

NEIGHBORS ALLIED FOR THE BEST RIVERFRONT PLANNING WORKSHOP



On Saturday, April 28, 2007, approximately 40 people met to discuss what could be built on Philadelphia's Delaware riverfront on two proposed casino sites — other than casinos.

In four short hours, local residents, along with architects and planners, discussed the neighborhood values that had been previously identified through the mayor's Central Delaware Planning Process, and used these values to envision alternative designs for the two sites.

What emerged at the end of this community-based planning process were two site plans that, devoid of all political pressure, truly responded to the neighborhood values.



planning an alternative to casinos

NABR RIVERFRONT PLANNING WORKSHOP:

The North Delaware: Delaware Avenue between Frankford Avenue and Shackamaxon Street

The approximately 17-acre site at the river between Laurel and Shackamaxon Streets is a key access point for neighborhood residents to connect to the Delaware and its continuous riverfront multi-use trail. In this design Shackamaxon Street and Frankford Avenue become prominent, pedestrian-friendly streets that extend to the river, with the site divided into smaller blocks that reflect the existing street grid in the adjacent neighborhood. The streets end at the river's edge, opening onto a riverfront park approximately half the size of Rittenhouse Square.

Immediately inland from the park are blocks of six- to eight-story buildings that are envisioned as housing on the upper floors with active uses such as restaurants or retail space on the ground floors. Between these buildings and Delaware Avenue, the blocks were envisioned as smaller, two- to three-story buildings with commercial uses on the ground floor and housing above.

The intersection of Delaware and Frankford Avenues will be a hub for public transportation, connecting a trolley or light rail line on Delaware Ave with a trolley line extending west on Frankford Avenue to Girard Ave, the main commercial corridor in the neighborhood. Parking occupies the center of the blocks on the riverside of Delaware Ave, and underneath Interstate 95.



The existing industrial buildings on the inland side of Delaware Avenue are important buildings in the neighborhood's industrial past, and should be preserved and reused as large commercial spaces, suitable for a market similar to Reading Terminal Market or other public marketplace. All new commercial uses in the area will be supported by the high density, high rise condominiums that are already approved for the parcels south and north of the study site.

Overall, this plan supports the neighborhood's need for more local services such as markets and restaurants, while providing jobs for local residents. This vision of the North Delaware Riverfront supports easy, intuitive, unimpeded access to the river through an extension of the public street grid, and the preservation of Philadelphia's industrial history by reusing adjacent existing industrial buildings.



NABR RIVERFRONT PLANNING WORKSHOP:

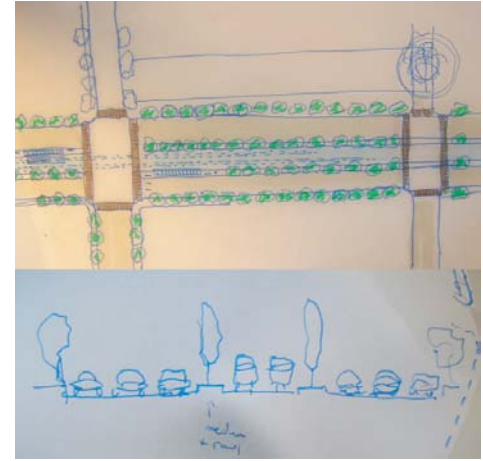
The North Delaware: Delaware Avenue between Frankford Avenue and Shackamaxon Street



- Connecting streets improvements: Repaired sidewalks, lighting, trees, illuminate under I-95
- Parking beneath I-95
- Historic building reused as Reading Terminal-style marketplace.
- Future low-rise development further connects urban pattern to waterfront
- Large blocks carved up to make smaller development sites, low scale of development reflects existing urban fabric across Delaware Ave.
- Grid streets extended into site, with focal points where they end at water
- Reconfigured intersection and gateway feature creates entrance to neighborhood
- Grocery store or other commercial use, with parking above
- Open space park with soft edge at river, fishing pier
- Continuous waterfront trail using bridges to cross narrow inlets

NABR RIVERFRONT PLANNING WORKSHOP:

The South Delaware: Columbus Boulevard between Reed and Tasker Streets



The 25-acre site at the river between Reed and Tasker streets presents an opportunity to bring much-needed open space to the eastern half of South Philadelphia, as well as initiate a denser redevelopment of the suburban development along Columbus Boulevard. Given the lack of contextual urban development nearby, the charrette team had more choice in programming the site - three alternatives were explored: The first looked at using the site mostly for green space, with a commercial farmers' market along Delaware Avenue. The second examined developing about half the site, with green space for the remaining half. The third alternative explored a build-out scenario for the site.

The plan at right blends the three alternatives. The grid of South Philly is extended into the site, allowing for a mix of housing, from townhouses to taller apartment blocks. Development is anchored around a Rittenhouse Square-sized park that includes amenities such as a wading pool, beach area, and amphitheater. The rotting piers are given over to programmed outdoor space and wildlife habitat, with opportunities for a sculpture garden, boat rentals, and fishing. The solid piers support small-scale residential development and waterfront restaurants. Large-scale commercial uses still line Columbus Blvd., but are developed in a more urban style, with parking decks, residences, or offices above the ground-floor retail. The site is crowned by three tall residential towers, declaring the newest waterfront neighborhood in the city skyline.



NABR RIVERFRONT PLANNING WORKSHOP:

The South Delaware: Columbus Boulevard between Reed and Tasker Streets



Improvements to connecting streets: lighting, improved sidewalks, trees, illuminating underside of I-95

Columbus Blvd. as a green urban boulevard with streetcar line in planted center median

Commercial development, up to street, with parking in rear or garages above

Grid, extended into site, creates smaller development sites that reproduce the South Philadelphia rowhouse fabric

Green roofs added to big-box buildings; future redevelopment site

Three tall residential towers set in park-like green space highlight the new neighborhood on the skyline

Large park space with amphitheater, playground, wading pond, and beach

Two-way Reed Street extended as major entrance to site, with focal point fountain at waterfront

Piers with low-rise residential units, surrounding a marina

Sculture garden, boat rentals, and pier caps removed to support fish habitat

NABR wishes to thank:

Old Brick Church,
Casino Free Philadelphia,
New Kensington Community Development Corporation,
Matt Papajohn and Katie Recker,
Riverfront neighborhood groups,
and the many community members and design professionals
that participated in the workshop

Formed in April 2006, Neighbors Allied for the Best Riverfront (NABR)'s mission is to support Philadelphia's communities and unite with them to envision and plan the development of the riverfront and surrounding areas. We promote community-based planning and development which is sensible, sustainable, and inclusive of the public process.

Visit us on the web at www.nabrhood.org.