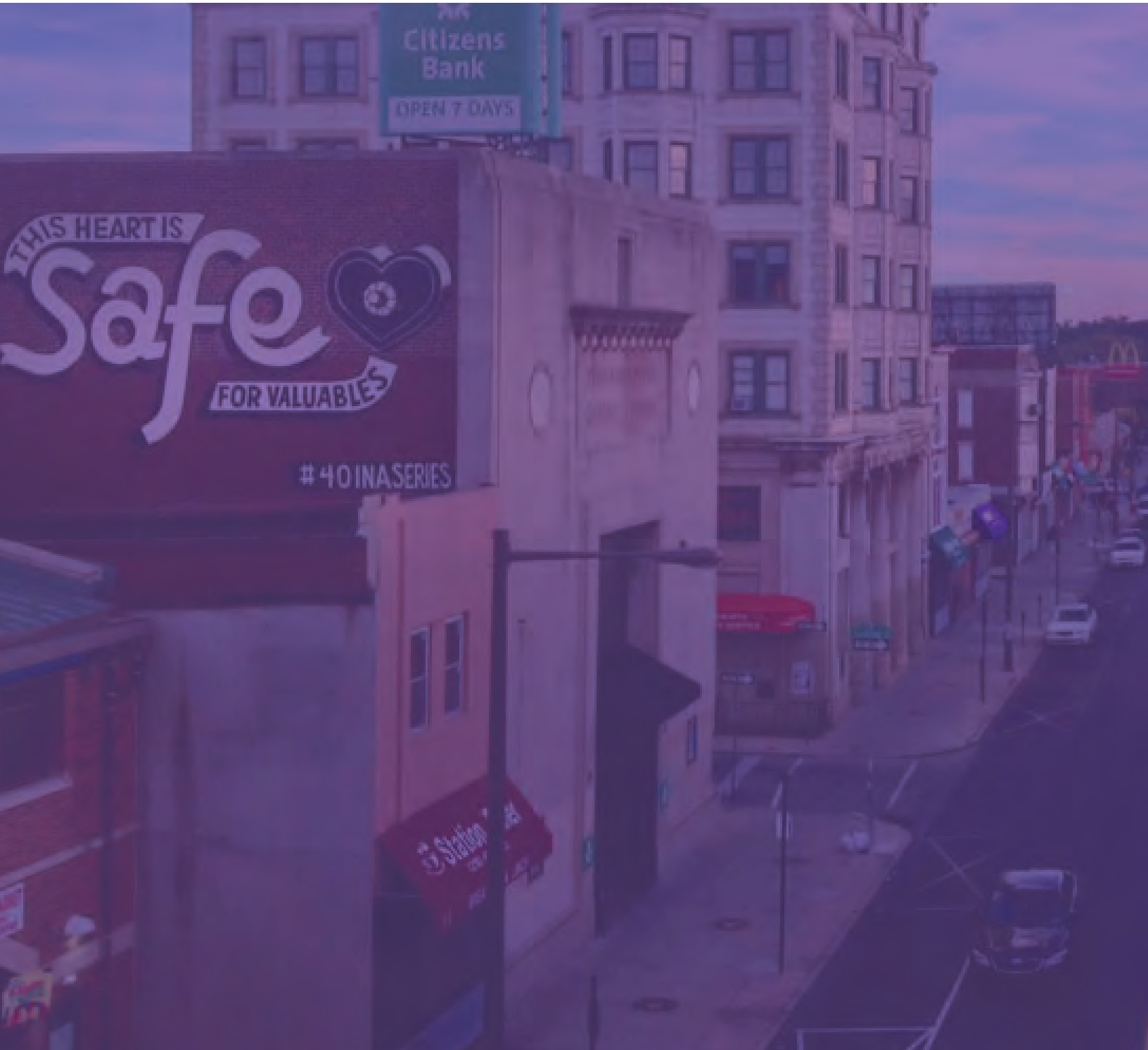


# FIVE-YEAR ACTION PLAN



## 52ND STREET COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR



# Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge the support we received from The Enterprise Center – and to especially thank **Daria Williams** and **Jamar Smith**, who met with our team throughout the semester to give us tours, answer our questions, and work with us to come up with implementable action items for the 52nd Street Commercial Corridor. We thank them for their time, support, and advice. We would also like to thank **Avanti Krovi** at the Nowak Metro Finance Lab and **Jennie Nam** at the Philadelphia Department of Commerce for meeting with us and teaching us about 52nd Street. Finally, we would like to thank our instructor, **Claire Jaffe**, for her mentorship and guidance over the course of the semester. The creation of this plan could not have been possible without Claire’s instruction and expertise.

## Project Team

Suzie Kazar | Frances Murray | Emmy Park | Alec Pompeo | Shihang Yan | Yang Yang | Chenxi Zhu



# Why this Plan?

The **52nd Street Commercial Corridor 5-Year Action Plan** was created to fulfill two main purposes:

1. To rebuild community trust in planners and local authorities
2. To supplement the existing plans from The Enterprise Center and the City of Philadelphia.

The residents, visitors, and business interests of 52nd Street have been promised a revitalized Commercial Corridor for decades, but have seen few real results. The implementation of existing plans from The Enterprise Center and the City of Philadelphia are in the works, but, given their scale, it may be years before the plans are fully carried out. The goal of this Action Plan is to identify strategies that can be accomplished in five or fewer years to build community capacity and show that positive changes along the Corridor are possible.



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# EXISTING CONDITIONS





# INTRODUCTION

## 52ND STREET AT A GLANCE

The 52nd Street Commercial Corridor is West Philadelphia’s Main Street, a once-vibrant economic center now facing challenges from cycles of disinvestment and the structural consequences that follow. However, this area is poised for a resurgence – with new investments, prime local assets, and dedicated community groups all working towards its revitalization.

The Corridor is confronting creeping development from University City, threatening the ability of the existing communities to stay in their homes. At the same time, the Corridor has ample opportunities for new and existing shops and residents.

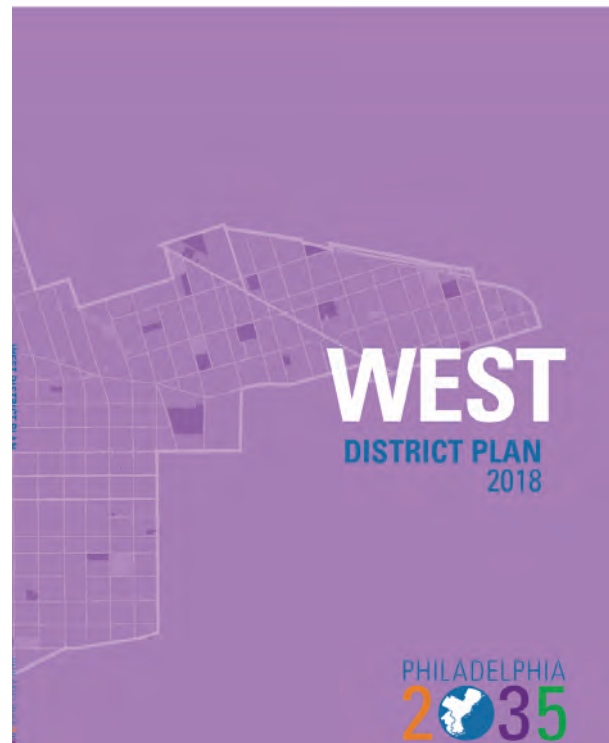
### Planning Context

The 52nd Street Commercial Corridor and the study area have undergone numerous previous planning exercises. This includes, among others, the City of Philadelphia’s 1964 West Philadelphia District Plan, its 2018 West District Plan, the Walk 52nd Traffic Safety and Streetscape Study, and, most recently, the 52nd Street Investment Playbook created by the local Community Development Corporation, The Enterprise Center (TEC), in partnership with Drexel University’s Nowak Metro Finance Lab and the Philadelphia Equity Alliance. The Vision Zero Action Plan 2025 and the Philly Tree Plan also cover the area.

#### *West District Plan 2018*

The West District Plan is the City of Philadelphia’s plan for West Philadelphia, which has 52nd Street at its heart. This plan seeks to maintain commercial corridors such as 52nd Street by strengthening neighborhood-oriented retail and developing vacant land. Coordination with SEPTA’s Trolley Modernization Program is centered as a way to improve connectivity, while traffic calming is proposed as a solution to traffic safety. Finally, this plan seeks to improve the sustainability of

West Philadelphia by improving green space and stormwater infrastructure. All of these ideas help create opportunities for the 52nd Street Commercial Corridor.



Cover of the Philadelphia 2035 West District Plan



## 52nd Street Investment Playbook

The 52nd Street Investment Playbook utilizes real estate acquisition, business development, community development, housing, and infrastructure investment. The goal is to revitalize the commercial corridor while protecting and promoting the local community. TEC is using its role as a local CDC to create a plan that works for the residents and businesses that are already on the Commercial Corridor. The Investment Playbook provides a basis for many of the goals and strategies laid out in this Action Plan, which provides short-term implementable goals related to the Playbook's long-term vision.

## Walk52nd Traffic Safety and Streetscape Study

The Walk52nd Traffic Safety and Streetscape Study (2020) was developed by JVM Studio, Sam Schwartz, and Drexel University's Lindy Institute for TEC. The overall goal of the plan is to make 52nd Street feel safe for all road users and deserving of its "Main Street of West Philadelphia" title. The recommendations provided include improvements to sidewalks, street trees, street lights, sidewalks, and more in order to improve the vibrancy and safety of 52nd Street and the surrounding roads.

## Vision Zero Action Plan 2025

The Vision Zero Action Plan 2025 was created by the City of Philadelphia's Office of Transportation, Infrastructure, and Sustainability (OTIS) in 2020. The plan outlines strategies and policies to reduce traffic fatalities, with the overall goal of achieving zero traffic deaths in Philadelphia by 2030.

## Philly Tree Plan

The Philly Tree Plan was released in 2023 and is the City's first-ever urban forest strategic plan. The document details a 10-year strategy to grow, protect, and care for the City's tree canopy in order to combat climate change. These strategies focus on improving tree planting and maintenance and developing a more tree-friendly culture.



Cover of the 52nd Street Investment Playbook

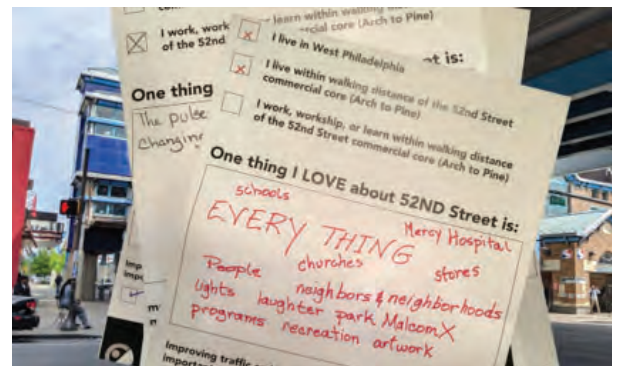
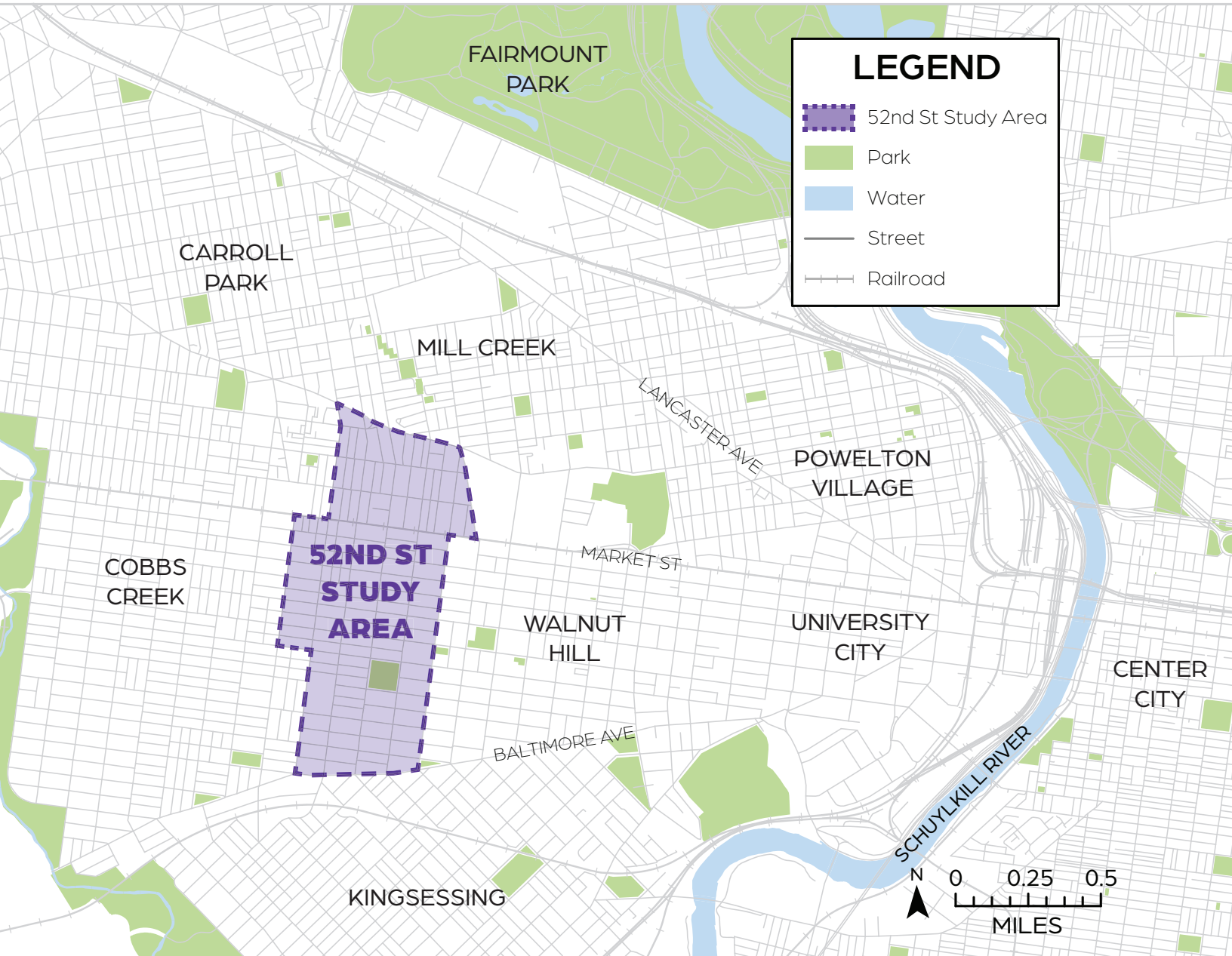


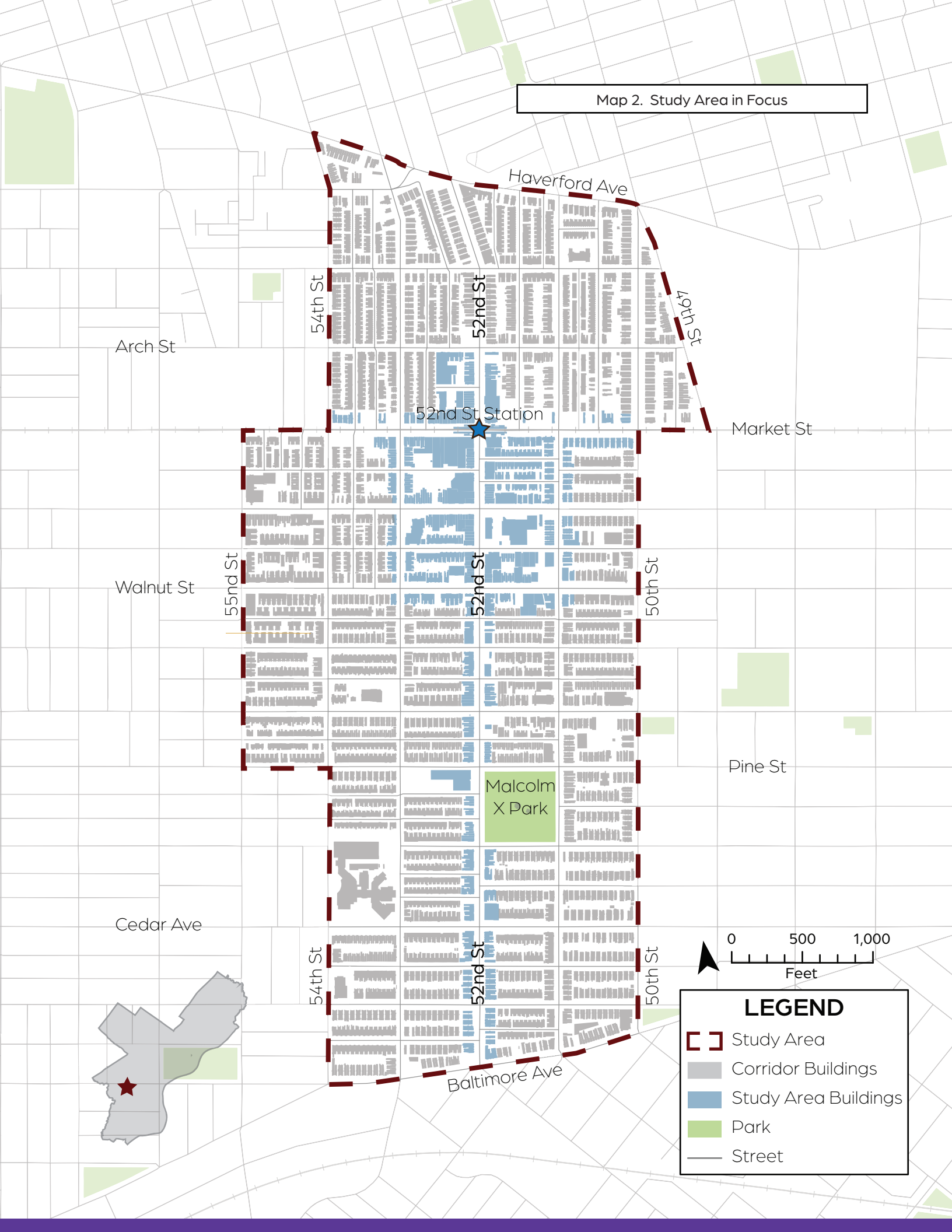
Photo from Walk 52nd Street

## Where is 52nd Street?

The 52nd Street Commercial Corridor is located in West Philadelphia, bounded by Haverford Avenue to the north and Baltimore Avenue to the south. For the purposes of this Action Plan, demographic and other related data was examined for all Census Tracts that encompass the Commercial Corridor – Census Tracts 80, 85, and 93. Throughout this document, this region will be referred to as the study area.



Map 2. Study Area in Focus



Arch St

Haverford Ave

54th St

52nd St

49th St

52nd St Station

Market St

Walnut St

55nd St

52nd St

50th St

Pine St

Malcolm X Park

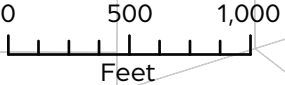
Cedar Ave

54th St

52nd St

50th St

Baltimore Ave



**LEGEND**

- Study Area
- Corridor Buildings
- Study Area Buildings
- Park
- Street



*Photo by Charles Fox for The Philadelphia Inquirer | Buildings on 52nd Street with first-floor commercial space and second-floor residential units*



*Photo by Stephen Ives | The nexus of West Philly's Main Street: under the el at 52nd & Market*

## Zoning

Approximately 53 percent of land along the 52nd Street Commercial Corridor is zoned for commercial mixed-use of varying densities and 46 percent is zoned for some sort of multi-unit residential building or attached and semi-detached houses. Commercial mixed-use is a zoning type that can apply to commercial districts, it is notable for allowing residential uses as well alongside commercial uses. The surrounding study area is primarily zoned for residential uses, with some lots zoned for commercial mixed-use.

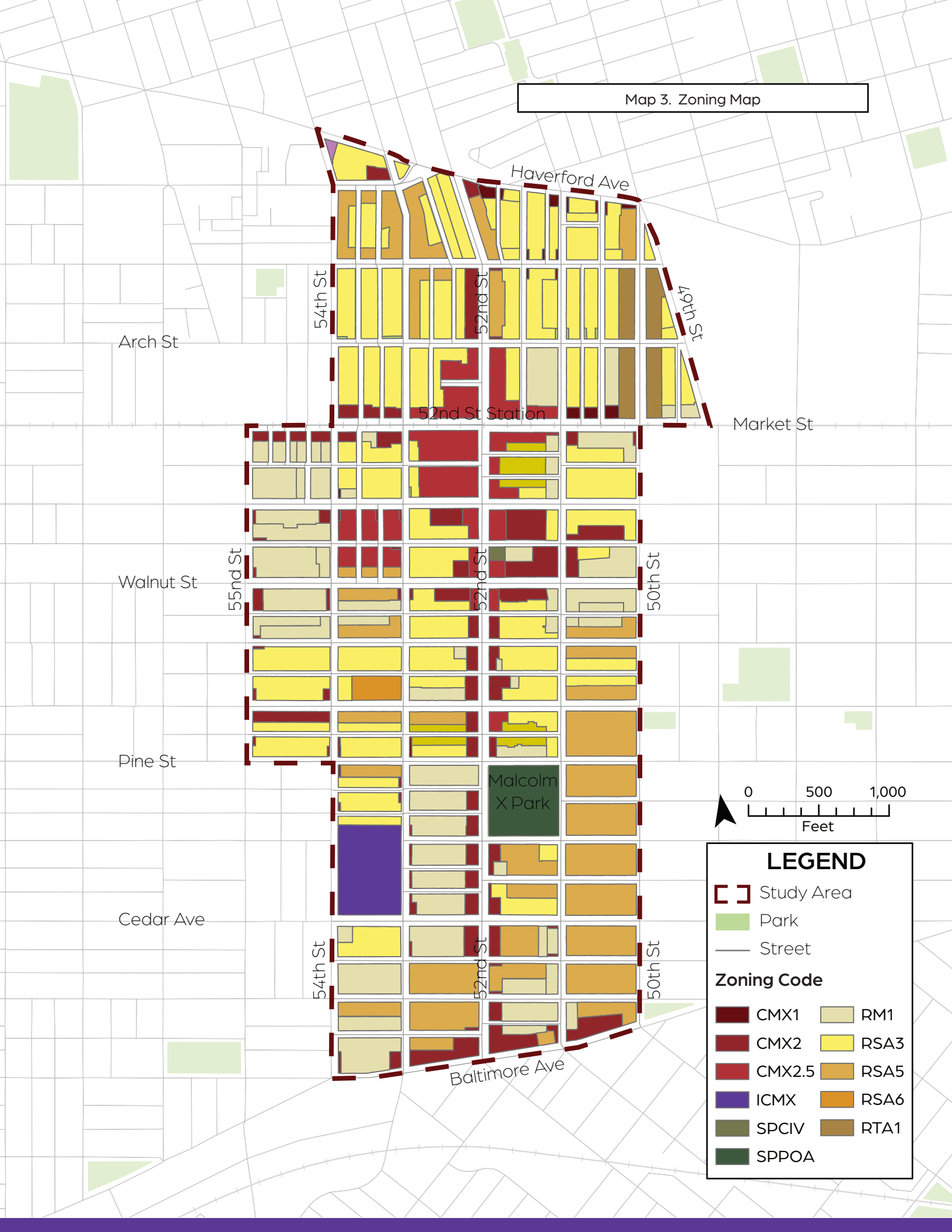
## Zoning Overlays

Land along the Commercial Corridor may also fall under an overlay zone, or a zoning district that adds additional requirements to the base zoning district.

One overlay is the Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Overlay District, which aims to encourage dense urban uses and alternative transportation methods near high ridership transit stops and is used within 500 feet of the 52nd Street Station of the Market-Frankford Line.

The second overlay is the Mixed-Income Neighborhoods (MIN) Overlay District, which is used to require between 15 and 20 percent affordable housing units on all developments of ten or more dwelling units.

Map 3. Zoning Map



**LEGEND**

- Study Area
- Park
- Street

**Zoning Code**

CMX1	RM1
CMX2	RSA3
CMX2.5	RSA5
ICMX	RSA6
SPCIV	RTA1
SPPOA	



# HISTORY

52nd Street, long known as "West Philly's Main Street" or "The Strip", has been the commercial hub of West Philadelphia since the early 1900s. The street rose to prominence as a hub for Black business and nightlife as the city expanded west. The stability of the street and neighborhood fluctuated throughout the 20th century, with each decade marked by declines and revivals of business and community.

## 1907

Residential and commercial developments sprung up around the new Market-Frankford Line ("the El"). The first neighborhood residents were primarily Jewish business owners who lived in apartments above their shops.



1900

1910

1920

## 1970s-1980s

Local government actors and non-profit organizations made efforts to restore the 52nd Street Commercial Corridor to its earlier prominence. The Corridor's distinctive red canopies were installed to give the urban area a suburban "mall-like" atmosphere.



1990

1980

## 1990s-2000s

Large-scale renovations to the El and 52nd Street Station ravaged life on the Corridor — businesses were forced to close, traffic was diverted, and vacancy rates soared. In 2007, the Philadelphia Inquirer named the corner at 52nd & Market Street the deadliest in the city.

2000

2010

## 2010s

Local and federal government-funded efforts, such as permanent stalls for sidewalk vendors and renovated storefronts, were introduced. By the end of decade, occupancy rates for storefronts rose to 80 percent — similar occupancy levels to Center City.





### 1930s–1950s

The 52nd Street Commercial Corridor became the center of culture and business for Black Philadelphians during the Great Migration from the South to the North. The Corridor gained cultural prominence for its iconic jazz venues, theaters, restaurants, clothing stores, and more.

1930

1940

1950

### 1960s–1970s

The 52nd Street Commercial Corridor began to decline. Urban renewal, a national program that aimed to address blight that often led to the displacement of low-income people and people of color, resulted in disinvestment along the Street and surrounding community. The once-famous venues and nightclubs shuttered their doors.

1970

1960



### 2020

The COVID-19 pandemic put a halt to all progress. Following the murder of George Floyd by police in Minneapolis, the 52nd Street Commercial Corridor became the center of protests and violent clashes between Philadelphians and local police forces. The resulting damage, both to physical structures and the community, devastated residents and businesses.

2020

### Current Day

Expansive government programs introduced a number of new funding opportunities for revitalization. Grants and other financing schemes from the federal government and local organizations like TEC have helped to keep stores in business while building the Corridor's resiliency.

Looking forward, this Action Plan will use 52nd Street's history of resilience as inspiration to revive the Corridor's backbone of small businesses and the arts through community empowerment.



# DEMOGRAPHICS

The study area is a major population hub of West Philadelphia, with a large number of densely clustered residents. These residents are majority Black, with this share significantly higher than the City of Philadelphia's, and face elevated levels of poverty and unemployment and earn considerably lower incomes than their peers citywide.

**Change in Population**  
2011-2021

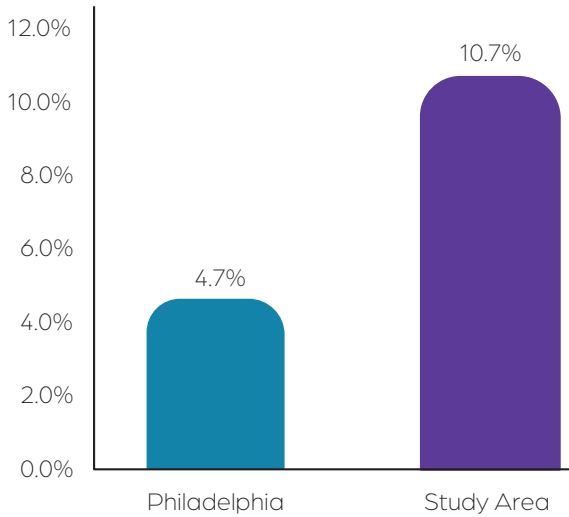


Figure 1. Source: U.S. Census Bureau

**Age Breakdown**  
Study Area

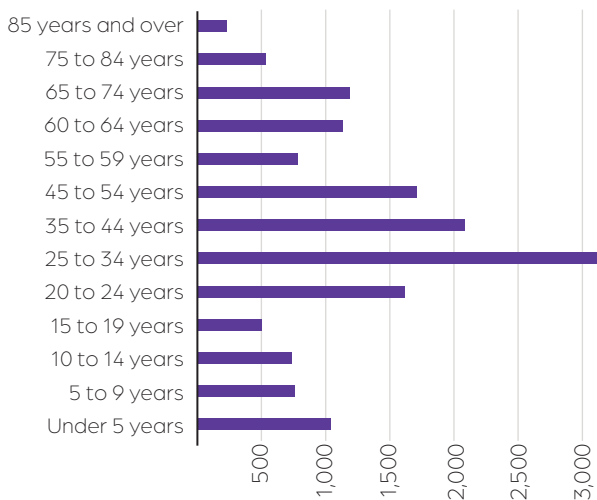


Figure 2. Source: U.S. Census Bureau

## Growth and Age

In 2021, the study area was home to 14,976 total residents. Over the previous decade, the population grew by 11 percent, more than double the citywide rate. Accordingly, the number of households also grew, again at double the rate of the City. Though the population has faced recent fluctuations, a healthy birth rate has kept numbers strong despite reduced in-migration. This area also has a higher proportion of working-age individuals, defined as those between 20 and 44 years old, with this share increasing over the past decade.

## Racial Diversity

Accordingly with the 52nd Street Commercial Corridor's history as a hub for Black arts and culture, the study area's population remains majority-Black. It has a much greater proportion of Black residents than the city as a whole. However, over the past decade the population has begun diversifying with greater numbers of white and non-Black minority of populations moving to the area. These groups now comprise nearly one-fifth of the study area's residents.

## Density

The population of the study area is the largest and densest in West Philadelphia outside of University City, a neighborhood which is bolstered by the presence of large universities and hospital systems. The majority of residents live south of Market Street, with most residing in the clustered rowhomes on streets intersecting with or parallel to 52nd Street.



## Economic Profile

The study area’s population faces high economic disadvantages with poverty and unemployment rates and low incomes compared to their peers across Philadelphia. Though this area has the advantage of the nearby commercial corridor, 15 percent of its population is unemployed – compared to just six percent citywide. The median household income of the study area is just \$24,000 per year, compared to \$32,000 in Philadelphia. Additionally, more than one-third (36 percent) of residents fall below the poverty line, compared to one-quarter (or 25 percent) citywide.

## Comparisons of Economic Conditions between Study Area & Philadelphia

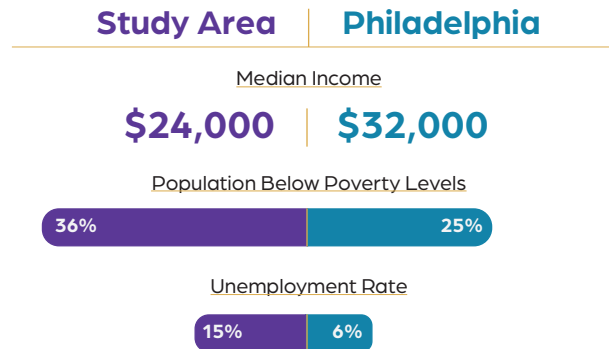


Figure 3. Source: U.S. Census Bureau

## Racial Breakdown Study Area

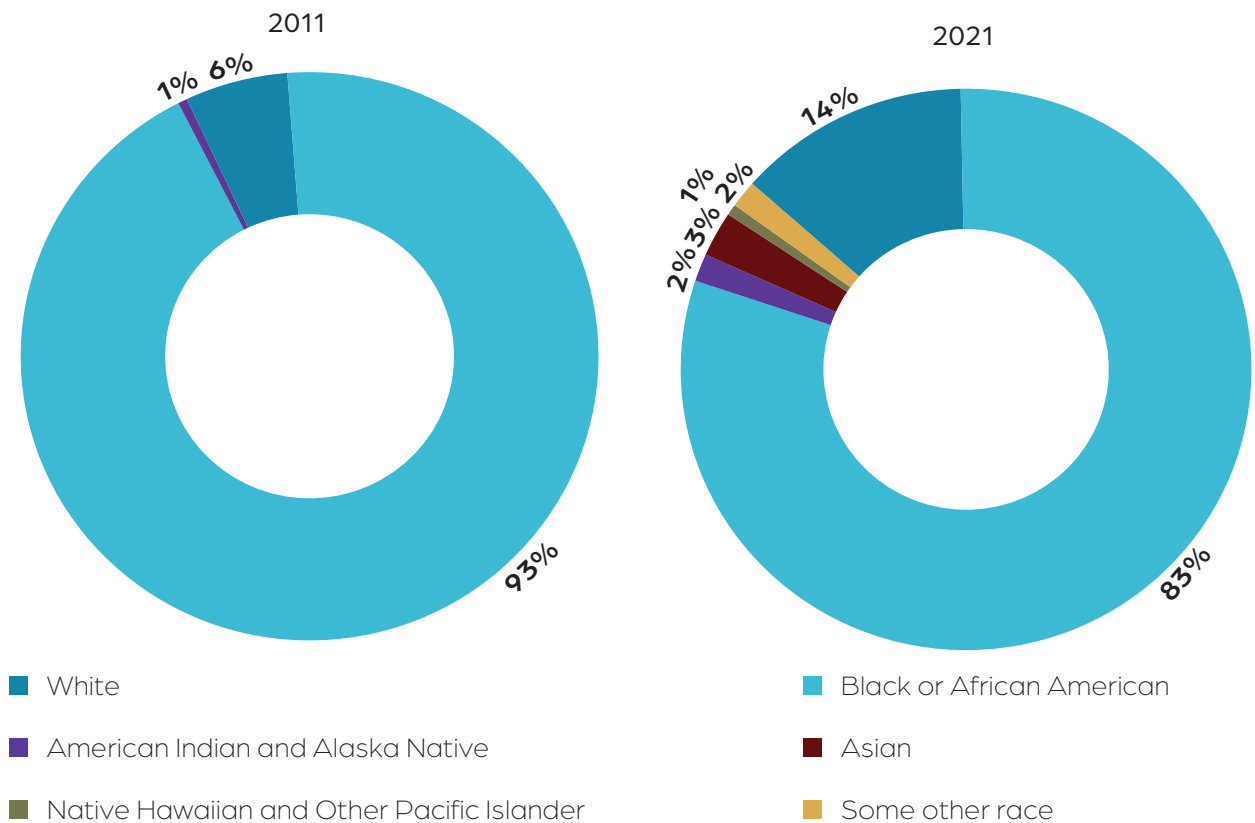


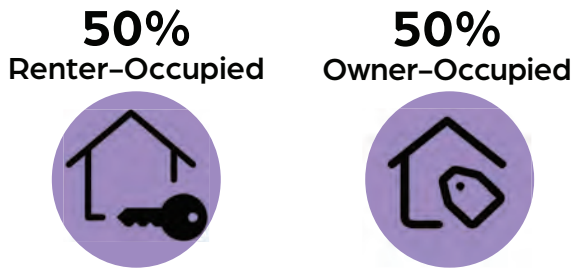
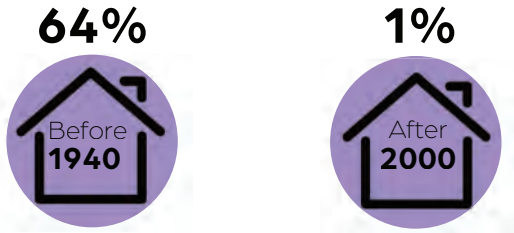
Figure 4. Source: U.S. Census Bureau



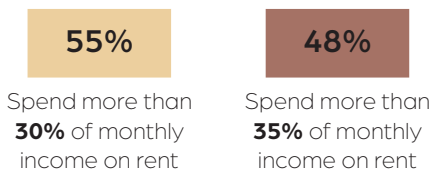
# HOUSING

The housing stock of the study area is generally made up of older attached row houses, similar to Philadelphia overall. Though affordable compared to prices citywide, residents are severely cost-burdened and face high eviction rates.

Most housing units were built **before** 1940.



## Rent Burden 2020



## Housing Structure and Age

The majority (57 percent) of housing structures within the study area are attached single-family residences. There is an increasing number of structures with three or four housing units, but very few with five units or more. Most units are more than 80 years old, with approximately 64 percent constructed before 1940. Though Philadelphia in general also has a large share of old attached row houses, the study area has a high concentration of such structures with fewer new builds. Older structures tend to be less expensive and less modern than newer builds, which contributes to why the median rent and home value within the study area is cheaper than that of Philadelphia overall. However, older buildings have higher maintenance costs and are more expensive to heat and cool, making these units less affordable.

## New Builds

Just 11 new residential building permits have been issued in the study area since 2019, none of which have been reported as completed. Between 2016 and 2019, there were eight new residential building permits issued – four of which are reported as complete. Overall, few new residential units are being built.

## Ownership and Affordability

In the study area, there is an even split of owners and renters. The majority of homeowners (about 85 percent) and renters (about 78 percent) are Black. White and Hispanic or Latino residents are more likely to live in rental units while Black and Asian residents are more likely to own their homes.

Figure 5. Source: U.S. Census Bureau

In 2020, the value of owner-occupied housing units in the study area was approximately \$135,000, about \$37,000 less than Philadelphia’s overall median value, with the largest share valued between \$50,000 and \$99,999. Adjusted for inflation, the study area’s median home value has increased by about \$43,000 since 2010 – a significant rise, particularly in comparison to Philadelphia where the average home value grew by just \$11,000. This suggests early-stage gentrification, in which rising home values and associated costs could potentially lead to future displacement of current residents.

Signs of gentrification are further apparent when considering the widening discrepancy between home and rent values. While the median home value has increased by 46 percent between 2010 and 2020, median rent has increased only by four percent when adjusted for inflation. The median rent in the study area is \$912, which is an increase of about \$33 per month since 2010. When neighborhoods gentrify, home values generally rise before rents do. A sharp increase in home values without a similar increase in rent values may make the area progressively unaffordable in the near future. Nevertheless, for now, the study area remains a relatively affordable area to live within Philadelphia as both rent and home values are below citywide medians.

### Cost Burden

More than half (approximately 55 percent) of renters in the study area are cost-burdened, meaning more than 30 percent of their income each month is spent on housing. Furthermore, almost half of all renters (48 percent) are severely cost-burdened, meaning at least 35 percent of their monthly income is spent on housing. While the share of renters facing severe rent burdens has decreased significantly since 2010, the absolute number

### Median Home Value 2010 - 2020

Study Area	Philadelphia
+\$43,000	+\$11,000

### Median Rent Cost 2010 - 2020

Study Area	Philadelphia
+\$32	+\$112

Figure 6. Source: U.S. Census Bureau

has decreased only slightly. This suggests that newer residents are earning higher incomes than longer-term residents and may be indicative of gentrification.

### High Vacancies

The study area has 7,629 total housing units, 81 percent of which are currently occupied. Within the neighborhood there is a high concentration of vacant housing units. Though overall vacancy has decreased by around 20 percent since 2010, 19 percent of total housing units are currently vacant. When compared to Philadelphia’s vacancy rate at large, housing vacancy is increasingly concentrated in the study area. Vacant properties can have negative effects on surrounding neighborhoods, such as increased crime and lower property values.

## Long-Term Residents

A plurality of homeowners (39 percent) in the study area moved into their residences prior to 1990, and a majority (over 60 percent) of homeowners moved before the turn of the century. On the other hand, approximately 65 percent of renters moved to the study area after 2014. These percentages suggest that homeowners in the study area tend to be longer-term residents and that, overall, residents generally remain living in the study area for long periods of time.

## Evictions

In the southern portion of the study area below Market Street, the eviction rate is over 25 percent higher than the citywide average and disproportionately impacts Black residents. There have been 26 eviction filings in March 2023 alone.

**Year Householder Moved to Corridor Neighborhood**

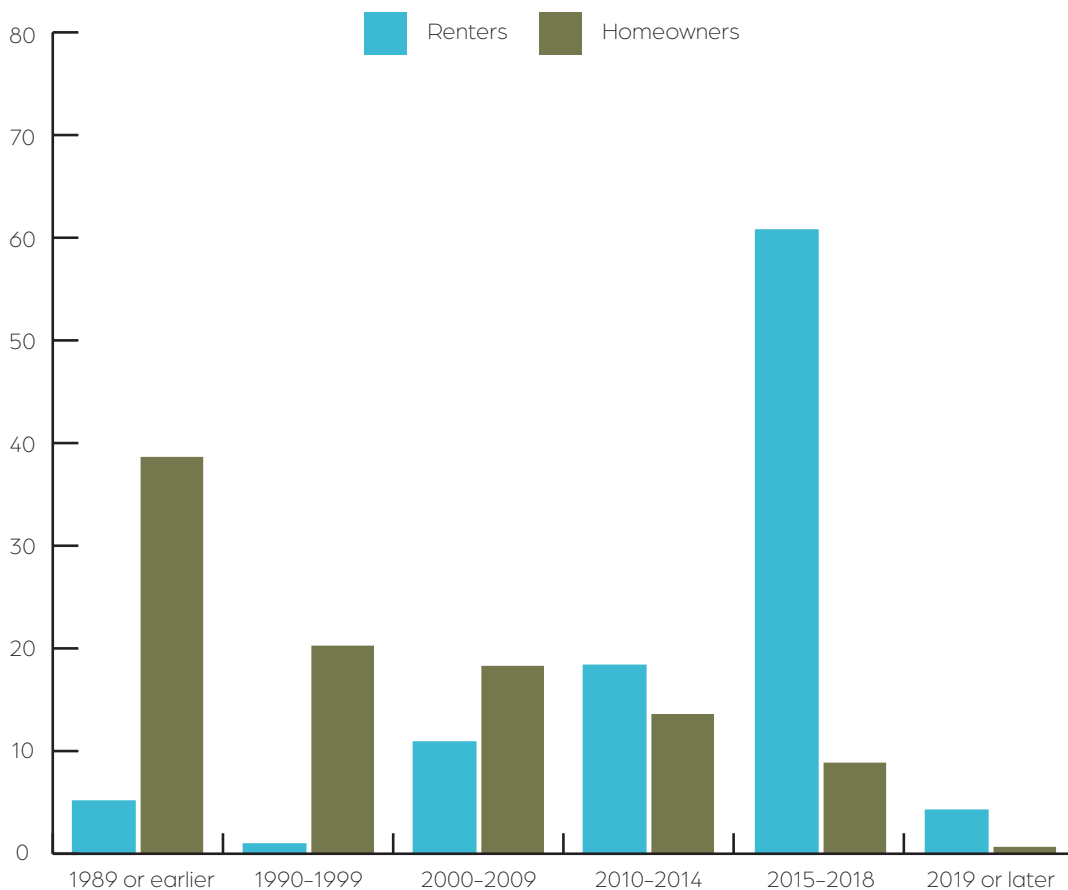


Figure 7. Source: U.S. Census Bureau



# TRANSPORTATION

The study area is incredibly transit-rich, with a wealth of public transportation, pedestrian, and bicycle infrastructure. The Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) is the regional transit authority that controls the buses, trolleys, and subways that connect 52nd Street to West Philadelphia and the rest of the region, including Center City and University City.

## Types of Travel

The ways in which residents of the study area travel reflect the diverse choice of transportation options available in the neighborhood. In 2021, more than one-third of the population (36 percent) rode public transit to work, compared to 23 percent citywide. Four percent walked to work, nine percent worked from home, and ten percent commuted using other modes of transportation.

Residents of the study area relied on cars for commuting far less than their counterparts citywide, with rates of 42 percent and 58 percent, respectively. This population also has relatively low access to a car, with 42 percent having no access compared to 29 percent of Philadelphians. This may be due in part to the Corridor's high concentration of quality public transportation options (particularly to major job centers) as well as the lower income levels of residents when compared to the rest of the City.

### Commute to Work 2021

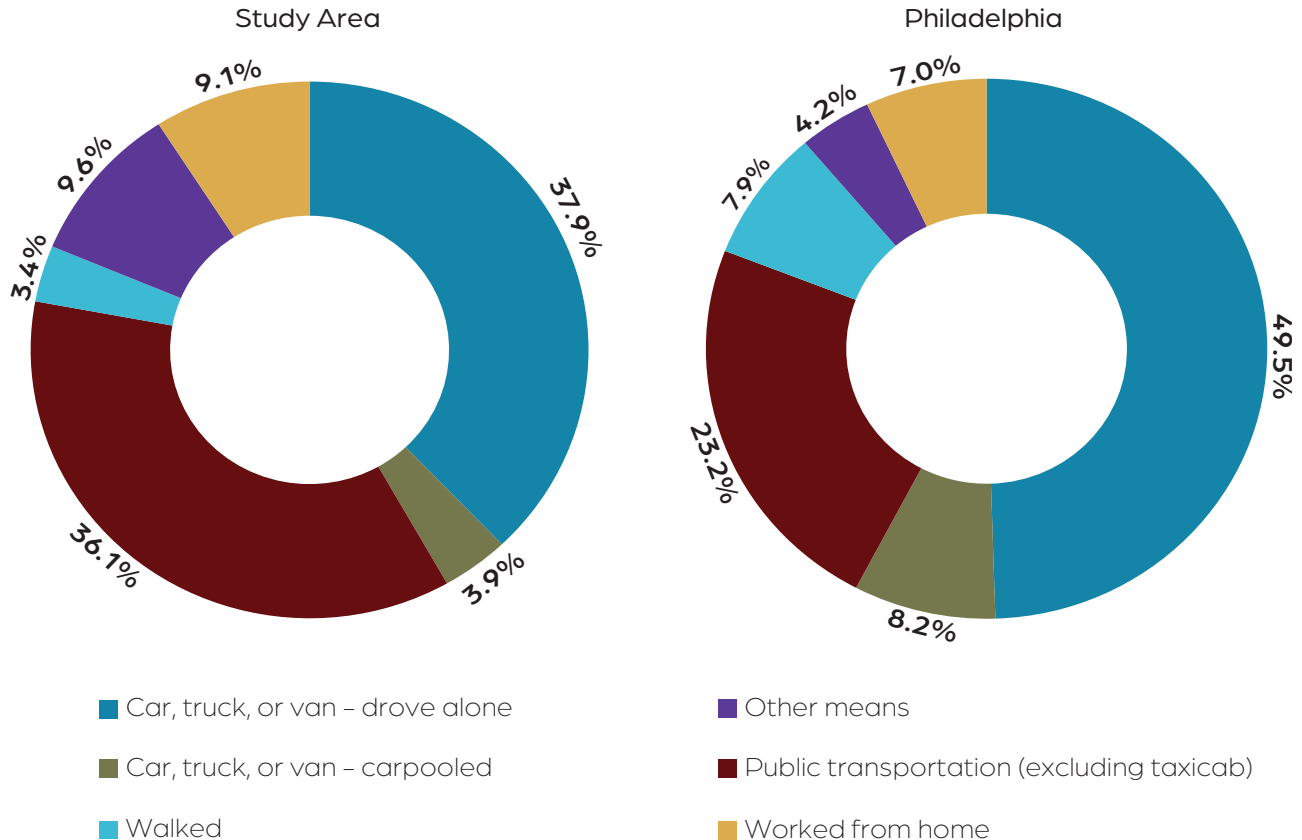


Figure 8. Source: U.S. Census Bureau

## Streetscape

The roadway of 52nd Street within the study area maintains a fairly consistent appearance throughout the Corridor. It has three lanes of traffic to support two-way traffic flow, with one lane serving as a central turning lane. On both sides of the street is on-street parking and wide sidewalks.

## Traffic Safety

Within the study area, the entirety of 52nd Street is on Philadelphia's High Injury Network, meaning that it belongs to one of the 12 percent of streets where 80 percent of all traffic deaths and serious injuries occur. In 2018, when the most recent data is available, two deaths and seven serious injuries occurred within the study area. Two pedestrians and one cyclist were seriously injured. In Philadelphia overall, traffic safety has only worsened in subsequent years. The danger to travelers along 52nd Street makes it a less safe place for residents, workers, and visitors.

## Market–Frankford Line

The study area is anchored by an elevated subway station on the Market–Frankford Line (“the EI”), located at the intersection of 52nd and Market Streets. This station, which spurred the initial development of the 52nd Street Commercial Corridor, serves as the area's activity hub and remains one of its most critical pieces of infrastructure. The EI is Philadelphia's busiest transit service, with an average weekly ridership of 171,973 in 2019, and the 52nd Street Station is its busiest stop outside of Center City. The EI also serves as a transportation option for visitors and shoppers to the Commercial Corridor.

In many ways, the history of the 52nd Street Commercial Corridor is tied to the history of the 52nd Street Station and the EI as a

whole. Throughout the Corridor's heyday and subsequent decline, the EI remained the area's primary connection to the rest of the City and region. In the late 2000s, the renovation of the 52nd Street Station eliminated access to the subway line for residents and visitors. The closure was an overwhelming setback for residents, businesses, and visitors alike, with many shops permanently closing as a result. Following the completion of the renovations, ridership on the EI has rebounded, providing a vital public service for the Corridor.

## Trolleys

Running along the southern edge of the 52nd Street Commercial Corridor, the Route 34 trolley provides east-west service on Baltimore Avenue. Like the EI, the trolley travels to Center City, University City, and other neighborhoods in West Philadelphia. The 34 is one of Philadelphia's busiest trolley lines, with an average weekly ridership of 12,413 in 2019. SEPTA is beginning to implement trolley modernization across its fleet, which will improve on-street stations, install accessible and higher capacity vehicles, and enhance operations.



*Photo by Jessica Griffin for The Philadelphia Inquirer*  
| 52nd Street is on Philadelphia's High Injury Network

Map 4. Public Transit in the Study Area



**LEGEND**

- Study Area
- Buildings
- Park
- Street Centerline
- Trolley Line
- Bus Line
- Market Frankford Line
- Trolley Stations
- MFL Stations

## Bus Routes

Numerous bus lines also cover the study area, with Routes 42, 21, and 31 providing further east to west connections and Route 52 running north to south along the entirety of 52nd Street. The 52 is one of SEPTA's most popular buses, with an average weekly ridership of 12,038 in 2019. That makes it SEPTA's 11th most utilized route of any transit mode. Meanwhile, Routes 21, 42, and 31 also maintain a strong ridership, ranking 16th, 29th, and 53rd in SEPTA's ridership in 2019. These routes vary in frequency, with the 52 and the 21 having the shortest headways of 15 minutes maximum.

Bus routes further from 52nd Street provide additional options for travel within West Philadelphia and the City as a whole. SEPTA is currently proposing changes to Route 31 under its Bus Revolution program to eliminate redundancies with El service, though this initiative has been delayed until 2024.



Photo from SEPTA | Route 52 which runs on 52nd

## Bicycle Infrastructure

The City has installed infrastructure for bicyclists around the Corridor, including several bike lanes running east-west on Market Street, Walnut Street, Spruce Street, and Baltimore Avenue. However, 52nd Street itself does not have a dedicated bike lane. Most of the existing bicycle lanes are unprotected, meaning that there is no physical division between vehicular and bicycle traffic. The one exception is the Chestnut Street cycle lane, which has plastic barriers for separation.

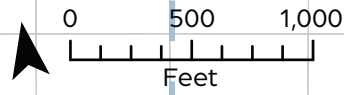
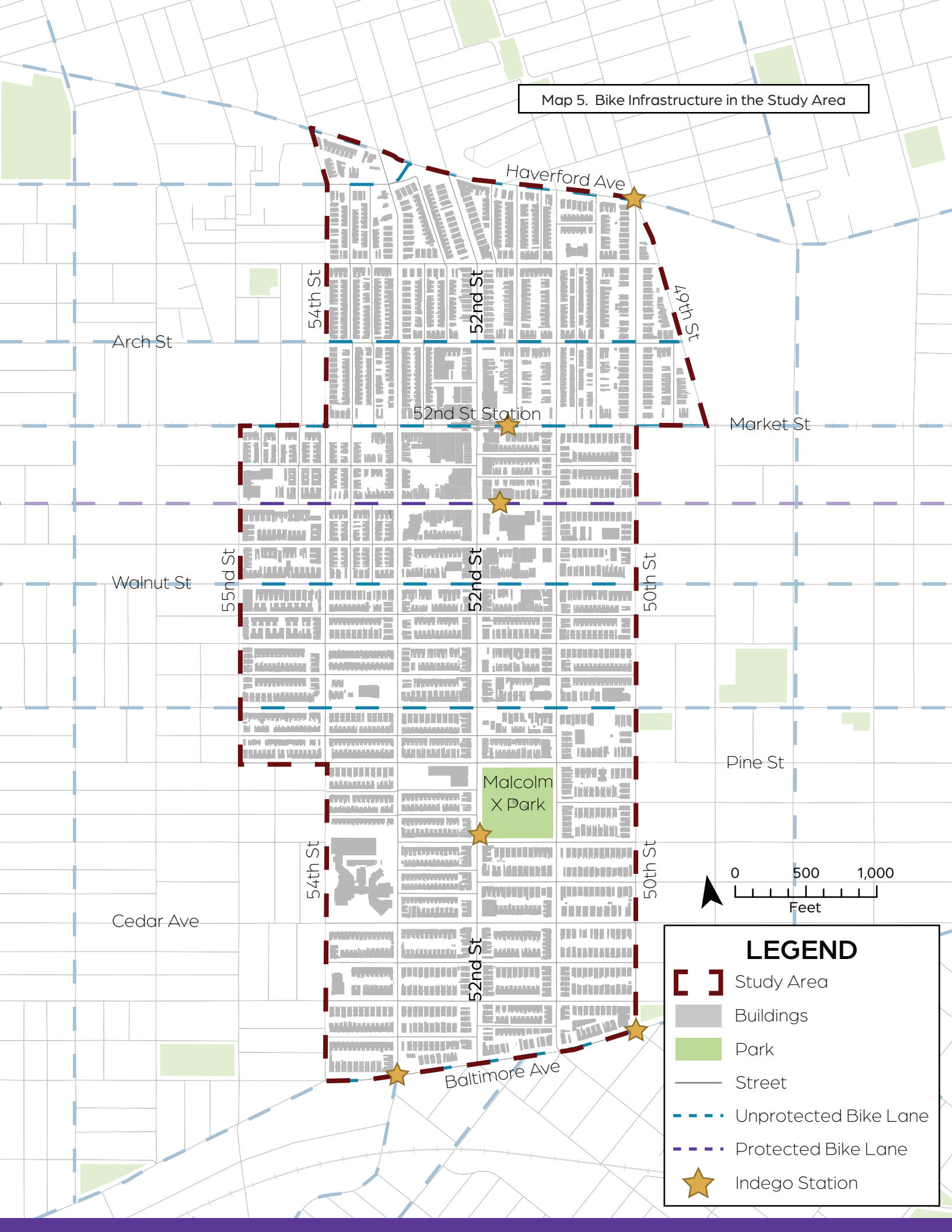
The study area also has access to the Indego bike share system run by the City of Philadelphia. There are three stations on 52nd Street alone, with one next to Malcolm X Park in between Pine Street and Larchwood Avenue, one on the corner of 52nd and Chestnut Streets, and one directly next to the 52nd Street Station. There are additional stations near the Corridor on Baltimore Avenue on 50th and 53rd Streets. Indego's expansion to this area of West Philadelphia is relatively recent, with all stations installed in the last couple of years. The Indego station by the El is the corridor's most recent addition, having just been installed in early 2023.



Photo by Chenxi Zhu | Indego bike share station at Malcolm X Park



Map 5. Bike Infrastructure in the Study Area



**LEGEND**

- [ ] Study Area
- Buildings
- Park
- Street
- - - Unprotected Bike Lane
- - - Protected Bike Lane
- ★ Indego Station



# COMMUNITY ASSETS

The 52nd Street Commercial Corridor and the study area comprise a vibrant community with a rich cultural heritage. The study area contains a number of existing community assets that benefit the people who live and work in its vicinity, as well as people from around West Philadelphia. Public events such as street fairs, music performances, and art exhibits are organized by local businesses, community organizations, and the Philadelphia city government. These events, as well as landmark public facilities, attract visitors from across West Philadelphia, making the 52nd Street Commercial Corridor a hub of activity and culture.

## West Philadelphia YMCA

The West Philadelphia YMCA sits near the intersection of Chestnut and 52nd Streets and serves as an essential community center providing resources and supportive programs for surrounding residents as well as all individuals in West Philadelphia.

Visitors to the YMCA can take advantage of fitness classes, sports leagues, youth programming, swimming, and educational resources. The facility offers gym equipment, basketball courts, an indoor pool, and meeting rooms for events, making it a versatile space for community activities. The YMCA has programming with the goal of community uplift, such as before and after school care programs, which provide a safe space for children to engage in academic and recreational activities. The West Philadelphia YMCA also offers programs for adults and seniors, including classes in babysitting and personal training, as well as opportunities for socializing.



Photo from YMCA | The YMCA is home to programs like art classes



Photo by John L. Puckett | Playground at Malcolm X Park

## Malcolm X Park

Malcolm X Park is a popular community gathering place for the study area and surrounding communities, offering a variety of recreational and cultural opportunities for diverse users. It has well-maintained playground equipment, a pavilion for picnics and other events, ample seating, and public restrooms.

Visitors to Malcolm X Park can play sports, picnic, relax in the shade under stately oak trees, and attend community events year round including concerts, movie nights, and neighborhood markets that attract visitors from across the city. Malcolm X Park also hosts health clinics, food distribution events, and served as the home base for West Philadelphia's anti-police protests in 2020.

Community programs at Malcolm X Park foster a sense of togetherness and serve as a vital resource for residents who have limited access to other recreational and gathering spaces.

## Events Highlights



### Jazz Nights

The Jazz Heritage Series take place in Malcolm X Park every other Thursday evening from 7-9 p.m. All concerts are free and feature Philadelphia native musicians.

### Philly Free Market

Happening every last Saturday of the month, the Really Free Market receive donations of items such as clothes, utensils, and food and redistribute to people in need, promoting a gift economy through mutual aid



### Juneteenth Celebrations

19th June, 2021. Children color a flag with chalk Saturday during a Juneteenth celebration in

19th June, 2021. A man shouts "on the move" during the Juneteenth parade that ended in Malcolm X Park. The chant is a well known rally cry for MOVE, a local black liberation movement.

## Lucien E. Blackwell West Philadelphia Regional Library

The Lucien E. Blackwell West Philadelphia Regional Library is a branch of the Free Library of Philadelphia system and serves as a valuable educational resource and community center for the residents of the study area and West Philadelphia.

People use the library in several ways: borrowing books, printing, accessing computers and free Wi-Fi, attending community events and workshops, and participating in literacy and educational programs. The library provides accessible facilities and a baby changing station, encouraging visits from families, senior citizens, and other users. The library also offers special programs for children and teenagers, including storytime, book clubs, and arts and crafts.



The library hosts community events for residents



The library served as a testing site during COVID

## Playstreet

The Philadelphia Parks and Recreation Department administers the Playstreet program in locations near the 52nd Street Commercial Corridor, with an aim to provide safe and fun spaces for children to play and engage in physical activities during the summer months. The initiative blocks off side streets to create space for children to ride bikes, play games, and participate in other recreational activities. Locations are picked by and for community members in the Study Area.

## Health Services

Health services are vital for the wellbeing of the community, providing access to essential medical and mental health services. The Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania (HUP) and the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) are two major hospitals in the area, offering comprehensive medical care to residents. There are also several clinics in the study area that provide dental services, as well as a gynecologist and multiple opticians.

Map 6. 52nd Street's Community Assets



WEST PHILADELPHIA YMCA



LUCIEN E BLACKWELL LIBRARY



MALCOLM X PARK



THE ENTERPRISE CENTER



**LEGEND**

- Study Area
- Buildings
- Park
- Street Centerline



# CRIME AND SAFETY

Crime and safety are dominating concerns along the 52nd Street Commercial Corridor, with nearly 2,000 total crimes reported in the study area in 2022. The Corridor itself experiences more violent crime than the surrounding neighborhood, a danger that directly harms residents, visitors, and businesses. Organizations within the area attribute the loss of once-vibrant nightlife to crime, and high crime rates can result in further disinvestment and stalled economic progress.

While the total number of offenses have decreased by more than a quarter over the past decade, violent crime has surged 24 percent. Gun violence in particular is a major issue. From 2014 to 2022, there were 878 shootings within one mile of the 52nd Street Station. At least 220 people were killed and 853 injured. More than half of the injuries and deaths were recorded in the last three years.

The four main types of crime in the study area are thefts, assaults, vandalism and criminal mischief, and robbery and burglary, as recorded by the Philadelphia Police Department (PPD). These account for more than 70 percent of total crime in the area and nearly one-third are aggravated crimes or involve firearms.



Photo from *Philadelphia Inquirer* | 52nd Street was a center for racial justice protests

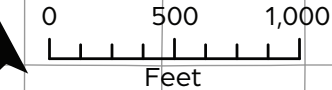
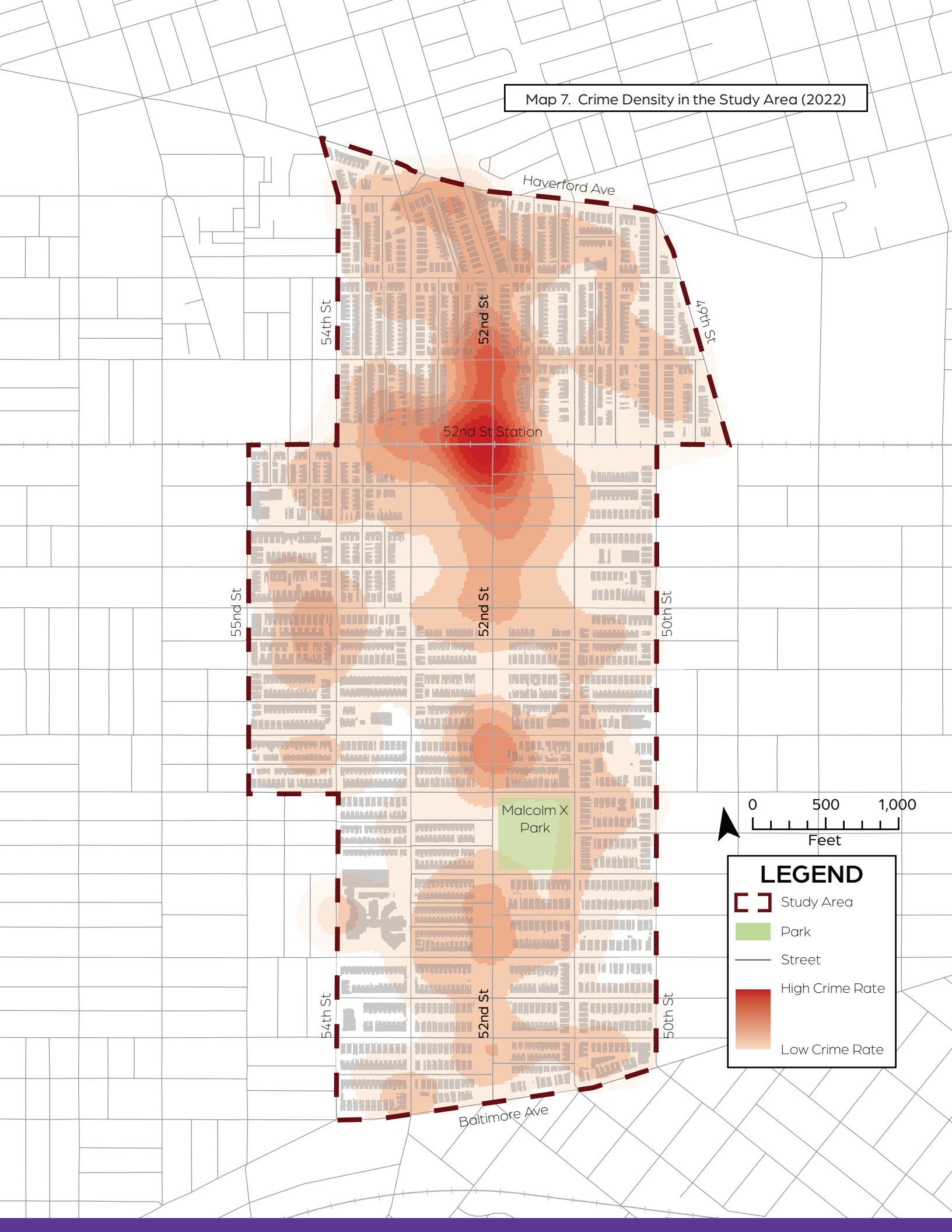
## Community Trust

West Philadelphia has a long history of tensions between police and residents. During the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 60s, residents testified that police were improperly targeting Black community members and this testimony ultimately led to the country's first civilian review board. In the 1970s, former Police Commissioner and Mayor Frank Rizzo carried out systemic brutality and discrimination against Black Philadelphians and was eventually sued by the Department of Justice. In the 1980s, police bombed the headquarters of MOVE, a Black militant liberation group, approximately a mile and a half away from the 52nd Street Commercial Corridor. The bombing killed six adults and five children and the resulting fire destroyed a residential block.

Long-building tensions came to a head in May 2020, when the Philadelphia Police Department responded to protests along the 52nd Street Commercial Corridor following the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis with paramilitary units and extreme force. Officers in full riot gear responded to looting and violence by select perpetrators by indiscriminately firing tear gas and rubber bullets on peaceful protestors and nearby residents, causing extreme physical and mental harm to the predominantly Black area. The Police Commissioner admitted to being underprepared, but the PPD did not apologize. Mayor Jim Kenney only apologized in a written statement six weeks after the protests.

Community trust was permanently harmed by these events, with residents saying that they felt "under siege and unprotected." Relations with PPD were already weak, but the violent response of officers is likely to further damage trust for years to come.

Map 7. Crime Density in the Study Area (2022)



**LEGEND**

- Study Area
- Park
- Street
- High Crime Rate
- Low Crime Rate



# EXISTING BUSINESSES

As West Philadelphia’s Main Street, the 52nd Street Commercial Corridor has a rich history that is inextricably tied to the success of its bustling sidewalk vendors and legacy businesses. Such institutions serve as integral parts of the community, providing goods, services, and a sense of neighborhood identity. However, as years have passed, the Corridor faces numerous potential roadblocks for healthy economic development, including deteriorating physical conditions, low rates of local business ownership, and dwindling retail employment. Approximately 20 businesses are either closed or vacant, representing nine percent of properties along the Corridor.

**Business Type Breakdown**

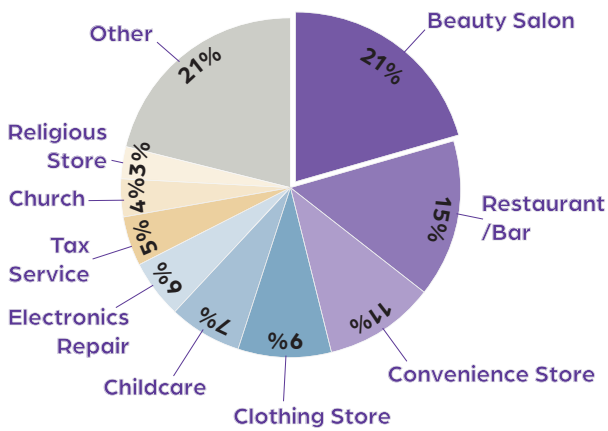


Figure 9. Source: Field research conducted by the project team

## Existing Businesses

The 52nd Street Commercial Corridor is home to more than 270 total businesses. The largest number of these shops are beauty salons, which comprise more than 20 percent of all businesses. The next largest categories are restaurants and bars (15 percent), convenience stores such as food marts, smoke shops, and beer distributors (11 percent), clothing stores (eight percent), and childcare services such as daycares and learning centers (seven percent). There are also thirteen separate businesses providing tax services.

## Ownership

According to TEC, just 14 property owners control 60 percent of the 52nd Street Commercial Corridor. Additionally, though the study area’s population is approximately 80 percent Black, local surveys estimate that Black business ownership hovers around 40 percent.

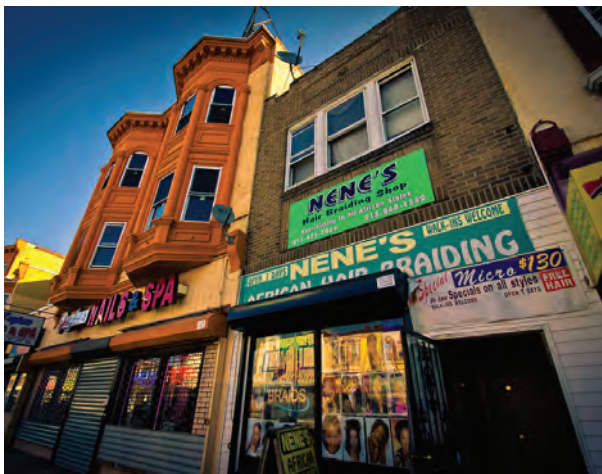


Photo from Theresa Stigale | Nene’s Hair Braiding Shop



### Notable Change in Industry Employment 2010 – 2019

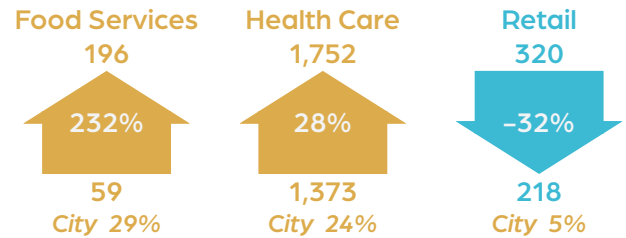


Figure 11. Bureau of Labor Statistics

## Dwindling Retail Employment

When looking at employment data on local industries over the past decade, the shops of the 52nd Street Commercial Corridor are providing fewer jobs. From 2010 to 2019, retail declined while food services and health care has grown. Notably over this same time period, employment in accommodation and food services more than tripled. However, decreasing retail has led to this industry falling out of the economic base – which is defined as industries that generate a large percentage of jobs in the area, export local goods and services, and bring in outside revenues. This shift could be due to the growth of e-commerce. Additionally, the Corridor has seen its local retail businesses attract fewer people from outside of its immediate neighborhood.

## Current Growth

The 52nd Street Commercial Corridor has seen a rising number of commercial building permits in recent years, with 15 new constructions, additions, or alterations in just the first two months of 2023.

### Commercial Permits Issued by Year

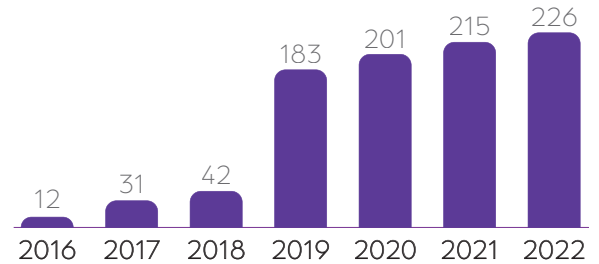


Figure 10. OpenDataPhilly



Photo from Kimberly Paynter for WHYY | 52nd Street in West Philadelphia was hit with both pandemic closures and looting.

## HAKIM'S BOOKSTORE & GIFT SHOP

**Hakim's bookstore started from the trunk of a car. Now it's building community.** – Mensah M. Dean, *Philadelphia Inquirer*



Photo from *Philadelphia Inquirer* | Interior of Hakim's Bookstore

Hakim's Bookstore is a historic Black bookstore located at 210 South 52nd Street that has been a community staple for over six decades. The founder Dawud Hakim opened his store in 1959 to provide a space for Black literature, which at the time was often not available in mainstream bookstores.

Over the years, Hakim's Bookstore became a community treasure, hosting book signings, lectures, and cultural events. The store's shelves were filled with books on Black history, culture, and literature, as well as titles by Black authors from around the world. Hakim's dedication to promoting Black literature and culture earned him a loyal customer base and a place in Philadelphia's cultural history. The COVID-19 pandemic caused significant harm to the business, as all book signings and events were canceled. Despite these setbacks, Hakim's was able to stay afloat and thrive with the help of its dedicated customers and community support. TEC played a crucial role, writing letters and encouraging people to donate to the store's revival.

Today, the bookstore remains a community mainstay and has inspired the development of more Black-owned bookstores in Philadelphia.

## Local Efforts

Despite challenges, there are efforts to revitalize the 52nd Street Commercial Corridor and support Black-owned startups to serve the community's needs. TEC is one organization that puts significant efforts into uplifting minority- and locally-owned businesses and has played a key role in breathing new life into the area through programs that fund storefront renovations, among others. In 2014, TEC was designated as the "corridor management" entity for the 52nd Street Commercial Corridor to work with businesses, residents, property owners, city agencies, and other key stakeholders to spur revitalization in the area.



Photo from Kimberly Paynter for *WHYY* | Storefront repairs from TEC for Dynamite Pest Control

## Business Assistance

Commercial and business assets within the 52nd Street Commercial Corridor provide West Philadelphians with access to goods and services and support the local economy. The Corridor itself is a hub of business activity, with a variety of stores including beauty salons, food marts, and clothing stores.

TEC is a vital resource for the Corridor as the local CDC, providing infrastructural and financial support for small businesses and entrepreneurs. This includes loans to established businesses as well as more affordable loans for qualifying small businesses and certifications for minority-owned and disabled-owned businesses.

TEC offers technical assistance and additional other programs for businesses in the area. Partnerships with national corporations like Wells Fargo as well as the City of Philadelphia have helped put more than \$1 million towards storefront improvements along the Commercial Corridor. TEC also conducts street cleaning five days per week and installs banners and planters to help nearby residents feel that their home is loved and cared for.

As local commercial rents rise, TEC is focusing part of its efforts on purchasing property along the 52nd Street Commercial Corridor to help retain businesses. Recently, TEC used one of its properties along the Commercial Corridor to host a Black Pop-Up Shop throughout the 2022 holiday season, giving more than 50 Black vendors the opportunity to sell their goods. This event garnered more than \$28,000 in revenue for these local small businesses. TEC is currently building a new headquarters in the heart of the 52nd Street Commercial Corridor.

## BIG GEORGE'S

**When You Want the Very Best  
in Food and Service, Come  
Dine with Us.** – Store Slogan



*Photo from Hidden City Philadelphia | Exterior of Big George's*

Despite its ultimate closure in 2009, Big George's Stop-N-Dine was a legendary restaurant that had been a staple of the 52nd Street Commercial Corridor since its 1987 opening by George T. Wake. As "the joint" for breakfast in West Philadelphia, locals frequented the diner and formed long lines that wrapped around the block, especially on weekend mornings. Former President Bill Clinton even visited the legendary establishment in 1998.

In 2005, Big George's was temporarily shuttered for renovations. However, financial hardship and instability led to its permanent closure in 2009. The building remains vacant.



# PUBLIC REALM

The streets and sidewalks of the 52nd Street Commercial Corridor have historically been a space for vendors, shoppers, and visitors to gather. Today, the public space shows evidence of the street's past neglect as well as its potential for the future.



Photo by Emmy Park | The street medallions of 52nd Street



Photo by Suzie Kazar | Street litter

## Sidewalks

Sidewalks along the 52nd Street Commercial Corridor are wide but vary in their accessibility and condition. Parts of the pavement are disjointed and cracked, creating potential tripping hazards for pedestrians. A number of street crossings lack ADA-compliant curb ramps. However, the sidewalks are unique in their inclusion of star medallions, which serve as a reminder of the Corridor's historical significance as West Philadelphia's Main Street.

## Cleanliness and Greenery

While there are BigBelly and regular trash cans present on 52nd Street, they are infrequent and poorly maintained. Piles of litter are common along the and around trash cans.

In addition, street trees and greenery are sporadic. With the exception of the area around Malcolm X Park, there are typically only two or three trees per block, almost all on the west side. The existing trees are young, small, and do not provide significant shade. The 52nd Street Commercial Corridor and the surrounding study area is within West Philadelphia's High Priority Zone for tree planting in the City of Philadelphia's 2023 Philly Tree Plan.

## Street Kiosks and Furniture

Recent revitalization efforts sought to formalize the sidewalk economy within the 52nd Street Commercial Corridor. Official vendor kiosks were installed by the City of Philadelphia on the blocks between Arch and Walnut Streets, offering a contained, secure place for merchants to run their businesses on the sidewalk. The kiosks are the most prominent pieces of street furniture. There are few benches, bike racks, or comfortable areas to gather outside of Malcolm X Park. Residents and visitors are known for bringing folding chairs and crates to make up for this dearth of infrastructure.



Photo by Alex Vuocolo for Flying Kite | Street kiosk

## Building Typology

The commercial buildings along 52nd Street are fairly uniform in style. Most are two to three stories tall and made of brick with brightly painted wood accents, with businesses occupying ground floors and residential units on the upper levels. The buildings are in varying states of disrepair. Most buildings were constructed before the 1940s and are high quality construction, but there are many indications that not all have not received consistent maintenance. New construction is mostly apparent south of Market Street.



Photo by Daria Williams | Mr. Hook storefront after renovation

## Arts and Culture

One of the most distinctive elements of the 52nd Street Commercial Corridor is the murals. Murals designed and painted by West Philadelphians cover the sides and fronts of buildings, trash cans, parking meters, and more. The murals depict a variety of subjects, including prominent figures from West Philadelphia and key moments in Black history. Similar to many areas of Philadelphia, the Mural Arts Program has left its mark on the 52nd Street Commercial Corridor, as the sides of many buildings have been painted by artists. The program, which is the largest dedicated to public art nationwide, has given special attention to the Street with installations such as *Afromation Avenue*, a series of posters intended to uplift and encourage Black Philadelphians.

The 52nd Street Commercial Corridor has historically served as an entertainment hub for many of its surrounding neighborhoods in West Philadelphia. While most of the jazz clubs

and theaters of the past have now closed their doors, the Corridor is still a center of culture. Many institutions are strongly linked to the large Black population residing in the area. Perhaps the most prominent is the Bushfire Theatre, a historic venue that showcases work from Black actors and playwrights.

Additionally, small businesses along the Corridor help to add to life on the Street. Some smaller legacy businesses that contributed to this vibrancy no longer remain, such as Big George's, a soul food restaurant that was in part a victim of the renovations to the 52nd Street Station in the late 2000s. Many still exist however, and new cultural spots are emerging. Hakim's Bookstore serves as a prominent and historic home of Black literature, while the Urban Art Gallery is a newer addition to the neighborhood's art scene. Such programming proves that 52nd Street remains a strong cultural center and West Philadelphia's Main Street.

## 52ND STREET PUBLIC ART

**Location:** West Philadelphia  
*Creating space for reflective thought and conversation*



Lindsay Bedford, Marian Bailey, Kristin Kelly, Brittini Jennings



**Location:** Lucien E Blackwell West Philadelphia Regional Library  
*A celebration of the culture of the African diaspora*

Source: Mural Arts Philadelphia

IF  
YOU  
WERE  
HERE  
I'D BE  
HOME  
NOW





# ISSUES &

Maintenance & Traffic Safety

Crime & Lack of Community Trust

Financial Hardship of Residents

Threat of Gentrification

Economic Risk on the Commercial Corridor

# OPPORTUNITIES

Strong Community Identity

Supportive Organizations Rooted in the Neighborhood

Good Transportation Connectivity

Strong Base for Growth

Vacancies to be Activated

# ISSUE 1

## Maintenance and Traffic Safety

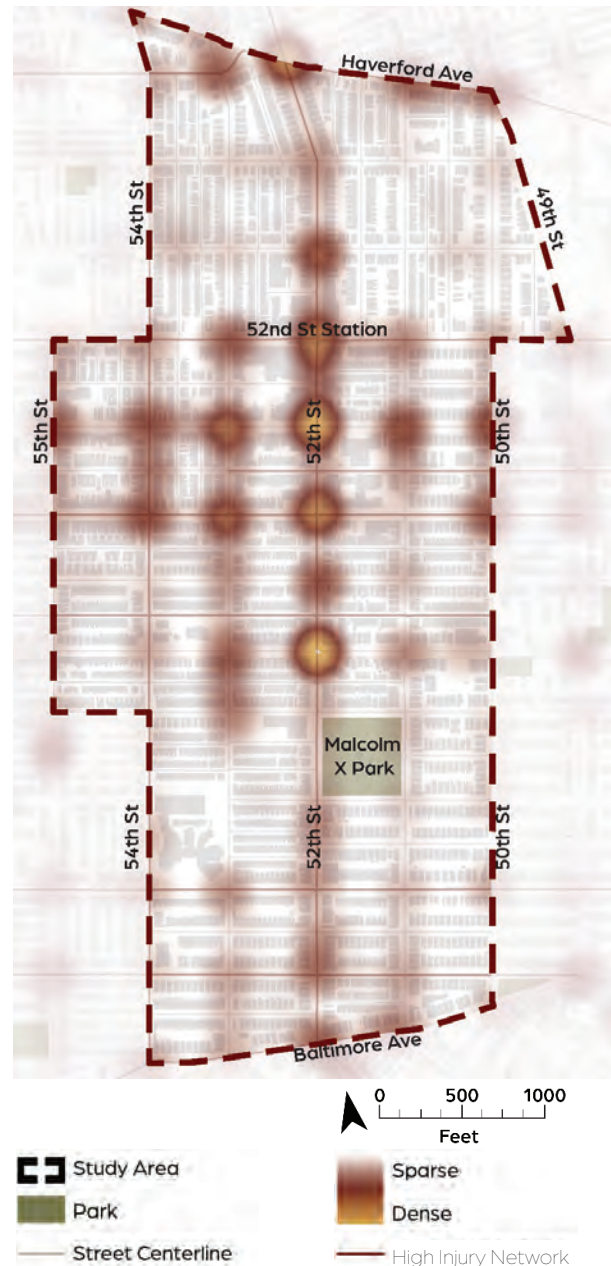
*...resulting in the Corridor feeling unsafe and unwelcoming.*

Traffic safety and public space maintenance are significant issues that need to be addressed in the 52nd Street Commercial Corridor. Traffic accidents and street litter contribute to safety problems and make the Corridor less welcoming to residents and visitors.

52nd Street's place on the High Injury Network is a major cause for concern. The High Injury Network is a citywide record of streets with a high rate of traffic accidents, injuries, and fatalities. The poorly designed street infrastructure contributes significantly to this problem. Inadequate pedestrian and biking infrastructure and unsafe crossing points make it difficult for people to navigate the Corridor safely.

In addition to traffic safety, the appearance of the Commercial Corridor can contribute to negative perceptions. Some storefronts are deteriorating, impacting both aesthetics and possibly discouraging potential customers. Street litter and a lack of greenery also detracts from the appearance and function of the Commercial Corridor. There are far fewer trees in this area than in many other locations citywide, and trash cans are inadequate to handle the amount of waste being generated along the Corridor.

Map 8. Study Area Automobile Crashes in 2021



# ISSUE 2

## Crime and Lack of Community Trust

... resulting in community members feeling skeptical of police and planners

The 52nd Street Commercial Corridor is also confronting crime and a lack of community trust as major barriers to revitalization. The area has a higher density of violent crime, particularly gun violence, when compared to Philadelphia as a whole, leading residents and visitors to feel fearful and unsafe. Crime is concentrated around the 52nd Street Station, whose intersection at 52nd and Market Streets was once named the most dangerous in the City.

While crime is a pressing issue along the Corridor, the relationship between police and the local community, who are majority Black, is strained after years of distrust, structural racism, and discrimination. The 2020 protests along 52nd Street in response to the killing of George Floyd only added to the strain, with peaceful protesters and residents tear gassed and harassed by police. Victims of this discrimination have been successful in suing the City of Philadelphia for damages from this event, with more lawsuits in progress. When local residents feel that they cannot trust those who are meant to protect and serve them, it creates instability within the community that can make it difficult to work with the authorities to decrease crime rates.

The skepticism of residents of the study area extends to other City of Philadelphia departments. Over decades, many plans have been proposed for improving the area — but most have not been realized. This can create a sense of frustration and distrust of planners and elected representatives, as residents may feel that the area is over-planned and under delivered.

### Total crime has decreased since 2010

**2,518**

crimes reported  
2010

**1,972**

crimes reported  
2020

### But the proportion of violent crime has increased

**21.8%**

violent crime  
2010

**36.7%**

violent crime  
2020



Photo from Philadelphia Inquirer | Neighborhood residents and activists marched down 52nd Street



# ISSUE 3

## Financial Hardship of Residents

... resulting in a cycle of poverty further disadvantaging residents.

Even with the longstanding 52nd Street Commercial Corridor nearby, the community in the surrounding study area is facing financial hardship in the form of low employment and income levels, high housing costs, and limited economic mobility. At the same time, the neighborhood is becoming increasingly vulnerable to gentrification, as property values rise and developers seek to take advantage of the area's prime location near University City. This threat exacerbates existing challenges for residents.

Many residents within the study area struggle with high costs of living that make it difficult for them to afford basic necessities, such as housing, food, and healthcare. Relatively high home and rental prices also prevent residents from building wealth through savings or investing, and may stop them from spending their money along the Commercial Corridor.



### Unemployment Rate

Study Area: **15%**  
Philadelphia: **6%**

### Median Rent

Study Area: **\$912**  
Philadelphia: **\$1,082**

### Median Income

Study Area: **\$24,000**  
Philadelphia: **\$32,000**





# ISSUE 4

## Threat of Gentrification

*... resulting in relatively low property values attracting developers and University City expansion, which could price out current residents.*

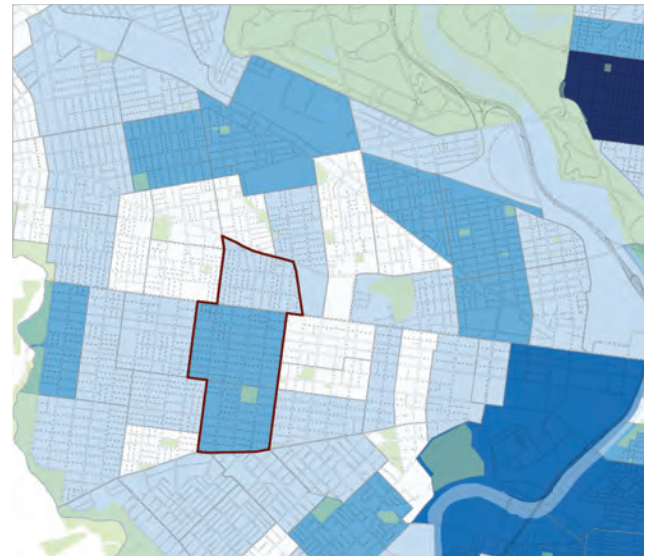
The threat of gentrification is a major concern for residents, as rising housing and rental costs could price out the area's long-term population and invite higher-income newcomers.

This is especially worrisome given the relatively low property values in the area when compared to the City, which can be attractive to developers looking to capitalize on the explosive growth of nearby University City. Wealthier individuals and families moving in may also create a demand for higher-end amenities and services in this area, lifting the overall cost of living even further.

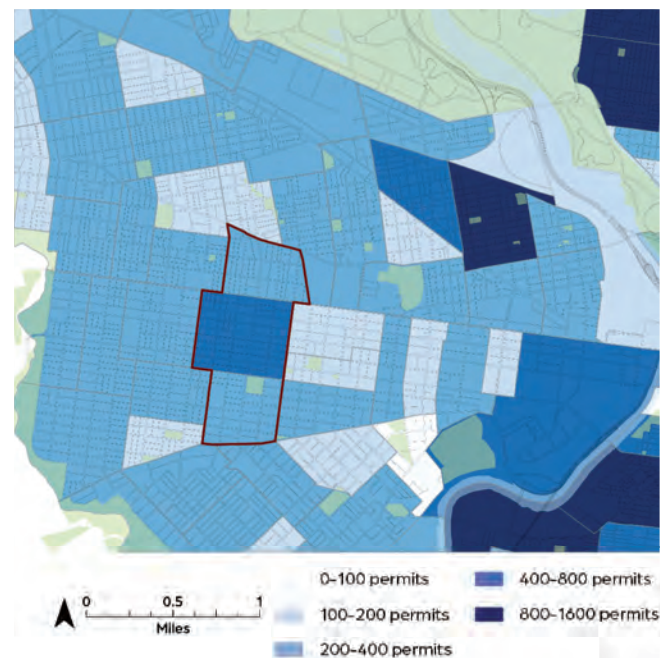
Without proper planning and intervention, the gentrification of the 52nd Street Commercial Corridor and the surrounding study area may have severe negative impacts on its community, including the displacement of current residents, a loss of cultural identity, and a decrease in local businesses and entrepreneurship.

Map 9. Number of Building Permits

2018 Building Permits



2020 Building Permits



### Gentrification indicators from 2010 – 2020

**\$43,000**

Increase in study area's **median home value.**

**69%**

Increase in study area households earning **\$75,000 or more.**

vs.

**\$11,000**

increase in Philadelphia's **median home value**

**12%**

increase in Philadelphia households earning **\$75,000 or more.**

# ISSUE 5

## Economic Risk on the Commercial Corridor

... resulting in money spent and earned outside of the community.

The 52nd Street Commercial Corridor has been a mainstay of West Philadelphia for decades, but the area is facing significant economic risks that could threaten its long-term viability.

One of the challenges facing the Corridor is an over-reliance on a single industry. Healthcare accounts for 70 percent of jobs within the study area, leaving the economic wellbeing of residents and the Corridor overly dependent on such institutions — namely the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania - Cedar Avenue, located at 54th Street and Cedar Avenue. A disruption to the healthcare industry could be disastrous.

Another risk to the Corridor is its low rate of local and minority business ownership. Sixteen corporate owners control 40 percent of 52nd Street. This lack of local land control leaves residents and businesses vulnerable to the wills and whims of property owners who may or may not live near the Corridor. Such actors may not be as invested in the community's success as someone who lives nearby.

Such economic vulnerabilities have important implications for residents and businesses along the 52nd Street Commercial Corridor and within the greater study area. A lack of local ownership and retail diversity may mean that economic benefits of growth and development in the Corridor may not be experienced by the people who live and work there.



Photo from Penn Medicine | Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania - Cedar Avenue

### Underrepresentation in Business Ownership:



Black residents make up **80%** of the study area population.



But only **40%** of business owners on the commercial corridor are Black.



# OPPORTUNITY 1

## Strong Community Identity

... providing community pride and ownership.

The 52nd Street Commercial Corridor has a strong community and commercial identity, helping to drive change by nearby residents and local organizations. As a well-known activity center with a long history of vibrant Black businesses and nightlife, 52nd Street lives up to its name as West Philadelphia's Main Street.

Legacy businesses, vendors, and institutions play an important role in establishing the Corridor's long-standing identity. This includes the historic Hakim's Bookstore, Philadelphia's first and oldest Black-owned bookstore which serves as an important cultural and educational resource, as well as neighborhood-serving amenities such as the West Philadelphia YMCA and the Lucien E. Blackwell West Philadelphia Regional Library. Malcolm X Park also offers gathering space for public events and provides recreational opportunities to residents and visitors.



Photo from Cinema Treasures | Historic photo of the Bushfire Theatre

The **Bushfire Theatre** is the only remaining theater from the 52nd Street Commercial Corridor's heyday. Over one hundred years old, it seats 1,400 and has historically provided a space for the training and performances of Black artists. It has presented works by historic Black playwrights such as August Wilson, and even served as a backdrop for a speech by former President Barack Obama. Though currently in need of repairs and other assistance to restore its former glory, the Bushfire Theatre is a symbol of 52nd Street's strong cultural identity.



# OPPORTUNITY 2

## Supportive Organizations Rooted in the Neighborhood

*... providing a foundation for trust and momentum for change driven by local leaders.*

Corridor improvements and revitalization require strong local institutions and organizations for leadership and support. Such groups can bridge the gap between residents, government, and business, providing local points of contact to establish ties with citywide leaders and advocate on behalf of the Corridor.



**THE ENTERPRISE CENTER**  
BUSINESS | CAPITAL | COMMUNITY

The 52nd Street Commercial Corridor and the surrounding residential area have several stable anchor groups and various establishments that serve in this role. The most prominent is The Enterprise Center (TEC). TEC and other organizations engage with the 52nd Street community, including residents and businesses, to understand its interests and also serve as an important intermediary to funnel funding from national corporations like Chase Bank and government sources to the Corridor. This money goes to projects that help to increase rates of local business ownership and storefront improvements, among others.



*Photo from Wells Fargo Stories | Storefront facades improvement*



# OPPORTUNITY 3

## Good Transportation Connectivity

... providing increased social connectivity and quality of life.

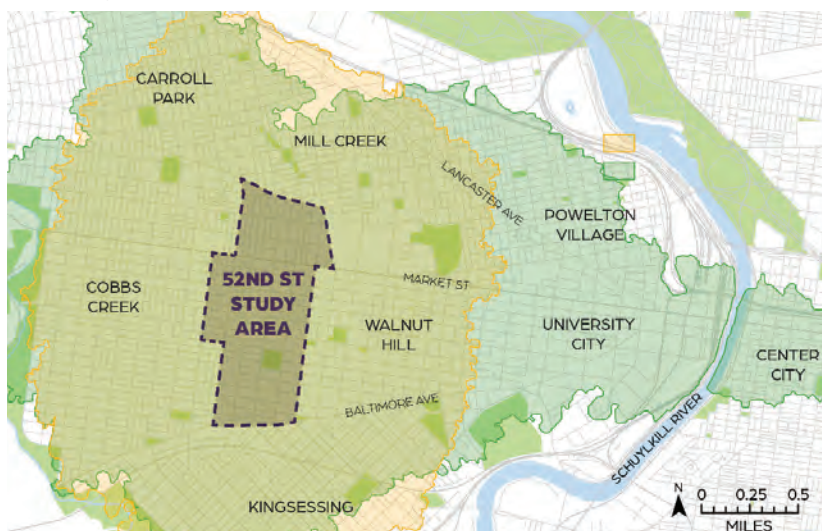
The 52nd Street Commercial Corridor is well connected, with various transit options traveling throughout West Philadelphia and to Center City. This wealth of transportation provides a strong foundation for business and economic development as well as local mobility, particularly important for a community where many residents do not have access to a vehicle.

Public transportation is readily accessible to residents and visitors, with several options including bus routes, a subway line, and a trolley line. It also has shared bike stations, connecting the Commercial Corridor to other parts of West Philadelphia and Center City and allowing easy and convenient travel for workers, customers, and residents.

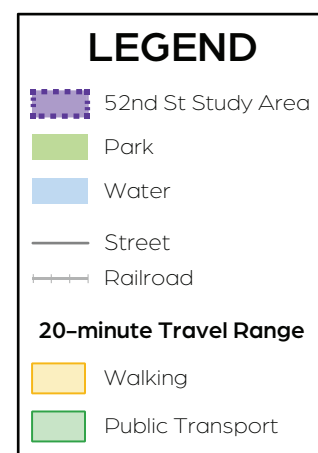
Moreover, transit along the Corridor provides an easy link to a prime job center in downtown Philadelphia. This connectivity provides access to employment opportunities and allows businesses to tap into a larger pool of workers and shoppers, increasing the potential for economic growth through better revenues and market positions.

The richness of the Corridor's transit also helps to increase social connections to other neighborhoods and services, reducing social isolation for residents. It also improves quality of life by reducing the environmental impacts of personal vehicles and introducing healthy lifestyles through bicycle commuting or leisure traveling.

Despite previously mentioned issues with litter and traffic safety, there is good existing pedestrian infrastructure on 52nd Street. The 52nd Street Commercial Corridor has a human-scale design, meaning that much of the infrastructure is developed with people in mind. It has wide sidewalks, mixed-use buildings, and low building heights, which help to contribute to a welcoming and pedestrian-friendly environment. Wide sidewalks provide space for people to walk and socialize, with room for outdoor seating and various uses such as street vendors and public art displays. This creates a vibrant atmosphere along the Corridor, promoting community interaction and supporting local businesses.



Map 10. 20-Minute Travel Range





# OPPORTUNITY 4

## Strong Base for Growth

... *providing a strong base for growth with potential workers and consumers to support the community and economy.*

One key opportunity for the 52nd Street Commercial Corridor is its strong base for growth, especially when considering nearby population density and accessibility to a large population in West Philadelphia.

The Corridor is situated in a densely populated and growing neighborhood in West Philadelphia, providing a large potential customer base for businesses along the street.

This is a major advantage for entrepreneurs looking to establish new businesses, as it provides local demand as well as a large local employable population. As businesses grow and prosper, they can create jobs and provide opportunities for residents to work closer to home, reducing commuting times and costs.



# OPPORTUNITY 5

## Vacancies to be Activated

... providing space for new businesses and housing programs to accommodate growth and mitigate threatening gentrification.

Another advantage held by the 52nd Street Commercial Corridor is its space available for new businesses and housing, providing potential for economic growth and development. Mixed-use buildings, which along 52nd Street typically have commercial spaces on the ground floor and residential units above, also contribute to the human-scale design of the Corridor. They create a diverse environment where people live, work, and socialize in the same area. Moreover, mixed-use buildings can generate foot traffic throughout the day, which can be beneficial for the businesses located along the Corridor.

Additionally, many commercial storefronts along the street are currently vacant and need activation, presenting an opportunity

for entrepreneurs and investors to start businesses in a prime location with lower rental costs.

There are also opportunities for development in the second-floor spaces above many of the commercial storefronts. These stories are underutilized, with the potential to be transformed into affordable housing or additional commercial space. This can further contribute to the Corridor's revitalization by creating more economic activity or increasing the area's foot traffic.

With careful planning and community-focused development, activating these vacancies can lead to a more vibrant and economically prosperous Commercial Corridor.



Photo by Chenxi Zhu | Vacant second floor



Photo by Theresa Stigale | Vacant Stacy Adams shoe store





# RECOMMENDATIONS

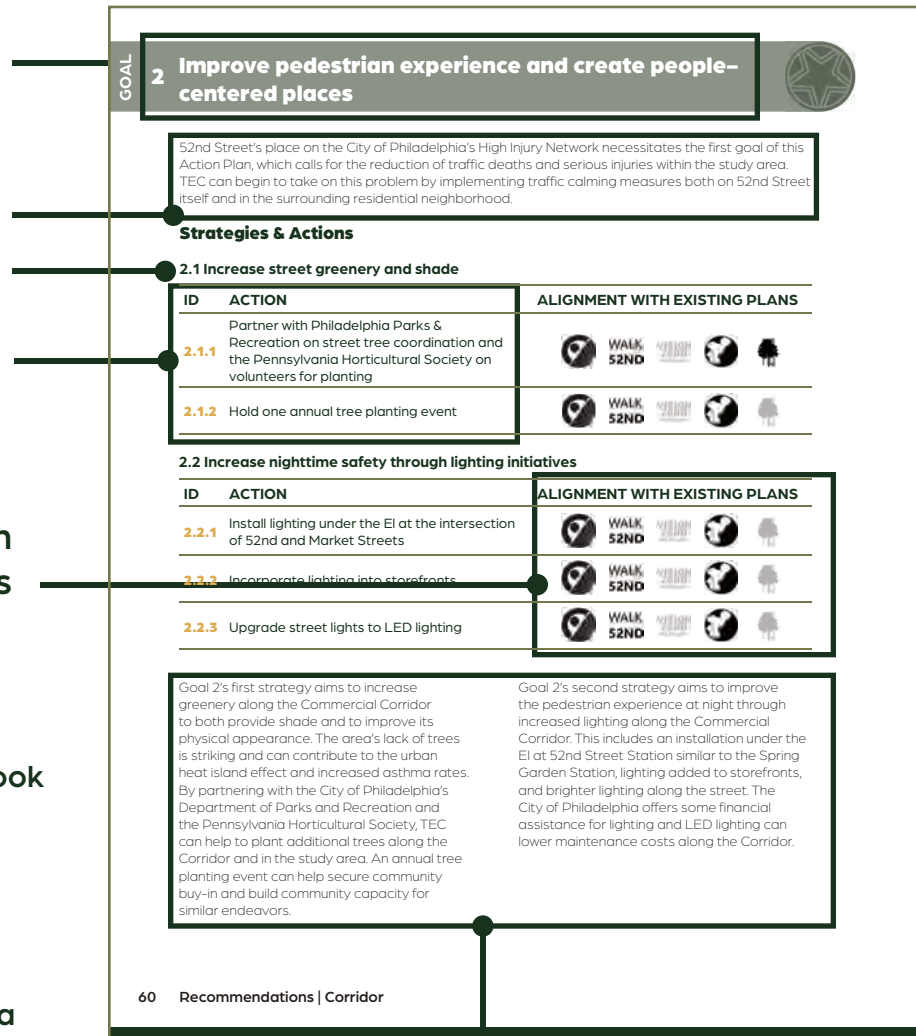
The following recommendations are derived from the existing conditions of the Commercial Corridor and the issues and opportunities they present. They address physical, business, and residential aspects of life on 52nd Street. Altogether, they comprise this Action Plan which will build community and organizational capacity over the next five years.

# How are recommendations organized?

There are 11 goals in total, split between three categories: Corridor, Business, and Neighborhood. Each goal is coupled with strategies and corresponding action items.

Overview of the goal  
Strategies  
Actions

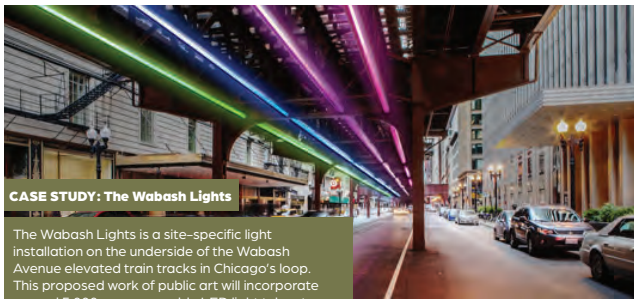
Alignment with existing plans



Details about each strategy and the corresponding actions

-  **TEC's 52nd Street Investment Playbook**
-  **TEC's WALK52nd Traffic Safety and Streetscape Plan**
-  **City of Philadelphia Vision Zero Action Plan**
-  **Philadelphia 2035 West District Plan**
-  **Philly Tree Plan 2033**

## Case studies and existing programs



### CASE STUDY: The Wabash Lights

The Wabash Lights is a site-specific light installation on the underside of the Wabash Avenue elevated train tracks in Chicago's loop. This proposed work of public art will incorporate around 5,000 programmable LED light tubes to transform an iconic piece of Chicago infrastructure into a canvas for a dynamic, interactive experience.



### CASE STUDY: Philly Streetlight Improvement Project

The Philly Streetlight Improvement Project will convert 120,000 old, high-pressure sodium streetlights into a network of efficient, longer-lasting LED lights. By upgrading to better quality lights with a new lighting management system, residents will benefit from better visibility and faster lighting replacement times. Putting 52nd Street as the one of the priorities would be important.

52nd Street Commercial Corridor 61

## CORRIDOR GOALS

- 1** Decrease traffic deaths and serious injuries
- 2** Improve pedestrian experience and create people-centered places
- 3** Activate vacant storefronts and second floors



# CORRIDOR







Colorful building facades along 52nd Street



Sidewalk vendors



Murals outside of Lucien E. Blackwell Library









# 1 Decrease traffic deaths and serious injuries











52nd Street’s place on the City of Philadelphia’s High Injury Network necessitates the first goal of this Action Plan, which calls for the reduction of traffic deaths and serious injuries within the study area. TEC can begin to take on this problem by implementing traffic calming measures both on 52nd Street itself and in the surrounding residential neighborhood.

## Strategies & Actions

### 1.1 Implement traffic calming measures by applying for a Neighborhood Slow Zone for residential areas surrounding 52nd Street

ID	ACTION	ALIGNMENT WITH EXISTING PLANS
1.1.1	Complete the Neighborhood Slow Zone Application	   
1.1.2	Recommend specific traffic calming measures, such as curb bump-outs or raised crosswalks	   

### 1.2 Implement traffic calming measures on 52nd Street

ID	ACTION	ALIGNMENT WITH EXISTING PLANS
1.2.1	Request a PennDOT traffic calming study	   
1.2.2	Leverage Philadelphia Water Department green stormwater investment for streetscape improvements	   

Goal 1’s first related strategy and actions call for traffic calming within the residential area around the 52nd Street Commercial Corridor. This can be accomplished by successfully applying for a Neighborhood Slow Zone from the City of Philadelphia’s Office of Transportation, Infrastructure, and Sustainability (OTIS). The Neighborhood Slow Zone for this area will cover the streets directly surrounding Malcolm X Park to provide safer connections for families and community members visiting the park. To apply for the Neighborhood Slow Zone, applications should be submitted by an organization or neighborhood champion that represents the people living within the proposed Slow Zone with the following materials:

- Applicant Contact Information
- Traffic Safety Concerns
- Proposed Location Map
- Applicant Letter of Support
- City Council Letter of Support
- (Optional) Additional Community Support

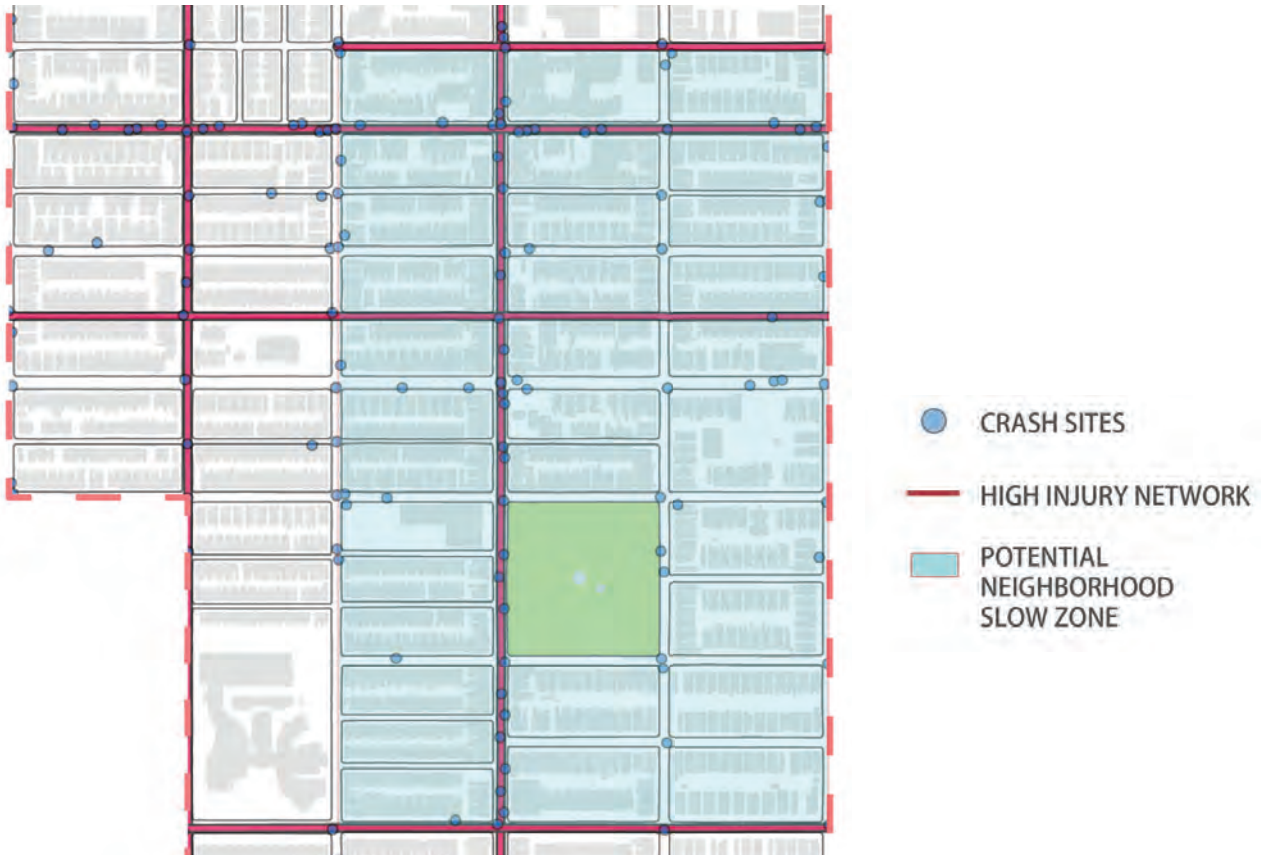
The Action Plan also recommends that TEC identify and advocate for specific traffic calming measures, such as raised crosswalks or speed humps at key locations. Suggested actions can be borrowed from the University of Pennsylvania’s Vision Zero Toolbox and the Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia’s Vision Zero Citizens Action Guide.

Goal 1’s second strategy calls for implementing traffic calming measures directly on 52nd Street. As a State-owned road, TEC can work with the City’s Department of Streets to submit a request for traffic calming and specific implementation measures to the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT). This will most likely be as a part of 52nd Street’s repaving, which is expected to happen within the next five years. Additionally, TEC should coordinate with the Philadelphia Water Department (PWD) to advocate for installing green stormwater infrastructure in the form of curb bump-outs to 52nd Street.

Map 11. Proposed Top View of Traffic Calming Site



Map 12. Proposed Neighborhood Slow Zone



## Improve pedestrian experience and create people-centered places















The physical appearance and infrastructure of 52nd Street can sometimes disadvantage residents and discourage visitors, particularly at night. A lack of street trees and their shade, insufficient lighting, and litter contribute to this issue. In response, TEC can coordinate with local partners to improve the Commercial Corridor with new greenery, lighting, and increased cleaning.

### Strategies & Actions

#### 2.1 Increase street greenery and shade

ID	ACTION	ALIGNMENT WITH EXISTING PLANS
2.1.1	Partner with Philadelphia Parks & Recreation on street tree coordination and the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society on volunteers for planting	   
2.1.2	Hold one annual tree planting event	   

#### 2.2 Increase nighttime safety through lighting initiatives

ID	ACTION	ALIGNMENT WITH EXISTING PLANS
2.2.1	Install lighting under the EI at the intersection of 52nd and Market Streets	   
2.2.2	Incorporate lighting into storefronts	   
2.2.3	Upgrade street lights to LED lighting	   

Goal 2's first strategy aims to increase greenery along the Commercial Corridor to both provide shade and to improve its physical appearance. The area's lack of trees is striking and can contribute to the urban heat island effect and increased asthma rates. By partnering with the City of Philadelphia's Department of Parks and Recreation and the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, TEC can help to plant additional trees along the Corridor and in the study area. An annual tree planting event can help secure community buy-in and build community capacity for similar endeavors.

Goal 2's second strategy aims to improve the pedestrian experience at night through increased lighting along the Commercial Corridor. This includes an installation under the EI at 52nd Street Station similar to the Spring Garden Station, lighting added to storefronts, and brighter lighting along the street. The City of Philadelphia offers some financial assistance for lighting and LED lighting can lower maintenance costs along the Corridor.



**CASE STUDY: The Wabash Lights**

The Wabash Lights is a site-specific light installation on the underside of the Wabash Avenue elevated train tracks in Chicago's Loop. This proposed work of public art will incorporate around 5,000 programmable LED light tubes to transform an iconic piece of Chicago infrastructure into a canvas for a dynamic, interactive experience,



**CASE STUDY: Philly Streetlight Improvement Project**

The Philly Streetlight Improvement Project will convert 120,000 old, high-pressure sodium streetlights into a network of efficient, longer-lasting LED lights. By upgrading to better quality lights with a new lighting management system, residents will benefit from better visibility and faster lighting replacement times.

## 3 Activate vacant storefronts and second floors











Activating vacant storefronts and second floors is necessary for the economic success of the 52nd Street Commercial Corridor. Goal 3 of this Action Plan aims to enlighten these spaces to enhance the Corridor's vibrancy and to attract new tenants and shoppers.

### Strategies & Actions

#### 3.1 Activate vacant storefronts and second floors

ID	ACTION	ALIGNMENT WITH EXISTING PLANS			
3.1.1	Improve the appearance of vacant storefronts to appeal to new tenants and owners, as well as shoppers and other visitors		WALK 52ND		 
3.1.2	Create internal list of vacant or underutilized storefronts		WALK 52ND		 

#### 3.2 Explore options for reuse of vacant second floors of storefronts

ID	ACTION	ALIGNMENT WITH EXISTING PLANS			
3.2.1	Survey business association on optimal uses of second floors		WALK 52ND		 
3.2.2	Create a guide for reuse as an apartment, creative space, or other uses		WALK 52ND		 

To improve the appearance of vacant storefronts before new tenants come in, TEC can create a Storefront Activation Program similar to one offered in the Germantown neighborhood of Philadelphia. This program partners with local artists to improve the appearance of vacant storefronts to create visually appealing installations that can both attract new owners and serve as a placemaking strategy. TEC can further this program by creating an internal list of vacant or underutilized properties, which can be used to determine a priority list for activation.

Vacant second floors are another problem plaguing the 52nd Street Commercial Corridor, as this unused space could be turned into housing or used for expanding a business. By reforming the 52nd Street Business Association as suggested in Strategy 4.1 later in this Plan, TEC can survey the stakeholders to identify optimal uses for these spaces. TEC can then create a guide by commissioning consultants for reuse outlining how second floors can be transformed for apartments, creative spaces, or other innovative uses.



### CASE STUDY: Madison, Wisconsin Storefront Murals

In response to the vandalism during protests against the death of George Floyd, business owners and artists took actions in a street-wide project to turn the boarded-up storefronts into art. Artists worked their way up and down State Street in downtown Madison painting murals.



### Installation in vacant space, available for rent

### CASE STUDY: Germantown Storefront Activation

Germantown United, the CDC for the Germantown neighborhood in Northwest Philadelphia, created the Storefront Activation Program to make vacant storefronts appealing to pedestrians, shoppers, and potential new businesses. The low-cost initiative matches local artists to businesses along Germantown's commercial corridors to upgrade window displays and interior spaces that are visible from the street.

## BUSINESS GOALS

- 4 Build a strong foundation for corridor growth
- 5 Retain and attract shoppers and visitors
- 6 Support existing businesses and attract new businesses
- 7 Promote an arts-based economy



# BUSINESS







Carmen Seldon-Scott stands in front of some of her products at the Juneteenth Parade on 52nd Street.



Juneteenth Parade march



Sharif Abdur-Rahim, one of two founding brothers of West Philadelphia's African Cultural Arts Forum, stands in a second-floor workshop used to store African art and to produce the oils, incense and personal-care products they sell.









## 4 Build a strong foundation for corridor growth



While the 52nd Street Commercial Corridor is primed for revitalization, it can lack the institutional capacity necessary to achieve that goal. The fourth goal is aimed at strengthening business networks to secure public buy-in for the Action Plan and to build a robust, resilient Corridor.

### Strategies & Actions

#### 4.1 Revive a robust business association for Corridor-wide coordination

ID	ACTION	ALIGNMENT WITH EXISTING PLANS
4.1.1	Conduct outreach to businesses along 52nd Street to create a plan for capacity building	   
4.1.2	Coordinate quarterly meetings for the term of the Action Plan	   

#### 4.2 Expand access to government programs that provide services or funding to businesses

ID	ACTION	ALIGNMENT WITH EXISTING PLANS
4.2.1	Hold events at The Enterprise Center's newly-constructed 52nd Street headquarters to raise awareness of existing business assistance programs with community partners	   

The Covid-19 pandemic has had many negative repercussions for the Commercial Corridor, but one key impact was the disintegration of the 52nd Street Stakeholders Group, which was the area's formal business association. Goal 4's first strategy is to reestablish this group as the 52nd Street Business Association to engage commercial interests along the Corridor. This will serve to build capacity to implement the Action Plan, as well as future improvements noted in the Investment Playbook.

Business associations are important tools for commercial areas. Members can share knowledge, network, and join together to influence the development of the Corridor.

The Corridor Manager will conduct outreach to businesses to rebuild this group so that ultimately the 52nd Street Business Association can build capacity and strengthen resilience to future economic shocks along the Commercial Corridor.

TEC is currently in the process of constructing its new headquarters on the 52nd Street Commercial Corridor. Once complete, Goal 4's second strategy recommends that TEC hold events and public meetings on business assistance programs to raise awareness of such initiatives, conduct outreach to local businesses, and build relationships with local owners and workers. Events could include walk-in hours, presentations, or networking



**Restoring the 52nd Street Stakeholders Group**

The 52nd Street Commercial Corridor had an active business association until 2020, when it unfortunately fell victim to the Covid-19 pandemic. Then called the 52nd Street Stakeholders Group, it helped to share resources around the Corridor with the help of TEC. Business associations can serve as a collaborative space for owners to discuss best practices, funding sources, and more.

**Organizations Providing Business Assistance:**





## 5 Retain and attract shoppers and visitors



To reestablish itself as a vibrant destination, the 52nd Street Commercial Corridor must focus on retaining and attracting shoppers and visitors. TEC can increase its visibility and appeal through restoring nightlife on the Corridor and creating a thorough business directory to help drive shoppers to the area.

### Strategies & Actions








#### 5.1 Increase nightlife

ID	ACTION	ALIGNMENT WITH EXISTING PLANS
5.1.1	Hold one event annually where businesses extend their hours at night	   
5.1.2	Incorporate lighting into storefronts	   

#### 5.2 Build a business directory

ID	ACTION	ALIGNMENT WITH EXISTING PLANS
5.2.1	Construct a directory of businesses for The Enterprise Center's website	   

#### 5.3 Update and expand Corridor branding

ID	ACTION	ALIGNMENT WITH EXISTING PLANS
5.3.1	Consult with the business association to determine appropriate branding for the Corridor	   
5.3.2	Work with a consultant to create a branding plan following the business association's discussions	   

To increase nightlife along the 52nd Street Commercial Corridor, this Action Plan recommends that TEC help to hold an annual event where businesses extend their hours at night. This could be paired with other Corridor events, such as movie nights at Malcolm X Park, or a special event to showcase businesses. Additionally, incorporating lighting into storefronts through the Storefront Improvement Program can make the area more welcoming at night. Better visibility along the street will create a safer environment and encourage increased foot traffic.

Another way to attract more shoppers to the Corridor is to build a business directory

hosted on TEC's website. By having a full and complete list of businesses, their addresses, and their hours, TEC can help to drive visits to stores on 52nd Street.

Lastly, creating an updated and expanded brand for the 52nd Street Commercial Corridor can make it a destination with a definite sense of place. TEC can consult with the 52nd Street Business Association to determine what kind of branding would be suitable for the Corridor and work with a consultant to create a detailed branding plan according to those discussions. This would be reflective of the community's vision for 52nd Street.

**Rendering: Extended Nighttime Hours**



Photo by Theresa Stiggle | Stacy Adams shoe store

**BEFORE**

Street Trees

Storefront Lighting



Street Light

Extended Hours

**AFTER**

## 6 Support existing businesses and attract new businesses



The 52nd Street Commercial Corridor has to both protect its existing businesses and draw in new ones. TEC is already heavily involved in both of these endeavors and should aim to continue or expand its existing work. This includes sponsoring more storefronts to improve their physical appearance as well as helping local small businesses to expand their footprints.

### Strategies & Actions

#### 6.1 Continue to improve streetfront facades

ID	ACTION	ALIGNMENT WITH EXISTING PLANS				
6.1.1	Create storefront signage and appearance guidelines for businesses along the Corridor		WALK 52ND	VISION ZERO PHILADELPHIA		
6.1.2	Double the number of storefronts who receive funding from the Store Improvement Program		WALK 52ND	VISION ZERO PHILADELPHIA		

#### 6.2 Continue to support local start-ups

ID	ACTION	ALIGNMENT WITH EXISTING PLANS				
6.2.1	Hold at least one annual pop-up event focusing on local small businesses		WALK 52ND	VISION ZERO PHILADELPHIA		
6.2.2	Work with the Center for Culinary Enterprises (CCE) to pilot at least one food installation along 52nd Street		WALK 52ND	VISION ZERO PHILADELPHIA		
6.2.3	Actively market vacant storefronts and buildings to potential tenants or owners		WALK 52ND	VISION ZERO PHILADELPHIA		

TEC has already helped 19 businesses along the 52nd Street Commercial Corridor to fix up their storefronts using the City of Philadelphia's Storefront Improvement Program. TEC can help additional businesses to take advantage of this program while offering guidance that any renovations should fit a certain appearance for Corridor branding and consistency. Additionally, as the City will now be covering up to 75 percent of costs for the program as opposed to 50 percent, TEC can assist more businesses in receiving funding.

TEC is heavily involved in supporting local small and Black-owned businesses, and continuing this work can help such endeavors thrive. TEC should continue to hold one annual event promoting small business, like 2022's Black Holiday Pop-Up Shop. It should also use its programs like the Center for Culinary Enterprises (CCE) to identify entrepreneurs who are ready to pilot a brick-and-mortar eatery on the Corridor in a TEC-owned building. Additionally, marketing vacancies along the Corridor can help to bring in new businesses or ones that TEC already supports.

**Proposed storefront signage and appearance guidelines**

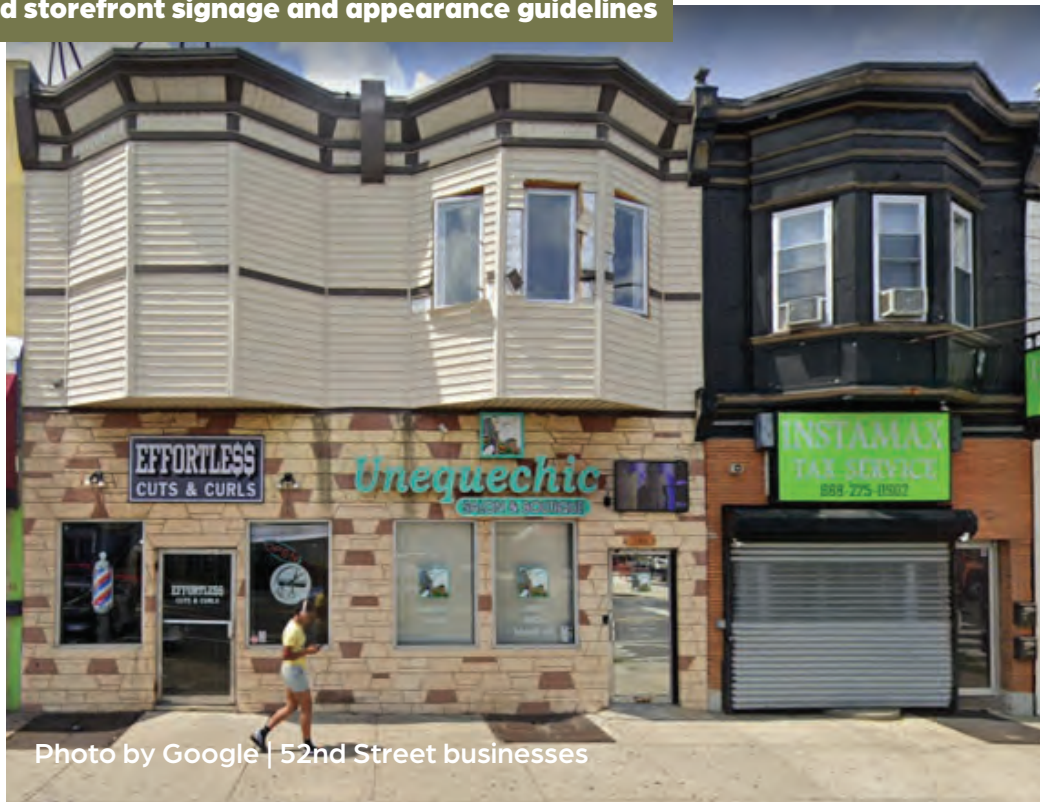


Photo by Google | 52nd Street businesses













## 7 Promote an arts-based economy





The 52nd Street Commercial Corridor has a long and storied history of arts and culture. TEC should capitalize on this identity to drive economic growth along the Corridor. By restoring historic landmarks and expanding arts programming, 52nd Street can continue to be a destination for visitors and create economic opportunities for businesses and artists.

### Strategies & Actions

#### 7.1 Work towards restoring Bushfire Theatre and other key historic locations

ID	ACTION	ALIGNMENT WITH EXISTING PLANS
7.1.1	Identify at-risk historic properties to create an inventory for future funding and preservation	    
7.1.2	Seek Historical Designation for the Bushfire Theatre and other properties as appropriate	    

#### 7.2 Expand arts programming along the Corridor

ID	ACTION	ALIGNMENT WITH EXISTING PLANS
7.2.1	Partner with African Cultural Art Forum and Urban Art Gallery to host one annual Art Night	    
7.2.2	Publicize murals and other local art through Mural Arts Philadelphia	    
7.2.3	Create new and enhance existing tourism programs based on various cultural experiences unique to 52nd Street	    

An important first step to promoting an arts-based economy is to identify at-risk historic properties to create an inventory for preservation and funding, with the ultimate goal of receiving historical designation. For example, the Bushfire Theatre is one of the last venues left from 52nd Street's heyday and will be submitted for historical designation to help open up new funding avenues for infrastructural improvements.

Expanding arts programming is a key strategy for strengthening an arts-based economy on the 52nd Street Commercial Corridor. TEC can partner with the African Cultural Art Forum (ACAF) and Urban Art Gallery to host

one Art Night annually, which will showcase the works of local artists and provide them a platform to connect with community members. Additionally, TEC can promote and further the existing public art of 52nd Street through Mural Arts Philadelphia by collaborating with community members and local artists to imagine and lead projects that build social capital and develop a sense of communal ownership over space. Finally, TEC can create or enhance new tourism programs in partnership with the City of Philadelphia and Visit Philadelphia based on the unique culture of 52nd Street, drawing in new visitors to the Corridor.



Map 13. Proposed Neighborhood Art Walk

Painted Bride Art Center



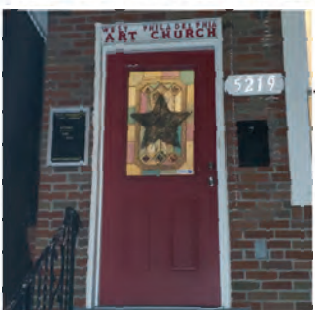
Bushfire Theatre



Urban Art Gallery



Art Church of West Philadelphia



Lucien E. Blackwell  
West Philadelphia Regional Library



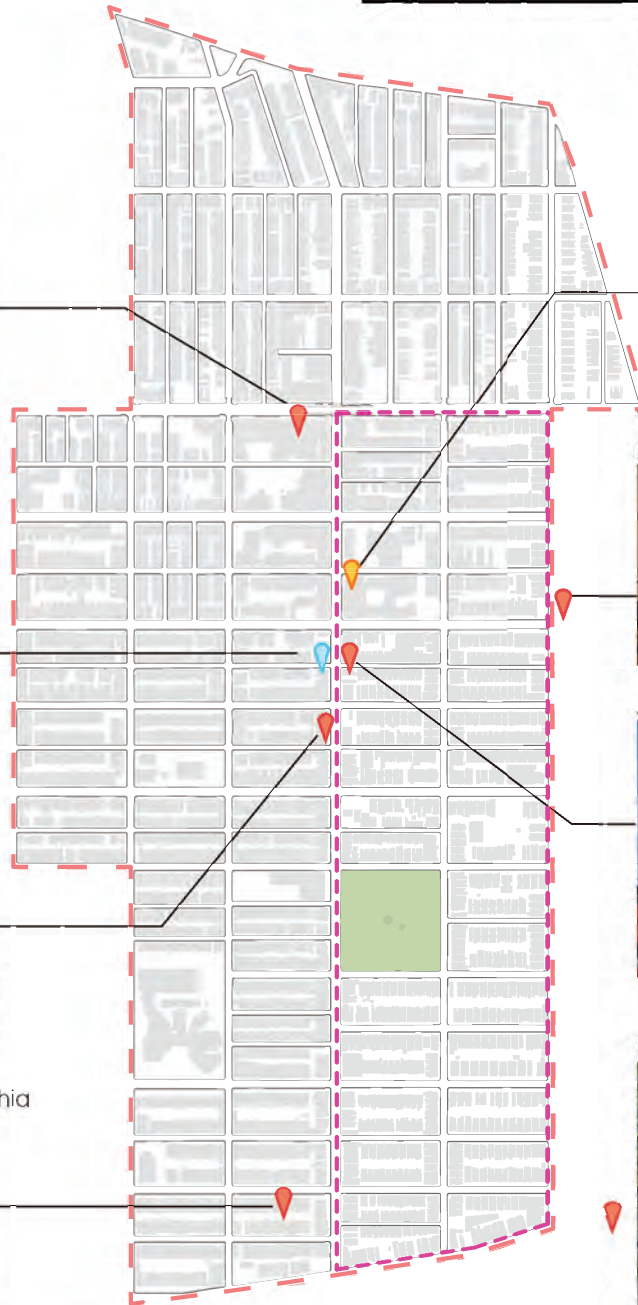
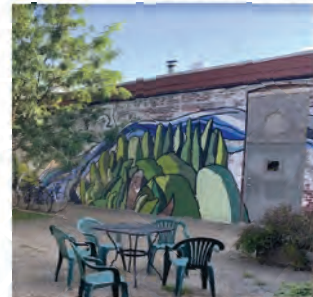
West Philadelphia Cultural Alliance  
Paul Robeson House & Museum



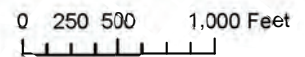
African Cultural Art Forum



Power of Paint Art Academy



--- Potential Art Walk Route  
 📍 Local Arts & Culture Centers



## NEIGHBORHOOD GOALS

- 8 Increase perception of safety and trust
- 9 Build local community capacity
- 10 Protect renters and homeowners
- 11 Modernize housing structures



# NEIGHBORHOOD



Cleaning at the  
Malcolm X Park



One of the Love Letter Murals series in the Study Area.



Della Clark, president/CEO of The Enterprise Center, speaks during a news conference held to highlight new federal funding.

## 8 Increase perception of safety and trust



The 52nd Street Commercial Corridor and its residents are harmed by perceptions of safety and trust in the neighborhood. It creates both a physical and emotional toll for people who live and work along the Corridor, as well as discourages new visitors. This Action Plan aims to begin to ease longstanding tensions with PPD and reduce gun violence by investing in community programming and building relationships with local Police Districts.

### Strategies & Actions

#### 8.1 Build stronger connections between police and local residents

ID	ACTION	ALIGNMENT WITH EXISTING PLANS
8.1.1	Create opportunities for socialization between residents and police	WALK 52ND VISION ZERO PHILADELPHIA GLOBE TREE
8.1.2	Continue to build the relationship between the Corridor Manager and the Philadelphia Police Department	WALK 52ND VISION ZERO PHILADELPHIA GLOBE TREE

#### 8.2 Continue to support efforts to reduce gun violence

ID	ACTION	ALIGNMENT WITH EXISTING PLANS
8.2.1	Support and grow neighborhood-based youth programming led by local organizations and community members	WALK 52ND VISION ZERO PHILADELPHIA GLOBE TREE
8.2.2	Connect teens and young adults to training, mentoring, and job placement programs	WALK 52ND VISION ZERO PHILADELPHIA GLOBE TREE
8.2.3	Explore community-based violence prevention programs	WALK 52ND VISION ZERO PHILADELPHIA GLOBE TREE

People who live and work along 52nd Street historically have not felt supported by PPD. This damaged relationship prevents beneficial collaborations that could help to reduce violent crime along the Corridor. Creating opportunities for residents and PPD to interact outside of formal uniformed encounters and establishing ties between TEC's 52nd Street Corridor Manager and PPD can build the community trust necessary to reduce violent crime.

The 52nd Street Commercial Corridor and surrounding study area is plagued by gun violence. TEC should continue to support programming for youth, including after school initiatives or access to employment, that can keep them engaged. TEC should work with citywide partners such as ACHIEVEability, the Philadelphia Youth Network, and the Philadelphia Office of Violence Prevention, among others, to implement programming and explore new ways to reduce gun violence.



### **CASE STUDY: Game Changer**

The Game Changer model brings together law enforcement and community members to participate in moderated focus groups followed by sporting events or concerts. Spending social time together out of uniform allows for participants to educate each other and challenge preexisting notions.



### **CASE STUDY: PowerCorpsPHL**

PowerCorpsPHL connects disconnected young adults and people with justice system involvement to employment opportunities in the environmental sector. Individuals start by exploring different career options before choosing a specific work placement or enrollment in an industry academy for on-the-job training.

## 9 Build local community capacity



In order to implement this ambitious Action Plan, TEC must invest in building community capacity along the Corridor and within the study area. Residents with knowledge of how city planning and legal processes work can help to inform the future development of their neighborhood and limit the effects of gentrification. Additionally, a stronger sense of community can encourage residents and businesses to invest more into 52nd Street and provide protection against outside interests.

### Strategies & Actions

#### 9.1 Empower residents to guide future development

ID	ACTION	ALIGNMENT WITH EXISTING PLANS
9.1.1	Help interested residents apply for the Citizens Planning Institute (CPI)	   
9.1.2	Create a stakeholder resident group with participants of the CPI	   

#### 9.2 Strengthen sense of community

ID	ACTION	ALIGNMENT WITH EXISTING PLANS
9.2.1	Send a bimonthly newsletter to keep residents informed about events, news, and resources in the community	   
9.2.2	Capitalize on the local history and heritage of 52nd Street through public art and marketing efforts	   

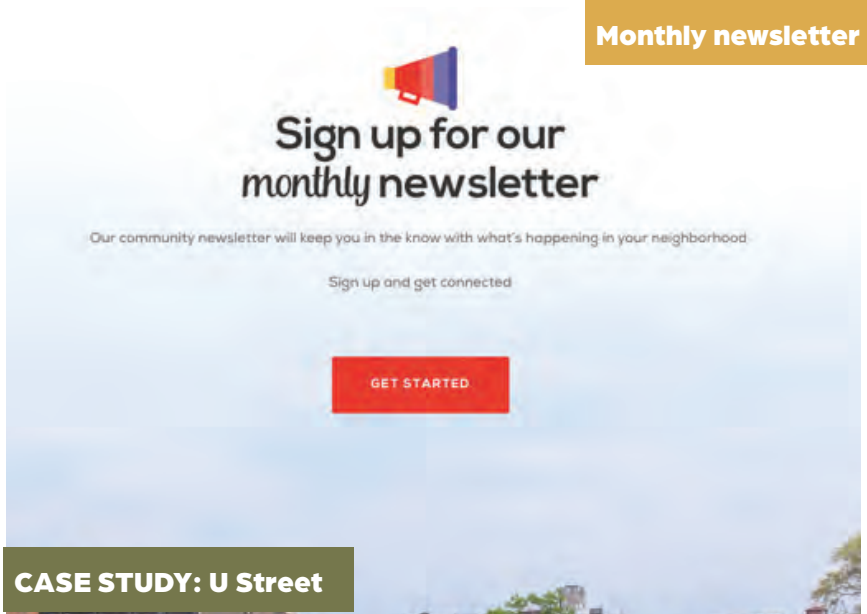
Part of the Philadelphia City Planning Commission (PCPC), the Citizen's Planning Institute (CPI) provides knowledge to Philadelphians who want to take a leading role in influencing the future landscape of the City. By helping interested study area residents apply for the CPI, TEC can build a team of empowered stakeholders who can conduct outreach throughout the Commercial Corridor and surrounding neighborhood, support revitalization efforts, and give a voice to residents who otherwise may not have had a say in local development.

Another way to build community capacity is for TEC to help strengthen a sense of place for study area residents. Awareness of community events and resources can help people to get out and about, where they can meet their neighbors or shop at local businesses. Additionally, placemaking efforts like public art, which are already used throughout the Commercial Corridor, can help to bolster the community.



**CASE STUDY: Citizens Planning Institute (CPI)**

CPI is a branch of the Philadelphia City Planning Commission, which works to educate residents of different Philadelphia neighborhoods on the activities of planning, zoning, and development processes. CPI offers an eight-week training course for residents interested in getting involved in the future development of their neighborhoods so that they can take an active role in shaping their neighborhood.



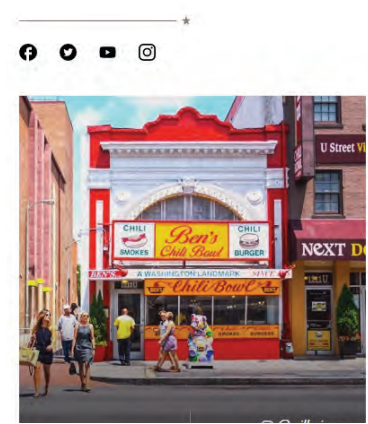
**Monthly newsletter**

**CASE STUDY: U Street**

U Street in Washington, D.C. is a hub of Black culture, music, and nightlife. To keep community members and visitors up-to-date on events around the neighborhood, the local CDC, District Bridges, offers a monthly newsletter specific to the U Street area. In this newsletter, subscribers are notified about new businesses opening, thematic community evening events, holiday shops, and where to locate specific small businesses. Additionally, the hashtag #MYDCcool keeps tagged U Street photos and event postings in one place for social media users to follow happenings around the neighborhood and share their own stories.

**#MyDCcool #MyDCcool**

Get your groove on in DC's U Street neighborhood. Learn more about everything from the best jazz bars to where to get your hands on the most famous chili bowl in DC. Share your U Street story.











# 10 Protect renters and homeowners











Residents of the 52nd Street Commercial Corridor study area are at risk of gentrification as development from University City creeps westward. This Action Plan aims to protect existing residents from this expansion, as well as from any cost of living increases that could result from Corridor revitalization. TEC should continue to connect residents to existing programs and ensure that those who wish to can remain in place.

## Strategies & Actions

### 10.1 Connect residents to existing programs

ID	ACTION	ALIGNMENT WITH EXISTING PLANS
10.1.1	Offer quarterly classes and educational resources to provide a range of legal, financial, and other technical advice to renters and homeowners	   
10.1.2	Partner with existing groups to give presentations to renters and homeowners	   

### 10.2 Preserve existing homeowners and increase affordable homeownership

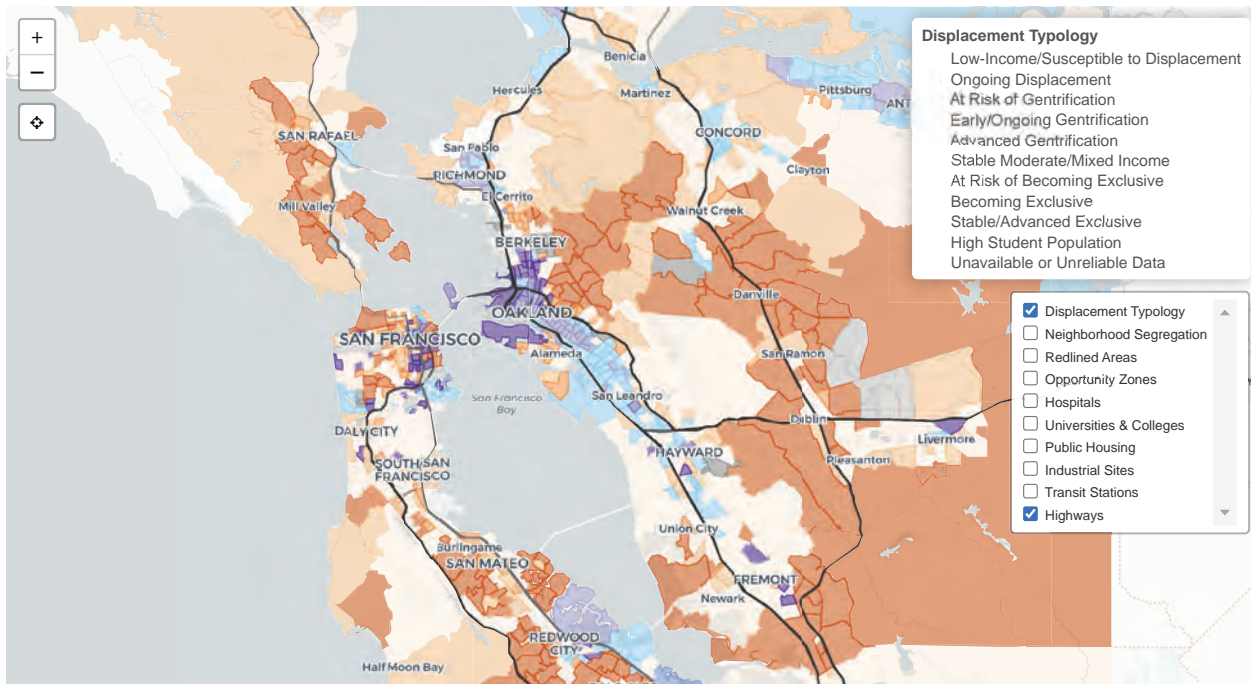
ID	ACTION	ALIGNMENT WITH EXISTING PLANS
10.2.1	Continue to work with current land and business owners and new developers to create new affordable and market-rate housing	   
10.2.2	Collect and summarize data on the 52nd Street area housing market to evaluate gentrification risks	   

Philadelphia has a wealth of existing programs and organizations focusing on housing affordability and combating gentrification. As the Neighborhood Advisory Committee for the 52nd Street Commercial Corridor and surrounding study area, TEC can offer quarterly classes at its new headquarters and partner with established groups, like Community Legal Services, to educate local renters and homeowners on existing funding or technical assistance.

TEC is already increasing its involvement in land use decisions along the 52nd Street Commercial Corridor through property purchases. TEC should continue to guide development by working with landowners and incoming developers to advocate for affordable housing for residents of the study area. Importantly, TEC should also collect data on the housing market surrounding the Commercial Corridor to adequately assess the risk of gentrification and to highlight priority zones for assistance.



## SF Bay Area – Gentrification and Displacement



### CASE STUDY: Evaluating Gentrification Risks

The City of San Francisco has faced ongoing challenges of gentrification due to its proximity to Silicon Valley. As a result, the San Francisco Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development has collaborated with the Urban Displacement Project to better understand and predict current and future locations of gentrification and displacement in the Bay Area through a community research process. This led to the creation of maps that summarize housing market dynamics and gentrification risk based on household incomes and housing costs. The tool used to develop these maps is open-source and can be used by any organization looking to better understand and mitigate the negative impacts of housing instability.









# 11 Modernize housing structures











The majority of housing stock on and surrounding 52nd Street was built more than 80 years ago. Such structures may be struggling with deferred maintenance and a lack of modern amenities, or may not be safe. To allow residents to remain in place in their communities, TEC should ensure awareness of existing resources for home repairs and examine ways to allow senior citizens to stay in their homes.

## Strategies & Actions

### 11.1 Explore ways for residents to age in place

ID	ACTION	ALIGNMENT WITH EXISTING PLANS
11.1.1	Survey local residents and in-home health care agencies on needs for aging in place	   
11.1.2	Identify appropriate funding opportunities for aging in place initiatives	   

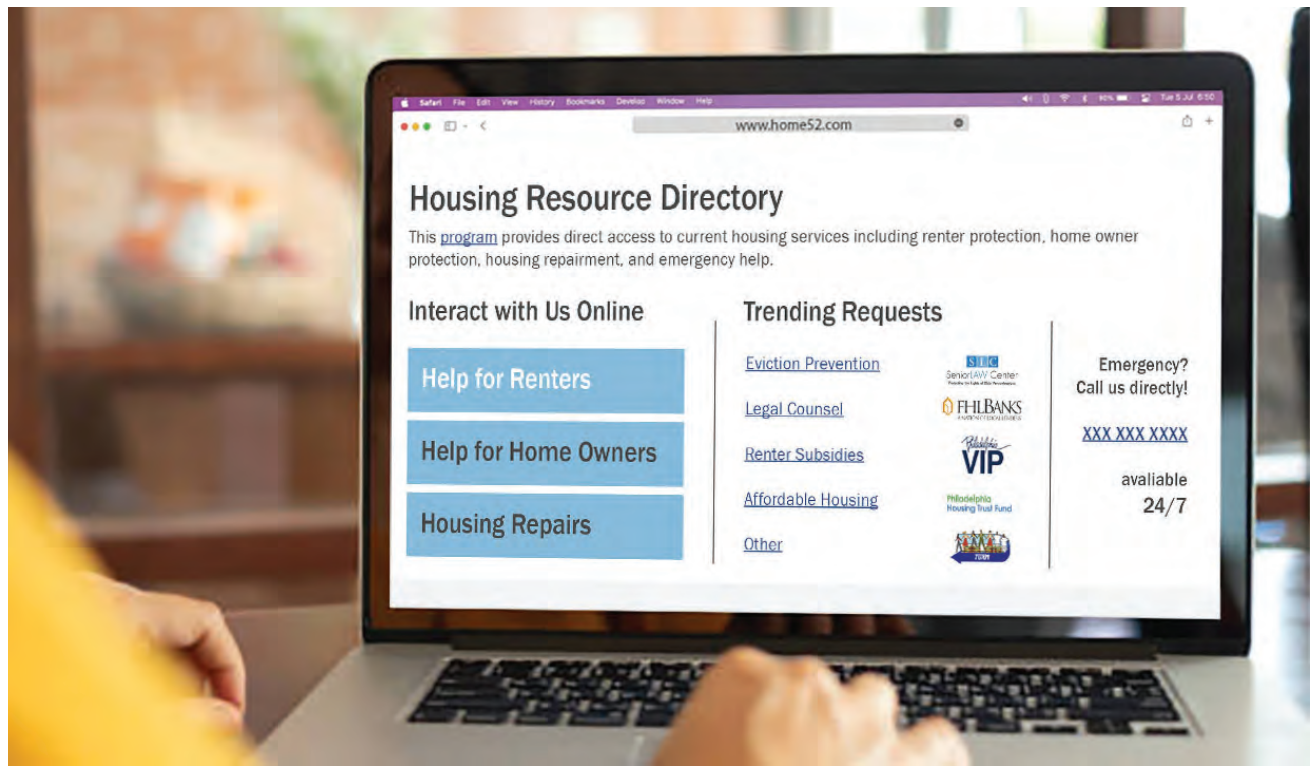
### 11.2 Expand access to government programs

ID	ACTION	ALIGNMENT WITH EXISTING PLANS
11.2.1	Conduct an educational campaign for the Whole Home Repairs Program	   
11.2.2	Create and maintain an online and up-to-date resource directory of government programs for home repairs and upgrades, such as Rebuilding Together	   

Older residents are at risk from not only gentrification, but also homes with inadequate infrastructure. Senior citizens can struggle with tasks like going up and down stairs, taking showers, or replacing the batteries in their smoke detectors. TEC can begin to explore this issue by surveying local residents and in-home health care agencies on the Corridor about their needs for staying in their homes, and then seek out funding or existing programs for those needs.

There are a wealth of existing funding sources for making home improvements. Recently, the Pennsylvania State Legislature enacted the Whole-Home Repairs Program to assist with home improvements and weatherization. Funding for this initiative will begin to roll out in the summer of 2023. TEC should work with State Senator Nikil Saval and Councilwoman Jamie Gauthier to conduct an education campaign for study area residents around this new program. Additionally, TEC can create and maintain a housing resource directory to serve as a one-stop shop for residents who are looking to make home repairs.

## Proposed Housing Resource Directory



### Age Friendly Seattle

Action Plan 2018–2021

### CASE STUDY: Age Friendly Seattle

Age Friendly Seattle was created under the Seattle Mayor’s Office for Senior Citizens to operationalize a citywide commitment to supporting older adults. The program administers age-friendly discounts and events and connects older residents to resources on housing, transportation, and social programs.



# IMPLEMENTATION



Corridor	ID	Task	2024 - 2025	2025 - 2026
		1.1.1	Complete the Neighborhood Slow Zone application	█
	1.1.2	Recommend specific traffic calming measures	█	█
	1.2.1	Request a PennDOT traffic calming study	█	█
	1.2.2	Leverage PWD green stormwater investment	█	█
	2.1.1	Partner with PPR and PHS on tree planting	█	█
	2.1.2	Hold one annual tree planting event	█	█
	2.2.1	Install lighting under the EI	█	█
	2.2.2	Incorporate lighting into storefronts	█	█
	2.2.3	Work with 311 to fix broken lights	█	█
	2.3.1	Seek funding for weekend cleaning	█	█
	2.3.2	Seek funding to hire the formerly incarcerated	█	█
	3.1.1	Create Storefront Activation Program	█	█
	3.1.2	Create internal list of vacant or underutilized storefronts	█	█
	3.2.1	Survey business association for second floor reuse	█	█
	3.2.2	Facilitate second floor reuse pilot	█	█
	3.2.3	Create a guide for second floor reuse	█	█

2026 – 2027	2027 – 2028	2028 – 2029	COST	SOURCES	PARTNERS
			\$	OTIS	OTIS; Councilwoman Jamie Gauthier
			\$	PennDOT	OTIS
			\$	PennDOT	PennDOT
			\$	PWD	PWD
			\$	PHS	PPR; PHS Tree Tenders Program
			\$ \$	TEC	PPR; PHS; TD Bank
			\$ \$ \$	Philadelphia Streets Department, "Vision Zero"	Philadelphia Department of Commerce
			\$ \$	Storefront Improvement Program	Department of Commerce
			\$	City's general fund for maintaining/repairing public infrastructure	311
			\$	Philadelphia Taking Care of Business Program (PHL TCB)	Philadelphia Streets Department
			\$	Philadelphia Works	Philadelphia Reentry Coalition; Employment Opportunities Center
			\$ \$	TEC	Local Artist Groups
			\$	TEC	52nd Street Business Association
			\$	TEC	52nd Street Business Association
			\$ \$ \$	TEC	52nd Street Business Association
			\$ \$	TEC	Experienced local architects/developers; local universities

\* \$ in thousands, \$\$ in ten-thousands, \$\$\$ in hundred-thousands

ID	Task	2024 – 2025	2025 – 2026
4.1.1	Conduct business outreach to create build capacity	[Task bar spanning 2024-2025 and 2025-2026]	
4.1.2	Coordinate quarterly meetings of the business association	[Task bar spanning 2024-2025 and 2025-2026]	
4.2.1	Hold events to raise awareness of business assistance programs	[Task bar spanning 2024-2025 and 2025-2026]	
5.1.1	Hold one annual nighttime business event	[Task bar spanning 2024-2025 and 2025-2026]	
5.2.1	Construct business directory	[Task bar in 2024-2025]	[Task bar in 2025-2026]
5.3.1	Determine corridor branding with business association	[Task bar in 2024-2025]	[Task bar in 2025-2026]
5.3.2	Create branding plan with consultant	[Task bar in 2024-2025]	[Task bar in 2025-2026]
6.1.1	Create signage and appearance guidelines for businesses	[Task bar in 2024-2025]	[Task bar in 2025-2026]
6.1.2	Double storefronts who receive Storefront Improvement funding	[Task bar in 2024-2025]	[Task bar in 2025-2026]
6.2.1	Hold one annual small business pop-up event	[Task bar spanning 2024-2025 and 2025-2026]	
6.2.2	Pilot at least one food installation	[Task bar in 2024-2025]	[Task bar in 2025-2026]
6.2.3	Actively market vacant storefronts and buildings	[Task bar spanning 2024-2025 and 2025-2026]	
7.1.1	Create an inventory of at-risk historic properties	[Task bar in 2024-2025]	[Task bar in 2025-2026]
7.1.2	Seek historical designation for the Bushfire Theatre	[Task bar in 2024-2025]	[Task bar in 2025-2026]
7.2.1	Host one annual Art Night	[Task bar spanning 2024-2025 and 2025-2026]	
7.2.2	Publicize murals and local art with Conrad Benner	[Task bar in 2024-2025]	[Task bar in 2025-2026]
7.2.3	Create new and enhance existing cultural tourism programs	[Task bar spanning 2024-2025 and 2025-2026]	

**Business**



2026 – 2027	2027 – 2028	2028 – 2029	COST	SOURCES	PARTNERS
			\$	TEC	52nd Street Business Association+Local Universities
			\$\$	TEC	52nd Street Business Association
			\$\$	TEC	52nd Street Business Association; ACHIEVEability
			\$\$	TEC	52nd Street Business Association
			\$	TEC	52nd Street Business Association
			\$	TEC	52nd Street Business Association
			\$\$	TEC	52nd Street Business Association
			\$\$	TEC	Department of Commerce
			\$\$	TEC	52nd Street Business Association
			\$\$	TEC	52nd Street Business Association
			\$\$	TEC	N/A
			\$	TEC	N/A
			\$	Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia	Philadelphia Historical Commission
			\$	National Park Service's Historic Preservation Fund (HPF)	Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission
			\$\$	Philadelphia Cultural Fund	ACAF; Urban Art Gallery
			\$	Philadelphia Office of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy	Mural Arts Philadelphia
			\$\$	Philadelphia Department of Commerce	Philadelphia Convention & Visitors Bureau (PHLCVB)

\* \$ in thousands, \$\$ in ten-thousands, \$\$\$ in hundred-thousands

		2024 - 2025	2025 - 2026
<b>Neighborhood</b>	8.1.1	Coordinate quarterly meetings of the business association	
	8.1.2	Continue building relationship between Corridor Manager and police	
	8.2.1	Support and grow neighborhood-based youth programming	
	8.2.2	Connect teens and young adults to training and job programs	
	8.2.3	Explore community-based violence prevention programs	
	9.1.1	Enroll interested residents in the CPI	
	9.1.2	Create a stakeholder resident group with CPI participants	
	9.2.1	Send a bimonthly newsletter to keep residents informed	
	9.2.2	Capitalize on local history, heritage through public art, marketing	
	10.1.1	Offer quarterly classes for renters and homeowners	
	10.1.2	Offer partner presentations for renters and homeowners	
	10.2.1	Help create affordable and market-rate housing	
	10.2.2	Collect data on gentrification risks	
	11.1.1	Survey local residents on needs for aging in place	
	11.1.2	Identify funding opportunities for aging in place	
	11.2.1	Conduct outreach for Whole Home Repairs program	
	11.2.2	Create and maintain a home improvements program directory	

2026 – 2027	2027 – 2028	2028 – 2029	COST	SOURCES	PARTNERS
			\$ \$	Philadelphia Police Department	Gamechanger
			\$	N/A	N/A
			\$ \$	Philadelphia Department of Parks and Recreation	ACHIEVEability, YMCA
			\$ \$	Philadelphia Works	Philadelphia Youth Network
			\$	OVP	OVP, Police Department
			\$	N/A	DPD
			\$	N/A	DPD
			\$	TEC	Department of Commerce
			\$ \$	The Philadelphia Cultural Fund	N/A
			\$ \$	TEC	Variety of partners
			\$	Fair Housing Compliance	Community Legal Services
			\$	TEC	N/A
			\$	TEC	Nowak
			\$	TEC	N/A
			\$	TEC	N/A
			\$ \$	PHDC Rental Improvement Fund	Office of Councilwoman Jamie Gauthier
			\$ \$	TTEC	Rebuilding Together; West District plan; 0 percent loans water

\* \$ in thousands, \$\$ in ten-thousands, \$\$\$ in hundred-thousands

# Endnotes

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