

South Wilmington Neighborhood Plan

Prepared by the **South Wilmington SAMP Neighborhood Plan Work Group**

With technical assistance from:

Phillips Preiss Shapiro Associates, Inc.

Planning & Real Estate Consultants

July 2006

South Wilmington Neighborhood Plan

Prepared by the **South Wilmington SAMP Neighborhood Plan Work Group**



With technical assistance from:

Phillips Preiss Shapiro Associates, Inc.

Planning & Real Estate Consultants

40-07-05/06/07/01

July 2006

Acknowledgments

Neighborhood Plan Work Group

Southbridge Residents and Community Service Providers

Jane Allison	4th District Planning Council
Arthur Boswell	Neighborhood House, Inc.
Wayne Brown	Mt. Joy Church
Lois Dennis	Property Owner
Veronica Oliver	Neighborhood House, Inc.
Rosa Rivera	Henrietta Johnson Medical Center
Marvin Thomas	Southbridge Civic Association

City and State Agencies

Peter Besecker	Wilmington Department of Planning
David Carter	DNREC Delaware Coastal Programs
Dave Gula	Wilmington Area Planning Council
Gwinneth Kaminsky	Wilmington Department of Planning
Rosalind Kotz	Wilmington Department of Real Estate and Housing
Susan Love	DNREC Delaware Coastal Programs
Fred Purnell	Wilmington Housing Authority
William Swiatek	Wilmington Area Planning Council

Elected Officials

Bud Freel	Wilmington City Council
Hanifa Shabazz	Wilmington City Council

Consultants

Phillips Preiss Shapiro Associates, Inc.
Tracy Sayegh, Project Director
Paul Grygiel, AICP and John Shapiro, AICP, Principals
Elizabeth Jordan, Graphic Artist
Contributing Staff: Namiko Kimura, AICP, Elizabeth Leheny,
Ben Margolis

Table of Contents



Vision Statement	1	V. Streets, Traffic, Safety and Community Facilities	49
I. Introduction	3	Streets and Roadways	49
The Big Picture	3	Community Services, Safety	52
The Planning Concept	7		
The Planning Process	7	Glossary	55
Major Proposals and Plan Implementation	10		
II. Demographics, Housing and Land Use	13	List of Maps	
The Community	13	1 Location Map	4
Land Use	15	2 Neighborhood Context Map	5
Built Form	17	3 Neighborhood Plan Map	6
Housing Occupancy, Tenure and Conditions	19	4 Existing Land Use	16
Publicly Supported Housing	24	5 Building Footprints	18
Soft Sites	26	6 Occupancy	21
III. Environment, Open Space and Recreation	33	7 Housing Tenure	22
Floodplain, Wetlands, Brownfields	33	8 Building Condition	23
Parks and Open Space	37	9 Public Housing and Subsidized Housing	25
IV. Economic Development, Education, Transit and Retail	41	10 Soft Sites	28
Economic Development	41	11 The Scattered Sites Problem	29
Retail	44	12 Floodplains and Wetlands	35
		13 Brownfield Sites	36
		14 Parks and Open Space	39
		15 Public Transit Map	43
		16 Retail Potential	46
		17 Street Trees	51
		18 Crime Map	54



Vision Statement



Take a checkerboard of historic homes, public housing, waterfront luxury housing and mixed-use sites, brownfields, bisecting corridors, floodplains and wetlands, and create a single neighborhood rich in heritage, racial and social diversity, superior ecology and shared community amenities, including a substantial new park at the heart of the neighborhood.





Above photo: Aerial view of South Wilmington looking southwest over the Southbridge core. Elbert-Palmer School featured in the foreground (center).



The neighborhood-scaled side streets of historic Southbridge have a close-knit quality which should be reinforced through increased in-fill housing.

1 This and other technical terms are defined in the Glossary at the end of the plan.

1. Introduction



PLAN SUMMARY

The Big Picture

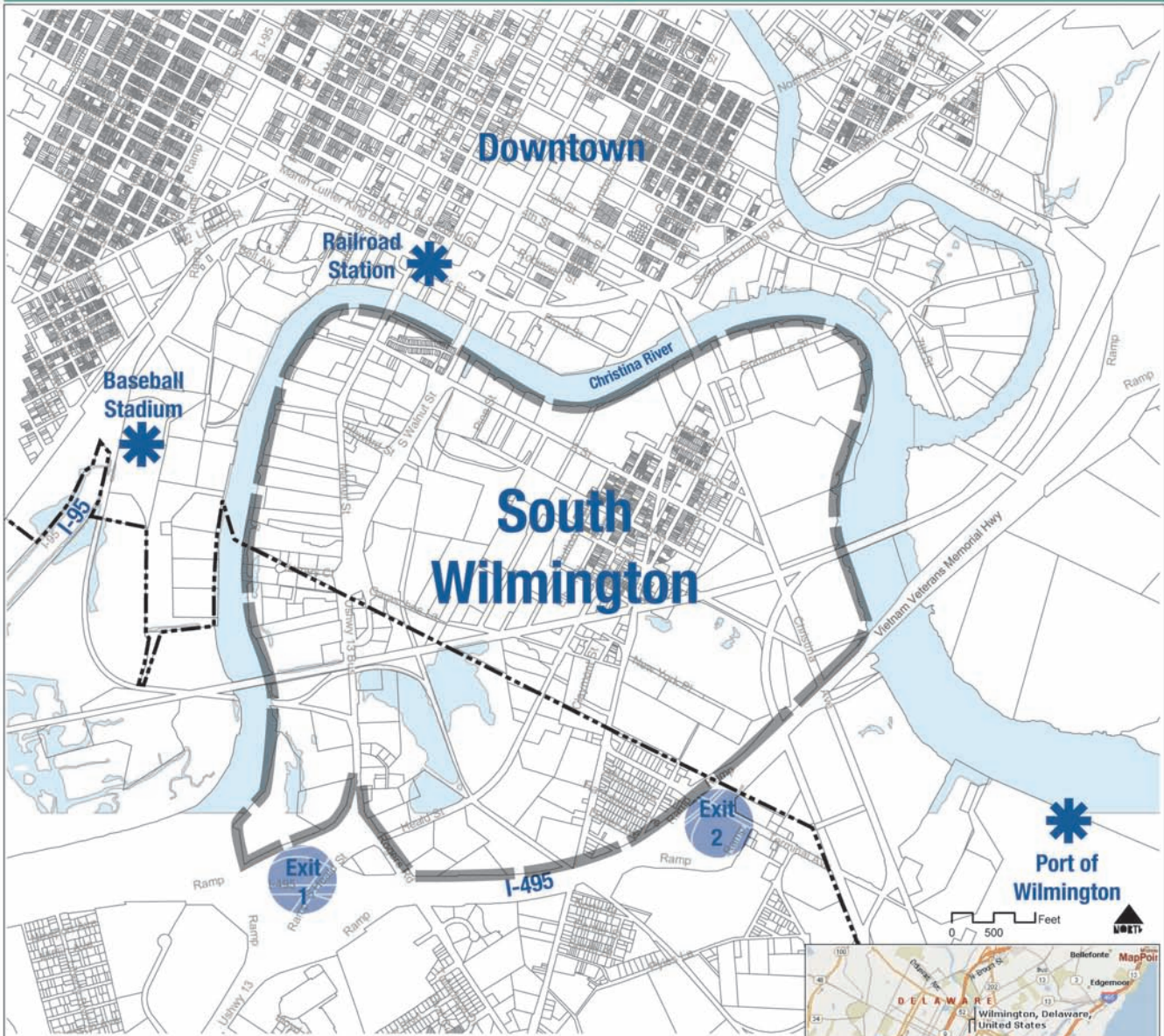
Reconcile and unite the existing neighborhood with proposed development, so as to create a South Wilmington that is richer socially as well as physically.

South Wilmington is an island of history, edged by river and roads, pockmarked by wetlands, floodplains and brownfields¹, that is being transformed by a wave of new development. The continued growth of Wilmington as a whole and its downtown in particular are causing South Wilmington to be viewed as a logical development location. Plans for hundreds of new housing units, commercial development and park space are being pursued by governmental entities such as the City of Wilmington and the State of Delaware's Riverfront Development Corporation (RDC) as well as by private developers.

The residential heart of South Wilmington, the Southbridge neighborhood, is home to many people and institutions that are working together to continue to improve it. The community has been steadily addressing issues such as the need for new and improved housing, job training and tree planting through the efforts of dedicated residents and others with an interest in the neighborhood. Now, some fear that the neighborhood will be overwhelmed by new development, its character threatened by the displacement of residents as well as by other effects of increased investment in the area.

This plan aims to align the divergent interests shaping South Wilmington's future, while respecting the neighborhood's past and protecting its current residents. It addresses a variety of topics, providing

South Wilmington Neighborhood Plan



Map 1: Location Map

Sources: City of Wilmington Delaware GIS Data
Map prepared by Phillips Preiss Shapiro Associates, Inc. 2006

South Wilmington SAMP Planning Boundary —————
City of Wilmington Municipal Boundary - - - - -

South Wilmington Neighborhood Plan

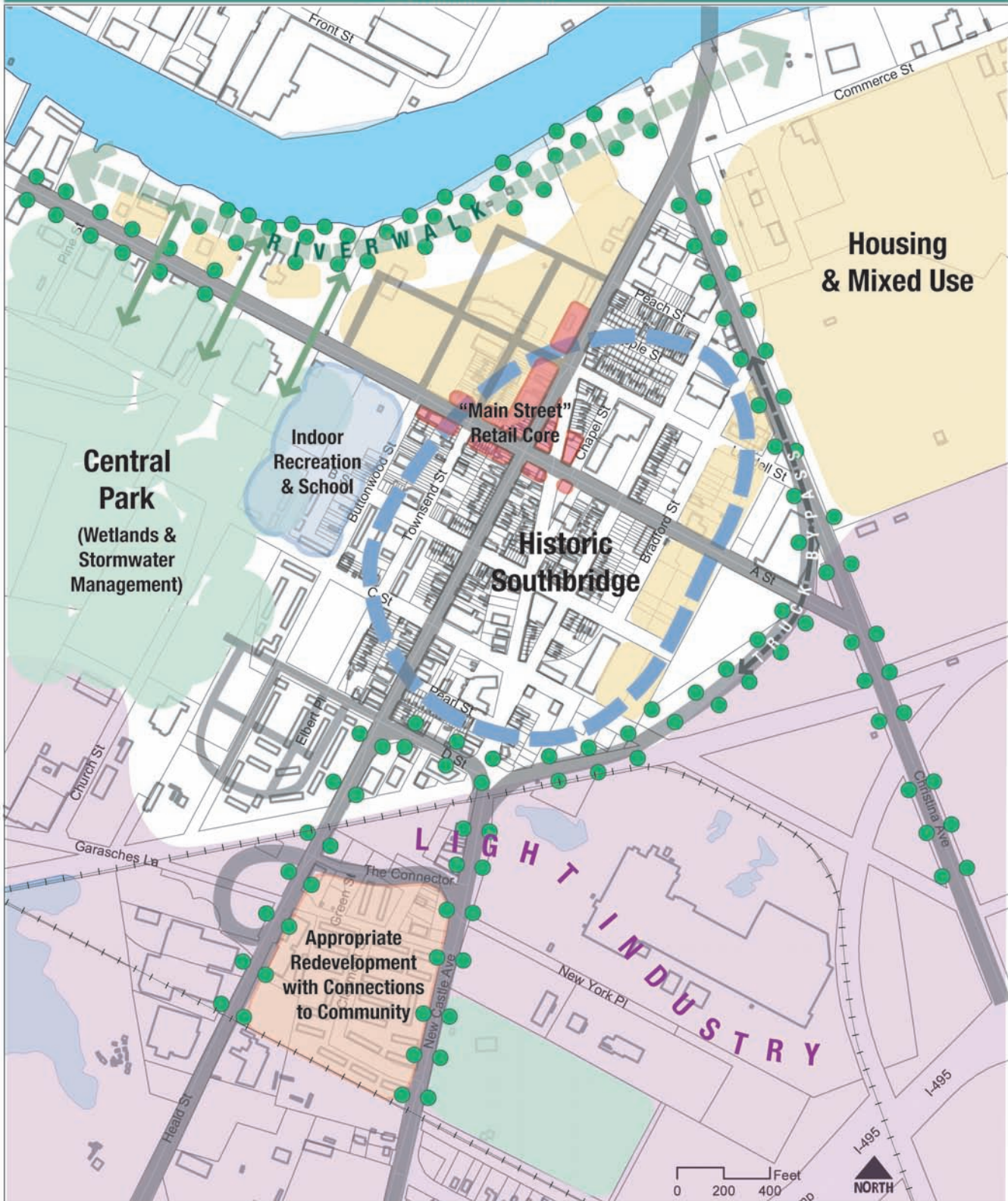


Map 2: South Wilmington Today: Neighborhood Context Map

Sources: City of Wilmington
 Delaware State GIS Data
 Map Prepared by:
 Phillips Preiss Shapiro Associates, Inc.
 November 2005

*According to City of Wilmington, 2002,
 Vacant Housing Strategy

South Wilmington Neighborhood Plan



Map 3: South Wilmington's Future: Neighborhood Plan Map

- Housing & Mixed Use
- Future Redevelopment Area
- Institutional
- Park
- Light Industry
- Roads
- Historic Neighborhood Core

Sources: City of Wilmington Delaware GIS Data
Map prepared by Phillips Preiss Shapiro Associates, Inc. 2006

key recommendations in these areas. But, more importantly, it is a guidebook for implementation. This plan thinks big, but its success will lie in addressing the small things that make a neighborhood a better place in which to live.

The Planning Concept

Build on the assets of Southbridge.

The plan embraces core concepts that draw upon the neighborhood's existing strengths:

- Restore, in-fill and protect the historic core of Southbridge.
- Create a central park at the heart of South Wilmington between Southbridge and the waterfront housing developments.
- Ring the central park with a new public school, indoor (community-based) recreation facility and other amenities.
- Create a small "Main Street" at A Street and Heald Street, which can be larger and healthier than otherwise if it draws from all of South Wilmington.
- Rebuild existing public housing as mixed-income housing, dispersed throughout the neighborhood.
- Carry out anti-displacement and inclusionary zoning to prevent displacement and keep Southbridge / South Wilmington diverse.
- "Traffic-calm" Heald Street and New Castle Avenue from A to D Streets.
- Reroute trucks and heavy traffic around the Southbridge core.
- Reconnect the community to the waterfront.

The Planning Process

This plan is rooted in the Southbridge community, growing out of the efforts of the Southbridge Civic Association, Neighborhood House, local churches and other institutions as well as individual residents. The formal planning process that led to the preparation of this plan is an extension of a Special Area Management Plan (SAMP) being drafted for South Wilmington, of which the neighborhood plan is a part. The SAMP will be a revitalization plan for South Wilmington that coordinates the efforts of government entities and stakeholders in addressing social, economic, and environmental issues. It is funded through a grant from a federal agency (the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) and administered by a state office (Delaware Coastal Programs, part of the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control) in partnership with the City of Wilmington.

The process has included exhaustive research into existing conditions. More importantly, it has involved the public and has attempted to get input from as wide a cross-section of the community as possible. The



Above photo: View of the vast wetlands located in the center of South Wilmington, just west of Southbridge.

SAMP process has tapped the resources of existing institutions in the community and has been guided by a core group of community and government representatives, with a smaller Southbridge-focused group overseeing the Neighborhood Plan process. The Neighborhood Plan Work Group undertook a search for a consultant to assist with its work, which led to the selection of Phillips Preiss Shapiro Associates (PPSA), a firm that specializes in land use planning, economic development and market analysis.



Once a consultant was on board, additional research and analysis was undertaken, maps were created, existing conditions were examined throughout the area and various government departments and others with interest in the future of South Wilmington were interviewed. The Work Group then reached out to its neighbors in the community by holding a public workshop for the South Wilmington Neighborhood Plan. This meeting was held at Neighborhood House, which is located in the middle of the Southbridge neighborhood. Approximately 75 people attended the meeting, including neighborhood residents, local business owners, clergy and members of local houses of worship and representatives of local community organizations, as well as local and state elected officials and government staff. Workshop participants broke out into working groups to discuss focused topics, and then reconvened to share ideas with all attendees. A number of local children also presented their suggestions for improving South Wilmington.

In addition, a variety of strategies were employed to help generate even more participation and insight:

- Information has been provided through flyers as well as through community groups such as the Southbridge Civic Association, Neighborhood House and local houses of worship
- Additional notice was provided by electronic and regular mail
- Information on the plan and how to get involved has been posted on a SAMP website, which also had links on the City of Wilmington and Delaware Coastal Programs websites
- Suggestion boxes were placed in several locations throughout the neighborhood



When the draft Neighborhood Plan was completed, a second public event took place at the Neighborhood House in the form of an Open House at which the major recommendations of the plan were exhibited during midday and evening sessions. This community forum was facilitated by members of the Neighborhood Plan Work Group and widely attended by a diverse group of stakeholders. The feedback and comments which were collected helped shape the final version of the plan.

The Neighborhood Planning Work Group is comprised of the following individuals:

Southbridge Residents and Community Service Providers

Jane Allison	4th District Planning Council
Arthur Boswell	Neighborhood House, Inc.
Wayne Brown	Mt. Joy Church
Lois Dennis	Property Owner
Veronica Oliver	Neighborhood House, Inc.
Rosa Rivera	Henrietta Johnson Medical Center
Marvin Thomas	Southbridge Civic Association

City and State Agencies

Peter Besecker	Wilmington Department of Planning
David Carter	DNREC Delaware Coastal Programs
Dave Gula	Wilmington Area Planning Council
Gwinneth Kaminsky	Wilmington Department of Planning
Rosalind Kotz	Wilmington Department of Real Estate and Housing
Susan Love	DNREC Delaware Coastal Programs
Fred Purnell	Wilmington Housing Authority
William Swiatek	Wilmington Area Planning Council

Elected Officials

Bud Freel	Wilmington City Council
Hanifa Shabazz	Wilmington City Council



Major Proposals and Plan Implementation

It is about partnerships.

This plan includes a number of recommendations for improving South Wilmington, which address small and large issues and build upon the neighborhood's existing strengths. As noted, many of the recommended actions address the "little things" that add up to improve people's lives. The plan also proposes some major actions, many of which will require cooperation between the community and various entities. Some of the major proposals in this plan include the following:

Community Benefits Agreements (CBA):

- Negotiate a CBA with the new owner of the Diamond Oil site; this agreement will set the standard for future agreements
- Generate a revolving fund through CBAs to be focused on homeownership / restoration and operated by joint venture between the existing local development corporations and the Wilmington Housing Authority
- Identify resources for legal counsel to represent neighborhood

Zoning:

- Enact new inclusionary and anti-displacement zoning

Capital Funding:

- Generate funding for mixed-income housing dispersed throughout the community through inclusionary zoning and various efforts of the Wilmington Housing Authority (WHA) and partners





- Generate funding for a new, bigger, better park at the heart of South Wilmington (i.e., the “Central Park”)
- Generate funding for new community facilities through the use of a tax increment financing (TIF) district, tax abatements and/or other incentives

Operating/Renewable Funding:

- Create a Park Improvement District to provide continuing funding for the Central Park
- Secure ongoing funding for housing renovation through CBAs and inclusionary zoning

Local Capacity:

- Enhance the capabilities of existing community development corporations
- Use Neighborhood House as the anchor for organizing and recruiting
- Obtain technical assistance from Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) and/or other experienced organizations

It is about environmental justice.

South Wilmington has had to deal with nearly every issue facing American inner cities, such as brownfields, flooding, preservation, and gentrification. The aftermath of Hurricane Katrina has helped bring attention to these types of issues; in particular, the disaster vulnerability of low-income communities located in environmentally sensitive areas. However, there is still a risk that similar mistakes could be made here. This plan addresses many of these issues from the “bottom up” with neighborhood residents and allies recommending how the government and private sector can best help South Wilmington. If carried through, this planning effort can serve as case study of local, state and federal support for neighborhood empowerment. It can also demonstrate how it is possible for a community to lead the way in ensuring that the environmental mistakes of the past are not repeated; and instead, pursue a positive, healthy, and safe development path for the future.

Historic Southbridge: The Roots of South Wilmington

In Southbridge, South Wilmington has a wealth of history to celebrate and draw upon for its emerging identity. A study carried out by students at the University of Delaware in 1996 analyzed the neighborhood's history from 1870 to 1996, revealing the following key historic themes and facts:

Demographic

- Over time, the ethnic origin of the growing immigrant community shifted from Irish to Eastern European.
- A constantly changing mix of people in the neighborhood contributed to the area's unique settlement pattern.
- Historically, the proportion of African-Americans in Southbridge remained steady at 20 to 25 percent, while the proportion for Wilmington as a whole was approximately 10 percent. The African-American population swelled in the 1920s and after WWII.
- Net population in the community increased through WWII; population reached its peak in 1900 at 5,560 people.
- The population has historically been largely made up of laborers.

Civic

- The first independent African-American church in the United States was established in Southbridge in 1812 when Peter Spenser, a minister, founded the African Union Church. Other historic churches: Mount Joy, Grant, Baptist Mission, and Madley Methodist Episcopal.

Architecture

- Southbridge has a "high degree of architectural integrity."
- The neighborhood remains one of the few urban landscapes in the area untouched by urban renewal.
- Much of the architecture of the prosperous industrial period of 1870 to 1920, i.e., the small-scale, two-story brick row homes (or nineteenth century workers row housing), remains in stable condition.
- In general, architectural building types from a wide range of building periods are present throughout the neighborhood.
- Most of the public housing was originally built after WWII for returning veterans.
- Southbridge has generally retained its character over time.

Industry

- Before 1870, Southbridge was largely agricultural, experiencing a major transformation to industrial from 1870 – 1900.
- Agriculture was replaced with steel, iron, and carriage-making, which, in was later supplanted by oil refining, and then auto shops.
- Despite heavy industry, the area was actually the industrial fringe of Wilmington.
- The period from 1927 to 1940 and World War II mark the peak for industrial activity.
- Southbridge had become entirely dependent on manufacturing for its economy.
- In post World War II period, industry began to decline and the neighborhood lost much of this base by the 1990s.

Overall, the study confirmed the historic significance of Southbridge, asserting that the neighborhood "represents an important part of Wilmington's identity and history."

Source: *Southbridge: An Historic Context for a Neighborhood in Wilmington, Delaware, 1870-1996*, Students of the Center for Historic Architecture and Design, University of Delaware, 1996.



II. Demographics, Housing and Land Use



The Community

Maximize mixed-income housing and homeownership, as the keys to at once improve the neighborhood and forestall displacement.

South Wilmington is home to approximately 2,200 people in 730 households (according to the 2000 Census), mostly concentrated in the historic Southbridge area which forms the residential core. Due to the closure of the Southbridge Extension (180 housing units), it is likely that the population within Southbridge has declined accordingly; however, new construction has also brought new residents to the community. The vast majority (85 percent) of the residents are African-Americans, many of whom are the second and third generations of their families to live in the community. South Wilmington is, at 72 percent, a family neighborhood – more so than both the City and State. Of these families, 47 percent are single parent, female-headed households – two times the Wilmington average, and four times the New Castle County average. Over half of South Wilmington’s households earn less than half the median income for the region (Metropolitan Statistical Area). One-fifth of the households earn incomes below the poverty level.



Displacement due to gentrification is an increasing concern for the community with the advent of new luxury residential developments (existing and proposed) along the riverfront (e.g., Christina Landing). Gentrification can be defined as a change to an area’s character that results in the removal of its traditional resident population and replacement with a higher income population, either through government action, rising cost of living or both. Gentrification is likely to happen where there are high rates of renters, ease of access to job centers, increasing levels of metropolitan congestion, and comparatively low



housing values – all of which are true for South Wilmington. Gentrification can occur through rising property values, speculation and even increased taxes and more vigilant code enforcement.

South Wilmington is in a unique position at this juncture in terms of being proactive about gentrification pressures. Wilmington is experiencing an intense level of development interest in the city. This shift in the real estate market presents an entirely new context within which the City must operate. The need to retain affordability and mitigate displacement is unprecedented, requiring new tools and interventions to consider.

Recommendations:

- Enact inclusionary zoning for South Wilmington. Require something like the following: for developments over 20 units in size, require 10 percent of the units on-site to be affordable at 80 percent of area median income, or 15 percent equivalency if off-site, or 20 percent equivalency if contributed to a revolving fund.
- Use a sequential and/or weighted lottery system to target affordable units to South Wilmington residents foremost, then other city residents, and then the population at large.
- Create a revolving fund jointly controlled by the community (through a new local development corporation and/or other community representation), the City, and the Riverfront Development Corporation (RDC). Alternatively, the fund could be controlled by a joint venture between the Wilmington Housing Authority (WHA), the Eastside Southbridge Development Corporation, and Neighborhood House Development Corporation, thereby bolstering local capacity.
- Dedicate the revolving fund to low-interest loans and small grants to qualifying, low-income residents for home improvements and/or home purchases.
- Prepare a plan for the agglomeration of vacant and underutilized parcels to target for housing construction (as discussed further, page 27).



Land Use

Improve Southbridge as the core of a larger South Wilmington neighborhood, rather than maintain it as an isolated enclave.

South Wilmington's historic land use pattern of isolated sectors of residential, commercial, and industrial uses is poised to shift with the arrival of new residential and commercial development on the waterfront. South Wilmington has a vast landscape of active and underutilized/vacant industrial parcels, particularly along the Christina River, Christina Avenue, Commerce Street, and South Market Street. Housing is concentrated in the historic Southbridge neighborhood roughly between Peach and D Streets and Buttonwood and Bradford Streets. Commercial uses are clustered in the western part of South Wilmington, although isolated commercial areas can be found throughout the area.

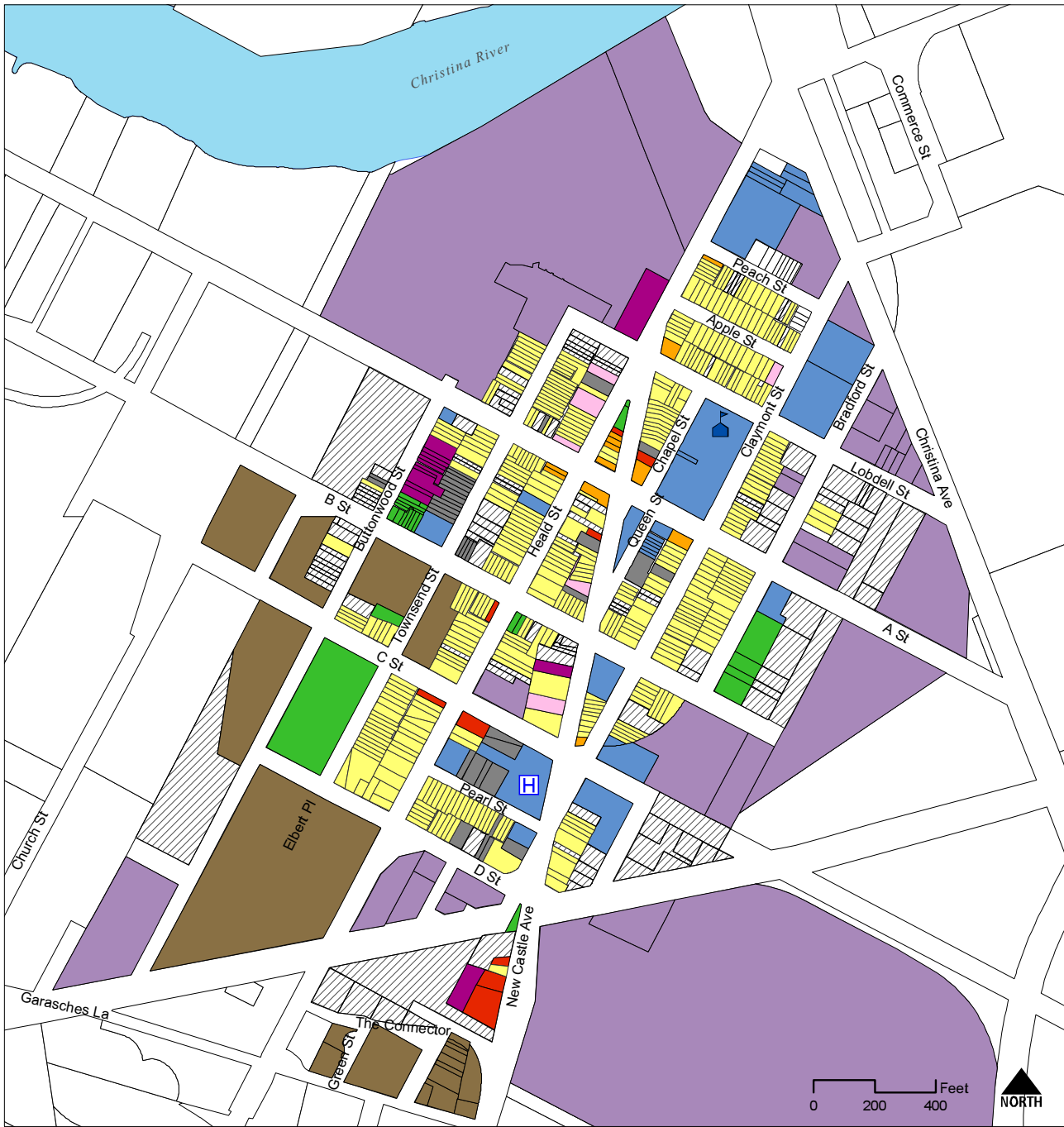
This long-standing land use pattern is changing due to both new and proposed residential and commercial development emerging on the waterfront which is being planned and overseen by the City and the Riverfront Development Corporation (RDC). The Christina Landing residential project and the Buccini/Pollin Group commercial offices are prime examples of new development opportunities.

Recommendations:

- Aim for a new retail center to serve the larger neighborhood.
- Add to and adjoin the Southbridge residential area; don't isolate it. This means joining the neighborhood to the waterfront, and creating South Wilmington destinations in and adjoining the Southbridge core.

Top left photo: The new headquarters for the Buccini/Pollin Group in South Wilmington demonstrates the growing development interest in the neighborhood.

South Wilmington Neighborhood Plan



Map 4. Existing Land Use

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| One and two family houses | Auto-related | Waterbody |
| Multifamily buildings | Public facilities and institutions | Henrietta Johnson Medical Center |
| Mixed use - residential and retail | Parking facilities | Elbert-Palmer Elementary School |
| Mixed use - residential and other | Vacant land | |
| Commercial with ground floor retail | Open space/park | |
| Industrial | | |

Sources: City of Wilmington
 Delaware State GIS Data
 Phillips Preiss Shapiro Associates,
 Field Survey, November 2005

Map Prepared by:
 Phillips Preiss Shapiro Associates, Inc.
 November 2005



Built Form

Reinforce Southbridge's rich historic quality.

Southbridge has an attractive, historic built environment for new development to draw upon for contextual design. The core residential area of Southbridge is concentrated between Buttonwood and Bradford Streets, from Peach to D Streets, and is predominantly made up of red-brick, two- and three-story rowhouses. The blocks encompassing Heald Street and New Castle Avenue, from Lobdell to D Streets include many 19th-century buildings, some of which date as far back as 1830, and are eligible for National Register Historic District designation.

The fine grain of the Southbridge core contrasts with the regimentation of the Wilmington Housing Authority projects to the southwest, and the surrounding, larger, isolated footprints of the industrial buildings and complexes. This pattern creates gaps between the core area and proposed developments to the west, north and east.

Recommendations:

- Continue to utilize and improve design guidelines under zoning to foster contextual in-fill housing, consistent with historic character.
- Expand existing form-based zoning to ensure “new urbanist” housing on larger sites, featuring street-oriented buildings, street trees, three- to four-story formats for rowhouses, rowhouses with flats above for higher-density housing, and stoops with parking below – which also is a good model for floodplain development.
- Prohibit gated communities; instead require alignment of roads and other pedestrian and visual connections to new developments.
- Relate new development to historic brick and federal styles prevalent in the neighborhood, so that it better transitions and blends into the existing character.






Above photos: Historic churches and turn-of-the-century rowhouses give new development a rich context to draw upon.

South Wilmington Neighborhood Plan



Map 5. Building Footprints

-  Building Footprints
-  Henrietta Johnson Medical Center
-  Elbert-Palmer Elementary School

Sources: City of Wilmington
Delaware State GIS Data

Map Prepared by:
Phillips Preiss Shapiro Associates, Inc.
November 2005

Housing Occupancy, Tenure and Conditions

Strengthen Southbridge's tight-knit sense of community with greater homeownership.

Historic Southbridge is comprised mostly of two- and three-story, red brick residential buildings, as well as a number of garden apartment-



style public housing units. While 60 percent of South Wilmington's 730 units are rental, after discounting 180 WHA public housing units from the Southbridge Extension, this figure falls to just over 45 percent. Homeownership occurs on all blocks, but more so in the area between Townsend and Bradford Streets, between Peach and D Streets, and especially on Apple and D Streets. However, housing affordability is an issue, particularly for renters: the combination of low incomes and high rents means that the neighborhood scores only a 0.6 on the housing affordable index, where a rating of 1.0 is generally affordable. Rental units are scattered throughout Southbridge, but are concentrated mainly in the western and southwestern portions of the neighborhood, west of Townsend Street and south of B Street, where the WHA public housing units are located.

The vacancy rate is a relatively high 17 percent (whereas 7 percent is considered healthy). Vacancies occur on all blocks, but more so on the periphery of the neighborhood. Out of 531 buildings, roughly 13 percent are in poor condition. Lead abatement is needed on porches and windows of many rowhouses. During the process of completing the City of Wilmington's Department of Real Estate and Housing 2005 Consolidated Plan, it was decided with the South Wilmington community that all of Southbridge should be considered a Strategically Targeted Redevelopment Area (STAR) because the entire neighborhood is a self-contained and tightly-knit community. Participants agreed that the funding of physical improvements throughout the community, particularly to the homes surrounding Neighborhood House, would instigate new development and successfully leverage limited funding.

Above photos: The neighborhood has a number of vacant rowhouses, for which rehabilitation presents opportunities to increase homeownership and housing options for local residents.

The City of Wilmington has provided up to \$5,000 grants for façade improvements, with funding from the Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) program of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban

Development (HUD). That program has ended; however, Southbridge received a significant portion of the funds, approximately \$360,000 between CDBG and private funds from the Buccini/Pollin Group. The Neighborhood House received the funds from the Buccini/Pollin Group through the Neighborhood Assistance Tax Credit program. Neighborhood House provides homeownership counseling, as well as constructs homes (Apple Square, Cabean Square, among others). Additional programs include the Community Empowerment Through Resident Empowerment (CETRE) program run by the Wilmington Housing Authority (WHA).






Recommendations:

- Continue to target the neighborhood for the identified programs.
- Augment existing sources with funding from the Neighborhood Assistance Act, Low Income Tax Credits, and other sources. One potential funding vehicle to pursue under the Neighborhood Assistance Act is the Neighborhood Assistance Tax Credit, which allows a business firm to invest in an impoverished community (for which Southbridge qualifies) either directly through projects or indirectly by contributing money or goods and services to a neighborhood organization, for a tax credit of up to 50 percent of the investment (a maximum of \$100,000).
- Negotiate a Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) with Pettinaro Development Corporation (new owner of the Diamond Oil site) and other nearby private developments to generate additional revenue sources, especially for a revolving loan program directed toward increasing homeownership, linked to technical assistance and pre-approved contractors. Securing a CBA with the new developers of the Diamond Oil site (Pettinaro) is critical in order to serve as a potential precedent for future inclusionary zoning, as well as for working with the City.

South Wilmington Neighborhood Plan



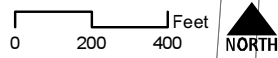
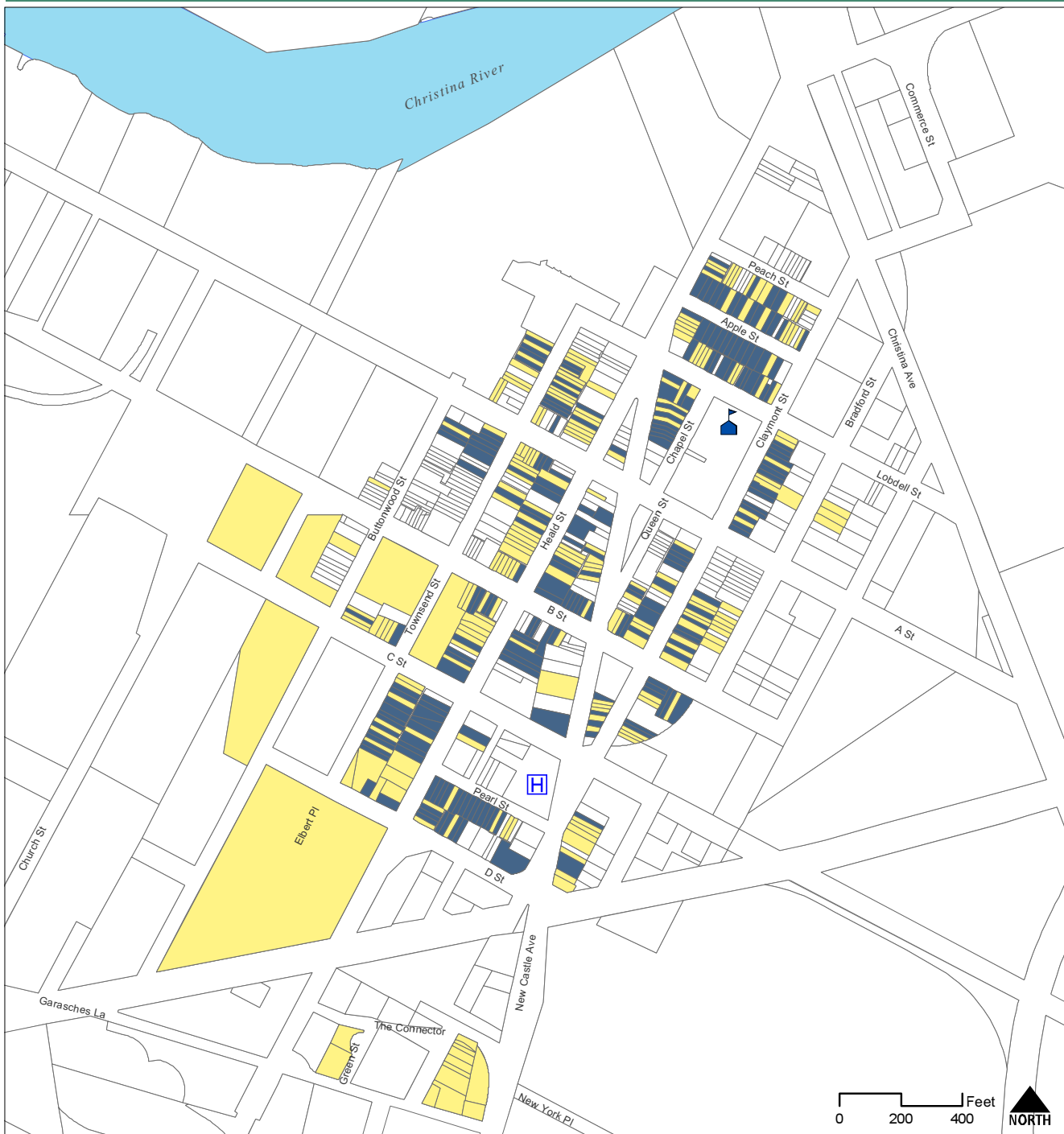
Map 6. Occupancy

- | | |
|--|--|
|  Occupied |  Waterbody |
|  Vacant (abandoned) |  Henrietta Johnson Medical Center |
|  Under Construction |  Elbert-Palmer Elementary School |

Sources: City of Wilmington
 Delaware State GIS Data
 Phillips Preiss Shapiro Associates,
 Field Survey, November 2005

Map Prepared by:
 Phillips Preiss Shapiro Associates, Inc.
 November 2005

South Wilmington Neighborhood Plan



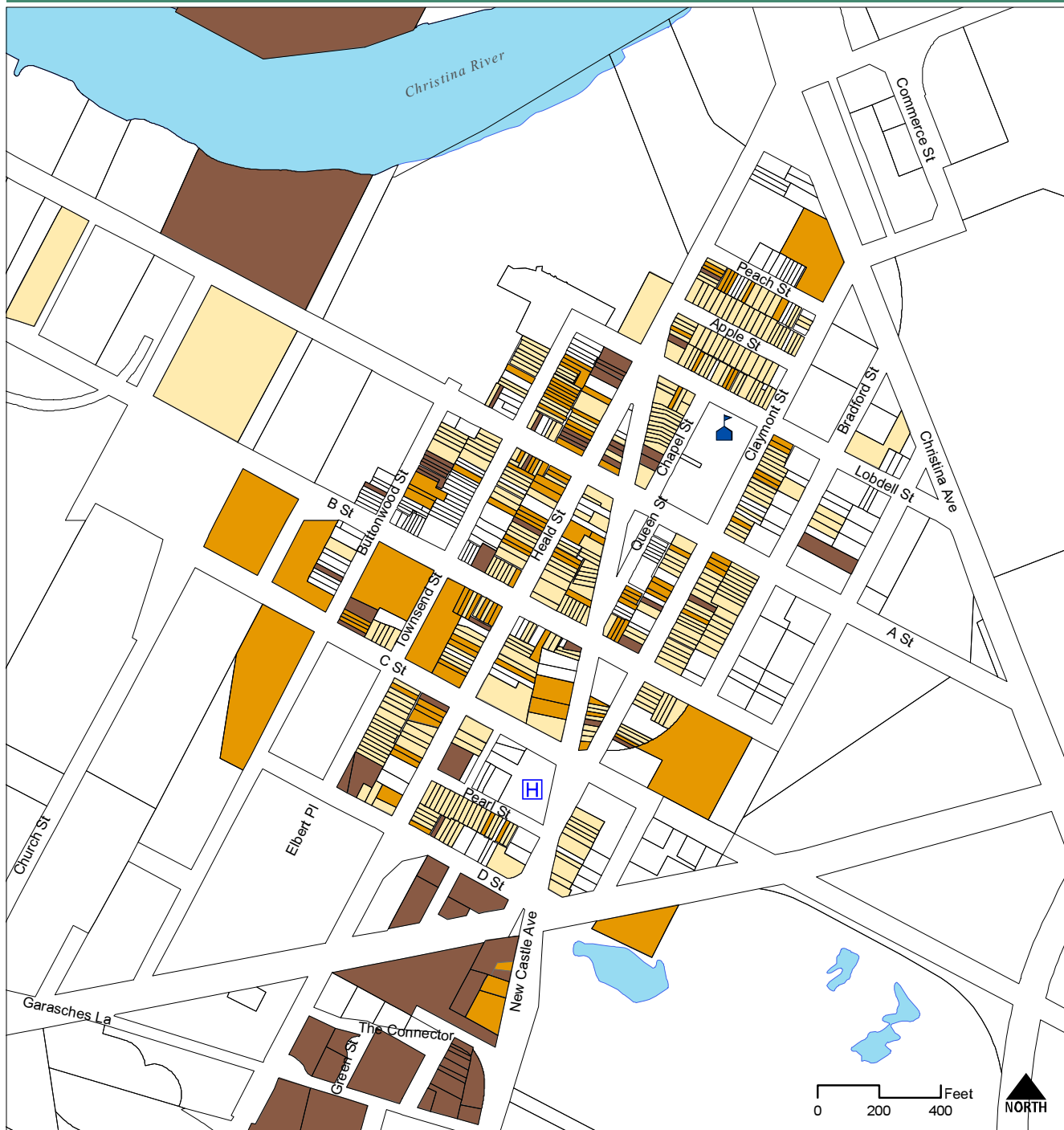
Map 7. Housing Tenure

- Owner
- Renter
- Waterbody
- H Henrietta Johnson Medical Center
- Elbert-Palmer Elementary School







Sources: City of Wilmington
Delaware State GIS Data

Map Prepared by:
Phillips Preiss Shapiro Associates, Inc.
November 2005

South Wilmington Neighborhood Plan



Map 8. Building Condition

- | | |
|--|--|
|  Good |  Waterbody |
|  Fair |  Henrietta Johnson Medical Center |
|  Poor |  Elbert-Palmer Elementary School |

Sources: City of Wilmington Housing Survey
 Delaware State GIS Data
 Phillips Preiss Shapiro Associates
 Field Survey, November 2005

Map Prepared by:
 Phillips Preiss Shapiro Associates, Inc.
 November 2005

* Data from the Housing Survey conducted by the City of Wilmington and an independent field survey conducted by PPSA were combined to generate this map. Where the surveyed conditions differ, the better condition was taken.

Publicly Supported Housing

Leverage Housing Authority commitment to the neighborhood to keep its mixed-income quality.

South Wilmington is home to a significant number of public housing units. The public housing and Section 8 housing units are concentrated in Southbridge and generally located south and southwest of the core residential and commercial areas of the neighborhood. The Wilmington Housing Authority (WHA) owns over 20 acres of land in South Wilmington divided between the site of the Southbridge housing project and the former site of the Southbridge Extension housing project. Most of these WHA-managed units are in brick, garden apartment-style buildings.

In 2000, there were approximately 400 public housing units in the community. However, in 2004 the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) awarded WHA over \$1.3 million in HOPE VI Demolition funds to demolish 180 units at the Southbridge Extension and there are now approximately 200 public housing units remaining in the neighborhood. HUD recently denied the WHA's HOPE VI application requesting \$20 million for the replacement mixed-income housing.

Recommendations:

- Strengthen WHA's HOPE VI application through mixed-income housing involving more land resources. This would, at once, provide added revenue, mitigate perceived and actual impacts of clustered public housing and help public housing residents transition into better housing. Pursue this plan even if federal dollars are not forthcoming.
- Develop the City-owned Parks and Recreation Department site for mixed use (housing above retail) to support a new proposed "Main Street" and improved gateway to the neighborhood, in lieu of the proposed office/business park use. Relocate the Parks and Recreation facilities to an industrial area. In connection with Diamond Oil redevelopment, negotiate for a community benefits agreement with the new owner that includes dedication of the portion of the site fronting Heald Street, opposite the Parks and Recreation site. On both Heald Street sites, housing might be built above stores, managed by existing local development corporations with possible collaboration with WHA.
- Support the sale of the Southbridge Extension property, if feasible, with proceeds used to develop mixed-income, homeownership and rental units, dispersed throughout the neighborhood. Detailed recommendations for the redevelopment of this site are beyond the scope of this plan. (See guiding principles for redevelopment at right).



Southbridge Extension Redevelopment

The following guiding principles are suggested for the eventual redevelopment of the Southbridge Extension site:

- If non-residential development is proposed, possible uses should include retail, office, light industrial and/or "flex" space (which includes unfinished space that is suitable for office and light industrial uses), all of which would add needed jobs and services to the neighborhood.
- If any housing is proposed, it should be part of a mixed-use development that includes retail, office and/or other commercial development. Housing targeted to a mix of income levels should be provided.
- A street plan should be created for the site that incorporates a street grid that will be more in character with the neighborhood's established grid pattern.
- Creating physical connections from the site to the neighborhood core should be considered paramount in any redevelopment plan.
- Given the site's proximity to the County line, the New Castle County Government should be engaged to maximize resources available, possibly through a joint City/County venture.

Above photo: Concentrated in the southwest part of Southbridge, the Southbridge housing project could eventually be rebuilt as dispersed units throughout the community

South Wilmington Neighborhood Plan



Map 9. Public Housing and Subsidized Housing

- Housing Authority Parcels
- Housing Authority Scattered Parcels - Occupied
- Housing Authority Scattered Parcels - Vacant
- Section 8
- Waterbody
- H Henrietta Johnson Medical Center
- Elbert-Palmer Elementary School

Sources: City of Wilmington
Delaware State GIS Data

Map Prepared by:
Phillips Preiss Shapiro Associates, Inc.
November 2005

Soft Sites

Identify development opportunities to fill-in the gaps in the neighborhood fabric and create more housing options.

A “soft site” is a property where development is likely to occur, given ownership or current land uses (i.e., vacant, parking, or industrial). Soft sites in Southbridge are scattered throughout the community and provide opportunities for home improvements and increased homeownership among existing Southbridge residents. Vacant/underutilized lots and buildings which are ripe for development total 114, and are located throughout the community. In addition to these scattered sites, there are several key parcels poised for new construction, including the former Diamond Oil site which is anticipated to be redeveloped in the near future. In addition, the City Department of Parks and Recreation facility at the intersection of Christina Avenue, Peach Street and Heald Street invites redevelopment. Finally, there is the vacated Southbridge extension site, at which the Wilmington Housing Authority (WHA) is tearing down the former housing units. There is already an Urban Renewal Area designation for Southbridge (“New Castle Avenue”) granted in 1990, which provides the City a basis for the authority to condemn problem properties within the designated area.



The Scattered Site Problem

In dealing with soft sites, South Wilmington has a major issue: the properties in need of redevelopment are scattered throughout the neighborhood. In fact, housing in poor condition, vacant industrial, vacant residential, open land, marginal retail and other soft sites are dispersed throughout the community, requiring a more complex approach than if these sites were concentrated or clustered in one area. For example, Southbridge has a number of vacant lots sandwiched in between houses in good condition, with building codes preventing a one-to-one housing replacement due to the narrow width of historic home lots. A further complication is that the scattered site inventory is only a snapshot or temporary assessment of the situation since it is a dynamic environment that is constantly changing.

In South Wilmington, and in Southbridge in particular, the real estate market has not quite bottomed out yet and at the same time new infill development and house rehabilitation has been occurring – i.e., contradictory trends are play. Identification of development opportunities that “fill-in the gaps” is not only important for a more complete built form/environment and sense of community, but also to create more housing and homeowner opportunities for local residents.

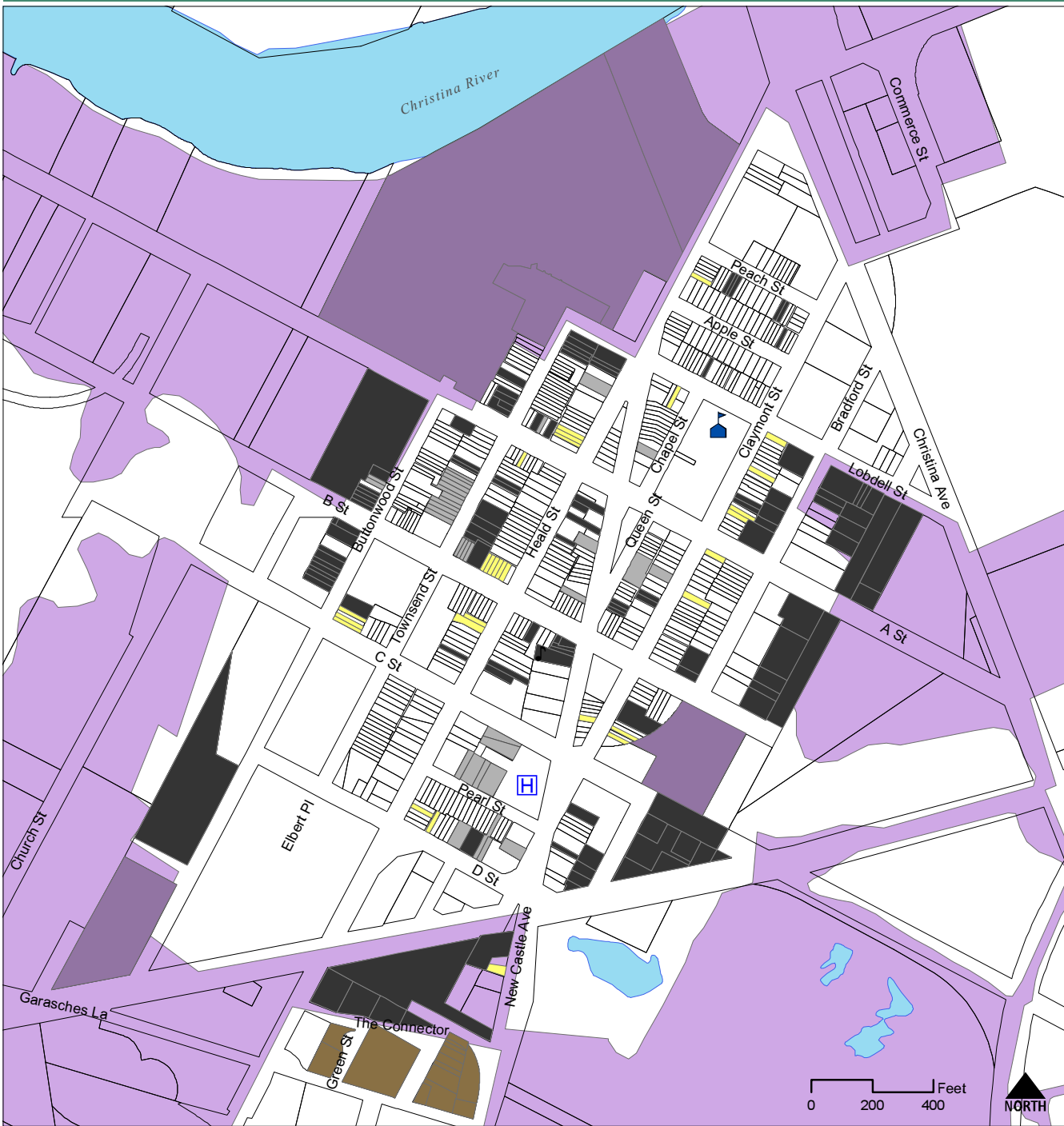


Recommendations:

- Utilize the urban renewal area designation that exists to allow the City to condemn scattered vacant lots and transfer these to either adjoining homeowners for side and rear yards, or to a community development corporation (CDC) for infill housing development.
- Complete a block-by-block, lot-by-lot inventory of the community, carried out by an existing local development corporation, as part of an urban renewal plan. The existing Underutilized Property Plan is a starting point, although field verification is necessary. Partner with the Wilmington Housing Partnership to help spearhead the planning analysis. Identify potential assemblages to present to the City and WHA for redevelopment.
- Create a revolving fund for infill/homeownership housing from Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) on Diamond Oil and other sites.
- (As noted above:) Enact inclusionary zoning, form-based zoning, and design guidelines to generate revenue for homeownership/improvements, and to assure seamless development within/adjoining the neighborhood.

There are a numbers of vacant properties, poised for development, which are scattered throughout the community.

South Wilmington Neighborhood Plan



Map 10. Soft Sites

- | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Parking | Waterbody |
| Vacant lots | Elbert-Palmer Elementary School |
| Vacant one and two family houses | Henrietta Johnson Medical Center |
| Vacant Multifamily Buildings | |
| Vacant/Underutilized Industrial | |
| Other Industrial | |

Sources: City of Wilmington
 Delaware State GIS Data
 Phillips Preiss Shapiro Associates,
 Field Survey, November 2005

Map Prepared by:
 Phillips Preiss Shapiro Associates, Inc.
 November 2005

South Wilmington Neighborhood Plan



Map 11. The Scattered Sites Problem

- | | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| Deteriorated Housing | Vacant Housing | Waterbody |
| Retail/Mixed Use | Vacant Industrial | Henrietta Johnson Medical Center |
| Parking | Vacant Lots | Elbert-Palmer Elementary School |

Sources: City of Wilmington
Delaware State GIS Data

Map Prepared by:
Phillips Preiss Shapiro Associates, Inc.
November 2005

Inclusionary Zoning: Precedents

Inclusionary zoning is a technique that creates new affordable housing by requiring or encouraging a percentage of new housing units to be affordable dwellings. In instances where the provision of such units is not mandatory, incentives such as an increase in development yield are granted in exchange for constructing a certain amount of affordable housing. This concept has been utilized with varying degrees of success in communities throughout the United States from California to Vermont.

In Delaware, Sussex County has a Moderately Priced Housing Unit Program ordinance. This inclusionary zoning law is intended to stimulate the production of housing for residents of the county with moderate incomes (defined as 80 to 125 percent of median income in Sussex County for the respective household size). Like other ordinances of its type, the Sussex County law is based upon a legislative finding that there is a shortage of affordable housing within the jurisdiction. It sets forth a detailed series of regulations governing how such housing will be provided, including the size and type of developments that are subject to the law, the minimum percent of affordable dwelling units that must be provided and the incentives that are offered for providing such units. These incentives include increased density, expedited development review, fee waivers and possible modification of zoning regulations.

The Sussex County inclusionary zoning ordinance creates new affordable housing by providing an incentive in the form of increased density in exchange for setting aside 15 percent of the housing units within a development as affordable housing units. The density bonus starts at 20 percent for creating affordable units with maximum sale prices affordable to residents with incomes between 100 and 125 percent of area median income. It increases to as much as a 30 percent increase in development yield for units that are affordable to residents with 80 percent or less of area median income. The ordinance also sets maximum initial sale prices and a minimum time period that these units must remain affordable. There are restrictions on the ownership of prospective residents of the units, who must live and work in the county and must occupy the affordable unit as a principal residence. This ordinance included a “phased implementation” clause that enabled a trial

period to test its provisions and modify them if necessary. New Castle County in Delaware also has an inclusionary zoning law, which provides bonuses for the creation of affordable housing. It is more limited in scope than the Sussex County ordinance as it is intended to encourage affordable units to be created through market forces with only minimal assistance from government. The means for achieving this objective is by allowing a greater amount of overall housing units to be built in a development in exchange for the provision of a certain amount of affordable units.

Another much larger scale program has been in effect for some time just to the east in New Jersey. As a result of what have come to be referred to as the “Mount Laurel” court decisions, the State of New Jersey determined that every municipality in the state has a constitutional obligation to provide affordable housing. The state created the Council on Affordable Housing (COAH), which spearheaded the implementing regulations. From the 1980s until 2004, COAH’s regulations were premised upon the creation of affordable housing zones, where a certain percentage of units would be set aside as affordable units in exchange for a more intense development. The setasides generally ranged from 15 to 20 percent of the total units created through a development.

The regulations were somewhat recently amended to go a step further by requiring all municipalities in New Jersey to provide affordable housing at a ratio corresponding to new residential and non-residential development. COAH now requires the provision of one affordable unit for every eight market rate housing units built in a municipality, as well as one affordable housing unit for every 25 jobs created. The number of jobs is calculated based upon multipliers for various types of non-residential development. Municipalities are required to submit a plan to COAH that includes population and employment projections in order to determine how much new affordable housing must be created. They must also provide periodic updates to COAH to ensure that actual development is consistent with the projections and to modify the projections if necessary.

Community Benefits Agreements: Components and Precedents

What Is a Community Benefits Agreement (CBA)?

It is a legally enforceable contract, signed by community groups and by a developer, setting forth a range of community benefits that the developer agrees to provide as part of a development project.

Why do Communities Create CBAs?

- Inclusiveness: ensure often overlooked community concerns are heard and addressed
- Coalition-building: help coordinate strong, diverse coalitions
- Clarity: help assess a community's needs
- Transparency: help reduce the unknowns in a development project
- Flexibility: communities can tailor negotiations to address specific needs
- Legitimacy: provide legal authority to enforce a developer's promise

What Kinds of Community Benefits do CBAs Typically Include?

- Employment opportunities and training
- Environmental improvements
- Affordable housing
- Funding or facilities for community services and businesses
- Community involvement and accountability

Caveats/Obstacles

- Permanency: difficult for community groups to amend or strengthen a signed CBA
- Legal expenses: usually requires attorneys and other consultants
- Coalition politics: building and maintaining coalitions is difficult
- Implementation challenges: for individual grassroots community members

Success Stories

- Los Angeles' Staples Center sports arena (2001): widely viewed as the exemplary and most progressive CBA model
- Park East Neighborhood in Milwaukee (2005): Example of incorporating community benefits principles into large-scale, land use planning (in this case, on the County level)
- Alameda (California) Corridor Transportation Authority (ACTA): benefits several different communities in various municipalities
- Hartford Hospital: model for first-source hiring

Form-based Zoning

What Is Form-Based Zoning?

A method of land use regulation characterized by 1) an emphasis on physical design (building size, location, appearance) rather than land use/function (e.g., residential, commercial, industrial) and 2) a focus on what's desired—the kind of town or city that people indicate they want—rather than what is forbidden.

The end goal is producing a specific type of “place.”

Why Have Communities Used Form-Based Zoning?

- Emphasize mixed uses
- Increased public participation
- Create flexibility so community can respond to economic changes
- Promote development in largely built out communities

What Is the Potential Benefit for South Wilmington?

- Increased community involvement
- Better comprehension of land regulations and future development
- Promotion of good urban design
- Enlarged community equity
- More control over South Wilmington's form



Caveats

- The need to invest time, effort and resources into a comprehensive vision/plan
- Codes are still new and disturbing to many developers, politicians and homeowners afraid of change
- Codes are not familiar (and thus not reassuring) to big financial lenders
- The perceived support of an “urban” agenda, and possible gentrification

Success Stories

- Historically, many communities have regulated development through systems that were primarily form-based: Chicago, Alexandria, Virginia and more recently, Miami
- Existing cities encouraging (traditional) infill redevelopment or concerned about protecting and enhancing the existing form and character of a community (or a specific district.): Iowa City, Iowa; Hercules, California; Fayetteville, Arkansas
- In addition, “rustbelt” cities like Syracuse, New York; Saratoga Springs, New York; and Providence, Rhode Island, have also adopted form-based codes
- Good design: Riverview at Upper Landing – stacked flats townhouses – along the Mississippi River in the heart of St. Paul, Minnesota

Form-based zoning for South Wilmington that promotes design for flood risk might be modeled on the Upper Landing development in St. Paul, Minnesota. The development, located along the Mississippi River, has been designed specifically to protect against routine flood stages and major flooding (e.g., through raised elevation and garages at ground floor level).

III. Environment, Open Space and Recreation



Floodplain, Wetlands, Brownfields

Redefine South Wilmington's problematic physical setting and infrastructure as a source of inspiration for a new type of urban ecology.

Flooding, wetlands, and contaminated sites present a variety of development constraints in Southbridge, but also opportunities for innovative and creative urban design solutions. An astronomical 90 percent of South Wilmington lies within the 100-year floodplain – meaning that there is a one-out-of-100 chance that virtually the entire neighborhood will be flooded in a given year, primarily due to abnormally high tidal stages on the Delaware River. But, as evident in frequent road washouts and wet basements, flooding is a regular problem in South Wilmington, due to its flat lowland quality. The current inlet and underground piping systems are inadequate to collect and carry off stormwater. Alternatives involving stormwater retention or pumping into the Christina River have so far been deemed too expensive. A significant amount of land is State-designated wetlands, with a particular concentration dead-center north of Garasches Lane. Wetlands are important for mitigating flood conditions.



Brownfields are interspersed throughout South Wilmington. The State-funded, City-sponsored South Wilmington Brownfield Compendium Pilot (2004) identified 60 sites. These sites tend to have high metal concentrations, along with ash, slag, and municipal waste used as fill for what had been marshlands. Unfortunately, cleanup/remediation costs can be astronomical and, worse, unpredictable. Capping with asphalt parking or concrete addresses both problems, but compounds flooding. The brownfields raise environmental justice issues, due to the relatively high occurrence of adverse health conditions in South

Above photos: Flooding and contamination issues are the key environmental constraints facing development in South Wilmington.



Wilmington. Southbridge's most prominent ready-to-develop brownfield is the Diamond Oil site. The most contaminated is the Halby Chemical site.

Recommendations:

- Use the pervasive floodplains to inspire urban design in which the first floor is raised above parking, with use of landscaping, berms and stoops (for housing) so as to maintain an urbanistic design quality. Integrate these formats into design guidelines enforced by zoning.
- Use restored and de-contaminated wetlands as the core of a central park system and network of open spaces, swales, and ponds to promote natural flood retention and water restoration. Financially, link the creation of this network to use of capping.
- Counter the challenge posed by floodplains and brownfields with a higher standard for green architecture, involving green roofs for commercial development, LEED "Certified" status or higher² for multi-family housing, etc. Consider incentives to encourage environmentally-sensitive, high-performance design.
- Enhance street cleaning efforts, and leaf litter collection in particular, to improve street appearance as well as drainage, since leaf litter may block drainage pipes and compound flooding.

2 U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System – Certified, Silver, Gold or Platinum rating

South Wilmington Neighborhood Plan



Map 12. Floodplains and Wetlands

FEMA Flood zones

- 100 Year with Elevation
- 500 Year

- State Wetlands
- Frequently Flooded Intersections

- Waterbody
- Bridges
- Henrietta Johnson Medical Center
- H Elbert-Palmer Elementary School

Sources: City of Wilmington
Delaware State GIS Data

Map Prepared by:
Phillips Preiss Shapiro Associates, Inc.
November 2005



South Wilmington Neighborhood Plan



Map 13. Brownfield Sites

- | | |
|--|---|
| Brownfield Sites | Waterbody |
| Bridges | H Henrietta Johnson Medical Center |
| ▲ Elbert-Palmer Elementary School | |

Sources: City of Wilmington
 Delaware State GIS Data
 Delaware Coastal Programs South Wilmington Brownfield Inventory

Map Prepared by:
 Phillips Preiss Shapiro Associates, Inc.
 November 2005



Parks and Open Space

Redefine South Wilmington with a network of parks and open space, providing full access to the Christina River waterfront.

There are five public parks/open spaces in South Wilmington: Barbara Hicks Park, Elbert Park, Eden Park, the corner of A Street/New Castle Avenue, and the corner of Heald Street/A Street. Public open space in Southbridge is concentrated in Eden Park, which is isolated and remote from the residential blocks. Duggan's softball field, although still maintained, has been rezoned to allow for residential development. Together, these parks total about 13 acres, which amounts to just under six acres of park per 1,000 people. However, 11.5 acres—close to 90 percent of the total parkland—are in Eden Park located at Wilmington's south boundary, and isolated by a long, uninviting walk along a major roadway adjacent to industrial and automotive uses. The amount of open space within the park also may be reduced, as there are plans in the works to locate a multi-use facility in Eden Park known as the Diamond State Sports and Learning Center (DSSLC), which would include a sports arena, a skating rink, and a banquet hall. The minimal facilities on the remaining 1.5 acres of parkland in the neighborhood are in need of additional programming and improved maintenance.

Recommendations:

- Create a Central Park located to the immediate west of Southbridge. Use this park as the lungs of the neighborhood. Its wetlands should be cleaned up and improved for flood retention. Traverse the park with trails, linking active recreation facilities.
- Explore a new middle school or indoor recreation center in the vicinity of the intersection of A Street and Buttonwood Street. (Such a recreation facility would be more local in nature than the Diamond State Sports and Learning Center discussed above, which would be geared to a more regional user population.) This facility would also involve shared parking for the recreation fields, indoor recreation and/or public school.
- The Central Park would thereby function as the main park for all of South Wilmington's diverse resident and worker populations. Employ an



exemplary design on par with those for the internationally acclaimed proposed park for Fresh Kills Landfill (New York City's Staten Island), Gasworks Park (Seattle), and Park Duisburg Nord (Germany).

- Promote a riverwalk on the south side of the Christina River, mirroring that on the north side – linked to any upzoning for housing and commercial development. Assure public connections to and across A Street at least every 600 linear feet, and especially at the Central Park.
- Require the creation of new blacktop and foundations (i.e., “groundcover”) to be linked to the creation of an equal amount of green space.
- Explore a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district to help pay for the park network's construction, and a Park Improvement District (PID) for its continued upkeep/programming.
- Seek partners or stewards for each of the other parks and especially playgrounds.
- Consider utilizing open space in the neighborhood to establish a vegetable farm (building on community gardening efforts) and a farmer's market.

South Wilmington Neighborhood Plan



Map 14. Parks and Open Space

- Parks (public)
- Waterbody
- Bridges
- H Henrietta Johnson Medical Center
- Elbert-Palmer Elementary School

Sources: City of Wilmington
 Delaware State GIS Data
 Phillips Preiss Shapiro Associates,
 Field Survey, November 2005

Map Prepared by:
 Phillips Preiss Shapiro Associates, Inc.
 November 2005



IV. Economic Development, Education, Transit and Retail



Economic Development

Improve access to jobs for neighborhood residents.



It is not the number of jobs, but rather access to jobs (and quality jobs), that is the critical economic development issue in South Wilmington. There are 4,700 jobs in South Wilmington, and over 40,000 jobs nearby in downtown, compared to 1,380 adults aged 18 or over in South Wilmington. Top areas of employment for Southbridge residents are: health and social services for women; wholesale and retail trade for men. Jobs are likely to increase in South Wilmington, even if new housing replaces industry. The Riverfront Development Corporation (RDC) and City Office of Economic Development (OED) are working on a 450,000-square foot AIG Companies office complex to employ 2,800 people. Other planned development in South Wilmington is likely to be mixed-use, including commercial. The Port of Wilmington is expanding. South Wilmington is also likely to attract both strip and large footprint retail. All these factors suggest a growing market for jobs in the area.

Despite the number of jobs, access to quality jobs remains an issue. The neighborhood faces significant unemployment, with a 10-percent unemployment rate for those in the labor force. Furthermore, Wilmington's economy has shifted in recent years. Consistent with national trends, the Wilmington/Newark area lost over one-fifth of its manufacturing jobs during the 1990s, with significant growth in the finance, insurance and real estate sectors. Most Southbridge adults are at a disadvantage: only 9 percent of adults over 25 years of age have a college degree; only 65 percent have a high school diploma. Therefore, appropriate job training and readiness remain overriding obstacles. One local training resource for residents is the technology center at the Neighborhood House.



The educational attainment of neighborhood youth will continue to be a major issue, if recent trends continue. The Christina School District data for enrollment by year and school (2002-2003 and 2003-2004) for all Southbridge students reveals a precipitous drop in students from 9th to 12th grade.

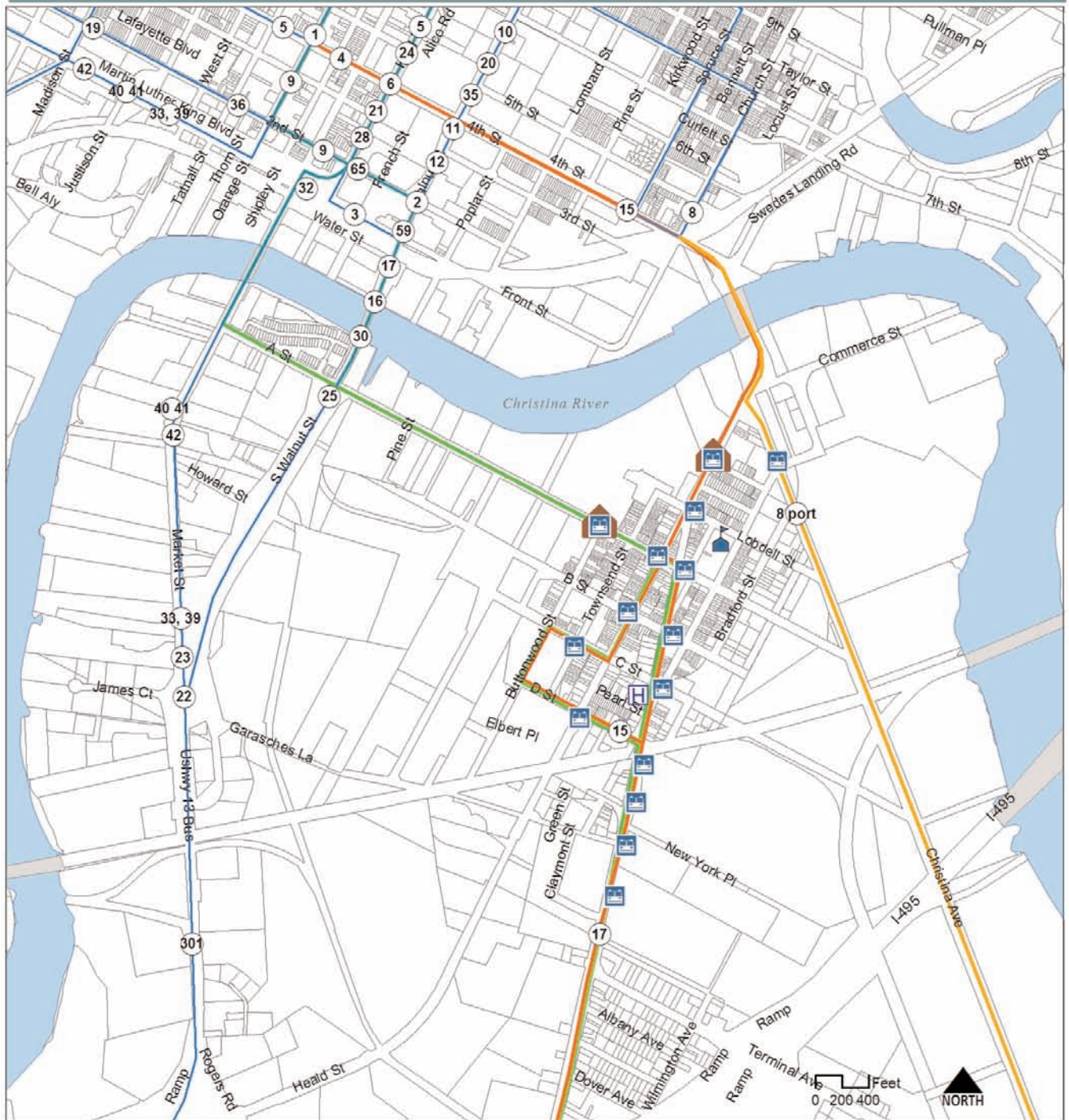
South Wilmington is generally well-served by transit, with three DART First State bus lines serving Southbridge directly. Service is adequate for week-day commuters. However, healthcare and retail often involve evening and weekend shifts, times when bus service operates on a more limited schedule. Although transit-dependency in the neighborhood is high, nearly three-fourths of South Wilmington's workers drive to work, with two-thirds driving alone. Given the neighborhood's low income, this represents a significant burden.

Recommendations:

- Enhance Neighborhood House programs to take on the character of a place-based job readiness/placement center, perhaps with the addition of a job placement ombudsperson. Foster linkages with the more specialized job training in downtown.
- Create and financially support programs that offer area youth tutorial assistance, cultural enrichment, and career exploration opportunities.
- Promote micro-enterprise loans (through the Community Reinvestment Act), a retail incubator, technical assistance, and façade grants for locally owned businesses.
- Condition public support (land or money) for private development on first-preference for South Wilmington residents as employees. A model for this program is Washington DC's First Source program (page 47).
- As per the Neighborhood Based Transit Strategy (2000), explore weekend/evening bus service with a route that also connects to the Concord Mall.
- Focus transit transfers at the A Street/Heald Street business district, to bolster stores there.
- Lobby for an additional bus stop at South Heald Street and Peach Street, as well as bus shelters at the following stops: Buttonwood and A Street and (proposed) South Heald Street and Peach Street.

Above photo: Better connecting residential areas of South Wilmington to job centers such as downtown and the Port of Wilmington will provide increased opportunities for residents.

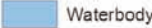

South Wilmington Neighborhood Plan



Map 15. Public Transit Map

- 15
- 17
- 8 port
- Other lines

-  Bus stops
-  Bus stops with proposed shelters

-  Waterbody
-  Bridges
-  Henrietta Johnson Medical Center
-  Elbert-Palmer Elementary School

Sources: City of Wilmington
Delaware State GIS Data

Map Prepared by:
Phillips Preiss Shapiro Associates, Inc.
November 2005

Retail

Create a small but much-needed “Main Street” at the intersection of A Street and Heald Street.

Retail in South Wilmington is scattered and generally marginal. Within Southbridge, it mainly consists of small shops: several barbershops/beauty salons, eateries, liquor stores, bars – both legal and illegal, and other service-type of establishments. A survey of residents retail needs as part of the Underutilized Property Plan identified the desire for a dollar store, a coffee shop, and especially basic services such as a laundromat, pharmacy, and bank.

South Wilmington residents (at approximately 2,200) generate market support for approximately for 5,500 square feet of groceries and other stores serving daily and weekly needs, and located within the Southbridge neighborhood, given low car ownership. Workers (at 4,700) generate support for 10,000 square feet of services and restaurants which, given roadway patterns and close competition from downtown and the riverfront, would be dispersed. There is support for an indeterminate amount of strip retail on U.S. Highway 13, which is the only route in South Wilmington that carries in excess of the 15,000-vehicle benchmark employed by most chains and franchises. There is support for destination retail only at the highway exits, of which there are two (Exits 1 and 2, off Interstate 495) to the immediate south of South Wilmington. Thus, retail cannot be easily concentrated within South Wilmington.

Access and visibility are paramount for retail businesses. Within walking distance of Southbridge, only two locations have any promise: (1) Heald Street from Christina Avenue to A Street, for small shops geared to a walk-in and passby clientele; and (2) the former Southbridge Extension site owned by the Wilmington Housing Authority (WHA), which has the access and visibility that might allow a discount store, drug store or even a supermarket to tap their threshold market populations of 10,000 to 20,000.

Recommendations:

- For local retail: Create a “Main Street” at Heald Street north from A Street to Christina Avenue. This would entail well-maintained sidewalks, street trees, historic-looking pedestrian-scaled lighting, façade improvements, and other “Main Street Management” strategies. Provide a traffic signal at A Street, to improve access and visibility for stores. At the north end, promote retail incubators in connection with housing development on the Diamond Oil and/or City Parks and Recreation sites.



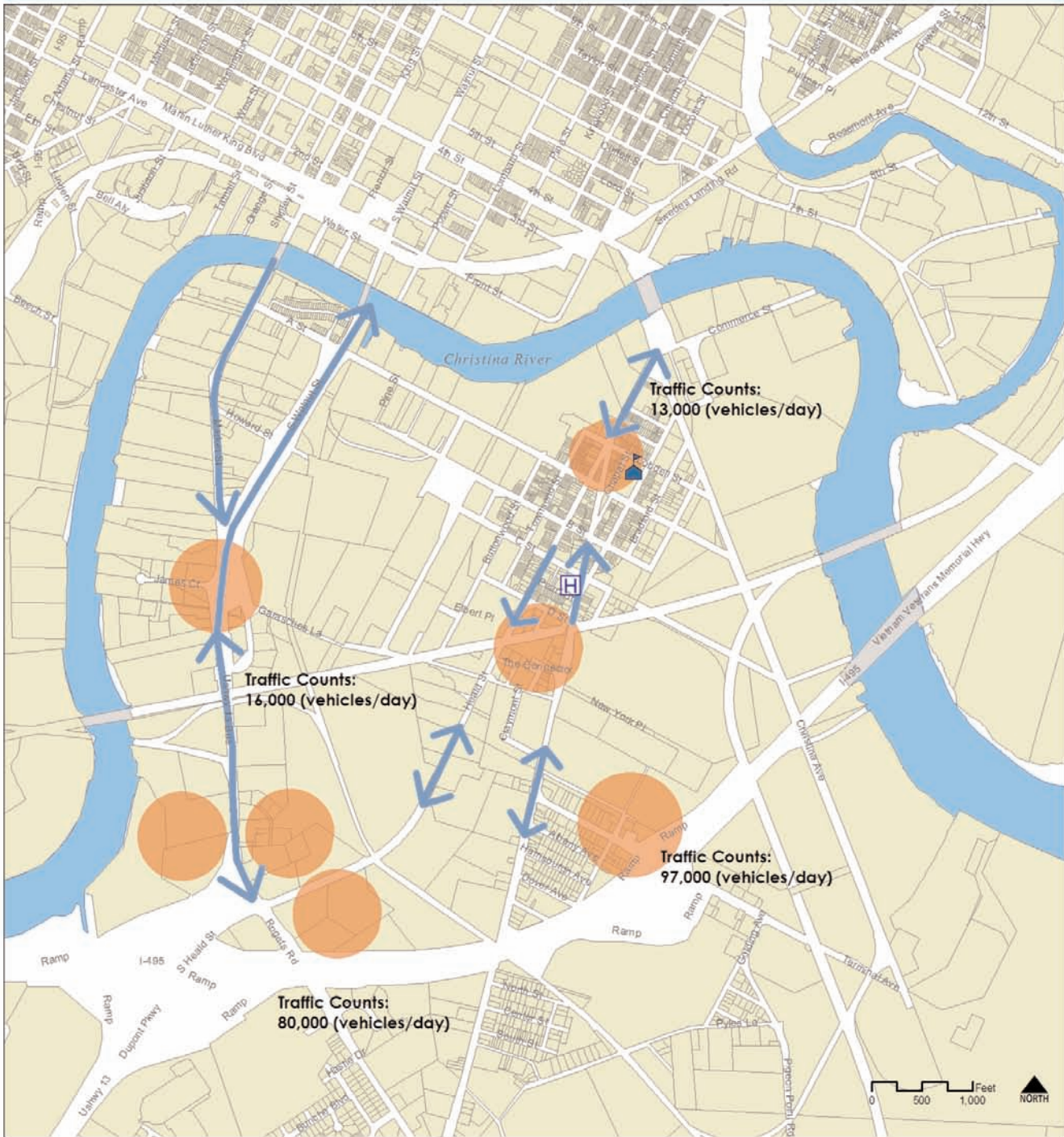
Focused investment at the north end of Heald Street will help existing businesses while creating a neighborhood “Main Street.”



- For destination retail: Support development of the WHA Southbridge Extension site for retail. If sold, the funds should be dedicated to affordable housing development in South Wilmington.



South Wilmington Neighborhood Plan



Map 16. Retail Potential

- Retail Potential Area
- Waterbody
- Henrietta Johnson Medical Center
- Traffic flow
- Bridges
- Elbert-Palmer Elementary School

Sources: City of Wilmington
Delaware State GIS Data

Map Prepared by:
Phillips Preiss Shapiro Associates, Inc.
November 2005

The figures shown on the map indicate the 2004 Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) data obtained from the Delaware Department of Transportation (unit: vehicles/day).

Case Study in Local Hiring Requirements: Washington DC's First Source Program

The First Source Employment Agreement Program in Washington DC requires employers benefiting from municipal assistance (in the form of grants, contracts, subcontracts, financial loans, bonds, zoning applications, street or alley closings, and leasing agreements of real property) to use the DC Department of Employment Services (DOES) as their "first source" in recruiting and hiring for any new jobs created by the project.

Each employer in the program must sign an agreement ensuring that all jobs openings created will be listed with DOES, and that 51 percent of new hires are DC residents. Those employers who are awarded contracts or other forms of assistance less than \$100,000, who are filling job openings from within the company, or who are located from outside the Washington, DC metro area are exempt from the program.

The program can save employers advertising expenses, reduce interviewing time, and qualify employers for tax credits based on the number of local residents hired.

The employer tells DOES of the positions being created, the projected salary for each position, the anticipated hire date, and the names of current employees on the project, and DOES recruits, pre-screens, and refers qualified applicants to the employer. The employer will make all decisions on the actual hiring of new employees.

The program has been successful in creating jobs, and in fiscal year 2004-2005 almost 3,000 DC residents were hired through the program. The program has been criticized, however, for not fully reaching its 51 percent goal. This is attributed in part to a lack of properly skilled or employable DC residents, and new efforts have been focused on ensuring DC residents obtain basic job readiness skills and special skills to match the occupations in demand.

For more information visit

<http://does.dc.gov/does/cwp/view,a,1232,q,537680.asp>



Above photos: The pleasant tree-lined streets that typify much of Southbridge should be emulated throughout South Wilmington.

V. Streets, Traffic, Safety and Community Facilities



Streets and Roadways

Make Southbridge more of a neighborhood, and less of a byway.

Heavy traffic flow on the major roadways in Southbridge impedes the creation of a pedestrian-friendly environment essential for a sense of neighborhood. A high traffic flow averaging 13,000 cars per day passes through Southbridge, taking advantage of the one-way pair of Heald Street (southbound) and New Castle Avenue (northbound); which merge north of Lobdell Street to join with Christina Avenue and the bridge across the Christina River. Heavy truck traffic, comprising roughly 10 percent of all traffic on most neighborhood roadways and as high as 18 percent on A Street between New Castle and Christina Avenues, has been a long-standing community concern. Traffic problems are further compounded by at-grade crossings for the freight railroad lines that cause periodic backups. The Heald Street and New Castle Avenue pair is one of the major routes in and out of Downtown from Interstate Route 495. These two highly traveled roadways bisect this already small neighborhood, posing a number of problems. It is no accident that building conditions are worse on Heald Street than other neighborhood streets. The high level and high speed of the traffic poses safety problems. Notably, passby traffic is nearly eight times as great as population.

The quality of the streetscape overall is poor on the major thoroughfares in Southbridge, lacking the amenities needed to create a sense of place. On A Street, west of Southbridge, a \$4.3 million reconstruction project has recently been completed, sponsored by the City and the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT). South Wilmington also lacks a strong sense of arrival at the major entry points to the neighborhood, and those visual cues that do exist are not in the best condition (e.g., the abandoned pedestrian bridge at Southbridge extension which is slated to be removed).



Narrow, tree-lined streets characterize the rest of Southbridge. The prevailing one-way street pattern promotes faster traffic that detracts from the quality of life for many residents. Street trees play a critical role in enhancing the public space and urban design of neighborhood streets, although the quality and quantity of plantings is not consistent. According to a 2004 inventory prepared by the Delaware Center for Horticulture, Southbridge has 234 live, healthy trees, and 178 planting sites where stumps, dead trees, and other trees should be removed. The healthier trees are proximate to Elbert-Palmer School and Neighborhood House, as well as to some homeowner streets like Peach Street.

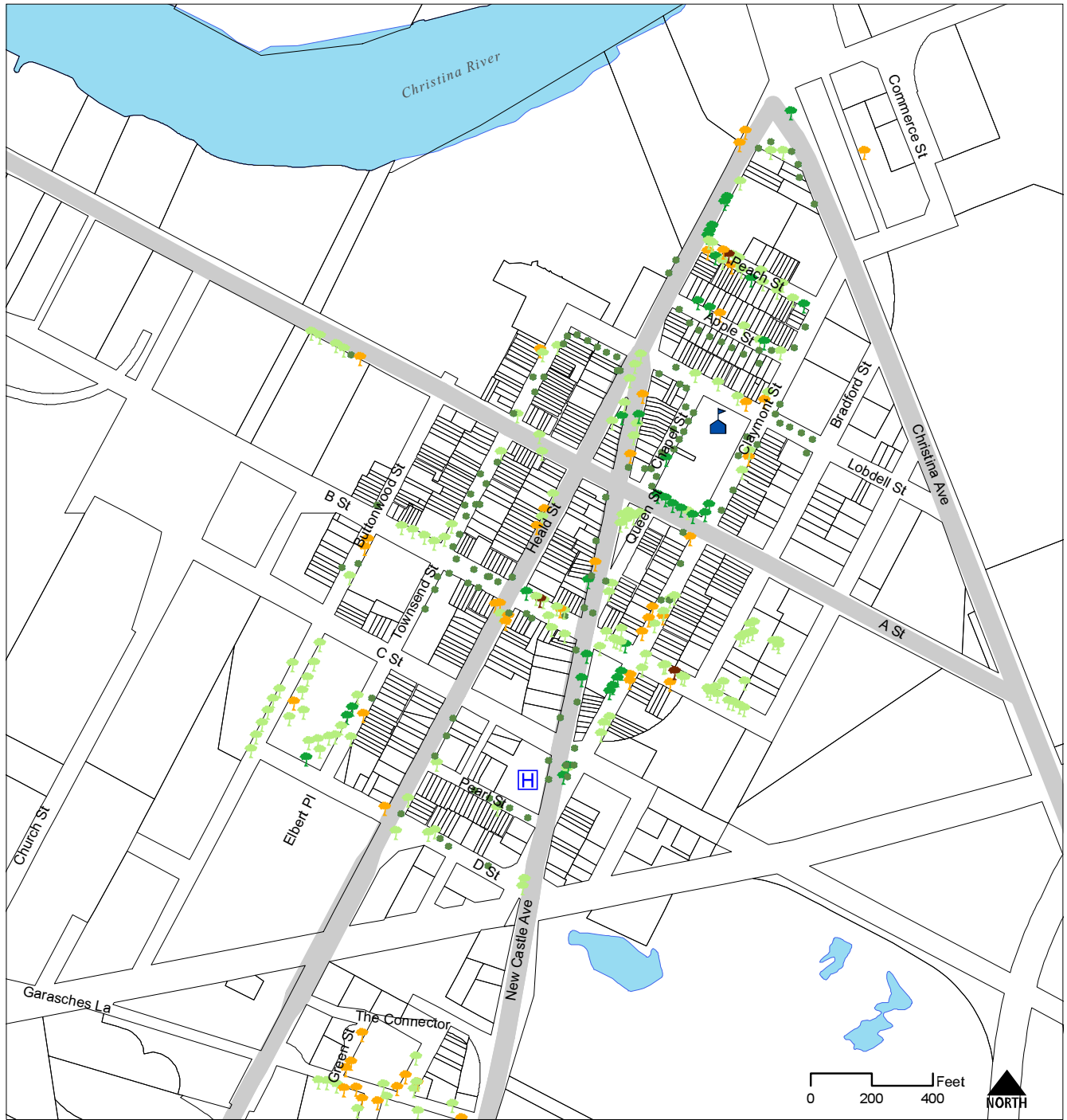


Recommendations:

- Pursue comprehensive streetscape enhancements and traffic-calming measures along Heald Street and New Castle Avenue as well as along A Street (see retail section), by adding street trees, pedestrian-scaled lighting, and a traffic signal at A Street. Utilize DelDOT’s Transportation Enhancement program for these improvements. Determine specific pedestrian recommendations at the planned “Walkable Community” workshop with local residents.
- Create a bypass starting where D Street intersects New Castle Avenue, eastward to the “paper” street one block east of Bradford, and up to Christina Avenue. Design this bypass as an attractive boulevard. Bypass also solves problem of tie-ups on New Castle due to at-grade crossing for freight railroad line (See Map 2 for bypass placement).
- Alternatively, pursue a connector road between Terminal and Christina Avenues, located to create an intersection with the I-495 ramps, directing most truck traffic around South Wilmington.
- Request two way traffic on Heald and New Castle from DelDOT, notwithstanding other bypass and traffic-calming recommendations.
- Pursue an aggressive tree-planting program that serves both aesthetic and traffic-calming objectives throughout Southbridge , starting with all of the homeowner streets, in addition to Heald/New Castle.
- Create gateway features that enhance approaches to the neighborhood.

Above photos: Improving the appearance of major roads can also increase safety for pedestrians and enhance neighborhood character.

South Wilmington Neighborhood Plan



Map 17. Street Trees

Tree Condition

- | | | |
|------|-----------------|----------------------------------|
| Good | Dead | Waterbody |
| Fair | Landscape Other | Henrietta Johnson Medical Center |
| Poor | | Elbert-Palmer Elementary School |

Sources: City of Wilmington
Delaware State GIS Data

Map Prepared by:
Phillips Preiss Shapiro Associates, Inc.
November 2005

Community Services, Safety

Create a “neighborhood of choice” by improving the essentials of crime prevention and public education.

Whether to buy a home or rent, an important factor in deciding where to live is whether the neighborhood is safe and a good place to raise a family. Perceptions of safety are paramount, making crime reduction a priority. Violent and drug-related crime is concentrated in the southeast area of the neighborhood, and can be presumed to have decreased since the demolition of the Wilmington Housing Authority’s troubled Southbridge Extension housing. Compared with Wilmington’s other 14 neighborhood/analysis areas, South Wilmington ranks near the middle; but this may be misleading, since so much of the area is industrial.

The Elbert-Palmer Elementary School, the only public school in the neighborhood, has approximately 300 Pre-K to Grade 6 students. A high poverty rate (85 percent qualify for reduced lunch) and relatively high absenteeism (10 percent) among students suggest a number of academically at-risk children. The school’s administration is actively interested in making the school more accessible to the community. As Wilmington moves away from bussing and heads back to neighborhood schooling, Elbert-Palmer plays an ever more important role as an institution in the community. Both the school and the Neighborhood House offer after school programs.

Southbridge has a history of civic involvement and religious participation. There are many active religious institutions and churches in the neighborhood. Active community organizations include Neighborhood House and the Southbridge Civic Association. The Neighborhood House’s board includes people who live outside of the neighborhood but who have fundraising or technical skills to bring to bear. The Eastside Southbridge Development Corporation is another local organization that has been a player in neighborhood revitalization.

Recommendations:

- Expand upon community policing efforts, involving zero tolerance for graffiti and other so-called minor crimes, focus on crime corners, etc.
- Explore a community court (this would need to be citywide) in which community service is meted out as punishment for delinquency and neglect (e.g., by landlords).
- Support the Elbert-Palmer Elementary School’s administration in its effort to make the school part of the community, including a new Parent Resource Center and access to its library and gym after school hours. The model is New York State’s “Beacon School” program.

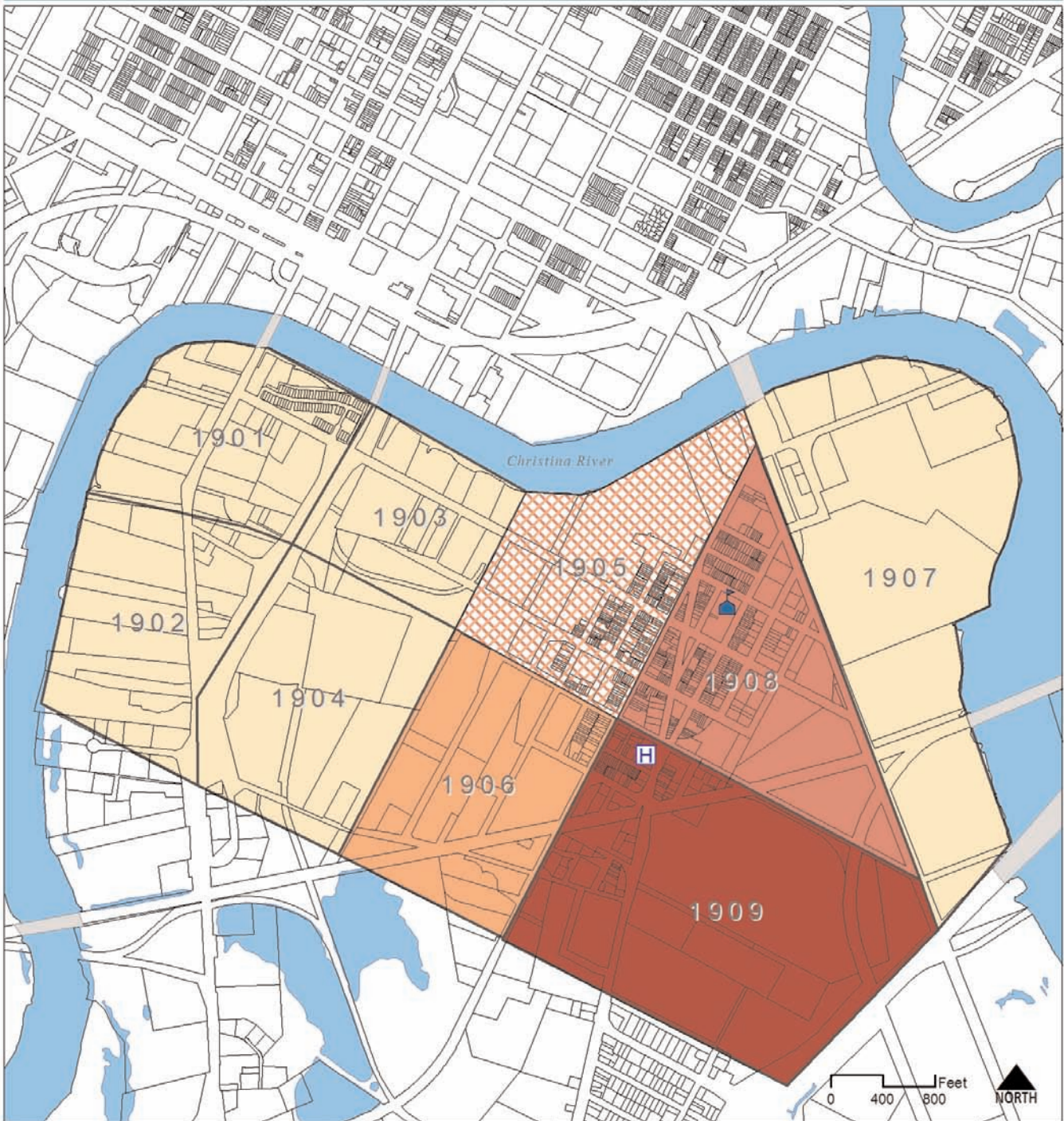




- Reach out to neighborhood churches and institutions to “adopt” a program or block, each. Examples include sponsorship of a block association, or of a community garden, or of a tree-planting program.
- Continue to look to the Neighborhood House and the Southbridge Civic Association as community leaders. Build the capacity of these Community Development Corporations (CDC) to pursue neighborhood-based development projects.
- Support the local fire company’s (Wilmington Fire Department, Station 2) interest in expanding its community presence and outreach through the creation of a community space or mentoring program at the firehouse.
- Think of all of the projects and efforts described in this plan as part of a whole.

Above photos: The many active civic institutions and community organizations in Southbridge will continue to play key roles as South Wilmington evolves.

South Wilmington Neighborhood Plan



Map 18. Crime Map

Drug Arrests by Grid, 1995-2003

6-20 21-34 35-126 127-151

Violent Crime Arrests by Grid, 1995-2003

0-7 8-34 35-68 69-113

*For District 1905, denotes Drug Arrests (21-34), and denotes Violent Crime Arrests (35-68)

- Waterbody
- Bridges
- Henrietta Johnson Medical Center
- Elbert-Palmer Elementary School

Sources: City of Wilmington
 Delaware State GIS Data
 Richard Harris memorandum to Ed Cervone entitled:
 "Crime Statistics for South Wilmington"

Map Prepared by:
 Phillips Preiss Shapiro Associates, Inc.
 December 2005

Glossary

Affordable Housing: As defined by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, any housing accommodation for which a tenant household pays 30% or less of its income for shelter.

Brownfields: Abandoned, idled, or under-used industrial and commercial facilities where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived environmental contamination.

Community Benefits Agreement: A legally enforceable contract, signed by community groups and by a developer, setting forth a range of community benefits that the developer agrees to provide as part of a development project.

Community Development Corporation (CDC): A non-profit group accountable to local residents that engage in a wide range of physical, economic and human development activities. CDCs rebuild their communities through housing, commercial, job development and other activities. A CDC's mission is normally focused on serving the local needs of low- or moderate-income households. Resident control usually takes the form of board representation.

Design Guidelines: A set of discretionary statements to guide land development to achieve a desired level of quality for the physical environment.

Flood Plain: The area of land adjacent to a watercourse that may be subject to flooding during the defined storm. It includes the floodway and the flood fringe.

Gentrification: A change to an area's character that results in the removal of its traditional resident population and replacement with a higher income population through market and/or governmental actions.

Green Architecture: A term used to describe economical, energy-saving, environmentally-friendly, sustainability-oriented, high-performance building design (in terms of the site, structure, and building systems). Strategies of green architecture include but are not limited to: non-toxic construction, the use of durable, natural, resource efficient materials, reliance on the sun for daylighting, thermal and electric power, and recycling of wastes into nutrients.

Hope VI: A multi-billion dollar Federal housing program initiated in 1992 and administered by HUD, in which the worst public housing developments are demolished or rehabilitated and replaced by mixed-income apartments or townhouses. HUD uses a competitive application process to choose sites for funding, and funds are granted to those applicants demonstrate the most pressing need and offer the most innovative proposals.

Inclusionary Zoning: The establishment of zoning regulations which create incentives or requirements for affordable housing development. This can include set-aside requirements or density bonuses for developers.

Incubator: An enterprise that is set up to provide business space (usually subsidized), equipment, and sometimes mentoring assistance and capital to new businesses that are just getting started.

Land Trust: A land trust is a not-for-profit organization, private in nature, organized to preserve and protect the natural and man-made environment by, among other techniques, creating conservation easements that restrict the use of real property. It can serve as a tool for communities to protect their land from overdevelopment so it can provide open space, habitat, clean water, scenic beauty, and other values of public benefit.

Low Income Housing Tax Credit: Tax incentive created in the Tax Reform Act of 1986 that is designed to attract equity capital for investment in rent restricted affordable housing. The program encourages the production of affordable housing by offering its owners tax credits for a ten year period based on the cost of development and the number of low income units produced.

Form-based Zoning: A method of land use regulation characterized by 1) emphasis on form regulations (building size, location, appearance) and 2) prescriptive rules (what a community wants to see built). Form codes are designed to provide more flexibility than conventional codes to promote development in largely built out communities. These codes work well in established communities because they effectively define and codify a neighborhood's existing characteristics or they can implement new building types when change is desired. The code may or may not include illustrations as part of its technical format.

New Urbanism: An urban design movement that promotes the creation and restoration of diverse, walkable, compact, vibrant, mixed-use communities composed of the same components as conventional development, but assembled in a more integrated fashion, in the form of complete communities. Principles of new urbanism focus on the following elements: walkability, connectivity, mixed uses, mixed housing, quality architecture and urban design, traditional neighborhood design, increased density, smart transportation, sustainability and quality of life.

Section 8: A federal program designed to increase the housing choices available to very low-income households by making privately-owned rental housing affordable to them. It provides rent subsidies, either rental certificates or vouchers, on behalf of eligible tenants. These subsidies usually equal the difference between 30 percent of the household's adjusted income and the HUD-approved fair market rent (for certificates) or a housing authority-approved payment standard (for vouchers). The program is tenant-based and the assistance stays with the family-where ever they choose to live as long as the landlord agrees to participate in the program.

Streetscape: The visual appearance of a roadway formed by the location of physical features such as buildings, pedestrian, bicyclist and vehicular facilities and landscaping.

TIF (Tax Increment Financing): A tool used by municipalities to capture future increases in property tax revenue and make these dollars available as a development incentive, subsidy or investment.

Wetlands: Lands that are seasonally or permanently covered by shallow water, as well as lands where the water table is close to or at the surface.

This project was funded, in part, through a grant from the Delaware Coastal Programs with funding from the Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management under award number NA03NOS4190078.

