

GRAYS FERRY 2030



**NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN
BUILDING RESILIENCE**

Purpose

This plan, Grays Ferry 2030, is intended to mitigate current challenges and propose solutions that will result in positive community and economic development in Grays Ferry. The plan seeks to provide actionable recommendations that will ensure Grays Ferry will develop in a way that honors both its history and the current needs of its residents.

Grays Ferry 2030 is the result of the semester-long Spring 2020 Planning Workshop course within the University of Pennsylvania Stuart Weitzman School of Design's Master of City and Regional Planning curriculum.

Acknowledgments

The team would like to thank everyone who was involved in the Spring 2020 Workshop course including all instructors and staff. We especially appreciate the feedback and guidance from our partner team Mantua/East Parkside and its instructor, Lizzie Hessek. We recognize that the Spring 2020 semester has been characterized by uncertainty and adjustments in light of the public health circumstances; we especially want to applaud the leadership and grace that our instructor, Joanna Winchester, displayed in helping the team transition to an online course.

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4 Introduction

8 Existing Conditions

28 Opportunities and Issues

34 Goals

38 Recommendations

70 Implementation

82 Conclusion and Appendix

Introduction



Grays Ferry is...

Grays Ferry is a dynamic neighborhood that has demonstrated continuous resilience in the face of adversity. Historically a center for industry, the neighborhood currently balances industrial and residential uses and must also balance their associated and sometimes conflicting needs.

Grays Ferry's 13,000 residents are located adjacent to the former Philadelphia Energy Solutions (PES) refinery, the largest oil refinery on the East Coast. While the presence of industry - especially the refinery - has contributed to Philadelphia's economic growth, Grays Ferry's residents have borne the brunt of its downsides without seeing commensurate economic benefit. The neighborhood's industrial quality poses several issues for residents (environmental harm, social isolation, and development pressures, to name a few), but Grays Ferry has great potential to build off its residents' robust civic engagement and activism and open up the possibility for greener development, improved social connectivity, and economic growth in the future.

Governance

One of the most powerful units of governance in Philadelphia is the City Council, which comprises seventeen council members. The City Council functions as the legislative branch of the city government and primarily serves to enact laws and adopt the city's operating budget; the council also determines who sits on various city boards and commissions. Grays Ferry lies within City Council District 2, which contains all of South Philadelphia, and has been represented by Kenyatta Johnson since 2012.

At the state-level, Grays Ferry is in Philadelphia 186th Congressional District and has been represented by Jordan Harris (D) since 2012. It is also in Pennsylvania's 8th State Senate District and has been represented by Anthony H. Williams (D) since 1999. Senator Williams has been the Democratic Whip of the Pennsylvania Senate since 2011.

Grays Ferry has...



Active community organizations



Public housing and other residences



Recreation spaces for children



Large industrial land uses



1750: Sparse development



1847: Bridge and railroad transit connections present



1910: Continued development of railroad, rowhouses, and refinery seen

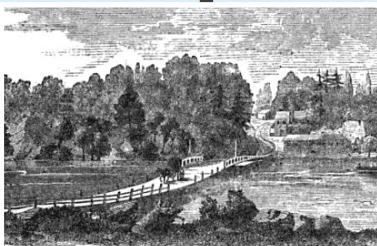


1962: Public housing and the Schuylkill Expressway visible

Neighborhood History

Pre-European Colonization

The indigenous Lenni Lenape people reside in the area.

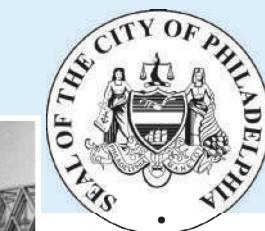


1838

The first bridge across the Schuylkill River is built, bringing rail and industry to Grays Ferry.

1854

The Act of Consolidation incorporates Grays Ferry into the City of Philadelphia.



1682

The proprietary colony of Pennsylvania is created; Grays Ferry is included within early townships.

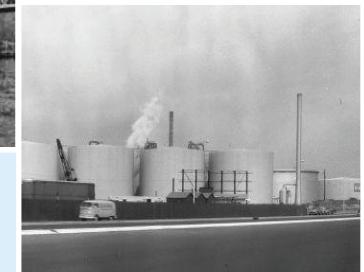
1747

George Gray purchases land south of Philadelphia along the Schuylkill River and runs a ferry crossing and tavern, establishing an important transit connection for the city.



1866

Atlantic Refining Company opens an oil refinery in Grays Ferry. Philadelphia emerges as a major petroleum hub for the growing nation.



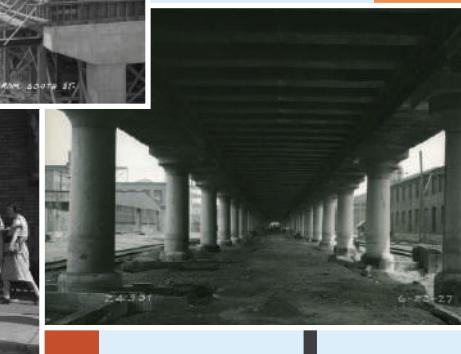
An industrial area in Grays Ferry.

10-18-34

Architectural Record

1918

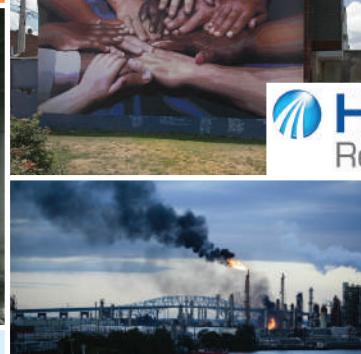
A 5,000 person strong, four day race riot breaks out after a white mob throws a brick into a black woman's window.



Hilco
Redevelopment Partners

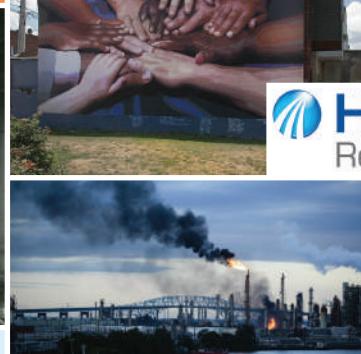
1958

Construction on the Schuylkill Expressway finishes. The expressway bisects Grays Ferry and creates the isolated Forgotten Bottom section of the neighborhood.



2020

Chicago-based developer Hilco Redevelopment Partners buys the PES refinery complex for \$252 million dollars.



1970

Deindustrialization, the Second Great Migration, and white flight lead to a demographic shift from majority white to majority black in the neighborhood. Racial tensions continue to rise.

2019

An explosion at the PES oil refinery complex causes the refinery to cease operations and declare bankruptcy.

Existing Conditions



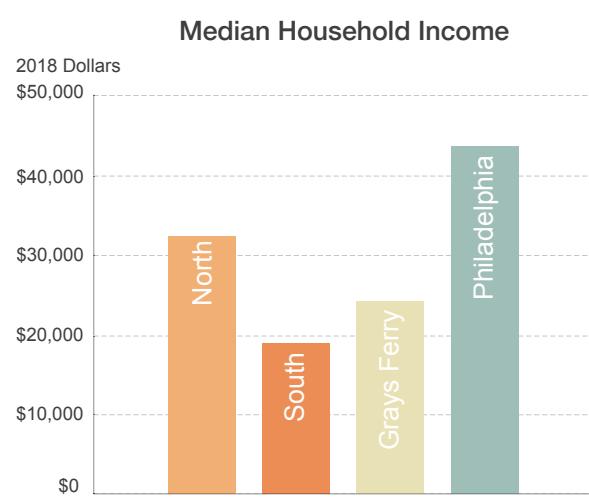
This section provides an overview of existing demographic, economic, education, land use, development, housing, transportation, and environmental conditions in Grays Ferry. This section highlights notable differences in existing conditions between the neighborhood and the City of Philadelphia, as well as changes over time.

Neighborhood Characteristics

Population & Race

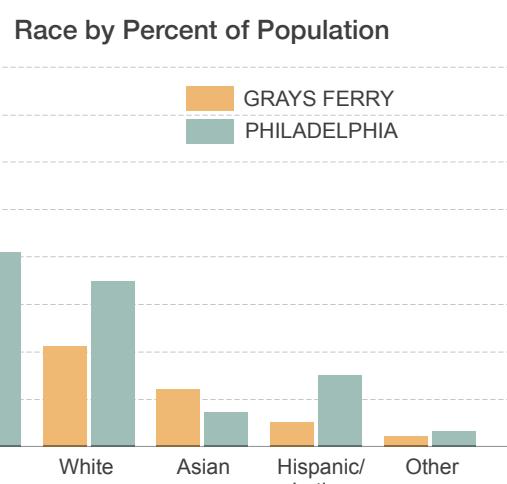
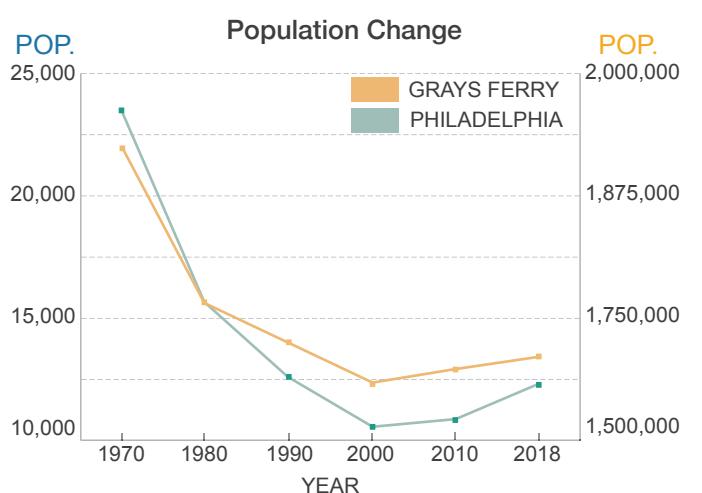
Grays Ferry's population is 13,400 and has grown about 12% since 2000- a rate roughly three times greater than Philadelphia's rate of growth. Changes in total population have mirrored larger trends in Philadelphia as both the city and neighborhood were on a trajectory of decline until 2000 and have been slowly gaining population since then. Grays Ferry has been majority-minority since the 1970s and growth in total population is largely attributable to corresponding growth in minority populations since 2000.

The neighborhood is predominantly Black or African American. Whites make up the next largest population group but their share of total population has actually decreased between 2000 and 2018. While Asians and Hispanics remain a relatively small subgroup within Grays Ferry, both groups have grown substantially between 2000 and 2018 by roughly 565% and 241% respectively.



Poverty Rate in Grays Ferry: **37.8%**

Poverty Rate in Philadelphia: **24.9%**



Income

Grays Ferry is economically less well off as compared to Philadelphia. Median household income in Philadelphia is roughly 1.8 times greater than that of the neighborhood. Large differences in income levels within Grays Ferry also exist. Median household income north of Tasker and Moore Streets is roughly 1.7 times greater than households in the southern half of the neighborhood. The presence of Philadelphia Housing Authority (PHA) public housing developments in the southern half of the neighborhood is most likely the primary driver of this difference as these developments are primarily open only to eligible low income residents.

Income Trends

Income trends vary substantially by race in Grays Ferry

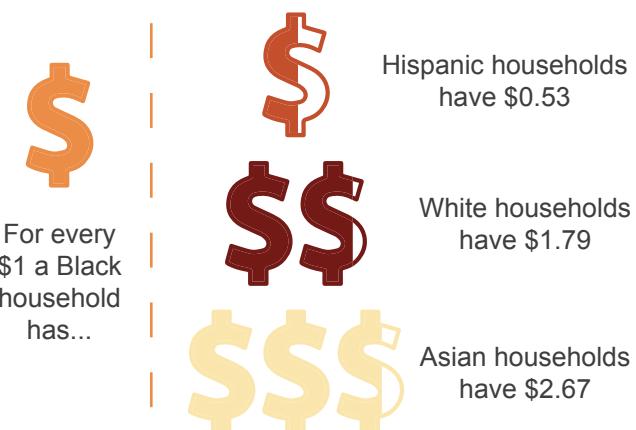
Grays Ferry's households almost all have lower median household incomes in 2018 than they did in 2000, but change in income levels varies substantially by race. Black households, whose income increased 25% to \$19,300 between 2000 and 2018, are the only subgroup to experience positive change. During that same time period, White, Asian, and Hispanic households all saw income fall between 26-28%. In Philadelphia, a contrasting situation has occurred: income for Black households has fallen, income for White and Asian households has increased, and income for Hispanic households has fallen a negligible amount. These shifts point to long-standing economic inequities between different racial groups and suggest that drivers of income change in Grays Ferry are dissimilar to those in Philadelphia.

Employment & Workforce

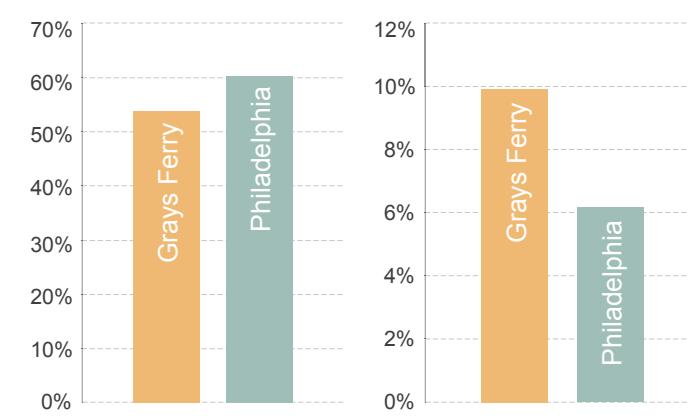
The labor force participation and unemployment rates in Grays Ferry across its northern and southern halves are similar. The female population in Grays Ferry participates in the labor force at a lower rate (49.1%) as compared to their male counterparts (59.5%) and the female population of the city (57.97%). Additionally, while unemployment rates for the neighborhood's total and male populations are similar to those in Philadelphia, the unemployment rate for the female population is 10.1%, nearly twice the unemployment rate for the female population of the city. The lower rate of labor force participation and higher unemployment rate raises concerns that specific barriers to entry exist for women in Grays Ferry and current supports do not effectively bridge that gap.

Most individuals work outside of Grays Ferry. North and West Philadelphia are the largest employment centers for Grays Ferry residents.

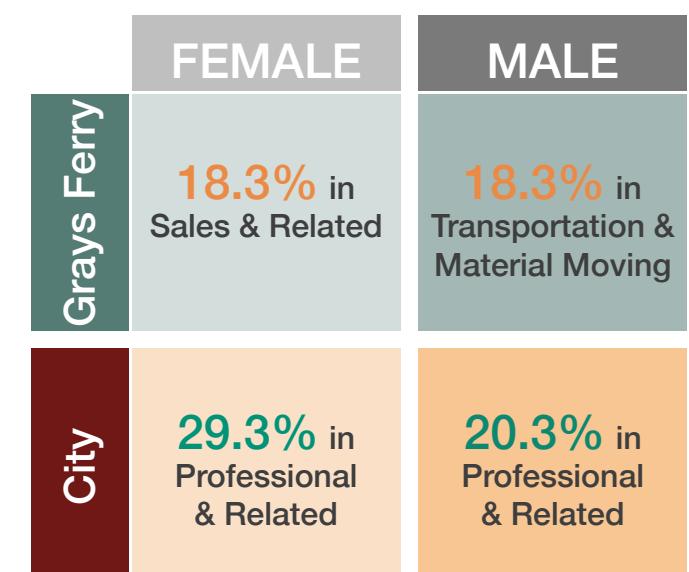
Income Differences by Race



Labor Force Participation Rate Unemployment Rate



Most Common Occupations

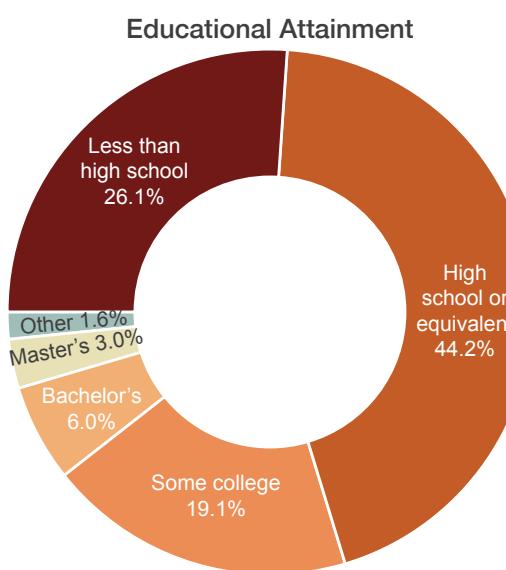


Education

Educational attainment rates are growing

Relative to the city, educational attainment rates are low, raising the possibility that nearby available and high paying jobs may be mismatched to residents' skills. The share of Grays Ferry residents without a high school degree or equivalent is more than twice that of Philadelphia; similarly, the share of Grays Ferry residents who hold a Bachelor's degree is almost three times lower than that of Philadelphia.

However, recent increases in the share of residents with high levels of educational attainment are a positive. In some degree categories, gains in educational attainment are outpacing those of the city. For example, the number of individuals holding a Master's degree increased by 78% in Grays Ferry compared to 58% in Philadelphia between 2010 and 2018.



Universal Charter School at Audenried.



Universal Charter School at Alcorn.

Local schools are making progress

Grays Ferry is home to two charter schools operated by Universal Companies. Both are part of the Renaissance School Initiative implemented by the School District of Philadelphia to improve schools that have had sustained academic and climate challenges that impede students' ability to attend a quality school within their neighborhood. Universal Charter School at Alcorn is the neighborhood's K-8 school. While overall school performance at Alcorn is relatively low, it has demonstrated recent significant growth in academic and school climate metrics. Universal Charter School at Audenried serves 9-12 grade students. Academic achievement is also low. Fewer than 30% of students demonstrated proficiency in ELA/Literacy during the 2018-2019 school year, and fewer than 10% of students demonstrated proficiency in Math/Algebra and Science/Biology. However, significant progress has been made in increasing academic achievement and graduation rates.

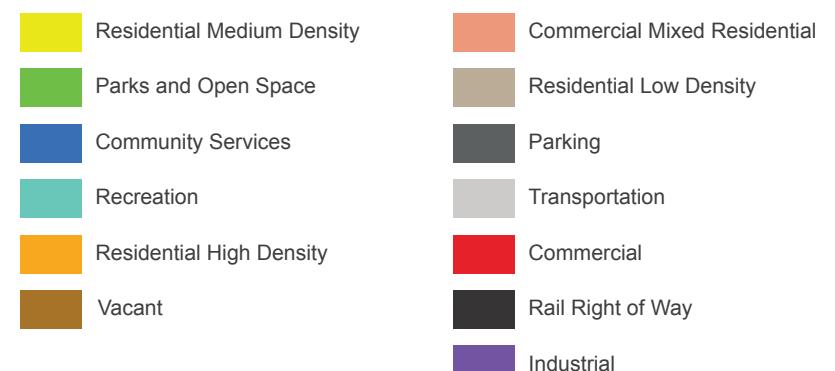
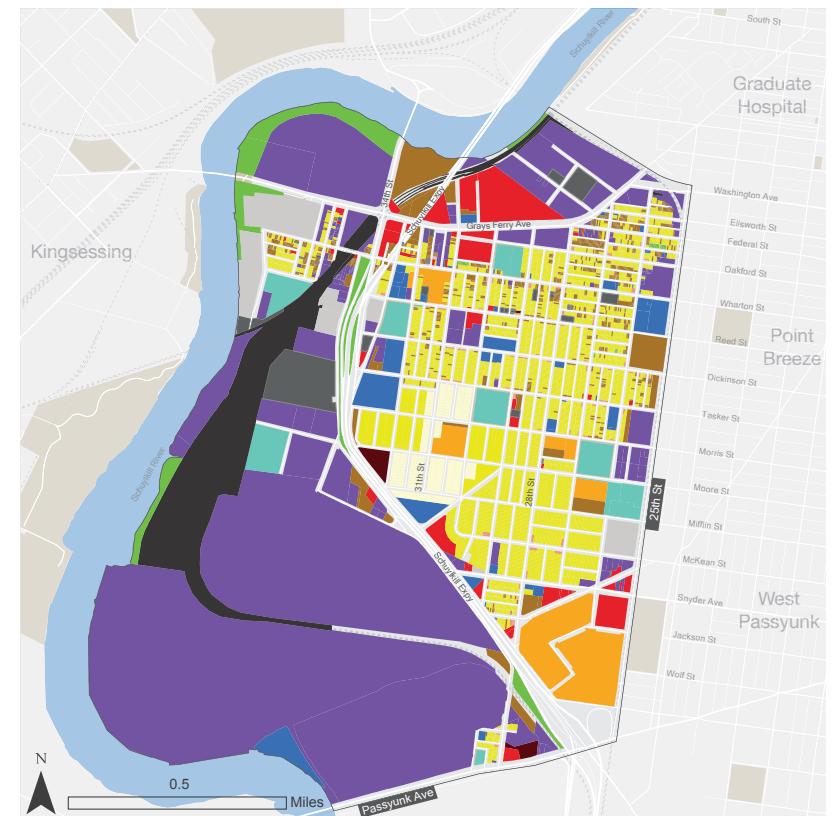


Land Use & Zoning

Land Use

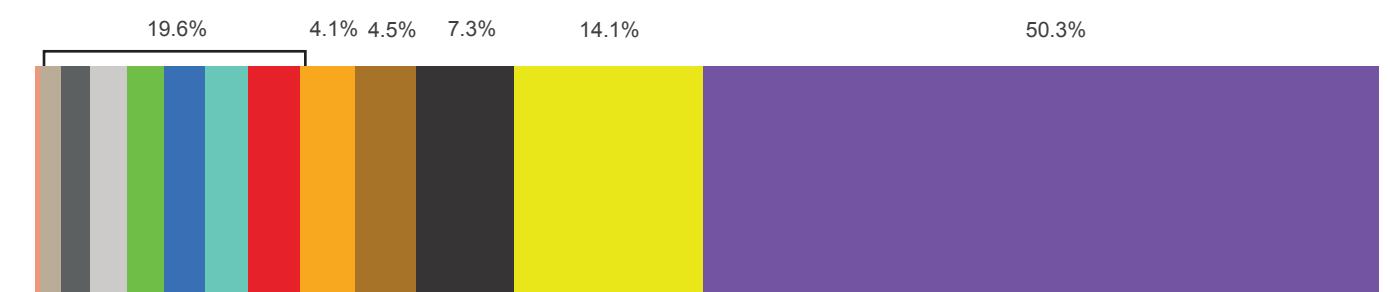
Land use patterns reflect the neighborhood's legacy as a residential area and industrial hub

Industrial land use is concentrated on Grays Ferry's northern and western edges proximal to the waterfront and transportation nodes. Residential low, medium, and high density land uses account for 19.9% of the neighborhood's land area. There is a minimal amount of vacant land as compared to other areas within the city and vacant parcels are distributed mostly in the residential areas of Grays Ferry. Commercial land use is focused along major arterials; the largest cluster of commercial land use is located along Grays Ferry Avenue.

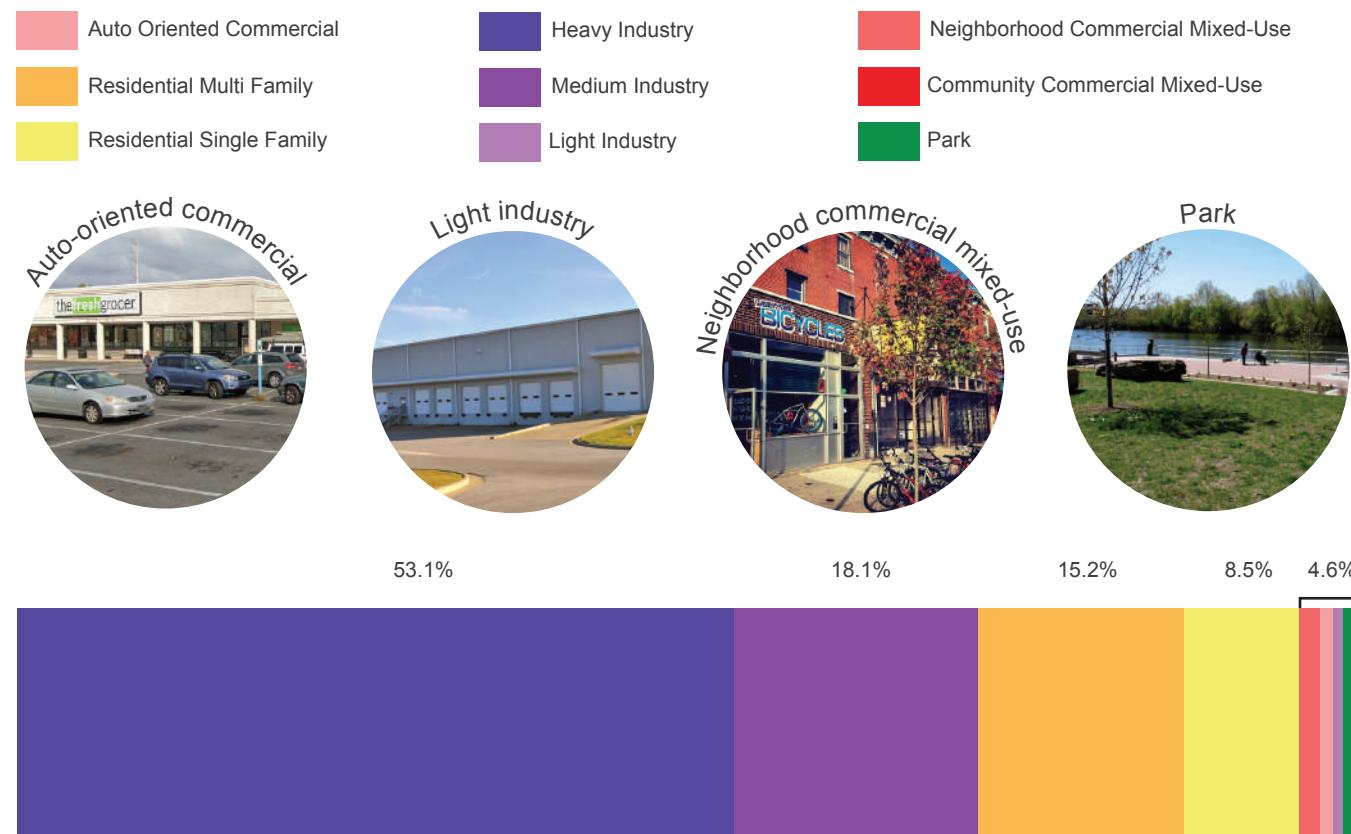
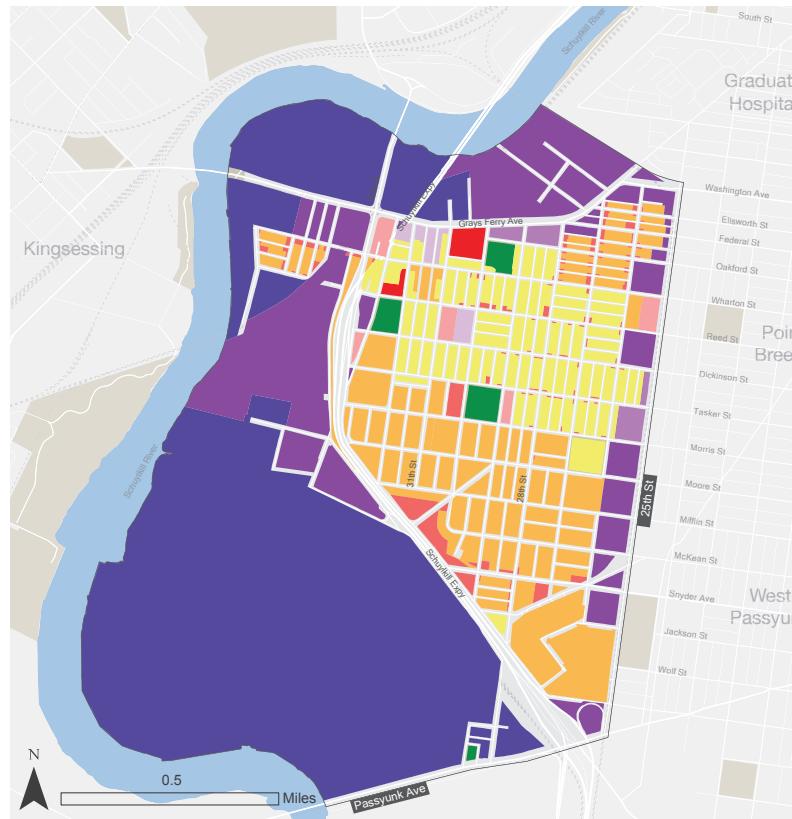


Industry will likely remain

The *Philadelphia2035* Lower South District Plan, adopted in 2012, maintains that the industrial land south of Grays Ferry Avenue—historically used for oil refining—is an attractive site for industry due to its size, industrial infrastructure, and relative isolation. The environmental contamination left behind from a legacy of heavy industrial land use will likely limit future development.



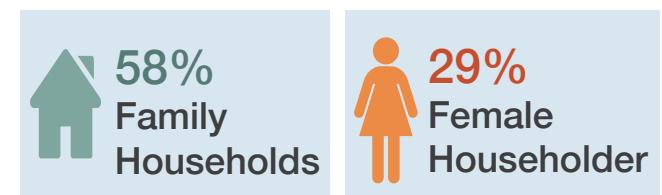
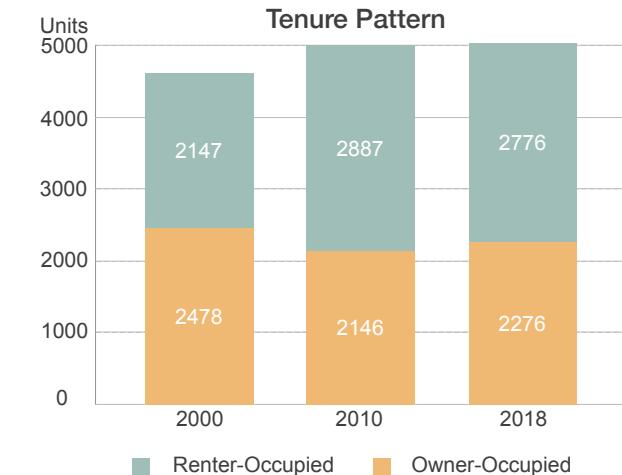
Zoning



Housing

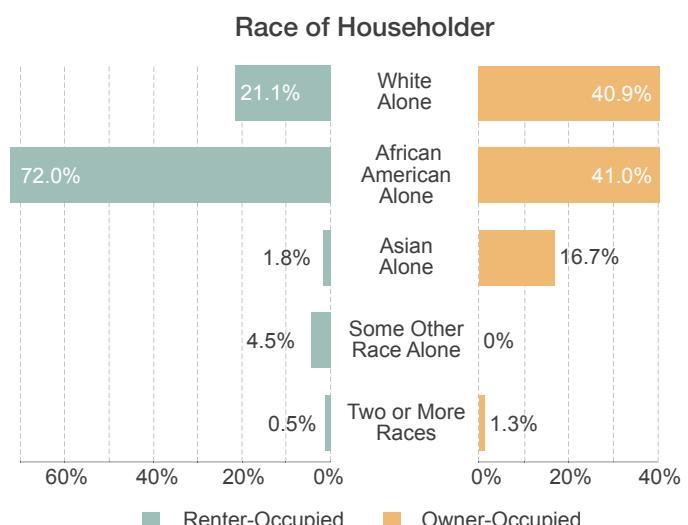
Housing Tenure Patterns

Tenure patterns have shifted substantially in Grays Ferry between 2000 and 2018. Substantial decreases in the number of owner-occupied units have occurred may reflect the economic impact of the 2008 Great Recession. In 2018, 55% of households were renter-occupied and 45% were owner-occupied- an almost direct flip in tenure patterns as compared to 2000. Although this reflects similar decreases in owner-occupied households in Philadelphia across the same time period, the majority of households in the city are still owner-occupied.



Grays Ferry is a neighborhood of long-standing residents. More than 85% of householders lived in their units before 2010 (and roughly a third moved in before 1990).

Grays Ferry's residents are majority Black or African American, but they are not a majority of homeowners. White and Asian individuals make up a disproportionately large share of owners. Whites account for 30% of householders but 41% of owners. Asians account for 8.5% of householders but 17% of owners. Comparatively, Black or African Americans account for 58% of householders but only 41% of owners.



Housing Occupancy

While there has been a relatively minimal increase in the total number of housing units available in the neighborhood, the number of vacant housing units declined by roughly 9% from 2000 to 2018. Vacant housing is mostly located in the northern half of Grays Ferry.

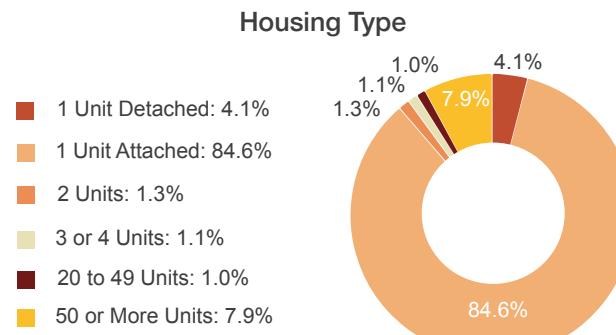


Housing Typology & Distribution

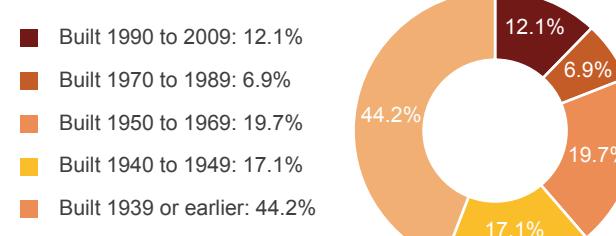
There are roughly 5,000 housing units in Grays Ferry. Single family units are nearly 90% of total housing stock.

There are large differences in the typology and distribution of housing throughout the neighborhood. Medium density housing is primarily located in the northern half of Grays Ferry. PHA public housing is located in the southern half of the neighborhood and accounts for the majority of residential low and high density housing.

Much of the housing stock in Grays Ferry was built prior to 1960, and there is a particular concentration of older housing in the northern half of the residential core. In the north, roughly 69% of housing was built in 1939 or earlier; in the south, only 22% of housing was built during the same time period. Both PHA affordable housing developments were built after 2000.



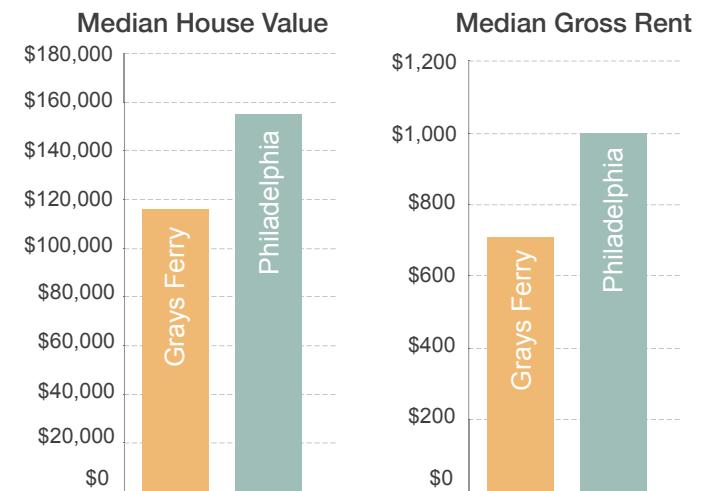
Housing Units by Year Structure Built



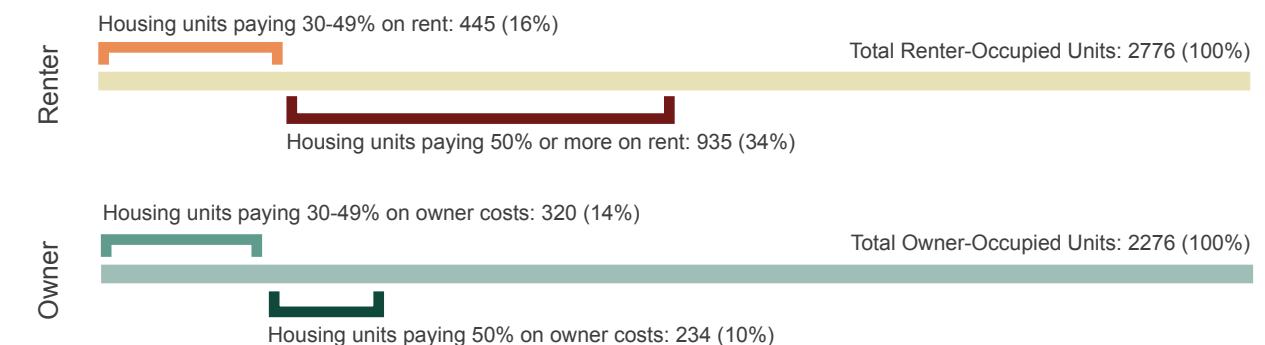
Housing Cost Burden

Affordability is deceiving

Compared to Philadelphia, median house values and gross rents are lower in Grays Ferry and imply that the neighborhood may be one of the more affordable areas in the city. However, for many of Grays Ferry's residents, "affordability" is a relative term. In total, 50% of renters and 24% of owners in the neighborhood are cost-burdened, meaning they spend 30% or more of their annual income on housing costs and may have little left over for other necessities or emergencies.



Housing Cost Burden by Tenure Pattern



Philadelphia Housing Authority (PHA)

Grays Ferry is home to two PHA affordable housing developments for qualifying low income individuals.

The first, Greater Grays Ferry Estates, sits on the site of the demolished Tasker Homes, a large public housing tower complex. The new estates bring suburban living into the city and cater to families and seniors. About 25% of the 482 homes are privately owned.

The second site, Wilson Park, is located in the southern tip of Grays Ferry and is also oriented toward families and seniors. The complex is one of the only high density developments in the neighborhood and has 727 total housing units.



Development

Recent Development Trends

Grays Ferry has seen little development in the last five years, part of which may be attributable to the relatively low number of vacant lots within the neighborhood. However, adjacent neighborhoods have experienced intense development: areas of Graduate Hospital and Point Breeze saw the most concentrated levels of development across the entire city in 2019, raising concerns that development pressures may eventually move into Grays Ferry.

Development Context With Philadelphia

The Philadelphia 2035 Citywide Vision was released in 2011 and emphasizes the need to creatively renew and adapt “industrial-legacy” sites to maintain economic growth. The Lower Schuylkill industrial-legacy area includes western half of Grays Ferry and is identified as a prime site for continued industrial use, as well as institutional, recreational, and environmental management purposes.

Building off the Citywide Vision, the Lower Schuylkill Master Plan was adopted in 2013 and reimagines future industrial use along the lower Schuylkill River. Under the plan, Grays Ferry is envisioned as an “Energy Corridor,” complementing an “Innovation District” in University City and “Logistics Hub” across the river. Several projects intended to reinforce connections within the Lower Schuylkill have been completed following the plan’s release (including Grays Ferry Bridge upgrades and Pennovation Works). It is unclear how the closing and sale of the Philadelphia Energy Solutions oil refinery site will affect the implementation of the Lower Schuylkill Master Plan.

The University of Pennsylvania (Penn) is a key actor in plans to expand the City’s Innovation District. Pennovation Works opened in the neighborhood in 2016 and is a business incubator and laboratory space for young start-ups. Penn plans on continuing to develop its 23 acre campus to create a biotechnology-focused hub of economic growth in Philadelphia.



Housing development in Grays Ferry.

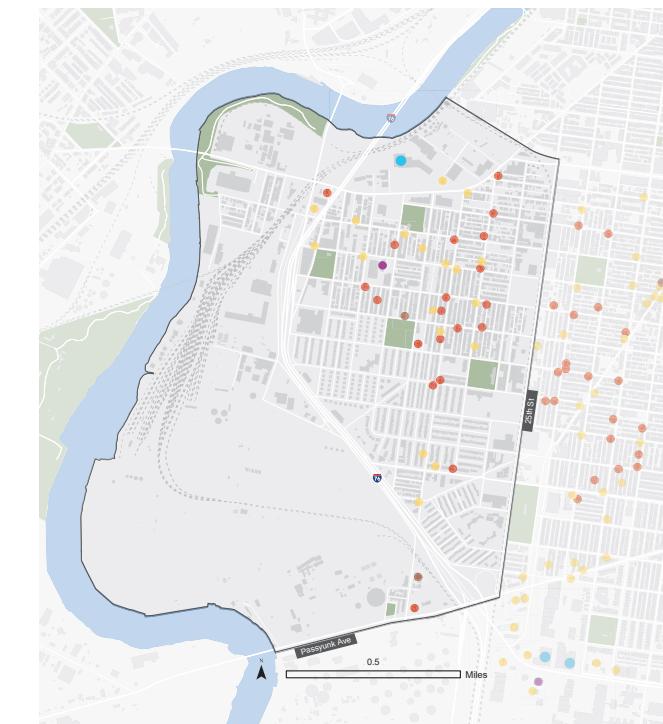


Rail and industrial uses in Grays Ferry.



The Pennovation Center.

Map of Food Retail in Grays Ferry



- Grocery store
- Convenience store
- Fast food, restaurant, or bar
- Drugstore
- Specialty store



The Forgotten Bottom Remembered
STORIES FROM A PHILADELPHIA NEIGHBORHOOD

Food Retail Trends

Grays Ferry's food retail environment has been characterized by frequent turnover. Discount supermarket Bottom Dollar Food opened and closed in 2014. Although the supermarket chain ALDI acquired and reopened its own stores in several former Bottom Dollar Food locations, the Grays Ferry location is still vacant. A second supermarket, Pathmark, closed the following year but was soon replaced by regional chain The Fresh Grocer. More recently, the specialty gourmet market Green Aisle Grocery is closing its doors after struggling to compete with larger chain groceries, leaving a hole in the neighborhood's organic and local food options.

According to a 2019 report by the Philadelphia Department of Public Health on the state of neighborhood food retail, 0-10% of Grays Ferry's food retail options are considered high-produce supply stores with most offering limited access to healthy food and produce. As of April 2020, The Fresh Grocer is Grays Ferry's only major supermarket. Food access is supplemented by a seasonal farmers market, convenience stores, and supermarkets in adjacent neighborhoods.

Forgotten Bottom

Large municipal development projects have negatively impacted Grays Ferry in the past. Following completion of the Schuylkill Expressway in 1958, Grays Ferry was divided in half with most residents living east of the expressway. The small residential section in the neighborhood's northwestern corner found itself caught between the river and expressway. This corner became known as “Forgotten Bottom” due to its newfound physical isolation.

Today, Forgotten Bottom contains several hundred residences. The area is also home several newer development projects including the Grays Ferry Crescent Park and Pennovation Center. These recent projects have contributed to a sense that change is coming for the neighborhood.

Environment

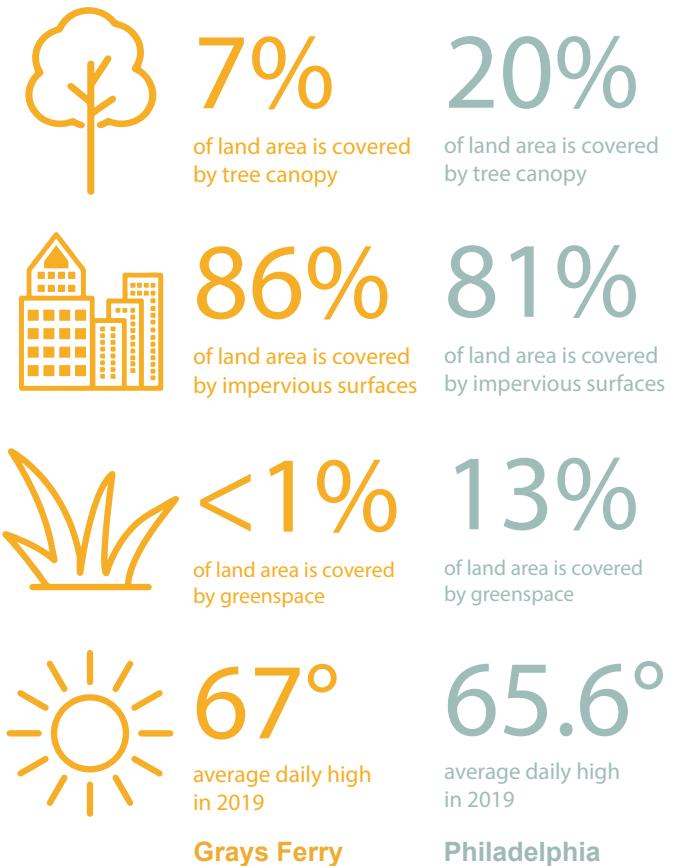
Flood Plains

Grays Ferry is partially located within 100- and 500-year floodplains which are areas that stand a respective 1% and 0.2% chance of flooding each year. Several active industrial sites are located within floodplains in the neighborhood.

Philadelphia's 2017 Hazard Mitigation Plan reports that the frequency and severity of flooding is expected to increase due to climate change factors. Communities located within 100-year floodplains are thought to be especially at risk.

Green Space

Tree cover and green space make up less than 10% of total land area in Grays Ferry. Trees are concentrated along the northeast area of the neighborhood and along the Schuylkill River. The lack of tree cover and green space—combined with the prevalence of hot surface parking lots and buildings with dark colored roofs—contributes to higher than average surface temperatures as compared to Philadelphia during the hottest months of the year.



Philadelphia Energy Solutions Refinery Explosion

In June 2019, a pipe failure occurred at the Philadelphia Energy Solutions (PES) refinery and resulted in an explosion and release of thousands of pounds of highly toxic chemicals into the air. PES filed for bankruptcy and ceased operations shortly after the incident. In the weeks following the explosion, air monitors consistently registered unhealthily high levels of benzene, a known carcinogen, in direct proximity of the explosion site. Residents were not immediately informed by officials of the potential environmental health concerns. In February 2020, the refinery lot was purchased by Hilco Redevelopment Partners, a Chicago-based developer. Hilco reportedly has no plans to reopen the site as a refinery and may look toward alternative industrial uses.

Floodplains, Tree Canopy, and Green Space



The Grays Ferry Fishing Pier.

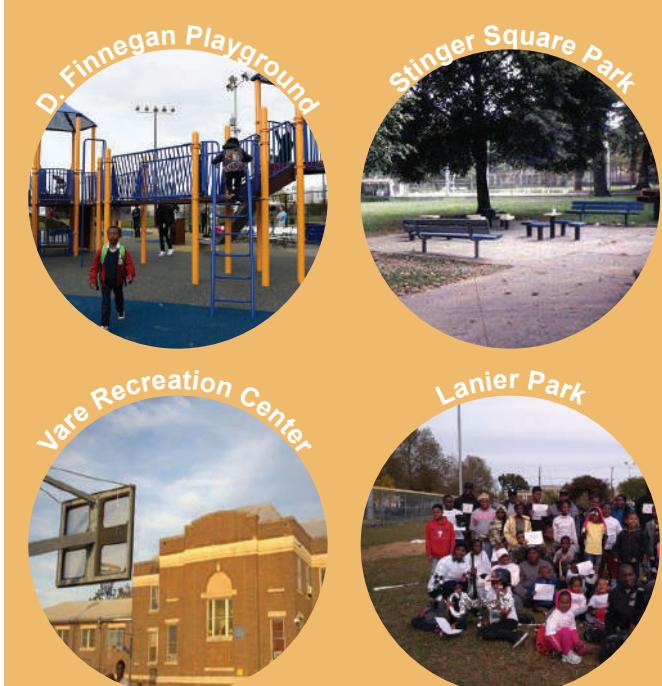


The Grays Ferry Skatepark.

Parks and Recreation

The neighborhood is home to four facilities in Philadelphia's Parks and Recreation Department: D. Finnegan Playground, Lanier Park, Stinger Square Park, and Vare Recreation Center. These facilities provide residents with access to playgrounds, athletic fields, swimming pools, and programming. Many of the facilities have had renovations within the last five years and now include green stormwater infrastructure as well as safer and updated play spaces. Other smaller unaffiliated parks are present in the area as well.

Funded through the Philadelphia Beverage Tax, the Rebuild program works with local residents members to make physical improvements to their community spaces. Sites located in high need communities are prioritized; Rebuild also prioritizes sites "where the investment could promote community development and stabilization." The majority of parks and recreation facilities in Grays Ferry are eligible Rebuild projects. The Vare Recreation Center is a current Rebuild site and improvements to the pool, building, and outdoor facilities are in various stages of community engagement, design, and implementation.

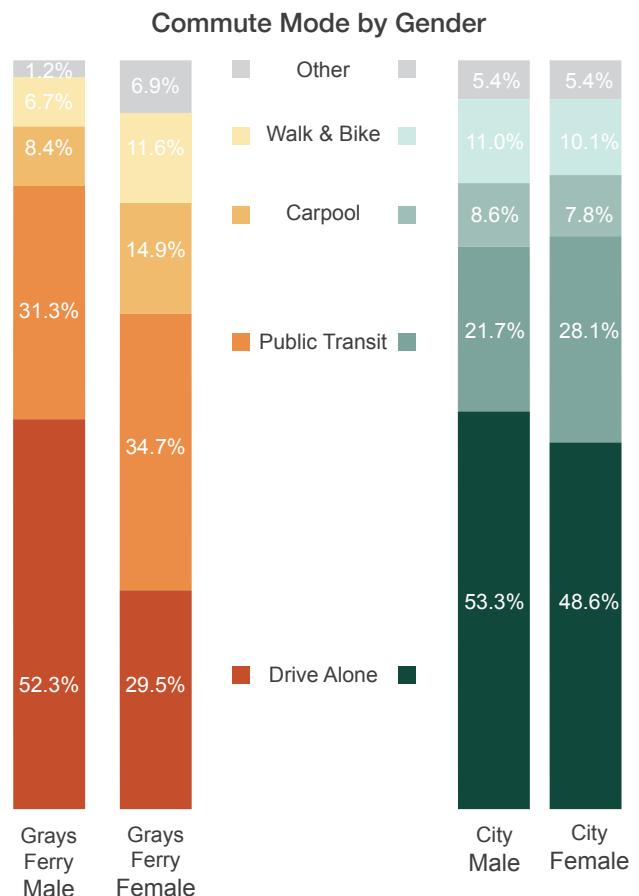
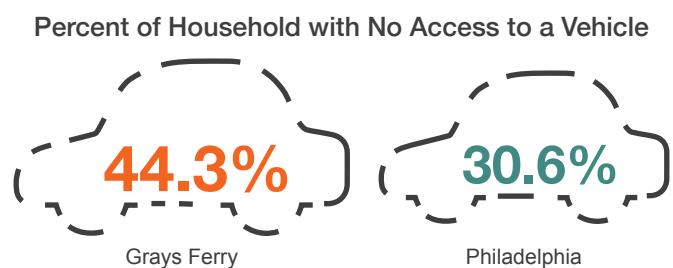


Transportation & Infrastructure

Transportation Patterns

Residents are highly dependent on public transportation

Grays Ferry residents have low car ownership and high public transit dependency rates. The ratio of car ownership by households in Grays Ferry is roughly 1.5 times lower than that of Philadelphia. The low car ownership rate is reflected in residents' commute mode choice—the majority of neighborhood residents commute to work by modes other than driving alone. More than 30% of residents commuting outside the neighborhood rely on public transit, compared to 25% of Philadelphia residents. There is also significant variation in public transit dependency rates across gender.



Transit

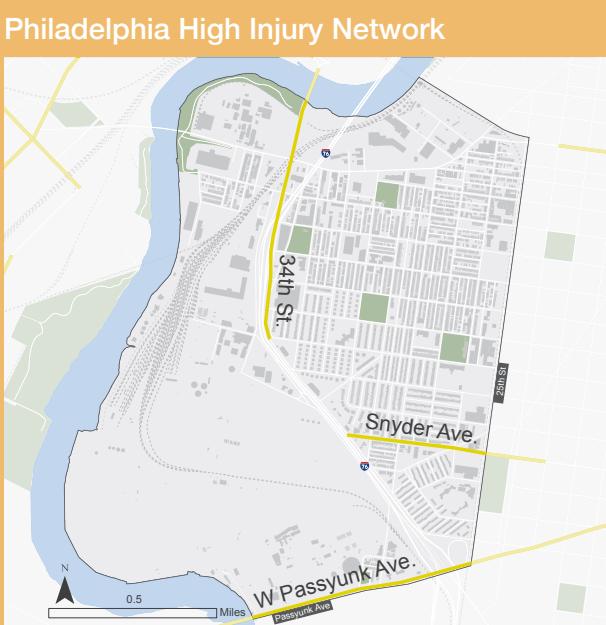
Bus access is expanding

The bus network in Grays Ferry connects its residents to many other parts of the city, including nearby centers of economic activity. In total, eight bus routes run through or within several blocks' distance of the neighborhood. SEPTA's newest bus route, Route 49, is intended to fill a lack of north-south transit options. Operating since February 2019, the route connects Grays Ferry to University City and as far north as Strawberry Mansion. Previously there were no fast public transit connections to University City within the neighborhood. Importantly, Route 49 also connects with Amtrak 30th Street Station to facilitate access to larger regional connections.

Maximum wait times at bus stops vary widely from 15 minutes to a full hour. With the exception of Route 49, there are stops at every corner (roughly every 500 feet) along each bus route. Connections across bus routes, especially with the advent of the north-south Route 49, present new opportunities for residents to move throughout Philadelphia. Weekday boarding (the number of individuals getting on the bus at a specific stop) within the community ranges from roughly 5 to 200 individuals across all bus lines and stops. The majority of recorded bus boardings occur on east-west routes that run along Grays Ferry Avenue, Morris Street, and Snyder Avenue. Boarding patterns within the community may be affected by points of interest. For example, the presence of retail stores along Grays Ferry Avenue may be generating the relatively large ridership at the avenue's intersections with 28th, 29th, and 30th Streets.

Vision Zero

Vision Zero is an international road safety movement that aims to end traffic-related injuries and deaths by reducing travel speed and redesigning streets. Philadelphia has committed to reducing traffic-related deaths to zero by 2030. To achieve this goal, the city has designated a High Injury Network that identifies streets where many fatal crashes or severe injuries occur. In Philadelphia, the High Injury Network consists of 12% of Philadelphia streets and is responsible for 50% of all traffic deaths and severe injuries. Three streets in Grays Ferry are included in the network: 34th Street, Snyder Avenue, and West Passyunk Avenue. Between 2012-2016, these streets saw one fatality and six severe injuries.



Infrastructure

Grays Ferry Bridge and University Avenue Bridge

The Grays Ferry Bridge and the University Avenue Bridge span the Schuylkill River and link Grays Ferry with West Philadelphia and University City, respectively. Both bridges have four traffic lanes and pedestrian walkways on either side. The University Avenue Bridge, one of the city's few remaining drawbridges, was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1994 in recognition of its architectural and engineering significance.

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation is currently reconstructing Grays Ferry Bridge to add in a protected mixed bike and pedestrian lane on the eastbound side of the bridge and a buffered bike lane on the westbound side. Construction on the \$13.3 million dollar project is set to finish in late 2020, barring any delays.



25th Street Viaduct

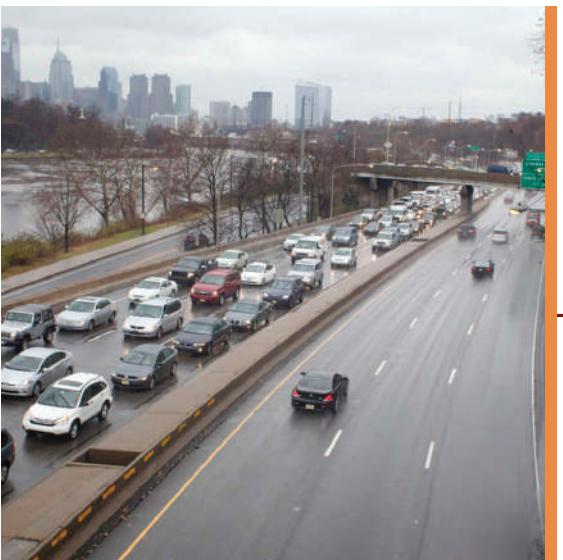
One unique piece of infrastructure in Grays Ferry is the 25th Street Viaduct which has been owned by CSX Corporation since 1999. 25th Street runs below the viaduct and is an active roadway although only the inner two of its four traffic lanes are currently in use. The viaduct was built between 1926 and 1928 around the same time other rail viaducts were constructed in the city. Its original intention was to remove freight trains from streets and expedite their movement across the city. The viaduct was designed to carry four tracks but only two exist today. Despite its crumbling conditions and safety concerns about falling concrete, the 25th Street Viaduct is still in active use today and serves a CSX trainyard in South Philadelphia and several businesses (including the now-shuttered PES refinery).



I-76 Schuylkill Expressway

The Interstate 76 Schuylkill Expressway bisects Grays Ferry. While originally envisioned as a solution to Philadelphia's traffic congestion, the expressway has been famously unpopular and dangerous since its full opening in 1958 and has derisively been labeled "Surekill Distressway." It has also failed to relieve traffic congestion in the city to the chagrin of many Philadelphians.

Within Grays Ferry, the expressway is made up of six lanes that run at ground level from Passyunk Avenue to Tasker Street before becoming elevated as it crosses over the Schuylkill River into University City. This configuration physically separates the Forgotten Bottom sub-neighborhood and heavy industrial area from the primary residential area of Grays Ferry. Access points to the expressway are located at Passyunk Avenue, near Mifflin Street, and on 34th Street.





Community Organizations

Grays Ferry is home to a network of active and engaged community organizations. This plan highlights five organizations that are particularly active in the community (although several additional resident groups exist) and pursue projects that connect residents with necessary goods, services, and resources. While their missions center around different causes, each organization provides an important platform for advocacy and is a key source of neighborhood resilience and strength.



PHILLY THRIVE *Right to Breathe Campaign*



Grays Ferry Civic Association

Grays Ferry Civic Association (GFCA) works to “bring service and a sense of community” to the neighborhood by “promoting a safe and healthy” environment. GFCA is especially focused on economic mobility issues and has worked in the past to organize events like the South Philly Job Fair and workshops and skills training sessions. GFCA is also a Registered Community Organization.

Grays Ferry Community Council

Grays Ferry Community Council (GFCC) is a Registered Community Organization and is particularly active in holding zoning meetings and disseminating information about city services to residents. Their stated purpose is to “perform constituent services that will better our community and make our neighborhood safer, cleaner, and a better place to live.” As such, GFCC also frequently organizes community cleanups and helps plan the logistics of community programs like bikeshares.



Tasker Morris Neighborhood Association

The Tasker Morris Neighborhood Association (TMNA) defines itself as “an organization who is trying to preserve some of the originality of our community and to ensure a fair transaction while keeping up the change.” Their mission is centered in empowering and advocating for residents, with efforts including voter registration; disseminating information on economic support resources, zoning practices, other city services; and launching youth advocacy projects. TMNA is also a Registered Community Organization.



Young Chances Foundation

The Young Chances Foundation (YCF) was founded by Tyrique Glasgow in order to “change the images neighborhood kids experience by providing positive opportunities in the community.” YCF recently opened a community center in Grays Ferry in 2019 and offers events and programming including free after-school care and summer camps, meal programs, continuing education and GED classes, and computer skills workshops.



Philly Thrive

Philly Thrive has been on the forefront of the fight for environmental justice in Philadelphia and has been particularly active in Grays Ferry due to the presence of the former refinery site. Philly Thrive advocates for a community-centered advocacy approach in order to secure the “Right to Breathe” and an end to polluting and profit-motivated industrial practices.



Opportunities & Issues



This section of the plan identifies major opportunities and issues in Grays Ferry. Each was selected after analyzing the neighborhood's existing conditions, visiting the area, reviewing topics of community advocacy, attending community meetings, and conversations with stakeholders. The opportunities and issues mentioned are not an exhaustive list but are intended as jumping off points to formulate goals and propose solutions that play upon Grays Ferry's strengths and encourage positive growth.

Opportunities

Community Engagement

Multiple community organizations are active within Grays Ferry and focus on topics such as environmental justice, civic engagement, economic development, and youth advocacy. These groups provide meaningful opportunities and tools for creating neighborhood change. Community organizations are resources for those within Grays Ferry and may also act as key informants and stakeholders for outside planners and institutions.

Physical Connections

Historically, the neighborhood's location along the Schuylkill River and early expansion of rail networks encouraged industry to settle in Grays Ferry. Today there is great potential for Grays Ferry and its residents to benefit from the area's proximity to Philadelphia's major economic hubs: University City, Center City, the Navy Yard, and Philadelphia International Airport.

Additionally, the neighborhood has access to several major arterial roads, including the Schuylkill Expressway. The new SEPTA Route 49 bus line enables residents to easily access important job and health centers in University City, Center City, and Northwest Philadelphia— areas that were previously difficult to reach by public transit.

Several community organizations are also Registered Community Organizations (RCOs). These are local groups that provide feedback on proposed development and land use changes to the Philadelphia City Planning Commission (PCPC). While they do not have veto powers over development proposals, RCO support (or nonsupport) factors into PCPC's decision-making process.



Grays Ferry in relation to major economic hubs

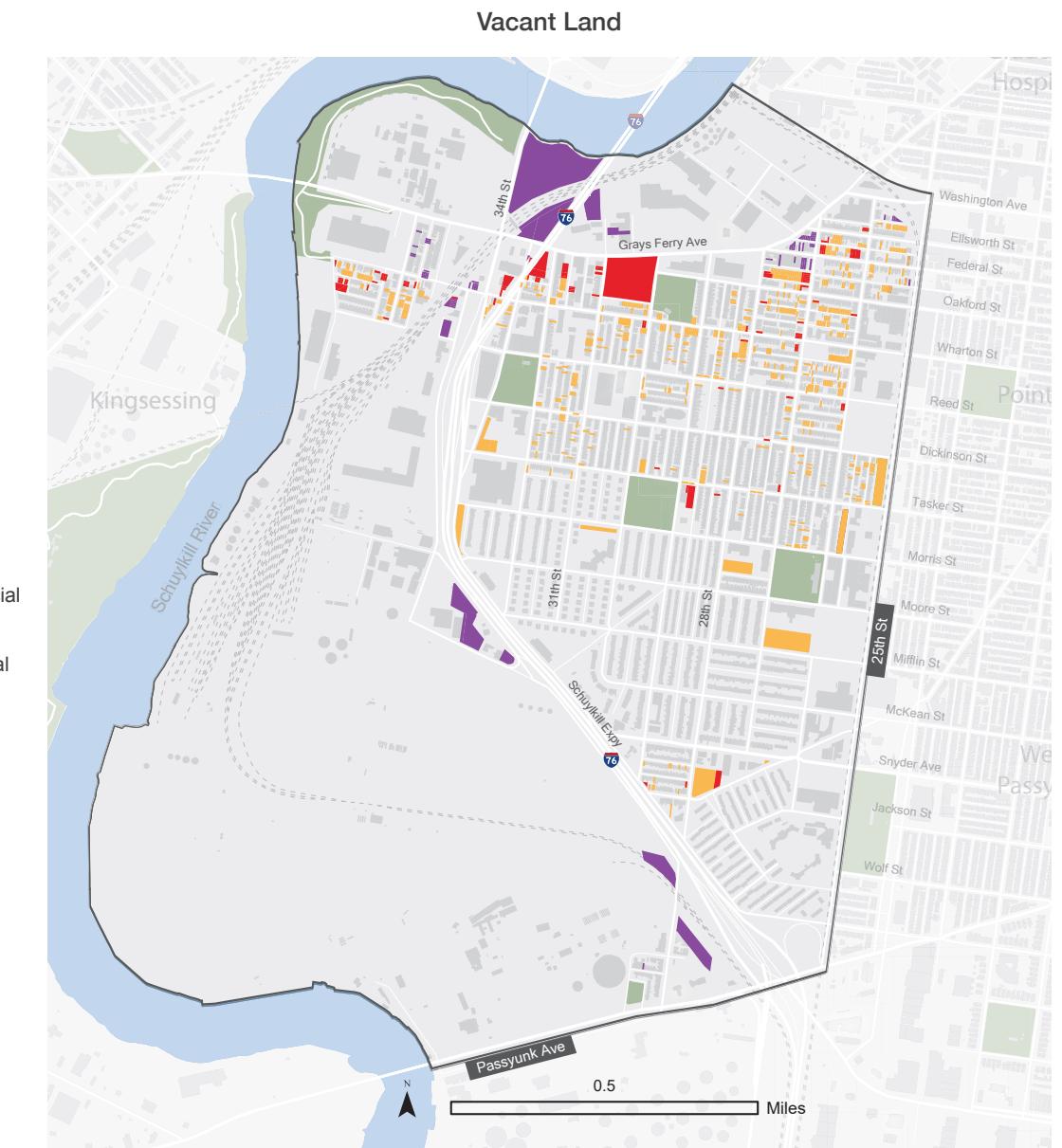
	BIKE	PUBLIC TRANSIT	CAR
UNIVERSITY CITY	10-15	20	10-20
CENTER CITY	20	30	15-30
NAVY YARD	25	60+	10-20
PHILADELPHIA AIRPORT	40	45	10-20

Vacant Land and Structures

Relative to Philadelphia, Grays Ferry has few vacant lots and structures. Roughly 4.5% of land in Grays Ferry is vacant, not including lots with existing structures present. Despite the seemingly low total vacancy, there are enough underutilized spaces that the opportunity is latent, providing blank canvases which can then be creatively transformed to better serve the community.

According to a 2017 study of the Grays Ferry Avenue commercial corridor (which does not encompass all of Grays Ferry and includes some areas in West Philadelphia) conducted by the

Urban Land Institute and PennPraxis, of the 52 acres of vacant land studies, 59% were public land, 29% were private land, and 12.1% were private buildings. A substantial amount of vacant land are empty corner lots, many of which have been fenced in, decorated with murals, or consist of grass.



Issues



The refinery has been a major source of health concern for the community.

Contaminants and Cancinogens Found in Grays Ferry

LEAD

A soft metal often used in refining processes. Lead air emissions can be breathed in directly and particles can also settle on surfaces and be ingested later. There is no safe lead blood level. Exposure may result in lead poisoning, cardiovascular effects, kidney and blood diseases, and cancer as well as long lasting neurological effects in children.

BENZENE

A chemical found in burning coal and oil emissions. Individuals are typically exposed via contaminated water, polluted air, or tobacco smoke. Long term exposure may result in blood disorders, weakened immune systems, and cancer.

PARTICULATE MATTER

Microscopic particles suspended in air that are produced by burning coal and oil. The small size of particulate matter allows them to travel easily into the respiratory system and cause irritation to the lungs and worsening conditions like asthma. Long-term exposure may result in cardiovascular effects, respiratory infections, and cancer.

Environmental Conditions

There are several environmental concerns within Grays Ferry. The neighborhood has been continuously exposed to high levels of air pollution and known carcinogens due to its proximity to the PES oil refinery site. As measured in 2016, more than 50% of all particle pollutants in the city were attributable to the PES refinery. Over the course of PES's ownership of the refinery, it was frequently in noncompliance with the Clean Air and Clean Water Acts. Additionally, Grays Ferry misses out on flood mitigation and stormwater retention and experiences high temperatures due to its many impervious surfaces and lack of green cover.

Grays Ferry Philadelphia

	Grays Ferry	Philadelphia
Life Expectancy	72.6	76.1
Poor Mental Health	19.8%	16.3%
Adult Asthma	13.4%	11.5%
COPD/ Lung Disease	10%	7.2%
Heart Disease	8.4%	6.5%
Cancer	5.8%	5.8%

Health Disparities between Grays Ferry and Philadelphia.

Development Concerns

In recent years, gentrification and demographic shifts in the adjacent Graduate Hospital and Point Breeze neighborhoods have raised concerns that similar development in the future may lead to displacement in Grays Ferry. A proposed bill to amend Philadelphia's zoning code and prohibit bay windows and balconies (so called "symbols of gentrification") in the neighborhood was proposed in 2019 and reflects community fears of the possibility of future development. The bill is currently in lapsed status.

Additionally, recent expansion of the University of Pennsylvania into Grays Ferry has brought uncertainty as to how much the institution's presence will affect residents.



Poorly maintained bike lane in Grays Ferry.

Mobility Barriers

Residential areas of Grays Ferry are bordered and bisected by large industrial sites and major infrastructure, including active freight rail lines, the former PES refinery site, and the Schuylkill Expressway. These physical structures isolate residents and impede movement. In some cases, the physical infrastructure presents significant transit safety dangers. Poor walkability and unfriendly streetscapes make it challenging for pedestrians and bicyclists to navigate the neighborhood; visibility and road quality issues also make driving in some areas difficult.

Case Study: Gentrification in Graduate Hospital

The Graduate Hospital neighborhood is located north of Grays Ferry was a working class African American neighborhood before it gentrified between 2000 and 2014. The transition from low income to higher income populations occurred alongside significant racial and economic shifts. Many individuals were displaced after the area became deeply unaffordable for existing residents. Graduate Hospital shared similar demographic characteristics with Grays Ferry before it gentrified, and may offer an idea of what kinds of shifts will occur if Grays Ferry gentrifies.

Gentrification in Graduate Hospital resulted in a:

- 55.7% decrease in the number of Black residents
- 225% increase in the number of White residents
- 90.1% increase in median household income



CSX Corporation and the 25th Street Viaduct

Railroad company CSX Corporation announced plans to renovate an elevated railway that it owns, the 25th Street Viaduct, in 2015. The CSX renovation was supposed to include installing a debris shield, repairing drainage systems, and resurfacing exposed concrete. As of 2020, however, much of the planned renovation is still not done and CSX has no published information regarding the project on its website. Today, the roadway underneath the viaduct is protected from falling concrete by netting-- a far cry from what was originally promised in 2015.

Goals

A nighttime photograph of a bridge over water. The bridge has multiple lanes and is illuminated by streetlights. The water below reflects the lights in various colors, including red, orange, yellow, green, and blue. The background shows some trees and possibly a building with more lights.

This section identifies four overarching goals intended to capitalize on existing opportunities and address issue areas identified in the previous section. These goals are intended to build resilience and prepare Grays Ferry for future challenges that range from climate change to encroaching development pressures. These goals also aim to make the community as it currently exists safer, better connected, and more strongly positioned to advocate for and access resources.

Goals

GOAL 1



Grays Ferry residents will have access to needed and affordable goods and services

Grays Ferry is located near to several amenity-rich neighborhoods, but decades of disinvestment have created a lack of services and goods. To ensure that residents have what they need, a renewed focus on filling underutilized commercial spaces with affordable resources is essential. Further developing existing neighborhood organizations may provide a stronger means for residents to play a role in future neighborhood advocacy and decision-making is crucial to ensure that Grays Ferry grows in a manner that best benefits the community.

GOAL 2



Grays Ferry residents will enjoy greater levels of economic mobility

Grays Ferry residents should have access to strong support networks that allow them to sustain and improve their livelihoods. Reducing housing cost burdens, removing barriers to homeownership, and increasing labor force participation rates are a start to further empowering Grays Ferry residents, especially given existing concerns about incoming gentrification and potential displacement. Connecting residents to existing citywide resources and strengthening community resources will help ensure that residents enjoy greater economic mobility and are secure in the neighborhood.

GOAL 3



Grays Ferry will prioritize climate resilience and rectify environmental health injustices

Grays Ferry has experienced a disproportionate amount of environmental harm throughout its history, most of which is man-made and connected to local industry. In order to address past environmental injustices and future climate-related challenges, action must be taken, as residents have demanded. There must be a renewed focus at the municipal level to ensure that Grays Ferry is able to access climate adaptability programs, develop in a resilient and sustainable manner, and ensure that the voices of its residents are heard.

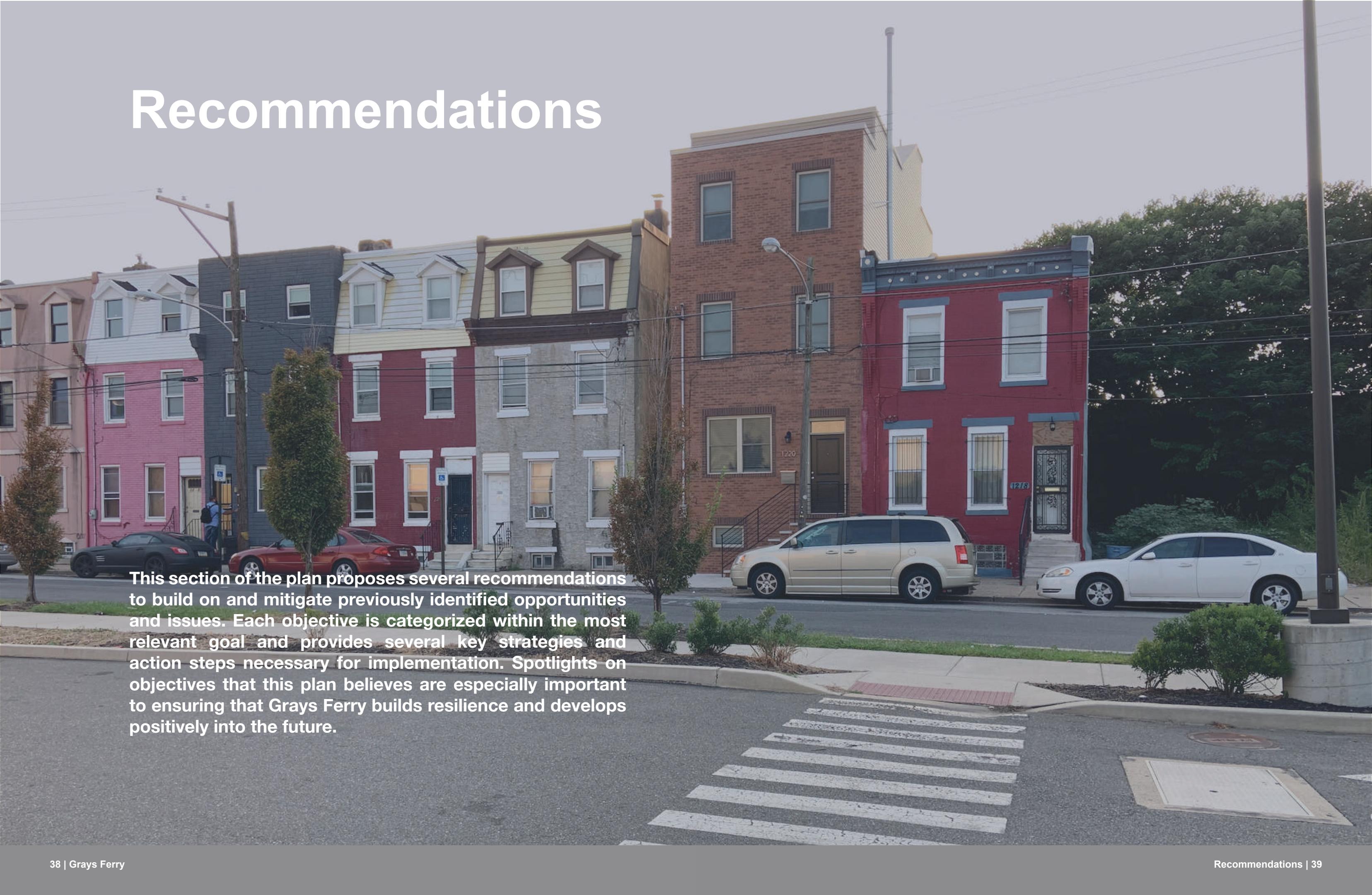
GOAL 4



Grays Ferry will provide robust mobility options that prioritize safe streets

Transit is fundamental to providing residents access to jobs, services, and other spaces. While Grays Ferry has a developing network of connections to the rest of Philadelphia, a lack of safe transit options present physical and mental barriers to mobility. Investments to enhance safety and remove barriers will move Grays Ferry toward a robust and equitable transportation system accessible to all.

Recommendations

A photograph of a row of colorful rowhouses in Grays Ferry, Philadelphia. The houses are built close together, showing various architectural styles and colors including pink, yellow, brown, and red. Some have dormer windows. A street with a crosswalk is in the foreground, and trees and utility poles are visible in the background.

This section of the plan proposes several recommendations to build on and mitigate previously identified opportunities and issues. Each objective is categorized within the most relevant goal and provides several key strategies and action steps necessary for implementation. Spotlights on objectives that this plan believes are especially important to ensuring that Grays Ferry builds resilience and develops positively into the future.

Goal 1

Grays Ferry residents will have access to needed and affordable goods and services

Grays Ferry is located near to several amenity-rich neighborhoods, but decades of disinvestment have created a lack of services and goods. To ensure that residents have what they need, a renewed focus on filling underutilized commercial spaces with affordable resources is essential. Further developing existing neighborhood organizations may provide a stronger means for residents to play a role in future neighborhood advocacy and decision making is crucial to ensure that Grays Ferry grows in a manner that best benefits the community.



Objective 1.1: Increase participation and representation of Grays Ferry residents in decision-making processes

Overview:

Grays Ferry is home to many residents who have adopted roles as advocates and organizers. Objective 1.1 seeks to provide stronger and more centralized pathways for residents to shape how Grays Ferry grows. Several community organizations are active in Grays Ferry, but their work is limited because none are 501(c)3 registered organizations able to access certain funding pools and grants. Creating a registered 501(c)3 community development corporation (CDC) may provide greater access to resources and formalize ways to engage with the city. A CDC would also play a key role in many of the objectives in this Recommendations section.

Strategies & Action Steps:

1. Establish a community development corporation (CDC) to provide neighborhood support and leadership at the municipal level.
 - Assess interest from established community leaders in creating a CDC.
 - Form a steering committee to oversee the CDC.
 - Partner with the nearby Southwest CDC to catalyze growth of the new CDC.
 - Partner with a local government representative to gain 501(c)3 status in order to qualify for certain funding pools and grants.



Left: The Grays Ferry Civic Association was the driving force behind the South Philly Career Fair.

Right: The Young Chances Foundation runs a free youth summer camp.

Strengthen and Expand Existing Initiatives

The projects pictured here are examples of existing advocacy and empowerment efforts in the community. The creation of a CDC would enable organizations and projects to access funding and resources necessary to scale up initiatives, thereby furthering their missions and extending their impacts throughout the neighborhood.

Establishing Grays Ferry CDC

Why Establish a CDC?

Objective 1.1 aims to provide a platform to residents and reinforce and improve the reach and impact of existing community organizations in the neighborhood. Creating a Grays Ferry CDC would provide neighborhood support and leadership at the municipal level. A Grays Ferry CDC would be able to access resources and fund projects that existing community groups currently cannot.

Creating a Grays Ferry CDC through partnership:

Southwest CDC was established in 1987 in West Philadelphia to increase the capacity and reach of existing civic organizations. Their activity in Grays Ferry is primarily focused on equitable economic development along the Grays Ferry Avenue commercial corridor.

Southwest CDC is already actively involved in the neighborhood and has the capacity to partner with and train an existing Grays Ferry organization (e.g. the Grays Ferry Civic Association, whose efforts align most closely with the mission of a CDC) to pursue projects and gain funding for the neighborhood.

Owners, Partners & Funding:

This plan recommends that Southwest CDC leads the effort to establish a Grays Ferry CDC. Partners include the Grays Ferry Civic Association, Councilmember Kenyatta Johnson, and the Philadelphia Association of Community Development Corporations.

The cost of this project is expected to be low, with funding stemming from social impact grants, existing Southwest CDC and Grays Ferry Civic Association funds, and city resources.



A community event in Grays Ferry Triangle.



Members of the Southwest CDC Neighborhood Advisory Committee.



Members of the Grays Ferry Civic Association, who state their mission as a commitment to, "service and a sense of community to our neighbors regardless of race, religion, political views or lifestyle."

Objective 1.2: Improve community access to affordable and healthy food options

Overview:

Grays Ferry has three chain supermarkets within 1.5 miles of its center, but residents still face uneven access to healthy food options and a disproportionately large number of low produce stores. In some areas of Grays Ferry, the number of low produce stores outnumber high produce stores by factors of more than 20 to 1. Additionally, as roughly 36% of Grays Ferry's population receive cash public assistance or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits, affordability barriers may prevent residents from pursuing more expensive healthier food options. Focused initiatives are needed to transition Grays Ferry to a high produce neighborhood. Outreach around food affordability programs may raise the purchasing power of SNAP recipients and make healthy food more accessible. Finally, converting vacant lots to community gardens could provide opportunities for greater neighborhood food security and education, as well as act as additional green space.



Temple Community Garden, a student-run community space in Philadelphia started to help improve neighborhood food security.

Strategies & Action Steps:

1. Leverage existing food access programs in Philadelphia to increase resident access to high quality, affordable food.
 - Work with the Department of Public Health and Get Healthy Philly to assess food affordability and quality in Grays Ferry.
 - Work with community organizations to inform residents about existing resources.
2. Utilize vacant lots for urban agriculture, prioritizing publicly owned land.
 - Explore opportunities to partner with neighborhood schools, recreation centers, the existing community garden, and other larger nearby urban agriculture ventures, such as Sankofa Farms.
3. Explore convenience store owners' interest in participating in Philadelphia's Healthy Corner Store Initiative.



A new produce display in a Philadelphia convenience store funded through the Food Trust's Healthy Corner Store Initiative.

Philly Food Bucks

The Philly Food Bucks program is a collaboration between the Philadelphia Department of Public Health and nonprofit organization The Food Trust. The program is one of several existing food access programs that can be leveraged to increase resident access to high quality and healthy foods. For every \$5 in SNAP benefits spent at a participating market or retailer, customers receive \$2 back in Food Bucks that can be used on fresh produce. Food Bucks are redeemable at a number of farmers markets citywide and the Grays Ferry Fresh Grocer.

Objective 1.3: Reduce storefront vacancy in Grays Ferry to zero

Overview:

The Philadelphia 2035 Plan highlights opportunities to reinvest in Grays Ferry's underutilized commercial areas, especially along Grays Ferry Avenue. The fact that retail space is limited makes it all the more important to put vacant spaces to productive use. Some retail spaces have sat vacant for years. The former Bottom Dollar supermarket space, for example, has been vacant since 2014. In order to provide residents with more retail opportunities, this objective aims to target vacant commercial land and structures for redevelopment, provide avenues for residents to help shape how the neighborhood develops, and offer support for local businesses and entrepreneurs.



Strategies & Action Steps:

1. Conduct a market analysis to identify opportunities for commercial development.
- Survey Grays Ferry residents to assess gaps between existing services and needs.
2. Provide local entrepreneurs and business owners with financial and technical support.
 - Establish a business development task force within the new Grays Ferry CDC to connect entrepreneurs and business owners to resources.
3. Pursue community-led commercial real estate acquisition of select vacant parcels and structures.
- Partner with a community development financial institution and larger community development networks in Philadelphia to guide and fund the process of commercial real estate acquisition and development.



An underutilized commercial space in Philadelphia before and after its 2014 storefront makeover.

Inclusive Revitalization of Vacant Commercial Space

High Impact, Low Cost Interventions:

Many Philadelphia neighborhoods have invested in "high impact, low cost" commercial revitalization projects. These are often small, temporary interventions, such as covering vacant spaces with art installations, that can be removed once a permanent use of the space is determined. Other interventions include storefront improvement projects to activate spaces. The Philadelphia Department of Commerce offers financial support to business owners in need of façade improvements through its Storefront Improvement Project (SIPs). Business owners can receive grants that cover up to 50% of the cost of improvements, up to a total of \$12,000. Since its inception in 2009, the program has helped over 380 Philadelphia business owners. Similar investments could make commercial spaces in Grays Ferry more attractive to potential business tenants and shoppers.



This Community Design Collaborative rendering for the Wynnefield Overbrook Revitalization Corporation shows how SIPs funding could improve a storefront. The Community Design Collaborative offers pro bono planning and consulting services to many community organizations in Philadelphia.

Community-led Real Estate Acquisition:

In addition to beautification and activation efforts, Grays Ferry would benefit from community-led commercial real estate acquisition of vacant parcels and structures. Other Philadelphia neighborhoods have begun similar initiatives in order to ensure future development reflects the community's needs. In Kensington, local community members joined with real estate and community development professionals to create the Kensington Corridor Trust. The trust, which is still in its early stages of operation, plans to acquire land and provide ground leases to developers and businesses. The trust will require all leasees to offer below-market rents or living wage jobs to local residents. By following this model, Grays Ferry would be able to manage future neighborhood development and offer opportunities and assistance to local entrepreneurs and business owners.

Owners, Partners & Funding:

Shorter-term projects have the potential to be funded and carried out by community organizations, local business owners, and citywide nonprofits like the Community Design Collaborative, which offers free design services to store owners applying for SIPs grants and loans. Long-term projects, such as developing a neighborhood trust, would depend upon a collaboration of a number of partners, including the newly established Grays Ferry CDC, the Philadelphia Industrial Development Corporation, Shift Capital, and more.

Objective 1.4: Increase access to more affordable and high quality childcare services

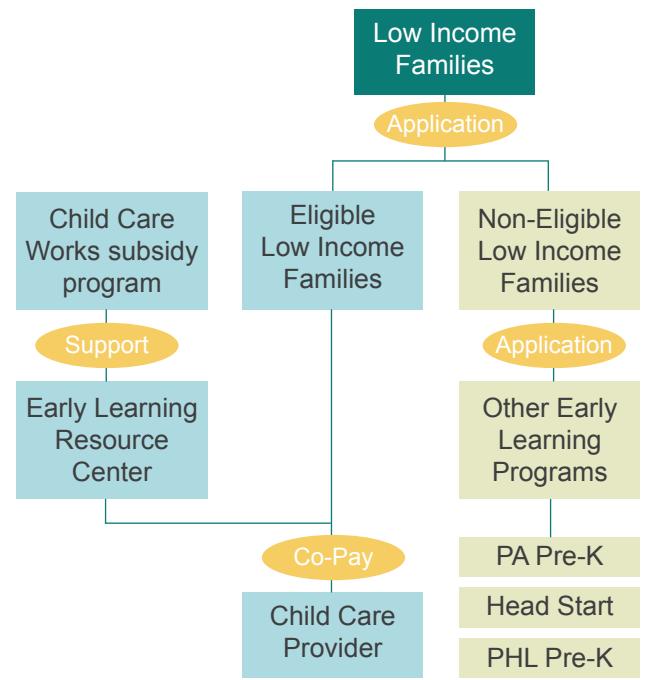
Overview:

Childcare plays an important role in future employment and economic mobility. Women in Grays Ferry participate in the labor force at a much lower rate than both their male counterparts and females across the entire city; women also head half of the neighborhood's family households. Taken together, this suggests that a lack of adequate childcare options may be a barrier for women seeking employment. Providing high quality childcare services is an essential part of supporting women in the workforce and also directly benefits child development.

Strategies & Action Steps:

1. Increase enrollment in existing subsidized childcare programs.
2. Increase the quality of existing childcare facilities.
 - Provide incentives for facilities to become Keystone STARS rated facilities.
 - Provide additional training to improve the diversity of childcare services available.

Workflow of Child Care Subsidy Program



Diverse Child Care Programs



Keystone STARS

The Keystone STARS program promotes continued quality improvements in child care and Head Start programs. Participating programs are rated from 1-4. At each level, programs have to meet certain standards across four areas:

1. Staff Education
2. Learning Environment
3. Leadership Management
4. Family and Community Partnerships

Goal 2

Grays Ferry residents will enjoy greater levels of economic mobility

Grays Ferry residents must have access to strong support networks that allow them to sustain and improve their livelihoods. Reducing housing cost burdens, removing barriers to homeownership, and increasing labor force participation rates are a start to further empowering Grays Ferry residents, especially given existing concerns about incoming gentrification and potential displacement. Connecting residents to existing city-wide resources and strengthening community resources will help ensure that residents enjoy greater economic mobility and are secure in the neighborhood.



Objective 2.1: Decrease the percentage of housing cost-burdened residents

Overview:

Housing is the foundation of a resilient city and supports the health and well-being of residents. Housing cost-burdened individuals have less financial stability and may be unable to afford other daily necessities. Additionally, renters, who make up more than half of all Grays Ferry households, typically suffer from higher eviction rates. Efforts to keep housing affordable in Grays Ferry by utilizing community land trusts and connecting residents to city subsidies can help lower the housing cost burden and enable residents to take care of other needs.

Strategies & Action Steps:

1. Pursue community ownership of residential properties in the neighborhood to make homeownership more accessible for low income populations.
2. Partner with the Community Justice Land Trust to obtain land for housing purposes.
2. Increase access to residential land acquisition, home repairs, and home improvement financing.
3. Connect residents to Philadelphia Housing Development Corporation assistance programs.
4. Provide subsidies and protections for low income renters to prevent evictions.
- Join rent subsidy and assistance programs in Philadelphia.

What is a Community Land Trust (CLT)?

A CLT is a nonprofit organization that promotes community ownership of land and development that meets neighborhood-identified priorities. In the case of affordable housing, CLTs work by separating the cost of a home (which the buyer bears) from the cost of the land (which the CLT bears).

A 2016 report from the Center for American Progress found that CLTs “serve as a springboard for lower-income families to eventually enter the conventional housing market, realize the financial benefits of homeownership with a lower risk of losing their home to foreclosure, and accumulate wealth in the long run.”



Objective 2.2: Match Philadelphia's rate of labor force participation

Overview:

Grays Ferry's labor force participation is 54% versus Philadelphia's 61%. To improve Grays Ferry's labor force participation and ensure that Grays Ferry residents enjoy greater levels of economic mobility, it is imperative that barriers to participation are addressed. Objective 4.3 aims to assess the neighborhood's economic activity to better understand what routes are needed for existing entrepreneurs to formalize their activities, provide workforce development programs, and improve access to jobs resources.

Find Your Power

Find Your Power is a job training program that works with Philadelphia high school students and connects them to internships and post-graduation employment opportunities. The program is a partnership between Solarize Philly and the School District of Philadelphia's Career and Technical Education program. While enrolled in Find Your Power, students are taught about solar installation, design, sales, and energy efficiency. In 2017, Pennsylvania identified solar installation as a High Priority Occupation in Philadelphia. High Priority Occupations are a component of Pennsylvania's approach to workforce development and identified occupations are in demand by employers, have higher skill needs, and are likely to provide family sustaining wages.



Students learning how to install solar panels.

Strategies & Action Steps:

1. Work with the Philadelphia Office of Economic Opportunity and other local institutions focused on labor force participation to understand the presence and potential impact of the informal economy on Grays Ferry.
 - Conduct a study assessing informal economic activity.
 - Leverage existing entrepreneurial and business development programs to "formalize" informal economic activity.
2. Establish a workforce development center in the neighborhood.
3. Implement workforce and youth development programs like technical training, apprenticeships, and other work-based learning opportunities.
4. Work with the Philadelphia Office of Economic Opportunity and the Grays Ferry CDC to identify population groups that would benefit from specific workforce development strategies and programs.
5. Connect Grays Ferry residents to green industry skills training and apprenticeship programs.
6. Provide entrepreneurial training, business assistance, and financial support to residents in Grays Ferry in partnership with local CDFIs and government.
7. Partner with local organizations that support minority business owners, such as the Women's Opportunities Resource Center.
8. Improve access to online jobs resources by increasing Internet access in Grays Ferry.
9. Host Internet registration drives at community gathering spaces in Grays Ferry, including schools, recreation centers, and public housing sites.

Objective 2.3: Increase homeownership rates to 50% by 2030

Overview:

Homeownership is a way for residents to build wealth and create a sense of community among residents. Currently, 45% of households in Grays Ferry are owner-occupied. Nationally, 64% of households own their own homes and 53% of households in Philadelphia own their own homes. Removing barriers to homeownership by utilizing down payment assistance programs, increasing affordability through community land trusts, and connecting residents to housing education and counseling would help Grays Ferry increase its homeownership rate.

Benefits of Homeownership:

Homeownership comes with several benefits. Owning one's home is a way to build wealth. The value of the house can increase and when the owner sells it, part of the capital gains is tax-exempt. The tax system also does not tax rental income that homeowners effectively paid themselves. Finally, the interest rate on mortgage is deductible from income, meaning homeowners can pay lower income tax. Even though there are also costs associated with owning a house, such as risks of depreciation and maintenance, the advantages of homeownership can greatly benefit owners in the long term.

Strategies & Action Steps:

1. Expand access to financial resources needed for homeownership.
- Connect residents to programs that assist with down payment financing such as Philly First Home Program, Housing Choice Homeownership Program, Habitat for Humanity's Homebuyer Assistance Program, and Homeownership Closing Cost Assistance Program.
2. Expand homeowner counseling in the neighborhood.
3. Increase the number of residential parcels owned by a community land trust.



Typical rowhouses in Grays Ferry.

Bringing a Community Land Trust to Grays Ferry

Why Grays Ferry?

As concerns grow that gentrification will spill into Grays Ferry from adjacent neighborhoods, it is important to create a pool of affordable housing to mitigate potential displacement. Prioritizing publicly owned vacant land and underutilized properties for affordable housing development will promote equitable development and aligns with the strategies in Philadelphia's 2018 Housing Action Plan. While there are few spaces available for large scale affordable housing development, some opportunities still exist and could be supplemented with smaller development across single, disconnected lots.

Publicly Owned Vacant Land in Grays Ferry

Within Grays Ferry, publicly owned vacant land is predominately located in the northern portion of the community. Vacant land is owned by different city agencies such as the Philadelphia Land Bank, Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority, Philadelphia Housing Development Corporation, Philadelphia Housing Authority, and the City of Philadelphia.



A large site suitable for development along Wharton Street. The site is currently vacant and could be developed into 25 housing units by a CLT to promote affordability and increase density.

Who are the Key Partners?

Community Justice Land Trust

Created in 2010, the Community Justice Land Trust is at the forefront CLT-led affordable housing development in Philadelphia. The organization is already active in the adjacent Point Breeze area and has just purchased their first property in Grays Ferry.

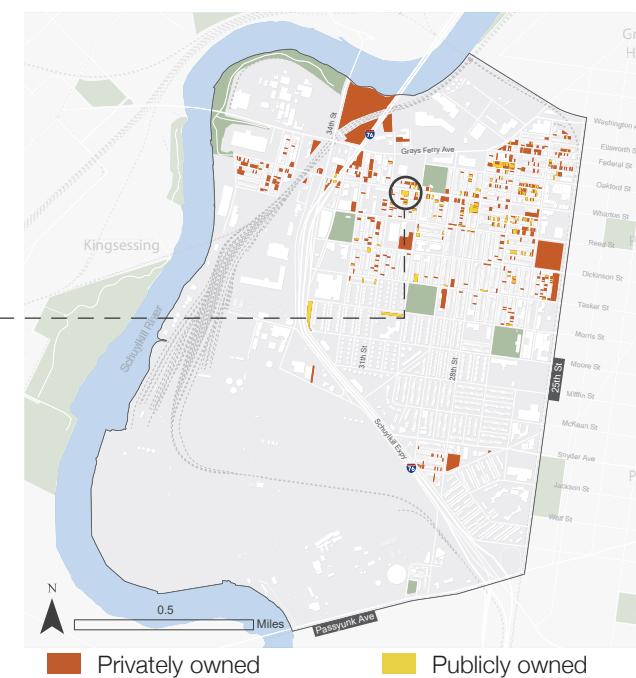
Philadelphia Housing Development Corporation

This nonprofit housing corporation works closely with the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority and Philadelphia Land Bank to offer vacant and underutilized properties at below market rates for affordable housing development.

LISC Philadelphia

This local branch of a national community development corporation functions as an intermediary. It helps community organizations preserve and develop affordable housing by connecting them to financial and technical resources.

Public & Private Owned Vacant Land



Creating a Workforce Development Center

Workforce Development Center in the former Bottom Dollar site

In order to support neighborhood workforce development goals, Grays Ferry residents will benefit from the establishment of a permanent workforce development center. By locating this center in the former Bottom Dollar Food location at 3000 Grays Ferry Avenue, the workforce development center would not only be providing much needed services to the neighborhood, but also fill a large vacant storefront along a major arterial street.

Site History

3000 Grays Ferry Avenue was purchased by Bottom Dollar Foods, a discount grocery chain, in 2013 and opened for business in early 2014. The store closed later that year when Bottom Dollar was acquired by the grocery store chain Aldi and has remained vacant.

A New Use

This building would have the physical space to accommodate skills-building classes and workshops, host job fairs and Internet registration drives, and provide other resources for residents. The building could also provide office space for other community organizations supporting the center. Its onsite parking lot and proximity to both Grays Ferry Avenue, the I-76, and bus lines make it easily accessible.

Project Lead

The newly formed Grays Ferry community development corporation would be best suited to operate the center, and it should partner with existing organizations specializing in workforce development and skills training to provide the programming.

Who are the Key Partners?

Southwest CDC

The more established Southwest CDC could assist Grays Ferry CDC in its first large project by providing administrative and technical support in acquiring the parcel, determining funding sources, and implementing training programs.

Women's Opportunities Resource Center

This organization provides entrepreneurial training, business assistance, and financial support to women and minority communities. Operating a satellite office out of the workforce development center would expand their reach across Philadelphia.

Philadelphia Office of Workforce Development

The Office of Workforce Development (OWD) is the key force behind Philadelphia's workforce development strategy. OWD facilitates the public-private partnerships needed to acquire the proposed site and operate key programs and initiatives.

Philadelphia Industrial Development Corporation

This public-private economic development corporation has the flexible financing and real estate acquisition experience needed to help translate the workforce development center into reality.

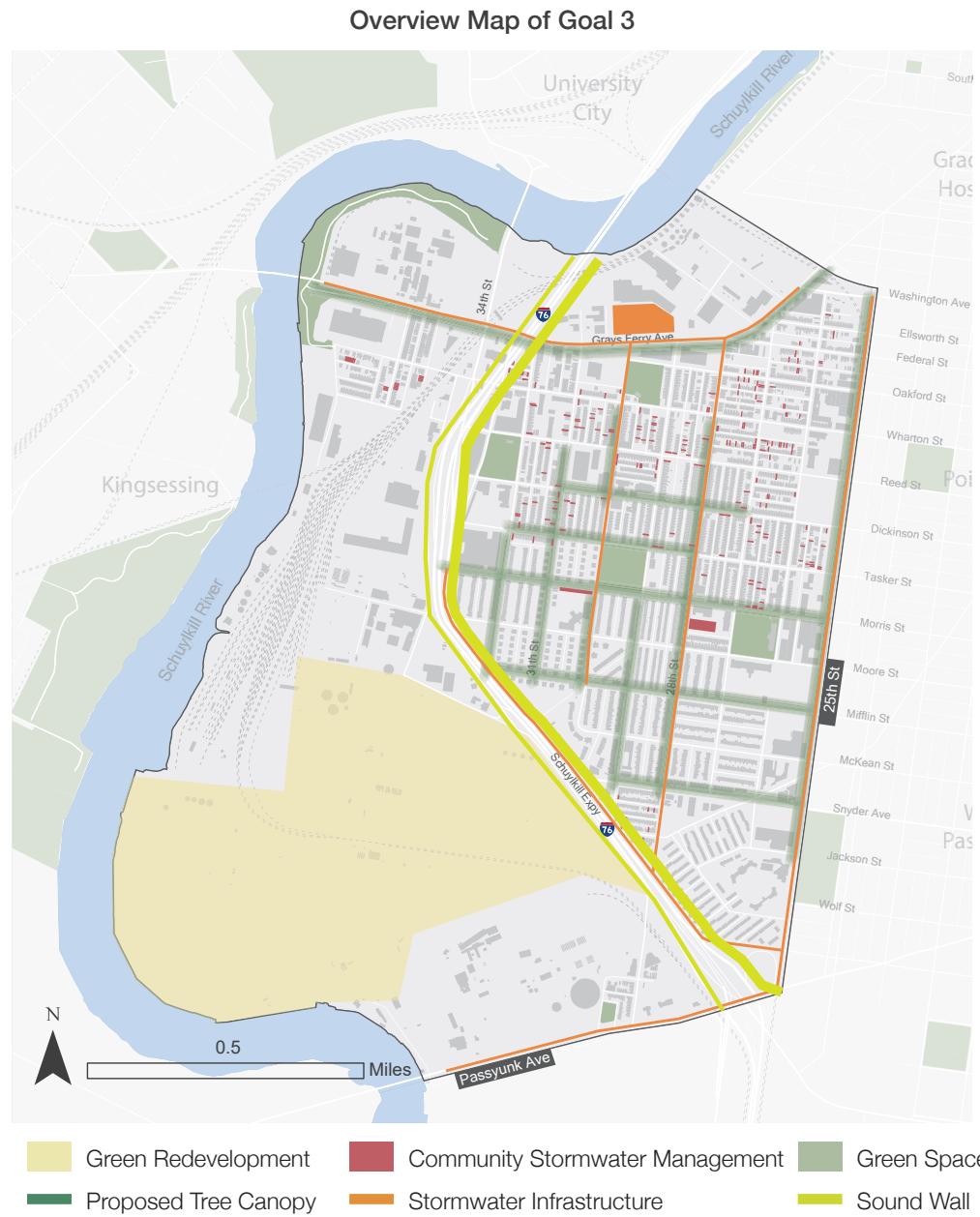


Rendering of a digital skills classroom at Civic Hall @ Union Square, a planned technology and job training center in New York.

Goal 3

Grays Ferry will prioritize climate resilience and rectify environmental health injustices

Grays Ferry has experienced a disproportionate amount of environmental harm throughout its history, most of which is man-made and connected to local industry. In order to address past environmental injustices and future climate-related challenges, action must be taken, as residents have demanded. There must be a renewed focus at the municipal level to ensure that Grays Ferry is able to access climate adaptability programs, develop in a resilient and sustainable manner, and ensure that the voices of its residents are heard.

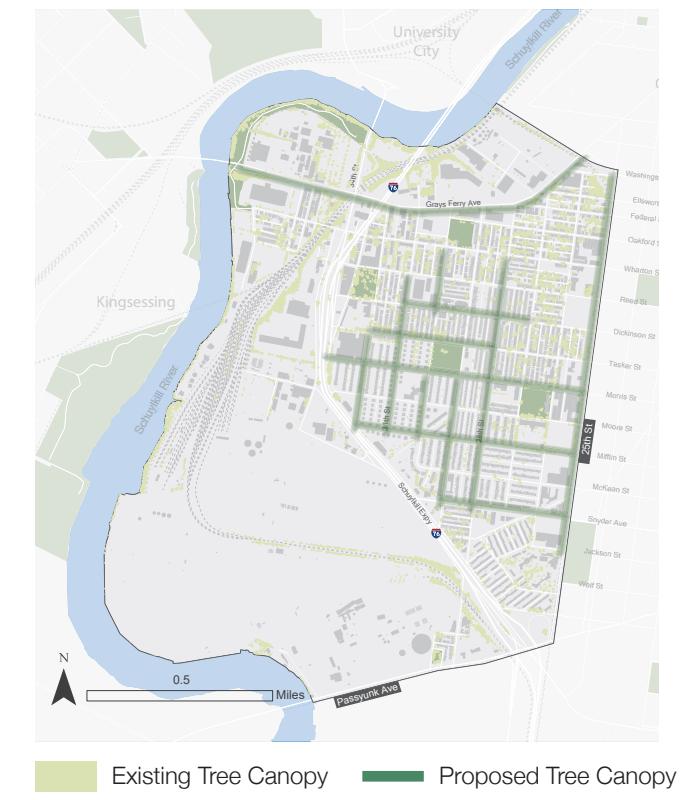


Objective 3.1: Reduce surface temperatures in the neighborhood to the city average

Overview:

The “urban heat island” effect makes Philadelphia noticeably warmer than adjacent rural areas due to its concrete and asphalt landscape. Grays Ferry is even hotter: surface temperatures in the neighborhood are roughly 1.4 degrees Fahrenheit greater than Philadelphia on sunny days. Excessive high temperatures can increase the demand for electricity, intensify heat waves, and can have serious healthy consequences for vulnerable populations. Increasing green cover and simple interventions like roof painting can help bring Grays Ferry in line with Philadelphia temperatures in the short term and set the stage for long term interventions to cool the area even further.

Tree Canopy Plan in Grays Ferry



Strategies & Action Steps:

1. Increase tree cover from 7% to 30% by 2030.
 - Prioritize street tree applications from Grays Ferry.
 - Incentivize residents to participate in tree care through financial compensation, employment, and subsidized training course fees. Engage youths through summer job and internship opportunities.
2. Connect Philly Thrive and local community organizations with citywide initiatives and efforts.
 - Partner with nonprofits like Energy Coordinating Agency to paint roofs white.
 - Establish a community task force to advocate on behalf of the neighborhood to bring more greening efforts to Grays Ferry.



Tree canopy comparison (before and after).

Objective 3.2: Increase the percentage of “Green Acres” in the neighborhood

Overview:

In 2009 the Philadelphia Water Department (PWD) released “Green City, Clean Waters,” an award-winning plan to improve local water quality through stronger urban water management. PWD’s plan implementation is measured through its “Green Acres” (GAs) metric, which refers to an acre of previously impervious land now capable of managing the first one-inch of rainfall. Philadelphia has greened over 1,200 acres of land through the construction of green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) around the city. While PWD is prioritizing neighborhoods with little access to green space in its implementation, Grays Ferry, a neighborhood that has seen decades of industrial-related environmental harm and has a high percentage of impervious surfaces, has fewer than five publicly-funded GSI projects. This objective calls for greater implementation of stormwater management projects that will mitigate surface runoff and create positive social and mental co-benefits.

Proposed Stormwater Infrastructure in Grays Ferry



Strategies & Action Steps:

1. Increase green stormwater infrastructure on major arterial streets.
- Construct tree trenches, stormwater planters, and green bump-outs.
2. Identify vacant lots for community use that can incorporate stormwater management practices.
3. Advocate that Grays Ferry becomes a priority neighborhood for green stormwater infrastructure investment.



Renditions of neighborhood rain garden.

Why Manage Stormwater?

Most of Philadelphia’s wastewater is managed via a combined sewer system that must also handle stormwater. During a large rainfall event, the combined sewer system can overflow and discharge raw sewage into local waterways. Managing stormwater is essential to protecting surface waters and preventing combined sewer overflow events.

Objective 3.3: Prioritize community environmental health

Overview:

The quality of one’s environment, natural and built, has direct effects on health. In Grays Ferry, many health concerns (such as respiratory illnesses and cancers) are linked to the presence of oil refining activities in the area and the Schuylkill Expressway. Objective 2.3 aims to address such environmental health issues by promoting community-led environmental justice projects, advocating for recompense, and ensuring access to quality healthcare.

Alcorn Education and Wellness Center

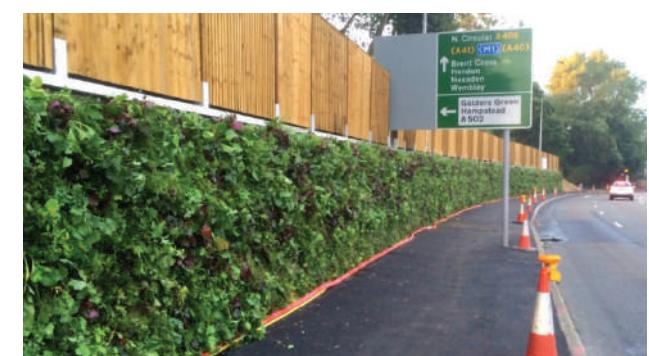
The Reinvestment Fund partnered with the Philadelphia Industrial Development Corporation and JP Morgan Chase to finance a community education and wellness center in a vacant school building in Grays Ferry. This center includes a Family School and a Spectrum Health Center, and there are plans to include an additional social service provider in the building. This plan recommends that the Alcorn Education and Wellness Center be a key partner in ensuring that all Grays Ferry residents have access to quality healthcare and social services needed as a result of air pollution-linked health concerns.



Programming at Alcorn Education and Wellness Center.

Strategies & Action Steps:

1. Conduct a Health Impact Assessment to study the links between industrial pollution and community health concerns.
2. Reduce noise pollution.
 - Construct a sound wall along Vare Avenue to reduce noise from the Schuylkill Expressway. Incorporate greenery within the design.
3. Pursue immediate options for recompense that can create long-term neighborhood institutions in recognition of the human health cost of local industry.
 - Organize a community-led campaign to raise awareness and city support.
 - Transfer ownership of select land parcels from the city to a local organization for use for neighborhood-identified priorities (such as an environmental education center).
 - Fund environment and health-focused higher education scholarships for neighborhood youth.
4. Ensure that all Grays Ferry residents have ongoing and affordable access to quality healthcare for treatment of air pollution-linked health conditions.
 - Partner with local health organizations.



Sound wall with greenery in London.

Objective 3.4: Increase resiliency and sustainability of infrastructure

Overview:

As climate change increases the frequency and severity of extreme weather events, cities must increase the resiliency and sustainability of their built environments. The effects of climate change disproportionately affect low-income and minority communities like Grays Ferry. They are also more likely to suffer from phenomena like urban heat island effect, be located in higher-risk geographies, and bear more of the cost associated with climate change. Grays Ferry is a neighborhood located in a flood-prone area on the banks of the Schuylkill with a high amount of industrial land full of various toxins and chemicals. It is essential that existing infrastructure be modified for better climate resiliency; future development meet a higher, greener standard; and costs associated with climate change be mitigated to the greatest extent possible.

The City of Philadelphia Energy Benchmarking Ordinance

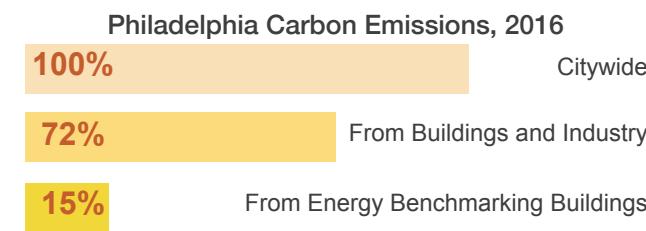
In 2012 the City of Philadelphia passed an energy benchmarking ordinance to help meet Mayor Kenney's goal of reducing carbon emissions 80 percent by 2050. The ordinance requires all commercial and multifamily buildings over 50,000 square feet to measure and report energy usage to the City. By using the EPA's free ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager program, these buildings are able to assess their own energy use at virtually no cost and gauge how they're performing compared to similar buildings, thus allowing them to understand their energy performance, identify cost-saving opportunities, make more informed purchasing decisions, and reduce the city's carbon footprint.

Strategies & Action Steps:

1. Increase residential energy efficient by weatherizing homes.
 - Partner with weatherization and energy efficiency providers to install white roofs, replace aging systems and appliances, and improve insulation.
 - Explore options to create a neighborhood funding pool for residential energy efficiency improvements.
2. Improve educational outreach to property owners regarding the importance of green development in their community and the resources available to them
 - Partner with local green business organizations like Green Building United to bring Philadelphia 2030 District to Grays Ferry.
3. Advocate for a new city ordinance requiring all commercial and multi-family residential properties to participate in energy benchmarking.



White roofs help reflect heat.



Objective 3.5: Redevelop the former refinery site and industrial land using green industry standards

Overview:

The closure and sale of the PES refinery and assurances from the new owner, Hilco Redevelopment Partners, that it would not continue refining has brought new optimism to Grays Ferry. After years of cancer, respiratory issues, and other illnesses that many residents link to the refinery, the community should actively pursue positive uses and development of the site. Hilco has indicated that it is interested in pursuing light or medium industrial uses for the space, such as manufacturing or logistics. Negotiating a community benefits agreement with Hilco is a key strategy for ensuring that community opinion is reflected in the site's development, and local and municipal organizations are well positioned to act as advocates. Organizations should also advocate for PWD to work with developers to finance and implement large scale stormwater management practices.



Green redevelopment (before and after).

Strategies & Action Steps:

1. Negotiate a community benefits agreement (CBA) with the new owners of the former PES refinery site.
 - Set quotas for hiring within the community.
 - Require greening of the site (especially adjacent to the river for flooding mitigation).
 - Commit to adaptive reuse of existing buildings when possible and construction of energy efficient buildings when not.
2. Manage on-site stormwater runoff generated from high levels of impervious areas on industrial sites.
 - Advocate for the use of the highest-ranked stormwater management practice where feasible.
 - Encourage collaboration between Hilco and PWD to create a large rain garden to manage stormwater runoff from the surrounding neighborhood.
3. Rezone to reflect the proper zoning classification of planned industrial activity to discourage a return to heavy industrial uses.



Rendering of a large-scale rain garden.

Green Redevelopment of Refinery Site

Shaping Development

While Hilco Redevelopment Partners has not revealed its plans for the refinery site, Philadelphia Mayor Kenney has expressed confidence in the firm and Philly Thrive has echoed that with cautious optimism. Mayor Kenney has stated that the city is optimistic development will “put the public’s safety as a top priority, [have] a more positive impact on the environment, [engage] meaningfully with the surrounding communities, and [contribute] significantly to the region’s economy.”

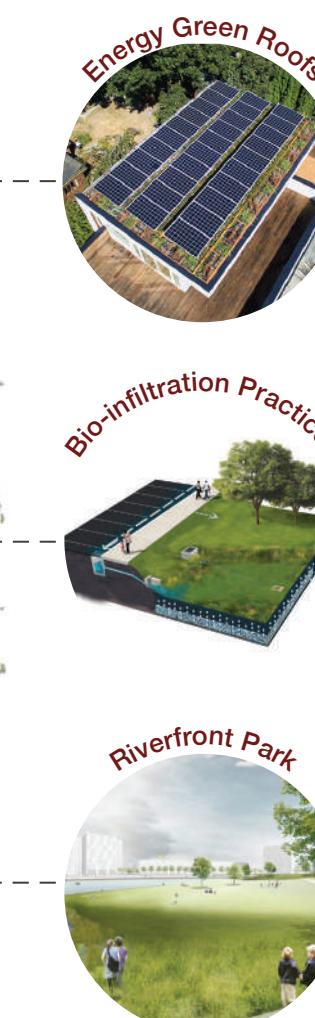
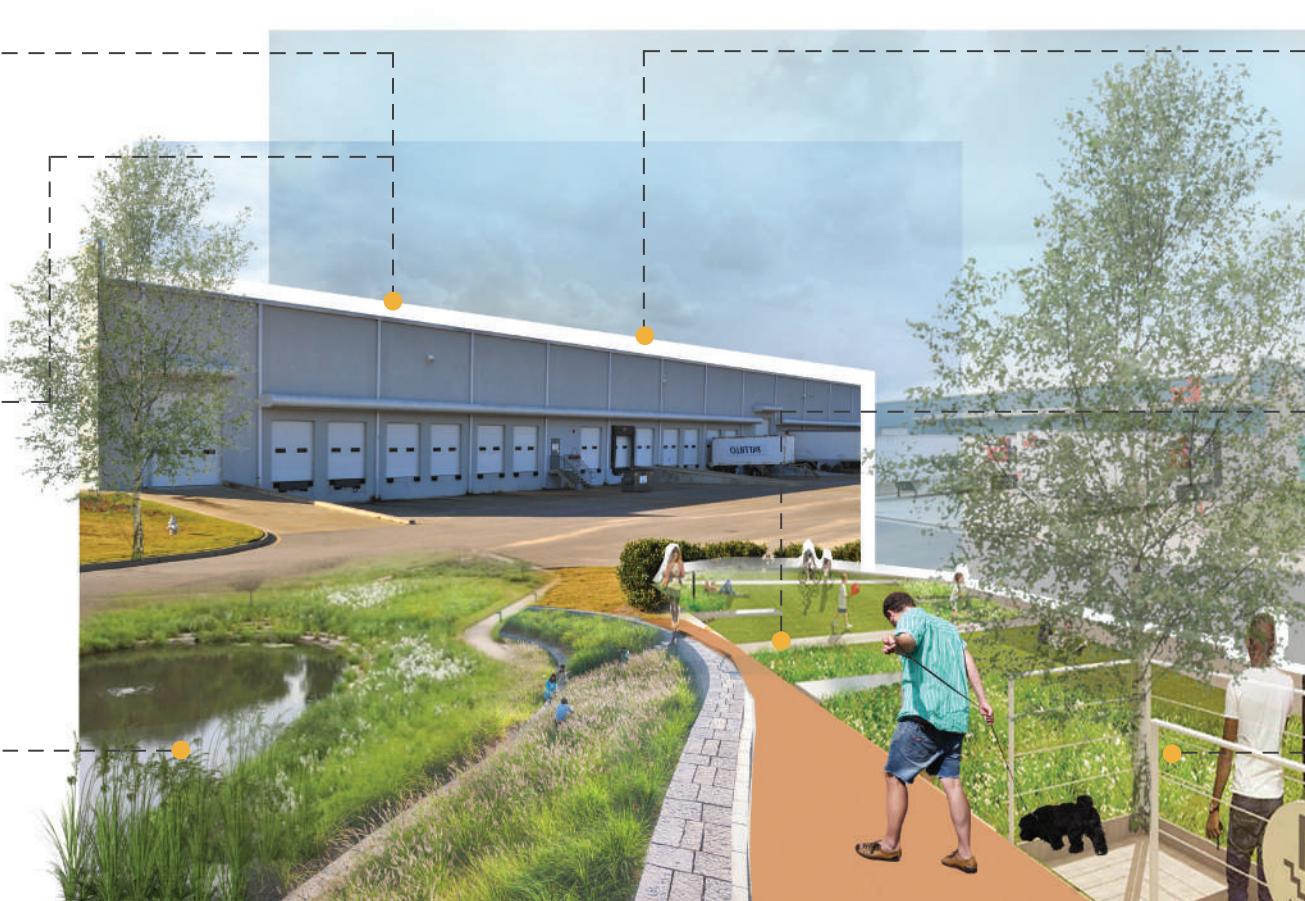
To ensure that future development is positive, it is imperative that the city help negotiate a binding community benefits agreement to translate promises into action. Additionally, the Philadelphia Water Department must play a leading role in facilitating the implementation of stormwater management practices onsite to mitigate runoff generated from high levels of impervious surfaces and green the former refinery site.

Community Benefits Agreement (CBA)

A CBA secures amenities or services for communities in return for local support of high impact development projects. Negotiating a CBA with Hilco will ensure that residents benefit from development, whether it be through a local hiring quota or mandated donations to local community groups. Sustained public and political pressure is essential as Philadelphia does not require that developers negotiate CBAs with communities. Philly Thrive and the new Grays Ferry CDC would be key community advocates, but political support and guidance from the City and Councilmember Kenyatta Johnson will also be impactful.

Potential Stormwater Management Practices

- Vegetated green roofs will insulate buildings, reducing cooling and heating energy needs. They will also manage rainfall that would otherwise be directed off impervious roofs and into combined sewers and waterways.
- A rain garden will collect stormwater directed from impervious areas in residential and industrial areas. This large area disconnect prevents stormwater from directly entering local sewers or waterways. The rain garden will also add a green amenity to the site.
- A riverfront park will restore the Schuylkill River’s banks and act as the first line of defense against flooding.



Goal 4

Grays Ferry will provide robust mobility options that prioritize safe streets

Transit is fundamental to providing residents access to jobs, services, and other spaces. While Grays Ferry has a developing network of connections to the rest of Philadelphia, a lack of safe transit options present physical and mental barriers to mobility. Investments to enhance safety and remove barriers will move Grays Ferry toward a robust and equitable transportation system accessible to all.



Objective 4.1: Increase equitable access to public transit

Overview:

Objective 3.1 recommends that transit advocacy in the neighborhood prioritizing addressing public transit equity issues. Nearly 40% of Grays Ferry residents live below the poverty line and many rely on public transit, but there are few initiatives within SEPTA to ensure that public transit is affordable. 2020 may offer several opportunities for change: recently, a citywide transit advocacy coalition was established and SEPTA is currently developing its Fare Restructuring Plan for fiscal years 2021-2023. Advocating for more equitable access to public transit is a long-term initiative, but there are opportunities for immediate advocacy that the new Grays Ferry CDC could join.

Strategies & Action Steps:

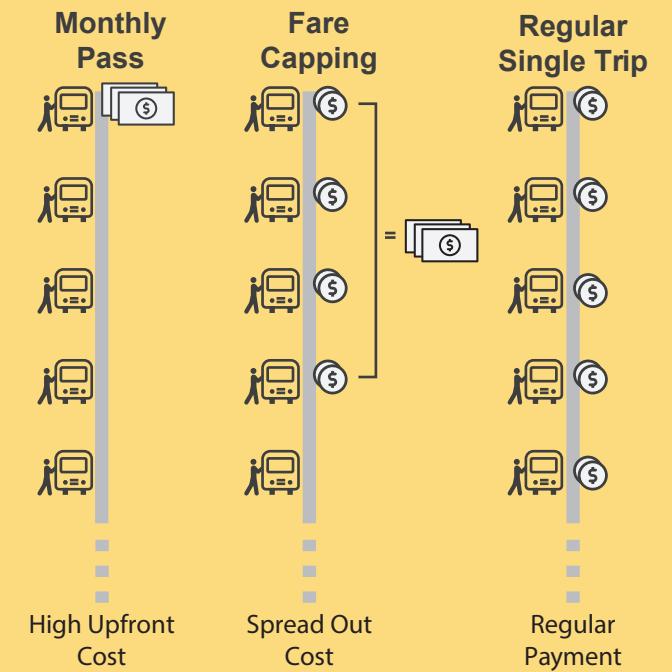
- Advocate for changes to SEPTA's rate structure to achieve greater use of public transportation options and social equity.
- Join the newly formed Transit Forward Philadelphia coalition to access a larger platform advocating for transit.
- Designate individuals within established neighborhood groups to attend the monthly SEPTA board meetings and raise community concerns regarding fare restructuring.
- Advocate for a fare capping policy on SEPTA public transit.

Fare Capping Rate Structure

Fare caps limit the amount an individual pays for transit over a given time period (often a month). Individuals pay for each of their rides until the amount paid equals the cost of a monthly pass. After meeting this cost, individuals no longer pay transit costs. Fare capping makes transit systems more equitable for those unable to access savings by paying upfront for monthly transit passes. Since fare capping applies to all riders, stigma is generally nonexistent.



Local political action committee calling for the end of SEPTA's \$1 transfer fee in March 2020. The fee was later partially eliminated as part of SEPTA's rate restructuring process.



Objective 4.2: Enhance transportation infrastructure to promote safety and user comfort

Overview:

Philadelphia has spent the last decade improving street safety through its Vision Zero and Complete Streets programs. Vision Zero aims to eliminate traffic fatalities and injuries by 2030 and Complete Streets encourages city agencies to create streets that support all users, regardless of travel mode. Many areas have benefited from both programs, but Grays Ferry has not. At least seven complex or wide intersections in Grays Ferry are identified as areas of safety concern for all road users, including along 28th Street, 29th Street, 34th Street, Grays Ferry Avenue, Point Breeze Avenue, Snyder Avenue, and Washington Avenue. Smaller intersections in the community's residential core feature unsafe and poorly-marked crosswalks. Additionally, the 25th Street Viaduct, an imposing piece of transportation infrastructure running along the neighborhood's eastern border, requires significant rehabilitation (that was promised by its owner, CSX Corporation, in 2015 and still has yet to finish). Focusing on improving these transportation infrastructures would create an environment where residents are empowered to use all mobility options available.



The current intersection at New Hope Street, 30th Street, and Mifflin Street is wide and confusing to navigate.

Strategies & Action Steps:

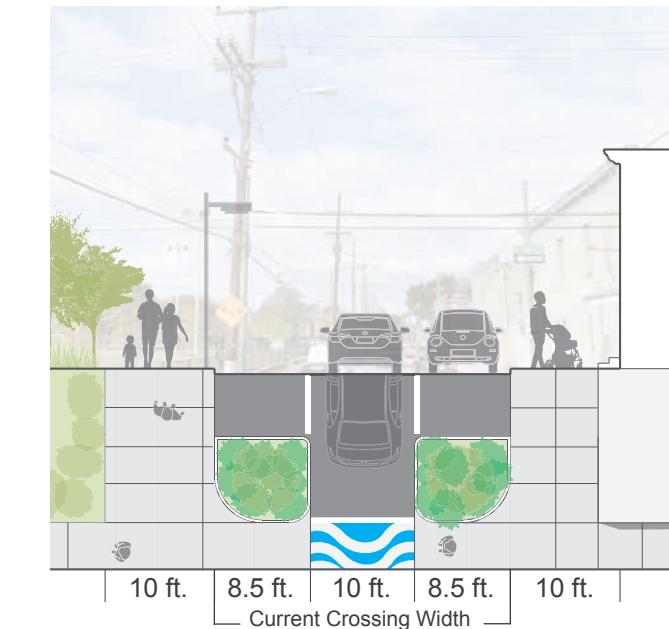
1. Improve dangerous and complex intersections.
 - Employ tactical urbanism to create immediate changes. This could include planters, barriers, street furniture, and community-painted crosswalks.
 - Modify intersections with more permanent changes like curb extensions to create long-term change.
2. Complete the 25th Street Viaduct resurfacing project and improve safety conditions on the roadway below.
 - Add street lighting along 25th Street.
 - Reinstall traffic signals to improve safety and traffic flow.
3. Install bus shelters along SEPTA routes to improve user comfort.
4. Maintain sidewalk infrastructure to improve pedestrian safety in Grays Ferry.



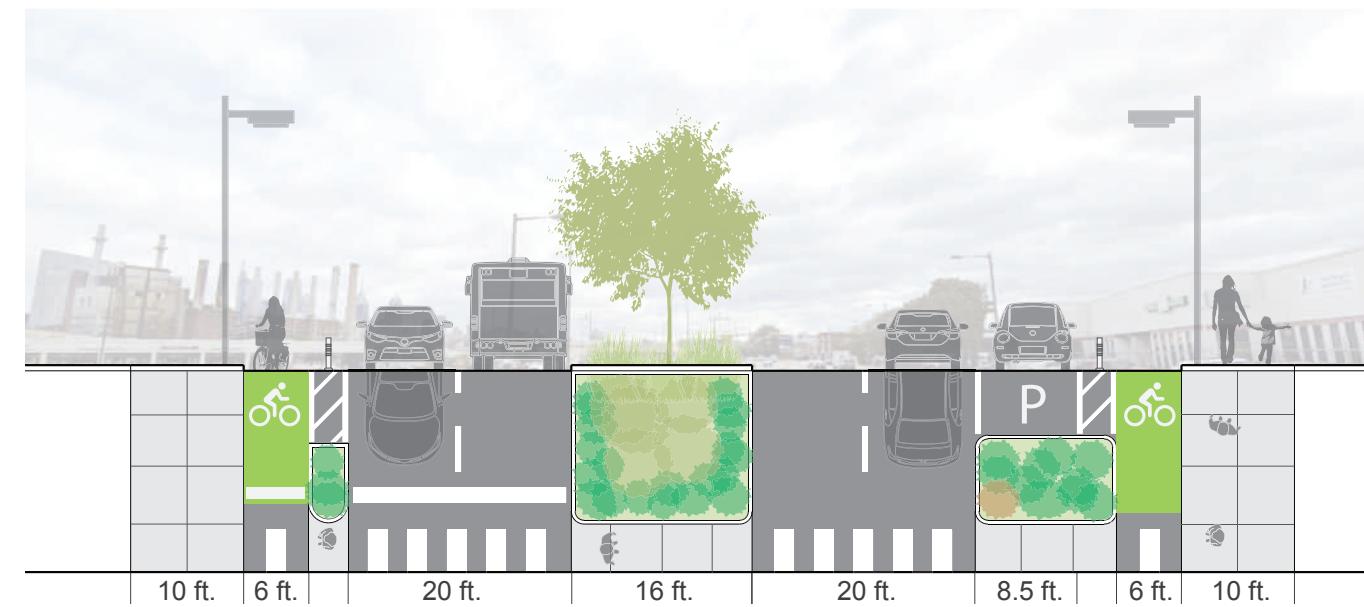
Immediate improvements could be achieved with painted crosswalks and curb extensions created with planters.



Solar powered bus shelters can improve user comfort, raise awareness of traffic safety, and power their own lighting.



Long-term improvements to neighborhood streets like Tasker Street would include curb extensions and community painted crosswalks.



Long-term improvements to major arterial streets like Grays Ferry Avenue would include a widened median, narrower lanes, clearly marked protected bike lanes, and narrow intersection.

Objective 4.3: Increase residents' use of active transportation modes

Overview:

Active transit modes like walking or biking can provide greater mobility freedom for travelers. Currently, 44% of Grays Ferry residents do not have access to a car, and most travelers rely on public transit. Fewer than 2% of residents bike as their primary transit mode compared to 2.6% in Philadelphia. The low utilization of active transit modes may be attributed in part to poor conditions of existing bike lanes and other infrastructure. Increasing and improving active transit mode-related infrastructure, amenities, and services has the potential to make walking and biking more attractive choices and provide greater mobility. This objective also aims to connect and expand existing bike infrastructure to broader bike networks in Philadelphia.

Strategies & Action Steps:

1. Repaint and maintain visibility of existing bike lanes.
2. Pilot bike lanes on key arterials to collect data and user feedback.
 - Install temporary protected bike lanes on Grays Ferry Avenue, Passyunk Avenue, Vare Avenue, and 34th Street.
3. Designate community streets as shared streets between vehicles and cyclists.
 - Paint shared streets markings on Reed St., Tasker Street, Morris Street, Mifflin Street, 29th Street, and 28th Street.
4. Install secure bike racks outside of high-traffic commercial areas, in parks, and schools.
5. Improve street safety and commuter perception of Grays Ferry.
 - Provide city biking and street safety lessons at local schools and recreation centers.



Vare Street will be used as a corridor with a two-way protected bike lane that provides a safer biking experience for users.



On narrow community streets not suited for dedicated bike lanes, clear markings will indicate that vehicles and cyclists must share the street.

Bike Lane Pilots

Bike lane pilots are a quick and inexpensive way to provide safe cycling infrastructure and gather feedback from community members. In October 2019, the Transportation Management Association of Chester County partnered with the Borough of West Chester to create a temporary bike lane with paint and removable road barriers. A temporary bike lanes is often a better mode of persuasion than a rendering and can help convince constituents that permanent changes will be positive.



Temporary bike lanes utilizes traffic cones and bollards to create a barrier between cyclists and other road users.



The proposed bike lanes and cyclist friendly streets will create a safe biking network for residents. Bike lanes on Grays Ferry Avenue will help link to job centers like Center City, University City, and West Philadelphia. Bike lanes on Vare Street will improve access to commercial areas immediately south of Grays Ferry.

Finishing the 25th Street Viaduct Improvement Project

Current Status of the Safety Improvement Project

CSX Corporation announced plans in 2015 to renovate the 25th Street Viaduct with a projected timeline of five years. Little progress has been made since then, aside from installing protective netting to catch falling concrete. Community members in the areas impacted by the viaduct have continuously called for CSX to move forward with the project and for the Philadelphia Streets Department to improve the conditions on the active roadway below. However, railroads are federally regulated and the Streets Department and the City of Philadelphia are unable to install safety measures until CSX finishes the project and gives permission.



Current status of 25th Street Viaduct.

Community Pressure

CSX has sole responsibility of repairing the viaduct, and must be pressured to finish the project through community action. Civic associations, councilmembers, and the City of Philadelphia should continue to pressure CSX to repair the viaduct. The newly formed Grays Ferry CDC should be the major community lead, but larger municipal partners like the Office of Transportation, Infrastructure, and Sustainability should also demand that the project move forward. In order to better incentivize CSX to finish the project, the City should facilitate the funding process by helping CSX obtain state and federal rail infrastructure grants.

Looking Ahead

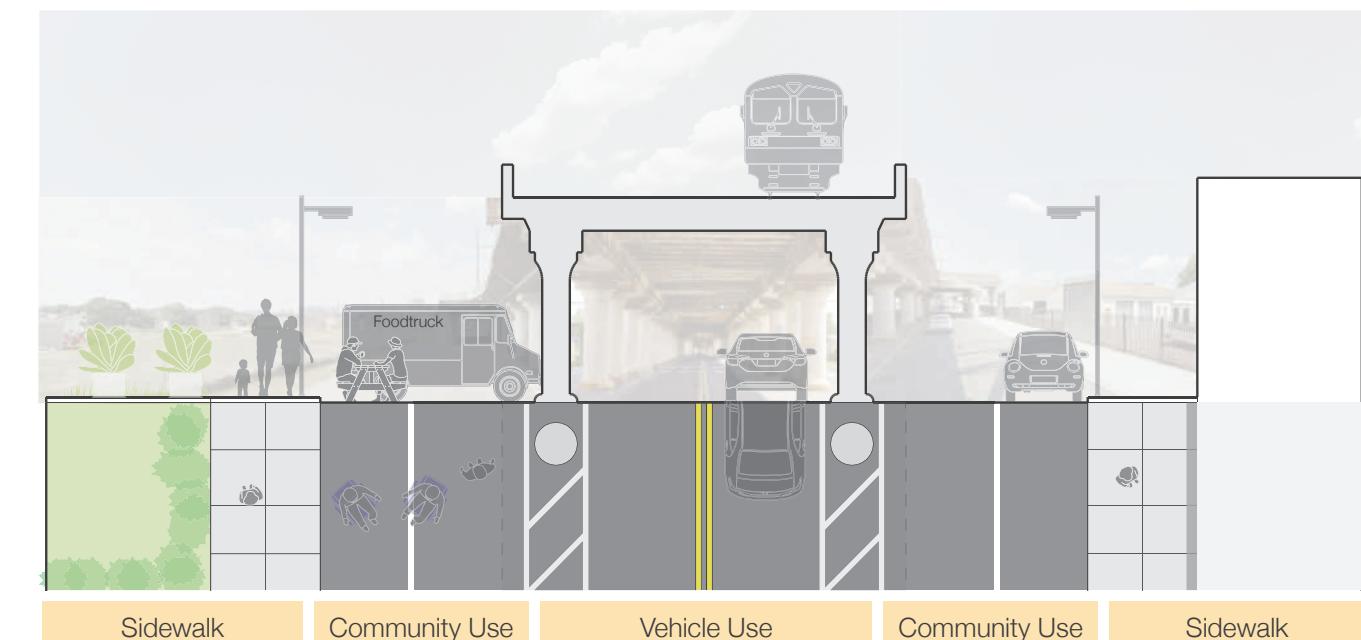
The imposing presence of the viaduct is both a physical and psychological barrier that impacts Grays Ferry negatively. Once resurfacing is completed by CSX, the viaduct can be made into a safe and enjoyable community asset. Installing lighting and traffic signals will improve safety and traffic flow. Programs like Philly Free Streets and Playstreets can be utilized for temporary closures of the outer lanes for community events. Placemaking projects will allow the community to visually transform the viaduct.



Rendering of street lighting (before & after).



Rendering showing proposed active use of streets for community events.



Street section for proposed 25th Street viaduct in temporary closures.

Implementation

To guide strategy implementation, the following table identifies the number of years implementation is expected to take, recommended project owners, partner institutions, estimated cost, and potential funding sources. This plan recommends that the newly established Grays Ferry CDC lead the implementation of a number of strategies, specifically those related to advocacy, education, and workforce development. Other community stakeholders, including smaller organizations like the Grays Ferry Civic Association, economic development institutions like LISC Philadelphia, and various city departments, are expected to play significant roles in ensuring Grays Ferry has access to the resources, expertise, and capital required to meet plan goals.

Strategy	Objectives	Timeline (Years)	Owner	Partners	Cost	Funding
Establish a community development corporation (CDC) to provide neighborhood support and leadership at the municipal level.	1.1	1-3	Southwest CDC	Grays Ferry Civic Association, Office of the District 2 Councilmember, PACDC	\$	Social impact financing, grants
Leverage existing food access programs in Philadelphia to increase resident access to high quality, affordable food.	1.2		The Food Trust	Grays Ferry CDC, Dept. of Public Health, PHA, Parks & Rec	\$	USDA Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive grant program
Utilize vacant lots for urban agriculture, prioritizing publicly owned land.	1.2		Residents, neighborhood organizations, Grays Ferry CDC, and Women's Community Revitalization Project	Parks & Rec, Neighborhood Gardens Trust, Soil Generation, Philadelphia Horticultural Society (PHS), Philadelphia Land Bank, Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority, LISC Philadelphia, PIDC, Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia	\$\$	Social impact financing, program-related investments, grants
Explore convenience store owners' interest in participating in Philadelphia's Healthy Corner Store Initiative.	1.2		The Food Trust	Get Healthy Philly, community organizations, City	\$\$\$	PA Dept. of Community and Economic Development, CDC, Storefront Improvement Grant Program
Conduct a market analysis to identify opportunities for commercial development.	1.3		University of Pennsylvania	Other community organizations	\$	University of Pennsylvania, grants
Entrepreneurial local entrepreneurs and business owners with financial and technical support.	1.3		Grays Ferry CDC	LISC Philadelphia, Citizen's Planning Institute, Southwest CDC, The Barra Foundation, Community Design Collaborative	\$\$	The Barra Foundation, LISC Philadelphia, Storefront Improvement Grant Program
Pursue community-led commercial real estate acquisition of select vacant parcels and structures.	1.3		Grays Ferry CDC	Shift Capital, PIDC, Philadelphia Land Bank, Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority, LISC Philadelphia, Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia	\$\$\$	Social impact financing, program-related investments, grants
Increase enrollment in existing subsidized childcare programs.	1.4		City of Philadelphia Office of Children and Families	All childcare services & related orgs	\$\$	Reinvestment Fund grants, City
Increase the quality of existing childcare facilities.	1.4		City of Philadelphia Office of Children and Families	All childcare services & related orgs	\$\$	Reinvestment Fund grants, City

Strategy	Objectives	Timeline (Years)	Owner	Partners	Cost	Funding
Pursue community ownership of residential properties in the neighborhood to make homeownership more accessible for low income populations.	2.1 & 2.3	4-6	Women's Community Revitalization Project, Grays Ferry CDC	LISC Philadelphia, PIDC, community organizations, Office of the District 2 Councilmember	\$\$\$	Social impact financing, program-related investments, grants
Increase access to residential land acquisition, home repairs, and home improvement financing.	2.1	1-3	Southwest CDC, Grays Ferry CDC	PHDC	\$-\$ \$\$	Basic Systems Repair PHDC program; Adaptive Modification PHDC program; Restore, Renew, Repair PHDC program (general), PHDC Community Asthma Prevention Program Plus
Provide subsidies and protections for low income renters to prevent evictions.	2.1	1-3	Southwest CDC, Grays Ferry CDC	PHDC, Division of Housing and Community Development	\$\$	Shallow Rent PHDC program
Work with the Philadelphia Office of Economic Opportunity and other local institutions focused on labor force participation to understand the presence and potential impact of the informal economy on Grays Ferry.	2.2	1-3	Philadelphia Office of Economic Opportunity	Philadelphia Works, local universities, Economy League of Greater Philadelphia, Pew Charitable Trusts, Southwest CDC, Grays Ferry CDC	\$	City
Establish a workforce development center in the neighborhood.	2.2	4-6	Grays Ferry CDC	Southwest CDC, PIDC, Women's Opportunities Resource Center, Office of Workforce Development	\$\$\$	Social impact financing, grants
Implement workforce and youth development programs like technical training, apprenticeships, and other work-based learning opportunities.	2.2	1-3	Grays Ferry CDC	Philadelphia Works, Southwest CDC, Women's Community Revitalization Project, West Philadelphia Skills Initiative	\$\$	Social impact financing, program-related investments, grants
Provide entrepreneurial training, business assistance, and financial support to residents in Grays Ferry in partnership with local CDFIs and government.	2.2	1-3	Grays Ferry CDC	Women's Community Revitalization Project, Citizen's Planning Institute, Southwest CDC	\$\$	The Barra Foundation, LISC Philadelphia, Storefront Improvement Grant Program
Improve access to online jobs resources by increasing Internet access in Grays Ferry.	2.2	1-3	PHA, Comcast	Grays Ferry CDC, local community institutions (schools, recreation centers, library)	\$	ConnectHomeUSA
Expand access to financial resources needed for homeownership.	2.3	1-3	Southwest CDC, Grays Ferry CDC	PHDC	\$-\$ \$\$	Philly First Home PHDC program
Expand homeowner counseling in the neighborhood.	2.3	1-3	PHDC, Southwest CDC, Grays Ferry CDC	Grays Ferry CDC, Division of Housing and Community Development	\$	Social impact financing, grants

Strategy	Objectives	Timeline (Years)			Owner	Partners	Cost	Funding
Increase tree cover from 7% to 30% by 2030.	3.1			7-10	Grays Ferry CDC, Parks & Rec	Philly Thrive, Office of the District 2 Councilmember, PHS, Philadelphia Orchard Project, Office of Sustainability, Streets Dept.	\$\$	PHS, City
Connect local community organizations with citywide initiatives and efforts.	3.1	1-3			Grays Ferry CDC	Clean Air Council, Philly Thrive, Office of the District 2 Councilmember, PHS, Parks & Rec, Office of Sustainability, Streets Dept.	\$	Grays Ferry CDC
Increase green stormwater infrastructure on major arterial streets.	3.2	1-3			PWD	Streets Dept., Grays Ferry CDC, Office of Sustainability, Philly Thrive, PHS, PIDC, local businesses, community organizations	\$\$	Capital Improvement Plan, Stormwater grants from PWD & PIDC
Identify vacant lots for community use that can incorporate stormwater management practices.	3.2	1-3			Grays Ferry CDC	Community Design Collaborative, Redevelopment Authority, Philadelphia Land Bank, PHS, PIDC	\$\$	Stormwater Management Incentives Program, Greened Acre Retrofit Program, City
Advocate that Grays Ferry becomes a priority neighborhood for green stormwater infrastructure investment.	3.2	1-3			Office of District 2 Councilmember	Community organizations, Mayor's Office, PIDC	N/A	N/A
Conduct a Health Impact Assessment to study the links between industrial pollution and community health concerns.	3.3		4-6		University of Pennsylvania, Dept. of Public Health	Philadelphia universities, Pew Charitable Trusts	\$	University of Pennsylvania, City
Reduce noise pollution.	3.3		4-6		PennDOT	Streets Dept., Philadelphia City Planning Commission, community organizations	\$\$\$	City
Pursue options for recompense.	3.3		4-6		Grays Ferry CDC, Philly Thrive	City of Philadelphia, Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority, Office of the District 2 Councilmember	\$\$	City & grants
Ongoing and affordable access to quality healthcare for treatment of air pollution-linked health conditions.	3.3		4-6		Spectrum Health	University of Pennsylvania, CHOP	\$\$	Spectrum Health

Strategy	Objectives	Timeline (Years)		Owner	Partners	Cost	Funding
Increase residential energy efficiency by weatherizing homes.	3.4		4-6	Grays Ferry CDC	Energy Coordinating Agency	\$\$	Grays Ferry CDC
Improve educational outreach to property owners regarding the importance of green development in their community and the resources available to them.	3.4	1-3		Grays Ferry CDC	Green Building United, Philly Thrive, community organization, PIDC, Office of Sustainability, Philly Energy Initiative	\$-\$	Social impact financing, program-related investments, grants
New city ordinance requiring all commercial and multi-family residential properties to participate in energy benchmarking.	3.4		4-6	Office of Sustainability	City Council, Mayor's Office, Philly Thrive	N/A	N/A
Negotiate a CBA with the new owners of the former PES refinery site.	3.5	1-3		Grays Ferry CDC, Hilco Redevelopment Partners	City, Office of the District 2 Councilmember	N/A	N/A
Manage on-site stormwater runoff on industrial sites.	3.5		4-6	PWD, Hilco Redevelopment Partners	Streets Dept.	\$\$	Stormwater Management Incentives Program, Greened Acre Retrofit Program
Rezone to reflect the proper zoning classification of planned industrial activity to discourage a return to heavy industrial uses.	3.5	1-3		Philadelphia City Planning Commission	Community organizations	N/A	N/A

Strategy	Objectives	Timeline (Years)			Owner	Partners	Cost	Funding
Advocate for changes to SEPTA's rate structure to achieve greater use of public transportation options and social equity.	4.1	1-3			Transit Forward Philadelphia	Grays Ferry CDC, Fifth Square, Philly Transit Riders Union	\$	Social impact financing
Improve dangerous and complex intersections.	4.2				Streets Dept., PWD	Office of the District 2 Councilmember, Transit Forward Philadelphia, SEPTA	\$\$	City, William Penn Foundation, Percent for the Arts
Complete the 25th Street Viaduct resurfacing project and improve safety conditions on the roadway below.	4.2			7-10	CSX Rail	City of Philadelphia, community organizations, Streets Dept.	\$\$\$	State and federal rail infrastructure funding, William Penn Foundation, Percent for the Arts
Install bus shelters along SEPTA routes to improve user comfort.	4.2		4-6		oTIS; Office of Arts, Culture, and the Creative Economy, Streets Dept.	PennDOT, PWD, Office of Sustainability, community organizations	\$	Percent for Art Program, City
Maintain sidewalk infrastructure to improve pedestrian safety in Grays Ferry.	4.2		1-3		Streets Dept., individual homeowners	Streets Dept., Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority, Office of the District 2 Councilmember, PHDC	\$\$	Restore, Repair, Renew PHDC program, individual homeowners
Repaint and maintain visibility of existing bike lanes.	4.3		1-3		Streets Dept.	Transit Forward Philadelphia, PennDOT, community organizations, SEPTA, PWD	\$\$	City
Pilot bike lanes on key arterials to collect data and user feedback.	4.3		4-6		Streets Dept.	Community organizations, PWD	\$\$	City
Designate community streets as shared streets between vehicles and cyclists.	4.3		4-6		Streets Dept.	Philly Free Streets, Play Streets	\$	Social impact financing, grants
Install secure bike racks outside of high-traffic commercial areas, in parks, and schools.	4.3		1-3		Grays Ferry CDC, Transit Forward Philadelphia	Energy Authority, Office of Sustainability, community organizations	\$	Social impact financing, grants
Improve street safety and commuter perception of Grays Ferry.	4.3		1-3		Parks & Rec	Streets Dept., PennDOT, PWD, Office of Sustainability, community organizations	\$	City

Conclusion



Grays Ferry 2030 aims to recognize the dynamism and strength that Grays Ferry is already home to and prioritize the needs of residents by building greater resilience in the community. The goals and recommendations in this plan seek to address pressing concerns in the community and empower residents by providing stronger access to resources, increasing economic wealth, ensuring environmental stewardship, and addressing critical transportation needs.

Big picture strategies will play a critical role in implementing recommendations and achieving Grays Ferry 2030's goals.

- Creating a CDC in Grays Ferry will provide the community with a larger advocacy platform and ability to access financing for much needed projects.
- Utilizing community land trusts for residential and commercial properties will stabilize the community against external development pressures, fill commercial properties with businesses that meet community-identified priorities, and make home and business ownership more affordable.
- Engaging in a community benefits agreement with Hilco Redevelopment Partners will ensure that the refinery site will transform from a source of harm to a source of strength. Sustainable and green redevelopment, as well as local hiring practices, has the potential to change the nature of industry in Grays Ferry.
- Repairing the 25th Street Viaduct and activating the street below will create a safer and more inviting neighborhood boundary, minimizing the mental and physical barriers the viaduct currently creates.

By pairing these strategies with smaller, more incremental steps, Grays Ferry 2030 has the potential to realize a future of greater self-determination, more inclusive and resilient development, and renewed city focus on working with local stakeholders to improve the lives of Grays Ferry residents.

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Implementation

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Appendix

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Notes

Demographic Data

All demographic data is sourced from the U.S. Decennial Census or the American Community Surveys (5-Year Estimates).

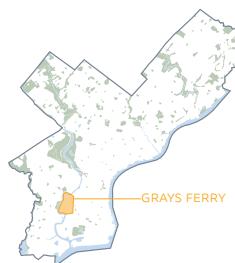
Appendix: Alternatives

As part of the Planning Workshop course, the team prepared three alternative visions of Grays Ferry in the future. The point of this exercise was not to identify the most actionable interventions for the neighborhood but rather to imagine transformative changes that could occur if all political, financial and social barriers to implementation were removed. The team imagined three futures:

- **INCLUSIVE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT** empowers residents and builds economic resiliency.
- **GREEN AND CLEAN** rectifies a history of environmental injustice and prepares for climate change.
- **BARRIER FREE** removes obstacles and improving accessibility.

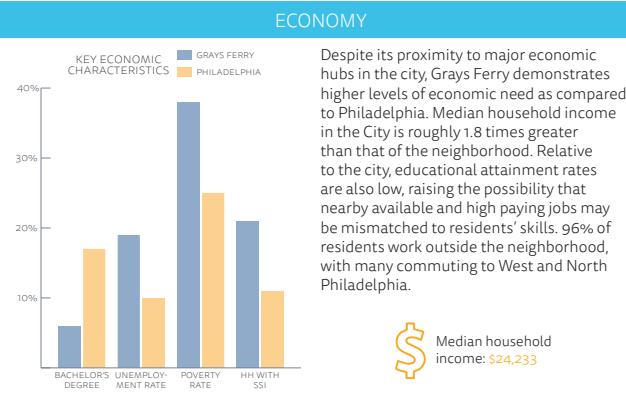
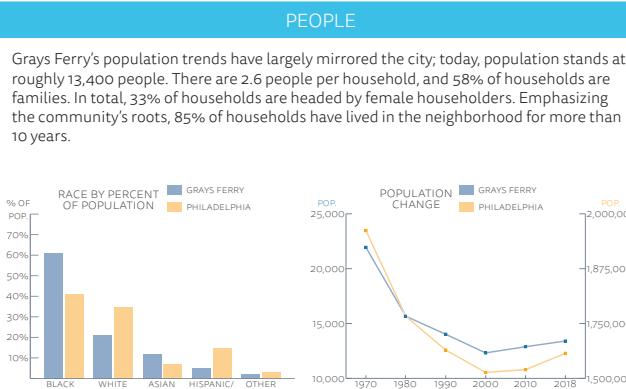
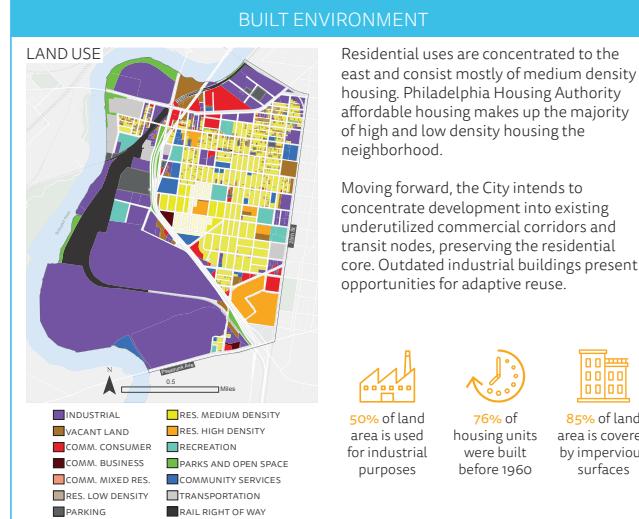
Although many of the alternatives' components did not translate in situ into Grays Ferry 2030, several influenced the plan's final recommendations and are represented in a more scaled down form. Recommendations related to sustainable development, community land trusts, recompense for environmental health issues, reclamation of the industrial waterfront, and community benefits agreements, for example, were all originally expressed during the alternatives exercise.

GRAYS FERRY TODAY



Grays Ferry is located along the Schuylkill River and south of central Philadelphia. Historically, the area's location on the outskirts of a growing Philadelphia and along a waterfront contributed to the rise of industry; an influx of working class residents soon followed.

Today, the neighborhood continues to balance the interests of industry and residents. The neighborhood has lagged behind economically in comparison to the city and adjacent areas. Confronting these realities is a wealth of civic minded residents working to bring better services and opportunities to Grays Ferry.



INCLUSIVE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

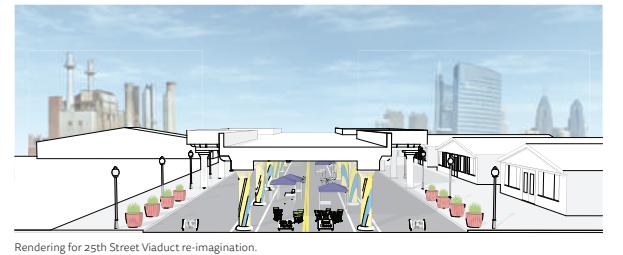
EMPOWERING RESIDENTS AND BUILDING ECONOMIC RESILIENCY



- MAP KEY
1. Vacant parcels will be used as community gardens or community land trusts.
 2. New bus & bike paths along arterial streets.
 3. Former refinery land developed using a CBA
 4. Reorientation of store fronts on 25th Street.
 5. Expanded public housing.



25TH STREET RAIL VIADUCT



Using design as a tool for economic invigoration, our vision of the 25th street viaduct is one where local businesses and residents thrive. While the viaduct will still be used as a route for CSX freight, the area below will be reimaged as a space conducive to local businesses, pedestrians, cyclists, and visitors. Local business activity and community interactions will be supported through the following measures:

- » Create a more welcoming retail corridor by reorienting business fronts toward 25th street.
- » Enact placemaking projects (e.g. murals, lighting, planters, plaques) to enhance visibility of local businesses and incentivize visitation.
- » Use landscaping as a tool to both draw visitors to corridor and create separation between pedestrians and through traffic.
- » Close several blocks of 25th street (from Washington avenue to Snyder avenue) to thru-traffic once a week, using this space for an open market for arts & cultural exhibits, food stands, and community events.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Inclusion is enhanced when residents gain economic mobility and are active participants in the city's work force.

- » Create a robust skills training program, free and accessible to all residents. Training will emphasize technological literacy, but provide a wide variety of course offerings with the goal of creating a diversified workforce.
- » Establish a committee for local business support that directs business owners toward loans and grants.
- » Promote local entrepreneurship
- » Direct infill development opportunities towards new local businesses.

HOUSING

A precursor for a sustainable and inclusive community is ensuring that all residents have access to safe, affordable, and stable housing.

- » Increase the amount of public housing in the neighborhood.
- » Establish rent controls on privately-owned apartment buildings.
- » Create a community land trust in a portion of the neighborhood.
- » Transform vacant lots into additional housing development opportunities.



Resident owns home
Long-term leases guarantee permanent affordability
CLT owns land

REFINERY SITE



In order to solidify accountability between Hilco and the community, it is important for Grays Ferry residents to have active involvement in the refinery site. We envision Hilco's occupancy of the refinery site to be characterized by transparency and community connection.

- » Guarantee a percentage of Hilco jobs to be allotted to Grays Ferry community members.
- » Ensure allotted jobs are based at a variety of skill levels.
- » Allocate refinery space to public use (e.g. park space, plaza space, etc.)

TRANSPORTATION

Inclusive transportation meets the needs of all residents and enhances their ability to access places of work, leisure, and necessity.

- » Introduce sliding scale, income-based fare capping.
- » Make late night bus service more frequent in order to meet the needs of service and healthcare workers.
- » Expand current bus routes that heighten connectivity to major job centers.
- » Improve bike infrastructure in order to reduce automobile dependency and offer mobility & autonomy to those without access to a vehicle.
- » Implement rotational art exhibits at bus shelters to highlight community talent and enhance neighborhood identity.



Milwaukee County Transit

GREEN AND CLEAN

RECTIFYING A HISTORY OF ENVIRONMENTAL INJUSTICE AND PREPARING FOR CLIMATE CHANGE



A rendering of a community greenhouse and stormwater retention park on the former refinery site.

- MAP KEY**
1. Denser tree coverage
 2. New and improved bike and bus network
 3. New facilities developed by HILCO Redevelopment Corporation
 4. 25th St. Viaduct Elevated Park
 5. Solar panels on PHA housing
 6. Stormwater retention park
 7. Community greenhouses
 8. Southern terminus of the Schuylkill River Trail
 9. Christian to Crescent trail segment
 10. Green parking lots



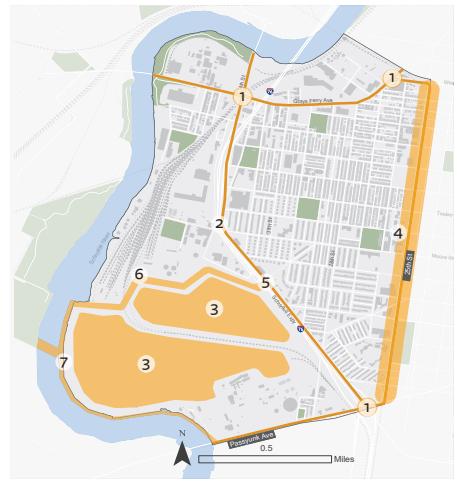
BARRIER FREE

REMOVING OBSTACLES AND IMPROVING ACCESSIBILITY



A rendering of a pedestrian bridge over I-76, connecting Grays Ferry residents to a waterfront trail.

- MAP KEY**
1. Safer intersections
 2. New bus routes along arterial streets
 3. Mixed-use industrial development on former PES refinery site
 4. Demolition of the 25th St. Viaduct
 5. Pedestrian bridge over I-76 and railroad tracks
 6. Trail connecting Grays Ferry to the waterfront and the Schuylkill River Trail
 7. Southern terminus of the Schuylkill River Trail



25TH STREET RAIL VIADUCT SITE

LEFT: Phase One of the Rail Park in Philadelphia's Callowhill neighborhood

BELOW: A rendering of the 25th Street Rail Viaduct as a public greenway.

"Solarizing" Grays Ferry through a new neighborhood energy co-operative will result in green jobs and cheaper energy; it will also move the City closer toward its goal of 20,000 solar roofs by 2025. To increase collective purchasing power, residents, institutions and commercial and industrial developments will all be partners in the energy co-operative.

Residential solar system installed on flat roofs by Exact Solar, a local installer with a history of partnering with solarize campaigns.

GREEN SPACE

Roughly 85% of Grays Ferry is covered by impervious surfaces, but various initiatives can help green the built environment.

- » Create an elevated public greenway and recreation space on the rail viaduct.
- » Designate pedestrian and cyclist paths separated from automotive traffic.
- » Install lights and traffic signals along the roadway.

Philadelphia Water Department rendering of Bringhurst Park, a pocket park that will double as a rain garden.

SOLAR ENERGY

Following environmental remediation, new LEED certified facilities occupied by a mix of light industrial and clean energy research and development purposes will replace oil refining infrastructure. Seeking to build stronger ties with the neighborhood, Hilco Redevelopment Corporation will designate space within the site for community use.

- » Pair traditional soil and groundwater remediation efforts with biological solutions, such as phytoremediation.
- » Adopt nature based infrastructure and revegetate the riverbank to mitigate future flood events.
- » Install stormwater retention parks. Build a southern connection between Bartram's Garden and Grays Ferry to extend the Schuylkill River Trail; add a southern terminus of the trail at Passyunk Ave.
- » Allow for the construction of urban greenhouses for neighborhood use.

Converting Grays Ferry's autocentric landscape into one shared by all modes of transit will require physical and policy changes.

- » Repaint existing bike lanes along major arterials; install protected bike lanes.
- » Install bicycle signal heads at major intersections.
- » Encourage the use of public transportation by installing bus shelters at key bus stops.
- » Free SEPTA transit is provided for low income families.

REFINERY SITE

Grays Ferry's boundaries are comprised of large physical street barriers – Grays Ferry Avenue to the north, the 25th Street Rail Viaduct to the east, and Passyunk Avenue to the South. All of these streets feature unsafe intersections and poorly marked car and bike lanes, if any exist at all. This makes all modes of transportation unsafe, renders all travel without a car inaccessible, and effectively separates the neighborhood from the rest of Philadelphia. To mitigate these problems, this plan calls for the 25th Street Rail Viaduct to be torn down. It also calls for the following changes to be made to major arterial roads:

- » Safer intersections and more clearly delineated crosswalks to make biking and walking more desirable modes of transportation.
- » The establishment of new bus routes to better connect residents to job centers.

RIGHT: A rendering of safety improvements to the intersection Grays Ferry Avenue & 34th Street.

TRANSPORTATION

In order to remove the physical and psychological barrier posed by the 25th Street Rail Viaduct, existing viaduct infrastructure will be entirely removed. While CSX rail will remain on the refinery site, the CSX route operating on the 25th Street Rail Viaduct will be rerouted.

In the viaduct's place, the streetscape will be reimagined as a space conducive to all modes of transit. The outer lanes of 25th Street will be dedicated to bike lanes and pedestrian-only sidewalks. Inner lanes will be dedicated to bus and auto traffic, with parking spaces allocated on either side of the street. Parking and landscaping will provide a buffer between traffic and cyclists & pedestrians. This design will re-imagine the space as accessible and safe for all who travel it.

A rendering of 25th Street after the viaduct is torn down and the streetscape is repurposed.

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