from the proposed residential development. The development concept includes approximately 654 new parking spaces, of which 175 consist of shared parking for the train station.

IMPLEMENTATION

As part of the analytical process, the existing comprehensive plan, area plans, and zoning regulations were examined to determine whether current policy would facilitate implementation of the recommended development plan. It was determined that substantial amendments to the comprehensive plan and zoning ordinance would be necessary to achieve an optimal implementation strategy.

Recommended Comprehensive Plan Amendments

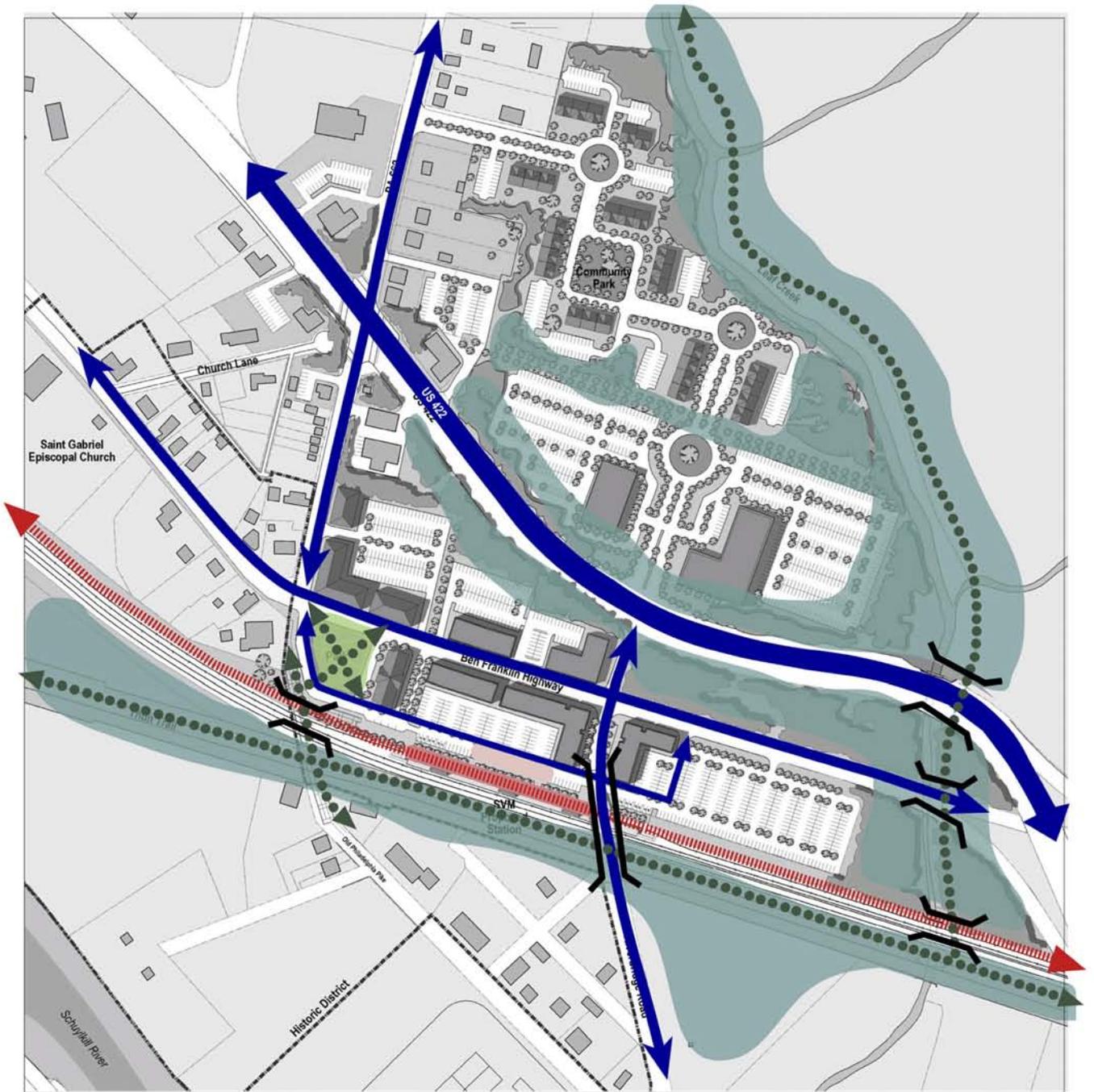
The Amity Township *Comprehensive Plan* envisions the portion of the study area north of the railroad tracks as a concentration of highway commercial uses. The area south of the tracks is generally intended for open space and recreation, except that some land may be needed for expansion of the sewage treatment plant. The proposed Historic District is envisioned as an area tourist attraction, possibly with renovated homes, small shops, restaurants, and other heritage-based commercial opportunities.

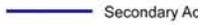
In order to be consistent with the proposed TOD plan, the *Comprehensive Plan* should be updated to include the SVM study area as a downtown commercial core, including relatively densely developed mixed uses and direct connection with the train station as a central feature.

Recommended Zoning Amendments

As indicated on the *Existing Zoning* map, the *PA 662 and Leaf Creek Mixed Office/Residential Area* is currently zoned SCC - Shopping Center Commercial. The *Benjamin Franklin Highway Corridor* is zoned HC – Highway Commercial. The *US 422/PA 662 Commercial Node* is zoned both HC and SCC. The area south of the railroad tracks is zoned RC – Rural Conservation. The following table presents highlights of existing SCC and HC zoning district requirements. These are the relevant districts because new uses are proposed north of the railroad and the RC District is adequate for the area to the south.





-  Trail / Pedestrian Paths
-  Major Access
-  Primary Access
-  Secondary Access
-  Bus Stop
-  Station
-  Civic Space
-  Green Space



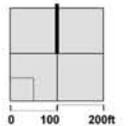
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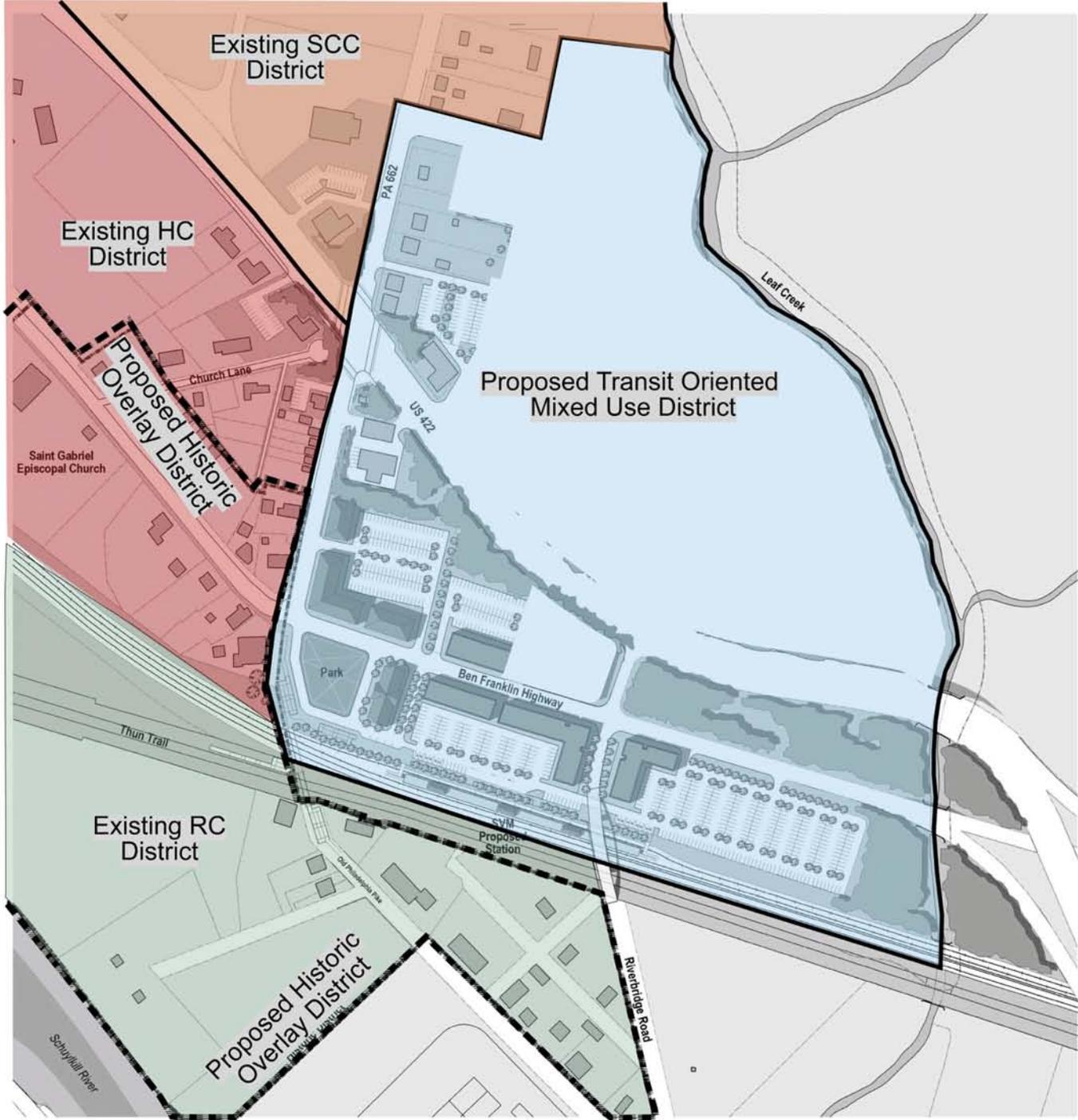
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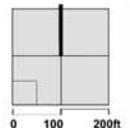
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Existing Zoning	SCC	HC
Major Permitted Uses	Shopping center, indoor theater, indoor recreation, retail, restaurants, self-storage, single family detached dwelling.	Professional office, personal service, restaurants, retail, self-storage, single family detached dwellings. Gas and service station, hotel/motel as special exceptions.
Min. Lot Size	3 acres	30,000 to 80,000 sq. ft.
Min. Front Setback	80 ft.	60 ft.
Min. Side Setback	80 ft. total	30 to 60 ft. total
Min. Rear Setback	50 ft.	50 to 60 ft.
Max. Bldg. Height	35 ft.	35 ft.
Buffer	20 ft.	10 ft.
Max. Impervious	60%	40 to 60%

The existing zoning requirements permit extensive highway oriented commercial uses that are not consistent with the overall moderate to high density, mixed-use development pattern proposed for the station area. The Amity Township zoning ordinance does not contain zoning districts that will adequately accommodate the proposed mixed-use development plan proposed in the station area.

Therefore, it is recommended that, with the exception of portions of the *US 422/PA 662* area, the majority of the study area be rezoned. The *Proposed Zoning* map presents the two-fold approach. First, it is recommended that a new Transit Oriented Mixed Use District be created and applied generally to the east of PA662 (and its imaginary extension south to the railroad tracks). Second, it is recommended that a Historic Overlay District be applied to the area currently proposed for historic district status.

Transit Oriented Mixed Use District

Requirements under the proposed Transit Oriented Mixed Use District are recommended as follows:

A. Purpose

The purpose of the Transit Oriented Mixed Use District is to provide for mixed use, moderate to high density, and pedestrian friendly development within walking distance (approximately 1,500 feet) of the SEPTA commuter rail station and to establish a node of commercial, residential, and public activity in the Township's central core.

B. Permitted Uses

1. Passenger train stations
2. Professional offices within 1,000 feet of the SVM platform and subject to the requirements of Section C. below
3. Single family attached or multi-family dwellings subject to the requirements of Section C. below
4. Eating or drinking establishments when part of a mixed-use structure within 1,000 feet of the SVM platform and restricted to a maximum floor area of 1,500 square feet.
5. Small scale service and retail establishments when part of a mixed use building in a mixed use development within 1,000 feet of the SVM platform. These include, but are not limited to barber and beauty shops, specialty shops, dry cleaning, repair shops, small-scale food markets and drugstores when part of a mixed use structure and restricted to a maximum floor area of 1,500 square feet. Service and retail establishments may also be permitted within professional office structures, but shall be restricted to a maximum of 20 percent of the leasable floor area of any one building.

C. Required Mixture of Uses

A mixture of uses, either within a single building or on a development site, must be provided within 700 feet of the SVM platform. Residential floor area must be provided but is not permitted on the ground floor of mixed-use structures. A minimum of 30 percent of the development shall be commercial and a minimum of 30 percent of the development shall be residential. The remaining development capability may go to either use up to a maximum of 70% for any one type. This percentage shall be calculated by square feet devoted to each type of use.

D. Density Requirements

1. Residential Density – Residential densities shall be a minimum of 10 units per gross acre.
2. Non-Residential FAR - The floor area ratio for non-residential structures shall be a minimum of 0.3.

E. Yard and Height Regulations

Each of the following minimum and maximum dimensional requirements shall apply to each permitted use in the Transit Oriented Mixed Use District except as specifically provided for in this ordinance.



Minimum Regulations

Building Setback	Buildings may be built to the sidewalk
Rear Yard	10 feet, except that commercial uses shall be setback a minimum of 30 feet when adjacent to a residential use.
Side Yard	10 feet, except that commercial uses shall be setback a minimum of 30 feet when adjacent to a residential use.

Maximum Regulations

Building Setback	15 feet
Building Height	45 feet
Impervious Coverage	80 percent (within 1,000 feet of the SVM platform) 70 percent (within 700 feet of the SVM platform)

F. Supplemental Design Standards

1. Building Orientation – Front building facades and main entrances shall be parallel and oriented to a public street.
2. Façade Treatment –Ground floor facades that face public streets shall be articulated to provide visual interest and a human scale. Such facades should have arcades, display windows, entry areas, awnings, or other such features along not less than 80 percent of their length. No facade should exceed 15 feet of length uninterrupted by such features.
3. Street Locations - Development shall utilize and connect with existing street networks where available. Where an existing or planned network of streets does not exist, streets shall be laid out in a pattern that maintains connectivity while reflecting the existing street system. Cul-de-sac and “dead end” streets shall be avoided.
4. Open Space
 - a) Private Development Requirements – A minimum of 10% of the buildable land area shall be set aside as open space. A building fronting on a public/civic open space may take credit for a pro rata share of the open space as its own based upon the percent of the open space’s edge to which the development is adjacent. Buildings directly opposite the SVM platform do not have a minimum open space requirement. For non-residential development, required open or public space shall include any one or a combination of the following outdoor amenities:



- i. Pedestrian plaza or patio area, with seating
 - ii. Outdoor dining
 - iii. Water feature
 - iv. Landscaped green area
- b) Public / Civic Open Space – This space shall be centrally located and adjacent to public streets, residential areas, and retail and office areas. It shall contain any one or a combination of the following outdoor amenities:
- i. Pedestrian plaza or patio area, with seating
 - ii. Water feature
 - iii. Landscaped green area

5. Streetscape

- a) Street Trees – Shade trees shall be planted along all existing and proposed streets. Street trees shall be spaced no further than 30 feet on center and shall be located in 6 foot wide planter strips between curbs and sidewalks. A limited number of the same species shall be planted along any single street.
- b) Sidewalks/Pedestrian Access – Sidewalks are required along all road frontages. Sidewalks shall be designed with a minimum width of 8 feet within the mixed use area. Pedestrian ways shall be provided to connect building entrances to the nearest transit street(s) or major pedestrian route. Direct pedestrian paths from parking areas to front entrances of structures shall be provided. Such paths shall be at least 5 feet wide and be separated from parking areas by grade, different paving material, or landscaping.
- c) Transit Stations – Transit stations shall provide shelter for pedestrians, convenient passenger loading zones, and secure bicycle storage.

6. Parking

- a) Locations – Surface parking lots should be located behind buildings or in the interior of a block, whenever possible.
- b) Configuration – Parking lots for proposed developments requiring more than 100 parking spaces shall be broken into discrete areas separated by landscaped buffers a minimum of 10 feet in width, an internal roadway with a landscaped buffer on at least one side, or buildings. An internal path or sidewalk located within the landscape areas between and connecting the parking areas is strongly encouraged.
- c) Shared Parking - Joint parking use is strongly encouraged for adjacent non-residential uses and apartment buildings. Shared parking areas shall be conveniently located to all uses, but do not need to be located on the same parcel.
- d) Access –To the maximum extent feasible, vehicular access to parking areas shall be from an arterial or collector street. The number and width of curb cuts shall be kept to a minimum. Sites with multiple buildings shall have

unified/joint access. Adjacent uses shall provide for vehicular and pedestrian circulation between their sites, through parking lot or alley connections, hard surface walkways, and similar measures.

7. Landscape Buffers

- a) SVM – Rail right-of-way – A minimum 20 foot landscaped buffer shall be provided between the rail right-of-way and adjacent development other than the SVM station and platform. Plantings within the buffer shall consist of a mix of species, 40% of which shall be evergreen. Trees shall be spaced no further than 30 feet on center.
- b) Arterial/Major Access Roads - A minimum 10 foot landscaped buffer shall be provided between the right-of-way of any arterial or major access road and adjacent development. Plantings within the buffer shall consist of a mix of species of shade trees. Trees shall be spaced no further than 30 feet on center.
- c) Service Area – A minimum 10 foot landscaped buffer area shall be provided between service and loading areas and the property line, except where adjacent to a residential use, in which case the buffer width should be increased to 25 feet. Plantings within the buffer shall consist of a mix of tree species. Trees shall be spaced no further than 30 feet on center.
- d) Parking – A minimum 10 foot landscaped buffer area should be provided between parking areas and the property line or public right-of-way. Plantings within the buffer shall consist of a mix of species.

Historic Overlay District

Requirements under the proposed Historic Overlay District are recommended for CTF consideration as follows.

A. Purpose

Given the significant role of the extant historic structures in the development of the Township and their potential to give richness and depth to local character, experience, and a meaningful sense of place, it is the purpose of the Historic Overlay District to promote the protection of and enhance the setting for the area of the Township contained within the Town Center Historic District.

B. Permitted Uses

1. All uses permitted by the existing underlying zoning designation are permitted within the Historic Overlay District.

C. Supplemental Design Standards

1. New Construction and Additions - Any new construction or addition to existing buildings shall be compatible with and sympathetic to the massing, siting, height, materials, textures, and colors of the existing building (for additions) or to the two



adjacent or other two closest historic structures in the District (for new construction).

2. Building Orientation – Front building facades and main entrances shall be parallel and oriented to a public street.

D. Review and Approval

1. Application for action (addition or new construction) within the Historic Overlay District shall be processed in the same manner as application for a conditional use.

Current Status and Next Steps

The CTF's involvement was instrumental in the development of the conceptual station area plan. The Township should take advantage of the opportunity presented by an upcoming Pennsylvania Department of Transportation study of the U.S. Route 422 corridor to advance their idea for its realignment. The Township should also consider the recommended Comprehensive Plan and zoning ordinance amendments, and historic district designation as methods to secure the desired recreated main street around the SVM station area.



Appendices

APPENDIX 1: PROGRAM MANAGEMENT TEAM MEMBERS

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Schuylkill Valley Metro Corridor Station Area Planning and Implementation Study

Station Areas Technical Report

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Key Words: Transit, Transit-Oriented Development, Station Area Planning

Abstract: This document includes technical studies and recommended actions to implement land development regulations (comprehensive plans and zoning) supportive of transit oriented-development. The document presents background analyses including market forecasts, field investigation of each of five station areas as well as land development plans designed to make best use of the enhanced access to be provided by construction and operation of the Schuylkill Valley Metro transit service.

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