Final Report
June, 2006

Prepared For:
Montgomery County Planning Commission
Norristown Borough
Plymouth Township

LAFAYETTE STREET

Land Use Access Study

Edwards AND Kelcey

A.D. MARBLE & COMPANY

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1. INTRODUCTION

Imagine riding down the Schuylkill River Trail on your bike; cool breeze blowing on your face, the smell of freshly cut grass. You notice some activity ahead. As you approach, you see families picnicking, a group playing volleyball, and senior citizens relaxing on benches. The SEPTA R6 train flies by. You stop and get off of your bike; there's a locker available where you can secure it. You notice office workers dining at outdoor cafés and parents shopping with strollers. The backdrop of this scene is the beautiful Schuylkill River. You're in Norristown: a destination for residents and visitors.

Norristown has the potential to thrive once again as the County Seat of Montgomery County and serve as a regional gateway. The riverfront is an opportunity for viable development in concert with recreation. Lafayette Street is a chance at a new, thriving corridor. Opportunities abound for incredible waterfront views, public access to the Schuylkill, and a rebirth for Norristown.

Once a place of great civic pride, Norristown was, and remains, the County Seat of Montgomery County. In addition to housing the County offices and the County Courthouse, Norristown has an abundance of historic architecture. Like most boroughs in the region, Norristown is arranged with a grid street pattern and a variety of older, 'urban' housing stock, including row houses, twins, and single-family dwellings. Revitalization of Lafayette Street and the riverfront is imperative for Norristown Borough, neighboring Plymouth Township, and all of Montgomery County.

Many of what were once vibrant, water-dependent commercial and industrial properties now lie dilapidated or abandoned. Many unsightly and odoriferous uses remain on the waterfront, blocking public access and views to the water. These uses pose environmental contamination concerns and have contributed to Norristown's poor image and history of decline. Additionally, PECO's 230kv lines hang overhead, a height and safety challenge for redevelopment.

Industrial uses on Washington Street

The Norristown riverfront once benefited from its transportation advantage as the crossroads of major rail and shipping lines. Today, Norristown is well positioned to again realize this transportation advantage

as it lies at the junction of SEPTA's R6 regional rail line, SEPTA's Route 100 trolley line, several bus lines, the Schuylkill River Trail, and a future interchange with the Pennsylvania Turnpike. The location of the R6 rail tracks along the river presents challenging access limitations; however, the opportunity exists to develop creative solutions to reconnect the public to the waterfront.

It is not uncommon for waterfront industries to develop to meet economic demands with the absence of planning and zoning as a guide. The most profitable land uses today, including recreational opportunities and public waterfront access, should not be pursued at the expense of public good. It is possible to pursue profitable redevelopment projects in concert with public access and amenities.

1.1 Study Purpose

Lafayette Street Transportation Improvements Project[1]

In 2000, the Montgomery County Planning Commission initiated what was to become the Lafayette Street Corridor Project, a study to improve vehicular access to the Borough of Norristown's riverfront. The County selected the consultant team of McMahon Associates, Inc., Simone Jaffe Collins and Skelly and Loy, Inc. to perform an evaluation of alternatives to enhance vehicular accessibility to the riverfront area from the major arterials surrounding the Norristown area for the Montgomery County Planning Commission. The goals of this evaluation were to develop alternatives to improve access to both the riverfront and the Norristown Borough area, by identifying measures to improve the capacity of the current roadway network and introduce new access opportunities to the adjacent arterial highways, while considering potential Right-of-Way and environmental impact.

The critical access points for efficient and effective movement of vehicular traffic to and from the redevelopment area were identified as the Dannehower Bridge at Lafayette Street, direct access to the Pennsylvania Turnpike via slip-ramps, and the extension of Lafayette Street to Conshohocken Road/PA Turnpike slip ramps. Various options at each of the key access points were evaluated based on a variety of factors including: the redevelopment options for the riverfront area, the potential land uses in the area, physical constraints of improvements, environmental issues, and design constraints.

[1]Information on Lafayette Street Transportation Improvements Project taken directly from Montgomery County's Lafayette Street Transportation Improvements website (http://www.montcopa.org/plancom/Lafayette_Web/project_history.htm)

The consultant team recommended that further preliminary design engineering services and environmental documentation be performed to determine one alternative at each of the key access points that will meet the project needs and objectives.

Following meetings with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission, and the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, the Lafayette project was placed on the FY 2001 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and funding was allocated for preliminary engineering and environmental studies. In 2001, the Montgomery County Planning Commission selected McCormick, Taylor, & Associates, Inc., in association with DMJM/F.R. Harris, Inc., Traffic Planning and Design, Inc., Vibra-Tech Engineers, Inc., Applied Geoscience and Engineering, Inc., Synterra, Ltd., and Pinto Engineering, Inc., to carry out this task, which has been named the Lafayette Street Transportation Improvements Project.

Lafayette Street Land Use Access Study

Based on the changes occurring under the Lafayette Street Transportation Improvements Project, redevelopment and revitalization of the project area will be necessary to promote the successful development of Norristown. This need for guided development led to the Lafayette Street Land Use Access Study, the results of which are included in this report. Given the history of the site and existing constraints, this document provides a realistic and achievable plan to ensure success.

The purpose of the Lafayette Street Land Use Access Study is to evaluate the land use and access issues facing Norristown Borough and Plymouth Township along the Schuylkill River. Conducted by Edwards and Kelcey, with the support of A.D. Marble & Company, and in concert with a steering committee, the study is divided into three major sections: Existing Conditions, Land Use, and Access.

- The Existing Conditions section discusses the natural and cultural resources found in the project area. It also includes an analysis of buildable land within the project area.
- The Land Use section provides a series of land use recommendations, development guidelines, and proposed regulatory changes.
- The Access section discusses riverfront access, as well as access control along Lafayette Street.

1.2 Steering Committee

In the Fall of 2005, a Steering Committee was convened to provide direction and feedback on the planning process. Members of the Steering Committee included representatives from the following agencies:

- Montgomery County Planning Commission
- Montgomery County Redevelopment Authority
- Norristown Borough
- Plymouth Township

Steering Committee Surveying the Schuylkill

The Steering Committee assisted with the initial visioning process for the study and developed the following goal statements:

- Improve traffic circulation by accommodating local and regional traffic.
- Increase on-street and off-street parking along Lafayette Street.
- Transform Lafayette Street into a walkable, tree-lined street.
- Provide active/passive waterfront recreation opportunities.
- Create physical and visual access to the waterfront.
- Generate new economic activity including residential and office development.
- Preserve the first 60 feet of the waterfront for public access/space.

These goal statements provide the foundation for the land use and access recommendations discussed in this report.

1.3 Public Input

With the assistance of the Steering Committee, Edwards and Kelcey conducted two public workshops, one in February 2006 and one in May 2006. Full reports summarizing the public workshops can be found in Appendix A.

2. EXISTING CONDITIONS

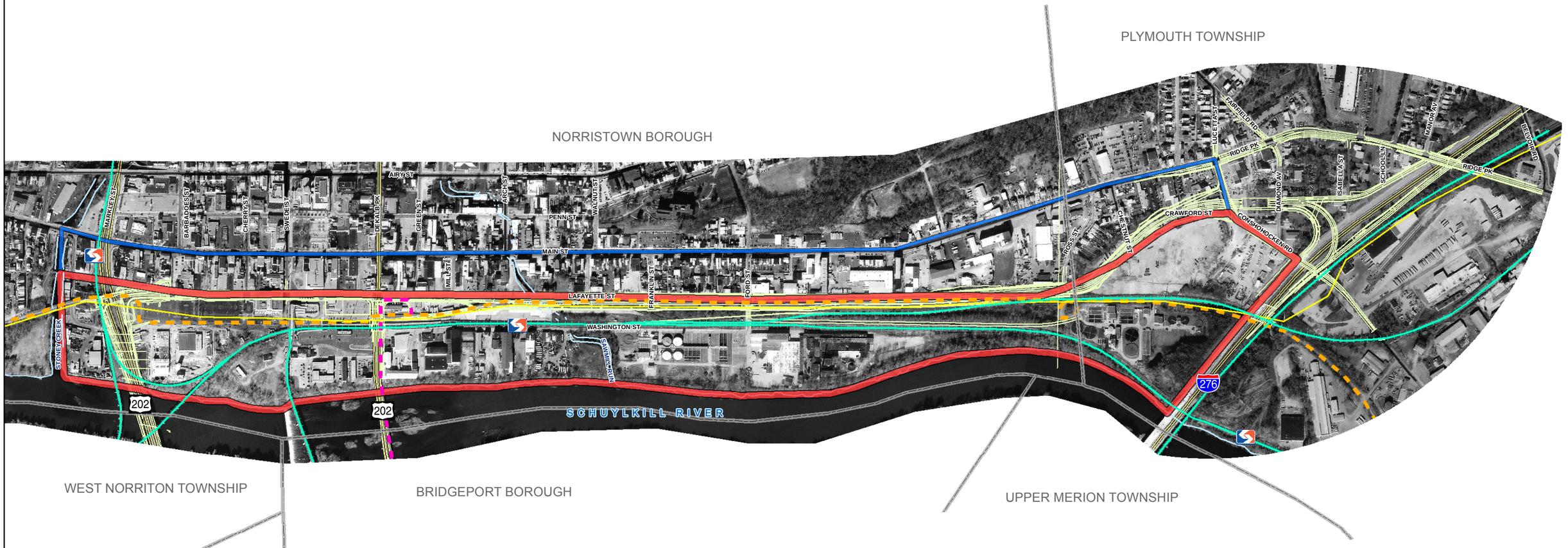
The Lafayette Street Land Use Access Study Area, located in Norristown Borough and a portion of Plymouth Township, extends from the banks of Stoney Creek to the west to Conshohocken Road to the east, a distance of approximately 1.5 miles (Figure 1). The area is bound by the commercial and residential Main Street to the north and the Schuylkill River to the south. This study area includes light and heavy industry, residential and commercial properties, and a variety of transportation corridors, such as S.R. 0202, the SEPTA R6 railway, and the scenic Schuylkill River and Chester Valley trails.

This study focuses on identifying natural and cultural resources within the project area to assist in the redevelopment and revitalization of the Norristown waterfront. This section describes the natural and cultural resources present in the corridor as identified during secondary source reviews (mapping, historical documentation, etc., as referenced in Appendix B.5) and windshield surveys conducted during November 2005.

It should be noted that the project location map identifies a primary and a secondary study area. The primary study area is the initial study area that includes the area between Lafayette Street and the waterfront. The secondary study area, which includes the commercial and residential Main Street, was added to highlight important access points to the primary study area.

Lafayette Street Land Use Access Study
Figure 1: Project Location

750 0 750 Feet



Streams

PennDOT State Road

State Road

Highway

Study Area

Primary

Secondary

Lafayette Street Transportation Improvement Footprint

Railroad

Power Lines

Chester Valley Trail

Schuylkill River Trail

SEPTA R-6 Regional Rail

Source: DVRPC 2002 Orthophotography; McCormick Taylor and Associates; Montgomery County Planning Commission; PennDOT State Roads 2005;

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2.1 Surface Water Resources

Streams and Waterways

The Schuylkill River is the prominent waterway within the project area, extending approximately 2,500 meters (8,200 ft) from the confluence of Stoney Creek to Conshohocken Road. There are two streams within the project area—Stoney Creek and Sawmill Run—which both flow in a southern direction through the project area (Figure 2). Due to the highly urbanized nature of the study area, both creeks are channelized, with Sawmill Run disappearing within a culvert through most of the study area.

Information about each stream and their Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP) Chapter 93 water quality classifications are listed below (Table 1).

Table 1: Streams and Rivers within Study Area.

Stream/ River Name	Length within Primary and Secondary Study Areas (ft)	PADEP Chapter 93 Stream Classification	PA Fish and Boat Commission Trout Stocked Waters
Schuylkill River	8,200	WWF	No
Stoney Creek	1,200	TSF	Yes
Sawmill Run	1,200	WWF	No

A *Warm Water Fishes (WWF)* designation means that the waterway is maintained for the propagation of fish species and additional flora and fauna, which are indigenous to a warm water habitat. The *Trout Stocking (TSF)* designation means that the waterway is stocked with trout from February 15 to July 31 and maintained for the propagation of fish species and additional flora and fauna, which also are indigenous to a warm water habitat.

There are no lakes or ponds within the project area.

Wetlands

A review of the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) mapping revealed that there is one wetland in the primary study area, no wetlands within the secondary project area, and

riverine wetlands located within the Schuylkill River corridor. The wetland within the primary project area is approximately 0.08 hectare (0.21 ac) in area and is classified as a palustrine unconsolidated sandy wetland (PUB2x). However, this wetland is located in a quarry and, according to local officials, has been altered and filled. As such, it is not indicated on the Water Resources Map (Figure 2). The wetlands associated with the Schuylkill River are all classified as riverine lower perennial unconsolidated bottom wetlands (R2UB). These wetlands also are depicted on the Water Resources map (Figure 2).

Additional wetland areas were not observed within the project area during a windshield survey. However, following the selection of projects within the study area, a formal wetland survey will be required for any selected sites since the NWI data typically is outdated and may not reflect all wetlands currently located in a specific area.

Floodplains

Floodplains provide a myriad of functions, including storing storm flow, reducing the intensity of flood events, recharging groundwater, providing habitat for riparian species, and protecting property of local residents. A preliminary review of Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) for the study area was conducted to determine floodplain location. Floodplains are associated with the Schuylkill River and its two tributaries, Stoney Creek and Sawmill Run. The FEMA floodway and 100-year floodplain boundaries are depicted on the Water Resources map (Figure 2).

Surface waters are regulated by federal and state agencies in order to maintain the various essential functions and values aquatic resources provide. As such, development that impacts streams, wetlands, and floodplains may require Section 404 and state stream encroachment permits prior to construction. In addition, when impacts to these resources are significant, new projects may require mitigation. Therefore, it is recommended that measures be taken to avoid or minimize impacts to these resources.

Lafayette Street Land Use Access Study
Figure 2: Water Resources

600 0 600 Feet

PLYMOUTH TOWNSHIP

NORRISTOWN BOROUGH

AIRY ST
MARKLEY ST
BARBADOES ST
CHERRY ST
SWEDE ST
DEKALB PK
GREEN ST
ARCH ST
WALNUT ST
PENN ST
MAIN ST
MILL ST
FRANKLIN ST
FORD ST
LAFAYETTE ST
WASHINGTON ST
SAWMILL RUN
STONEY CREEK
202
202
276
FAIRFIELD RD
LUCETTA ST
RIDGE PK
DIAMOND AV
CRAWFORD ST
CONSHOHOCKEN RD
ROSS ST
CHESTNUT ST
1ST
SCHUYLKILL RIVER

WEST NORRITON TOWNSHIP

BRIDGEPORT BOROUGH

UPPER MERION TOWNSHIP

Streams
PennDOT State Roads
State Road
Highway

Tax Parcels
Study Area
Primary
Secondary

NWI Wetlands
FEMA Floodway
100-Year Floodplain

Source: FEMA 1996 Montgomery County, PA;
NWI 1999 Montgomery County, PA;
PennDOT State Roads 2005.

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2.2 Groundwater Resources

According to the Pennsylvania Ground Water Information System (PaGWIS), there are four wells within the project area: three in the primary and one in the secondary study area. Two were derived from the Water Well Inventory (WWI), a database created by the Pennsylvania Geological Survey to manage data supplied to them by water well drillers. The other two were derived from the Ground Water Site Inventory (GWSI), a database that is part of the United States Geological Survey's (USGS's) WATSTORE system, a national database used to manage water data. These wells are all private and are either inactive or are not withdrawal wells. They are not indicated on the Water Resources map, as they are not public wells protected by the wellhead protection program.

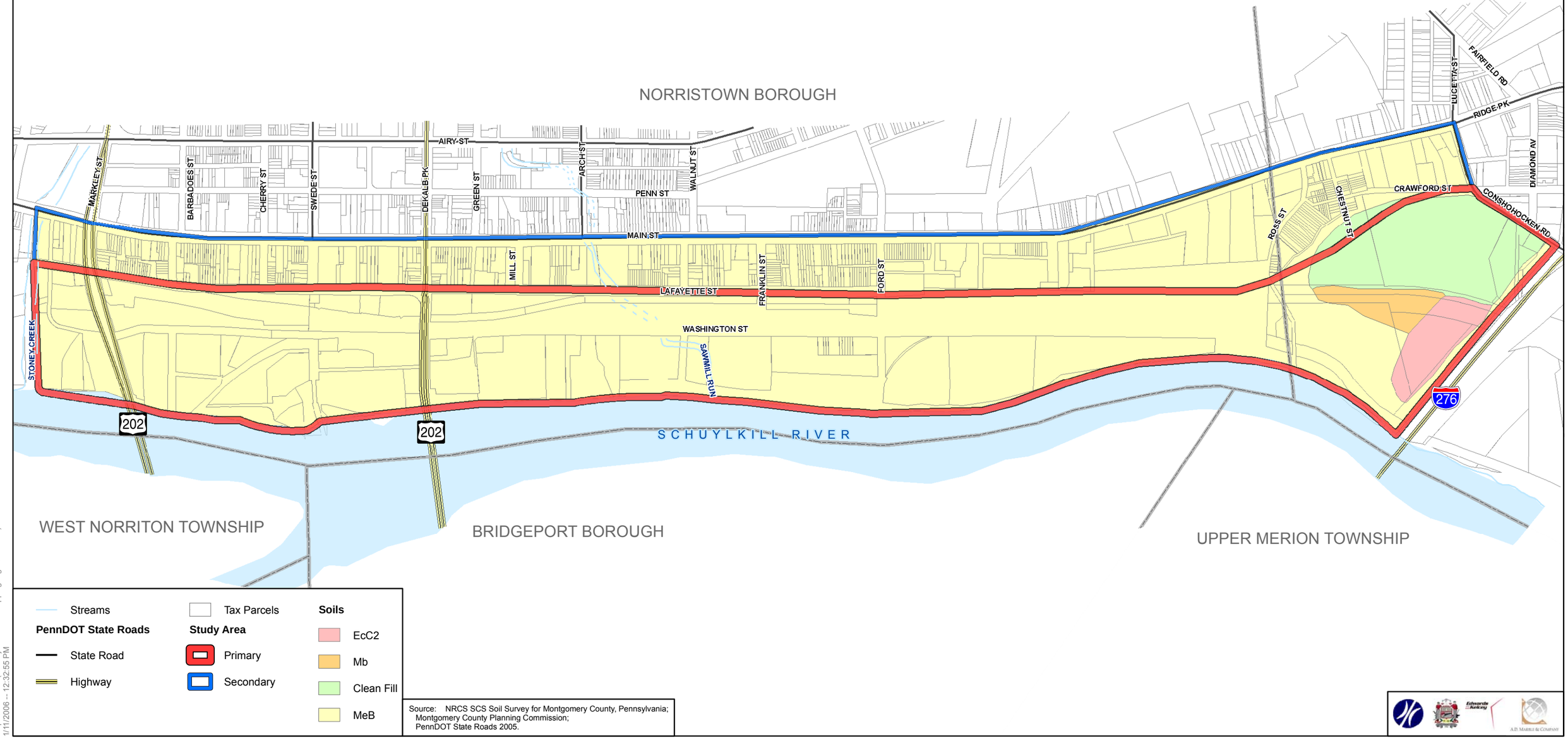
Groundwater plays an essential role in the supply of clean, potable water. As part of the 1996 Safe Drinking Water Act and Pennsylvania's Source Water Assessment and Protection Program, source water assessments have been conducted to determine the susceptibility of public water system water sources to potential sources of contamination. Therefore, if impacts occur near public wells, coordination with PADEP will be required to limit contamination of local drinking water.

2.3 Soils

Soils are categorized by their suitability for cultivation, susceptibility to erosion, permeability, and location within the landscape. These soil characteristics often dictate their compatibility with various types of land uses. A review of the soils associated with the primary and secondary study areas indicates that there are only four main soil types: three are categorized as Made Land (MeB, Mc, Mb) and one is Edgemont channery loam (EcC2) (Figure 3, Table 2). These soil types are not classified as hydric; therefore, they typically will not contain wetland areas. EcC2 is classified as farmland of statewide importance, indicating that it is suitable for the production of food, feed, fiber, forage, and oilseed crops. However, this soil type is located on the existing East Norriton/Plymouth/Whitpain Joint Sewer Authority property and is currently maintained as a landscaped lawn and the location of settling ponds. Ninety-eight percent of the soils within the study area are classified as Made Land; therefore, the majority of the project area already is suitable for development and should not pose a compatibility issue for any proposed waterfront projects.

Lafayette Street Land Use Access Study
Figure 3: Soils

600 0 600 Feet



Streams
Tax Parcels

PennDOT State Roads
State Road
Highway

Study Area
Primary
Secondary

Soils
EcC2
Mb
Clean Fill
MeB

Source: NRCS SCS Soil Survey for Montgomery County, Pennsylvania; Montgomery County Planning Commission; PennDOT State Roads 2005.

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Table 2: Soil Types within the Lafayette Street Primary and Secondary Study Areas.

Soil Type	Description	Prime Farmland	Acres
MeB	Made Land, shale and sandstone materials, sloping	No	215.29
Mc (Clean Fill)	Made Land, limestone materials	No	16.13
Mb	Made Land, land fill and sediment basins	No	2.99
EcC2	Edgemont channery loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes, moderately eroded	Farmland of statewide importance	4.33
		Total land in study area	**238.74**

2.4 Threatened and Endangered Species

The project area consists of a highly urbanized industrial and residential section of Norristown. As a result, there are few tracts of forest or open space land that can support wildlife. To determine the presence of threatened and endangered species within the project area, the Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory (PNDI) Environmental Review Tool was used to identify species of concern listed on the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PAFBC), PNDI, Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC), and United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) databases. The database review was conducted on November 28, 2005. A response is provided in Appendix B. The results of this review suggest that further correspondence must be made with the USFWS, PAFBC and the PNDI. Letters were sent to these agencies to request any further guidance on threatened and endangered species in the project area, and the response letters are included in Appendix B. The DCNR and USFWS responses indicate projects within the project study areas will not result in impacts to threatened and endangered species, however, the response from the PFBC indicates that the state threatened red-bellied turtle (*Pseudemys rubriventris*) may be present within the vicinity of the project study area. The turtles' habitats generally are located in relatively large, deep streams and rivers, such as the Schuylkill, and may be impacted by disturbance associated with projects along the waterfront.

2.5 Hazardous Waste

On November 18, 2005, A.D. Marble & Company performed a preliminary analysis to identify potential waste sites of concern within the primary and secondary study area. Potential waste sites of concern consist of underground storage tanks, waste disposal sites, and areas with soil contamination and surface water runoff. The preliminary field reconnaissance identified 34 potential waste sites of concern. Within the primary and secondary study areas, these sites include, but are not limited to, manufacturing facilities, commercial properties, waste transfer and recycling centers, shipping and receiving operations, vacant land, water treatment facilities, and auto repair shops. The location of each site is displayed in Figure 4.

In addition to the preliminary field view, an environmental database provided by INFOMAP Technologies Inc., an Environmental FirstSearch Network, was reviewed. Potential hazardous waste sites provided by this database are displayed in Figure 4. It should be noted that these locations are approximate, based on information provided by INFOMAP Technologies and have not been field verified. The INFOMAP locations are based on addresses that are sometimes inaccurate or missing. In this context, the database serves as a key to the location of clusters of hazardous waste concerns on a macro-level. When specific projects are identified within the project area, these sites should be field verified to confirm the presence or absence of hazardous waste. Finally, brownfield sites listed by PA SiteFinder, the PADEP's Land Recycling Program website, have been added to Figure 4. According to their website, they serve as a *'one-stop-shop'* for brownfield buyers and sellers. The website compiles the necessary information and resources so citizens can recycle real estate into a sound investment.

In order to develop an understanding of the costs associated with developing a site, it is critical to identify any hazardous waste concerns. For example, soil testing, debris removal, groundwater testing, and excavation all may be required if the site has been contaminated. The data provided serves as part of the Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment required to identify potential concerns. If projects are selected on or near potential waste sites of concern, additional measures may be required to alleviate these concerns prior to construction activities.

Lafayette Street Land Use Access Study
Figure 4: Hazardous Waste Resources

600 0 600 Feet

PLYMOUTH TOWNSHIP

NORRISTOWN BOROUGH

MARKLEY ST
BARBADOES ST
CHERRY ST
SWEDE ST
DEKALB PK
GREEN ST
ARCH ST
WALNUT ST
AIRY ST
PENN ST
MAIN ST
MILL ST
FRANKLIN ST
FORD ST
LAFAYETTE ST
WASHINGTON ST
SAWMILL RUN
STONEY CREEK
FAIRFIELD RD
LUCETTA ST
RIDGE PK
DIAMOND AV
CRAWFORD ST
CONSHOHOCKEN RD
ROSS ST
CHESTNUT ST
202
276

BP Gas Station
Mobil Gas Station
Auto Repair
Auto repair
Onyx Waste Services
Norristown Filtration Plant
Norristown Filtration Plant
PECO Transformer
SEPTA Transformer
Vacant Building
New-tu-You Car Dealership
Vacant Building
Railroad Corridor
Vaughn's Auto Body
Marano's Iron Works
Marano's Iron Works
Ferro Iron Works
Sciacca Service Center
Service Co. Sales and Service
Service Co. Sales and Service
Affordable Auto Sales
Rich's Auto Repair
Duff's Company
Component Enterprise Co. Inc
Industrial Building
First Choice Duff's Company Provisions
Accord Mechanical Services
Eastern State Steel
Flooring Company
Industrial Complex
Phoenix Recycled Plastics
Vacant Building
R&S Auto
Industrial Plant Services
Waste Water Treatment Facility
Waste Water Treatment Facility
Equivest Industrial Center
Railroad Corridor
Delight Dry Cleaners
Gretz Beer Company
Gretz Beer Company
Auto repair
Aquarius Irrigation Supply
United States Roofing
Truck Parking
Industrial Building
New Concept Cars
Norristown Business Park
Shell Station
East Norriton/ Plymouth/Whitpain Joint Sewer Authority
Quarry
Quarry
Quarry

SCHUYLKILL RIVER

WEST NORRITON TOWNSHIP

BRIDGEPORT BOROUGH

UPPER MERION TOWNSHIP

Streams
PennDOT State Roads
State Road
Highway
Tax Parcels
Study Area
Primary
Secondary
INFOMAP Hazardous Waste Sites
Brownfield Sites
Potential Sites of Concern - Field Survey

Source: A.D. Marble Field Survey November 2005;
InfoMap Technologies. 2005;
Montgomery County Planning Commission;
PA DEP;
PennDOT State Roads 2005.

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2.6 Community Resources

Community resources in the project area were identified using secondary source information and a field view conducted on November 18, 2005. These facilities include, but are not limited to, schools, parks and trails, courthouses, community centers, health care facilities, and churches. The names and locations of these facilities are shown in Figure 5.

This information is essential in understanding the services available to the local community and will assist in the evaluation of the effects of transportation or commercial development (e.g. noise pollution) on the community's quality of life. With this knowledge, projects can be proposed that not only limit impacts, but also enhance the community's economic and social resources. For example, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has established noise level guidelines for different land use activities. These guidelines are based on the type of receptor site; such as the community resources listed above, and defines noise as an unwanted sound. The community resources identified in this section fall into Category B (e.g., residences, schools, places of worship, and recreational areas), which requires that noise levels exterior to these receptors be maintained below 67dBA (Table 3).

Table 3: Noise Level Criteria for Considering Barriers.

Land Use Category	Leq(h)[1] (dBA)	Description of Land Use Category
A	57 (Exterior)	Lands on which serenity and quiet are of extraordinary significance and serve an important public need and where the preservation of those qualities is essential if the area is to continue to serve its intended purpose.
B	67 (Exterior)	Picnic areas, recreation areas, playgrounds, active sports areas, parks, residences, motels, hotels, schools, churches, libraries, and hospitals.
C	72 (Exterior)	Developed lands, properties, or activities not included in Categories A or B above.
D	—	Undeveloped lands.
E	52 (Interior)	Residences, motels, hotels, public meeting rooms, schools, churches, libraries, hospitals, and auditoriums.

[1] *Leq(h):* is the constant, average sound level, which over a period of time contains the same amount of sound energy as varying levels of, for example, traffic noise. http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/probresp.htm

Lafayette Street Land Use Access Study

Figure 5: Community Resources

600 0 600 Feet

PLYMOUTH TOWNSHIP

NORRISTOWN BOROUGH

Montgomery County Government
Norristown Post Office
Montgomery County Courthouse
Public Square
Humane Fire Engine Co. #1
Holy Savior Parochial School
Holy Savior Church
Montgomery County Housing and Redevelopment Authorities
Department of Environmental Protection
Norristown Transportation Center
Norristown Regional Rail Station
Norristown Filtration Plant
Waste Water Treatment Plant
Wastewater Treatment Plant

AIRY ST
MARKLEY ST
BARBADOES ST
CHERRY ST
SWEDE ST
DEKALB PK
GREEN ST
ARCH ST
WALNUT ST
PENN ST
MAIN ST
MILL ST
FRANKLIN ST
FORD ST
LAFAYETTE ST
WASHINGTON ST
STONEY CREEK
SAWMILL RUN
ROSS ST
CHESTNUT ST
LUCETTA ST
FAIRFIELD RD
RIDGE PK
DIAMOND AV
CRAWFORD ST
CONSHOHOCKEN RD
202
276

SCHUYLKILL RIVER

WEST NORRITON TOWNSHIP

BRIDGEPORT BOROUGH

UPPER MERION TOWNSHIP

Streams
PennDOT State Roads
State Road
Highway
Tax Parcels
Study Area
Primary
Secondary
Community Facilities
Chester Valley Trail
Schuylkill River Trail
SEPTA R-6 Regional Rail

Source: A.D. Marble Field Survey November 2005;
InfoMap Technologies. 2005;
Montgomery County Planning Commission;
PA DEP;
PennDOT State Roads 2005.

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2.7 Cultural Resources

This document identifies resources located within the project corridor, roughly bounded by Main Street to the north, Conshohocken Road to the east, the Schuylkill River to the south, and Stoney Creek to the west, that are listed in or determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. A review of files located at the Pennsylvania Historic Museum Commission's Bureau for Historic Preservation (PHMC-BHP) revealed 12 resources within the project corridor that were previously determined eligible for listing or listed in the National Register of Historic Places. This review also identified one previous study conducted by McCormick, Taylor and Associates in 2003-2004 that included the study area (S.R. 9102, Section MG1 Lafayette Street Improvement Project). The attached map includes National Register boundaries for the previously determined eligible or listed resources (Figure 6).

National Register of Historic Places

A resource generally qualifies for listing in the National Register of Historic Places if it:

1) is 50 years in age or older;
2) retains sufficient integrity to convey its significance; and
3) is significant under one of the National Register Criteria.

The National Register Criteria describe how properties are significant for their association with a significant event (Criterion A) or a significant person (Criterion B), as distinctive characteristics of an architectural style or construction type or if it is the work of a master (Criterion C), and/or for potential to yield important information (Criterion D) (*National Register Bulletin, How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation)*.

Based on the results of a windshield survey in November 2005, no additional resources of 50 years in age appear to be potentially eligible under Criterion C within the study area. Background research would be required to investigate the National Register eligibility of these resources under Criteria A, B, or D.

Central Norristown Historic District

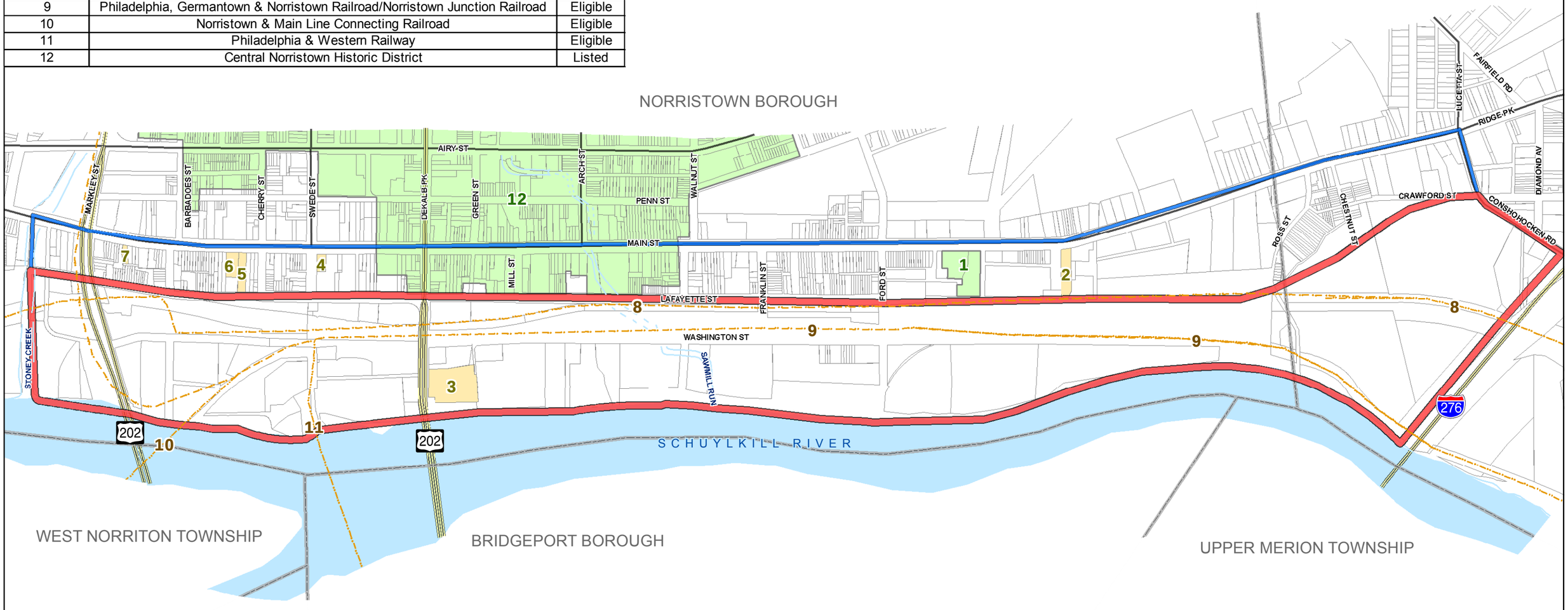
The Central Norristown Historic District includes over 1,900 structures in an irregularly shaped area of approximately 40 square blocks in the Borough of Norristown. Extending eastward from Stoney Creek/Markley Street, the district encompasses "the material diversity of a 19th-and early 20th-century Pennsylvania industrial town" (National

Lafayette Street Land Use Access Study

Figure 6: Historic Resources

600 0 600 Feet

Key Number	Historic Name	NR Status
1	Globe Knitting Mills	Listed
2	Reading Screw Company	Eligible
3	Jamison's Mill	Eligible
4	Philadelphia & Western Railway Station/Norristown Transportation Center	Eligible
5	James Hooven Mansion/Masonic Temple	Eligible
6	Bank of Montgomery County/Kaplan Property	Eligible
7	Odd Fellows Building/Holmes Property	Eligible
8	Pennsylvania Railroad-Schuylkill Division; Schuylkill River Trail	Eligible
9	Philadelphia, Germantown & Norristown Railroad/Norristown Junction Railroad	Eligible
10	Norristown & Main Line Connecting Railroad	Eligible
11	Philadelphia & Western Railway	Eligible
12	Central Norristown Historic District	Listed



Streams

Tax Parcels

Linear Resource Eligible for National Register

PennDOT State Roads

State Road

Highway

Study Area

Primary

Secondary

National Register Status

Eligible

Listed

Source: A.D. Marble Field Survey November 2005; Montgomery County Planning Commission; PennDOT State Roads 2005; PHMC-Bureau of Historic Preservation files.

Map Document: (X:\Projects\P871\Mapping\Fig6HistResources.mxd)
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Register of Historic Places Inventory Form, Central Norristown Historic District). The district includes three contiguous and interdependent areas: the core of the old business and government center, the nineteenth-century residential district to the north and northeast, and "Sandy Hill," a residential area comprised of nineteenth-century mansions, and later, row and semi-detached buildings. The Central Norristown Historic District was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on November 23, 1984.

James Hooven Mansion/Masonic Temple

This three-story, five-bay, brick Italianate structure was built ca. 1869 for James Hooven, a prominent and well-known mid- to late-nineteenth-century citizen of Norristown. Following his death, the building was sold to the Trustees of Charity Lodge on September 9, 1896 in consideration for $18,000. The Masonic Lodge used the Hooven Mansion as their headquarters until 1984 (National Register of Historic Places Inventory Form, James Hooven Mansion). The James Hooven Mansion/Masonic Temple was determined individually eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places on September 26, 1986.

Odd Fellows Building/Holmes Property

Designed in the Beaux Arts style in 1904, the three-story brick building at 230 W. Main Street features quoins and ornamental stone on the façade. The building served as a Lodge for the International Order of Odd Fellows (IOOF) until 1978. The Odd Fellows Building was determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places on February 6, 2004 for its association with the development of the IOOF in Norristown and for its Beaux Arts Architecture (Pennsylvania Historic Resource Survey Form [PHRS], Odd Fellows Building/Holmes Property).

Norristown and Main Line Connecting Railroad

The Norristown and Main Line Connecting Railroad links the Philadelphia, Germantown and Norristown (PG&N) Railroad/Norristown Junction Railroad on the north side of the Schuylkill River in Norristown Borough to the Philadelphia and Western Railroad Main Line on the south side of the Schuylkill River in Upper Merion Township. Crossing Barbadoes Island at grade, the line is carried over the Schuylkill River by two *circa*-1902-1903 thru-girder railroad bridges. The approximately 1,066 meters (3,500-ft) short line began operations on September 20, 1903 (PHRS Form, Norristown and Main Line Connecting Railroad). The Norristown and Main Line Connecting Railroad was determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places on June 21, 2004.

Jamison's Mill

Built in 1837, the core of Jamison's Mill is a four-story, stucco-covered, stone structure. Additions erected in 1844, ca. 1860, and ca. 1890 form the buildings current "U" shape. Jamison's cotton spinning and weaving factory was one of three Norristown mills in operation in 1837. Later owned by Woodstock Mills in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and by Edwin and Louis Bry in the early to mid-twentieth century, the mill continued operations until 1950. Presently, the mill complex is occupied by a variety of commercial and light industrial tenants. Jamison's Mill was determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places on October 16, 2003 for its roles as one of Norristown's major industries during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (PHRS Form, Jamison's Mill).

Globe Knitting Mills

Originally comprised of three buildings, only two buildings associated with the Globe Knitting Mills remain extant today (680-694 E. Main Street). Built concurrently in 1898 and designed by Hales & Ballinger, the three-story brick "Main Building" and the one- to two-story "Oxidizing Building/Dye House" reflect the "scale, massing and construction technologies typical of late nineteenth century industrial sites" (National Register of Historic Places Inventory Form, Globe Knitting Mills). The mill continued operations until August 1958. Since its subdivision, the "Main Building" has served as a warehouse and office space, while the "Oxidizing Building/Dye House" has been owned by a plumbing supply company. Globe Knitting Mills was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on January 31, 2003.

Reading Screw Company

Erected ca. 1910, the three-story brick building with a four-story brick tower located at its northwestern corner served as operations for the Reading and American Screw Companies in the early to mid-twentieth century. The building features Italianate and Colonial Revival architectural elements. Since 1958, the building has changed ownership numerous times and currently is home to Positran Manufacturing, Inc. (Pennsylvania Historic Resource Survey Form, Reading Screw Company). The Reading Screw Company was determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places on October 17, 2003.

Pennsylvania Railroad—Schuylkill Valley Division

Construction on this railroad line began in 1882 under the ownership of three different railroad companies. Reorganized as the Schuylkill Valley Company in 1883, the line connecting Reading and Philadelphia was completed in 1884. Roughly paralleling the Schuylkill River, the line connected Montgomery County communities such as Pottstown, Norristown, and Conshohocken, and served their industrial interests. Portions of this line now serve as a recreational trail as part of the Rails to Trails program (PHRS Form, Pennsylvania Railroad—Schuylkill Valley Division). The Pennsylvania Railroad—Schuylkill Valley Division was determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places on March 16, 2004.

Philadelphia, Germantown and Norristown (PG&N) Railroad/Norristown Junction Railroad

Although operations of the PG&N Railroad began in 1832, the connection to Norristown was not completed until 1835. Paralleling the north side of the Schuylkill River in Norristown, the line encouraged industrial development in the communities it served. Later, in 1880, the Norristown Junction Railroad was incorporated to connect the PG&N at its western terminus (west of Barbadoes Street in Norristown) to the Stoney Creek Railroad near Marshall Street. When completed, this connection "improved the circulation system controlled by the Philadelphia & Reading Railroad in Montgomery County" (PHRS Form, PG&N Railroad/Norristown Junction Railroad). Today, the lines serve the R6 Route of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA). The PG&N Railroad/Norristown Junction Railroad was determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places on May 19, 2003.

Philadelphia & Western Railway

Today, this high-speed line (SEPTA Route 100) extends between Philadelphia's 69th Street Station and the *circa*-1986 Norristown Transportation Center. The line once extended to a railroad station at the corner of Main and Swede Streets, although the trestle between the 1931 station and the *circa*-1980 building has been removed. The Philadelphia & Western Railway was determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places on June 21, 2004.

Philadelphia & Western Railway Station/Norristown Transportation Center

In 1931, the Philadelphia & Western Railway erected a station at the southeast corner of Main and Swede Streets in Norristown. The three-story brick building has a stone

façade with Art Deco elements. The building ceased to serve as a transportation center when it was replaced by a newer structure to the south in the 1980s (PHMC Building File, Philadelphia & Western Railway Station). Today, the building has been rehabilitated and is used for offices of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP). The Philadelphia & Western Railway Station was determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places on January 8, 1991.

Bank of Montgomery County/Kaplan Property

The two-and-one-half-story brick building with marble façade is located at 110 W. Main Street. Built in 1854, the Greek revival structure features a front gable pedimented roof and a full-façade porch supported by four fluted, Roman Doric columns. Throughout its history, the name of the bank changed several times. Other incorporations included Montgomery National Bank (1865) and Philadelphia National Bank (1954). The building ceased bank operations ca. 1995 (PHRS Form, Bank of Montgomery County). The building embodies distinctive characteristics of Greek revival architecture and was determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places on February 6, 2004.

Section 4(f) Resources

Section 4(f) Resources are properties that function or are designed as a public park, recreation area, wildlife and waterfowl refuge, or historic or archeological site in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. When a use, actual or constructive, direct or visual, of a resource is identified as resulting from a potential project (e.g., roadway improvements), a Section 4(f) Evaluation must be performed to ensure that a feasible and prudent alternative is pursued. If impacts occur to a Section 4(f) resource, the goal becomes minimization of harm to the resource as a result of the project.

The resources listed in the Community Resource and the Historic Resource section are all potential Section 4(f) Resources. As projects are selected within the project corridor, impacts to historic resources or parks and recreational areas will need to be evaluated to determine if they result in the use of a Section 4(f) resource.

2.8 Socio-Economic Data

United States Census Data from 2000 was used to obtain information about the community within the project area. The project area is comprised of census tracts 2039.01 and 2039.02. The tables below (Tables 4 to 7) show information for the two census tracts, as well as Montgomery County, for comparison. The tables include information about race, income, poverty, and industry within the study area. It should be noted that the entire project area (primary and secondary) does not encompass the entirety of either of these census tracts. Therefore, the numbers and percentages of each category that actually exist in the project area will differ. However, the benefit of reviewing this census tract data is in developing an initial idea of the race and income of the local area, the types of employment they have (local or regional depending on the industries present in the project area), and the level of poverty within the study area.

Table 4: Race.

	Montgomery County		**Census Tract 2039.01**		**Census Tract 2039.02**	
Race	*Number*	*Percent*	*Number*	*Percent*	*Number*	*Percent*
White	648,510	86.5	731	23.6	1,220	43.8
Black or African American	55,969	7.5	1,861	60	1,133	40.7
American Indian and Alaska Native	848	0.1	14	0.5	4	0.1
Asian	30,191	4	41	1.3	155	5.6
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	255	0	0	0	1	0
Some other race	5,598	0.7	346	11.2	176	6.3
Two or more races	8,726	1.2	108	3.5	96	3.4
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	15,300	2	712	23	415	14.9

Table 5: Income Levels.

	Montgomery County		**Census Tract 2039.01**		**Census Tract 2039.02**	
	Number	*Percent*	*Number*	*Percent*	*Number*	*Percent*
Total Number of Families	198,871	100	1,054	100	1,236	100
Income Levels						
Less than $10,000	3,734	1.9	190	18	257	20.8
$10,000 to $14,999	2,947	1.5	101	9.6	119	9.6
$15,000 to $24,999	10,580	5.3	246	23.3	227	18.4
$25,000 to $34,999	14,499	7.3	158	15	150	12.1
$35,000 to $49,999	25,384	12.8	138	13.1	268	21.7
$50,000 to $74,999	46,646	23.5	139	13.2	120	9.7
$75,000 to $99,999	36,010	18.1	35	3.3	40	3.2
$100,000 to $149,999	33,373	16.8	38	3.6	37	3
$150,000 to $199,999	11,717	5.9	0	0	10	0.8
$200,000 or more	13,981	7	9	0.9	8	0.6
Median family income (dollars)	72,183	N/A	23,810	N/A	25,658	N/A

Table 6: Poverty Levels.

	Montgomery County		**Census Tract 2039.01**		**Census Tract 2039.02**	
Individuals below the poverty level	32,215	N/A	955	N/A	672	N/A
Percent below poverty level	N/A	4.4	N/A	31.1	N/A	23.7

Table 7: Industry.

	Montgomery County		Census Tract 2039.01		Census Tract 2039.02	
Industry	*Number*	*Percent*	*Number*	*Percent*	*Number*	*Percent*
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	1,039	0.3	17	1.3	11	0.9
Construction	21,691	5.6	69	5.2	54	4.6
Manufacturing	57,831	15	151	11.4	149	12.8
Wholesale trade	15,069	3.9	51	3.9	60	5.2
Retail trade	43,445	11.3	176	13.3	183	15.7
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	12,384	3.2	66	5	40	3.4
Information	13,412	3.5	28	2.1	15	1.3
Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing	38,494	10	98	7.4	107	9.2
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	49,471	12.9	217	16.4	97	8.3
Educational, health and social services	83,269	21.6	191	14.5	173	14.8
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	20,902	5.4	178	13.5	124	10.6
Other services (except public administration)	17,220	4.5	44	3.3	107	9.2
Public administration	10,461	2.7	35	2.6	45	3.9

2.9 Land Use/Land Cover

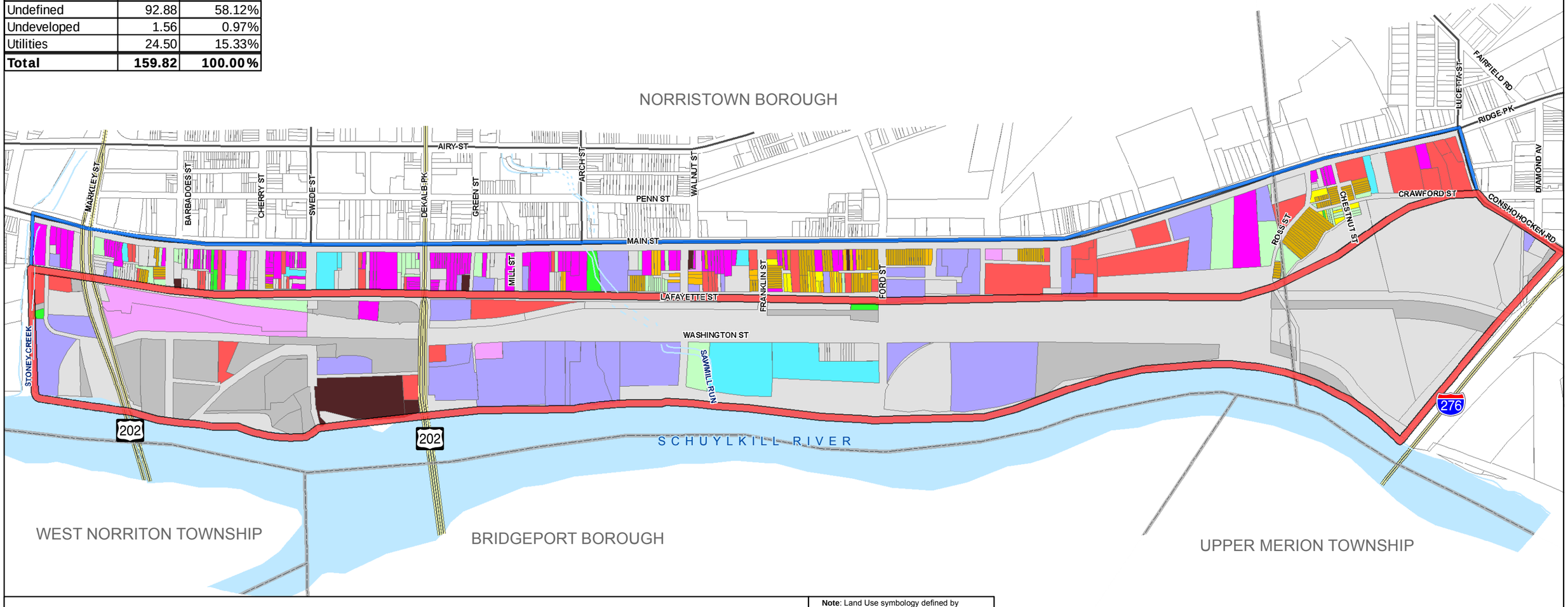
The existing land use has been inventoried using GIS data supplied by the Montgomery County Planning Commission (2004) and is displayed in Figure 7. Table 8 summarizes the existing land use in the project primary and secondary study areas. The primary study area is dominated by undefined (railroads, roadways, parking), utilities (PECO Power lines), and industrial land uses. The secondary study area is comprised of primarily undefined (roadways, parking), retail (commercial) and mixed use (mix of commercial/residential).

600 0 600 Feet

Lafayette Street Land Use Access Study

Figure 7: Land Use

Primary Study Area Land Use		
Land Use	**Acreage**	**Percentage**
Industrial	21.89	13.70%
Institutional	5.60	3.50%
Mixed Use	0.33	0.21%
Multifamily	3.45	2.16%
Office	6.50	4.07%
Public Open Space	0.27	0.17%
Retail	2.84	1.78%
Undefined	92.88	58.12%
Undeveloped	1.56	0.97%
Utilities	24.50	15.33%
Total	**159.82**	**100.00%**



Streams

Tax Parcels

PennDOT State Roads

State Road

Highway

Study Area

Primary

Secondary

Land Use 2004

Multifamily

Single-Family Attached

Twin / Duplex

Single-Family Detached

Mixed Use

Retail

Office

Industrial

Institutional

Public Open Space

Utilities

Undeveloped

Undefined*

Note: Land Use symbology defined by Montgomery County Planning Commission *Land Use Code Standards for ArcMap 8.3* except where noted by an *.

*Undefined by Montgomery County Planning Commission. Review of orthophotography reveals Land Use type may include Parking Lots, Vacant Land, Utilities, Open Space, and Transportation.

Source: A.D. Marble Field Survey November 2005; Montgomery County Planning Commission; PennDOT State Roads 2005.

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Table 8. Land Use/Land Cover in the Lafayette Street Access Study Corridor.

Land Use/Land Cover	Number of Properties	Acreage
Primary Study Area		
Industrial	33	21.89
Institutional	4	5.60
Mixed Use	1	0.33
Multifamily	4	3.45
Office	3	6.50
Public Open Space	2	0.27
Retail	12	2.84
Undefined	58	92.88
Undeveloped	3	1.56
Utilities	37	24.50
	Total	**159.82**
Secondary Study Area		
Industrial	25	7.72
Institutional	6	1.37
Mixed Use	103	11.21
Multifamily	4	0.32
Office	5	0.80
Public Open Space	5	0.61
Retail	41	11.27
Single-Family Attached	138	5.15
Single-Family Detached	15	0.70
Twin / Duplex	27	1.28
Undefined	95	36.39
Undeveloped	43	4.36
	Total	**81.18**
	Total Study Area	**241.00**

Coupled with the zoning data provided below, this data will be used to identify land for development and revitalization of the Schuylkill River waterfront.

2.10 Zoning

Zoning plays an integral role in the development and implementation of projects within the project study area. Currently, the Norristown Department of Planning and Municipal Development is encouraging a revitalization of the Norristown waterfront in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan, the 5-Year Consolidated Plan, the Norristown Economic Revitalization Strategy, and the Riverfront Redevelopment Plan for the Riverfront Area. The existing zoning map of the project area provides guidance on the types of projects that will complement these development strategies (Figure 8).

Current zoning regulations were reviewed to identify possible amendments needed to implement the land use recommendations described below. Current zoning within the primary study area, as illustrated in Figure 8, includes Light Industrial, Heavy Industrial, Residential, Town Center, and Recreation. The secondary study area includes zoning for Light Industrial, Commercial, Town Center, Recreation, and Neighborhood Commercial.

Base Zoning

Generally, the residential zones located within the primary and secondary study allow single family detached, single family attached and low-rise multi-family dwellings. For more specific information regarding residential districts please see Article VII – R-S Residence District and Article VIII – GA Residence District of the Borough of Norristown Code.

The Town Center (TC) designation is intended to encourage uses compatible with the historic character of the downtown. The TC district encourages pedestrian-oriented uses as well as office, cultural, residential, and other related uses. New buildings within the TC district must preserve the streetscape and be built to the sidewalk. Maximum building height within this district is 10 stories. (See Norristown Code Article X for more details.)

The purpose of the Neighborhood Commercial (N-C) District is to allow retail and service businesses to be located in a manner convenient for the immediate neighborhood. In addition, the N-C district is intended to encourage the development of mixed use buildings that include commercial uses on the street floor and residential above. (See Norristown Code Article XII for more details.)

The Light Industrial (LI) and the Heavy Industrial (HI) Districts establish standards for the size and height of buildings and the operation of industries to minimize impacts such

Lafayette Street Land Use Access Study
Figure 8: Zoning

600 0 600 Feet

PLYMOUTH TOWNSHIP

NORRISTOWN BOROUGH

MARKLEY ST
BARBADOES ST
CHERRY ST
SWEDE ST
DEKALB PK
AIRY ST
GREEN ST
ARCH ST
WALNUT ST
PENN ST
MAIN ST
MILL ST
FRANKLIN ST
FORD ST
LAFAYETTE ST
WASHINGTON ST
SAWMILL RUN
WATER ST
STONEY CREEK
SCHUYKILL AVE
ROSS ST
CHESTNUT ST
CRAWFORD ST
CONSHOHOCKEN RD
LUCETTA ST
FAIRFIELD RD
RIDGE PK
DIAMOND AV

SCHUYLKILL RIVER

WEST NORRITON TOWNSHIP

BRIDGEPORT BOROUGH

UPPER MERION TOWNSHIP

Streams

PennDOT State Roads

State Road

Highway

Tax Parcels

Study Area

Primary

Secondary

Zoning

Commercial

Neighborhood Commercial

Heavy Industrial

Light Industrial

Recreation

Residential

Town Center

Unified Development Overlay Districts

UDO I

UDO II

Source: A.D. Marble Field Survey November 2005; Montgomery County Planning Commission; Norristown Borough Zoning Ordinance (2000/2002) & Plymouth Township (1975) Zoning Coverage; PennDOT State Roads 2005.

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as traffic congestion, pollution, and safety hazards. (See Norristown Code Article XIV and XV for more details.)

The Recreation District allows land to be used and structures built for uses including golf courses, tennis courts, swimming pools, ice-skating rinks, marinas, playing fields, or similar recreational uses conducted out of doors. (See Norristown Code Article XVI for more details.)

Overlay Zoning

In addition, two overlay districts are in place. Unified Development District I (UDO I) covers the majority of the primary and secondary study areas. UDO I extends from Stoney Creek at the western most boundary of the study area east to the Norristown municipal boundary with Plymouth. Unified Development District II (UDO II) is within the secondary study beginning near Green Street and extending east past Ford Street.

A technical analysis of the current site and development standards was conducted by the Montgomery County Planning Commission. The analysis focused on what currently is allowed based on the Zoning Ordinance as applied to the existing conditions of the Project Area, including: building and site design elements, lot sizes and configurations, redevelopment opportunities, open space opportunities, and general market viability. The following information was ascertained:

- 6 total pinnacle (10+ story) buildings are allowed, with only 1 of these 6 pinnacle buildings permitted in the UDO-1 between an extension of Lafayette Street and the Schuylkill River, from the extension of Walnut Street to a line 2,500 feet east of a parallel to the extension of Walnut Street.
- 20 feet of street frontage is required.
- 350 feet x 350 feet is the maximum footprint.
- 75 feet building separation is required.
- 300 linear feet of buildings must be separated by 500 linear feet. Parking can fill this 500 linear foot separation.
- Bonuses are available which allow for exceptions to the requirements:
    - Development can meet the 10% green space requirements by transferring the 10% of green space to another location.
    - Buildings can increase to 15 stories in certain circumstances (non-pinnacle buildings).
    - Floor Area Ratio (FAR) can increase to 5.0 (from 4.5) in certain circumstances.

The zoning and land use information will play a role in identifying areas for future development, integrating the community resources, employment opportunities, modes of transportation, and recreational activities.

2.11 Available Land Analysis

Upon examining the existing conditions of the study area, it is important to identify the ability of the land to support redevelopment. To this end, the primary study area has been divided into riverfront and upland areas. The riverfront and upland areas were defined based on areas of similar physical, environmental or land use characteristics, as well as infrastructure features (e.g. rail lines, major roadways).

As a preliminary review of the buildable area in the primary study area, the potential for redevelopment in each riverfront and upland area is measured on a scale of low, moderate or high. A low potential for redevelopment is associated with an area that contains viable existing uses that are expected to continue, a land parcel that would be difficult to acquire due to cost, or an area that has significant physical constraints that limit the potential for redevelopment. An example of a viable existing land use is the active municipal water treatment plant. Physical constraints in the study area include the Schuylkill River floodway, steep slopes or the existing SEPTA R-6 railroad corridor. Conversely, a riverfront or upland area that is assigned a high potential for redevelopment could be a vacant area with few or no physical constraints. Such an area would be easily developed because of the low acquisition costs associated with it. The moderate potential designation is for areas that may have existing infrastructure but are suitable for redevelopment or reuse due to their poor physical condition or superfluous nature. The assignment of a low, moderate or high measurement is based on field observations, and a general understanding of the viability of existing uses and conditions.

Table 9 describes what is illustrated on Figure 9: Redevelopment Potential.

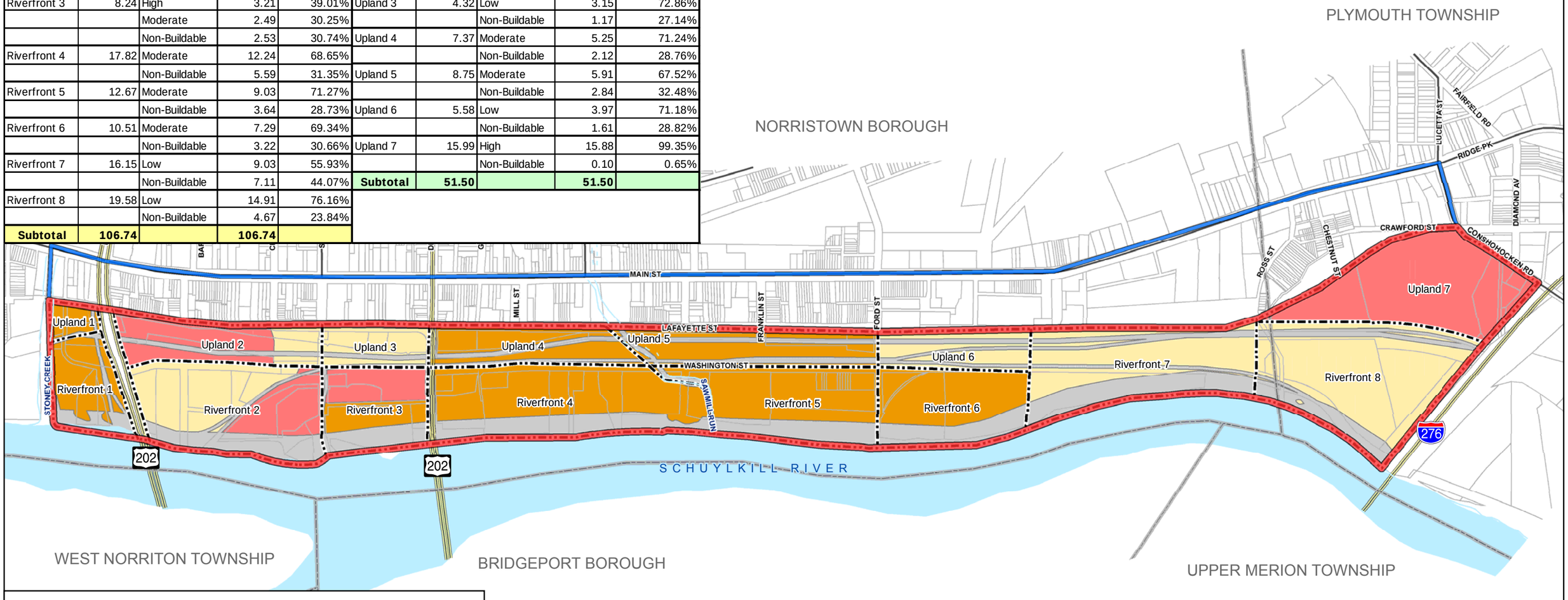
Lafayette Street Land Use Access Study

Figure 9: Redevelopment Potential

600 0 600 Feet

Buildable Land - Riverfront					Buildable Land - Upland				
Riverfront	Total Acreage	Potential	Acreage	% of Riverfront	Uplands	Total Acreage	Potential	Acreage	% of Upland
Riverfront 1	6.11	Moderate	4.02	65.85%	Upland 1	1.50	Moderate	1.19	79.41%
		Non-Buildable	2.09	34.15%			Non-Buildable	0.31	20.59%
Riverfront 2	15.66	High	3.83	24.47%	Upland 2	8.00	Low	1.55	19.41%
		Low	7.55	48.25%			High	4.97	62.13%
		Non-Buildable	4.27	27.29%			Non-Buildable	1.48	18.46%
Riverfront 3	8.24	High	3.21	39.01%	Upland 3	4.32	Low	3.15	72.86%
		Moderate	2.49	30.25%			Non-Buildable	1.17	27.14%
		Non-Buildable	2.53	30.74%	Upland 4	7.37	Moderate	5.25	71.24%
Riverfront 4	17.82	Moderate	12.24	68.65%			Non-Buildable	2.12	28.76%
		Non-Buildable	5.59	31.35%	Upland 5	8.75	Moderate	5.91	67.52%
Riverfront 5	12.67	Moderate	9.03	71.27%			Non-Buildable	2.84	32.48%
		Non-Buildable	3.64	28.73%	Upland 6	5.58	Low	3.97	71.18%
Riverfront 6	10.51	Moderate	7.29	69.34%			Non-Buildable	1.61	28.82%
		Non-Buildable	3.22	30.66%	Upland 7	15.99	High	15.88	99.35%
Riverfront 7	16.15	Low	9.03	55.93%			Non-Buildable	0.10	0.65%
		Non-Buildable	7.11	44.07%	**Subtotal**	**51.50**		**51.50**	
Riverfront 8	19.58	Low	14.91	76.16%					
		Non-Buildable	4.67	23.84%					
Subtotal	**106.74**		**106.74**						

Buildable Land - Riverfront Subtotal			Buildable Land - Upland			Total Project Acreage		
Potential	Acreage	% of Total	Potential	Acreage	% of Total	Potential	Acreage	% of Total
High	7.04	6.60%	High	20.85	40.49%	High	27.90	17.63%
Moderate	35.07	32.86%	Moderate	12.35	23.97%	Moderate	47.42	29.97%
Low	31.50	29.51%	Low	8.67	16.84%	Low	40.17	25.39%
Buildable	73.61	68.97%	Buildable	41.87	81.30%	Buildable	115.48	72.98%
Non-Buildable	33.12	31.03%	Non-Buildable	9.63	18.70%	Non-Buildable	42.76	27.02%
Subtotal	**106.74**	**100.00%**	**Subtotal**	**51.50**	**100.00%**	**Totals**	**158.24**	**100.00%**



Streams

PennDOT State Roads

State Road

Highway

Tax Parcels

Study Area

Primary

Secondary

Riverfront/Upland Areas

Potential for Redevelopment

High

Moderate

Low

Non-Buildable*

*Non-Buildable land includes FEMA Floodways, I-276, S.R. 202, Lafayette Street, a 16 ft. buffer from power lines, a 10 ft. buffer from railroads, and the Sawmill Run stream corridor.

Source:
Montgomery County Planning Commission;
PennDOT State Roads 2005.

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Table 9: Redevelopment Potential

Riverfront / Upland Area	Potential for Redevelopment
Riverfront 1	Moderate
Riverfront 2	Low / High
Riverfront 3	Moderate / High
Riverfront 4	Moderate
Riverfront 5	Moderate
Riverfront 6	Moderate
Riverfront 7	Low
Riverfront 8	Low
Upland Area 1	Moderate
Upland Area 2	Low / High
Upland Area 3	Low
Upland Area 4	Moderate
Upland Area 5	Moderate
Upland Area 6	Low
Upland Area 7	High

As noted on Figure 9, some areas were indicated as “non-buildable.” These areas included environmental features such as the FEMA floodways and the Sawmill Run stream corridor. In addition, areas with infrastructure that will remain intact were also considered “non-buildable”, and include the I-276 Turnpike, S.R. 0202, Lafayette Street, the existing railroads, and the PECO power line.

The entire primary study area is 158.24 acres in size. Approximately 72 percent (115.48 acres) of this area is buildable, with 27.9 acres rated as having a high potential for redevelopment, while 47.42 acres and 40.17 acres were rated as having a moderate and low potential for redevelopment, respectively.

3. LAND USE

The Land Use Section outlines a direction for the Lafayette Street Corridor based on thoughts and ideas gathered through public outreach, data collection, and an analysis of existing conditions. The purpose of this section is to describe the process followed to achieve a land use vision, the suggested land use recommendations, and proposed regulatory changes needed to implement the recommendations.

A series of study goals was developed, as described in Section 1.2 of this report, to help shape the vision for the Lafayette Street Corridor and form the basis from which success can be measured. These goals provide a comprehensive understanding of the issues facing Norristown's revitalization, and serve as a starting point for the land use analysis.

3.1 Existing Planning Documents

To date, several planning studies relevant to the Lafayette Street corridor have been written, including:

- Norristown Economic Revitalization Strategy (2000)
- Redevelopment Area Plan for the Riverfront Redevelopment Area (2002)
- Norristown Zoning Ordinance, Article XXXIV – Unified Development Overlay Districts
- Area Revitalization, Mobility & Industrial Corridor Reuse Study: Norristown/Plymouth/Conshohocken (2005)
- A Feasibility Study for Adaptive Reuse and Rehabilitation of a Railroad Freight Transfer Station

These studies provide the groundwork for the current Lafayette Street Land Use Access Study. To develop the land use recommendations, the goals and recommendations of the Norristown Economic Revitalization Strategy (2000) and the Redevelopment Area Plan for the Riverfront Redevelopment Area (2002) were analyzed in comparison with the goals identified for this study. The matrix found in Appendix C shows whether the goals of previous studies conflict or support the current study goals for each sub-area. Ultimately, at least one goal in each of the previous studies supports a sub-area goal of the current study.

3.2 Stakeholder Interviews

As land owners within the project area, PECO, SEPTA, and O'Neill Properties Group all have a vested interest in Lafayette Street's redevelopment. In order to fully understand the development opportunities and restrictions along Lafayette Street, the needs of each of these companies was evaluated. In order to involve these stakeholders fully, members of the steering committee and consultant team interviewed PECO on January 31, 2006, SEPTA on February 10, 2006, and O'Neill Properties Group on June 1, 2006. Copies of the interview notes can be found in Appendix D.

3.3 Zoning Analysis

Because of the significant role that zoning will play in developing downtown Norristown, particularly the riverfront, close attention should be given to the existing zoning regulations. Based on the information provided in Section 2.10, the zoning currently is very liberal, allowing for large-scale development, which is not desired by Norristown residents and is not recommended by this study. Instead, public input has shown that the study area should become a walkable urban area with urban parks provided as open space. In order to preserve this notion of an urban downtown, the zoning code may need to be revised.

3.4 Economic Development Context

The land use recommendations highlight appropriate types of high-quality economic development on sites that have the potential to support Norristown's economic development goals and meet the study goals. These recommendations are based on an analysis of the economic structure within the regional context, including an examination of changes in Norristown's economic activity patterns over time.

<u>Regional Context</u>
Regionally, Norristown is located within the affluent Montgomery County but faces high unemployment rates, crime, and disinvestment. The negative perception of Norristown has stifled previous efforts to revitalize. In addition, Norristown is losing the battle of attracting office development because it is surrounded by popular Philadelphia suburbs, such as King of Prussia, with an ample supply of parking.

Norristown also is home to the SEPTA Transportation Center, a regional transportation hub. The Transportation Center is located within the Lafayette Street corridor and represents an important opportunity for Norristown. The existence of the Transportation

Center supports Transit Oriented Development (TOD) within walking distance of the station. TOD is a growing trend involving the creation of vibrant, compact, and walkable communities near transit service.

Employment

Norristown has been experiencing a decline in employment, but this trend is anticipated to reverse. According to the *Mobility and Industrial Corridor Reuse Study: Norristown, Plymouth, Conshohocken* developed by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, Norristown is forecasted to have an 8.0% increase in employment between 2000 and 2010 and a 5.9% increase between 2010 and 2020. In addition, as the seat of Montgomery County government and with a traditional downtown, Norristown has a built-in employment base and opportunities from which to build.

Similar to the national trend toward a service economy, Norristown's top employers are government and/or service related. Montgomery County is by far the largest employer in Norristown, and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection is another large employer. They relocated their regional headquarters to Norristown in 2004, and now employ approximately 300 people.

A notable change in large employers will occur with the relocation of Montgomery Hospital outside Norristown. Many jobs will be lost initially with this relocation. However, Norristown already is discussing possible reuse opportunities for the hospital site. Reuses could include medical related uses, a nursing home, or possibly light industrial uses.

Housing Growth

According to the Norristown Economic Development Department, approximately 400 townhouses have been built citywide in the past 3 years. With an average price of around $225,000 per townhouse, the economic benefit of this residential growth is important to Norristown. This growth brings tax revenue into the community and has a minimal impact on the local school district because townhouses typically are not significant generators of school age children.

Even with this recent growth, the Norristown downtown is not as vibrant as desired by the community. To enhance investment in the downtown area, the community is seeking to revitalize the riverfront and establish it, along with the Lafayette Street corridor, as a destination with twenty-four hour activity serving residents and visitors. The success of the riverfront and corridor ultimately will flow over into the downtown area as well. If implemented, the land use recommendations outlined in this report will serve to drive this revitalization.

3.5 Land Use Recommendations

Together, the goals developed for this study would bring Norristown closer to becoming an active economic center with a low crime rate and a high quality of life. The goals outline what is necessary to make Norristown a destination for residential growth, economic investment, and recreation. The goals address access and connections, a variety of uses, public space, and aesthetics.

The following is a description of desired land uses including identification of appropriate locations for specific development and recommendations for allowable height and character. The recommendations address the attributes that can enhance the Lafayette Street corridor. The recommendations focus on:

- Facilitating the redevelopment or adaptive reuse of locations that currently are underutilized, vacant, or otherwise face development challenges;
- Facilitating the preservation and enhancement of significant open space, trails, and recreational opportunities; and
- Understanding the role that the appearance of public and private spaces plays in community identity and economic function.

To facilitate the redevelopment or reuse of underutilized locations within the Lafayette Street Corridor, recommendations address mixed use development and open space and recreational uses. The discussion of mixed use development includes the placement of pinnacle buildings, infill development, parking needs and the street system south of Lafayette Street. The open space and recreation discussion includes the creation of a riverfront urban park and elements included within the park.

<u>Recommendations for Mixed Use Development</u>
An appropriate mix of land uses is essential for successful revitalization. Cultivating redevelopment and improved public access within older commercial and industrial areas along the riverfront can create greater economic development opportunities and enhance the quality of life for the community. The increased flexibility associated with allowing a mix of uses can further support the revitalization efforts.

"Typical" Mixed Use Urban Area

In addition to economic revitalization of the riverfront, a number of other benefits can be realized through a mixed use approach to redevelopment. Mixed use can create a sense of community, increase housing options, and guide development into established areas thereby protecting environmentally sensitive areas.

Mixed use development also creates a community that is active beyond the 9 to 5 workday. Residential uses, such as coffee shops, eateries, and retail stores, support the neighborhood commercial uses, and the commercial uses provide convenience to those living in the area. In its *Guide to America's Best New Development Projects*, the Sierra Club refers to livening up the street with a mix of uses and activities as "Bringing in the Bustle." Bringing the bustle to the Lafayette Street corridor is essential to its long term success.

The concept of focusing development into mixed use nodes can be applied at different scales and with varied emphasis through the Lafayette Street corridor. For example, five pinnacle buildings are recommended, offering an opportunity for larger scale and more dense mixed use, while the infill development may contain smaller, more neighborhood scale mixed use buildings.

Four to Six Story Mixed Use Buildings – Several blocks of 4-6 story mixed use buildings are recommended within the corridor. The development of 4-6 story buildings reflects the desires of community residents as expressed during the public outreach process.

The mixed use development recommended between Barbadoes Street and Cherry Street would include commercial use on the first floor and residential uses on the upper floors. This area currently is zoned for Town Center, and no zoning modifications are necessary for this recommended mixed use.

The suggested mixed use between DeKalb Street and Mill Street is a possible location for a future County Trail Center or a similar type of cultural center. Given the location adjacent to the transportation center, this type of development would welcome residents and visitors to the Lafayette Street corridor and the riverfront. This area currently is zoned for Town Center. It is anticipated that no zoning modifications are necessary for this recommended mixed use.

The mixed use development located south of Washington Street between Route 202 and the Sawmill Run Creek would include a similar mix. The mixed use development located east of the Sawmill Run Creek would include office and residential uses. However, all commercial development should remain west of Sawmill Run. Existing zoning regulations may need to be modified to allow for these types of mixed use in this area. Currently, these areas are located within a Light Industrial and/or Heavy Industrial zoning district. It is important to note that, under this recommendation, the first floor of these buildings may need to be elevated in order to protect the habitable space from potential flooding.

Pinnacle Buildings – According to the Norristown code, a pinnacle building is a building allowed in the UDO districts that "occupies a key location (such as a downtown intersection of arterial streets or at a bridge crossing and a river) and is designed to be more visually prominent than those buildings surrounding it. Such a building is generally higher, has a scale and bulk that commands attention and contains step-backs or notable architectural features that distinguishes it from the surrounding structures."

Five pinnacle buildings are recommended as outlined in the UDO I overlay district. Two recommended pinnacle buildings anchor each end of the study area and should be located along the riverfront at Water Street and Ford Street. In addition, pinnacle buildings are recommended south of Washington Street near DeKalb Street and at the base of Barbadoes Street.

Each pinnacle building serves to enhance the gateway into Norristown. A gateway welcomes residents and visitors into a community and essentially sets the first impression of the community. In addition, the pinnacle buildings are located near major

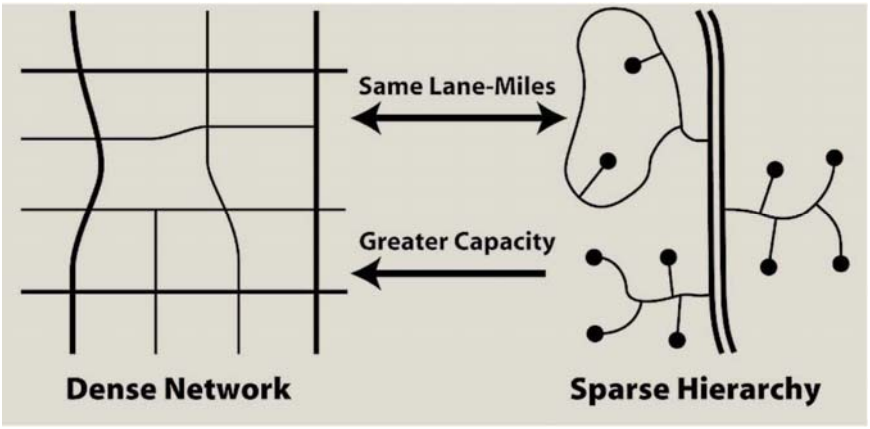
access points in the study area, such as the Transportation Center, and would support the concept of a TOD.

Infill Development – Four areas are identified for infill development, including two areas near Water Street and two areas south of Schuylkill Avenue. Infill development is intended to fill the residual smaller spaces that might not be conducive to larger buildings, thereby preserving the sightline. Infill development within the corridor should include 3-4 story mixed use buildings.

Grid Pattern Street System – An important aspect of encouraging redevelopment within the Lafayette Street corridor is improving access. It is important to preserve the capacity created by the interchange and reconstruction of Lafayette Street. An extension of the traditional grid pattern street system found in the Norristown downtown is recommended.

Currently, pedestrian and vehicular access is limited due to the industrial nature of the large blocks. A street network that follows a grid pattern has several benefits, including:

- A grid pattern gives drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians more route options, thus dispersing traffic and reducing congestion.
- A grid pattern breaks up large blocks, creating more walkable blocks, which promotes walking and also reduces congestion. Therefore, maximum block sizes and connectivity requirements are recommended. Maximum block sizes of 300-400 feet per side might be considered in order to maintain pedestrian scale.
- A grid pattern can preserve or create interesting views. The street system can preserve views of the river, thereby helping to bring the river into the public realm. In addition, some streets, such as Schuylkill Avenue, could terminate in a location where the building creates an interesting focal point.



Dense Network vs. Sparse Hierarchy

As illustrated in Figure 10, new and rebuilt primary streets within the corridor include Lafayette Street, Washington Street, and Schuylkill Avenue. These streets provide east-west access throughout the site. Another east-west access street is recommended closer to the river. Extension of Barbadoes Street, Mill Street, and Ford Street create additional north-south primary street access.

New and rebuilt secondary streets also are recommended. Such streets, or perhaps alleys, would break up larger blocks, creating a more pedestrian friendly environment. Secondary streets also would provide access for deliveries and maintenance purposes.

Parking – While the intention of a mixed use community is to enhance the pedestrian friendliness of the built environment, parking of vehicles is still a necessity. A mix of off-street and on-street parking options are recommended to accommodate parking needs.

In addition to the SEPTA parking garage located at DeKalb Street and Lafayette Street, off-street parking is recommended in the form of surface lots between Lafayette Street and Washington Street and Mill Street and Franklin Street. While this area is physically challenged by active rail lines and high voltage power lines, there is an opportunity for surface parking. Any surface lots should be appropriately landscaped and need not dominate the landscape. Also, off-street surface lots should not break a continuous street wall.

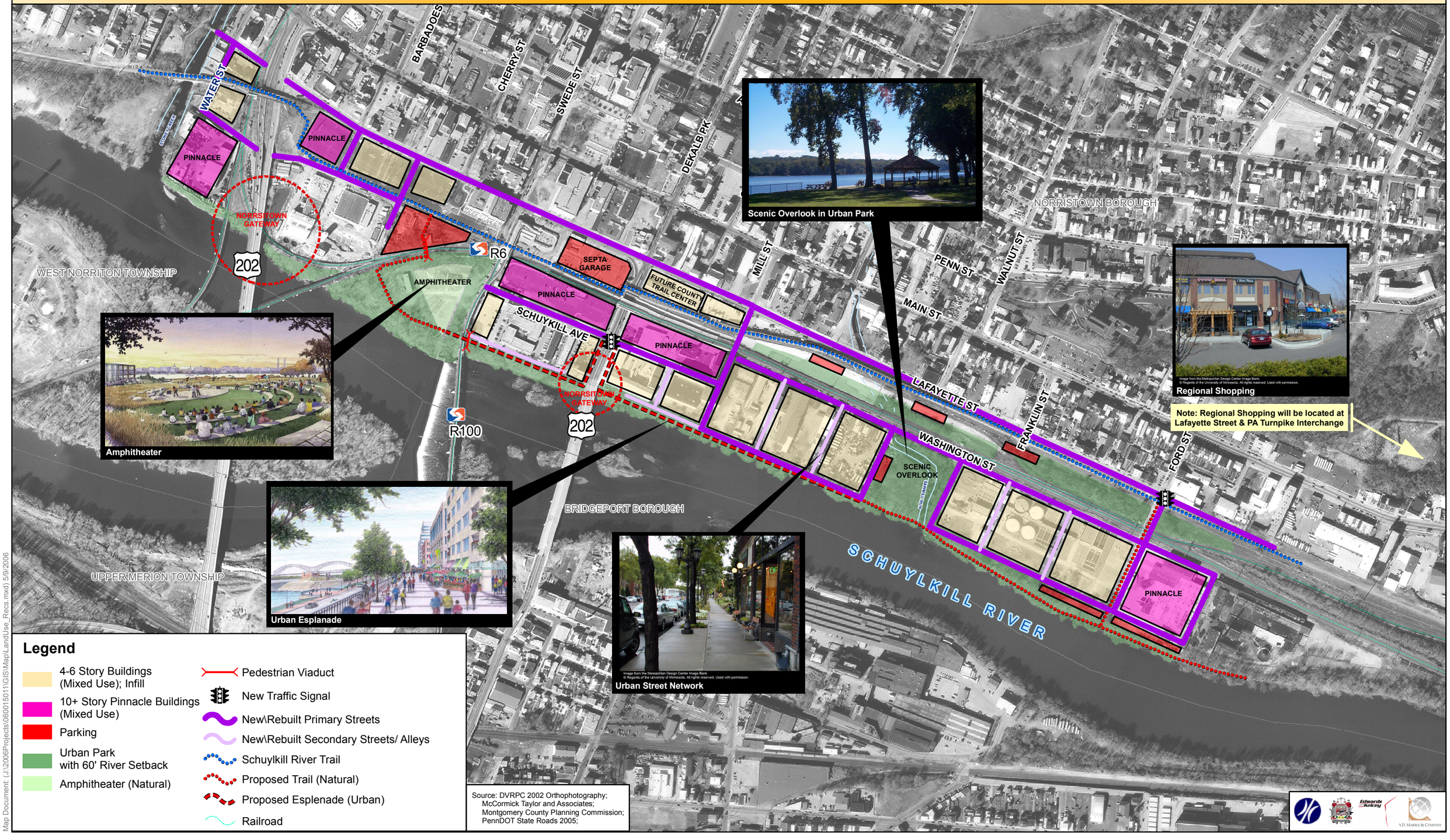
On-street parking could be allowed on primary streets within the study area. On-street parking is convenient for patrons of the commercial businesses found in the mixed use developments. In addition, on-street parking buffers pedestrians from active travel lanes, creating a safer, more pedestrian friendly environment.

Regional Lifestyle Center – A regional lifestyle center is recommended at Lafayette Street and the I-276 interchange in Plymouth. A lifestyle center is an open air retail shopping experience that mimics the feel of a traditional downtown retail area. Built around a main street-like grid street system, a lifestyle center can provide connections to adjacent neighborhoods. This approach could reduce the perceived negative impacts of a regional commercial center on nearby neighborhoods.

Lafayette Street Land Use Access Study

Figure 10: Land Use Recommendations

200 0 600 Feet



Legend

- 4-6 Story Buildings (Mixed Use); Infill
- 10+ Story Pinnacle Buildings (Mixed Use)
- Parking
- Urban Park with 60' River Setback
- Amphitheater (Natural)
- Pedestrian Viaduct
- New Traffic Signal
- New\Rebuilt Primary Streets
- New\Rebuilt Secondary Streets/ Alleys
- Schuylkill River Trail
- Proposed Trail (Natural)
- Proposed Esplenade (Urban)
- Railroad

Source: DVRPC 2002 Orthophotography; McCormick Taylor and Associates; Montgomery County Planning Commission; PennDOT State Roads 2005;

Map Document: (J:\2006Projects\060015011\GIS\Map\LandUse_Recs.mxd) 5/9/2006

Lifestyle centers typically are located near major points of access and have plenty of parking available. Much of this area already is zoned for commercial development, but some zoning modifications may be necessary to accommodate a lifestyle center.

Existing SEPTA, PECO, and Sewer Authority Uses – Each of these property owners has existing facilities located within the corridor. The SEPTA and PECO facilities should be allowed to continue, but the Sewer Authority plant needs to be relocated. Any future changes in uses at these locations should be consistent with the character of the surrounding community.

Recommendation for Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

Some portion of the recommended mixed use development discussed herein would be private development that generates public benefits. Paying for the infrastructure improvements necessary to redevelop the area could be a challenge for the borough on its own. With the upcoming I-276 interchange improvements and subsequent increase in vehicular travel through the corridor, infrastructure improvements will become increasingly necessary. New development and redevelopment could assist in paying for such infrastructure costs. This funding strategy could occur in a number of ways, including the use of tax increment financing (TIF).

A TIF is one tool communities can use to publicly finance public infrastructure improvements such as roads, sewer lines, and water lines. This tool uses the tax revenue generated by new development to repay money used for the infrastructure improvements. The purpose of a TIF is to promote the revitalization of communities and to attract new development. It is essentially a win-win situation for the private developer and the community.

Recommendations for Open Space, Recreation and Natural Areas

Facilitating the preservation and enhancement of significant open space, trails and recreational opportunities in the study area involves enhancing public access to the riverfront and creating new pedestrian and bicycle connections. For many years, the industrial activity along the riverfront has prevented easy public access. Surrounded by new mixed use activities, the riverfront will be infused with new energy.

Many communities are realizing the success that can come from reconnecting with their waterfront and more are joining the trend. Harborpark in Kenosha, Wisconsin is an example of redeveloped industrial land that includes an active public park, a marina, housing, and future plans for commercial development.

Harborpark – Kenosha, WI
Photo: Project for Public Spaces

Urban Riverfront Park – Many urban waterfronts are playing new roles as places for recreation and catalysts for economic development. A significant factor in the Lafayette Street corridor revitalization is reconnecting with the riverfront and establishing the riverfront as a destination not just for local residents, but also for the broader region as well. A linear riverfront park is recommended along the length of the Schuylkill River located within the study area. To ensure a successful riverfront park, it is suggested that five critical elements be created within the park – an urban esplanade, an amphitheater, a scenic overlook, a riverfront trail, and natural areas. These elements are described below.

Urban Esplanade – An urban esplanade is a formal promenade. It is recommended that an urban esplanade be created along the Schuylkill River to enhance public access to the river and also to connect pedestrians and bicyclists to the existing regional Schuylkill River Trail. The esplanade would begin near the SEPTA rail line and extend east toward the proposed scenic overlook near Sawmill Run Creek. Public access would be gained from the proposed primary and secondary streets that could be developed adjacent to the esplanade.

Many esplanades display public art as well as other pedestrian and bicyclist amenities. This type of public space also creates opportunities for social interaction, which is a building block to community. The esplanade would be a tremendous resource for local residents, as well as for those who work downtown.

Amphitheater – An amphitheater is recommended for the area immediately west of the SEPTA rail line at the termination of Cherry Street and Swede Street. The amphitheater would provide an interesting opportunity for local and regional attractions. Musical or theater groups could perform and bring people to the riverfront. Convenient access to the amphitheater would be provided by rail and via the riverfront park. Parking also is recommended adjacent to the amphitheater.

Scenic Overlook – The Sawmill Run Creek is a natural feature located within the study area. Instead of diverting or burying this natural feature, it is recommended that this feature be celebrated as open space. Since the highest elevation in the study area is located near Sawmill Run Creek, this open space could provide a scenic overlook with views of the Schuylkill River and connections to the Riverfront Trail.

Riverfront Trail – The Riverfront Trail would serve as a major pedestrian and bicycle connector within the study area. The Trail would connect the Urban Esplanade with the amphitheater and the existing Schuylkill River Trail. The riverfront trail would contain no hardscape and would be included within the setback area. The Riverfront Trail should include benches and interpretive signage that highlights the industrial history of the Norristown Riverfront.

Natural Areas – The areas not containing the urban esplanade are considered natural areas for the purposes of this study. These areas are within the floodplain and contain Sawmill Run Creek. These natural areas would be protected by the creation of a riverfront park.

3.6 Development Guidelines

Development guidelines can assist in maintaining or creating the character of a community. They address the form and function of development and often illustrate appropriate site organization and architectural standards. Norristown should be clear from the beginning what is expected of a developer regarding site and building design. Identifying development guidelines up front also might assist in expediting the development process and the resulting predictability may further encourage redevelopment.

Interconnected streets, walkable blocks, mixed uses, and a more refined character could be a reality along the riverfront. The use of development guidelines can bring the community closer to this reality. The following discussion identifies potential tools to

create an environment that will foster the vision for the project area, including general design characteristics required for buildings of various types.

Many communities across the nation are increasingly using development guidelines to address community character and influence the functionality of the built environment. Recognizing this trend, the American Planning Association (APA) recently created a sample mixed use code that incorporates several important development guidelines. This sample code is included in Appendix E.

The existing UDO I, Town Center, and Neighborhood Commercial zoning regulations each have components that address some aspects of development guidelines within their area and yard regulations and conditional use regulations. An example of one positive element described includes the front setback within the UDO I which states a principle structure must have a front façade built to the edge of the public sidewalk.

While positive design requirements are interspersed in the regulations, these requirements could be reinforced and could be identified more clearly as development guidelines, complete with illustrations. Illustrations of development guidelines are often helpful to developers and staff. The creation of consistent development guidelines for the entire study area may be appropriate. Basic elements described in development guidelines could include:

Site Organization – Site organization within the study area should emphasize the pedestrian. Buildings should be oriented to the street and be placed at the sidewalk. A continuous street wall assists in creating an inviting pedestrian space. Parking, if available on site, should be placed in the rear or side of the building. Building entrances should be oriented to the sidewalk as well.

Signage – Signage should be pedestrian-scaled. Size and placement of signs should be consistent throughout the study area.

Building Form – While building size may vary, the community may wish to have a consistent design theme for buildings. As noted in the first public workshop, the public agreed that they would like to see buildings developed that are similar in style to the rest of Norristown. To meet the public's request, building materials and façade treatments could be prescribed through development guidelines. In addition, windows should be required on the first floor to create visual interest for pedestrians. Transparency, as it is often called, also can enhance the marketability of the commercial space.

Landscape Features – The sidewalk should be separated from the street with a planting strip. A planting strip buffers pedestrians from street traffic and, with the addition of street trees, creates a visually interesting streetscape. During the winter months, a planting strip provides a place for snow storage. In addition, parking areas should be landscaped.

Public Spaces – Desired design characteristics of public spaces include wide sidewalks, well-marked crosswalks, bicycle parking, pedestrian scaled lighting, street furniture and other pedestrian amenities, way-finding signage, and interpretive signage for the trails and parks.

Sample Illustration of Development Guidelines

3.7 Proposed Regulatory Changes

During its anticipated review of the current zoning regulations, Norristown may wish to consider where amendments may be necessary to support the desired land uses within the study area.

- Mixed use development – Much of the study area may need base zoning modifications to allow for mixed use development at all scales. For example, a majority of the study area has an underlying industrial zoning which does not support mixed use development in the manner discussed in the land use recommendations.

The Town Center or Neighborhood Commercial zoning classifications may be appropriate for most mixed use development recommended herein. However, mixed use is allowed as a conditional use in both districts. Consideration may be given to allowing mixed use as of right to further encourage mixed use development.

Another alternative is to follow the UDO overlay district or allow the UDO (or similar zoning) as the base zoning for the study area. The UDO also allows a mix of retail/residential and office residential uses.

Also, there is currently a 75 foot building separation requirement within the UDO. A careful look should be given to how this separation supports the compact mixed use development recommended.

- Regional Lifestyle Center – Some modifications may be necessary to allow for the development of a lifestyle center. This area currently is zoned for commercial development, however, the compact, walkable form of a lifestyle center may not be allowed within the current regulations.

- Scenic Overlook – This area currently is zoned as industrial. A zoning change to Recreational would support a scenic overlook use.

- Development Guidelines – Requirements could be reinforced and could be identified more clearly as development guidelines, complete with illustrations. The creation of consistent development guidelines for the entire study area should be considered.

4. ACCESS

4.1 Background

An important issue related to the redevelopment of Norristown's riverfront is vehicular and pedestrian access to the site. Access must support the land use proposed as part of this study, while fitting within the context of the planned Lafayette Street Transportation Improvements Project.

There are six primary points of access to the riverfront that must be improved to serve proposed land uses. These points include five existing intersections and a potential underpass at Mill Street and Lafayette Street.

The pedestrian and vehicular points of access to the riverfront that EK has identified are (Figure 11):

- Lafayette Street & Ford Street
- Washington Street & Ford Street
- Lafayette Street & DeKalb Street
- Washington Street & DeKalb Street
- DeKalb Street & Schuylkill Avenue
- Potential underpass at Mill Street
- West Lafayette Street & Water Street

In addition, the project team recommends the extension of Barbadoes Street to form a connection with Water Street to the west of the Dannehower Bridge. This connection is also shown in Figure 12.

Lafayette Street currently acts as a local street, but it will become an arterial with the construction of a new PA Turnpike Interchange to the east of the project area. An arterial typically provides movements for both local and regional travel. The face of Lafayette Street will change drastically through the roadway project. While mobility is the major function of the newly designed roadway, pedestrian safety and riverfront accessibility must be considered to ensure the success of the riverfront redevelopment effort.

Lafayette Street Land Use Access Study
Figure 11: Access Analysis

600 0 600 Feet

NORRISTOWN BOROUGH

PLYMOUTH TOWNSHIP

W. LAFAYETTE STREET & WATER STREET

LAFAYETTE STREET & DEKALB PIKE

LAFAYETTE STREET & MILL STREET

WASHINGTON STREET & DEKALB PIKE

SCHUYKILL AVENUE & DEKALB PIKE

LAFAYETTE STREET & FORD STREET

WASHINGTON STREET & FORD STREET

MARKLEY ST
BARBADOES ST
CHERRY ST
SWEDE ST
DEKALB PK
GREEN ST
ARCH ST
PENN ST
WALNUT ST
MAIN ST
MILL ST
FRANKLIN ST
FORD ST
ROSS ST
CHESTNUT ST
CRAWFORD ST
CONSHOHOCKEN RD
DIAMOND AV
FAIRFIELD RD
RIDGE PK
LUCETTA ST
LAFAYETTE ST
WASHINGTON ST
SAWMILL RUN
SCHUYKILL AVE
WATER ST
STONEY CREEK
202
276

S C H U Y L K I L L R I V E R

WEST NORRITON TOWNSHIP

BRIDGEPORT BOROUGH

UPPER MERION TOWNSHIP

Streams

PennDOT State Roads

State Road

Highway

Tax Parcels

Study Area

Primary

Secondary

Riverfront/Upland Areas

Potential for Redevelopment

High

Moderate

Low

Non-Buildable*

*Non-Buildable land includes FEMA Floodways, I-276, S.R. 202, Lafayette Street, a 16 ft. buffer from power lines, a 10 ft. buffer from railroads, and the Sawmill Run stream corridor.

Source:
Montgomery County Planning Commission; PennDOT State Roads 2005.

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Lafayette Street Land Use Access Study

Figure 12: Vehicular and Pedestrian Access Improvements

200 0 600 Feet

N

WATER ST
BARBADOES
CHERRY ST
SWEDE ST
DEKALB PK
MILL ST
PENN ST
WALNUT ST
MAIN ST
LAFAYETTE ST
FRANKLIN ST
WASHINGTON ST
FORD ST
SCENIC OVERLOOK
SCHUYLKILL AVE
SCHUYLKILL RIVER
STONY CREEK
PINNACLE
SEPTA GARAGE
FUTURE COUNTY TRAIL CENTER
AMPHITHEATER
NORRISTOWN GATEWAY
R6
R100
202
WEST NORRITON TOWNSHIP
UPPER MERION TOWNSHIP
BRIDGEPORT BOROUGH
NORRISTOWN BOROUGH

EXTEND BARBADOES STREET AND IMPROVE WATER STREET TO IMPROVE CONNECTIVITY

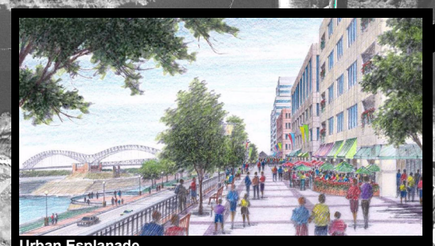
REALIGN AND SIGNALIZE SCHUYKILL AVENUE

IMPROVE FORD STREET AND LAFAYETTE STREET INTERSECTION AND FORD STREET RAILROAD CROSSING

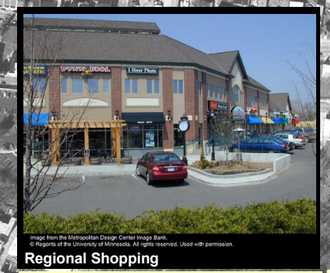
Note: Regional Shopping will be located at Lafayette Street & PA Turnpike Interchange


Scenic Overlook in Urban Park

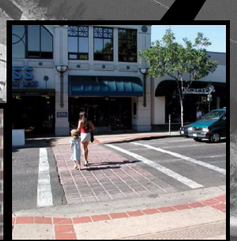

Amphitheater


Urban Esplanade


Urban Street Network


Regional Shopping


Countdown Timer


Treated Crosswalk

Legend

- 4-6 Story Buildings (Mixed Use)
- 10+ Story Pinnacle Buildings (Mixed Use)
- Parking
- Urban Park with 60' River Setback
- Amphitheater (Natural)
- Pedestrian Viaduct
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- Proposed Trail (Natural)
- Proposed Esplenade (Urban)
- Railroad

Source: DVRPC 2002 Orthophotography; McCormick Taylor and Associates; Montgomery County Planning Commission; PennDOT State Roads 2005;

Edwards Kelcey

A.D. Marble & Company

Map Document: (J:\2006Projects\06001501\GIS\Map\Vehicular_Pedestrian_Access_Recs.mxd) 6/17/2006

4.2 Riverfront Access

Potential Streetscape and Traffic Calming Initiatives

An attractive streetscape and low-speed traffic is important for the Norristown riverfront to improve the overall appearance and encourage pedestrians to stroll, shop, and safely meet other people. The presence of pedestrians on the street indicates to passing motorists that Norristown is a place to stop, visit, and explore, and that they should slow down.

In addition, streetscape improvements along Lafayette Street will attract new businesses to invest in the area, as well as encourage existing business owners to reinvest in their properties. Streetscape improvement is among the most effective strategies to encourage business district revitalization and renewal. Therefore, streetscaping should be incorporated into both the Lafayette Street Transportation Improvements Project and the revitalization of the riverfront as a whole.

Some potential streetscape and traffic calming improvements for the Lafayette Street corridor and the revitalized riverfront include:

- *Landscaping* – Most images of healthy communities include tree-lined streets interspersed with grass and shrubbery. This trend holds true in commercial as well as residential areas. Apart from their physical beauty, these landscaped areas create a friendly, walkable environment by separating pedestrians from cars and slowing driver speeds. The space required for vegetation varies with the type selected; grass or shrubs will require less room than a deciduous tree.

- *Sidewalks* – Sidewalks are essential in commercial and residential areas. Even with low vehicle speeds, children, seniors, and people with disabilities cannot walk safely without sidewalks. The Americans with Disabilities Act provides basic standards for width and accessibility. Items to remember are that two people should be able to walk side-by-side, sidewalks that aren't separated from vehicle travel lanes by green strips (or parked cars) should be wider than the standard, and sidewalks next to fences, walls, or buildings should be wider than above the standard.

- *Curb Ramps* – Curb ramps provide smooth and gradual transitions between the sidewalk and the road surface and are designed for wheelchairs, walkers, and strollers. The Americans with Disabilities Act provides standards for their location and design.

- *Traffic Signs* – Stop, yield, speed limit, and warning signs require that specific conditions be present to warrant them. Posting too many signs can cause unnecessary distractions or cause drivers to disregard the signs' warnings.

- *Marked/Treated Crosswalks* – Crosswalks alert drivers that they are approaching an area of pedestrian activity and alert pedestrians to a safe and accessible crossing. The concept of marked/treated crosswalks is to incorporate a textured or patterned surface, which contrasts with the surrounding roadway. Crosswalks can be marked with stripes, colored concrete or pavers, or stamped asphalt. A crosswalk with texture also serves to slow drivers because of its roughness and noise.

Lafayette Street & Ford Street

Existing Conditions:
Lafayette Street & Ford Street is a T-intersection with one-way traffic on Ford Street, traveling north to Main Street. Traffic on Lafayette Street is stop controlled for its approach to Ford Street. Right turns headed south on Ford Street towards Washington Street are allowed. This movement is composed mostly of trucks entering the industrial facilities along Washington Street. The Schuylkill River (SR) Trail runs adjacent to the intersection with a pedestrian crossing over Ford Street.

Intersection of Lafayette St. & Ford St.

Lafayette Street Transportation Improvements Project Impacts:
This intersection will be reconstructed as part of the Lafayette Street Transportation Improvements Project. It will be extended eastbound to connect with the PA Turnpike. Left turn lanes will be added in both directions on Lafayette Street. It is a major access point to the eastern portion of the riverfront from the Turnpike and Main Street. Ford Street will continue to be used for access to the residential areas.

Improvement Recommendations:

- Treated Crosswalk for Pedestrian Crossings
- Pedestrian signs and markings for SR Trail and riverfront attractions
- Pedestrian-oriented crosswalk for the SR Trail crossing Ford Street
- Landscaped buffer along the SR Trail

Intersection of Ford St. & SR Trail

Washington Street & Ford Street

Existing Conditions:
This intersection is adjacent to the railroad tracks and industrial buildings. The intersection operates freely with limited signage. Traffic primarily consists of industrial workers and heavy vehicles accessing the facility. This intersection is adjacent to the train tracks.

Intersection of Washington St. & Ford St.

Lafayette Street Transportation Improvements Project Impacts:
None.

Improvement Recommendations:
As part of the land use recommendations for this study, the intersection will provide a primary access point to new Riverfront area. Washington Street will be reconstructed adjacent to the railroad tracks with residential, retail, and arts/entertainment properties. Specific intersection recommendations include:

- Stop sign or traffic signal for traffic control
- Railroad crossing signs and warnings
- Landscape the open space areas for aesthetics
- Sidewalks both at the intersection and the railroad crossing
- Pedestrian crossing at the railroad

Lafayette Street & DeKalb Street

Existing Conditions:
This intersection is a four-way signalized intersection. A pedestrian island is located in the eastbound approach with pedestrian buttons and signage for crossing purposes.

Intersection of Lafayette St. & DeKalb St.

The pedestrian striping is faded in all directions. The sidewalks are handicap accessible with brick design decorating two sidewalk corners. The pedestrian island has broken cement on some of its corners.

Lafayette Street Transportation Improvements Project Impacts:
None.

Improvement Recommendations:
This intersection is a gateway to the riverfront and downtown Norristown from DeKalb Pike. Pedestrian accommodations will be important at this intersection in order to serve the Transportation Center and the riverfront. Specific intersection recommendations include:

- Treated crosswalks for pedestrian crossing in all directions
- Pedestrian buttons / pedestrian "count-down" signals
- Appropriate signing for Riverfront Attractions

<u>DeKalb Street & Washington Street</u>

Existing Conditions:
This intersection is a T-intersection and is stop controlled for access onto DeKalb Street. The intersection is adjacent to the train tracks overpass and close to the signalized intersection at Lafayette Street. The intersection may warrant a traffic signal in the future, despite the close spacing with the Lafayette Street and DeKalb Street intersection.

Intersection of DeKalb St. & Washington St.

Lafayette Street Transportation Improvements Project Impacts:
None.

Improvement Recommendations:
This intersection will provide access to the Riverfront area including the Urban Esplanade and Amphitheatre. It will serve as a primary entry/exit point for vehicles and pedestrians to the riverfront area. Specific recommendations include:

- Reconstruction of Washington Street and realignment with Schuylkill Avenue
- Pedestrian "count-down" signals
- Treated crosswalks
- Sidewalk and landscaping improvements

DeKalb Street & Schuylkill Avenue

Existing Conditions:
Schuylkill Avenue is a narrow two-way street that provides access to an apartment complex and existing filtration plant. Schuylkill Avenue is adjacent to the Norristown Transportation Center's one-way exit street. A grass median separates these two streets. A used car dealer is on the corner of Schuylkill Avenue and DeKalb Street. The sidewalk has ramps, making it handicap accessible, but there is no marked crosswalk.

Intersection of DeKalb St. & Schuylkill Ave.

Lafayette Street Transportation Improvements Project Impacts:
None.

Improvement Recommendations:
The intersection (as well as Schuylkill Avenue) will need to be widened to provide safe access to the riverfront properties on the west side of DeKalb Street. The intersection should be aligned with Washington Street.

West Lafayette Street & Water Street

Existing Conditions:
Water Street is a stop-controlled two-way street that provides access to a waste facility. Cars are parked along the roadway and in driveways off the street. Route 202 and train tracks run adjacent to Water Street, and Stoney Creek separates Water Street from the River Front Park. Buildings and trees hinder the view of the park.

Lafayette Street Transportation Improvements Project Impacts:
The project suggests transforming the area around Water Street into a park and open space. The existing park along the SR Trail would expand with this project.

Improvement Recommendations:
The recommended land use in the vicinity of this intersection is park / open space. The existing park along the SR Trail would be expanded with this scenario. Specific recommendations at this intersection include:

- Sidewalks
- Pedestrian crosswalks
- Landscaping

Vehicle and Pedestrian Viaduct at Mill Street & Lafayette Street

Intersection of Lafayette St. & Mill St.

There are two options for the structure required to provide an underpass below the existing SEPTA tracks at Mill Street. It was assumed that a 50' span length is required to provide enough width for 2 lanes of traffic and pedestrian access. The options for such a bridge are the following:

- *Option #1* - Open Deck Bridge: The advantage of this option is that it increases the clearance to an estimated 7-8 feet. However, the disadvantage is that the deck is "open", so things potentially could fall onto cars/pedestrians below. Also, SEPTA will be very reluctant to accept this design for their structure because of the danger associated with objects falling through the “open” deck.

- *Option #2* - Ballast Bridge: The disadvantage of this option is that it only increases clearance to an estimated 6-7 feet. However, this bridge design likely will be accepted by SEPTA.

The bridge would be constructed off-line to reduce impacts to service. The cost for either structure is estimated at $2-$3 million plus the cost of temporary buses for SEPTA passengers to the Norristown Transportation Center, which should be relatively minor. The underpass would allow for safe foot travel through the waterfront area.

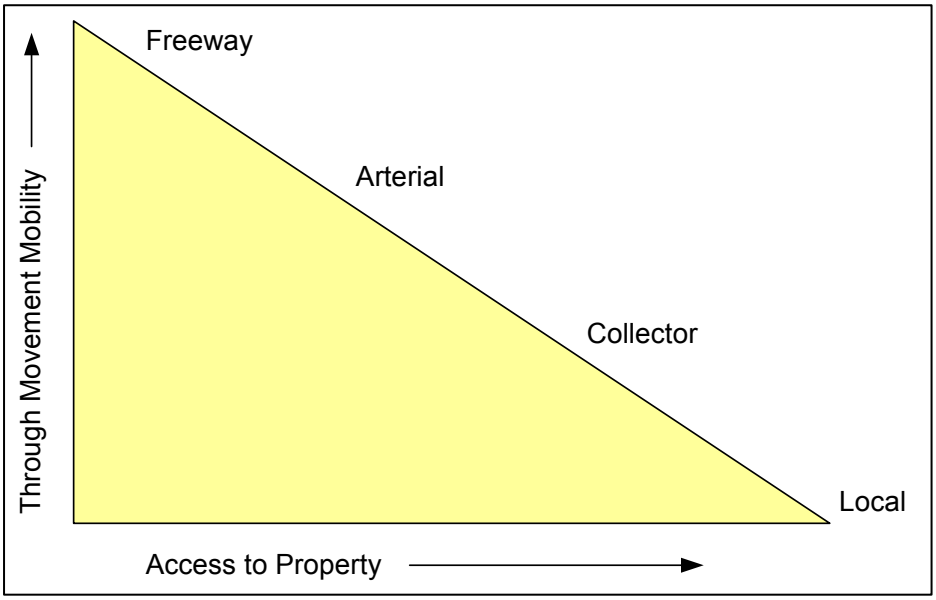
4.3 Lafayette Street Access Management

Lafayette Street currently operates as a local street with many curb cuts. It also serves as a thruway, which will experience traffic volumes increases as the plan to develop the surrounding area is implemented. An increase in traffic volumes creates a need to limit access points in order to improve traffic flow. The access points to Lafayette Street are driveways from existing businesses and residential properties. The driveways can be consolidated to limit access points and confusion when entering onto Lafayette Street.

Access management maintains systematic control of a new location with the spacing, design, and operation of driveways, median openings, interchanges, and street connections to a roadway. Access management also evaluates the suitability of a site for given developments from an access standpoint at the same time that it identifies the need to maintain the utility of the roadway to serve through traffic. Arterial streets, highways, and collector roads must serve both access and movement needs.

Mobility vs. Access

As mentioned in the previous section, the classification of Lafayette Street will change from a local road to an arterial with the completion of the Lafayette Street Transportation Improvements Project. Classification refers to the designation of streets and highways into classes based on how they function within a larger system. Classifications reflect the nature of operations on individual roads and the types of service they are intended to provide.



Functional Classification – Mobility versus Access

Classification is a function of ***mobility*** – movement through an area with a minimum of conflict – and ***access*** – the degree of connection the highway provides to the adjacent land use. As examples, interstate highways provide the highest degree of mobility with no direct local access, while at the other end of the functional classification scale, local streets and roads provide the greatest degree of local access.

Individual roadways and linkages vary in the degree to which they are able to provide mobility and access. The functional classification of a roadway depends upon the particular role the roadway section has in providing mobility or access.

With the change in classification of Lafayette Street, there is a need to limit access points to provide through movement mobility. In addition, there is a requirement to provide safe pedestrian accommodations to ensure a pleasant pedestrian environment for people walking between the riverfront area and downtown.

Access Points on Lafayette Street

DeKalb Street to Mill Street

Along Lafayette Street there are industrial, retail, residential and parking accesses. Not all of the access points are used, and some can be eliminated if adjacent properties combine access points. For example, the access point to a warehouse office door after DeKalb Street can be curbed. Also, the DUFF Company can utilize one shared driveway for their lots and curb the drives that do not need to be used. The space from curbing the driveways creates more parking along Lafayette Street. Several corner properties have two points of access, one off of Lafayette Street and the other off of the adjacent side street. These driveways can be curbed off of one street to reduce the number of access points further.

Car parked in front of unused driveway

Mill Street to Walnut Street

The Marble & Granite warehouse adjacent to Mill Street uses their driveway as a parking spot. The drive provides access to the side of the warehouse where no garage or parking lot is located. This access point can be curbed and parking can be marked along the street. The addition of parking along the street will be beneficial to a cultural center and retail property that is to be built across the street.

Vaughn's Auto Body faces Lafayette Street and has a gated driveway. The driveway extends further than the gate and can be curbed to the length of the gate. This extra curbing would provide more parking along the street. August Moon Restaurant and Banquet Hall has a one-way drive off of Main Street and two driveways to access the parking lot off of Lafayette Street. An access point on Lafayette Street can be curbed to eliminate traffic confusion and create one enter/exit driveway.

Trolley tracks that no longer are used along Lafayette Street can be removed. They are located at a driveway to a run-down warehouse with a large open lot. The warehouse adjacent to Walnut Street has an access point for the side of the building and thus can be curbed for on-street parking.

Walnut Street to Franklin Street
The driveway to Service Company & Sales Service can be shortened to provide access to the garage only. This change will provide more curb space for on-street parking. Next to Tony's Auto Repair, one driveway can be curbed.


Ramp Access to a door that can be curbed

Franklin Street to Ford Street
Parking lots and driveways of residential homes justify the access points at the east end of Lafayette Street. The one exception involves the parking lot on the corner of Lafayette Street & Ford Street, which has an access point off of both streets. The parking spaces can be marked to indicate which driveway to use when parking in the lot, and the other driveway can be curbed.

<u>Lafayette Access Management Improvement Recommendations:</u>

The curbing of driveway aprons that are not needed helps maintain safe access points to Lafayette Street. Improvements to the spacing, location, and design of driveway access can reduce the number and frequency of vehicle turning conflicts. Internal connections between neighboring properties allow vehicles to access businesses and activities without having to re-enter the major street. Some of the curb cuts along Lafayette Street can be eliminated if access to properties is shared.

The side streets, Green Street, Mill Street, Walnut Street, Franklin Street and Ford Street, are dedicated access points that will be used to access the arterial. Driveway spacing at corner properties presents the additional consideration of conflicts created by vehicles entering and exiting the site in close proximity to vehicle movements through the adjacent street intersection. These interactions become particularly complex when the adjacent intersection is controlled by a signal. Specific recommendations for improving access control along Lafayette Street include:

- Consolidating driveways by curbing driveways that are not in use
- Adding handicap ramps to the corner streets along Lafayette Street
- Marking on-street parking spaces for effective utilization
- Removing unused trolley tracks

These improvements should be designed in accordance with Pennsylvania Code (Appendix F).

Washington Street Access Management Considerations:

Although Washington Street is not an established roadway like Lafayette Street, consideration of access management principles should be included in the reconstruction of Washington Street. Washington Street will serve as a local road serving the revitalized riverfront area. The traffic volumes are expected to be low compared to Lafayette Street, as Washington Street will serve little or no through movements. Therefore, more driveways and access points are acceptable but not necessarily preferable. As with Lafayette Street, curb cuts and driveways should be consolidated where they are consistent with proposed land uses.

These improvements also should be designed in accordance with Pennsylvania Code (Appendix F).

5. APPENDICES

A. Appendix A – Public Workshop Reports

A.1 February 23, 2006

Meeting Purpose: Initial public workshop for the Lafayette Street Land Use Access Study. This meeting was an opportunity for residents to learn about previous planning efforts and engage in a discussion about their vision and goals for the study area.

Sign-In: Approximately 50 participants provided their names and contact information.

Project Staff in Attendance

Leo Bagley	Montgomery County Planning Commission
Matt Edmond	Montgomery County Planning Commission
Paul Jansson	Norristown Municipal Administrator
Joel Johnson	Montgomery County Redevelopment Authority
Jayne Musonye	Norristown Planning Director
Steve Nelson	Montgomery County Commissioner's Office
Henry Sekawungu	Norristown Assistant Planning Director
Heather Sherk	Montgomery County Planning Commission

Jennifer Duval	Edwards and Kelcey
Mamie Lynch	Edwards and Kelcey
Keith Mullins	Edwards and Kelcey
Holly Rybinski	Edwards and Kelcey

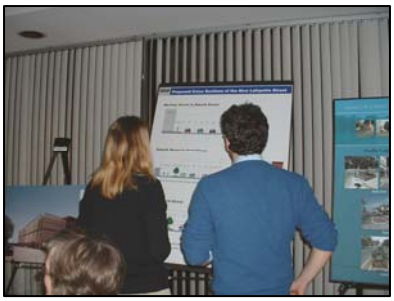
The format of the meeting was as follows:
6:00 – 6:30 Open House
6:30 – 7:00 Presentation
7:00 – 8:00 Open House

PRESENTATION

The presentation portion of the workshop included remarks on revitalization by Paul Jansson, Norristown Municipal Administrator, a history of the Lafayette Street Land Use Access

Study project area by Leo Bagley of Montgomery County Planning Commission, and a PowerPoint presentation by Jennifer Duval and Keith Mullins of Edwards and Kelcey. The following discussion ensued based on the presentations:

- A resident questioned if the project will improve Norristown's economic situation and improve traffic. Paul Jansson (Norristown Municipal Administrator) responded that it would, especially since one goal of the project is to have coordinated traffic signals.
- Another resident questioned if there would be more pedestrian access crossings to which Leo Bagley (Montgomery County Planning Commission) replied that this possibility is being studied.
- A resident suggested that she does not want this project to make Norristown similar to Manayunk because Manayunk is too congested.
- A resident questioned if any homes or businesses are being bought through this project. Leo Bagley responded that for this project, no homes or businesses are being taken; it is up to the market to decide what changes occur in Norristown. He stated that for the roadway project (in progress), some property is being taken.



- A resident asked if the community is in support of this effort. Leo responded that we will find out the community's opinions based on input received this evening.
- A resident asked if the river can be dredged. Paul Jansson responded that it cannot be dredged because of the rocks along the bottom.

OPEN HOUSE

The Open House portion of the workshop included four (4) listening stations as well as display boards of past studies. The four listening stations included:

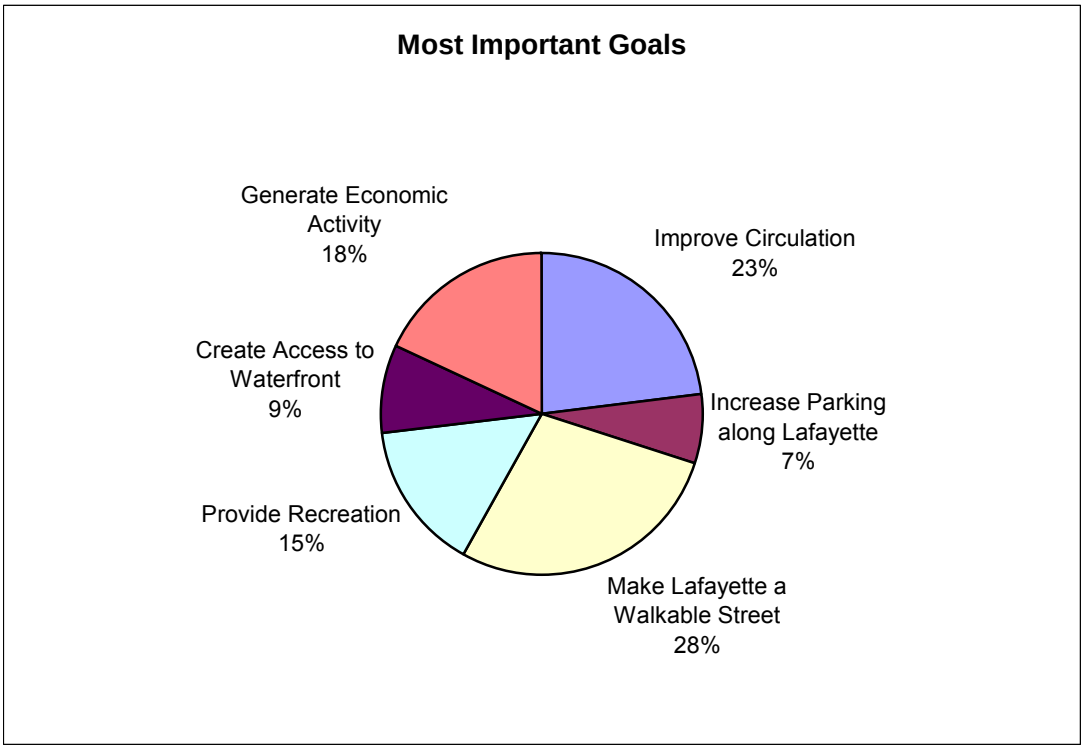
Study Goals

This station included a list of six goal statements for the study area. Participants were given 2 green sticker dots to vote for the goal(s) they felt were most important. Dots could be placed on two separate goals or both on one goal.

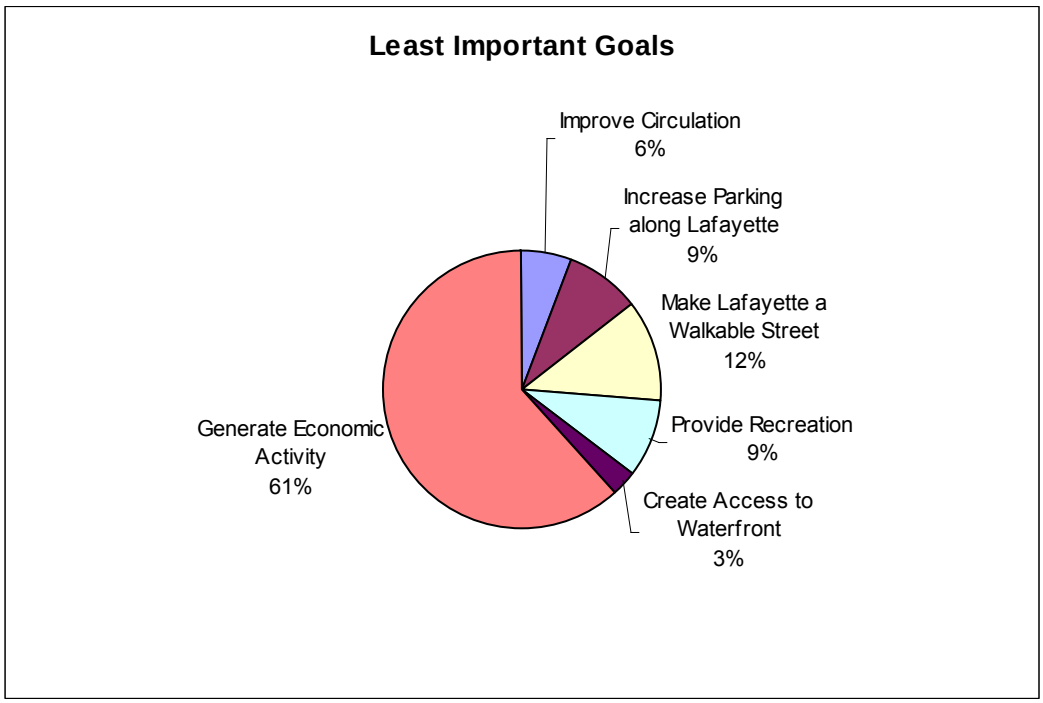
Participants also were given 1 yellow dot to vote for the goal they felt was least important.

Results/Comments:

MOST IMPORTANT GOALS (green dots – 2 per participant)		
Goal	**Dots**	**Percentage**
Improve traffic circulation by accommodating local and regional traffic	16	23.5%
Increase on-street and off-street parking along Lafayette Street	5	7.4%
Transform Lafayette Street into a walkable, tree-lined street	19	27.9%
Provide active/passive waterfront recreation opportunities	10	14.7%
Create physical and visual access to the waterfront	6	8.8%
Generate new economic activity including a range of residential and office development	12	17.6%
Total	**68**	**100%**



LEAST IMPORTANT GOALS (yellow dots – 1 per participant)		
Goal	**Dots**	**Percentage**
Improve traffic circulation by accommodating local and regional traffic	2	5.9%
Increase on-street and off-street parking along Lafayette Street	3	8.8%
Transform Lafayette Street into a walkable, tree-lined street	4	11.8%
Provide active/passive waterfront recreation opportunities	3	8.8%
Create physical and visual access to the waterfront	1	2.9%
Generate new economic activity including a range of residential and office development	21	61.8%
Total	**34**	**100%**



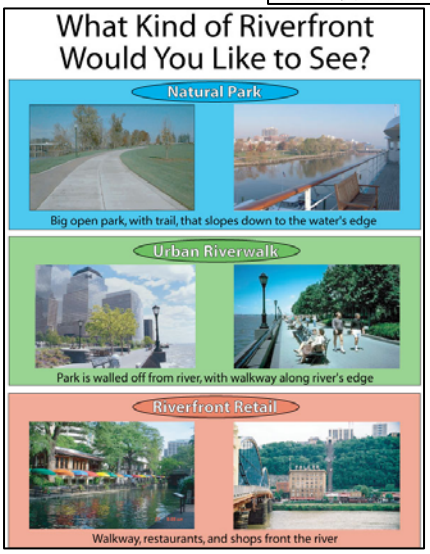
Most workshop participants ranked two particular goals of the study as the most important: transforming Lafayette Street into a walkable, tree-lined street (28%) and improving circulation by accommodating local and regional traffic (23%). Other popular choices for most important study goals included: generating new economic activity including a range of residential and office development (18%) and providing active/passive waterfront recreation opportunities (15%). Still others felt that the most

important goals were: creating physical and visual access to the waterfront (9%) and increasing on-street and off-street parking along Lafayette Street (7%).

As far as ranking the least important study goals, workshop participants overwhelming chose generate new economic activity including a range of residential and office development (61%). Staff attending to this station reported that many workshop participants verbally expressed distaste for office development along the waterfront, which explains why this goal was ranked as least important. The remainder of choices received somewhere between 1% and 4% of the votes for least important, indicating that workshop participants felt that the remaining goals are all important.

Waterfront Design

This station involved a series of boards addressing building design, building height, and riverfront characteristics. Participants were given sticker dots and asked to vote on their favorite images.



Results/Comments:

What would you want new buildings on the riverfront to look like?	Dots	Percentage
Similar to the rest of Norristown	18	75%
Typical of today's new development	2	8%
Cutting-edge/futuristic	4	17%
Total	**24**	**100%**

How tall would you want new buildings on the riverfront to be?	Dots	Percentage
4-6 stories	19	86%
10-11 stories	3	14%
15-20 stories	0	0%
Total	**22**	**100%**

What kind of riverfront would you like to see?	Dots	Percentage
Natural park	2	7%
Urban riverwalk	15	52%
Riverfront retail	12	41%
Total	**29**	**100%**

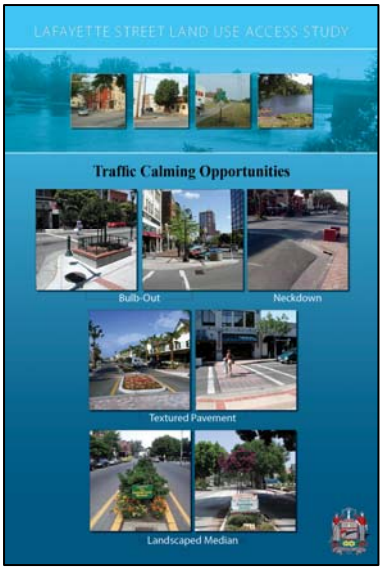
The voting results show that workshop participants overwhelmingly prefer that new buildings on the waterfront look similar to the rest of Norristown architecturally (75%) and be in the 4-6 story height range (86%). Most prefer an urban riverwalk (52%), while many prefer the riverfront retail option (41%).

Based on verbal comments offered at the workshop, participants were interested in keeping the architecture the same and not developing many tall buildings. They want to keep the quaint/historic feel of the town. Participants warned against blocking the town off from the riverfront. One participant stated that the train tracks already serve as a barrier, so building a row of tall buildings would further separate the town and the river.

Some people suggested focusing on what the people of Norristown want, but also just as importantly, what the market wants because the market dictates success. Finally, many participants were interested in the plans for the sewage treatment plant.

Roadway Design/Access

This station included a display board of photographs depicting various traffic calming mechanisms such as textured pavement, landscaped medians, bulb-outs, and neck-downs. It also included a "roll-out" map of the study area used to engage participants in discussions of waterfront access.



Results/Comments:
Participants at this station offered numerous questions and comments regarding the new interchange project. Discussions hinted at a need for more coverage / public involvement of the Lafayette Interchange. Regarding access, participants were most concerned with pedestrian and bicycle facilities both at the existing access points and within the redeveloped area. They want the redeveloped area to be very walkable. Participants favorably received the traffic calming images.

Land Use

This station included a land use map and zoning map of the study area. Additionally, this station included a map showing redevelopment potential based on a buildable land analysis. The analysis entailed dividing the study area into 15 subareas and calculating the area available for development after removing constraints such as the floodway, railroad tracks, major streets, and PECO power lines. Each developable area was consequently assigned a probability of redevelopment (low, medium, high) based on factors such as existing uses, physical constraints, and property conditions.

Results/Comments:
One resident suggested building a walkway along the river with restaurants, similar to the riverwalk in Georgetown, South Carolina. Another suggested public amenities on the waterfront such as an amphitheatre, recreational opportunities, and trails.

Several residents suggested that residential development for middle and upper income residents be created along the waterfront. This waterfront residential development could be buffered from the railroad tracks with 5-6 story buildings. One resident suggested building row houses to encourage "pride of ownership" instead of building condominiums, which do

not promote community. No high rises should be placed directly on the waterfront; this will make residents angry.

A student inquired about the market feasibility of the area. He asked who will live in Norristown, as well as who will visit Norristown. A business owner mentioned that he would like to see more pedestrian and bicycle traffic in order to encourage more patronage of his business. A resident commented that proportionally, Norristown has more affordable housing and social services than the rest of the county. This trend may be because Norristown also has the best public transit.

WRITTEN COMMENTS RECEIVED

- Provide an area that is usable and accessible for senior citizens (C. Pacher, Plymouth Twp resident)
- From the standpoint of someone who works in town (DEP Building) I can say that a common theme coming from the newer people working in Norristown is that there is a severe limitation of things to do along Main and Lafayette Streets during the day. There is a definite demand for both retail and recreational opportunities. The alienation of traffic congestion is also a major hurdle that needs to be overcome. As a resident, I would much prefer to see a recreational aspect to a redeveloped waterfront. As was already mentioned tonight, there is a serious glut of office space. The high rise building style employed by O'Neill Properties in Conshohocken has done nothing but wall off the river from the surrounding community (Ben Russell, Norristown resident).

A.2 May 18, 2006

Meeting Purpose: Second public workshop for the Lafayette Street Land Use Access Study. This meeting was an opportunity for residents to learn the results of the previous public workshop and to comment on the planning team's recommendations.

Sign-In: 12 participants provided their names and contact information.

Project Staff in Attendance

Leo Bagley	Montgomery County Planning Commission
Matt Edmond	Montgomery County Planning Commission
Summer Frederick	Montgomery County Planning Commission
Paul Jansson	Norristown Municipal Administrator
Barry Jeffries	Montgomery County Planning Commission
Joel Johnson	Montgomery County Redevelopment Authority
Jayne Musonye	Norristown Planning Director
Dawn Nicholson	Norristown Planning and Municipal Development
Henry Sekawungu	Norristown Assistant Planning Director
Heather Sherk	Montgomery County Planning Commission
Mamie Lynch	Edwards and Kelcey
Keith Mullins	Edwards and Kelcey
Holly Rybinski	Edwards and Kelcey

The format of the meeting was as follows:

6:00 – 6:30 Open House
6:30 – 7:00 Presentation
7:00 – 8:00 Open House

PRESENTATION

The presentation portion of the workshop included an introduction by Leo Bagley of the Montgomery County Planning Commission and a PowerPoint presentation by Keith Mullins of Edwards and Kelcey.

The following discussion ensued based on the presentation:

- A participant asked if the existing uses, such as the water treatment plant, can be changed. Keith responded that some land uses can be changed more easily than others. He suggested that the group look at the Available Land Redevelopment Acreage map which shows the potential for change for different regions in the study area. Each area is designated as high, moderate, or low potential for redevelopment, and the land use recommendations were based on these rankings.
- A participant questioned if the project recommends enough parking. He suggested that the map does not seem to display much parking as compared with the proposed amount of development. Keith explained that the designated parking lots will not be the only parking available in the area. Developers will be required to provide parking as they develop the land. Leo added that since this is a market-driven plan, the type of development relies on the market, but regardless of the type of development, the zoning requires development to include the appropriate amount of parking.

- As a follow up to the first parking question, a participant asked how many spaces will be included in the new SEPTA parking garage. Leo responded that there will be 540 new spaces and that the contract for construction of the garage will be awarded next week, allowing for construction to begin very soon.

- Another participant asked how many lanes will be constructed on Lafayette Street, and Leo responded that as part of Lafayette Street Transportation Improvements project, Lafayette Street will be widened to two lanes in each direction.
- A participant asked for more information on the gateway streets. Leo explained that the plan is to enhance the streets that enter Norristown to provide more of a welcoming atmosphere. For example, the plan would include improving the lighting on the bridges to make them more inviting, but would not include widening the bridges. By creating more attractive gateways into Norristown, the hope is that more people will be encouraged to visit and live in the town.

- Another participant asked about the north/south connections in the study area and was concerned that it will be difficult to get from Main Street to the riverfront. Paul Jansson (Norristown Municipal Administrator) explained that DeKalb Street, Ford Street, and Mill Street will provide access between Main Street and the riverfront. In order to improve this access, the plan proposes signalizing the Ford Street and Lafayette Street intersection and improving the railroad crossing on Ford Street. Keith added that the plan also concentrates on the north/south pedestrian movements because riverfront accessibility for pedestrians coming from Main Street is essential.

OPEN HOUSE

The Open House portions of the workshop, which occurred both before and after the presentation, allowed attendees to view figures displaying the project's progress and discuss different aspects of the plan with the representatives from Montgomery County, Norristown, and Edwards and Kelcey. This portion of the workshop included three (3) listening stations as well as boards displaying the results of the previous workshop and a large overall aerial map of the study area including photographs of existing conditions and renderings of proposed improvements. The three listening stations included:

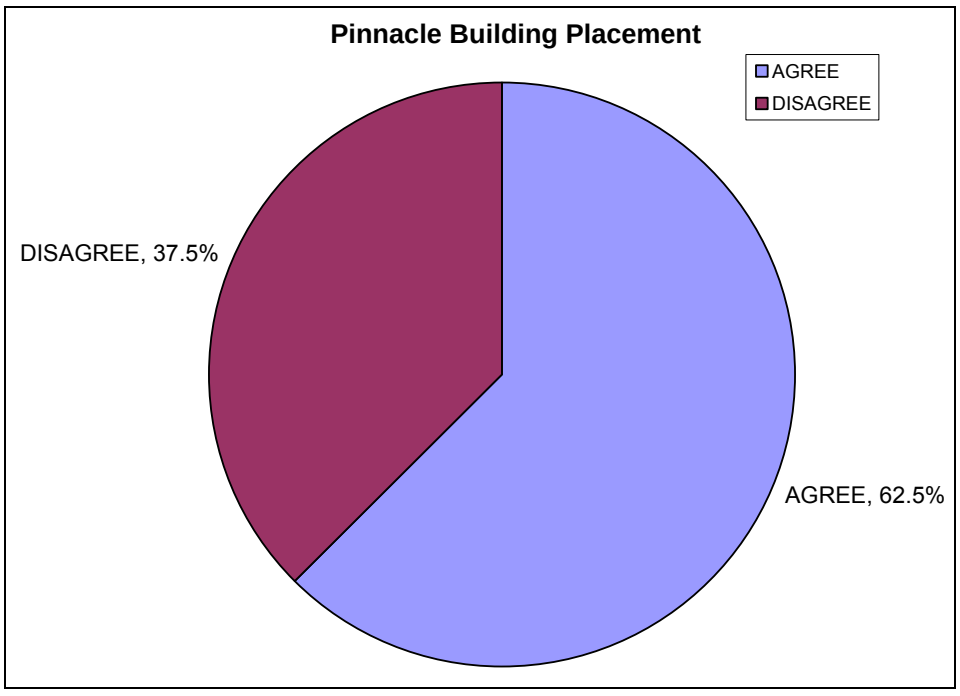
Pinnacle Buildings

According to the zoning code, six (6) pinnacle buildings (10+ stories) are permitted within the study area, with one pinnacle building permitted east of Walnut Street. The planning team proposed building five (5) pinnacle buildings throughout the study area with one located east of Walnut Street. These five locations were displayed on a map and workshop participants were asked to provide their opinions on the proposed pinnacle building

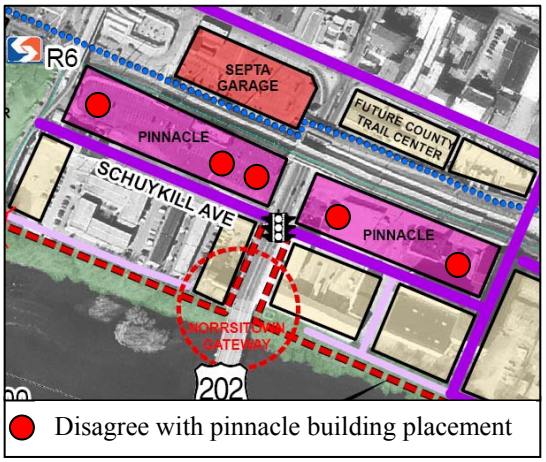
locations. Each participant used a green sticker dot to indicate agreement with the placement of the pinnacle buildings or a red sticker dot to indicate disagreement with their placement. Participants who disagreed with the pinnacle building placement were asked to indicate which buildings they did not approve of and why.

Results/Comments:

Do you agree with the placement of the pinnacle buildings?		
Response	**Dots**	**Percentage**
YES	5	62.5%
NO	3	37.5%
Total	**8**	**100%**



Most workshop participants (63.5%) agreed with the placement of the pinnacle buildings. However, several participants (32.5%) had suggestions regarding their placement. All three people who disagreed with the pinnacle building placement did so because of the pinnacle building located north of Schuylkill Avenue to the west of DeKalb Pike. Additionally, two of the three people who disagreed also did not like the location of the pinnacle building north of Schuylkill Avenue and east of DeKalb Pike. All three participants felt that these two pinnacle buildings would create a physical and visual barrier between the town and the riverfront and preferred locating pinnacle buildings on the western and eastern ends of the study area while constructing smaller buildings in the areas that will be pedestrian oriented.



Vehicular and Pedestrian Access

This station included a board displaying the Proposed Vehicular and Pedestrian Access Improvements. The three main improvements discussed at this station were:

- Extending Barbadoes Street and improving Water Street to improve connectivity,
- Realigning and signalizing Schuylkill Avenue, and
- Improving the Ford Street and Lafayette Street intersection and the Ford Street railroad crossing.

Results/Comments:
A resident voiced concern over the need for children to cross the train tracks in order to access the riverfront. Many children live north of Lafayette Street between Ford Street and Mill Street, so they will try to cross the R6 tracks to access the urban area and the river. It will be very important to install barriers to prevent people from crossing the tracks at unsignalized locations. Additionally, there is a significant elderly population living north of the railroad

tracks, so a resident suggested making provisions for the elderly to access the riverfront from Main Street. Finally, a participant voiced approval of the plan by saying that if people are given transportation, they will spend money in Norristown.

Land Use

This station included three figures showing the process and the results of the land use analysis. The first board showed the Available Land Redevelopment Acreage, and the second board showed the Land Use Recommendations. It was explained that the Available Land Redevelopment Acreage information was used to determine the Land Use Recommendations set forth in the study. The third figure (Figure 13), which was developed by Montgomery County Planning Commission, also provides an overview of the proposed land uses.

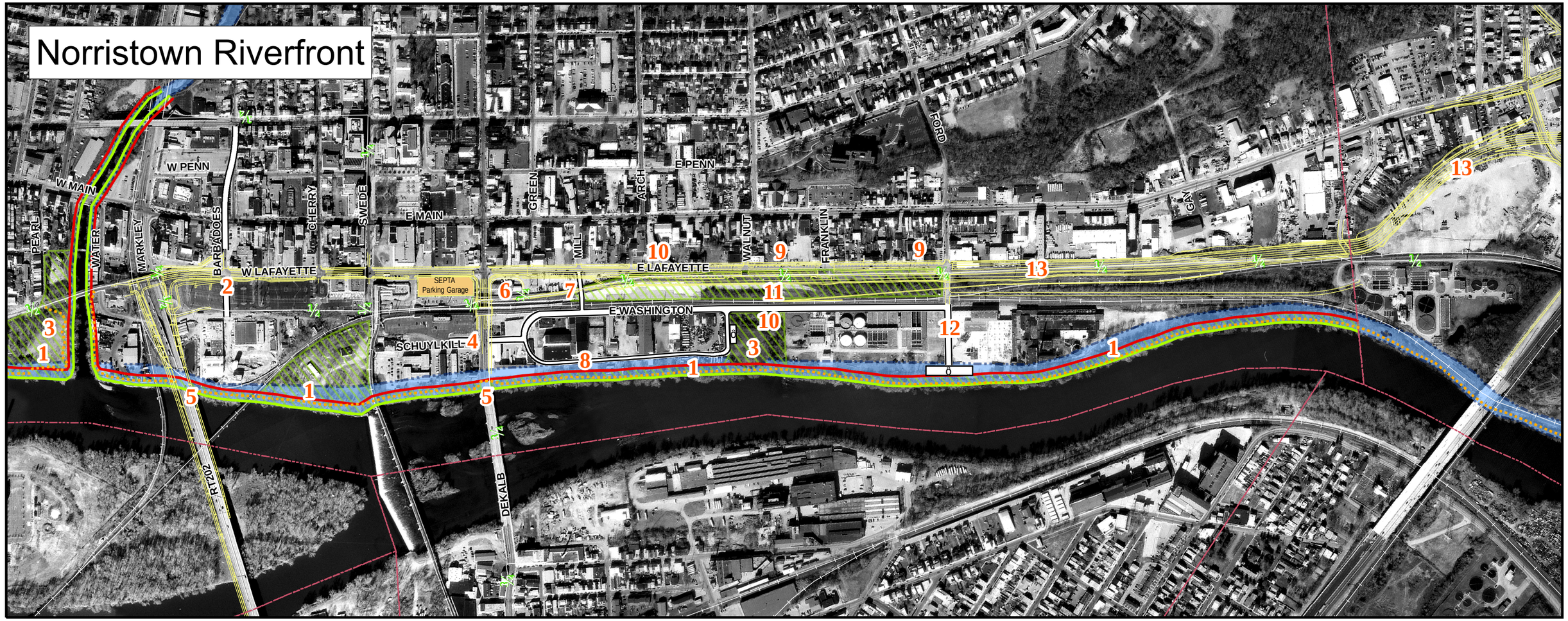
Results/Comments:

Several workshop participants asked how the land segments were identified as having high, moderate, or low potential for redevelopment. Mamie Lynch (EK) and Leo explained that the analysis entailed dividing the study area into 15 sub-areas and calculating the area available for development after removing constraints such as the floodway, railroad tracks, major streets, and PECO power lines. Each developable area was consequently assigned a probability of redevelopment (high, moderate, low) based on factors such as existing uses, physical constraints, and property conditions.

One resident asked for more information on the regional shopping. Mamie explained that while the location of this shopping area is market-driven, it is proposed to be located near the new Turnpike interchange. This location would be ideal because the Turnpike would provide easy access to the shopping center. She continued to explain that the idea for this shopping center is to create a walkable shopping community, similar to Main Street at Exton, where visitors can park their car and then stroll around the shops and restaurants.

Several participants indicated their approval of the land use recommendations. They said that the proposed recommendations match what they would have planned themselves. One person noted particular interest in the scenic

Norristown Riverfront



1 Create publicly accessible riverfront trail from Riverfront Park to Washington Street. The trail should be built within a greenway corridor. The trail should be designed to accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists.

2 Extend Barbadoes Street to Washington Street.

3 Create public parks in two areas along the riverfront.

4 Realign Schuylkill Avenue and Washington Street to create a four-way, signalized intersection.

5 Enhance gateways to Norristown with landscaping, signs, and other street improvements.

6 Possible site for future county trail center.

7 Extend Mill Street to Washington Street. The new road will accommodate cars and light trucks only.

8 Construct Riverfront Drive, a one-way road along the riverfront with on-street parking.

9 Provide off-street parking for residents and businesses along redesigned Lafayette Street.

10 Implement streambank improvements along Sawmill Run.

11 Reposition Schuylkill Trail and improve currently underutilized greenspace.

12 Improve and extend Ford Street and construct public parking along riverfront to facilitate access to the greenway.

13 Improve and extend Lafayette Street from Ford Street to a new turnpike interchage in Plymouth Township.

Legend

- 60 ' Riverfront Setback Line
- Top of Riverbank
- County Trails
- Norristown Riverfront Walk
- FEMA Floodway
- Open Space
- Road Improvments
- Lafayette Street Improvement Project

Montgomery County Planning Commission

Map Prepared June 5, 2006.
Source: DVRPC 2000 aerial photography, floodplain data published by Penn State University. Floodplain data shown on this map should not be assumed to be accurate for engineering purposes.
Lafayette Street Project information should not be considered accurate for engineering purposes.

1 inch equals 600 feet

overlook in the urban park near Sawmill Run Creek. He agreed that this is an ideal location for an urban park because of the existing stream. Additionally, he liked the idea of the urban street network and the opportunity that it provides for a walkable community.

WRITTEN COMMENTS RECEIVED

- I did not attend the 2/23 meeting, but was concerned to see that 61% of participants felt generating increased economic activity was the least important goal. I feel that renewing the economic vitality of Norristown (not just along Lafayette Street) should be the primary goal of this project. (Steven Duffy, Norristown resident)
- In general, I found the plan presented to be a good plan. I would not, however, be in favor of a tall 10-12 story "pinnacle" building on the south side of the SEPTA train station. I would prefer a smaller structure that preserved the view from the courthouse to the river and took advantage of the open space on the triangular site next to the dam. (Steven Duffy, Norristown resident)
- I'm concerned about the lack of access to the area from Ford Street to Mill Street. Residents immediately north of the area will not be able to get to it. Recreation space for children of both existing and new residents is needed. Access streets to the area are running through highly residential areas with many children. These streets with higher speed traffic will not be safe. (Judy Novey, Lafayette Hill resident)

B. Appendix B – Project Documents

Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

Bureau of Forestry

January 13, 2006

Gina Tartamosa
A. D. marble & Company
FAX: 484-533-2599 (hard copy will NOT follow)

Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory Review, PNDI 20051128012133
Lafayette Street Land Use
Norristown Twp., Montgomery County

Dear Ms. Tartamosa,

This responds to your request about a Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory (PNDI) ER Tool "Potential Impact" or a species of special concern impact review. We screened this project for potential impacts to species and resources of special concern under the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources' responsibility, which includes plants, natural communities, terrestrial invertebrates and geologic features only.

☒ ***NO PROJECT IMPACT ANTICIPATED***

☐ PNDI records indicate that no known occurrences of species or resources of special concern under DCNR's jurisdiction occur in the vicinity of the project. Therefore, we do not anticipate the project referenced above will impact plants, natural communities, terrestrial invertebrates and geologic features of special concern. No further coordination with DCNR is needed for this project.

☒ PNDI records indicate special concern species or resources are located in the vicinity of the project. However, based on the information submitted to us concerning the nature of the project, the immediate location, and our detailed resource information, we determined that no impact is likely. No further coordination with DCNR is needed for this project.

☐ ***POTENTIAL PROJECT IMPACT - UNDER FURTHER REVIEW***

Based on our PNDI map review we determined potential impacts to species and/or resources of special concern. This project has been passed on to our review committee. The committee will contact the applicant/consultant directly if more information is needed to assess the project's potential impacts. Response time is typically less than a month after the date on this notification.

COMMENTS:

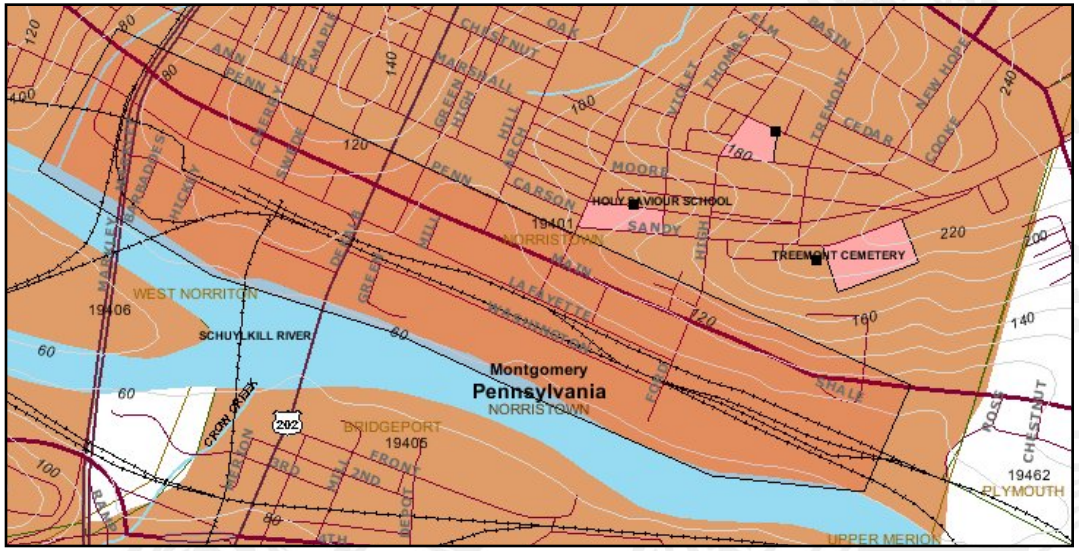
This response represents the most up-to-date summary of the PNDI data files and is good for one (1) year from the date of this letter. An absence of recorded information does not necessarily imply actual conditions on-site. A field survey of any site may reveal previously unreported populations. Should project plans change or additional information on listed or proposed species become available, this determination may be reconsidered.

This finding applies to impacts to plants, natural communities, terrestrial invertebrates and geologic features only. To complete your review of state and federally-listed species of special concern, please be sure the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the PA Game Commission and the Fish and Boat Commission has been contacted regarding this project either directly or by performing a search with the online PNDI ER Tool found at www.naturalheritage.state.pa.us.

Ellen M. Shultzabarger, Environmental Review Specialist, PNHP
DCNR/BOF/PNDI, PO Box 8552, Harrisburg, PA 17105 ~ Ph: 717-772-0258 ~ F: 717-772-0271 ~ c-eshultza@state.pa.us

PNDI Project Environmental Review Receipt
Project Search ID: 20051128012133
Project Name: Lafayette Street Land Use
Date: 11/28/2005 11:54:16 AM

Project Location



Project Name: Lafayette Street Land Use
On behalf of: Self
Project Search ID: 20051128012133
Date: 11/28/2005 11:52:27 AM
# of Potential Impacts: 3
Jurisdictional Agency: US Fish and Wildlife Service,Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources,Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission
Project Category: Development,New public/community development (school, library, church, museum)
Project Coordinates (Lambert): 743968.36797110, 416314.77851706 ft

ZIP Code: 19401
Township/Municipality: NORRISTOWN
County: Montgomery
USGS 7.5 Minute Quadrangle ID: 285
Quadrangle Name: NORRISTOWN
Project Size: 231.741 ac

Location Accuracy

Project locations are assumed to be both precise and accurate for the purposes of environmental review. The creator/owner of the Project Review Receipt is solely responsible for the project location and thus the correctness of the Project Review Receipt content.

3 Potential Impacts

Under the Following Agencies' Jurisdiction: US Fish and Wildlife Service,Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources,Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission

 APPLICANT INITIALS: _____

Project Name: Lafayette Street Land Use
On behalf of: Self
Project Search ID: 20051128012133
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ZIP Code: 19401
Township/Municipality: NORRISTOWN
County: Montgomery
USGS 7.5 Minute Quadrangle ID: 285
Quadrangle Name: NORRISTOWN
Project Size: 231.741 ac

These determinations were based on the project-specific information you provided, including the exact project location; the project type, description, and features; and any responses to questions that were generated during this search. If any of the information you provided does not accurately reflect this project, or if project plans change, DEP and the jurisdictional agencies require that another PNDI review be conducted.

This response represents the most up-to-date summary of the PNDI data files and is good for one(1) year from the date of this PNDI Project Environmental Review Receipt.

Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory (PNDI) records indicate there are potential impacts on special concern species and resources within the project area. If the project is pursued, the jurisdictional agency/agencies indicated require that the instructions below regarding potential impacts and/or avoidance measures be followed in their entirety.

Q1: Aquatic habitat (stream, river, lake, pond, etc.) is located on or adjacent to the subject property and project activities (including discharge) may occur within 300 feet of these habitats
Your answer is: **3. Unknown**
Please initial here signifying that you have provided the most accurate answer to the question as possible.
APPLICANT INITIALS: _____

Q2: Accurately describe what is known about wetland presence in the project area or on the land parcel. "Project" includes all features of the project (including buildings, roads, utility lines, outfall and intake structures, wells, stormwater retention/detention basins, parking lots, driveways, lawns, etc.), as well as all associated impacts (e.g., temporary staging areas, work areas, temporary road crossings, areas subject to grading or clearing, etc.). Include all areas that will be permanently or temporarily affected -- either directly or indirectly -- by any type of disturbance (e.g., land clearing, grading, tree removal, flooding, etc.). Land parcel = the lot(s) on which some type of project(s) or activity(s) are proposed to occur .
Your answer is: **2. The project area (or land parcel) has not been investigated by someone qualified to identify and delineate wetlands, or it is currently unknown if the project or project activities will affect wetlands.**
Please initial here signifying that you have provided the most accurate answer to the question as possible.
APPLICANT INITIALS: _____

1 potential impact
The Applicant should MAIL a copy of this Project Environmental Review Receipt, a cover letter with project narrative, acreage to be impacted, how construction/maintenance activity is to be accomplished, township/municipality and county where project is located, and a USGS 7.5 minute quadrangle with project boundary and quad name marked on the map.

US Fish and Wildlife Service.
Endangered Species Biologist
315 South Allen Street,Suite 322.
State College, PA 16801

1 potential impact
The Applicant should MAIL/FAX a copy of this Project Environmental Review Receipt, a cover letter with project narrative, acreage to be impacted, how construction/maintenance activity is to be accomplished, township/municipality and county where project is located, and a USGS 7.5 minute quadrangle with project boundary and quad name marked on the map.

Ecological Services Section
Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
Bureau of Forestry
P.O. Box 8552
Harrisburg, PA 17105-8552
Review Coordinator: (717) 772-0258
FAX Number: (717) 772-0271

1 potential impact
The Applicant should MAIL/FAX a copy of this Project Environmental Review Receipt, a cover letter with project narrative, acreage to be impacted, how construction/maintenance activity is to be accomplished, township/municipality and county where project is located, and a USGS 7.5 minute quadrangle with project boundary and quad name marked on the map.

Natural Diversity Section
Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission
Division of Environmental Services
450 Robinson Lane
Bellefonte, PA 16823
FAX Number: (814) 359-5175

Please mail only one (1) copy of the project review request. Do not email the project information. Allow 30 days for completion of the project review from the date of PFBC receipt of the project review request.

DISCLAIMER

The PNDI environmental review website is a preliminary environmental screening tool. It is not a substitute for information obtained from a field survey of the project area conducted by a biologist. Such surveys may reveal previously undocumented populations of species of special concern. In addition, the PNDI only contains information about species occurrences that have actually been reported to the Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program.

Pennsylvania State Programmatic General Permit (PASPGP)

Please note that regardless of PNDI search results, projects requiring a Chapter 105 DEP individual permit or GP 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 or 11 in certain counties (Adams, Berks, Bucks, Chester, Cumberland, Delaware, Franklin, Lancaster, Lebanon, Lehigh, Monroe, Montgomery, Northampton, Schuylkill and York) are required by DEP to comply with the bog turtle habitat screening requirements of the PASPGP.

 APPLICANT INITIALS: _____

TERMS OF USE

Upon signing into the PNDI environmental review website, and as a condition of using it, you agreed to certain terms of use. These are as follows:

The web site is intended solely for the purpose of screening projects for potential impacts on resources of special concern in accordance with the instructions provided on the web site. Use of the web site for any other purpose or in any other way is prohibited and subject to criminal prosecution under federal and state law, including but not limited to the following: Computer Fraud and Abuse Act of 1986, as amended, 18 U.S.C. § 1030; Pennsylvania Crimes Code, § 4911 (tampering with public records or information), § 7611 (unlawful use of computer and other computer crimes), § 7612 (disruption of service), § 7613 (computer theft), § 7614 (unlawful duplication), and § 7615 (computer trespass).

The PNHP reserves the right at any time and without notice to modify or suspend the web site and to terminate or restrict access to it.

The terms of use may be revised from time to time. By continuing to use the web site after changes to the terms have been posted, the user has agreed to accept such changes.

This review is based on the project information that was entered. The jurisdictional agencies and DEP require that the review be redone if the project area, location, or the type of project changes. If additional information on species of special concern becomes available, this review may be reconsidered by the jurisdictional agency.

PRIVACY and SECURITY

This web site operates on a Commonwealth of Pennsylvania computer system. It maintains a record of each environmental review search result as well as contact information for the project applicant. These records are maintained for internal tracking purposes. Information collected in this application will be made available only to the jurisdictional agencies and to the Department of Environmental Protection, except if required for law enforcement purposes—see paragraph below.

This system is monitored to ensure proper operation, to verify the functioning of applicable security features, and for other like purposes. Anyone using this system consents to such monitoring and is advised that if such monitoring reveals evidence of possible criminal activity, system personnel may provide the evidence to law enforcement officials. See Terms of Use.

In order for this project to be considered for subsequent review, a signed and initialed copy of this receipt is required by the agency or agencies indicated. DEP requires that a signed and initialed copy of this receipt, along with any required documentation from jurisdictional agencies concerning resolution of potential impacts, be submitted in applications for permits requiring PNDI review. See DEP PNDI policy at www.naturalheritage.state.pa.us or visit the following websites for further information.

Regional Offices
Http://www.dep.state.pa.us/dep/deputate/fieldops/map.pdf

District Mining Operations
Http://www.dep.state.pa.us/dep/deputate/minres/Districts/homepage/Default.htm

 APPLICANT INITIALS: _____

PNDI Project Environmental Review Receipt

Project Search ID: 20051128012133
Project Name: Lafayette Street Land Use
Date: 11/28/2005 11:54:16 AM

Oil and Gas Management
Http://www.dep.state.pa.us/dep/deputate/minres/OILGAS/CustomerNeeds.htm

Print this Project Review Receipt using your Internet browser's print function and keep it as a record of your search.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Project applicant on whose behalf this search was conducted:

APPLICANT

Contact Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

PERSON CONDUCTING SEARCH (if not applicant)

Contact Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

The following contact information is for the agencies involved in this Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory environmental review process. Please read this entire receipt carefully as it contains instructions for how to contact these agencies for further review of this particular project.

US Fish and Wildlife Service.
Endangered Species Biologist
315 South Allen Street,Suite 322.
State College, PA 16801

Ecological Services Section
Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
Bureau of Forestry
P.O. Box 8552
Harrisburg, PA 17105-8552
Review Coordinator: (717) 772-0258
FAX Number: (717) 772-0271

Natural Diversity Section
Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission
Division of Environmental Services
450 Robinson Lane
Bellefonte, PA 16823
FAX Number: (814) 359-5175

 APPLICANT INITIALS: _____

PNDI # 20051128012133 USFWS Project # 2006-0573

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

315 South Allen Street, Suite 322, State College, PA 16801

This responds to your inquiry about a PNDI Internet Database search that resulted in a potential conflict with a federally listed, proposed or candidate species.

PROJECT LOCATION INFORMATION

County: MONTGOMERY

Township: NORRISTOWN

Quad: NORRISTOWN

MISC INFORMATION

Date of PNDI search: 11-28-05

Date received by FWS: 12-15-05

Project Type (FWS code #): NT -

Status: ☑ IC ☐ IP FA: ☐ none ☑ UND ☐

Fax #: 484-533-2579

Affiliation: A.D. MARBLE CO.

USFWS COMMENTS ☑ FAXED ☐ MAILED

To: GINA TARAMOSA

SPECIFIC PROJECT: LAFAYETTE STREET ROAD USE ACCESS

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE COMMENT(s):

_√_ ***NOT LIKELY TO ADVERSELY AFFECT***

The federally listed BOG TURTLE occurs or may occur in or near the project area. However, based on our review of the information provided, including the project description and location (_____), no adverse effects to this species are likely to occur. If there is any change in the location, scale, scope, layout or design of the project, further consultation or coordination with the Service will be necessary.

___ This response supersedes our comments of _____, based on our review of the additional project information that was submitted to us on _____.

The above determination is valid for two years from the date of this letter. In addition, this response relates only to federally listed, proposed, and candidate species under our jurisdiction, based on an office review of the proposed project's location and anticipated impacts. No field inspection of the project area has been conducted by this office. Consequently, comments on this form are not to be construed as addressing other Service concerns under the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act or other authorities. *Please reference the above PNDI # and USFWS Project # in any future correspondence regarding this project.*

This review was conducted by the biologist listed below. He/she can be contacted at 814-234-4090.

___ Jennifer Dombroskie (x 242) ___ Bonnie Dershem (x 234) ___ Robert Anderson (x 228)

_√_ Pamela Shellenberger (x241)

SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: 1-6-06

Supervisor, Pennsylvania Field Office

Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission

established 1866

Division of Environmental Services
Natural Diversity Section
450 Robinson Lane
Bellefonte, PA 16823-9620
(814) 359-5237 Fax: (814) 359-5175

January 10, 2006

IN REPLY REFER TO
SIR #21536

A.D. MARBLE & COMPANY
GINA TARTAMOSA
375 EAST ELM STREET, SUITE 200
CONSHOHOCKEN, PA 19428

Re: Species Impact Review - Rare, Threatened And Endangered Species – SIR #21536
LAFAYETTE STREEt LAND USE ACCESS STUDY
Borough of Norristown and Plymouth Township, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania

Dear Ms. Tartamosa:

The staff of the Natural Diversity Section has examined the project narrative and map accompanying your recent correspondence, which shows the location of the above referenced project. Based on records maintained in the Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory (PNDI) database and Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission files, the following rare or protected species is known from the vicinity of the project site:

Common Name	Scientific Name	PA Status
Red-bellied turtle	*Pseudemys rubriventris*	threatened

The red-bellied turtle is one of Pennsylvania's largest native aquatic turtles. This turtle species is known to inhabit relatively large, deep streams, rivers, ponds, lakes, and marshes with permanent water and ample basking sites. Red-bellied turtles are restricted to the southcentral and southeastern regions of the Commonwealth. The existence of this turtle species is threatened by habitat destruction, poor water quality and competition with aggressive non-native turtle species that share its range and habitat (e.g. red-eared slider, *Trachemys scripta elegans*).

Based on the review of this information and the proximity of the project to known element occurrences of the red-bellied turtle, potential habitat or nesting areas for the red-bellied turtle could be present within the proposed disturbance area. Therefore, additional evaluations are necessary to confirm whether or not the project site contains red-bellied turtle habitat and to determine the potential for adverse impacts to this species. We request completion of a biological survey to determine presence/absence of potential red-bellied turtle habitat and/or nesting habitat at the proposed project area.

The red-bellied turtle habitat/nesting habitat survey should include a search for habitat and nesting areas within 1000 feet of large, deep streams, rivers, ponds, lakes and wetlands with permanent water as well as the proposed project area. Note that the period from mid-May through July is the usual nesting time for the species. Although the red-bellied turtle nesting survey must include the aforementioned search areas at a

minimum, additional areas should be surveyed at the discretion of the surveyor based upon field observations of likely habitat.

A qualified biologist, who possesses the necessary Scientific Collector's Permit issued by the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, must conduct this habitat/nesting habitat survey. A list of biologists recognized as qualified by the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission to perform red-bellied turtle surveys is enclosed.

Following completion of the survey, a report of the qualified red-bellied turtle biologist's observations and conclusions must be submitted to this office for further review and consultation. At a minimum the report should include the following information:

- Dates and times (start and end, plus total elapsed) of all site visits
- Weather conditions (including starting and ending air temperatures)
- Search time spent per acre per visit
- A description of the survey methodology – in cluding acreage searched, dates and hours per day of search effort
- An explanation of which waterways/wetlands/uplands or portions of waterways/wetlands/uplands were or were not surveyed and why
- Names and brief summary of the qualifications for all surveyors (leader and assistants)
- Presence or absence of red-bellied turtles
- Exact number and location (latitude/longitude coordinates) for all red-bellied turtles and nests observed
- A narrative description and color photographs (dated and keyed to a map) of where red-bellied turtles, habitat, or their nests were observed – i.e. w aterway name, stream characterization (width, depth, channel substrate composition, presence/absence of pools and in-stream basking sites, type and abundance of aquatic vegetation), type of basking structure, stream/wetland/upland, vegetation type, acreage, and for nesting areas the type of soil and percent canopy cover
- A list of other reptile and amphibian species, and the number of each, observed on-site
- A site map with all herpetofauna sightings – includin g red-bellied turtles – ann otated.

If the presence of red-bellied turtles, red-bellied turtle habitat and/or their nesting areas is confirmed within or near the project area, then additional consultation with this office (Natural Diversity Section) will be necessary.

Please contact Bob Morgan at 814-359-5129 if you have questions regarding this response. In any future correspondence with us regarding this specific project, please **refer to the SIR tracking number** indicated above. Thank you for your cooperation and attention to this matter of threatened and endangered species conservation.

Sincerely,

Christopher A. Urban, Chief
Natural Diversity Section

CAU/

Enclosures: 1
Cc: DEP SE Region, PFBC SE Region Law Enforcement Officer

PENNSYLVANIA FISH & BOAT COMMISSION
Division of Environmental Services
Natural Diversity Section
450 Robinson Lane
Bellefonte, PA 16823-9620

QUALIFIED RED-BELLIED TURTLE BIOLOGISTS

The following list includes persons known to the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission whom possess skills and have experience in properly searching for and finding red-bellied turtles (*Pseudemys rubriventris*) and in identifying their critical habitat. This information is not to be construed as an endorsement of individuals or firms by the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission or any of its employees. Persons not on this list but who have documented experience in conducting scientific studies of, or successful searches for, red-bellied turtles and their critical habitat may submit their qualifications to the Natural Diversity Section for review and possible inclusion as a recognized biologist/surveyor. Each person added to or deleted from this list shall be at the sole discretion of the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission. This list is subject to revision at any time without prior notice. Any individuals handling, collecting, or otherwise removing red-bellied turtles from their natural habitat, even if on a temporary basis for relocation, must first obtain a Scientific Collector's Permit from the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission. All permitted collector's encounters with red-bellied turtles must be reported in writing to the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission's Natural Diversity Section.

Dr. Rudolf G. Arndt
Richard Stockton College of New Jersey
Jim Leeds Road, P.O. Box 195
Pomona, NJ 08240-0195
(609) 652-4432

Mr. Gian Rocco, Ph.D. Candidate
509 Orlando Avenue
State College, PA 16803
(814) 237-2313
E-mail: gxr124@psu.edu

Mr. Scott E. Bush
Conestoga Rovers & Associates
Route 113
559 West Uwchlan Avenue, Suite 120
Exton, PA 19341
(610) 280-0277
FAX (610) 280-0278

Ms. Andrea M. Teti
ANDREA M. TETI, Inc.
31 Boulder Drive, Suite A
Sellersville, PA 18960
(215) 258-2862
Cell : (609) 457-1370
E-mail : AMT_Inc@comcast.net

Ms. Deborah Poppel
ENSR
2005 Cabot Boulevard West
Langhorne, PA 19047
(215) 757-4900
E-mail: dpoppel@ensr.com

Mr. Robert Zappalorti
Herpetological Associates, Inc.
575 Toms River Road
Jackson, NJ 08527
(732) 833-8600
E-mail: Rzappalort@aol.com

Mr. Marlin D. Corn
ANDREA M. TETI, Inc.
31 Boulder Drive, Suite A
Sellersville, PA 18960
(215) 258-2862
Cell : (215) 869-0482
E-mail: AMT_Inc@comcast.net

Mr. Donald F. Knorr
Conestoga Rovers & Associates
Route 113
559 West Uwchlan Ave., Suite 120
Exton, PA 19341
(610) 280-0277
FAX (610) 280-0278

B.5 References

Surface Water Resources:
Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR):
http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/wlhabitat/aquatic/streamdist.htm

Streams: McCormick Taylor, Inc. provided, derived from Pennsylvania DEP, Streams 305b 2004.
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Floodplain: Federal Emergency Management Agency, 1996 Montgomery County, PA.

Groundwater Resources:
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http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/topogeo/groundwater/PaGWIS/pagwishelp.htm

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U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service
Montgomery County, 2004 (GIS dataset)
Soil Survey of Montgomery County, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1967

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PNDI Environmental Review Tool, http://www.naturalheritage.state.pa.us/

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Hazardous Waste Sites (dataset):InfoMap Technologies. November 2005
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http://www.pasitefinder.state.pa.us/home.asp (August 2003)

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Highway Traffic Noise in the United States, Problem and Response by U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration, April 2000

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http://factfinder.census.gov/home

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Zoning:
Montgomery County Planning Commission provided, derived from zoning created by each municipality (Norristown, December 2000; Plymouth, March 1975)
Redevelopment Area Plan for the Riverfront Redevelopment Area, Borough of Norristown, Montgomery County, PA, Last Revised 2002. Boundaries from Appendix E: "Unified Development Overlay District, Article XXXIV of the Norristown Borough Zoning Ordinance."

C. Appendix C – Land Use Matrix of Previous Studies

Scoring of Proposed Land Use Recommendations from Existing Planning Studies Against the Current Study Goals

	Redevelopment Area Plan for the Riverfront Redevelopment Area													
	Upland 1	**Riverfront 1**	**Upland 2**	**Riverfront 2**			**Upland 3**	**Riverfront 3**		**Upland 4**			**Riverfront 4**	
Proposed Land Use	Open Space	Open Space	Parking Lot (existing)	Open Space	Residential	Parking Lot	Transportation Center (exist)	Office	Parking Lot	Convention Center	Entertainment	Open Space	Office	Parking Lot
Study Goals														
Improve traffic circulation by accommodating local and regional traffic	2	2	3	2	2	2	3	2	2	1	1	3	2	2
Increase on-street and off-street parking along Lafayette Street	2	2	3	2	2	3	3	2	3	1	2	2	2	3
Transform Lafayette Street into a walkable, tree-lined street	3	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Provide active/passive waterfront recreation opportunities	3	3	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	1	2
Create physical and visual access to the waterfront	3	3	2	3	2	1	2	2	1	1	2	3	1	1
Generate new economic activity including residential/office development	2	2	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	3	3	2	3	1
Preserve the first 100 feet of the waterfront for public access/space	3	3	2	3	2	2	2	3	3	2	2	2	1	1
Total	18	17	15	17	15	13	15	16	14	12	14	17	12	12

KEY

1 Conflicts

2 Neutral/Moderate

3 Supports

This matrix shows the specific proposed land use recommendations from two of the previous planning studies for the study area.

Each land use proposed has been assigned a score based on its compatibility with the goals of the current study.

Scoring of Proposed Land Use Recommendations from Existing Planning Studies Against the Current Study Goals

Redevelopment Area Plan for the Riverfront Redevelopment Area

Upland 5			Riverfront 5		Upland 6			Riverfront 6		Upland 7	Riverfront 7		Riverfront 8
Retail	Restaurant	Parking Lot	Office	Parking Lot	Retail	Restaurant	Open Space	Entertainment Complex	Parking Garage	N/A	Open Space	Parking Lot	N/A
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	3		2	3	
2	2	3	2	3	2	2	2	2	2		2	2	
3	3	2	2	2	3	3	2	2	2		2	2	
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2		3	2	
2	2	1	2	1	2	2	2	2	1		3	2	
3	3	1	3	1	3	3	1	3	1		1	1	
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2		3	2	
16	16	13	15	13	16	16	13	14	13	0	16	14	0

This matrix shows the specific proposed land use recommendations from two of the previous planning studies for the study area.

Each land use proposed has been assigned a score based on its compatibility with the goals of the current study.

Scoring of Proposed Land Use Recommendations from Existing Planning Studies Against the Current Study Goals

Norristown Economic Revitalization Strategy												
Upland 1	**Riverfront 1**	**Upland 2**		**Riverfront 2**	**Upland 3**		**Riverfront 3**			**Upland 4**	**Riverfront 4**	
Park	Park	Mixed Use	Office	Baseball Stadium	Transportation (existing)	Office	Parking Facility	Recreation District	Restaurant	Office	Skating Arena	Park
2	2	2	2	1	3	2	3	2	2	2	1	2
3	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
3	2	3	3	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2
3	3	2	2	1	2	2	2	3	2	2	3	3
3	3	2	2	2	2	2	1	3	3	2	2	2
2	2	3	3	3	2	3	1	3	3	3	3	1
2	2	3	3	3	2	3	1	3	3	3	3	1
3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	2	2	2
19	17	16	16	13	17	16	13	18	17	15	15	14

This matrix shows the specific proposed land use recommendations from two of the previous planning studies for the study area.

Each land use proposed has been assigned a score based on its compatibility with the goals of the current study.

D. Appendix D – Stakeholder Interview Reports

D.1 PECO

Attendees:

Leo Bagley	Montgomery County Planning Commission
Paul Jansson	Norristown Municipal Administrator
Jennifer Duval	Edwards and Kelcey
Mamie Lynch	Edwards and Kelcey
Bill Magee	PECO Senior Engineer, Transmission & Substations
Suzanne Ryan	PECO County Affairs Manager, Montgomery County
Rodney Stark	PECO Asset Manager, Land Assets, EED Real Estate & Facilities
Dennis Wilson	PECO Manager of Leasing & Sales, Real Estate & Facilities

I. Welcome and Introductions

Leo Bagley opened the meeting with a welcome and history of the study area. He stated that the goal is to build a full directional Turnpike extension that connects to Lafayette Street and eventually build a half interchange at the Dannehower Bridge. McCormick Taylor is the consultant working on the preliminary engineering, and they are hoping to have environmental clearance this spring. Leo shared the following schedule of construction:

- 2008-2009: begin rebuilding the existing Lafayette Street between Barbados and Ford street
- 2010: begin extending Lafayette Street to Conshohocken Road and begin construction of the Turnpike interchange
- 2012: complete the Turnpike interchange
- Mid-next decade: begin work on the Dannehower Bridge

Leo mentioned that we are conducting a similar interview with SEPTA because they also own parcels in the study area. He added that this land use study will determine the best use for this strip of land with two linear constrictions.

Leo stated that more off-street parking should be added as the road is widened towards to the river. The Schuylkill Valley Trail will be moving south towards the PECO poles, and the elevated portion of the trail will be coming down. Much of the railroad will also be removed. Leo added that SEPTA is building a 550 space parking garage and construction will begin this spring.

Suzanne Ryan questioned if there are any plans for the sewage treatment plant. Paul Jansson responded that the Norristown Borough Council has six goals for this year and one of them is to relocate the sewage treatment plant. He said that they may not relocate it to Barbados Island, but in order to be successful in the redevelopment efforts, it must be relocated somewhere.

Paul mentioned that the potential exists for buildings that are taller than the PECO power lines on both sides of the Dannehower Bridge. The poles are about 100 feet tall. He also asked if it is possible to paint the stacks on Barbados Island. Suzanne offered to put Paul in contact with the right person.

II. PECO Interview

Can you summarize the history of how and when PECO/Exelon obtained this property?

- Rodney offered that the pieces of land along the railroad tracks were acquired in the late 1960's/early 1970's.
- He added that the Swede Street piece was acquired in the 1920's. Prior to that, a predecessor electric company owned it.

What do you envision for the land you own? Are there any plans? Have you developed or disposed of similar parcels in other communities?

- According to Rodney's notes, the triangular piece of land in the southwest portion of the study area (west of 202) is just a PECO easement.
- The piece of land between the two 202s encompasses the PECO substation. The cost to move this facility is estimated at approximately five million dollars. The county needs to maintain waterfront access from this piece of land to the dam.
- PECO has an easement from Lafayette Street to Bridgeport along the strip of land that extends down from Ford Street.
- PECO needs to keep the triangular piece of land east of 276, because it houses some very restricted uses. Nothing other than open space is going to work on this piece. Dennis noted that he had met with Representative Harper regarding this piece of land.

Are you aware of any constraints to developing the land?

- Rodney told the group that PECO must maintain access to their facilities (towers and lines).
- Rodney reported that he doesn't think there are gas lines in this area.

- One constraint is the crash liability of building a bike/walking trail next to the poles. There are no hard and fast rules regarding crash liability, but design features are one solution.
- Bill stated that the power lines are 230 kV, and with enough clearance the following land uses could be considered for location underneath: green space, parking, small buildings (storage sheds). Bill estimated a 35 foot horizontal clearance requirement for construction near the power lines in order to prevent the lines from being blown into the building. This 35 foot estimate varies depending on the span between poles. Another concern is the electronic fields present under the lines. Bill added that construction issues exist because it is necessary to build without taking the power lines down.

Are you willing to sell or lease your land?

- Dennis stated that a lease is a possibility. If the land is being sold to build a road or something more permanent, a sale or easement is possible. Typically, PECO does not sell its right-of-way corridors.
- Leo mentioned that some PECO land will be needed to expand the road.

What is your corporate decision-making process for land disposition?

- Suzanne mentioned that an engineering review takes a minimum of four months.
- The first step is to field a request to Dennis and Rodney. Rodney is knowledgeable about acquisitions.
- The next step is to submit a proposal to Bill to see if there are restrictions or to get the "green light."
- The Real Estate Department ultimately decides if land will be leased, sold, or an easement granted.
- Dennis mentioned that plans for a trail must be approved by PECO and Montgomery County (John Woods). Leo added that a typical trail is now 12-14 feet wide, which is wider than trails used to be.

D.2 SEPTA

Attendees:

Bob Allman	SEPTA, Director of Transportation
Leo Bagley	Montgomery County Planning Commission
Leo Byrne	SEPTA – Supervisor, Transit Properties
Jennifer Duval	Edwards and Kelcey
Stan Kadish	SEPTA – Manager, Property Development
Ed LaGuardia	SEPTA – Assistant Chief Engineer, Bridges & Buildings
Mamie Lynch	Edwards and Kelcey
Gerald Maier	SEPTA – Director of Real Estate

I. Welcome and Introductions

Leo Bagley opened the meeting with a welcome and history of the study area. He stated that the goal of the existing Lafayette Street project is to build a full directional Turnpike extension that connects to Lafayette Street and eventually to build a half interchange at the Dannehower Bridge. McCormick Taylor is the consultant working on the preliminary engineering, and they are hoping to have environmental clearance this spring. Leo mentioned that Lafayette Street is and will continue to be a borough and township road; therefore it is not owned or maintained by PennDOT.

Leo continued that one of the purposes of the Lafayette Street Land Use Access Study is to improve access into, out of, and within the waterfront area. He also explained that the project involves widening Lafayette Street from Ford Street to DeKalb. This widening may involve SEPTA because of the proximity to SEPTA's land. He added that the Schuylkill Valley Trail will be moving south towards the PECO poles, and the elevated portion of the trail and the wall will be coming down. Leo said that one of the items this study will examine is whether or not the freight transfer station and Duff properties should stay where they currently lie. The freight station could become the park/trail headquarters or visitors center.

Leo mentioned that we are conducted a similar interview with PECO because they also own parcels in the study area.

II. SEPTA Interview

Can you summarize the history of how and when SEPTA obtained this property?

- Gerry Maier explained that SEPTA originally acquired the property from various sources as the Pennsylvania and Reading Railroads demised.
- The area along I-276, currently mapped as Pennsylvania Railroad Company ownership, is actually owned by Norfolk Southern.
- Gerry Maier stated that SEPTA owns a cube of space under the power lines near where the underpass is, but that the bridge is owned by PECO. He added that SEPTA cannot do anything other than what they are doing currently with their long strip of land.
- Leo Byrne stated that other railroads are basically out of the picture as far as ownership. The bike path is along the old Pennsylvania Railroad and SEPTA bought the old Reading Railroad.

What do you envision for the land you own? Are there any plans? Have you developed or disposed of similar parcels in other communities?

- Gerry stated that there are no firm plans for the temporary parking area located between Lafayette Street and Washington Street. If the land can be used for a public purpose that makes sense, SEPTA will work with the County.
- Gerry explained that SEPTA mostly owns right-of-way and parking, and they do not see any other possibilities for the station.
- Gerry stated that bids for a new parking lot and garage in the area will be prepared within the next few weeks. Jen Duval will coordinate with Leo Bagley to obtain more information on this plan.
- Gerry stated that SEPTA may need the surplus parking in the future, even after the new parking garage is built. SEPTA estimates that there may be demand for over 1,000 parking spaces if the Schuylkill Valley Metro is built. This parking could be used jointly with the County.
- Leo Bagley stated that the goal is to extend the R6 line to Route 422, and SEPTA agreed with this goal.
- Ed said that he does not think SEPTA currently uses the land near the river.

Are you aware of any constraints to developing the land?

- The group did not state any known constraints to developing the land.

Are you willing to sell or lease your land?

- Gerry Maier stated that it is easier to deal with another government agency rather than with individual landowners. As stated earlier, Gerry said that SEPTA would

be willing to work with the County to develop the land for a use that would benefit everyone involved.

What is your corporate decision-making process for land disposition?

- Leo Byrne explained that the best course of action is to start with this same group of SEPTA representatives who will work with Montgomery County and inform the County of what approvals are needed. This group can also provide a good feasibility test. The Board must approve all real estate transactions.

Is it possible to widen the track crossing at Ford Street?

- It is possible with enhanced gates and electronics.
- Gerry reported that the last at-grade crossing project cost $1 million, so it is an expensive project to undertake.

D.3 O'Neill Properties Group

ATTENDEES

Chris Galligan – O'Neill Properties Group
Brian Finnegan – O'Neill Properties Group
Caren Brown – O'Neill Properties Group
Summer Frederick – Montgomery County Planning Commission
Steve Nelson – Montgomery County Planning Commission
Jim Savard – O'Neill Properties Group
Keith Mullins – Edwards and Kelcey
Mamie Lynch – Edwards and Kelcey
Paul Jansson – Norristown Municipal Administrator

I. Welcome and Introductions

Keith began the meeting with a welcome and then described the limits and the purpose of the Lafayette Street Land Use Access Study. He explained that Edwards and Kelcey was tasked with evaluating the area's susceptibility to change, proposing land uses based on the UDO zoning, evaluating the Weitzmann and other studies, recommending access improvements, and performing stakeholder interviews with SEPTA, PECO, and O'Neill Properties Group.

Jim Savard asked if this study looked into the parking requirements of development, and Keith responded that while the land use recommendations include several proposed parking lot locations, a parking study was not completed under this study because more detailed information would be necessary to develop parking plans.

II. O'Neill Discussion

Keith asked a representative from O'Neill to explain which properties within the study area that they own. Caren Brown listed the following properties:

- 1210 Stanbridge Street
- 408 Cherry Street
- 29-33 West Main Street
- 500 East Washington Street – There are multiple tenants here now.
- 600 East Washington Street – This location, which falls within a Keystone Opportunity Zone (KOZ), is the current Nicolette site which will be demolished soon.

- 600 East Washington Street – This location, which falls within a Keystone Opportunity Zone (KOZ), is the current Nicolette site which will be demolished soon.
- 700 East Washington Street – This site currently is vacant.

Keith asked if O'Neill is interested in acquiring more properties in the area, and Caren responded that they are interested in continuing to develop in Norristown. She added that the relocation of the sewer plant and the planned Lafayette Street improvements provide the impetus for further development in the area, and O'Neill is working with Wallace, Roberts, and Todd to evaluate this potential development within Norristown.

Keith explained that this study evaluated the susceptibility to change of land throughout the study area. He explained that the proposed land uses need to justify the costs of acquisition. Also, he said that the study aimed to create some public space including an amphitheater, a scenic overlook, and an urban esplanade. Keith went on to explain that the pinnacle buildings displayed on the Land Use Recommendations map represent 10+ story buildings, and the infill buildings represent 4 to 5 story buildings.

Caren asked about the setbacks requirements, and Summer responded by explaining the analysis done regarding the floodplain and the floodway. She went on to discuss the zoning analysis that the Montgomery County Planning Commission performed. She explained that 6 pinnacle buildings are permitted within the UDO. She also discussed the public desire for access to the waterfront. In order to meet the public's request, this study recommends a public river walk. Also, to encourage successful redevelopment, the study recommends the development of an urban street network west of the Sawmill Run, and a pedestrian underpass on Mill Street, providing easy access to the water.

The group talked about the plans for the Nicolette building. Jim explained that O'Neill is thinking of creating office buildings at this site, and then possibly growing into a mixed use building. Paul responded by emphasizing the public pushback regarding commercial development. The public strongly requested residential/retail/commercial mixed-use development rather than the construction of office buildings, and Mamie offered to send Caren a link to the results of the public workshop indicating this public response. Jim responded by saying that there still needs to be an environmental study to see if the buildings are up to residential standards before residential development can be considered. There are two possible options that O'Neill must be prepared for: 1) if the whole plan works and 2) if the plan does not come to fruition fully. Jim then asked what the public and merchant preference regarding retail development is. He suggested that businesspeople along Main Street would be unhappy with retail development along the riverfront because it could detract from their business. Keith

explained that at the public workshops, people were in favor of the urban riverwalk, but the public workshop participants were mostly residents, not businesspeople from Main Street. Paul followed up this comment by explaining that as the transition occurs, merchants may leave Main Street for the riverwalk, but other businesses, such as kitchen outfitters, will remain on Main Street. The riverwalk will have an eclectic urban retail feel with restaurants and shops, while Main Street still will be able to thrive with different types of businesses. Summer emphasized the need to improve access to the river from Main Street in order to maintain economic success at both locations.

Paul updated the group on the opinions of other stakeholders. He stated that the school district is on board for the project, including the addition of residential development. Since the proposed development is not single-family homes, the schools will not be dramatically impacted by an increase in residential population. Also, he met with the sewer group which is using a 2.7 people/household estimate. He went on to explain that office development will have no economic impact on the community, especially in a KOZ. Jim responded by saying that office development will bring in money. Paul agreed that it is acceptable to develop offices if they have commercial uses on the first floor. However, developing office-only buildings will not make the best use of the space.

Caren asked how the work would be phased for the Turnpike Interchange project. Keith replied that the first phase of construction will take place from Barbados Street to Ford Street, the second phase will take place from Ford Street to the Dannehower Bridge, and the final phase will involve the replacement of the Dannehower Bridge, including ramp construction. Summer added that the Montgomery County Planning Commission plans to investigate this phasing in more depth soon. Paul provided a summary of the project's schedule by explaining that it would take one year to get political impetus for funding, one year for engineering of the sewer relocation, and three years to build the plant, for a total project length of approximately 5-7 years. Brian explained that O'Neill is working on a six month abating and demolition of the Nicolette property. The rest of the building development relies on planning and finding the tenants. Brian added that receiving Act 2 clearance also will be a factor in the building timing.

Paul explained that Norristown has been talking with Malcolm Pirnie about economic options as part of the study to move the sewer plants. He then asked if O'Neill would consider organizing a mutli-developer effort. Jim said that they have not worked as part of a multi-developer effort before, but it may be a possibility. They would need to discuss the option with Brian O'Neill. Paul said that they could either fight eminent domain or already have developers online with money. Paul indicated that other developers are prepared to join in this effort. Jim explained that in order to join such a group, they will need to understand the value of different properties first.

E. Appendix E – American Planning Association Model Mixed Use Zoning District Ordinance

4.1 MODEL MIXED-USE ZONING DISTRICT ORDINANCE

The following model zoning district provisions represent a commercial zoning classification that permits, rather than mandates, a vertical mix of commercial and residential uses within the same building. The district is intended to accommodate a physical pattern of development often found along village main streets and in neighborhood commercial areas of older cities.

Primary Smart Growth Principle Addressed: Mix land uses
Secondary Smart Growth Principle Addressed: Compact building design

CX1, Neighborhood Commercial, Mixed-Use District

101. Purpose

The purposes of the CX1, Neighborhood Commercial, Mixed-Use District are to:

(1) Accommodate mixed-use buildings with neighborhood-serving retail, service, and other uses on the ground floor and residential units above the nonresidential space;

(2) Encourage development that exhibits the physical design characteristics of pedestrian-oriented, storefront-style shopping streets; and

(3) Promote the health and well-being of residents by encouraging physical activity, alternative transportation, and greater social interaction.

102. Definitions

As used in this ordinance, the following words and terms shall have the meanings specified herein:

"Floor Area Ratio" means the ratio of a building's gross floor area to the area of the lot on which the building is located.

"Gross Floor Area" is the sum of the gross horizontal areas of all floors of a building measured from the exterior faces of the exterior walls or from the centerline of walls separating two buildings. Gross floor area does not include basements when at least one-half the floor-to-ceiling height is below grade, accessory parking (i.e., parking that is available on or off-site that is not part of the use's minimum parking standard), attic space having a floor-to-ceiling height less than seven feet, exterior balconies, uncovered steps, or inner courts.

"Mixed-use Building" means a building that contains at least one floor devoted to allowed nonresidential uses and at least one devoted to allowed residential uses.

103. Allowed Uses

Uses are allowed in "CX1" zoning districts in accordance with the use table of this section.

USE GROUP	Zoning District
Use Category	**CX1**
Specific Use Type	
P= permitted by-right C = conditional use N = Not allowed	

USE GROUP	Zoning District
Use Category	**CX1**
Specific Use Type	
P= permitted by-right C = conditional use N = Not allowed	
RESIDENTIAL	
Household Living	
Artist Live/Work Space located above the ground floor	P
Artist Live/Work Space, ground floor	C
Dwelling Units located above the ground floor	P
Detached House	C
Multiunit (3+ units) Residential	C
Single-Room Occupancy	C
Townhouse	C
Two-Flat	C
Group Living	
Assisted Living	C
Group Home	P
Nursing Home	C
Temporary Overnight Shelter	C
Transitional Residences	C
Transitional Shelters	C
PUBLIC AND CIVIC	
Colleges and Universities	P
Cultural Exhibits and Libraries	P
Day Care	P
Hospital	N
Lodge or Private Club	N
Parks and Recreation	P
Postal Service	P
Public Safety Services	P
Religious Assembly	P
School	C
Utilities and Services, Minor	P
Utilities and Services, Major	C
COMMERCIAL	
Adult Use	N
Animal Services	
Shelter/Boarding Kennel	N
Sales and Grooming	P
Veterinary	P
Artist Work or Sales Space	P
Drive-Through Facility [See comment]	C
Eating and Drinking Establishments	
Restaurant	P

USE GROUP	Zoning District
Use Category	**CX1**
Specific Use Type	
P= permitted by-right C = conditional use N = Not allowed	
Tavern	C
Entertainment and Spectator Sports	
Small (1–149 seats)	P
Medium (150–999 seats)	N
Large (1,000+ seats)	N
Financial Services	P
Food and Beverage Retail Sales	P
Gas Stations	N
Lodging	
Small (1–16 guest rooms)	P
Large (17+ guest rooms)	C
Medical Service	P
Office	P
Parking, Commercial (Nonaccessory)	C
Personal Service, including health clubs and gyms	P
Repair Service, Consumer, including bicycles	P
Residential Storage Warehouse	N
Retail Sales, General	P
Vehicle Sales, Service, and Repair	N
INDUSTRIAL	
Manufacturing, Production and Industrial Services	
Artisan (hand-tools only; e.g., jewelry or ceramics)	C
OTHER	
Wireless Communication Facilities	
Co-located	P
Freestanding (Towers)	C

Comment: *This use table should be refined to reflect local characteristics and planning objectives. The range of uses allowed should be kept as broad as possible in order to ensure that the district is economically viable. Note that this model allows, as a conditional use, drive-through facilities. Drive-through facilities may be appropriate in such areas in connection with banks and pharmacies. Whether to allow them is a policy choice, no different than other policy choices in selecting permitted uses. Also keep in mind that in buildings with residential units, commercial use issues will be largely self-policing because owner associations and builder/developers will ensure that commercial uses in mixed-use buildings will be compatible with upper-story residential uses.*

104. Commercial Establishment Size Limits

The gross floor area of commercial establishments in the CX1 district shall not exceed [15,000] square feet.

Comment: *Floor area limits are proposed in the model ordinance to help ensure that allowed commercial uses would be geared toward a neighborhood market area. Some local ordinances impose much more restrictive floor area limits in neighborhood-oriented districts. The limit proposed in this model ordinance would accommodate a modern drug store. If floor area limits are employed, the standards should not be so restrictive as to hamper the economic viability of the district.*

105. Indoor/Outdoor Operations

All permitted uses in the CX1 district must be conducted within completely enclosed buildings unless otherwise expressly authorized. This requirement does not apply to off-street parking or loading areas, automated teller machines, or outdoor seating areas.

106. Floor-to-Floor Heights and Floor Area of Ground-floor Space

(1) All commercial floor space provided on the ground floor of a mixed-use building must have a minimum floor-to-ceiling height of [11] feet.

(2) All commercial floor space provided on the ground floor of a mixed-use building must contain the following minimum floor area:

(a) At least [800] square feet or [25] percent of the lot area (whichever is greater) on lots with street frontage of less than [50] feet; or

(b) at least 20 percent of the lot area on lots with [50] feet of street frontage or more.

Comment: *In areas with strong residential real estate markets, ground-floor space is sometimes viewed as an afterthought, particularly when developed by those with a poor understanding of mixed-use development. These types of provisions can help ensure that ground-floor space will meet the needs of future retailers and not sit vacant for years after upper-floor residential units have been leased or sold.*

107. Lot Area per Unit (Density)

The minimum lot area per dwelling unit shall be [1,000] square feet for mixed-use buildings and [1,500] square feet for all other buildings.

Comment: *If mixed-use buildings are desired, such buildings should be rewarded with more flexible development standards. The model ordinance allows higher residential densities in mixed-use buildings than it does in single-use buildings.*

108. Floor Area Ratio

The maximum FAR shall be [2.0] for mixed-use buildings and [1.25] for all other buildings.

Comment: *To encourage mixed-use buildings, the model ordinance allows higher FARs for mixed-use projects.*

109. Setbacks

(1) The entire building façade must abut front and street side property lines or be located within [10] feet of such property lines.

Comment: *Rather than mandating a zero-foot "build-to" line for all properties in CX1 zoning districts, this model offers flexibility to accommodate shallow building setbacks that are sometimes necessary to accommodate features such as outdoor seating/display areas, stoops and sidewalk widening. Alternately, it is possible for the ordinance to establish a formula to determine setbacks based on the average setback of buildings in a block face. For an example of this, see Section 108 of the Model Town Center Ordinance (below).*

(2) The minimum rear setback is [*0–30*] percent of the lot depth.

Comment: *The appropriate minimum building setback will depend on lot and development patterns in the area. When alleys abut the rear of CX1 lots, no rear setback may be necessary, except perhaps for upper floors. On the other hand, when CX1-zoned lots will abut the rear property line of residential lots, buildings in the CX1 district should be set back from rear property lines in order to protect the privacy and open feeling expected within residential rear yards.*

(3) No interior side setbacks are required in the CX1 district, except when CX1-zoned property abuts R-zoned property, in which case the minimum side setback required in the CX1 district shall be the same as required for a residential use on the abutting R-zoned lot.

Comment: *Most pedestrian-oriented shopping streets are lined with buildings that span the entire width of the lot. The standard proposed here will help reinforce that pattern, while also ensuring that if a CX1 district abuts a residential zoning district, a "typical" residential side yard will be provided.*

110. Building Height

The maximum building height shall be [*38–50*] feet for mixed-use buildings and [*35–47*] feet for all other buildings.

Comment: *Some communities will want to regulate height by stories rather than feet above grade, since stories will allow for greater flexibility in building design. The standards proposed allow greater height for mixed-use buildings than for single-use buildings because mixed-use buildings are required to have taller floor-to-ceiling heights on the ground floor. The proposed standards will accommodate three- or four-story buildings.*

111. Off-Street Parking

(1) [Insert off-street parking standards]

(2) No off-street parking is required for nonresidential uses in CX1 districts unless such uses exceed [3,000] square feet of gross floor area, in which case off-street parking must be provided for the floor area in excess of [3,000] square feet.

Comment: *Paragraph (2) may be incorporated into paragraph (1). Exempting small retail businesses from compliance with off-street parking requirements will help promote pedestrian-oriented character and encourage use/reuse of storefront retail space. Communities should also*

examine off-street parking ratios with an eye toward reducing the amount of off-street parking required overall and encouraging shared and off-site parking arrangements.

(3) Off-street parking spaces must be located to the rear of the principal building or otherwise screened so as to not be visible from public right-of-way or residential zoning districts.

112. Transparency

(1) A minimum of [*60–75*] percent of the street-facing building façade between two feet and eight feet in height must be comprised of clear windows that allow views of indoor space or product display areas.

(2) The bottom of any window or product display window used to satisfy the transparency standard of paragraph (1) above may not be more than [*3–4.5*] feet above the adjacent sidewalk.

(3) Product display windows used to satisfy these requirements must have a minimum height of [4] feet and be internally lighted.

113. Doors and Entrances

(1) Buildings must have a primary entrance door facing a public sidewalk. Entrances at building corners may be used to satisfy this requirement.

(2) Building entrances may include doors to individual shops or businesses, lobby entrances, entrances to pedestrian-oriented plazas, or courtyard entrances to a cluster of shops or businesses.

Comment: *Requiring ground-floor windows and sidewalk-facing entrances help make for a more pleasing pedestrian environment.*

114. Vehicle and Driveway Access

No curb cuts are allowed for lots that abut alleys.

Comment: *Driveways that cross sidewalks disrupt pedestrian movements and pose safety threats. They should be the rare exception in neighborhood-oriented mixed-use districts.*

References

Denver, Colorado, City of. Div. 15. Mixed-Use Districts, Sections 59-301--59-320, website [accessed November 5, 2004]: www.municode.com/resources/gateway.asp?pid=10257&sid=6

Fort Worth, Texas, City of. Zoning Code, Mixed Use Sections 4.902, Low-Density Mixed Use [accessed November 5, 2004]: www.fortworthgov.org/csec/disclaimer.asp

Maryland, State of. Infill Development Model [accessed November 5, 2004]: www.mdp.state.md.us/mgs/infill/InfillFinal_1.pdf

Orland, Florida, City of. Southeast Orlando Sector Plan Development Guidelines and Standards [accessed November 5, 2004]: www.cityoforlando.net/planning/deptpage/sesp/sespguid.htm

F. Appendix F – General Driveway Requirements

The requirements for access along collectors and local roads must follow the Pennsylvania Code.

1. GENERAL DRIVEWAY REQUIREMENTS IN THE PENNSYLVANIA CODE

Driveways shall be located, designed, constructed and maintained in such a manner as not to interfere or be inconsistent with the design, maintenance and drainage of the highway. The number and location of driveways, which may be granted, will be based on usage, interior and exterior travel patterns, and current design policy of PENNDOT.

1) Normally, only one driveway will be permitted for a residential property and not more than two driveways will be permitted for a nonresidential property.
2) If the property frontage exceeds 600 feet, the permit may authorize an additional driveway.
3) Regardless of frontage, a development may be restricted to a single entrance/exit driveway, served by an internal collector road separated form the traveled way.

2. DRIVEWAY DESIGN REQUIREMENTS IN THE PENNSYLVANIA CODE

The ability of a driveway to safely and efficiently function as an integral component of a highway system requires that its design and construction be based on the amount and type of traffic that it is expected to serve and the type and character of roadway which it accesses. Chapter 441 separates driveways into four classifications, based on the amount of traffic they are expected to serve. A description of each classification and typical examples of land uses normally associated with each follows:

1) Minimum use driveway (Figure 5.3). A driveway normally not used by more than 25 vehicles per day, such as:
   - Single family dwellings, duplex houses; or
   - Apartments with five units or less.

2) Low volume driveway (Figure 5.4). A driveway normally used by more than 25 vehicles per day but less than 750 vehicles per day, such as:
   - Office buildings;
   - Elementary and junior high schools; or
   - Car washes

3) Medium volume driveway (Figure 5.5). A driveway normally used by more than 750 vehicles but less than 1,500 vehicles per day, which normally does not require traffic signalization, such as:
   - Motels;
   - Fast food restaurants; or
   - Service stations and small shopping centers or plazas.

4) High volume driveway (Figure 5.6). A driveway normally used by more than 1,500 vehicles per day, which often requires traffic signalization, such as:
   - Large shopping centers; or
   - Multi-building apartment or office complexes.

Driveways Adjacent to Intersections

Driveways serving properties adjacent to a highway intersection shall be subject to the following:

1) There shall be a minimum ten foot tangent distance between the intersecting highway radius and the radius of the first permitted driveway.
2) The distance from the edge of pavement of the intersecting highway to the radius of the first permitted driveway shall be minimum of 20 feet on curbed highways and 30 feet on uncurbed highways.

Multiple Driveways

Multiple driveways serving the same property must be separated by a minimum distance of 15 feet measured along the right-of-way line and 20 feet measured along the shoulder, ditch line, or curb. When the distance between multiple driveways is 50 feet or less measured along the shoulder or ditch line, the area shall be clearly defined by permanent curbing. This curb shall be placed in line with existing curb or two feet back of the shoulder or ditch line on uncurbed highways. It shall be extended around the driveway radii to the right-of-way line.

Curbing

Requirements for curbing shall conform to with the following:

1) The highway occupancy permit may require the installation of curbing wherever it is required to control access or drainage, or both.
2) Wherever property abutting the right-of-way line could be used as parking area, the permit may require curbing, permanent guide rail, or fencing to be

constructed along the right-of-way line in order to prohibit vehicle encroachment upon the sidewalk or shoulder area.

3) If, in the opinion of PENNDOT, there is a high probability that vehicles would otherwise utilize a portion of the property frontage other than the approved driveway to gain access to the property, the permit may require curbing or other physical barriers to be constructed.