

LOWER EASTWICK

George Pepper Middle School



Penrose Plaza + Eastwick Station + Former Korman Site + G. Pepper Middle School Campus

FOCUS AREA SUMMARY

The Lower Eastwick focus area is different than typical Philadelphia2035 Focus Areas, in that much of the current occupancy and future owners are still uncertain. The focus area includes undeveloped parcels that were previously under redevelopment agreement, a closed Philadelphia School District site that is currently for sale, and several other acres of publicly owned parcels that are underutilized. The site is situated between the Philadelphia International Airport, the Heinz Wildlife Refuge, and the Eastwick residential community.

A future planning effort will be conducted by the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority to help inform future land uses on the site. The current Lower Southwest District Plan aims to inform that planning effort by examining the area's history, existing conditions, opportunities, and constraints; and by framing a set of guidelines and principles to inform future development.

FOCUS AREA GOALS

- Preserve and create natural resources and community amenities
- Reduce flooding
- Provide commercial/light industrial development opportunities
- Create better pedestrian and transit connections to surrounding neighborhood and job centers

OPPORTUNITIES

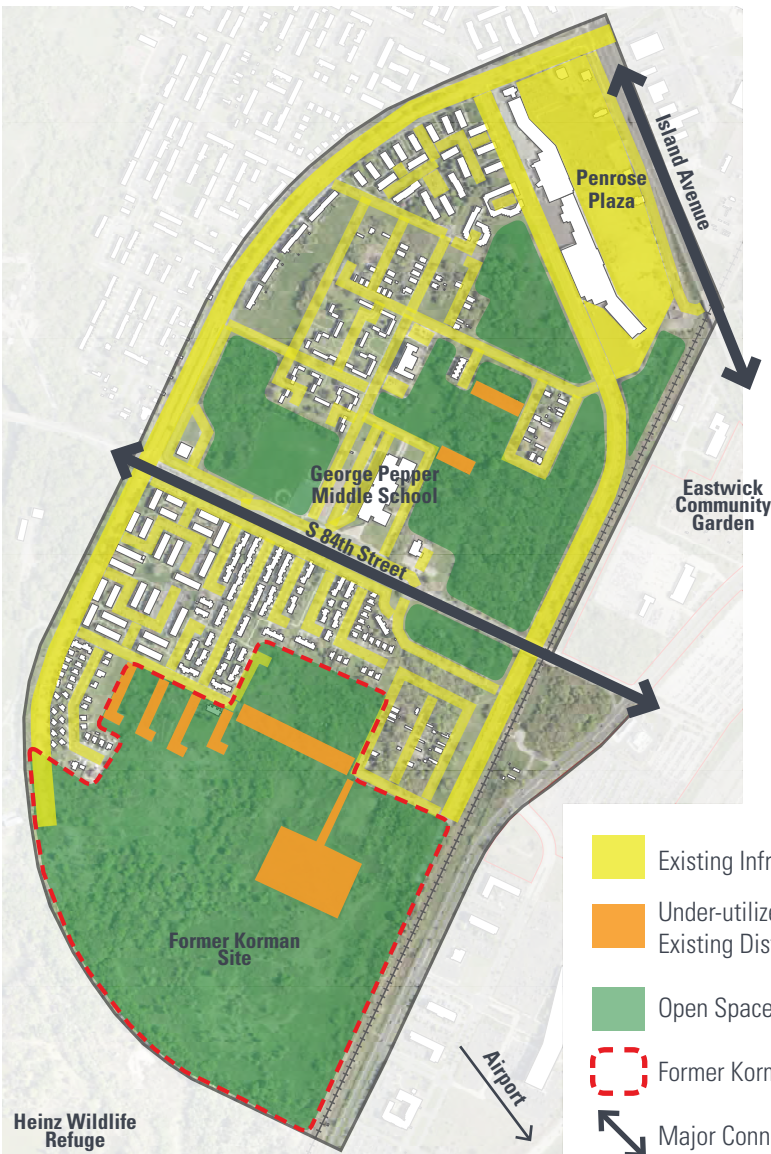
- Vacant and underutilized properties
- Proximity to highway / transit networks
- Beginnings of a gridded street network
- Historic and environmental preservation opportunities

CHALLENGES

- Flood risk and environmental issues
- Proximity to Airport
- Land suitability constraints

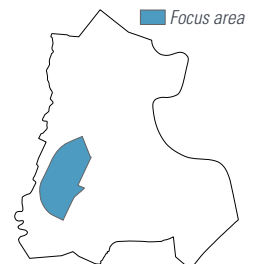
PHYSICAL CONDITIONS IN LOWER EASTWICK

Once sparsely populated, Eastwick was nicknamed 'The Meadows' for its vast open spaces and marshlands created by the Darby Creek. In the 1930s, dredging of the Darby Creek to create land for the Airport reduced some of the marshy conditions of Eastwick and created space for small farms and scattered homes. In 1954, the City of Philadelphia adopted a redevelopment area plan to develop 3,000 acres of this low-lying land. The plan was not fully realized, however, and over 128 acres of open land remains without physical infrastructure improvements.



Today's environment of Lower Eastwick is complicated by many competing interests and impacts including the nearby residential community that was developed as a result of the urban renewal plan, an adjacent expanding international airport, flood effects from the Cobbs and Darby Creeks, remaining wetlands from the area's once large marsh, and a nearby wildlife refuge. Some members of the community would like to see completion of the urban renewal plan, including the realization of industrial and commercial development, educational and recreational uses, preservation efforts, and relief from flooding and sinking homes. The Airport is interested in expansion and protection of existing operations, and the wildlife refuge would like to improve their connections to the community, which in some cases come into conflict with each other. All of these interests are confounded by a very high water table and flooding.

KEY MAP

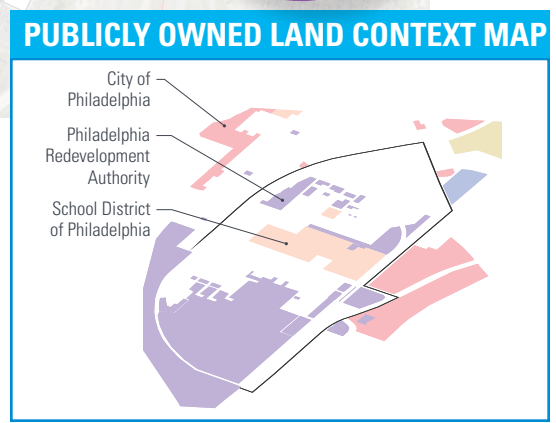


LOWER EASTWICK SITE CONDITIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES



PUBLICLY OWNED LAND IN LOWER EASTWICK

The Lower Eastwick Focus Area includes a great deal of public, undeveloped land, which presents opportunities for development. However, the series of constraints listed on the next page indicates barriers to certain types of development. When considering alternatives for future land use, it will be important to keep in mind the suitability of the site based on these physical and environmental limitations.



LOWER EASTWICK SITE CONSTRAINTS AND CHALLENGES

		CONSTRAINT / CHALLENGE	POTENTIAL FUTURE LAND USES				
EXISTING BUILDINGS		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residential land uses should be buffered from higher intensity uses, such as dense commercial, transportation, and industrial development. Small residential streets are not compatible with truck traffic. Some areas do not have an existing street network. Airport rail line creates a barrier between vacant land and adjacent economic uses. 	●	●	●	●	●
FLOOD PLAIN (100 & 500 YEAR)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Certain uses are prohibited in 100-year floodplain: Hospitals, medical centers, rest/old age, nursing homes, correctional institutions, mobile homes, federally funded housing. New and rehabilitated privately funded housing must be elevated 18" above base flood levels. New commercial and industrial uses must be flood proofed. 	●	●	●	●	●
WETLANDS		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No construction is allowed on wetlands. The City of Philadelphia will be completing a Wetland Assessment Study in the near future to determine additional wetland areas within the focus area. 	●	●	●	●	●
AIRPORT NOISE CONTOURS		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Areas within the Airport noise contours are not compatible with residential homes, schools, healthcare facilities, and hospitals. 	●	●	●	●	●
AIRPORT SURFACE ZONES		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are height controls within the Airport Safety Hazard Area, which become more crucial closer to the Airport. FAA guidelines specify that wildlife habitats and open space amenities be limited due to potential conflicts with air traffic. 	●	●	●	●	●
LOWER EASTWICK CONTEXT MAP							
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● FAVORABLE land use potential ● LIMITED land use potential ● UNFAVORABLE land use potential 					
			RESIDENTIAL USES	COMMERCIAL / HOSPITALITY USES	INDUSTRIAL / TRANSPORTATION USES	PRESERVED OPEN SPACE URBAN AGRICULTURE	ACTIVE RECREATION USES

DESIGN PRINCIPLES FOR LOWER EASTWICK

EDUCATIONAL USES



The Eastwick community has a high interest in expanding educational uses in the area, particularly since the closure of the Pepper Middle School and Communications Technology High School, and the relocation of Motivation High School out of the district. Wherever possible, the addition of educational programming or educational related uses should be added.

FLOOD PROTECTION



Eastwick is predominately within FEMA's Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA), or 100-year floodplain. It is crucial to implement climate change adaptation, stormwater management, and flood protection measures into new development proposals. Public funding for new housing is not available within the SFHA, while new private residential development must be raised at least 18" above the base flood level, and new commercial or industrial structures must be flood proofed. New development proposals must incorporate stormwater management to reduce the impacts of runoff on the neighboring community.

NEIGHBORHOOD-SCALE DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS



In areas of new investment, reestablishing the street grid can promote walkable, neighborhood-scale development patterns. New development should fit into context with surrounding uses, and should be scaled appropriately. Any new uses that are not compatible with neighborhood scale development should be buffered from existing residential and commercial properties.

PHILADELPHIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT COMPATIBLE DEVELOPMENT



All potential development or preservation within the Airport safety hazard area must be compatible with Airport related use. Residential and other noise sensitive uses should be discouraged within the Airport's noise contours, height must be limited within airport safety zones, and wildlife attracting uses should also be discouraged within the Airport Hazard Overlay.

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATIONAL AMENITIES



The former Pepper School site currently holds a number of ball fields in use by the community. Development should try to include the maintenance or replacement of these fields. Preserving areas of natural open space should also be considered when developing in Lower Eastwick.

TRAILS DEVELOPMENT



Lower Eastwick is situated along the future East Coast Greenway, and has the opportunity to connect to this recreational amenity. Users can benefit from the access to natural areas in a healthy way. The trails should be buffered from residences and connect with neighborhood amenities and transit nodes.

TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT



Co-locating commercial uses and access to transit can promote new growth and investment. Penrose Plaza is in a prime location to build upon existing commercial activity, and to leverage the benefits of being located along a major arterial and major transit route. Development should be guided close to these amenities to maximize access to jobs, goods, and services, and maximize the economic, environmental, and public health benefits of transit.

URBAN AGRICULTURE



Urban agriculture is a prominent use in Eastwick, but the Eastwick Community Garden is currently located on Airport owned land and is leased on a yearly basis. Provisions should be made to determine a permanent location for the maintenance or expansion of this garden.

APPLYING DESIGN PRINCIPLES IN LOWER EASTWICK

Penrose Plaza, highlighting new pad sites and upgraded trolley station

EMPLOYMENT IN LOWER EASTWICK

With over 200 acres of underutilized or vacant lands, Lower Eastwick could accommodate several new employment generating land uses. With utilities and infrastructure in place and proximity to I-95, there is potential for more commercial, industrial, or transportation uses; potentially creating a new localized job center. Future planning should incorporate neighborhood-scale development patterns helping connect pedestrians to housing, commercial nodes, and transit options including Eastwick Station and the Route 36 trolley. Transit oriented development (with a new transit hub for both the Airport Line and trolley) could create regional attraction, promoting ease of access to the new development uses.



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Creating a more vibrant and accessible Penrose Plaza starts with upgrading connections and transit amenities as part of SEPTA's trolley modernization process. Additionally, adding pedestrian and greening enhancements to the Penrose's parking lot will make the commercial node safer and more attractive. As a long term goal, providing additional commercial and retail sites in newly designed pad sites will help spur additional economic growth in Lower Eastwick.



LOWER EASTWICK AS AN ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCE

Providing the Lower Southwest community with additional environmental resources is a major planning goal moving forward. Preserving portions of land will allow for new amenities including urban agriculture, community gardens, and passive recreational spaces. Likewise, these areas can help mitigate runoff with stormwater and flood control solutions, while providing new trails and access to surrounding open spaces including the John Heinz Wildlife Refuge.

Rendering of additional urban agriculture potential in Lower Eastwick



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Preserving open space for additional urban agricultural fields can also double as educational resources for the community.