



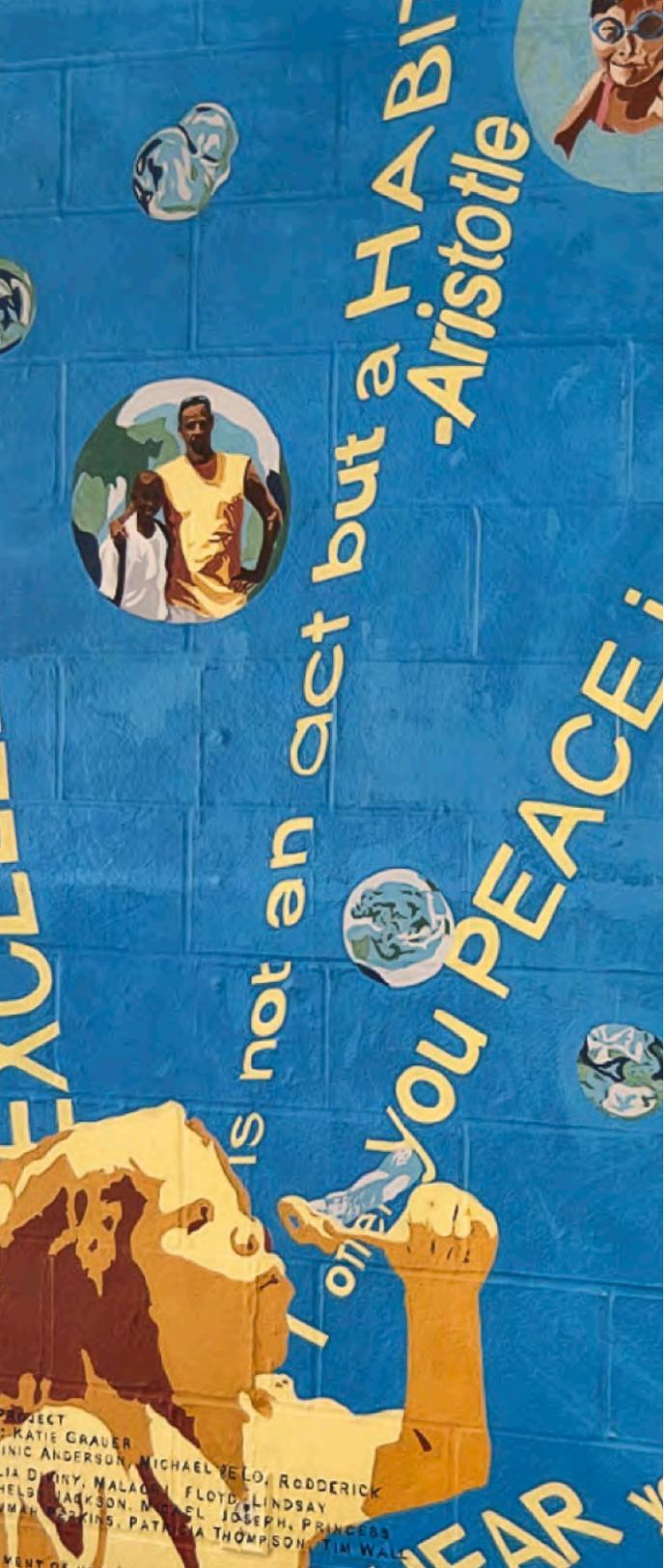
We Are Mantua! **10 YEARS LATER**

Neighborhood Plan

DRAFT FOR COMMENTS
June, 2025

Submitted to:





ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The We Are Mantua! 10 Years Later Neighborhood Plan (WAM!10YL) is a comprehensive 15-month planning initiative spearheaded by the Mt Vernon Manor CDC with funding from the Regional Foundation and planning support from Thriven Design and Community Capacity Builders.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the residents, community members, and partners across public, private, and nonprofit sectors who dedicated their time, commitment, and expertise to shaping this plan.

Mount Vernon Manor CDC

Belinda Mayo, *Board Chair*
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Faith Dyson-Washington, PhD, *Board Member*
Gary Travis (1953-2024), *Board Member*
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Dave Wilkes | Block Captain Network
Yolanda Braxton | HopePHL
George Bantel | West Philadelphia Real Estate (WPRE)
Officer Jesse Woodhouse | City of Philadelphia – Police Department
Andrew Goodman | City of Philadelphia - Councilwoman Jamie Gauthier’s office
City of Philadelphia - Office of Community Empowerment and Opportunity
Brian Wenrich | City of Philadelphia - Planning Commission
Carolyn Brown | CEO

Stakeholder Interviews

Board of Directors | Mt Vernon Manor CDC
Michael Thorpe | Mt Vernon Manor CDC
Brian Wenrich | Philadelphia City Planning Commission
Gwendolyn Morris | Mantua Civic Association
De’Wayne Drummond | Mantua Civic Association
YoungMoo Kim | Drexel University
Andrew Goodman | Councilwoman Jamie Gauthier’s office
Officer Jesse Woodhouse | Philadelphia Police Department
Principal Dollette Johns-Smith | Morton McMichael School
Rev Dr. Frederick Scott, Jr | Transfiguration Church
The Office of Transportation and Infrastructure Systems (OTIS)
Rikeyah Lindsay | Mantua Resident
Shuning Zhao | Mantua resident and neighborhood gardener



Community Partners

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Shari Gilyard
Shari Goode
Sharon McCray
Shuning Zhao

Sir Sutton
Tammy Pullins
Tanya Kennedy
Thyressa Barbee
Tinisha Stuckey
Toni Hayes
Trinity Rose
Vanessa Battle
Vanessa M. Pembleton
Victoria Borges
Victoria H Peurifoy
Virginia Brooker
Walter Brumskill
Wendell Johnson
Yahala Fisher



ACRONYMS

CLT	Community Land Trust
DB4	Da Bottom For... (Mantua Youth Action Committee)
HUD	Department of Housing and Urban Development
LISC	Local Initiatives Support Corporation
MCA	Mantua Civic Association
MCIC	Mantua Community Improvement Committee
MCP	Mantua Community Planners
MUPG	Mantua Urban Peace Garden
MVMCDC	Mt. Vernon Manor Community Development Corporation
NTI	Neighborhood Transformation Initiative
OHCD	Office of Housing and Community Development
OTIS	Office of Transportation and Infrastructure Systems
PCPC	Philadelphia City Planning Commission
PEC	People's Emergency Center
PHA	Philadelphia Housing Authority
PHFA	Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency
PHS	Philadelphia Horticultural Society
PPD	Philadelphia Police Department
PRA	Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority
SCI	Sustainable Communities Initiative
TPL	Trust for Public Land
UCD	University City District
WAM!	We Are Mantua!
WPRE -	West Philadelphia Real Estate



TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 2

PART I

INTRODUCTION 10

CHAPTER 01: PLANNING PROCESS 24

CHAPTER 02: NEIGHBORHOOD OVERVIEW 30

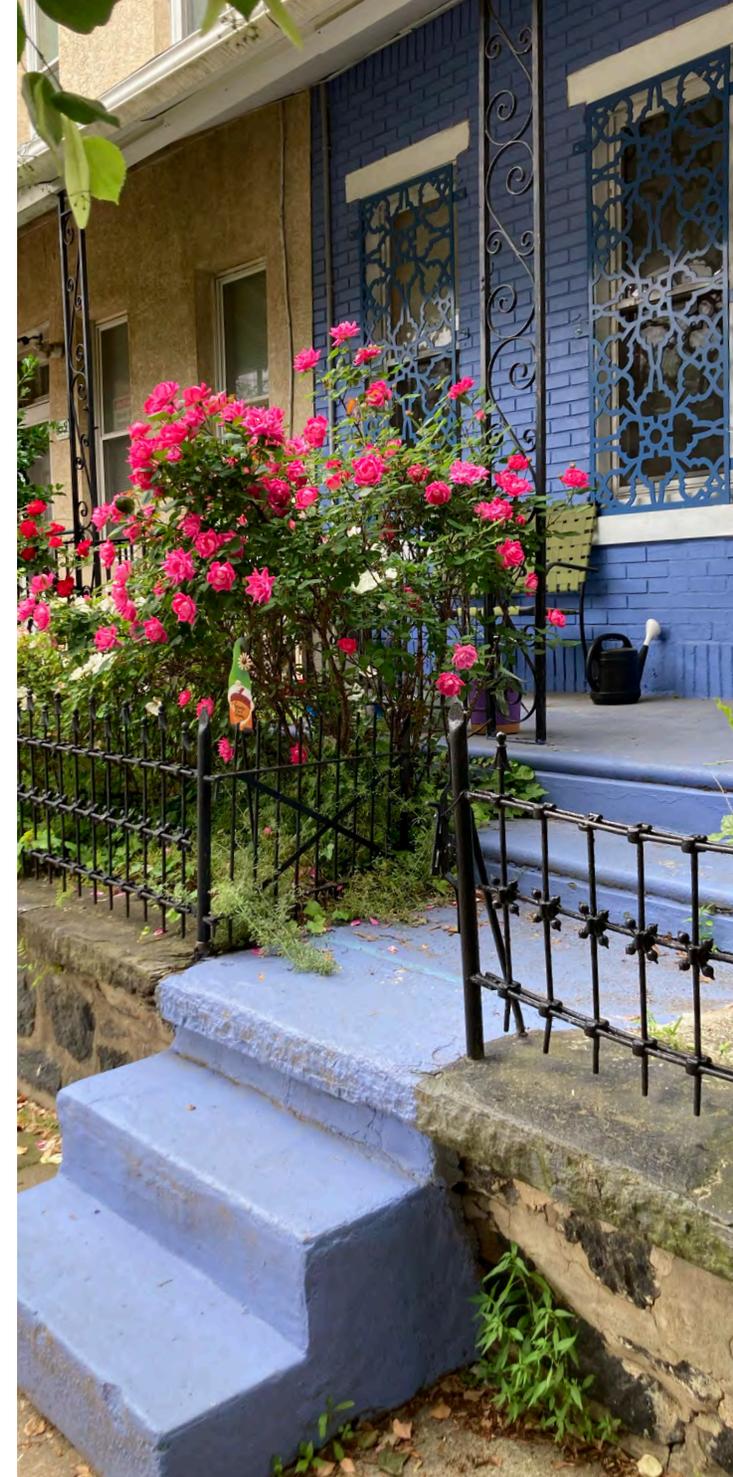
CHAPTER 03: WHAT WE HEARD 54

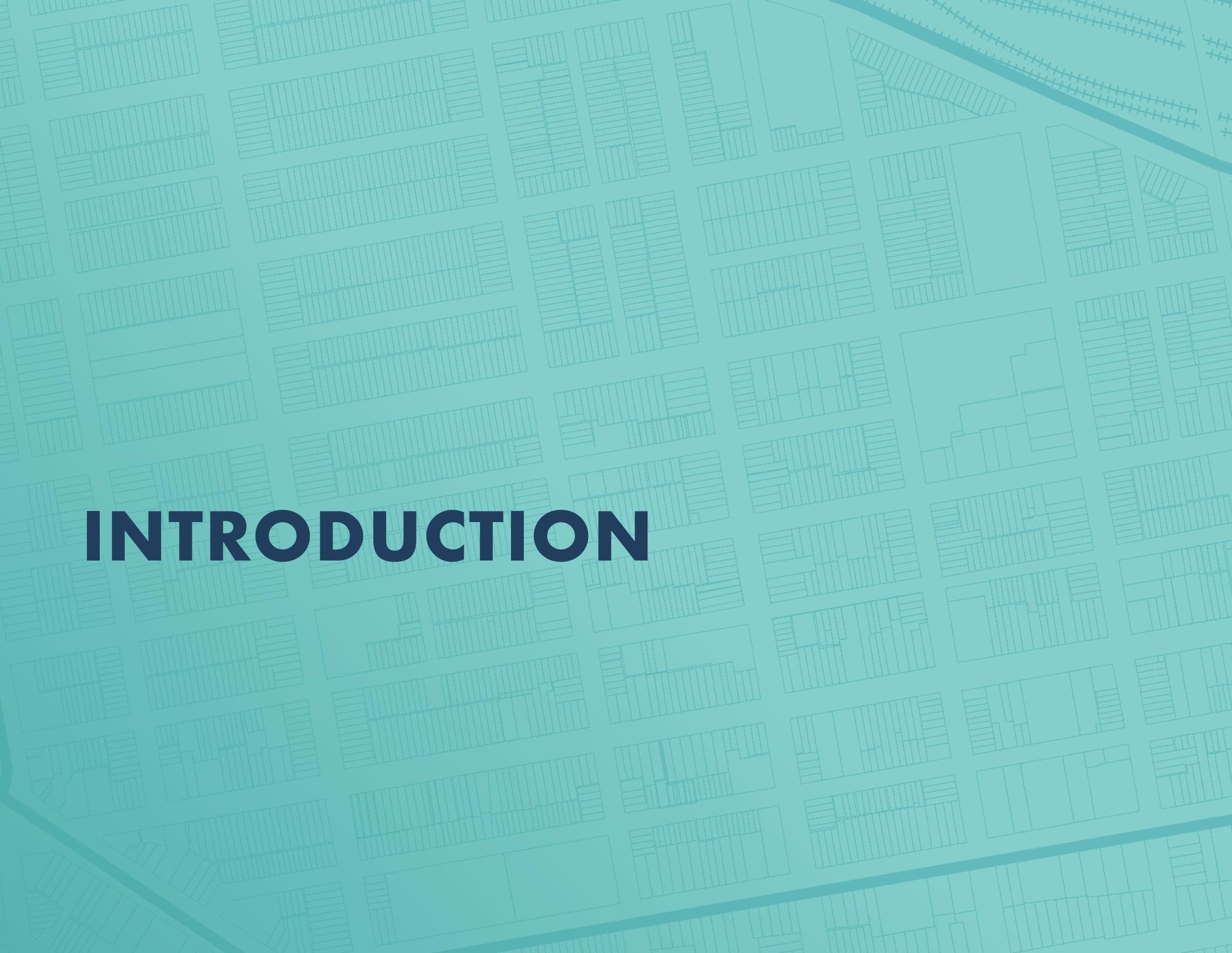
PART II

CHAPTER 04: NEIGHBORHOOD PRIORITIES 58

CHAPTER 05: IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY 128

APPENDIX



The background of the slide is a light teal color with a faint, repeating architectural floor plan. The plan shows a grid of rectangular rooms and corridors, with some rooms containing smaller rectangular shapes representing furniture or fixtures. The lines are thin and light, creating a subtle pattern across the entire page.

INTRODUCTION

Once again, the Mantua community comes together to plan for the future of their neighborhood, living up to a historic motto: "Plan or be planned for".

The We Are Mantua! Neighborhood Plan – Ten Years Later is the result of a community driven planning process facilitated by the Mt Vernon Manor CDC with financial support from The Regional Foundation.

Recognizing that much of the work outlined in the previous neighborhood plan – We Are Mantua! Transformation Plan (WAM! Plan) - had been accomplished, the Mt Vernon Manor CDC secured a planning grant in the Winter of 2023 to re-assess neighborhood needs and outline priorities for action and investment for the next ten years. The 15-month planning process kicked-off in January of 2024, involving the participation of over 300 residents and community stakeholders who contributed their time and commitment to the development of an updated plan, reflecting current priorities and outlining a roadmap for future investments and community work for the next ten years.

Mantua has experienced significant changes since the completion of the 2013 WAM! Plan. For the first time in decades, the neighborhood has gained residents, reversing a historic trend of population loss. An influx of public and private investments helped revitalize residential blocks with new and rehabilitated homes, expanded affordable housing opportunities, upgraded parks, and the redevelopment of vacant land. Non-profit and institutional partners joined efforts, introducing new services and programs in support of local families, and effective community safety initiatives helped make neighborhood streets safer and cleaner.

The emergence of a strong and organized civic leadership is at the heart of these changes, mobilizing residents around neighborhood issues and building partnerships to advance the community's vision. In the past ten years, Mantua shifted away from distress to opportunity, becoming, in the process, an example of effective community development in the City.

Despite these many successes, there is still work to be done to fulfill the community's vision for a safe, inclusive, united and affordable neighborhood. To achieve that vision, residents have identified five top priorities to be tackled in the next ten years: improved public safety, a more equitable access to housing, expanded opportunities for youth development, improvements to the physical environment and an expanded capacity for civic engagement.

Building on the many accomplishments of the past decade, this neighborhood plan describes the goals and strategies addressing neighborhood priorities, along with projects and initiatives to be implemented incrementally and through the collaborative work of residents, local community leadership, City agencies, elected officials and community partners.

NEIGHBORHOOD VISION AND ASPIRATIONS

The vision guiding the original 2013 Neighborhood Plan continues to hold true for Mantua residents today. Complemented by the following community aspirations, it informs the goals and strategies outlined on this plan and provides a helpful set of parameters against which progress can be evaluated.

“Mantua looks to the future as a community with a strong sense of identity, an engaging civic life and a safe and healthy environment that allows individuals and families to thrive as active members of society. Mantua is a place where long-term residents choose and are able to stay, a place that supports families raising children and provides opportunity to its youth. It is organized from within but connected to the City beyond.

Mantua is proud of its history and builds on its strengths to improve and expand opportunities for self-sufficiency among its residents. Strong learning institutions, access to employment, a healthy lifestyle and improved connections to resources will be the building blocks of a positive future for current and future members of the community. This vision will be achieved through collaborative work involving residents, local organizations, institutions and partners in the private and public sector”.

"TEN YEARS FROM NOW, MANTUA WILL BE..."



PROUD

Mantua remains strong and proud of its history. Community pride is part of everyday life and is celebrated on the stoops of Mantua homes, neighborhood streets and community spaces.



INCLUSIVE

Mantua residents are active participants and benefit from changes and improvements that occur in the neighborhood.



SUSTAINABLE

Mantua residents are conscious about the impact of their actions in the environment and promote solutions to minimize that impact in their homes, neighborhood infrastructure and public spaces.



ENGAGED

Mantua is a model for civic engagement in Philadelphia. Residents have a seat at the table and are engaged in the day-to-day of neighborhood development.



UNITED

Mantua is a cohesive community working together towards shared goals. The historical barriers to collaboration have been erased and community groups unite to advocate for positive change.



CONNECTED

Mantua is a place where neighbors know and engage with each other. Residents are connected to the wealth of resources available in the neighborhood and the city.



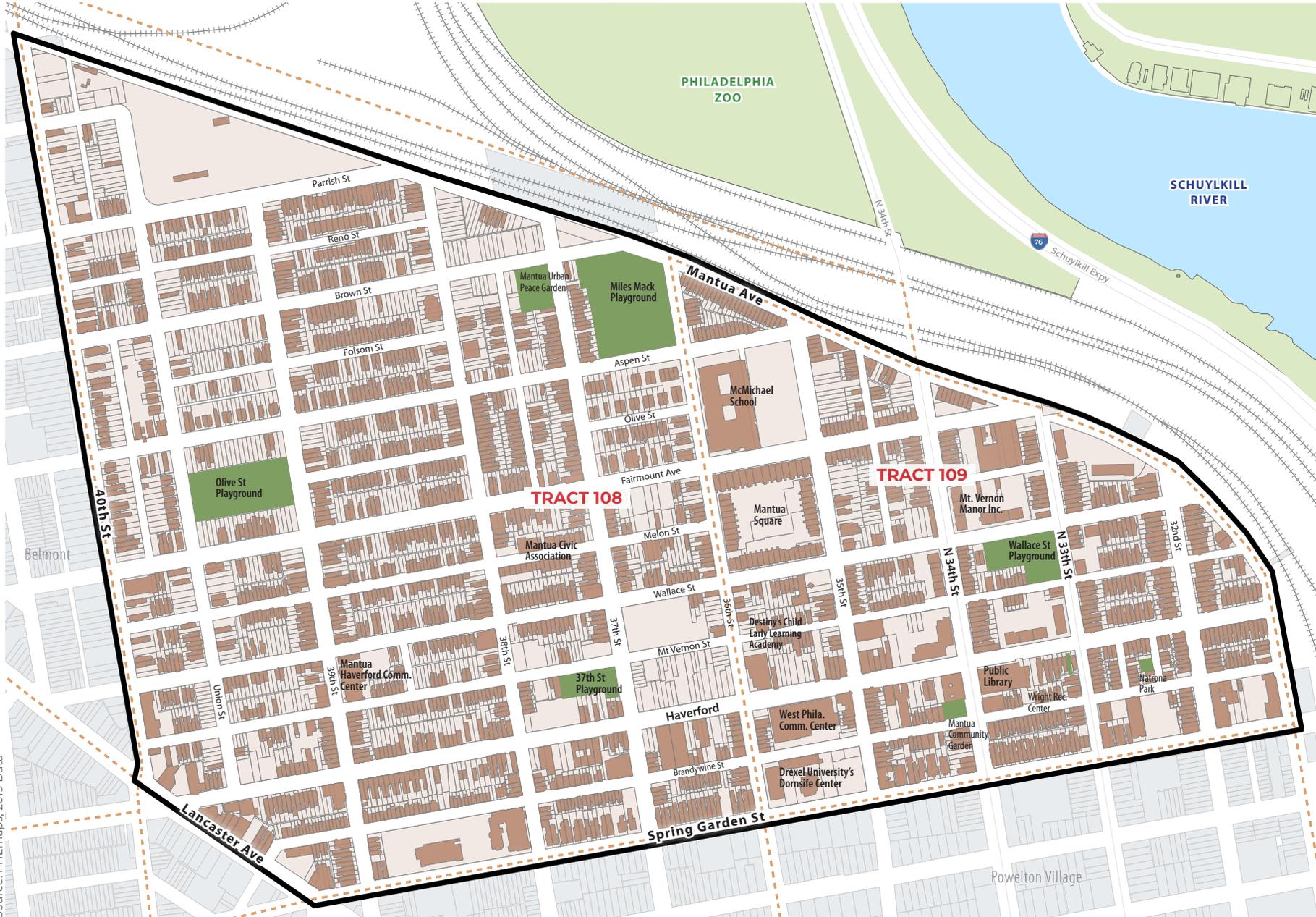
AFFORDABLE

Mantua remains affordable to renters and homeowners. Long-term residents are secure in their ability to stay in the community and housing opportunities exist for families of all ages and income levels.

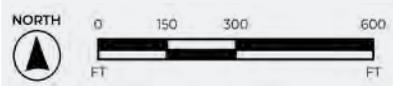


SAFE

Mantua remains safe for residents across age, gender, race and income groups. Residents feel safe accessing community amenities and traveling through the neighborhood day and night.



Source: PHLLmaps, 2019 Data



- LEGEND:**
- NEIGHBORHOOD BOUNDARY
 - CENSUS TRACT
 - RAILROAD
 - PARCEL
 - BUILDING FOOTPRINT
 - OPEN SPACE/PARK

NEIGHBORHOOD BOUNDARIES

NEIGHBORHOOD BOUNDARIES

Mantua is located in West Philadelphia, with boundaries defined by Spring Garden Street to the south, 40th Street to the west, Mantua Avenue to the north and 31st Street to the east. Covering a total of 0.3 square miles and 80 neighborhood blocks, location is one of Mantua's primary assets as it sits right across the river from Center City and within walking distance from University City, 30th Street Station, the Philadelphia Zoo, and the Philadelphia Art Museum. The neighborhood is adjacent to Powelton Village to the south and Belmont to the west.



WHY DO WE NEED AN UPDATED PLAN?

The 2013 We Are Mantua! Transformation Plan had a tremendous impact for the community as it guided several of the public and private investments made in the past decade. But a lot has happened in Mantua and in Philadelphia since its completion. It is time to take stock of what was achieved, discuss current needs and chart a path for the next ten years.

An updated plan will:

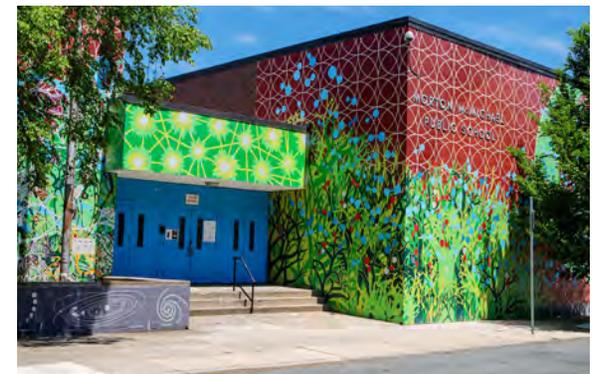
- Unify and empower Mantua residents and local community organizations to have an active role in neighborhood decisions and community building.
- Inform future public and private investments.
- Help attract funding in support of project implementation.
- Promote opportunities for collaboration and partnerships.
- Promote coordination and the effective use of resources.



Mantua Greenway community event
Source: Mt. Vernon Manor CDC Community Impact Report 2012-2016



WPRE V - Affordable housing, completed in 2017



THE 2013 WE ARE MANTUA! TRANSFORMATION PLAN

We Are Mantua!
CHOICE NEIGHBORHOODS INITIATIVE

Transformation Plan

NEIGHBORHOOD PRIORITIES

This planning effort is funded by a Choice Neighborhoods Initiative Planning Grant FY2011 awarded to Mt Vernon Manor, Inc. and the Mantua community by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

For more information, visit www.WeAreMantua.com

PRIORITY	KEY STRATEGIES	KEY PARTNERS	PRIORITY	KEY STRATEGIES	KEY PARTNERS
1 IMPROVE CAPACITY FOR CIVIC ENGAGEMENT	a. Establish Mantua Civic Association	WAM Residents LISC Drexel MCA MCC West Philadelphia Community Center Dorland Center PMA Mt Vernon Manor	4 MAKE MANTUA A SAFER PLACE	a. Address hot-spots for Drug Activity	Mantua Residents US Attorney's Office 16 th District Police Dept Mt Vernon Manor LISC / MCC Drexel Streets Department Parks & Recreation Mantua in Action
	b. Establish Community Home and School Association			b. Build Capacity at Block Level	
	c. Cultivate Tomorrow's Leadership			c. Reinforce and expand Drug Free Zone	
	d. Establish Mantua Improvement Coalition (Civic Core)			d. Expand Access to Affordable and Diverse Food Options	
2 ENSURE QUALITY EDUCATION	a. Expand Mt Vernon Manor Board's Capacity	MCHA Drexel School District McMichael WAM Drexel Philadelphia Community College	5 PROMOTE A HEALTHIER LIFESTYLE	a. Improve Access to Basic Healthcare Services	Mantua Residents MCC Presbyterian Hospital CHOP Karabets Center City Health Dept PEC PMA Public Health Mgmt LISC
	b. Support Pre-K and Early Library			b. Improve Access to Affordable and Diverse Exercising Activities	
	c. Improve Learning at Local High-Schools			c. Create a Strong Civic Core (34 th to 38 th Street)	
	d. Establish a Path to College Opportunity			d. East End: Strengthen Residential Blocks (31 st to 34 th Street)	
3 PROMOTE ECONOMIC SELF-SUFFICIENCY	a. Support Job-readiness	LISC PMA PEC Philadelphia Works Entrepreneurworks Enterprise Center Tompano's Promise Dorland Center Mt Vernon Manor	6 REVITALIZE THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	b. West End: Rebuild Residential Fabric (38 th to 41 st Street)	WAM LISC MCC Drexel PMA PMA City of Philadelphia Private Developers
	b. Connect Residents to Job Opportunities			c. West End: Rebuild Residential Fabric (38 th to 41 st Street)	
	c. Develop Skills in Construction Trades			d. Haverford Avenue Revitalization Initiative	
	d. Support Entrepreneurship			e. Establish a Strategy for Parent Engagement	
7 EXPAND HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES	a. Support Job-readiness	LISC PEC PMA Philadelphia Works Entrepreneurworks Enterprise Center Tompano's Promise Dorland Center Mt Vernon Manor	7 EXPAND HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES	a. Preserve existing homeownership	LISC PEC GHCD PMA PMA Mt Vernon Manor Private Developers
	b. Connect Residents to Job Opportunities			b. Expand affordable homeownership	
	c. Develop Skills in Construction Trades			c. Expand Affordable Rental Opportunities	
	d. Support Entrepreneurship			d. Expand Mixed Income Housing Opportunities	

Vision Plan

40th St Corridor Revitalization

- Enhance residential character
- Gateway project at the bridge
- Streetscape improvements

39th & Olive St Revitalization

- Expand and improve Olive St playground
- Infill affordable homeownership around the park

Mt Vernon St Infill

- Includes rehab and new construction
- Includes publicly owned vacant land
- Up to 20 units

Folsom St Infill

- Includes publicly owned vacant land
- Up to 30 units

38th St Infill

- Includes publicly owned vacant land
- Up to 15 units

Mantua Ave Revitalization

- Improve and Expand Mantua greenway
- 37th St outdoor tennis court
- 34th St Gateway transit-oriented development
- Mt Vernon Manor Phase II

Haverford Ave Revitalization

- Streetscape initiative
- Encourage higher density mixed use along Haverford Ave
- Infill along Mt Vernon St
- 47th and Mt Vernon playground
- Streetscape improvements

Haverford Ave Corridor (24th to 34th St)

- Streetscape improvements
- Facade improvements

West End (Western Residential Fabric)

Mantua Civic Core (A Place for Community Life)

East End (Strengthen Residential Blocks)

Legend:

- Improved Gateway Corridor
- Residential Use
- Mixed Use
- WAM Manor Apts
- Anticipated Residential (WPRE)
- Commercial Use
- Community Facility

At the end of the WAM! Transformation Plan, residents received a poster celebrating the completion of the planning process and summarizing vision and recommendations included in the plan.

COMMUNITY ACHIEVEMENTS SINCE 2013

The 2013 WAM! Transformation Plan unleashed a new chapter for Mantua. As one of the first recipients of a Choice Neighborhoods planning grant, Mantua leveraged that funding opportunity to address the redevelopment of Mt Vernon Manor Apartments and promote broader neighborhood improvements. Residents and community leaders came together to develop an action-driven

neighborhood plan grounded on collaboration and partnerships. What ensued was a decade-long series of neighborhood accomplishments advanced by community work and coordinated investments leading to improvements in all seven neighborhood priorities. Ten years later, we take stock of those improvements and highlight key achievements for each of these priorities.

CAPACITY FOR CIVIC ENGAGEMENT



As an organized community, Mantua found its voice and the ability to advocate for itself: The Mantua Civic Association was established, formalizing community voice and representation; Mt Vernon Manor Inc expanded its mission as a community development corporation advancing quality of life in the neighborhood; and the Mantua Neighborhood Advisory Committee came to fill the important role of connecting residents to services and resources.

EDUCATION



Morton McMichael School gets new playground thanks to a decade-long effort



Students at the Morton McMichael School, a K-8 public school located on Fairmount Avenue in the Mantua neighborhood, will have a brand new playground when the 2022-2023 school year begins next week, as the result of a joint effort by the School, Drexel University, and the Mantua Civic Association.

Mantua families protected Morton McMichael School from closure and advocated for improvements to the learning environment. Federal funding from the Promise Neighborhood Implementation Grant (2016) helped advance those improvements and restore this elementary school as a critical asset in the community.

ECONOMIC SELF-SUFFICIENCY



The Dornsife Center was established in 2013, providing services and resources in support of residents looking to complete their education, prepare for job opportunities or start their own businesses.



West Philadelphia Promise Zone
Mayor's Office of Community Development and Department (OCDD)

Population Size: 16,700

Local Organization: Mayor's Office of Community Development and Department (OCDD)

About West Philadelphia
Although home to a vibrant culture, strong academic institutions, good transportation systems and other economic drivers, the Philadelphia Promise Zone has struggled with a 12% poverty rate, high housing vacancy rates, uneven crime, and low educational levels that stand in the way of economic recovery. The area received a CHOCCE planning grant in 2011 and a Bonded Capital Grant Implementation Grant in 2012. The West Philadelphia Promise Zone is roughly two square miles – bounded by the Schuylkill River to the east, Conard Avenue to the north, 48th Street to the west, and Station Street to the south.

Promise Zone Leadership

Number of Organizations	Number of Community Organizations
10	10

Organization	Public Interest	Business	Community Development	Health and Welfare
West Philadelphia Promise Zone				



The Promise Zone designation (2014) provided tax incentives for new investments in the neighborhood and preference for competitive federal grant programs for a 10-year period. It also leveraged private investments to create job opportunities for residents.

COMMUNITY SAFETY



Federal funds awarded through the Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation Program allowed the community to come together and develop a comprehensive public safety plan through place-based strategies and partnerships. A focus on relationship building has helped establish trust and collaboration between the community and police.



In 2020, the City of Philadelphia started work with the community to implement traffic safety improvements



The Mantua block-by-block program was established in 2013, bringing block leaders together to address public safety concerns.



Cleaning and beautification projects helped keep the neighborhood safe and clean.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS



The Mantua Urban Peace Garden was established in 2013, providing residents with space and resources to grow their own fruit and vegetables.



Located on Haverford Avenue, the future Haverford Square will include a neighborhood grocery store and a medical center.

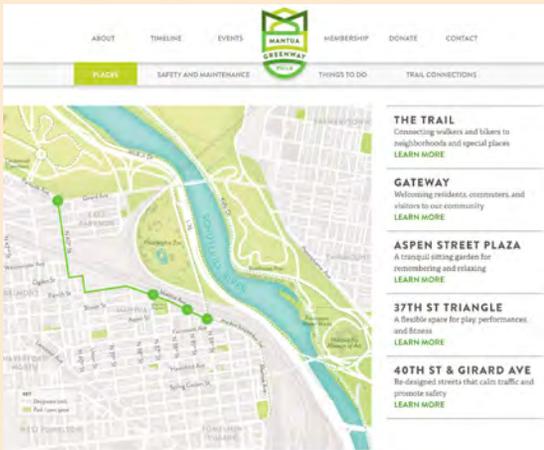


Community partnerships have created opportunities for wellness programs in the neighborhood.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT



Beautification projects and various upgrades to existing neighborhood playgrounds were completed



The first phase of Implementation of the Mantua Greenway was completed.



Bike lanes and bike stations increased mobility options for residents



Mixed-use development on Haverford Ave is underway

HOUSING



New affordable homeownership opportunities are underway through initiatives by Mt Vernon Manor CDC and the City

Homeowners received assistance with essential home repairs and programs through partnerships with the City and Rebuild Together.



New mixed income housing options built throughout the neighborhood



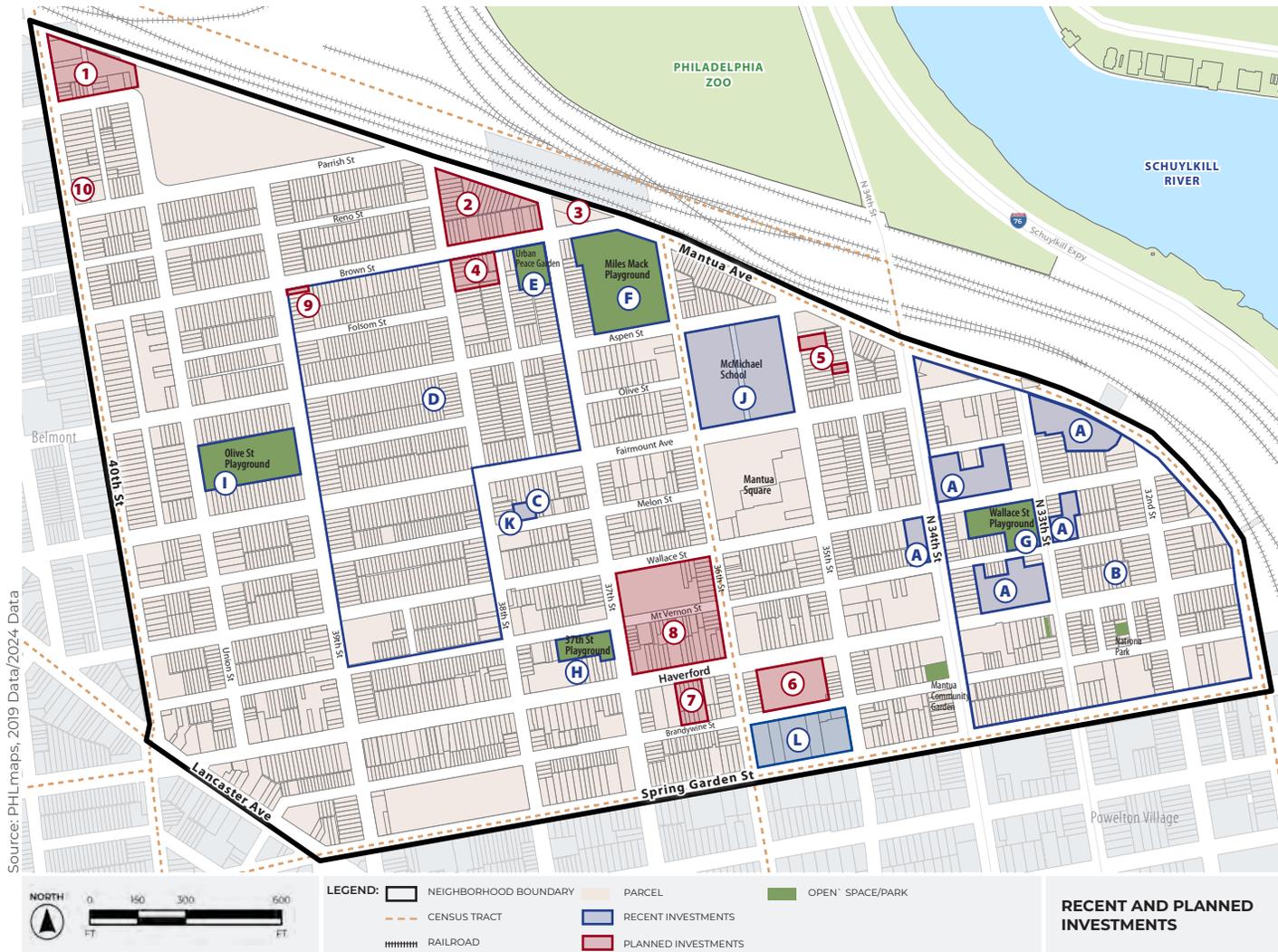
Over 150 existing units were preserved and upgraded as affordable homes



Through a community-driven process, the City updated the neighborhood's zoning map, prioritizing single family residential uses.

RECENT AND PLANNED INVESTMENTS

The following map highlights projects and initiatives completed in the past ten years, including public and private investments in housing, playgrounds and community spaces. Also included are projects currently underway with completion anticipated in the next three to five years.



Mt. Vernon Manor Apartments
Affordable Housing • 125 units • 2011



Mantua Preservation Project
Affordable Housing • 29 units • 2019



WPRE V
Mixed Use • Affordable Housing • 20 units • 2017



WPRE VI Affordable Housing
New construction and retrofit • 20XX



E
Mantua Urban Peace Garden
Community Garden · 2013



F
Miles Mack Playground
Playground Renovation · 2021



G
Wallace Playground
Playground Renovation · 20XX



H
37th St Playground
Playground Renovation · 2016



I
Olive St Playground
Playground Renovation · 20XX



J
Morton McMichael School
Facilities Renovation · 2014



K
Mantua Civic Association
Mixed Use · Community Facility · 2017



L
Dornsife Center
Facilities Renovation · 2014



1
3935-45-47 Ogden Street
Mixed Use · Housing/Commercial · 140 units · proposed



2
Triangle Village Senior Housing
Affordable Housing · 40 units · 2025 expected



3
Mantua Greenway
Physical Improvement · ongoing



4
WCRP Womens Housing
Affordable Housing · 40 units · 2025 expected



5
Shedwick St Homeownership
Affordable Housing · 4 units · 2025 expected



6
Drexel/Boys And Girls Club
Community Center · proposed



7
Residences At 3604
Renovated units · 12 units · 2024



8
Village Square On Haverford
Mixed Use · Housing/Commercial · 162 units · ongoing



9
MVMCDC Office and Rental Apartments
Mixed Use · Apartments/Offices · 2025 expected



10
North 40th St Housing Project
Affordable Housing · 40 units · 2025 expected

The background features a detailed architectural site plan or city grid, rendered in a light teal color. The grid consists of numerous rectangular blocks of varying sizes, with internal lines suggesting building footprints and street layouts. A prominent diagonal road or boundary line runs from the top right towards the bottom left. The overall aesthetic is clean and technical, typical of urban planning documents.

01

PLANNING PROCESS

The WAM!10YL Neighborhood Plan is the outcome of a 15-month planning effort coordinated by the Mt Vernon Manor CDC with active participation from Mantua residents, community leadership, City and institutional partners.

To ensure a welcoming environment and maximize opportunities for community involvement, the planning process was guided by the following groups:

The WAM! Working Team, charged with establishing the framework for the planning process and day-to-day coordination activities, including community outreach and communication. MVMCDC led the effort with input and guidance from the Mantua Civic Association and professional planning support from Thriven Design and Community Capacity Builders. Success Measures also landed their expertise in designing and analyzing community surveys.

The WAM! Steering Committee, a dedicated group of individuals representing community partners, city agencies, and organizations, offered their expertise, guidance, feedback at specific planning milestones, helping ensure coordination and alignment with future investments and initiatives. Comprised of x members, the WAM! Steering Committee met four times as a team with individual members also assisting with information and guidance throughout the process.



PLANNING TIMELINE

	WINTER 2024			SPRING 2024			SUMMER 2024			FALL 2024			WINTER 2025			SPRING 2025		
	Jan'24	Feb'24	Mar'24	Apr'24	May'24	Jun'24	Jul'24	Aug'24	Sep'24	Oct'24	Nov'24	Dec'24	Jan'25	Feb'25	Mar'25	Apr'25	May'25	Jun'25
TASK I Organizational Structure	Project schedule Outreach plan St committee																	
TASK II Baseline Neighborhood Assessment		Mapping Data collection Early themes																
TASK III Property Conditions Assessment			Survey design Field work Survey results															
TASK IV Assets and Needs Assessment			Community engagement Asset mapping Community Survey															
TASK V Plan Development						Thematic discussions Key findings Vision, Goals and Strategies Plan Development OUTLINE Submission												
TASK VI Plan Documentation											Documentation DRAFT Submission					30-day Review Period FINAL Plan Submission		
TASK VII a Community Engagement St. Committee																		
TASK VII b Community Engagement Community			Community Session	Open House (Apr) Surveys (Apr/May) Neighborhood walk (May) Visioning session (June)			Thematic discussions (Jul/Aug)											Com Review Final Pres.
TASK VIII Team Communication Coordination																		

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The WAM!10YL Neighborhood Plan was centered around a robust approach to community input. Mirroring the community-driven approach of the 2013 WAM! Plan, this new endeavor looked to actively engage residents in every step of the planning process, inviting them to review and reflect about the successes and challenges of the past ten years and build on that dialogue to shape a shared vision for the future. Throughout the planning period, numerous community events were held, successfully drawing participation from residents who contributed valuable insights, ideas and concerns.

ENGAGEMENT IN NUMBERS

<p>241 responses to the Community Survey</p>	<p>21 Community stakeholders and partners were represented in the WAM!10YL Steering Committee</p>
<p>150+ Community members participated in community wide events</p>	<p>30 residents actively participated in Thematic Sessions held virtually</p>
<p>20 young residents participated in focused youth planning session</p>	<p>10 interviews were conducted with community stakeholders</p>

PUBLIC OUTREACH

A key priority when it came to planning for community events and communication was to ensure participation across age and income groups while also reaching out to neighbors from all corners of Mantua. To maximize outreach, the planning team held a variety of events, including community gatherings, a neighborhood walk, community surveys and online thematic conversations. Information about events and updates was disseminated through multiple channels including flyers, banners, social media, newsletters and email messages.

We Are Mantua! 10 Years Later

WELCOME!

Mt. Vernon Manor CDC is kicking off the planning effort to update our WAM! Neighborhood Plan and we need your help! The new plan will build on the achievements of the last ten years to create a new roadmap for the NEXT ten years. This is the time to reflect on the work completed so far, identify what still needs to be done and address new challenges and opportunities to continue to improve quality-of-life for our residents. Please join us in this effort!

JOIN US FOR UPCOMING EVENTS!

- JUN 01 NEIGHBORHOOD WALK**
Sporontani is a great time to get outside and discuss a vision for the neighborhood while meeting neighbors and sharing ideas. Join us for coffee and donuts. Children and pet friends are welcomed!
MVM CDC OFFICE - 11 AM
631 N 39th St, Philadelphia, PA 19104
- JUL 23 VISIONING SESSION**
Join us to hear the results of the community survey and share ideas for the future of the neighborhood. Dinner and drinks will be available.
EMAIL: info@mvmcdc.org FOR LOCATION
- JUL AUG THEMATIC DISCUSSIONS**
Join us for a series of discussions around different aspects of neighborhood life. Each weekly session will be dedicated to a specific theme.
JUL 30, AUG 06, 20, & 27 | 6 PM
Remote | Zoom Meeting
Meeting ID: 814 1895 0406 Passcode: 056767
or email: info@mvmcdc.org for the meeting link.

Join a We Are Mantua Thematic Discussion!

- 7/30 Tuesday PUBLIC SAFETY**
- 8/6 Tuesday HOUSING**
- 8/20 Tuesday YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**
- 8/27 Tuesday PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**

All discussions use the same time and Zoom:

6PM-8PM

Zoom
Phone: 646-558-7788
ID: 814 1895 0406
Passcode: 056767
<https://mvmcdc.org>

Connect with us: [Mt. Vernon Manor CDC](#) | [@mvmcdc](#) | info@mvmcdc.org | Visit our website: <https://mvmcdc.org/programs/we-are-mantua-ten-years-later/>

Flyers and handouts of upcoming events were made available at multiple locations in the neighborhood and distributed at community events to maximize outreach.

Community Open House



The event at the Mantua Civic Association kicked off the planning effort with 80 residents, introducing the process, schedule, and engagement opportunities. It also launched the community survey and encouraged reflections on neighborhood challenges and achievements since the 2013 We Are Mantua! Transformation Plan.

Community Survey



With support from Success Measures, the planning team conducted a comprehensive neighborhood survey in the Summer 2024, collecting 241 responses online and through door-to-door efforts. Key findings were shared at the Visioning Session and guided thematic discussions later that summer.

Neighborhood Walk



The walk was held on a sunny Saturday morning bringing residents and community members together for a tour of Mantua. The walk aimed to help the planning team learn about residents' everyday experiences in the neighborhood, identify areas of concern and opportunities for improvement.

Visioning Session



The session was targeted to discuss the results of the community survey and shape the vision statement and primary goals for the future neighborhood plan. Community members including residents and community stakeholders, discussed a vision and aspirations for the future.

Thematic Sessions



Four online thematic conversations were held between July and August of 2024. These small group gatherings provided an opportunity for in-depth discussions around four themes identified by residents as top priorities for the next ten years.

Youth Focus Group



A focused planning session was held in the Fall of 2024 at Dimplez 4 Dayz bringing teens together to discuss their thoughts and vision for the future of their neighborhood.

The background of the slide is a light teal color with a faint, white architectural floor plan of a neighborhood. The plan shows a grid of streets and various building footprints, some with internal room divisions. The overall style is clean and modern.

02

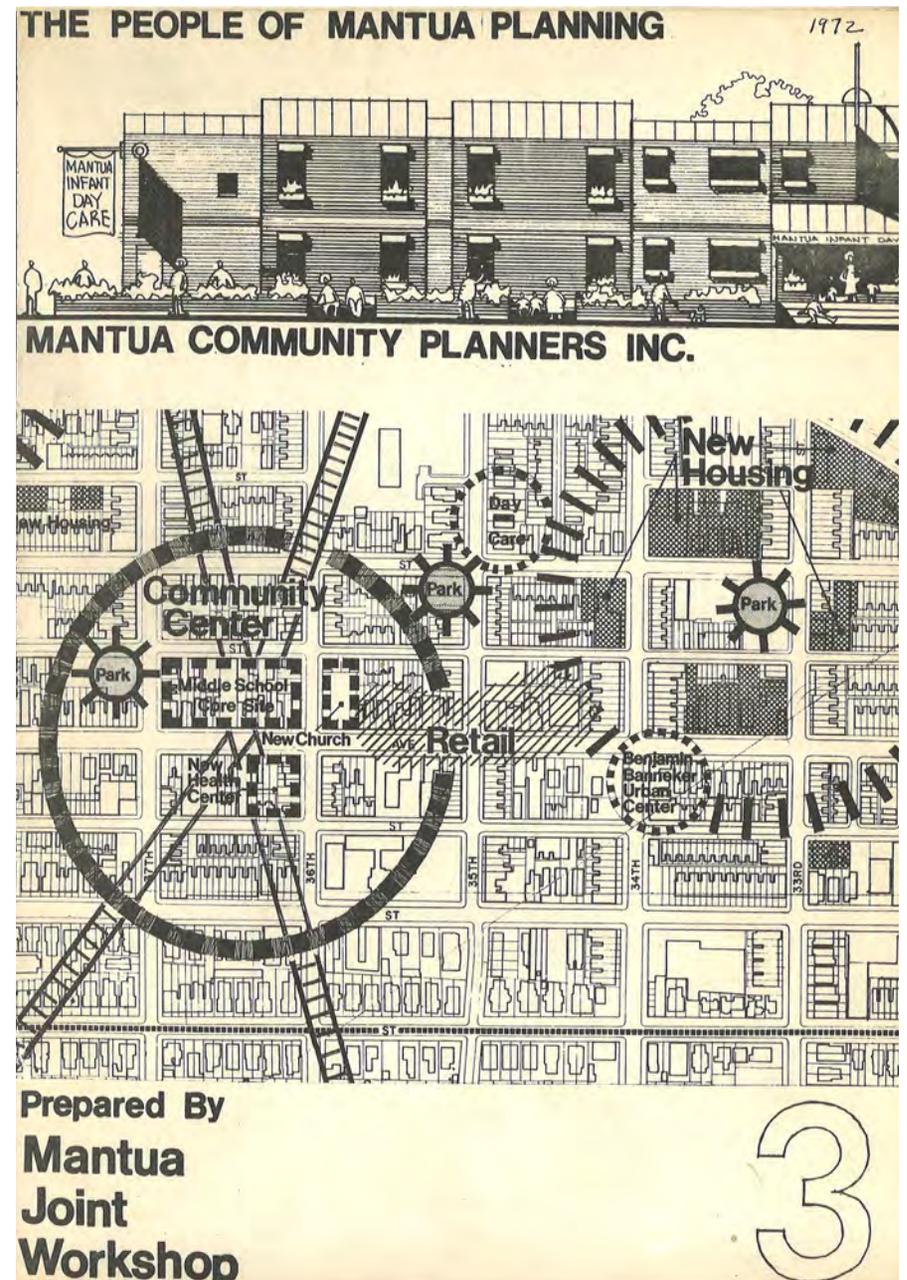
NEIGHBORHOOD OVERVIEW

NEIGHBORHOOD HISTORY

Mantua was developed initially as a suburban neighborhood in West Philadelphia, following the construction of the Spring Garden Bridge (1918), an important connection to Center City. In the 1920s, the neighborhood's population, comprised predominantly of Irish middle and working-class families and a growing number of black americans migrating from the South.

The years after World War II brought significant changes to the neighborhood, as affluent homeowners moved out to the suburbs, leaving behind vacant homes and economic decline. By the 1960s, Mantua was already showing signs of a community in distress. The 1964 District Plan for West Philadelphia showed Mantua's socioeconomic indicators trailing behind much of West Philadelphia and the City as a whole. That same plan identified Mantua as a target area for demolition and replacement of up to 40% of existing structures, a first step towards the neighborhood's designation as an Urban Renewal Area by the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority. Mantua Hall, built in 1961, was a component of the renewal effort, replacing several of the abandoned properties with a 18-story public housing high-rise.

In the late 1960s, social problems and gang activity took hold in the community. Under the leadership of Andrew Jenkins and Herman Wrice, local residents mobilized to support at-risk youth and combat gang and drug activity which significantly impacted the community safety and well-being.



Mantua Community Plan prepared by the Mantua Community Planners, Inc

Believing that Mantua residents should have a voice in driving the burgeoning urban renewal efforts, Jenkins and Wrice founded the Mantua Community Planners and launched a concentrated effort of community planning which set the direction for Mantua's future and built a community of leaders.

The 1968 Mantua Area Plan for the West Philadelphia Redevelopment Area acknowledged Mantua's community leadership and the need to ensure that planning for Mantua be driven by voices from within the community. That same plan proposed the physical expansion of the Morton McMichael School and the development of many of the neighborhood's current playgrounds and public spaces.

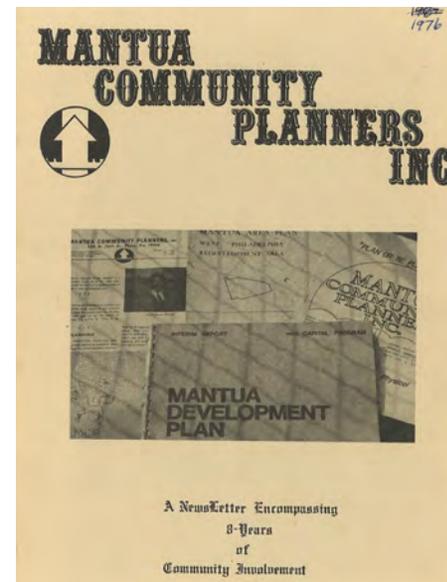
In the early 1970s, under the auspices of the Neighborhood Development Program, an initiative by the U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Young Great Society and the Mantua Community Planners formed the Mantua Joint Workshop. The Workshop worked to tackle local problems with a multi-faceted approach, addressing housing, economic development, physical development, health, education and social issues. The resulting "Plan for Mantua" guided public investments in the neighborhood for several years and shaped what would later become some of Mantua's major assets including community centers, playgrounds and recreation spaces. To ensure public participation, accountability and adaptability, the Mantua Joint Workshop issued a series of interim reports detailing the progress and anticipated outcomes of the plan.



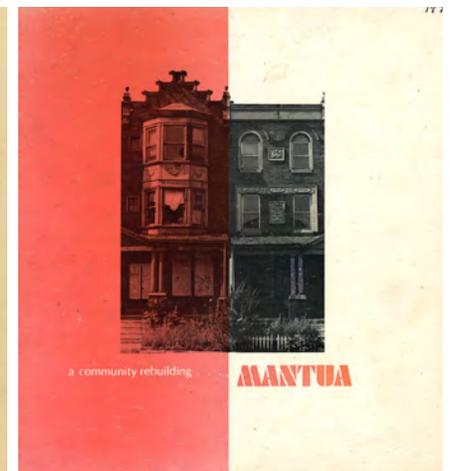
Herman Wrice (pictured sitting) along with Andrew Jenkins (not pictured) founded the Young Great Society and Mantua Community Planners.

Source: Archives from Philadelphia library

The community driven planning process guiding the 1968 Plan for Mantua served as a national model for community grassroots planning and built a legacy of community leadership that continues in Mantua to this day.



Mantua Community Planners Inc. newsletter, published 1976



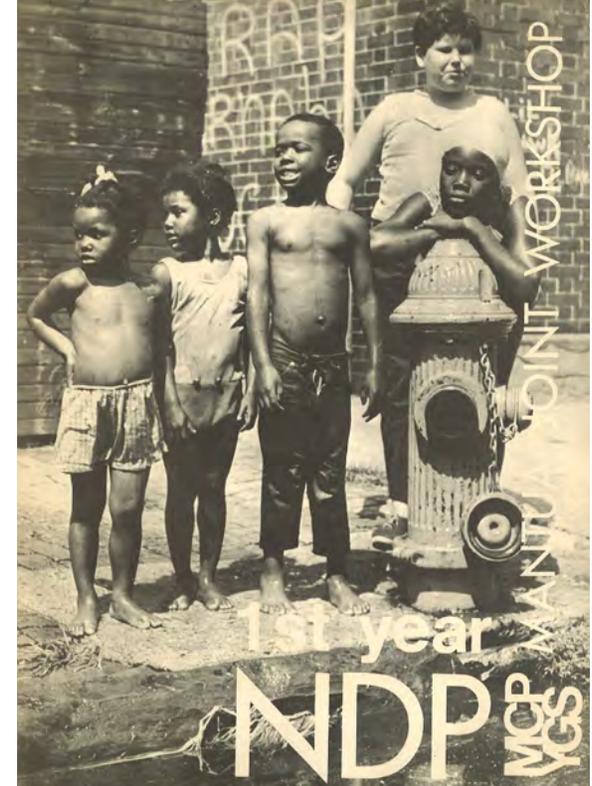
Mantua Community Planners Inc. newsletter, published 1971

The development plan for Mt Vernon Manor Apartments was originally conceived as one of the goals of the Plan for Mantua. Formed by local leaders in 1977, the Mount Vernon Manor Inc, maintained as its primary mission providing safe, high-quality, affordable housing to the people of Mantua. Mt Vernon Manor Apartments was built at that time, adding 125 new affordable homes to the neighborhood.

The legacy of Mantua's grass roots planning and community involvement persisted through the following decades. Mantua, like many black urban neighborhoods in the country, faced multiple challenges through the 1990s and 2000s, including disinvestment, drug epidemics, crime, encroachment of institutional development and gentrification. Many of the community assets developed during the Joint Workshop era fell into disrepair and underutilization, victim of city budget cuts and population decline. At the same time, the demolition and redevelopment of PHA's Mantua Hall into a new affordable residential community, followed by the construction of new affordable for-sale homes and the introduction of new, market-driven rental housing, indicated the beginning of a new chapter for the neighborhood.

In 2011, Mantua leaders chose to, once again, engage in a pioneering and community driven planning process when Mount Vernon Manor Inc. was selected by HUD as one of the nation's first recipients of a Choice Neighborhood Planning Grant. The 24-month planning effort served as a catalyst for the preservation and rehabilitation of Mount Vernon Manor Apartments while also guiding over a decade of public and private investments. The 2013 WAM! Transformation Plan attracted other federal grants and led to a Promise Neighborhood designation of a substantial section of West Philadelphia, fostering partnerships with City agencies, non-profits and institutional partners. Mantua residents reorganized to form the Mantua Civic Association and worked to impact the zoning remapping of the neighborhood. Mount Vernon Manor Inc. solidified its role as a community development corporation, expanding its mission, staff capacity and portfolio of affordable housing.

Ten years later, Mantua's community planning spirit remains as the force driving an updated neighborhood plan, encouraging a new generation of leaders and community members to advocate and guide the stewardship of Mantua's civic assets and align future development with the needs of the community.



Neighborhood Development Program, published 1972



WAM! Transformation Plan, published 2013

HISTORIC TIMELINE

.....1600.....1800.....1900.....1950.....1970.....



1677: William Warner purchases part of the land that defines today's Mantua from the Lenape tribe.

1690: Welsh Friends lay beginnings of Lancaster Pike.

1795: Lancaster Pike opens as the only turnpike in the country.



1809: Judge Richard Peters divides and sells a portion of his Belmont Estate for real estate development. The appropriated land is called Mantua after the town of residence of ancient Italian author Virgil.

1812: Spring Garden Bridge opens, offering direct access to Center City.

1858: Trolley lines are first extended to West Philadelphia.

1870: University of Pennsylvania moves to West Philadelphia.

1870: University of Pennsylvania moves to West Philadelphia.

1891: Drexel Institute of Science, Art and Industry is opened.



Early 19th Century:

Mantua is a well-established community of Irish working class families whose presence lends the nickname "Cork Town" after County Cork, Ireland. Local residents also sometimes call the area "The Bottom".

1920: Mantua experiences an influx of African Americans migrating from the south. These residents find employment in manufacturing, railroading, construction, clerical work and other office/service support jobs.

Pop: 19,394



1950: Mantua hits peak population of 19,394 residents.

1961: 18-story Mantua Hall is constructed, following the trend of public housing "projects".

1963: West Philadelphia Redevelopment Area is certified.

1964: Herman Wrice forms the Young Great Society with the goal of inspiring the youth of Mantua to be leaders within the community.

Pop: 12,004



1970: Herman Wrice establishes the Urban Leadership Training Program. Mantua Urban Renewal Plan establishes the Neighborhood Development Plan (NDP) and spells out community development initiatives.

1971: Planning for Mantua, prepared by The Mantua Joint Workshop is submitted to Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority.

1977: Mt Vernon Manor CDC is established as a community-based organization addressing housing needs in Mantua.

1978: Mount Vernon Manor Apartments are completed.

1980

Pop: 9,112



1980: Mantua population drops to 9,112 a decrease of 53% from peak population.

1980: Mantua sees a rise in drug-related crime and violence.

1988: Herman Wrice establishes Mantua Against Drugs. His organization demolishes or boards up numerous known drug houses.

1990

Pop: 7,230



1992-93: Cloisters and Cloisters I homes are constructed.

1994: Plan for West Philadelphia attempts to address areas of Mantua that were overlooked in previous redevelopment efforts.

1997: Establishment of the University City District (UCD).

1997: Spencer Place Town-homes constructed.

2000

Pop: 6,826



2000: PHS's Vacant Land Stabilization and Mayor John Street's NTI programs work to improve the condition of the neighborhood by demolishing abandoned structures, removing debris from vacant land and creating "park-like" settings on vacant parcels.

2003: Mantua Community Improvement Committee (MCIC) is founded by Rick Young in an effort to keep the streets of Mantua clean and safe.

2008: Mantua Hall is demolished, construction of new Mantua Hall begins.

2008: Mantua Presbyterian Apartments is completed.

2010

Pop: 5,924



2010: Mt. Vernon Manor Inc. is awarded a HUD Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant leading to development of the We Are Mantua! Transformation Plan.

2012: Mantua Civic Association (MCA) is formed. Mantua residents succeed in protecting Morton McMichael School as a local neighborhood school.

2013: Mantua Urban Peace Garden (MUPG) is established with support from PHS.

2014: West Philadelphia is designated a Promise Zone, attracting public and private investments into the neighborhood, including federal grants is support of education and community safety initiatives. Drexel University opens the Dornsife Center.

2015: The Mt. Vernon Manor Neighborhood Advisory Committee (NAC) is established.

2016: Mt. Vernon Manor completes the rehabilitation of 121 units of existing affordable housing.

2020

Pop: 6,577



2020: Mantua gains population, reversing decades of population decline.

2020: Mantua Greenway Phase I construction begins.

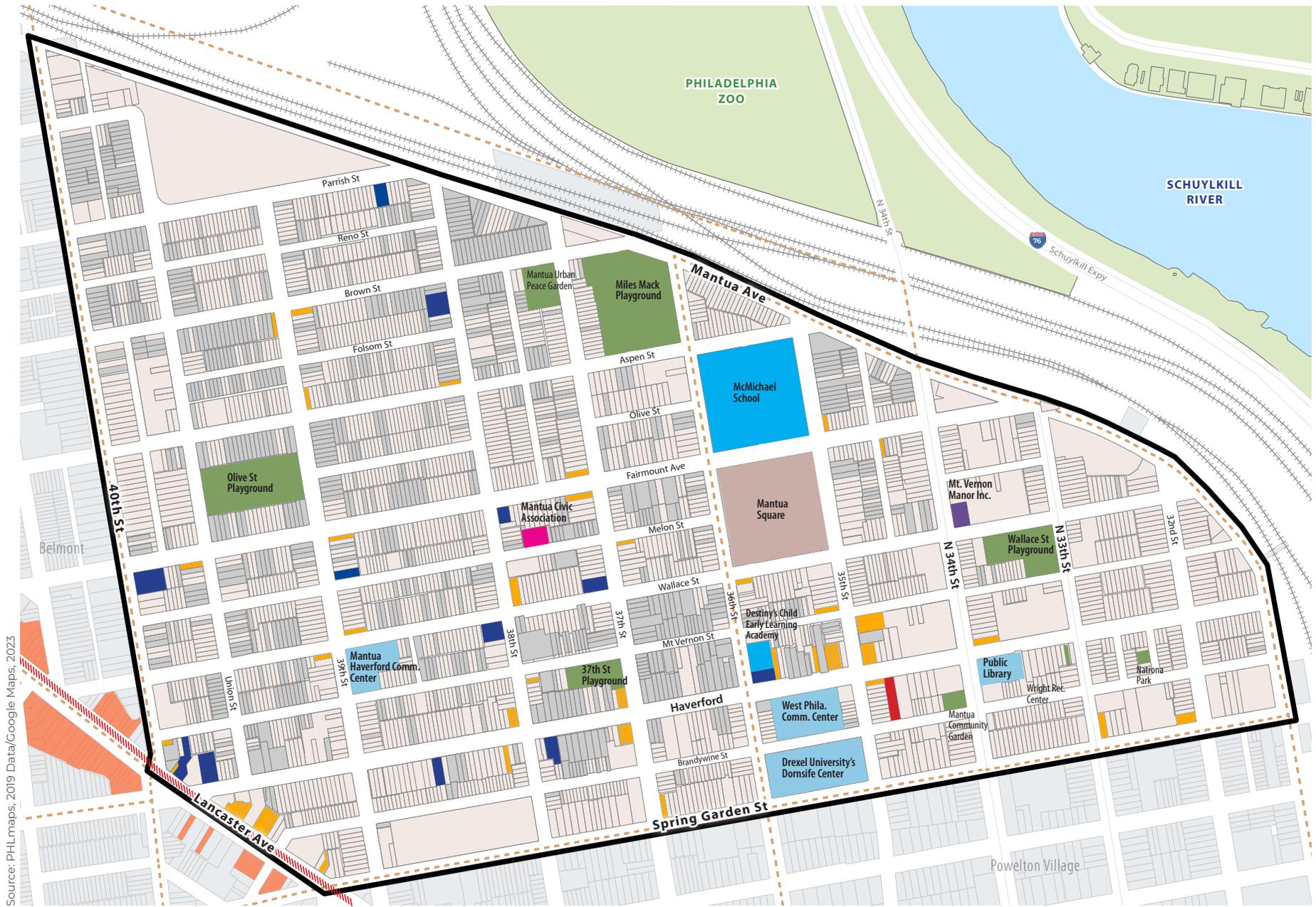
2021: Mt. Vernon Manor CDC completes the Mantua Preservation Project, with the rehabilitation of 29 affordable housing units. Mantua receives a \$4 million grant to support traffic improvements in the neighborhood.

Miles Mack playground is renovated as part of the Rebuild Philadelphia program.

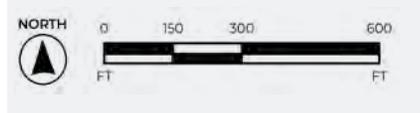
2022: MCA opens a new community space on 3729 Melon St.

2022: Construction begins at Village Square on Haverford.

2023: Mt. Vernon Manor CDC embark on a new planning effort aimed to update the WAM! Transformation Plan.



Source: PHL maps, 2019 Data/Google Maps, 2023



LEGEND:	
	NEIGHBORHOOD BOUNDARY
	CENSUS TRACT
	RAILROAD
	PRIMARY COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR
	PARCEL
	OPEN SPACE/PARK
	VACANT LOT
	FIRE STATION
	MVMDC OFFICE
	COMMUNITY FACILITY
	RETAIL SPACE
	RETAIL SPACES ALONG LANCASTER AVE
	CHURCH
	SCHOOL
	MANTUA CIVIC ASSOCIATION

NEIGHBORHOOD REFERENCE MAP

MANTUA TODAY

Transformative changes have shaped Mantua's physical and socio-economic character over the past ten years. Spreading over eighty-five neighborhood blocks within 0.3 square miles of land area, this mostly residential community of approximately 6,500 people has received significant investments in housing, civic and open spaces which, combined with new services and orchestrated by strong civic leadership and solid partnerships, have contributed to improve quality of life for residents and put Mantua back on the map as a desirable residential neighborhood. But just like other first ring communities around Philadelphia's Center City, the combined dynamic of neighborhood improvements and influx of new residents has brought new opportunities and new challenges to the area.



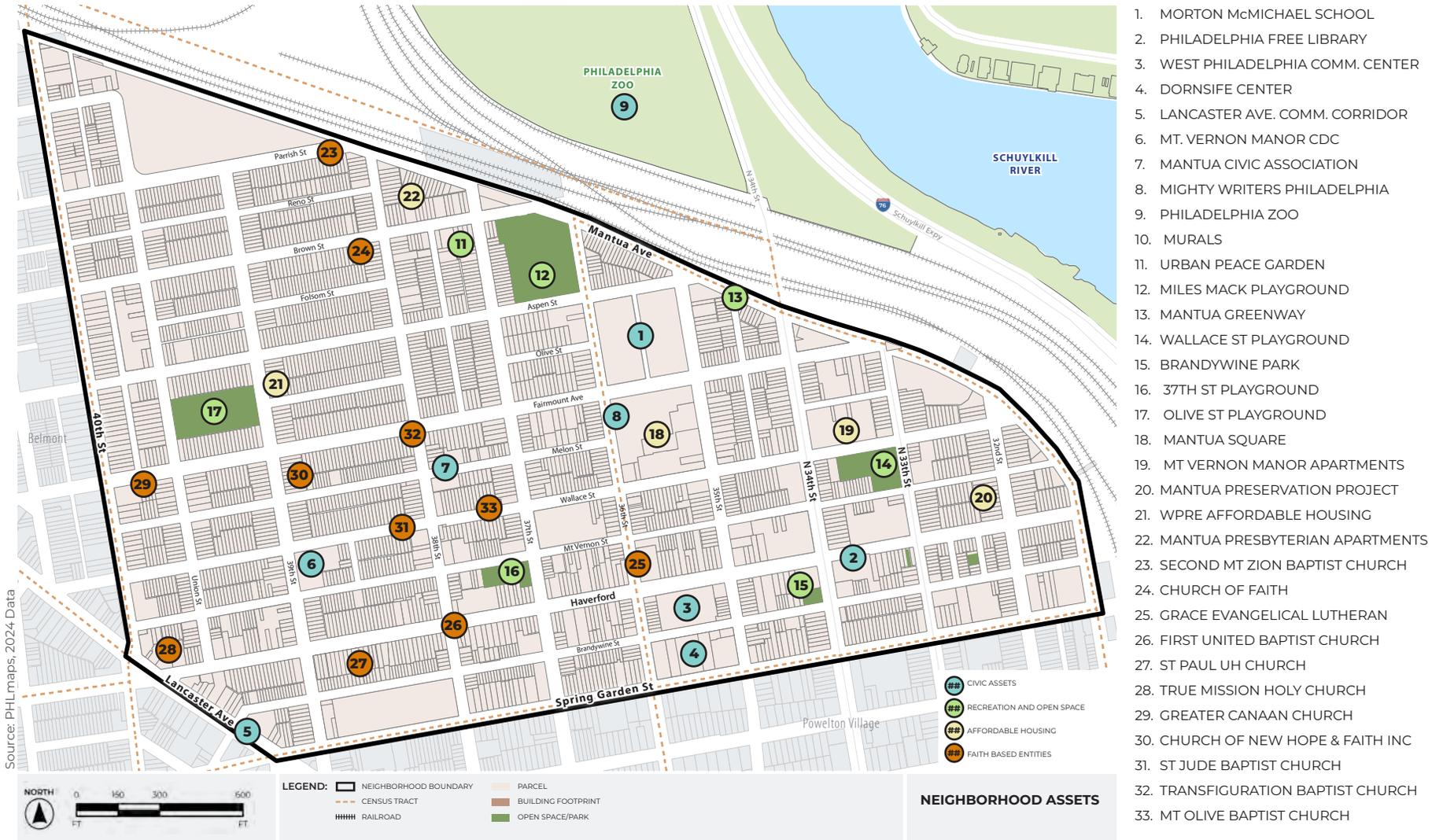
New multi-family development along Mantua Avenue



First ring neighborhoods like Mantua have experienced first hand the impact of Philadelphia's revitalization over the past twenty years.

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSETS

Neighborhood assets are things that matter to residents, support their daily lives, and make the neighborhood a better place to live. In Mantua, residents identified key assets in four main groups. These assets play an important role in the community and influence why people choose to live and raise their families in Mantua.





Home

For Mantua residents, home is their most cherished asset. It represents a deep bond with their surroundings and the community they call their own.



Civic Assets

Civic assets are Mantua's backbone, offering essential spaces and services within walking distance. Spaces like McMichael School, the free Library and community centers are highly valued by the residents.



Recreation and Open Spaces

Recreation and open spaces in Mantua serve as vibrant hubs for connection and physical activity. Six playgrounds and open spaces comprising approximately 4.5 acres of land serve local youth and families.



Affordable Housing

Despite fluctuations in the housing market and external pressures, Mantua has been able to preserve and expand its stock of affordable housing units through rehabilitation and new construction of rental and for-sale homes.



Faith Based Entities

Faith-based entities are pillars of strength in Mantua, inspiring hope and connection, serving as trusted centers of support, guidance, and community action. Currently Mantua has twelve active churches.



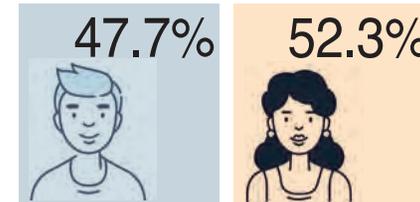
Neighborhood Identity

Mantua's unique identity is shaped by its rich history, cultural pride, and the resilience of its residents. Residents proudly speak of their roots and long-term connection with the neighborhood through public art and history.

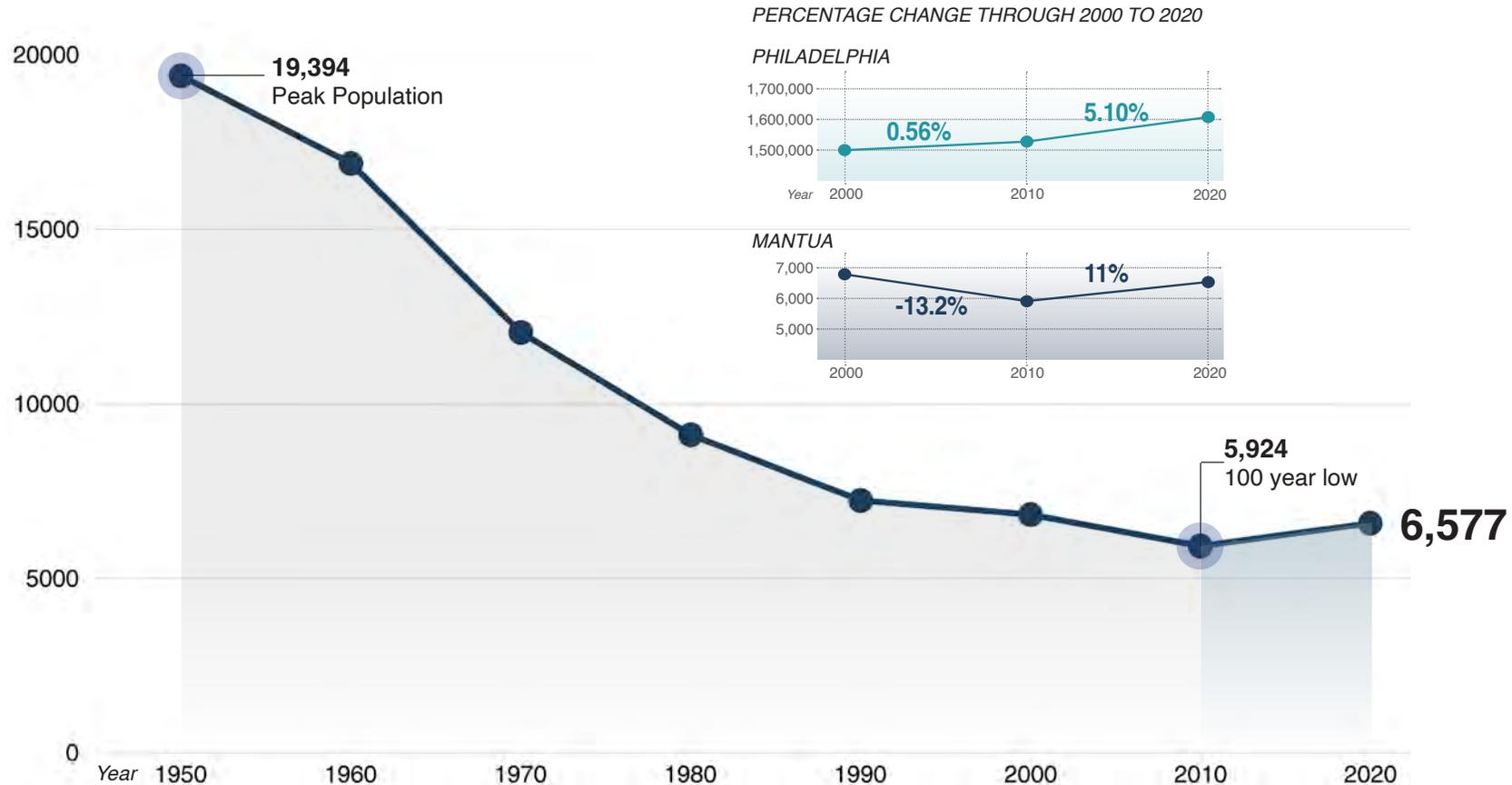
NEIGHBORHOOD INDICATORS

The 2020 U.S Census reported significant demographic shifts in Mantua. Reversing several decades of population loss, the neighborhood gained over 600 new residents in 2020, representing an 11% increase since 2010 and exceeding the City's 5.1% growth in that same period.

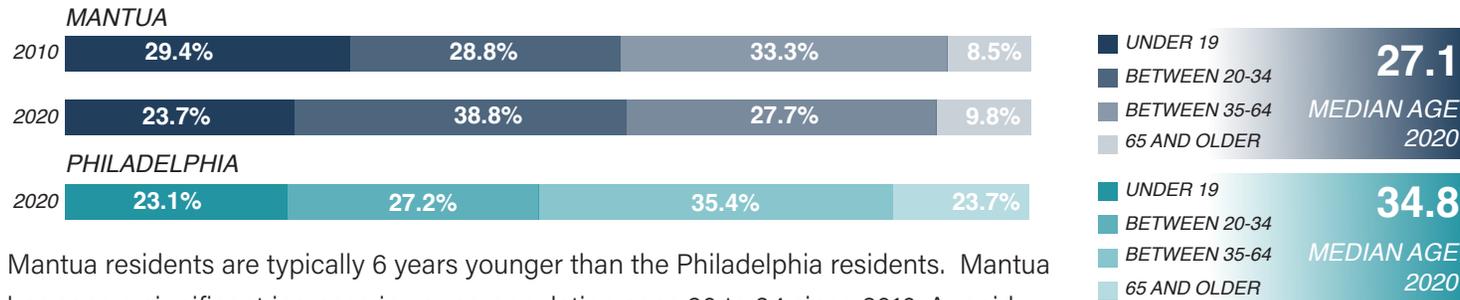
GENDER



POPULATION INCREASED BY 11% SINCE 2010



A YOUNGER POPULATION, LESS FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN, AND MORE SENIOR RESIDENTS



Mantua residents are typically 6 years younger than the Philadelphia residents. Mantua has seen a significant increase in young population ages 20 to 34 since 2010. A rapid influx of students and young professionals account for that change, compared to a reduced number of families with children.

HOUSEHOLDS INCREASED BY 27% SINCE 2010

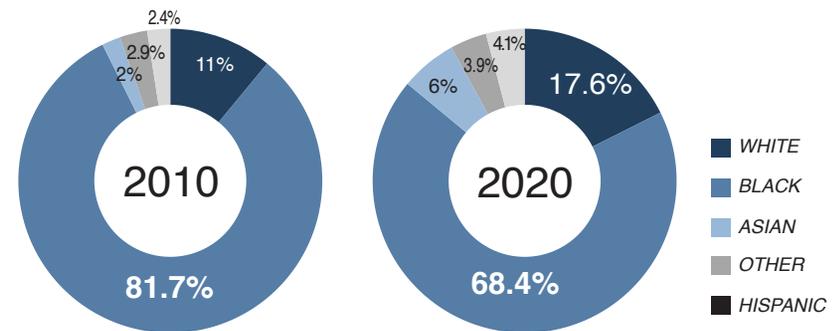


Household sizes have decreased since 2010, suggesting a growing number of single residents and small families. The growing presence of college students certainly contributes to this trend.

HOUSEHOLD SIZE



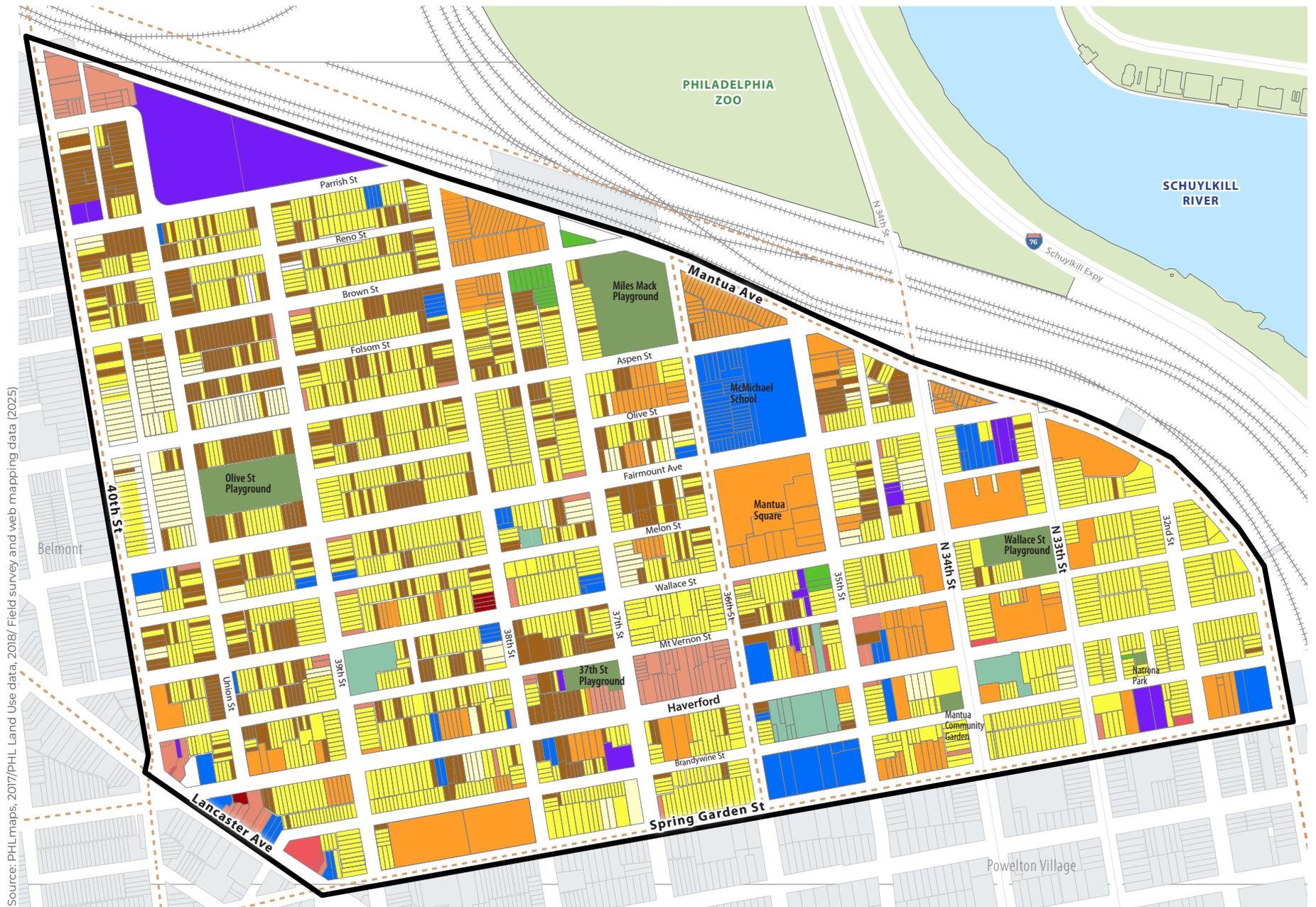
INCREASED RACIAL DIVERSITY



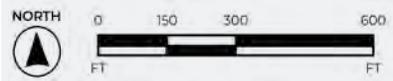
While still predominantly comprised of black residents, the neighborhood's population is slowly shifting to an increased racial diversity with growing presence of white and asian groups.

■ MANTUA
■ PHILADELPHIA

Data Sources: U.S. Census Data, 2010,2020



Source: PHLMaps, 2017/PHL Land Use data, 2018/Field survey and web mapping data (2025)



LEGEND:	
	NEIGHBORHOOD BOUNDARY
	CENSUS TRACT
	RAILROAD
	RES-LOW
	RES-MED
	RES-HIGH
	COMM-1
	COMM-2
	COMM-3
	INDUSTRIAL
	CIVIC/INST
	CULTURE
	RECREATION
	OPEN SPACE
	VACANT

COMM-1: Comm. consumer ; COMM-2: Comm. business/professional ; COMM-3: Comm. mixed-use

LAND USE

LAND USE

Mantua is primarily a residential community with 67% of all properties used for residential purposes. Two and three-story row homes continue to be the predominant housing type in the neighborhood but construction of multifamily housing has increased in recent years, mostly within the southern and eastern sections of the neighborhood. Neighborhood businesses, originally concentrated on Haverford Avenue, have decreased but new commercial spaces including offices and services have popped in different sections of the community. Most retail and services are concentrated on Lancaster Avenue, along the southwestern edge of the neighborhood. A new mixed-use development underway along Haverford Avenue promises to add new retail and neighborhood services to the core of the community.

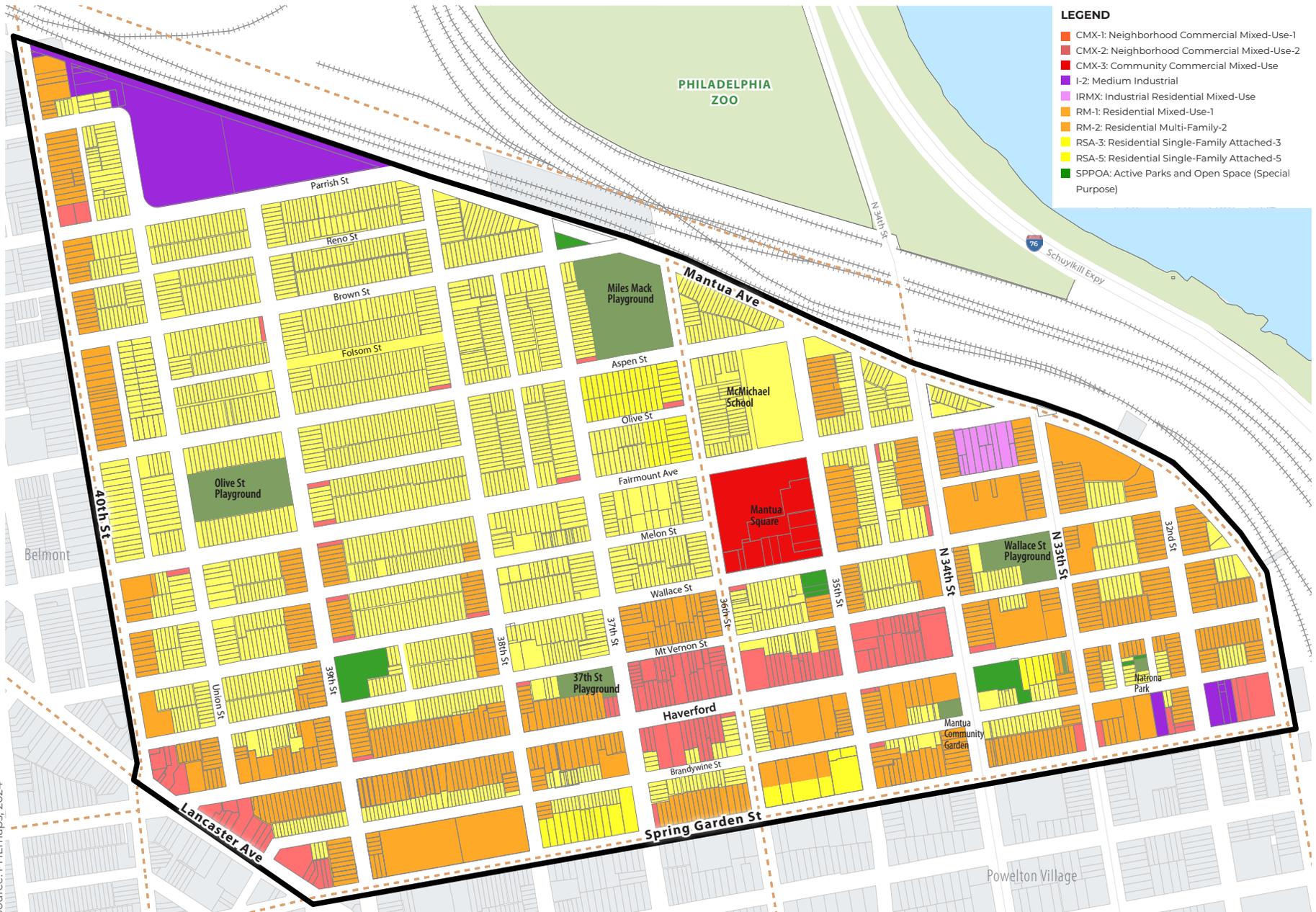
In recent years, Mantua has seen significant redevelopment efforts, converting large swaths of City owned vacant land into new multifamily housing opportunities. Much of the remaining vacant land is now comprised of privately owned land concentrated to the west of 36th street. Mantua's only significant Industrial parcel is a large site controlled by PECO along Parrish St. in the northwestern corner of the neighborhood.



Typical neighborhood rowhomes



Recent multifamily development on 34th Street



LEGEND

- CMX-1: Neighborhood Commercial Mixed-Use-1
- CMX-2: Neighborhood Commercial Mixed-Use-2
- CMX-3: Community Commercial Mixed-Use
- I-2: Medium Industrial
- IRMX: Industrial Residential Mixed-Use
- RM-1: Residential Mixed-Use-1
- RM-2: Residential Multi-Family-2
- RSA-3: Residential Single-Family Attached-3
- RSA-5: Residential Single-Family Attached-5
- SPPOA: Active Parks and Open Space (Special Purpose)

Source: PHLMaps, 2024

NORTH

0 150 300 600
FT FT

LEGEND:

- NEIGHBORHOOD BOUNDARY
- CENSUS TRACT
- RAILROAD
- CMX-1
- CMX-2
- CMX-3
- I-2
- IRMX
- RM-1
- RM-2
- RSA-3
- RSA-5
- SPPOA

ZONING

ZONING

The current zoning map for Mantua was enacted upon community input during the City's zoning remapping effort in 2016. Reflecting the community's goals to preserve homeownership and the historic residential character, zoning regulates two main uses in the neighborhood: low-density, single-family residential uses (RSA-5) targeting a core of properties to the west of 36th Street, and mixed-use and multi-family uses (RM-1 and RM-2) targeting a ring of properties along the south and eastern ends of the neighborhood. Higher density mixed-use development with an emphasis on commercial and residential uses is permitted on Haverford Avenue, Lancaster Ave and Spring Garden Street.

Despite the effort to align zoning with the community's goals, Mantua has experienced a trend of recent development initiatives pushing the boundaries of applicable zoning standards in support of higher density housing projects in single family districts. Residents have expressed deep concern about this trend as a threat to the community's physical fabric and affordability.

Mantua is also zoned as a Mixed Income Neighborhood Overlay District, which requires that 20% of residential units in new development be reserved for households earning up to 40% of the Area Median Income (AMI) for rental units and 60% AMI for owner-occupied units.



Typical multifamily projects built in the neighborhood include 4-story structures with up to 8 units. These buildings cater primarily to the student housing market.



Recent multifamily development on Haverford Ave

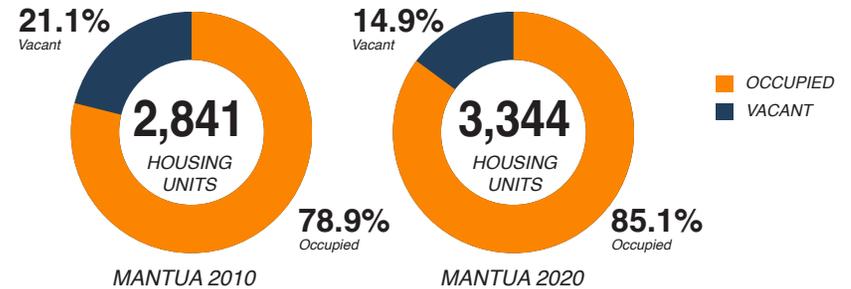
HOUSING

Like several of the first ring neighborhoods around Philadelphia's Center City, Mantua has experienced a significant boom in residential development over the past decade. According to the U.S. Census (2020), over 500 housing units (new and rehabilitated) were added to the neighborhood housing stock. New development has helped repurpose vacant land and reduce housing vacancy, signaling a stronger demand for housing options in the area.

Catering to a growing demand for student housing and rentals, new units are typically small in size, ranging between studios and one-bedroom apartments. The neighborhood has also seen a consistent trend of investments in preservation and new construction of affordable rental housing. Between completed projects and projects that are currently under construction, over 200 affordable rental units were added to Mantua's housing inventory in the past ten years. Alternative models of housing production like intergenerational housing and community land trust have also been introduced as new ways to address the housing demand across age and income groups.

Affordability, however, remains a challenge for a wide range of Mantua residents who cannot afford market rents but are also not eligible for affordable housing. Similarly, low and very low-income residents who grew up in Mantua and continue to call it home see themselves increasingly unable to stay in their homes or find other affordable housing options in the community.

503 new homes were added or preserved since 2010



Typical multi-family projects include midrise buildings offering small units such as studios and one-bedroom apartments.



Affordable housing production included preservation and new construction projects including Mt Vernon Manor Apartments, Mantua Preservation Project and Mantua Square

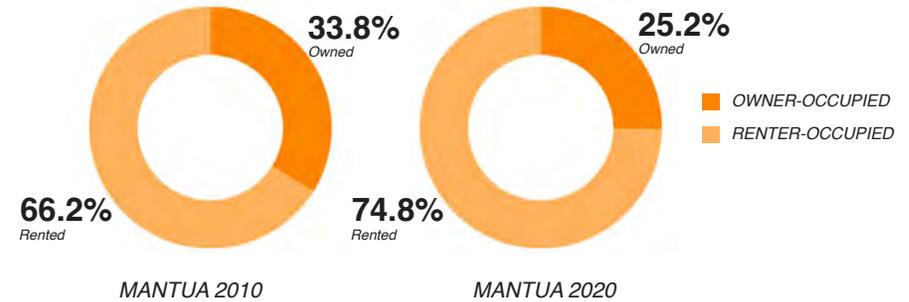
Homeownership

Homeownership, one of Mantua's most critical assets, continues to lose ground to new development, reinforcing a trend of decline observed since the 1990s. Homeownership assistance programs with a focus on upgrades and home repair initiatives have had a positive impact in the past decade, helping local families preserve and stay in their homes. Homeowners benefited from City programs and home repair initiatives promoted by LISC, Rebuilding Together, Habitat for Humanity and other organizations. Yet, longtime homeowners still struggle to keep up with increasing real estate taxes and the costs of maintaining and upgrading their homes. Challenges related to tangled titles and inheritance issues complicate property transfers, leaving families vulnerable to market pressure from cash buyers and house flippers who look to purchase and convert these properties into rental units or new multi-family apartment buildings. Efforts to build new for-sale homes are well underway with initiatives by the City (Turn the Key program) and affordable housing developers like Mt Vernon Manor CDC. However, limited land availability limits opportunities for new construction.

Displacement has become a reality for many Mantua renters and homeowners. Although assistance programs implemented by the City and community organizations have protected some residents from eviction, they have not substantially addressed the fundamental disparities between household incomes and rising housing costs.

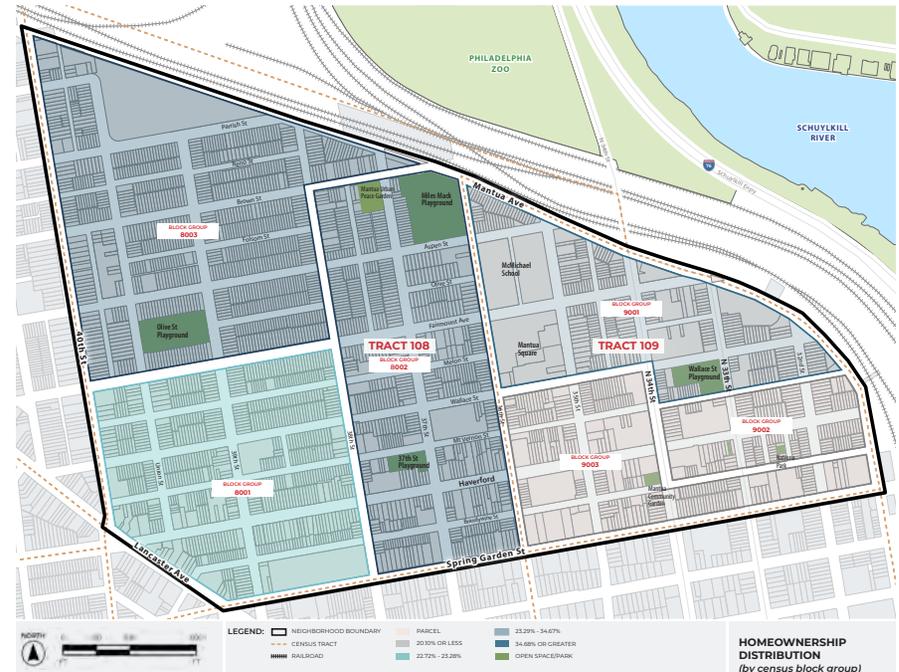
As discussed before, zoning is another important facet of housing production in Mantua. Despite the community's ongoing efforts to protect single-family homes, development decisions often tilt away from these goals, favoring the development of multifamily buildings in areas otherwise zoned for single family residential uses.

Homeownership rate has declined to 25.2% in 2020



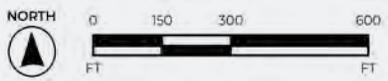
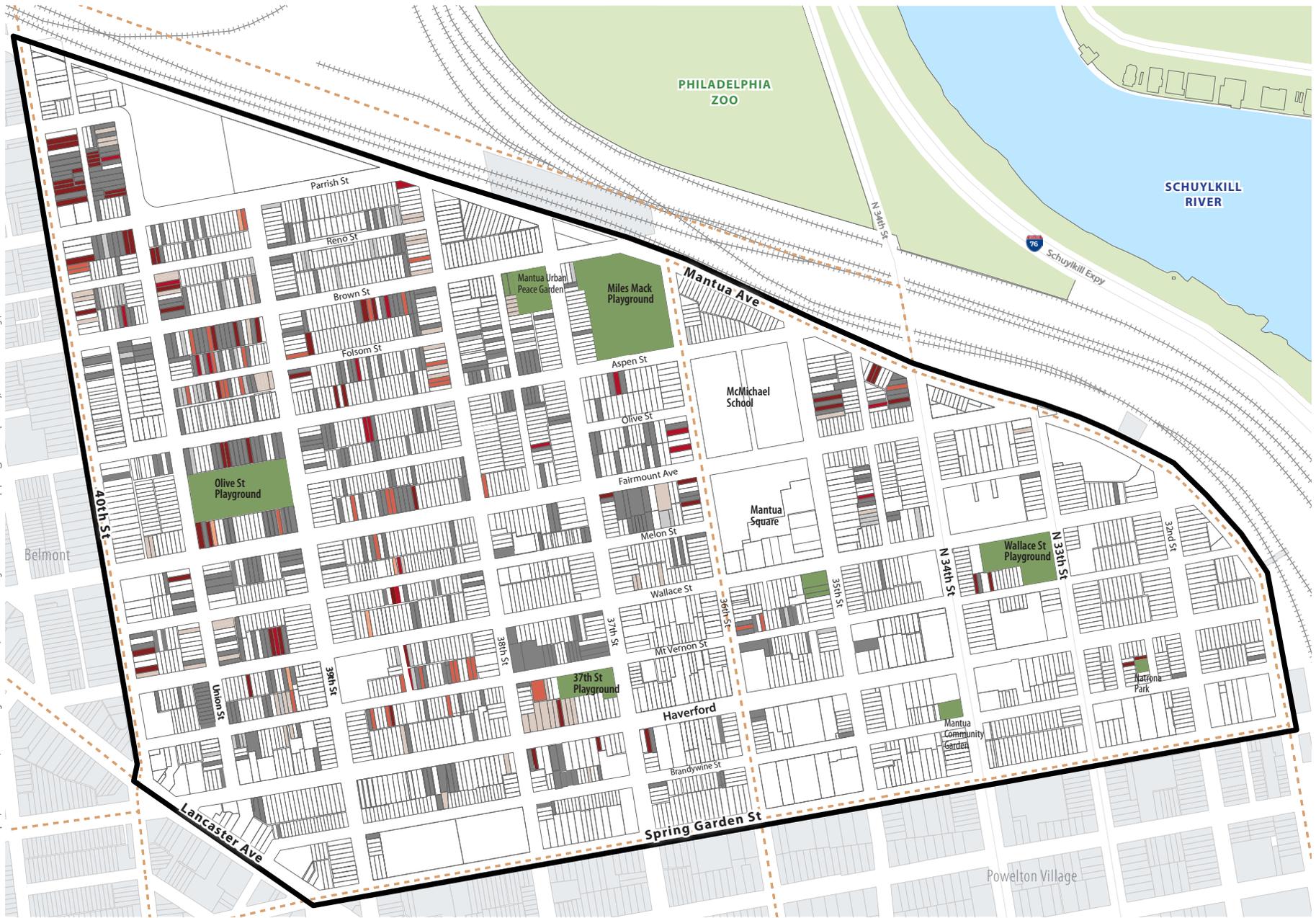
In 2020, there were approximately 530 mortgage-free owner occupied homes in Mantua.

	MANTUA	PHILADELPHIA
OWNER OCCUPIED, WITH MORTGAGE	25.9%	59.8%
OWNER OCCUPIED, MORTGAGE FREE	74.1%	40.2%



Map shows a higher concentration of owner occupied units west of 36th street

Source: PHL maps, 2019 Data/Vacancy data 2024; Field survey and web mapping data (2025)/Turn the Key, 2024



LEGEND:	
	NEIGHBORHOOD BOUNDARY
	PARCEL
	CENSUS TRACT
	RAILROAD
	TURN THE KEY
	PRA
	PRIVATE
	OPEN SPACE/PARKS
	PHDC
	PHA
	LAND BANK
	CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

VACANCY
(by ownership)

VACANT LAND

The status of vacant land in Mantua has changed significantly since the 2013 WAM! Transformation Plan. Most of the publicly owned vacant properties in the neighborhood have been repurposed for new development, bringing large swaths of land back to productive use and re-energizing entire blocks with new housing and commercial activity. The Philadelphia Land Bank has been instrumental in managing and streamlining disposition of City owned properties according to community plans and goals. PRA properties on Mantua Avenue, Brown Street and Haverford Avenue are all dedicated to affordable and mixed income housing initiatives currently under construction. Smaller properties were leveraged in support of small scale private development projects; in 2024, forty additional lots were targeted for affordable homeownership development under the Turn the Key Program.

However, while there have been progress in the redevelopment of City land, there is still work to be done to repurpose more than 400 privately owned vacant lots scattered throughout the neighborhood. These properties, many of which restricted by tax liens and other encumbrances, remain abandoned and are seen as liabilities by the community. The transfer and disposition of these properties is one important priority for the community in the next ten years.

VACANCY BY OWNERSHIP -	
Ownership	Vacant Lots
City of Philadelphia	62
Land Bank	19
PHA	39
PHDC	5
PRA	57
Turn the Key	49
Total public	231
Private	513
Total Vacant properties	744

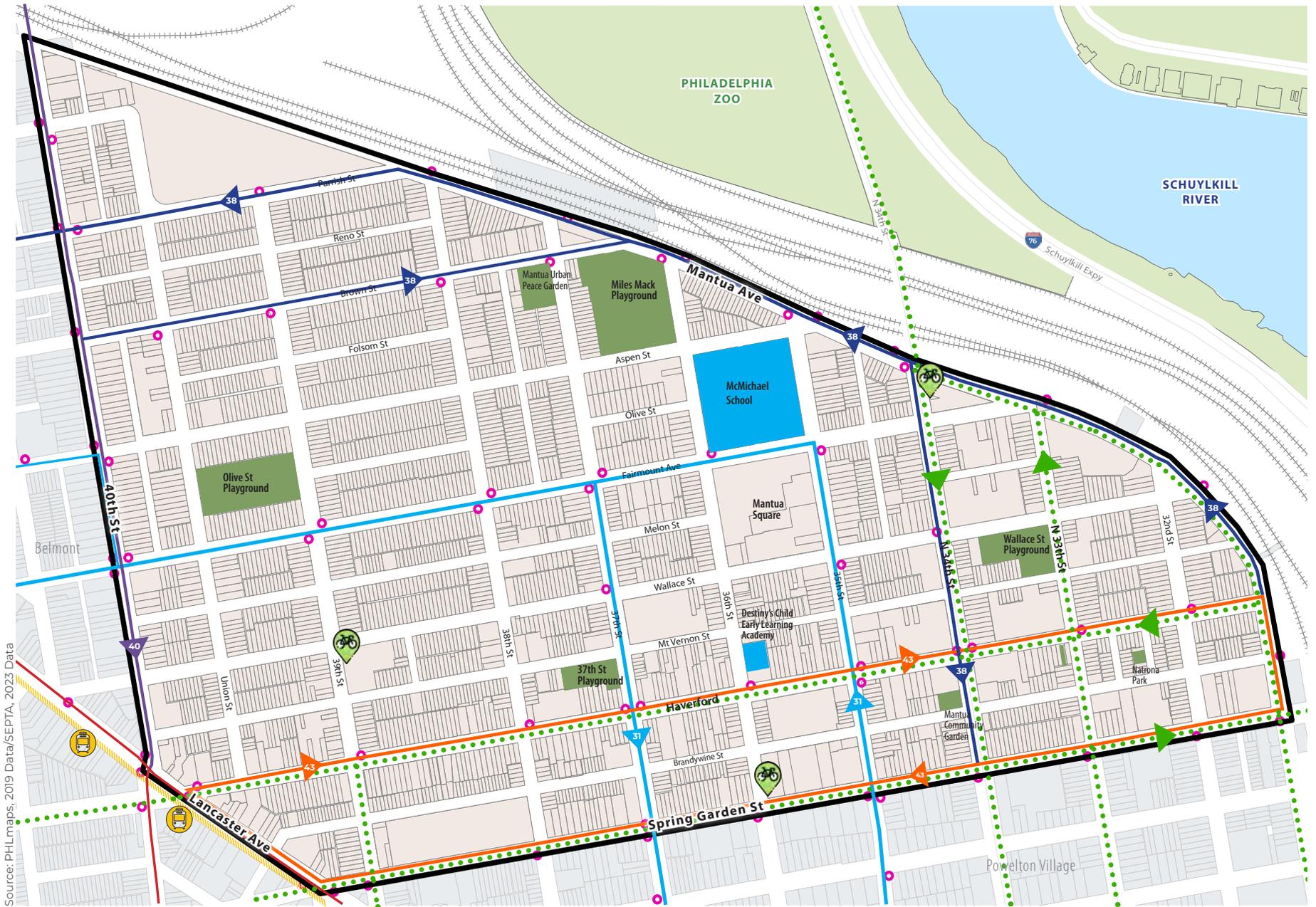
Original number of vacant lots in Mantua. Most publicly owned properties have been repurposed for redevelopment but privately owned properties remain as a concern among residents.



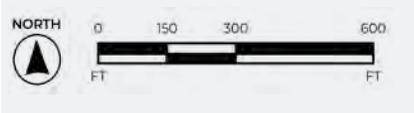
Stretch of vacant lots along Brown St comprising City and privately owned lots.



PRA property on Haverford Avenue slated for redevelopment



Source: PHLMaps, 2019 Data/SEPTA, 2023 Data



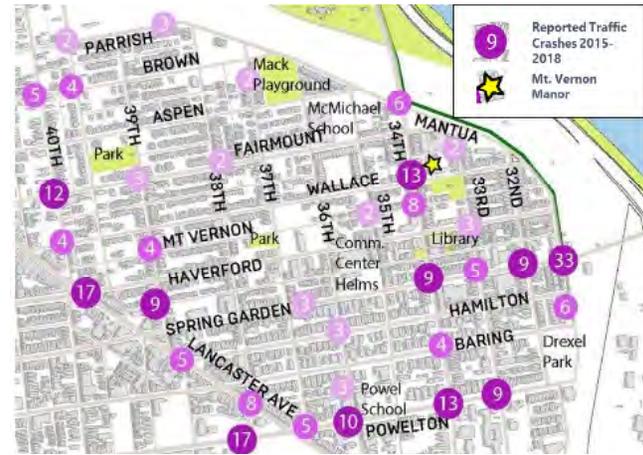
LEGEND:	
	NEIGHBORHOOD BOUNDARY
	BUS STOP
	BUS ROUTE 40
	RAILROAD
	BUS ROUTE 31
	OPEN SPACE/PARKS
	SCHOOL
	BUS ROUTE 43
	BUS ROUTE 10
	LIGHT RAIL
	INDEGO BIKE STATION
	LIGHT RAIL STATION
	BICYCLE INFRASTRUCTURE

TRANSIT MAP

MOBILITY

Mantua is served with multiple transportation options, including four bus lines and easy access to subway and trolley stops within walking distance from the neighborhood. While two in three households own a car, walking, biking and public transportation remain as primary mobility options for daily trips to work and school. The growing influx of new residents with cars has contributed to challenging parking conditions on neighborhood streets, especially around new multifamily apartment buildings. Mantua has also seen a growing number of cyclists due largely to the presence of college students living and working in the area and improved connections to the city's bike network.

Traffic safety is a top concern in the community, who has seen numerous accidents over the years, including fatal crashes impacting cyclists and pedestrians. Spring Garden Street, Mantua Avenue and 34th Street stand out as especially dangerous corridors impacted by heavy through traffic and speeding vehicles. Under the City's Vision Zero program, critical improvements were made on these corridors with investments in timed traffic signals, speed cushions and repaved roadways.



City map reporting car crashes in Mantua between 2015 and 2018. Two intersections - Spring Garden and Mantua Avenue and 34th Street and Wallace St were identified as priority areas for improvements under the Vision Zero Program. Timed traffic signal



City investments have improved traffic safety at the 34th and Haverford intersection. This area is known by neighbors as "Daytona 500" due to speeding.

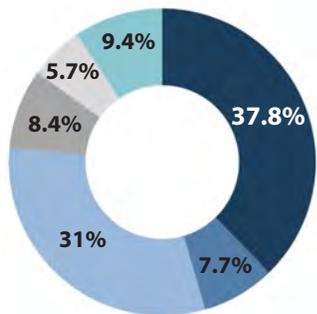


Haverford Avenue is one of the east/west bike corridors implemented in recent years.

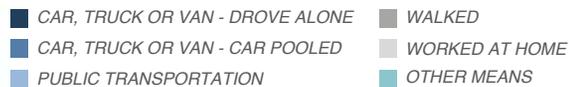


Indego, Philly's bike share, has three stations in the neighborhood (39th St, 34th St, and at the Dornsife Center)

Trips by Mode of Transportation



45.5% of residents commute by car, 31% to use public transportation for their commute.



Car Ownership



33.5%

do not own a vehicle. 66.6% own a vehicle

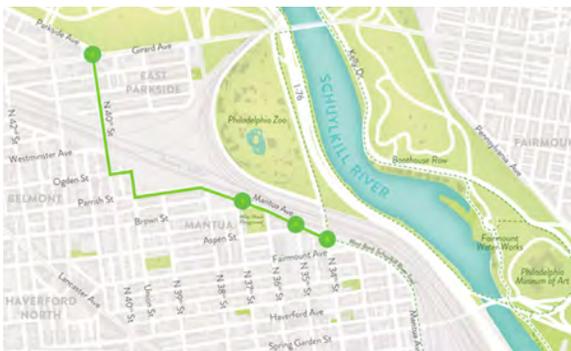
ALIGNMENT WITH PLANNING INITIATIVES



Philadelphia 2035 - City Wide Vision, 2011.
Source: City of Philadelphia



We Are Mantua! (WAM!) Transformation Plan, 2013
Source: City of Philadelphia



The Mantua Greenway is a part of the Philadelphia Trail Plan
Source: Mantua Greenway Website

Philadelphia 2035 - City Wide Vision (2011) - The plan lays out comprehensive development goals for the City, aimed to promote a strong economy, healthy quality-of-life and a smaller environmental footprint. The plan outlines strategies to enhance housing quality and diversity, and link neighborhood centers, commercial corridors, and transit hubs. It also highlights priority areas for expanded parks and open spaces, along with a framework for implementation of policy objectives and key projects. The plan informs district plans developed for 18 districts, including the West District Plan, which targets West Philadelphia.

Building Opportunities for Lasting Dreams (BOLD) BCJI Innovation Initiative (2012) - The Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation Grant was awarded to Mt Vernon Manor by the US Department of Justice to support planning and implementation efforts aimed at improving community safety through place-based community initiatives. The program relied on cross sector partnerships including law enforcement agencies, research and development partners to reduce and prevent crime in Mantua.

We Are Mantua! Transformation Plan (2013) - The We are Mantua! Transformation Plan was led by Mt. Vernon Manor and supported by HUD's Choice Neighborhoods Initiative, focuses on Housing, People, and Neighborhood to build a stronger, more connected community. It has guided key initiatives backed by government agencies, nonprofits, and local stakeholders.

Philadelphia Trail Plan (2013) - The Philadelphia Trail Master Plan, part of Philadelphia2035, includes the Mantua Greenway—a community-led effort to revitalize Mantua Avenue and North 40th Street. Originating from the 2013 Mantua Transformation Plan, the Greenway aims to create a safe, vibrant pedestrian corridor that honors the neighborhood's culture and residents.

Philadelphia 30th Street Station District Plan (2016) - The 30th Street Station District Plan, led by Amtrak and Brandywine Realty Trust, aims to enhance existing neighborhoods and create new ones. Key elements include expanding Drexel Park and upgrading the Mantua Greenway to link green spaces across the district. The development promises

economic benefits for Mantua and nearby areas by creating jobs, stimulating growth, and attracting investment.

West Philadelphia Promise Neighborhood (2016)

The West Philadelphia Promise Neighborhood Implementation Grant was awarded by the US Department of Education to Drexel University and the City of Philadelphia to support improved educational, health and economic outcomes for children living or going to schools in the West Philadelphia Promise Zone. The initiative included Mantua's Morton McMichael School as one of seven schools targeted for investment.

Promise Zone Comprehensive Housing Strategy (2017)

The Promise Zone Comprehensive Housing Strategy outlines proposals for 11 focal areas within the West Philadelphia Promise Zone. This initiative seeks to promote equitable development and housing preservation by enhancing the quality of existing housing, increasing homeownership opportunities to benefit current residents, and offering mixed-income and affordable housing options. The Promise Zone encompasses the Belmont, Mantua, Powelton Village, Saunders

Park, and West Powelton neighborhoods.

Philadelphia 2035 - WEST District Plan (2018)

The West Plan applies the concepts of the Citywide Vision Plan to West Philadelphia, addressing land use and zoning updates, focus areas and improvements to the physical environment.

Philadelphia Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan (2022)

The Philadelphia Pedestrian & Bicycle Plan also derived from Philadelphia2035, sets forth a comprehensive set of policy and program recommendations addressing enhancements to the City's pedestrian and bicycle network. In Mantua, the plan proposes a bike network that prioritizes connectivity along neighborhood corridors and facilitating access to prominent City destinations.

The Philly Tree Plan (2023) is a 10-year strategy to ensure equitable growth and care of Philadelphia's urban forest, guided by environmental justice, community engagement, and sustainability. It prioritizes delivering tree benefits to the communities that need them most.



Philadelphia 30th Street Station District Plan, 2016
Source: City of Philadelphia



Map of Promise Zone Proposed Target Housing Sites
Promise Zone Comprehensive Housing Strategy, 2017
Source: City of Philadelphia



Map of Promise Zone Neighborhoods
West Philadelphia Promise Neighborhood, 2016
Source: City of Philadelphia

The background of the entire page is a light teal color with a faint, repeating architectural floor plan. The plan shows a grid of rectangular rooms and corridors, with some rooms containing smaller rectangular shapes representing furniture or fixtures. The lines are thin and light, creating a subtle pattern across the page.

03

WHAT WE HEARD

The needs assessment phase of the planning process was conducted in the Summer of 2024 and included a series of stakeholder interviews, an online community survey, community events and thematic conversations around key neighborhood priorities. While the input received was critical in guiding the development of this plan, it also provided the community an opportunity to collectively reflect on what was accomplished since the last plan and how those changes have affected life in the neighborhood.



WHAT WE HEARD FROM THE COMMUNITY SURVEY

The Mantua community survey was conducted by the Mt. Vernon Manor CDC with support from Success Measures. It aimed to understand the needs and concerns of the community and identify priorities for the next ten years.

241 community members participated in the survey

SURVEY PROFILE

Gender

Majority female respondents

Female	65%
Male	33%
Non-binary	2%

Age

Respondents across all age groups

18 to 24	9%
25 to 34	14%
35 to 44	28%
45 to 54	15%
55 to 64	14%
65 or older	20%

Race

Majority African-American respondents with diverse racial representation and good representation from the Hispanic community (11%)

Black /African American	73%
White	9%
American Indian /Alaska native	9%
Asian	4%
Other	5%

Housing Tenure

28% **56%**

Owner Renter

Mostly renters with solid representation from owners



Residency Duration

Equal Participation

from respondents who have been living in Mantua for less than 5 years-**38%**, and long-time residents who were born or have lived in the neighborhood for 20+ years-**48%**

WAM! 2013

25%

respondents were very familiar or involved with the 2013 WAM! Neighborhood Plan

QUALITY OF LIFE

Why did you decide to live in Mantua?

- #1 *To be near friends and family* **1 in 2** respondents were either born in Mantua or chose the area to be close to friends and family.
- #2 *Born here*
- #3 *Affordability of Housing*

How do you feel about changes in the neighborhood?

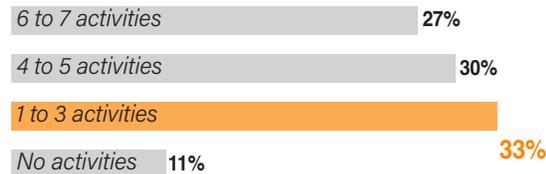
- #1 *Happy about changes* **Almost half** of all respondents said they are happy with recent changes but **1 in 3** residents have mixed feelings about the changes.
- #2 *Its complicated*
- #3 *Unhappy about changes*

NEIGHBORHOOD PRIORITIES

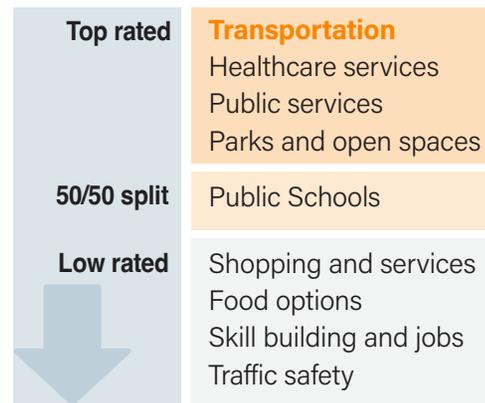
#1 **Public Safety** was identified as a top neighborhood priority, followed by **Housing and Youth Development**

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Mantua residents are highly engaged in neighborhood activities and have a strong sense of community.



ACCESS TO SERVICES



Businesses and Services needed in the neighborhood

#1 Grocery store

#2 Pharmacy

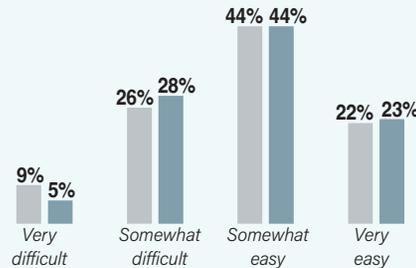
#3 Dry Cleaner

Barriers to Participation

- #1** Work and/or college schedule
 - #2** Child caregiving responsibilities
 - #3** Need more education around issues
- Personal responsibilities and lack of education** were ranked as top 3 barriers from engaging in community activities.

HOUSING

Ease of meeting housing expenses for renters and owners



1 in 3 respondents reported that it is difficult for them to cover their monthly housing expenses.

2 in 3 residents have experienced an increase in rent in the past 3 years

2/3 of all respondents feel that **Displacement due to rising real estate prices** is a significant concern

PUBLIC SAFETY

How safe is it to walk during..

40% respondents feel very safe walking during **day**. 42% feel somewhat safe.

42% feel unsafe walking at **night**.

40% feel unsafe to let their children move independently across the neighborhood



Homeownership

50% of the participants who currently rent have considered purchasing a home in the neighborhood

#1 Home Prices is the top factor that would drive a home buyers decision

#2 Types of housing available

#3 Neighborhood conditions



Data Sources: Mantua Community Survey Results, 2024
For full survey results see Appendix

WHAT WE HEARD FROM COMMUNITY EVENTS

Stakeholder interviews and a series of community events provided community members the space to share their thoughts, ideas and concerns about the neighborhood today and priorities for the future. Five key themes emerged from this process and are summarized below (for further details, see Appendix - Community Input Report):

PUBLIC SAFETY

Most residents feel safer today than they did ten years ago. Community police and Drexel presence have helped people feel safe. Issues still exist but residents do not perceive the neighborhood any less safe than other places in the City.

The neighborhood is generally more stable today, with cleaner and fully occupied blocks. People have established trusting relationships with their neighbors but the transient nature of students and young professionals requires a more intentional effort to connect with them. Most nuisance issues relate to communication gaps between long-term and short-term residents.

There are still critical challenges with respect to the physical environment, especially dark alleys, trash, street lighting and vacant lots.

Despite City's efforts to address critical neighborhood intersections, concerns about traffic and pedestrian safety remain front and center in the list of safety concerns.

HOUSING

Homeowners feel that they are being pushed out of the community by an aggressive real estate market and rising property taxes. There is not enough help for homeowners and without support, most low income residents and people of color will not be able to protect their homes in the long run. Residents feel that City programs like Turn the Key is not for them and recognize alternative efforts such as multi-generational housing as potential solutions to help homeowners stay in their homes.

Multifamily residential projects are approved by the City despite the community's objections communicated through the RCO process. Primary concerns are the fact that most multifamily projects drive up rental prices in the neighborhood, displacing low income residents. Ongoing efforts to expand the number of affordable housing units is recognized as a positive trend.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Mantua suffered a few losses when it comes to education and youth development: the early childhood center, Drew School and the High School make it harder to track neighborhood kids and understand their needs. DB4 was seen as a promising opportunity for youth leadership but it is no longer active.

Residents are proud of the community's work in protecting McMichael as a local neighborhood school but wanted to see it become a school of choice for all K-8 students in the community.

Physical and mental health are important factors in youth development, especially post-pandemic years. Residents call for mental health services and after school programs to support students and families.

There is a need for out of school activities in the neighborhood addressing enrichment, vocational and workforce development. In a community surrounded by universities, residents want to see more opportunities for higher education for local youth

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Residents feel that the neighborhood environment improved significantly with new development, improved open spaces and cleaner streets. COVID has helped highlight the importance of outdoor spaces for people's physical and mental health and the focus on sustainability and resilience as critical for the future.

Residents wish to see more activities in existing spaces, targeting youth, families and senior residents. They also want to see the old Boys and Girls club re-opened with community programs.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Mantua residents are highly engaged in neighborhood activities and have a strong sense of community. But the COVID pandemic had an impact on participation and new residents are not as involved in the neighborhood as they could be.

There is still a need to improve the relationship with college students and younger residents, and invite them to become active in the community.

Local youth are also not as engaged in community activities as they were in the past. Residents want to see an intentional effort to empower and encourage teens and young adults participate in neighborhood work.

In the next few years, current neighborhood leadership will start transitioning their responsibilities to the younger generation. It is time to identify new leaders.



The background of the page is a light teal color with a faint, repeating architectural grid pattern of rectangular blocks and lines, suggesting a city street layout. The grid is slightly tilted and has a subtle gradient.

04

NEIGHBORHOOD PRIORITIES

The WAM!10YL Neighborhood Plan is organized around five community priorities identified during the planning process.

1

PUBLIC SAFETY

Residents feel safe, day and night, at home or in the community

2

HOUSING

Current and future Mantua residents find housing options that meet their needs

3

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Young residents are safe, healthy and have access to economic opportunity

4

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Mantua is a vibrant community with access to community amenities, retail and services

5

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Mantua is a model of community engagement and leadership



1

PUBLIC SAFETY

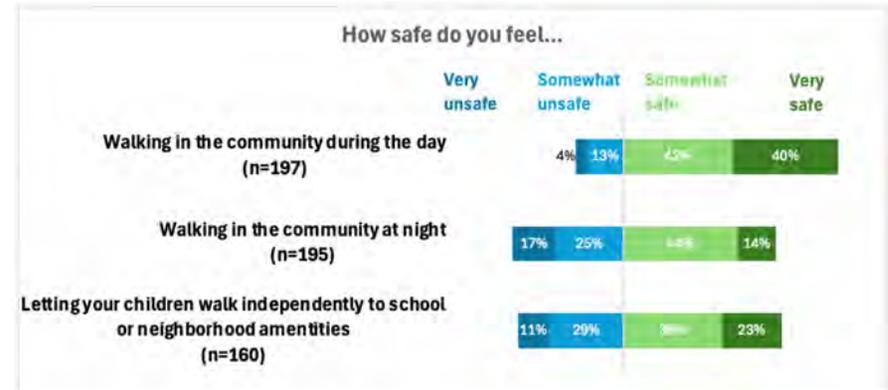
Residents feel safe, day and night, at home or in the community

"Public safety gives people a feeling of security in their investment and confidence about their choice to live in the neighborhood" - Mantua resident, 2024

Feedback received from the neighborhood survey placed public safety as a #1 priority for the community. While neighbors report feeling significantly safer today than they did ten years ago, their day-to-day routine in the neighborhood is still impacted by concerns about gun violence, traffic safety and distressed sections of the neighborhood's physical environment.

Mantua residents feel generally safe in the neighborhood, a perception that has improved over the years with the influx of new residents and additional community safety initiatives implemented through partnerships with the Philadelphia Police Department (PPD) and University City District (UCD). Programs implemented with support from the Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation Grant between 2012 and 2016 have also contributed to engage residents in crime prevention solutions with a significant impact in crime reduction. Over the years, residents have established a positive and consistent relationship with law enforcement, securing a seat in district wide initiatives and maintaining direct communication with PPD officers on topics of neighborhood concern.

Yet, just like in other sections of Philadelphia, thefts, robberies and gun violence still impact life in the neighborhood. And while increased coordination and collaboration in community policing is an important step towards safer streets, residents have also called for improvements to the physical environment, addressing issues like trash, illegal dumping, tree maintenance, dark alleys, abandoned structures and vacant lots. Traffic safety was also highlighted as a key safety concern, with a special emphasis on pedestrian safety, accessibility, parking and bicycle



Results from the community survey show that although residents feel generally safe in the neighborhood during the day, they feel less safe at night and do not feel comfortable letting their children walk independently to school, parks and other neighborhood facilities.



Obstructed sidewalks and abandoned buildings are some of the safety issues highlighted by residents during the planning process

PUBLIC SAFETY

GOAL S1

Collaboration and partnerships advance community safety

Community led safety efforts have successfully contributed to reduce violence in neighborhoods. Mantua itself has a long history of community-driven initiatives with positive impact in public safety. Residents can continue to build on that experience and strengthen their work through collaboration with community partners to address local concerns and implement effective public safety projects.



There were 90 block leaders in Mantua in 2016. Their experience can be leveraged for new safety initiatives in the coming years.



Collaboration between the City and neighbors inform the Vision Zero plan advancing traffic safety improvements in Mantua



POST

2025 PMBC Block Captain Rally: Celebrating Community Leaders & Neighborhood Beautification

The Philadelphia More Beautiful Committee is a key partner for future safety and beautification initiatives

STRATEGY

S1.1

Re-engage block leaders and block groups to support neighborhood safety initiatives and advocate for city services

Mantua has a solid tradition of active block captains leading initiatives to keep neighbors engaged, informed and involved in safety, cleaning and beautification projects. Coordinated efforts and dedicated support will help current and future block leaders expand their impact and maintain Mantua's streets clean, safe and welcoming. Four key measures will help re-ignite and expand Mantua's block captain program:

a. Re-engage block leaders in neighborhood level dialogue: The MCA and Mantua NAC can help reconvene block leaders and provide the initial support they need to re-establish their network. Mantua has 38 block leaders at the moment. Regular meetings will help them assess their activities, discuss challenges and identify priorities for effective and coordinated action. These meetings should also help identify which sections of the neighborhood are represented by a block leader and which sections could benefit from representation.

b. Recruit and train new block leaders: A coordinated recruiting and training effort will help bring new participants to the program and empower them to fulfill their role in the community. Mantua NAC and the City's Philadelphia More Beautiful Committee (PMBC) provide good guidance and resources. Beyond information, PMBC supports registered block leaders with assistance in the organization of block initiatives and holds annual events including spring cleanups and beautification projects. Participation in the Citizen Planning Institute is another way to get new block

leaders prepared for an active role in their neighborhood.

c. Establish clear communication channels: Block captains need reliable ways to stay in touch with each other and with the residents in their block. A clear communication plan will identify different tools required to advance that goal including meetings, email lists, social media and printed materials.

d. Provide support and funding for programs: Organizational and financial support will ensure the long term sustainability of the block leader program. Mantua NAC and partners can help identify potential grants and funding sources to help advance block level initiatives.



A good strategy to re-ignite Mantua's block leadership program is to encourage the participation of young residents and pair them with active, seasoned block leaders who can help mentor a new generation of leaders while getting the help they need to advance their block initiatives. This is also a good way to prepare the younger generation for community action and leadership!

ANTICIPATED OUTCOME

- Block leadership network is established with dedicated support for capacity building and programming
- Expanded number of block leaders

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

- TBD

KEY PARTNERSHIPS

- Current Mantua block leaders
- Mantua NAC
- PMBC
- Others

STRATEGY S1.2

Strengthen partnership between the community and police

Partnerships with PPD and UCD Public Safety will help build trust and maintain a clear communication channel between the community and police. That can be advanced through the following action steps:

a. Promote initiatives that foster trust between police and community: A regular calendar of community events with formal and informal opportunities for connection between police and community members will help build familiarity and trust between officers and neighbors. Informal 'coffee with a cop' sessions, public safety workshops, school visits and community service events are some examples of opportunities for residents to get to know police officers and build a relationship of trust and collaboration. It is also important to integrate regular opportunities for interaction with block leaders in the community calendar, including the annual 16th District Community Fun Day.

b. Revisit University City District service area: Over the past five years, Mantua has seen a significant increase of college students in the neighborhood. Students are also more spread out, living in parts of Mantua that go beyond Spring Garden Ave and 38th Street, traditional boundaries of the UCD's service area. UCD clean and safe teams provide an additional layer of service working to check in and connect with residents, serving as walking escorts and helping enhance public spaces. An

effort to re-assess boundaries can help expand these services to Haverford ave and beyond.

c. Maintain Mantua's representation at Captain's Town Hall meetings: PPD's town hall meetings provide community members an opportunity to hear updates about public safety trends in the district and discuss concerns related to local crime and quality of life issues. Mantua residents are represented at the 16th Police District Advisory Council, helping strengthen the connection between the community and police by disseminating information received at meetings with the broader Mantua community and communicating neighborhood concerns to the police.



UCD's public safety presence is widely appreciated in Mantua. The growing presence of college students in the neighborhood provides UCD an opportunity to reassess the boundaries and expand its Safe and Clean services beyond Spring Garden Avenue and into the neighborhood.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOME

- Annual calendar of partnership events between PPD and Mantua
- Expanded UCD coverage area
- Designated representative at PPD meetings

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

- TBD

KEY PARTNERSHIPS

- Mantua Civic Association
- Mantua block leaders
- Philadelphia Police Department
- University City District

STRATEGY S1.3

Implement violence prevention and intervention initiatives

Community based violence intervention programs look to establish partnerships based on trust and accountability between community stakeholders, at-risk individuals and governmental agencies. They seek to identify local solutions for conflict resolution, aiming to reduce and prevent violent crime. Violence prevention initiatives are part of a third critical partnership aimed at improving public safety in the neighborhood.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOME

- Reduced crime incidents
- Youth empowerment and opportunity

a. Establish a street outreach team:

Residents who live in the community and have well established relationships with their neighbors can be important partners in the effort to prevent and interrupt patterns of violence. **Violence interrupters** rely on their familiarity with the community to identify at-risk individuals, intercede in crisis situations, mentor, and connect people to supportive services and resources as needed. The Community Violence Intervention Hub led by the Penn Injury Science Center offer grants and support to violence prevention activities in West Philadelphia. The Hub can serve as an important partner for Mantua.

b. Implement school-based counseling and mentoring program:

Programs like Dimplez4Days, Nomo and We Embrace Fatherhood have been successful in providing young men in 7-12th grades the resources they need to make responsible personal decisions and participate in their community in a positive way. Kids involved in these types of programs have shown improved participation in school and community activities and are more likely to stay out of trouble. Mantua has a history of community led mentoring programs for young

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

- TBD

men. Partnerships with service providers can help revive that tradition in support of today's youth.

c. Connect at risk residents to employment and services:

Programs supporting adult men at risk of getting involved in gun violence have had positive impact in preventing crime. They connect at risk people to employment opportunities, behavioral therapy and supportive services, helping them structure a new path for their lives.



A partnership with the Community Violence Intervention Hub will provide yet another tool to prevent and reduce violence in the neighborhood.

KEY PARTNERSHIPS

- PPD
- Penn Injury Science Center
- PA Career Link West

GOAL S2

Well kept streets are safe streets

Neighborhood upkeep is a leading indicator of neighborhood safety. Throughout the planning process, community members expressed concern about the inconsistency between blocks when it comes to care and maintenance. While some blocks are typically well maintained, other sections of the neighborhood remain unkept and are perceived as unsafe. Primary concerns include the poor conditions of sidewalks, broken street lights, overgrown trees, trash, illegal dumping and vacant lots. Residents also expressed frustration with the City's inaction and lack of response when problems are reported to the Streets Department website or through 311.

While the City is responsible for street infrastructure, residents and community groups can organize, advocate, and promote hands-on initiatives to maintain the neighborhood clean and safe. A small task force comprised of block leaders, property owners and engaged residents can coordinate a comprehensive

audit to assess the physical condition of individual blocks, identify areas in need of attention and outline an action plan for ongoing maintenance initiatives. The action plan may include projects that can be implemented by community members, and advocacy for projects that require action by City agencies and other community partners.

AARP AARP Walk Audit Tool Kit Worksheet
Street Safety and Appeal

Community Name: _____
 Location/Street Name(s): _____
 Audit date: _____ Start time: _____ AM | PM End time: _____ AM | PM

YES | NO | OTHER *Stop any statements that don't apply.*

THE LOCATION HAS:

- 1. Places to sit
- 2. Shade trees
- 3. Grass, flowers and landscaping (if yes, is the greenery well maintained? _____)
- 4. Awnings, outdoor umbrellas or other shelter from rain and other weather conditions
- 5. Drinking fountains (if yes, are they working and clean? _____)
- 6. Public restrooms (if yes, are they clean and safe? _____)
- 7. A transit or bus shelter (if yes, is there seating? _____)
- 8. Trash receptacles (if yes, do they appear to be regularly emptied?)
- 9. Buildings and/or homes that are well-maintained
- 10. Informative signage
- 11. Well-placed signage
- 12. Streetscape features (art, signage, etc.) that are representative of/suitable for the community
- 13. Pedestrian-scaled lighting
- 14. A posted speed limit that seems suitable (if yes, does it appear that drivers are obeying the limit? _____)

IMPRESSIONS:

- 1. The location/street is a safe and appealing destination
- 2. The location/street is a safe and appealing travel route
- 3. The location/street appears to be safe for users of all ages, abilities, races, income levels, etc.
- 4. The location/street appears to be safe for pedestrians during both the day and night
- 5. Pedestrians appear to be safe from moving vehicles
- 6. Pedestrians appear to be safe from crime, harassment or similar threats

For "Yes" or "Other" answers, use the space below or on the back of this worksheet to briefly explain the response.

NOTES ON OTHER OBSERVATIONS:

Walkability of the area, based on the findings above: Great Acceptable Mixed Poor

Visit AARP.org/WalkAudit to download, print, copy and distribute additional worksheets.



Recent initiatives at the local and City level look to address ongoing trash and illegal dumping issues. The MVMCDC Landcare crew works in partnership with PHS to maintain neighborhood spaces and respond to residents reports of illegal dumping; the City's Clean and Green Initiative also tackles trash, illegal dumping and other nuisance and quality of life issues. More recently, Councilmember Gauthier's office also made a commitment to coordinate regular block cleanups in the 3rd District.

There are multiple ways to perform a neighborhood maintenance audit. Block level assessments can be conducted with the support from block leaders and neighbors. The AARP Walk Audit Toolkit provides useful forms and materials to help guide audits.

STRATEGY

S2.1

Maintain sidewalks clean and safe

Sidewalks are a vital part of neighborhood life. Residents who took part of the neighborhood walk back in the Summer of 2024 observed poor and unsafe conditions of sidewalks throughout residential blocks. Beyond physical issues like cracked pavement, uneven surfaces and missing sections, other obstacles like unsecured trash cans and construction fences contribute to make sidewalks unsafe and unsightly. Inconsistent sidewalk conditions pose a significantly higher risk for people with physical disabilities, families with young children and elderly residents.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOME

- Complete sidewalk assessment
- Sidewalk repair campaign
- Assistance to low income homeowners
- Improved trash management by property owners

a. Identify priority areas for repair and maintenance:

A block-by-block assessment can help identify areas in need of attention. Major pedestrian corridors, school routes and areas around transit stops should be prioritized for repairs. A campaign starting with non-residential property owners such as businesses and institutions can help mobilize the community and encourage landlords and homeowners to also do their part in repairing and maintaining the sidewalk in front of their properties.

b. Assist low-income property owners with sidewalk repairs and maintenance:

In Philadelphia, property owners are responsible for maintaining their sidewalks safe and clean. That responsibility poses a special challenge to low-income homeowners who may not have the financial means to cover the costs of sidewalk repairs. While home repair programs run by the City are not specifically focused on sidewalk repairs, programs like Habitat's Critical Home Repair include sidewalks in the scope of health and safety repairs eligible for assistance. Other programs offer low-interest loans for

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

- Assessment: Up to two years
- Implementation: Ongoing with annual milestones

essential home repairs. Organizations like the Mantua NAC can help connect residents to these programs.

c. Address trash bins and other obstacles:

Trash bin issues have become increasingly prominent in Mantua due to the increased number of apartment buildings in the neighborhood. Sidewalks in front of those buildings tend to stay cluttered with multiple and often overflowing containers. Property owners should be encouraged to maintain trash bins secured within the boundaries of their property and have them rolled to the sidewalk only on trash day.



Philacans have improved trash management in the City but without a designated location in the property, the cans add to the clutter and hazards pedestrians encounter on the sidewalks.

KEY PARTNERSHIPS

- MCA
- Mantua NAC
- Property owners

STRATEGY

S2.2

Improve nighttime lighting conditions

Research shows that street lighting is second only to increased police presence as an effective way to prevent crime. Well-lit streets make spaces more visible to neighbors and police and encourage residents to spend more time outside of their homes thereby increasing movement and informal surveillance. Mantua residents expressed concern about the City's delays in addressing reports of broken street lights and a particular concern about dark alleys that have minimal lighting and are not part of the police routes.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOME

- Improved lighting on alleys
- Broken lights are repaired
- Porch light program is established
- Improved lighting at public buildings

a. Advocate as a community for improved lighting on alleyways: Mantua was part of the City's recent effort to convert all streetlights to LEDs. According to data from the Philly Street Improvement Project, the vast majority of streetlights in the neighborhood has been replaced and only a few scattered locations are left to be addressed in 2025. Assuming that the LED upgrade will be fully completed this year, a primary focus for the community could be to organize a nighttime neighborhood walk to assess the impact of LED replacement on street conditions and advocate for additional lighting in streets and alleyways that remain dark and feel unsafe. Playgrounds and open spaces should be included in this assessment.

b. Establish a front porch light program: Communities throughout the country have seen success in combining streetlight upgrades with initiatives encouraging residents to keep their front porch lights on at night as an additional lighting and safety measure. The program typically includes the free installation of light fixtures combined with the supply of energy efficient bulbs and timers.

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

- Ongoing

c. Enhance exterior lighting at public buildings and public spaces: Just as porch lights can enhance the sense of security on residential streets, structures like schools, churches and community buildings can add another layer of safety with the installation of exterior lighting on building facades. Enhanced lighting will also help highlight neighborhood landmarks like the Firehouse and McMichael School and can integrate special lighting initiatives for holidays and winter months.



With the goal to improve nighttime lighting and visibility, communities like the West Bayfront in Erie, PA leveraged grant funding to install exterior lighting on residential and commercial properties. The program covered the costs of lighting fixtures and bulbs along with a gift card to encourage residents participation.

KEY PARTNERSHIPS

- Block leaders
- City of Philadelphia
- PECO
- Property Owners

STRATEGY

S2.3

Combat illegal dumping

Despite multiple efforts by the City and local leadership to eradicate illegal dumping in the neighborhood, this is still a top concern among Mantua residents. Aspen Street remains a hotspot area where contractors doing work in the City are said to routinely dump their trash. Other streets and vacant lots serve as dumping areas for disposal of large household items such as mattresses and old furniture. The City has taken a more aggressive approach to illegal dumping, installing cameras and fining dumpers but residents feel that additional action is needed to prevent illegal dumping from happening altogether.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOME

- Illegal dumping is eradicated from Mantua
- Improved waste management among households
- Improved City services

a. Maintain and activate vacant lots:

Vacant lots can be primary dumping areas and property owners have the responsibility to secure and maintain their vacant lots. While enforcement is a top priority to ensure these lots are not used as dumping grounds, positive community uses and activities can help deter illegal dumping. From community gardens to informal weekend events, residents can partner with lot owners to send a message that the neighborhood has eyes on those spaces. Other opportunities to address vacant lots are discussed under Strategy 2.5.

b. Disseminate information about

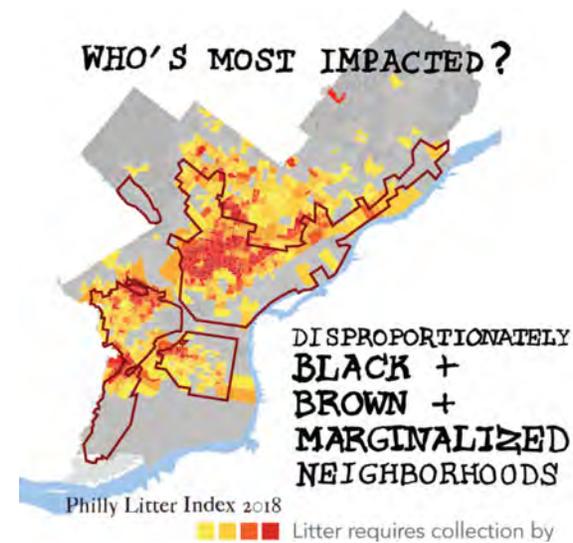
proper trash disposal: From trash days to recycling to disposal of large items, there is a lot that residents need to know to make sure their household trash is properly disposed. A regular campaign focused on household waste management can help minimize the amount of trash that is dumped throughout the neighborhood. Equally important is the proper use of neighborhood trash cans which can overflow and contribute to negatively impact the physical environment.

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

- Up to two years

c. Join Citywide efforts to advocate for improved dumping, waste and litter solutions:

The Trash Academy advocates for adequate waste collection, litter abatement and elimination of open dumping in Philadelphia. The organization can be an important partner, providing Mantua residents with the resources to advocate for better City practices and enforcement of waste regulation.



Dumping is identified as one of the most pressing environmental justice issues in Philadelphia. The Trash Academy launched Clean Philadelphia NOW, a Citywide campaign to end dumping in the City by 2028 along with other efforts to reduce waste, eliminate litter and promote a circular economy. (Graphic by Trash Academy)

KEY PARTNERSHIPS

- Vacant lot owners
- MCA / Mt Vernon Manor CDC
- City of Philadelphia
- Trash Academy

STRATEGY

S2.4

Secure and maintain vacant lots

The number of vacant lots in Mantua has decreased significantly since 2013 with the influx of new development. However, while most City owned lots have been re-purposed for redevelopment, there are still approximately 400 privately owned vacant lots scattered throughout the neighborhood. While redevelopment is the ultimate goal for these properties, residents want to see interim solutions to keep these spaces from posing health and safety risks to the community.

a. Support homeowners and organizations who wish to acquire a vacant lot:

According to the Philadelphia Land Bank website, there is a very limited number of City owned lots left for acquisition in Mantua. Most of them are small infill lots not suitable for development. A program encouraging residents who wish to acquire and maintain lots adjacent to their properties will go a long way in improving safety conditions on residential blocks. Used as gardens or as simply secured side yards, these spaces can be converted into safe private or community amenities.



The Philadelphia Land Bank website shows City owned vacant lots left in the neighborhood. Mantua residents have expressed interest to adopt or acquire these lots but have bumped into challenges going through the City's application process. Guidance from Mantua NAC and the local council office will help facilitate this process and create positive uses for vacant lots.

b. Report vacant lots: Block leaders and neighbors can help address safety issues in vacant lots by consistently reporting unsecured, abandoned and overgrown vacant to the City. Even if problems are not immediately addressed, recorded complaints show that the community is tracking problem sites and can lead to fines and ultimately City action toward acquisition.

c. Advocate for vacant lot acquisition:

Private vacant lots that represent a nuisance in the neighborhood should be included in potential acquisition list for City's consideration. As City owned properties, these lots can be re-purposed for development or community uses. A coordinated effort to map and report nuisance lots can help inform dialogue with the city.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOME

- Residents are able to acquire vacant lots
- Regular reporting of issues with vacant lots
- City acquires nuisance lots

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

- TBD

KEY PARTNERSHIPS

- City of Philadelphia
- Philadelphia Land Bank
- Mantua NAC / MVMCDC

STRATEGY

S2.5

Support neighborhood clean-up and beautification initiatives

Community clean ups and beautification projects provide residents the chance to connect regularly with their neighbors towards positive change. Efforts to integrate cleanups in the community schedule will go a long way in building community while also maintaining the neighborhood safe and clean.



Knowing my neighbors contributes to the feeling of safety. People look out for one another and that too brings a sense of safety.



ANTICIPATED OUTCOME

- Regular schedule of block cleanups
- Regular schedule of neighborhood cleanups
- Additional community trash cans

a. Support block level clean up efforts:

Block clean up efforts provide a great opportunity for neighbors to meet and come together around a practical and concrete goal. As they require coordination primarily between same block residents, block level cleanups can be done more frequently and include other initiatives such as greening and beautification projects. The Philadelphia More Beautiful Committee (PMBC) supports local neighborhood groups in their efforts to keep their blocks clean through organized clean-up events, supplies, micro-grants and beautification contests. Block leaders must be registered to participate.

b. Schedule seasonal clean up targeting parks and public spaces:

Annual or semi-annual clean-ups bring the broader community together to focus on streets, parks and public spaces. City initiatives such as the Philly Spring Cleanup provide participating community groups with support and materials. Local churches and community groups are critical partners in outreach and organization efforts. The MCA Youth Ambassadors Program engages in weekly clean-up projects in Mantua.

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

- TBD

c. Request community trash cans for neighborhood corridors and public spaces:

Community members have expressed the need to increase the number of community trash cans, especially along high pedestrian traffic areas such as transit corridors, schools and parks. The Department of Sanitation partners with local organizations and businesses to place wire mesh trash baskets in designated neighborhood areas. Partner organizations adopt the basket and are responsible for securing and maintaining the baskets according to City's guidelines.



Community trash cans provided by the City of Philadelphia consist of wire mesh baskets with metal toppers decorated by local artists. They provide an opportunity to add community branding and art to local streetscapes. (Photo: Fishtown community cans)

KEY PARTNERSHIPS

- MCA
- Block leaders
- PMBC
- Philadelphia Dept of Sanitation

PUBLIC SAFETY

GOAL S3

Traffic safety is public safety

Traffic safety emerged as a top public safety priority in community discussions. Despite recent improvements done under the City's Vision Zero program to address dangerous traffic conditions, accidents are still re-occurring events impacting residents' daily routine. To ensure that pedestrians, transit riders, cyclists and drivers can move safely through the neighborhood, day and night, residents have called for essential improvements including additional traffic calming solutions along neighborhood corridors, ADA compliant sidewalks, safer bicycle lanes and a balanced approach to parking needs. Looking into the future of Haverford Ave as a hub for community life, a new vision for a safe and pedestrian friendly neighborhood corridor has emerged seeking to inform future public and private investments.



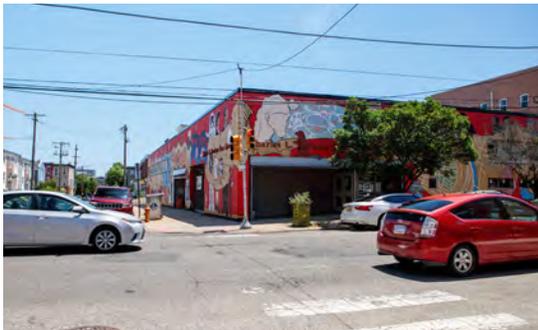
The neighborhood walk held in the Summer of 2024 gave community members an opportunity to discuss traffic safety

STRATEGY

S3.1

Implement traffic calming solutions on neighborhood corridors and around schools and playgrounds

Under the City's Vision Zero Program, speed cushions and timed traffic signals were installed to slow down traffic. These measures have helped but have not fully addressed the challenges of vehicles speeding through the neighborhood and creating an unsafe environment for pedestrians and cyclists.



Faded crosswalk on 34th Street by the branch library. This is an area of high pedestrian traffic, especially children and senior citizens.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOME

- Reduced number of traffic related accidents
- Residents feel safe walking in the neighborhood

a. Continue to prioritize improvements along neighborhood corridors: Residents continue to prioritize 34th Street, Mantua Avenue and Spring Garden Ave for future safety improvements. Restriped crosswalks, painted bumpouts and signage are low cost but effective solutions within the City's traffic safety toolbox that complement previous investments and improve safety conditions along those corridors and primary intersections.



Painted curb extensions expand pedestrian space and alert drivers to slow down as they approach the intersection

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

- TBD

b. Install traffic calming solutions around schools, parks and community buildings: Four residential corridors were identified for speed cushions, enhanced crosswalks and painted bump outs: 33rd Street (by Wallace St playground), 39th Street (by 39th and Olive playground), Aspen Street (by Miles Mack) and Fairmount Ave (by McMichael School). Proper signage advising drivers about their proximity to children zones will also help ensure a safer environment in residential blocks.



Add clear and visible signage by schools and playgrounds

KEY PARTNERSHIPS

- City of Philadelphia / OTIS
- Others TBD

STRATEGY

S3.2

Continue to invest in Mantua's bicycle infrastructure

A safe and enhanced infrastructure will encourage more residents to use bicycles for transportation and recreation. Building on the established network of neighborhood bike lanes, the next steps should include the following:

LEARN TO RIDE!



In an effort to promote bicycles, the Bicycle Coalition of Philadelphia offers FREE bike riding lessons to children and adults.

a. Advocate for enhanced bike lanes:

Residents reported that marking on existing bike lanes is faded, making them barely noticeable on the road. That has a direct impact on traffic safety for all road users. Since Mantua's bike lanes are unprotected or shared lanes, clear marking is essential to ensure a safe road environment. Restriping and green colored traffic paint will communicate to drivers that they are driving on shared roads and remind them to watch for cyclists. Clearly marked roads will also ensure that cyclists prioritize the use of designated bike ways over streets and sidewalks. Signage should also be enhanced.



Philadelphia has adopted green pavement for bike lanes and sharrows in the City. Green pavement will enhance visibility and help ensure the safe use of bikes in Mantua.

b. Extend the Mantua trail path through 40th St:

As the only separated bike path in the neighborhood, the trail path along Mantua Avenue provides a safe alternative for cyclists traveling across the neighborhood. The existing path covers the stretch from Spring Garden Ave to 34th Street. The next stretch will complete the connection through 40th St and beyond. The missing stretch of approximately 0.6 miles is a critical component of the Mantua greenway and is further discussed under Goal 4 of this plan.

b. Add bike racks: Bike racks are an integral part of a safe bike infrastructure and should be available in different parts of the neighborhood, especially community facilities such as the library, playgrounds and school.

c. Promote bike culture: Bikes are still met with some resistance and at times seen as a symbol of neighborhood gentrification. An intentional effort to expand their use across age, race and income groups will also ensure the safe use of bikes among Mantua residents. Indego and the Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia, represented in Mantua by two Indego Ambassadors, provide resources such as classes, group rides and support to communities looking to embrace bicycles as a way to get around in the City.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOME

- Safe and enhanced bicycle infrastructure
- Mantua trail path connected through 40th St
- Expanded use of bikes among residents

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

- TBD

KEY PARTNERSHIPS

- OTIS, City of Philadelphia
- Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia
- Indego / Neighborhood Bike Works

STRATEGY

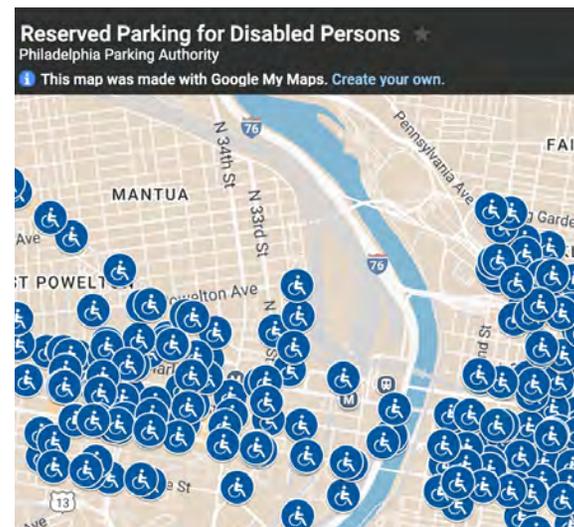
S3.3

Manage street parking

Competition for street parking has become more intense in the past five years with the influx of new residents to Mantua. Residents who were once able to park in front of their homes now experience a new unfamiliar reality. Today, two in three Mantua households own a car and new residential development does not always include off-street parking spaces for residents. Pressure on street parking may continue to intensify in the next ten years but the community can start taking steps to address this challenge.

a. Prioritize handicap accessible parking:

Safe and convenient access to accessible parking spaces should be a priority for residents who need this accommodation near their homes. The Philadelphia Parking Authority reserves parking spaces for disabled persons around public buildings and community facilities and accepts applications for reserved accessible parking spaces in residential areas. A targeted effort to implement handicap accessible spaces in areas where they are most needed will be a first positive step towards an equitable parking strategy.



PPA's map shows that Mantua does not have any reserved parking for disabled persons.

b. Petition for parking permit zones:

Residents can also opt to petition the City to zone certain neighborhood blocks for residential parking permit. The process requires the support of residents of targeted blocks. Once a permit zone is approved, residents must register their vehicles to get a permit. This may be a practical solution in congested sections of the neighborhood.



PPA's map shows that Mantua does not have any reserved parking for disabled persons.

c. Convert vacant lots into parking lots:

As demand for parking grows, certain vacant lots in the neighborhood may serve as an additional parking resource to help alleviate pressure in residential areas or along commercial corridors.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOME

- Handicap accessible parking spaces around public buildings and community spaces

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

- TBD

KEY PARTNERSHIPS

- Philadelphia Parking Authority
- Philadelphia Land Bank
- Philadelphia City Planning Commission



2

HOUSING

Current and future residents find housing options that meet their needs

"Housing sets the stage for your life. Where you live gives you that foundation and determines how the rest of your life goes." - Mantua resident, 2024

Like other first ring neighborhoods around Center City, Mantua has seen a significant amount of housing development in the past ten years, shifting from a long pattern of disinvestment that characterized the neighborhood through the mid 2010s to a steady influx of public and private housing projects. This new era has brought new challenges and the opportunity to advance a more equitable and inclusive approach to housing.

Over 500 new units were added to Mantua's housing stock since 2010. Old homes were repaired and rehabilitated with support from the City and community partners or converted into multi-family units catering to the growing demand for student housing. New development brought housing options for young tenants and new affordable homes for low- and moderate-income households. Between preservation projects and new construction, approximately 200 new affordable units were built since the 2013 WAM! Plan. Ongoing housing investments have contributed to the revitalization of Mantua's residential fabric, breathing new life into vacant lots and abandoned structures.

But development and market pressure have also impacted the community with new challenges including rising home values, increased property taxes and a growing affordability gap putting long-term residents (renters and homeowners) at risk of displacement. The COVID pandemic intensified some of these trends, as people lost their jobs and the ability to pay rent, facing eviction and the risk of homelessness. Homeownership stands at 25%, less than half of the City's rate of 53%.

City, state and federal programs have helped minimize the impact of these changes on families but additional efforts will be required to balance growth and development with the need to ensure affordability and protect residents assets, securing a more equitable and inclusive approach to housing development. A series of projects and initiatives can help reverse declining homeownership, expand housing options and prevent displacement and improve the effectiveness of zoning tools to advance neighborhood goals.



BUILDING ON THE H.O.M.E PLAN

The Housing Opportunities Made Easy - H.O.M.E Plan, unveiled by Mayor Cherrille Parker in April 2025, describes the City's vision for the production of 13,500 new homes and preservation of 16,500 existing housing units over the next four years. The plan proposes the allocation of \$2 Billion towards implementation of various initiatives

tackling process, policies, programs and funding sources associated with housing production. Aiming to expand homeownership and rental housing opportunities across income levels and throughout the City, the plan promotes increased assistance to homeowners in their efforts to maintain and preserve their homes and to renters with expanded funding for rental assistance, utilities and anti-eviction programs. The plan also supports landlords and developers investing in the preservation of existing structures and new housing construction. Zoning updates, streamlined community review process, tax incentives are some of the many tools included in the plan aimed to move projects through implementation in timely and more effective ways.

This City effort sets the tone for coordinated projects and initiatives advancing Mantua's housing goals for the next several years. It also provides the community an opportunity to actively participate in future decisions that may impact zoning and community engagement processes around housing initiatives.

HOUSING

GOAL H1

Protect and expand homeownership through new construction, rehabilitation and preservation initiatives

Aside from its value as one of the most critical opportunities for generational wealth among individuals and families, homeownership is one of Mantua's most valuable community assets and a critical foundation for social cohesion and community engagement. The goal to reverse the trend of decline in homeownership must be at the heart of any future housing strategy for

the next ten years. Strategies to achieve that goal include the preservation of existing owner occupied homes, assistance to existing and first time home-buyers, and ongoing housing production including rehabilitation and new construction of market rate and affordable homes.




The path to protect and expand homeownership in Mantua will require multiple partnerships and a multifaceted strategy to connect residents to resources and to preserve, rehabilitate and build new homes. (From left to right: Home repair program by Habitat, Turn the Key Homeownership program, Habitat new homes built on Reno Street. Top: Mantua NAC announcement for community information session addressing tangled titles).

STRATEGY

H1.1

Establish a homeownership preservation program

Mantua has close to 700 owner occupied housing units. Approximately 75% of these homes are mortgage free. If the goal is to ensure that owner occupied homes remain owner occupied in the future, it is critical to support current homeowners in their efforts to stay in their homes, preserve their assets and plan for the future when they decide to sell or transfer their properties. A multifaceted program involving education, advocacy and services will help individual homeowners and, in the process, preserve this important community asset.

a. Education: Establish a calendar of educational seminars for community members addressing the multiple facets of homeownership, from the first mortgage payment to estate planning. While there are several programs in the City focused on guiding people through the steps of purchasing a home, resources are less abundant once buyers become homeowners. Mantua's homeowners, young and senior, will benefit from information that helps them maintain their homes not only as shelter but as a primary source of generational wealth. A homeownership learning series held in the neighborhood will help inform residents about their rights and responsibilities, addressing critical topics such as foreclosure, home maintenance and repairs, estate planning, tangled title, property taxes, etc.

b. Services: Housing counseling services can help connect residents to service providers and through one-on-one interactions guide individual homeowners through their specific questions and needs. Annual housing clinics held in the neighborhood can help connect Mantua residents to the wealth of resources assistance programs they may be able to access to protect and preserve their properties.

c. Advocacy: Local organizations like MVMCDC and the Mantua Powelton Association can use their platforms to continue to advocate at the City and State level for homeownership preservation programs. Representation and coordination with other City organizations will help reinforce the importance that homeownership plays in the fabric of the community and help attract resources to Mantua.

d. Home repairs and upgrades: Nearly x% of Mantua homes are over 100 years old. Older homes require ongoing maintenance, have outdated systems and are not energy efficient. Programs to help homeowners upgrade and repair their homes already exist in Philadelphia and have had a positive impact supporting low income families in the neighborhood. In the next ten years, a new round of home repairs and upgrades should be coordinated through programs like the City's 'Restore, Repair and Renew initiative' or Habitat for Humanity's 'Home Preservation' program, targeting essential repairs and energy upgrades at low or no costs.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOME

- Regular calendar of education sessions
- Residents are connected to housing services and providers

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

- TBD

KEY PARTNERSHIPS

- MVMCDC / Mantua NAC
- City of Philadelphia / PHDC
- Mantua Powelton Association
- Philly5000
- Affordable Housing Center of Philadelphia

STRATEGY

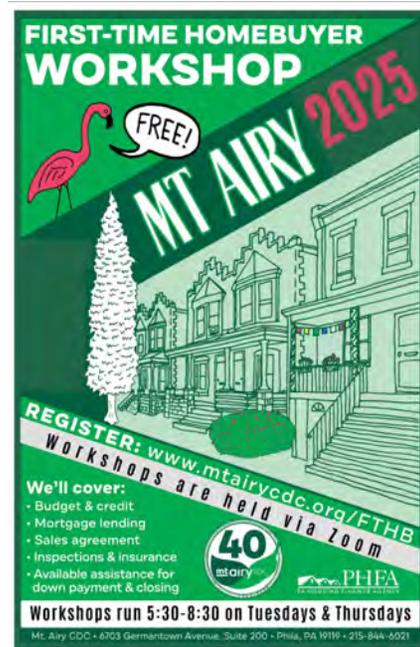
H1.2

Support first time homebuyers

Homeownership remains as a top goal for many in Mantua. Community feedback from the neighborhood survey showed that 1 in 2 renters want to purchase a home in the community and 79% of those that would consider purchasing want to learn more about homeownership assistance programs. To make this an attainable goal and help people prepare for the steps leading to the purchase of their first home, a targeted initiative to connect residents to resources could be facilitated by local organizations with support from City partners.

a. Promote first time homebuyer workshops in the neighborhood:

Coordinated efforts between the MVMCDC and local CDCs in Powelton and Belmont can help create a series of workshops geared to future homeowners. This program can connect residents to HUD certified housing counselors who can guide them through the home purchase process.



Mt. Airy CDC offers a helpful example of first time homebuyer programs geared to specific neighborhoods in the City

b. Connect residents to financial literacy programs:

Financial literacy was identified as a critical step in the path for economic opportunity. Philadelphia offers a wealth of financial counseling organizations including the City's Financial Empowerment Centers. Broader dissemination of information about these resources will help Mantua residents prepare for major life projects including homeownership.

c. Prioritize Mantua residents for future homeownership opportunities in the neighborhood:

Mantua is a target area for 40 new homeownership units to be built in the next five years as part of the City's Turn the Key Program. This is a unique opportunity for Mantua residents interested in purchasing a home in the neighborhood. An intentional effort to connect interested residents to the program and help them prepare financially for this move will have a positive impact for the neighborhood. An additional move in that direction may include financial incentives such as down payment assistance for eligible Mantua residents.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOME

- Annual calendar of first time homebuyer workshops
- Mantua residents participate in Turn the Key program

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

- TBD

KEY PARTNERSHIPS

- MVMCDC
- City of Philadelphia / PHDC
- Clarifi
- Dornsife Center

STRATEGY

H1.3

Establish a Community Land Trust to support affordable homeownership initiatives

Community land trusts (CLTs) are effective tools for affordable housing production. They are non-profit organizations that purchase and develop properties on behalf of communities, selling homes at affordable prices but retaining ownership of the land in perpetuity. This model ensures the long term affordability of properties while building equity for homeowners. A CLT model can serve Mantua's homeownership goals while preventing gentrification and displacement.

a. Join efforts with other community

groups: Mantua shares many of the same housing challenges faced by other neighborhoods in West Philadelphia. A coalition of community groups to create one CLT serving the district will strengthen the initiative through expanded capacity, solid partnerships and shared resources. WCRP followed that path when establishing the Community Justice Land Trust in North Philadelphia.

b. Seek community input:

Community understanding of the CLT concept is critical. Early engagement will ensure that people are informed and can appreciate the benefits of CLT in ensuring affordability.

c. Advocate for City and institutional support:

The City will be a critical partner for the long-term success of the CLT. Getting the City involved in the early visioning process shaping the mission and goals for the CLT will ensure long term support to the process, land transfer and potential funding opportunities. Likewise, support from universities, community foundations and philanthropic organizations will help set the framework for financial support and technical assistance.

HOW DO CLTS WORK?

The first Community Land Trust was founded in 1969 by black leaders in southwest Georgia. Their experiment was the seed of a movement of over 300 CLTs operating throughout the country. While CLTs operate in a variety of activities, the vast majority focus on housing production.

The central characteristic of a Community Land Trust is that it separates ownership of the land from ownership of the house sitting on that land. When buying a house, homeowners enter into a long-term lease of the land with the CLT. The CLT maintains ownership of the land while the homeowner owns the house. When homeowners decide to sell, they retain the value of what they invested in the house plus some of the house's appreciation. This approach helps maintain the long term affordability of homes in the community.



Developed by MVMCDC, the future homes on Shedwick Street follow the CLT model, ensuring the long term affordability of these new homes in the neighborhood. Four homes are currently under construction with anticipated completion in 2026.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOME

- Established CLT in Mantua

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

- TBD

KEY PARTNERSHIPS

- MVMCDC
- West Philadelphia community groups
- City of Philadelphia

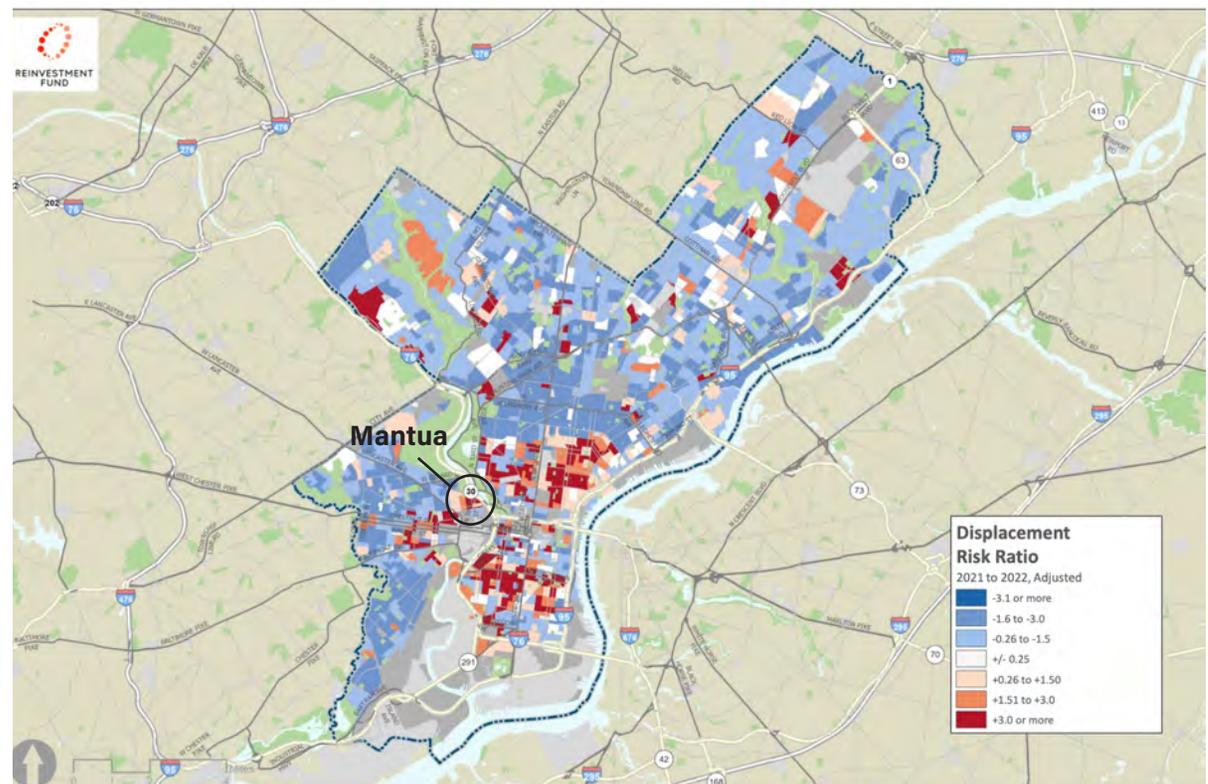
HOUSING

GOAL H2

Prevent displacement

Results from the community survey conducted during the planning process reveal that displacement is one of the most significant concerns among Mantua residents. Over 60% of respondents, homeowners or renters, expressed concern about rising real estate prices and their impact on local families' ability to remain in the neighborhood. Data from the 2023 Market Value Analysis conducted by the Reinvestment Fund reinforces residents' concerns, identifying Mantua as an area with medium to high displacement risk. Over the next ten years, multiple measures will be required to alleviate the pressure on current and future residents, and ensure that Mantua remains affordable for low and moderate income households.

DRR Values, 2021 – 2022



Map from the 2023 Philadelphia Market Value Analysis prepared by the Reinvestment Fund describes displacement risk ratio at census block level. Red describes areas with high risks of displacement. Parts of Mantua fall in that category.

STRATEGY

H2.1

Connect at-risk renters to housing assistance and resources

Over the past five years, Philadelphia residents have experienced a significant increase in housing costs. That has been especially true for low and moderate income renters burdened by rent increases that severely outpace income growth. Housing affordability issues are further exacerbated in high demand neighborhoods like Mantua, where residents have struggled with the risk of eviction and homelessness. City assistance programs have been instrumental in helping minimize some of those risks and neighborhood organizations continue to play a critical role in connecting residents to those resources

a. Connect local tenants to housing resources and assistance programs:

The MVMCDC and Mantua NAC have served as critical resources helping people navigate housing assistance programs and services. In future years, these organizations can build on that important role and expand their reach by facilitating housing information sessions and disseminating helpful information through online and printed channels. This approach can complement one-on-one advisory services and help educate the broader community about housing resources available. As an example, a user friendly portal of housing resources may be added to the MVMCDC website and include the following:

- **Mantua affordable housing directory:** Mantua has a solid inventory of affordable housing units. As new housing projects are developed and completed, the community will benefit from easy access to information about affordable homes located within the boundaries of the neighborhood. A simple list describing name, location and type of affordable housing projects in the area will provide helpful references for residents looking to move or relocate in Mantua.

- **Housing assistance programs directory:** Philadelphia provides a wealth of resources and services in support of residents facing housing insecurity. A central webpage providing links to existing City and state programs as well as services offered by local non-profit organizations can facilitate and maximize access to those resources among Mantua residents.

c. Advocate for housing assistance policy and programs:

Housing advocates have been actively engaged in City dialogue about ways to expand the reach of existing housing assistance programs in support of low and moderate income households. From targeted services to increased funding for existing programs, Mantua residents and community groups can have an active role in broader City discussions, advocating for improved access to safe and affordable rental housing. The MVMCDC already is a member of the Philadelphia Coalition for Affordable Communities (PCAC) and the Philadelphia Association of Community Development Corporations (PACDC), two major housing advocates in the City.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOME

- MVMCDC and Mantua NAC expand their role as a local resource for housing programs

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

- TBD

KEY PARTNERSHIPS

- MVMCDC / Mantua NAC
- City of Philadelphia
- HopePHL

STRATEGY H2.2

Expand affordable rental housing opportunities for all incomes

Mantua has seen a significant increase in affordable housing production in the past ten years. Mt Vernon Manor CDC alone has secured the preservation of over 150 units in addition to new multifamily projects currently under construction. Other efforts from WPRE, Mission First, WCRP and PHA have contributed to expand affordable housing options but there is still a gap of housing opportunities for very low income families and for residents who do not qualify for affordable housing but cannot afford market rate prices.

“Mantua residents are seeing an enormous amount of development. However, we would like to see development that includes us and is accessible to us” - Mantua resident, 2021

ANTICIPATED OUTCOME

- Increased availability of affordable housing options across household types and income levels

a. Leverage the MIN Overlay District as a tool to increase affordable housing production for low income households:

Mantua is one of several neighborhoods in Philadelphia included in the Mixed Income Neighborhood Overlay District. This zoning designation was implemented in 2023 to support the production of affordable housing units in neighborhoods that are vulnerable to development pressure. The regulation requires that 20% of residential units built in multifamily projects with 10 or more units be dedicated to households earning up to 40% of the Area Median Income (AMI). The RCO review process provides the community an opportunity to advocate for affordable housing when market-rate developers seek zoning relief for multifamily projects, and support development that creates new affordable housing for low income households in the neighborhood.

b. Develop middle income housing:

There is a gap in housing opportunities for middle income households (80 to 120% AMI) who do not qualify for affordable housing but cannot afford standard rental prices. This segment of the market is often left with limited housing options, especially in rapidly

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

- TBD

appreciating neighborhoods like Mantua. Future housing initiatives prioritizing middle income housing would fill that gap, supporting individuals and families who wish to stay in the community. The City supports middle income housing with programs like the Workforce Housing Credit Enhancement (WFH).

WHAT IS AMI?

AMI (Area Median Income) is an important reference used by governmental agencies to determine who is eligible to live in affordable housing. AMI is the midpoint of a region's income distribution, where half of the families earn more than that midpoint value and half earn less. Philadelphia's AMI is based on incomes from 11 counties across four states. In 2024, that amounted to \$114,400 for a family of four. Most of the affordable housing built in the City is for households who earn between 30% and 100% of the AMI. In recent years, housing advocates in the City have called for a localized AMI that more accurately reflects Philadelphia incomes, which are substantially lower than the regional AMI. In 2024, the median income for a family of four in Philly was \$87,000. That gap helps explain why Mantua residents feel excluded from affordable housing opportunities in the neighborhood.

KEY PARTNERSHIPS

- Private developers
- City of Philadelphia
- MVMCDC
- MCA

STRATEGY

H2.3

Preserve current stock of affordable rental properties

Mantua has a successful track record of affordable housing preservation. In the past 15 years alone, over 150 units were preserved through a concerted effort by the MVMCDC to acquire, renovate and maintain affordable rental homes. Other property owners and developers like the West Philadelphia Real Estate have also invested in the renovation of row-homes as affordable units. In the next ten years, a multi-pronged initiative based on ongoing partnerships with small landlords and property owners will help sustain the preservation of affordable homes in the neighborhood.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOME

- Existing affordable homes are preserved as affordable rental properties for the next ten years.

a. Encourage small landlords to maintain affordable rental properties:

Small landlords who typically own one to two housing units represent approximately 75% of all licensed landlords in the City (Pew Charitable Trust report, 2021). They are typically local neighborhood residents and important partners in the effort to preserve homes affordable to low and moderate income families without the need of government subsidies or other affordability mechanisms. For high demand neighborhoods like Mantua, an intentional effort will be required to encourage local landlords to maintain their properties at affordable rent prices. At the City level, PHDC and other City agencies provide assistance, training and support to small landlords including financial incentives to property owners who commit to preserving affordable rents. The MVMCDC and Mantua NAC can help connect local landlords to these resources and help them identify potential tenants.

b. Track affordable properties funded with low income housing tax credits: The low income housing tax credit program (LIHTC) is a primary source of subsidies for affordable housing production and requires property

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

- TBD

owners to maintain affordability for a minimum of 15 years and up to 30 years. At the end of this period, owners have the choice to exit the program and are no longer required to maintain their properties affordable to low income households. LIHTC properties in Mantua built before the year 2000 are coming to the end of the affordability restrictions in the next five years. This is a good time to track the status of these properties and advocate for property owners to maintain affordability passed the required 30-year period.

LANDLORD ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

City programs like the Rental Improvement Fund and the Adaptive Modifications Program are targeted to support landlords who provide affordable housing in the City.

Through the Rental Improvement Fund, landlords can access forgivable loans for housing repairs and upgrades for up to \$25,000 per unit. Eligible repairs include new roof, windows, heating and cooling systems, electrical and plumbing, and asbestos, lead and mold remediation.

The adaptive modifications program is available to landlords with special needs tenants who are eligible to receive free adjustments to improve mobility within their homes.

KEY PARTNERSHIPS

- Small landlords
- Property managers
- MVMCDC
- City of Philadelphia (PHDC)

HOUSING

GOAL H3

Improve zoning effectiveness as a tool to advance neighborhood goals

Approximately 60% of parcels in Mantua are zoned for single-family use. However, growing market demand for rental housing continues to add multi-family development to Mantua's residential blocks, transforming the character of sections of the neighborhood. Residents supported remapping the community to primarily single-family uses in 2016 and, through the RCO process, have regularly voiced opposition to the expansion of market-rate, multi-family housing in core residential blocks. To date, these steps have not been sufficiently effective in aligning new development with neighborhood goals. Strengthening the RCO input process along with revisiting the underlying zoning in the community will help guide new development to better reflect community objectives while welcoming new housing options and new residents to the neighborhood.

Recent development occurring in the neighborhood is often at odds with the community desire to protect the character of Mantua's residential blocks



Residents have supported multi-family apartment buildings along neighborhood corridors like Haverford Avenue. (left). But multifamily buildings (4 to 8 unit structures) have become a common feature in residential areas zoned for single-family uses.

STRATEGY

H3.1

Revisit neighborhood zoning map to preserve single-family homes in the residential core and allow for a mix of uses along neighborhood corridors

Revisit Mantua's underlying zoning to address market demands while directing new multi-family development and commercial uses away from core residential blocks of the neighborhood. Focus higher density and mixed-use development on major corridors such as Haverford Ave, Mantua Ave, and 34th St. Maintain and preserve the single-family character of core residential blocks where development of new family housing remains viable.

a. Maintain RSA-5 single-family zoning in the residential core:

Mantua residents have remained consistent in their desire to preserve the area as a community of family homes. Single-family RSA-5 zoning remains appropriate for much of the neighborhood where single-family attached and semi-attached homes remain the predominant building type. Maintaining the single-family zoning on core residential blocks is essential to preserve the neighborhood character, especially as development pressure continues to push north and west in the community.

b. Explore opportunities for mixed-use and higher density zoning along neighborhood corridors:

New, diverse housing options and expanded commercial spaces will ensure that Mantua can offer the services and opportunities residents need. Directing this type of development to appropriate locations will help meet demand while protecting the core residential blocks from over development. Haverford Ave, 34th Street and Mantua Ave are appropriate locations for new mixed-use higher density housing. Consider expanding higher density designations such as CMX 2 and CMX 2.5 along these corridors as one component of a strategy to direct density away from stable single-family block.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOME

- Preserve the character of Mantua's residential blocks and direct higher density development to appropriate locations within the neighborhood.

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

- TBD

KEY PARTNERSHIPS

- MCA
- Philadelphia City Planning Commission
- Third Council District
- Developers

STRATEGY

H3.2

Improve the effectiveness of the RCO process on ZBA decisions about development in Mantua

As the coordinating Registered Community Organization (RCO) in Mantua, MCA convenes community meetings to solicit resident input on proposed development projects that require zoning relief. Despite vocal community opposition, multifamily projects have been regularly approved by the ZBA. Residents feel unheard and disengaged from the process, which in turn further lessens the impact of local opinion on ZBA decisions. A series of steps can help break that cycle and strengthen the impact of community's voice on ZBA decisions.

a. Increase turnout at community zoning meetings with more effective communication:

Resident turnout and representation is critical for the RCO review process to be impactful on ZBA decisions. Expanded outreach and information sharing around impactful cases can bring more residents to the table and magnify the community voice. Key steps include:

Consistent flyer distribution. Developers are required to notify impacted properties within 200 feet of a proposed development. However, the official notice sent by attorneys is often written in legal terms that can be unclear and confusing for a lay person. Hand delivered flyers by the MCA with clear and accessible language regarding proposed projects and the agenda for community meeting can help get the word out and increase turnout, particularly to residents who will be immediately impacted by the proposed development. Consistency in communication and outreach is key. Consider hiring paid staff to prepare and distribute flyers.

Outreach to local groups. Leverage Mantua's civic network by reaching out to local leaders

like churches and community groups with information about upcoming cases.

Options for participation: In person attendance at RCO zoning meetings can be challenging for residents with busy schedules, childcare needs or mobility considerations. Consider adding a remote option to enable residents to participate in the discussion and vote on cases. If required, identify potential sources of funding and technological assistance to add a virtual option.

Attendance at ZBA meetings. Input from RCO zoning meetings where residents vote in support or opposition of development proposals requiring zoning variances is one part of the ZBA's decision making process. Residents and community groups can have additional impact on ZBA decisions by attending ZBA hearings and sharing their concerns directly with members of the ZBA. While ZBA meetings occur during working hours, which often prevents neighbors from attending. Consider assigning rotating responsibilities to neighbors to ensure neighborhood representation at ZBA meetings as needed.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOME

- TBD

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

- TBD

KEY PARTNERSHIPS

- MCA

b. Strengthen community input through increased coordination with local leadership:

In addition to the RCO, the ZBA takes input from the local council office and the Planning Commission prior to granting zoning variances. Increased communication between MCA and the Third Council District office can ensure that the Councilperson is fully aware of the community position and provides full support to the community. A representative from the council district office can also be asked to support the community and speak directly to the ZBA at the public hearing.

Solicit input from PCPC. The Philadelphia City Planning Commission is the third point of input for ZBA decisions. In addition to providing direct input to the ZBA, the community planner assigned to Mantua can also provide advice and expertise to the community during the community input process.

c. Where zoning variances may be appropriate, work with developers to improve the quality of multi-family infill development:

In some cases, the community may choose to conditionally support a project that aligns with community objectives. For those cases, the following steps can help ensure that new buildings will contribute to enhance the neighborhood environment:

Pre-screening. Committee led pre-screening meetings can encourage an applicant to align their proposal with community objectives prior to the RCO review meeting.

Bring local expertise to the dialogue:

Residents who work in real estate development (designers, planners, etc) can contribute their expertise to the RCO review process. Encourage their participation at meetings and as members of the neighborhood zoning committee. Their involvement can help advance the dialogue with the development team and improve the quality of proposed projects.

Provisional Support. A community position on a development proposal can be conditional on the project addressing issues important to the neighborhood. ZBA approval can be conditioned on an attached proviso based on the applicant meeting specific community demands.



3

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Young Mantua residents are safe, healthy and have access to educational and economic opportunities

"If we take care of them, the future is secure" - Mantua resident, 2024

One in four Mantua residents is under the age of 19. Today's youth will be tomorrow's neighborhood leaders and they need the tools to become active members of their community.

Between the opportunities afforded by the 2013 Choice Neighborhood Initiative and the 2016 Promise Neighborhood Implementation Grant, positive changes occurred in the past ten years regarding education and youth development in Mantua. The fight to keep the Morton McMichael School open brought the community together around shared long term goals, some of which implemented through funding from the Promise Neighborhood Implementation Grant. Today, McMichael benefits from a committed community of teachers, staff and parents who work collaboratively to support students and local families. Parent engagement, along with dedicated teachers, committed partners and an improved physical environment, have contributed to enhance learning conditions and stabilize student enrollment.

The COVID pandemic caused significant setbacks for local families, impacting students' well being and academic performance. Young residents are said to still be suffering the impact of those years, lagging behind academically and dealing with personal trauma.

Looking into the next decade, improved education ranks as a top neighborhood priority for families with children, with a focus on academic performance, physical and mental health, access to enrichment activities and opportunities to help prepare young adults as they become active members of their community.



To ensure McMichael School remained open, the community, including the Mantua Civic Association and Drexel University's School of Education, worked to develop and implement school improvement plans, including physical improvements to the building and playground area. (Photos: Philadelphia Inquirer)

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT GOAL Y1

Increase enrollment at Morton McMichael School and secure it as a school of choice

Originally designed with capacity for approximately 800 students, McMichael School has experienced a steady decline in enrollment over the years. The demolition of Mantua Hall in 2008 was a major factor contributing to that decline as families living in the nearby public housing community were forced to relocate to other parts of Philadelphia. In the past ten years, a shift in the neighborhood demographics combined with a wider range of school options in West Philadelphia further reinforced the trend of lower enrollment which currently stands at around 300 students between Kindergarten and 8th grade. Residents report that the smaller student body has fostered a stronger sense of community and a supportive learning environment for students. Through partnerships with local foundations and universities, the school has been able to offer a variety of special programs like the Young Dragons, a middle school STEAM summer program offered by the Malcolm Jenkins Foundation in partnership with Drexel University; and the Sixers Youth

program, providing middle school students with a broad curriculum combining life skills, physical and emotional health support.

Looking into the next ten years, the Mantua community aim to leverage investments made in the school's learning and physical infrastructure to expand student enrollment and solidify McMichael's position not only as a solid choice for academic learning but as a resource center for youth development with a range of out-of-school opportunities for educational, physical, social and emotional development.



McMichael robotics team (Photo: McMichael School website)



McMichael students learning with the Philadelphia Zoo (Photo: Philadelphia Zoo Instagram)



Basketball team (Photo: McMichael School website)

STRATEGY

Y1.1

Seek Community School designation

Community schools are structured around the premise that children are better prepared to learn when they are healthy, well fed and safe. Over the past decade, McMichael School has made significant progress in promoting initiatives that enhance the learning environment with supportive services and a closer attention to students' specific needs. This approach has helped minimize absenteeism and improve learning outcomes. In the next ten years, the community seeks to take this experience to the next level and solidify a holistic approach with expanded funding and additional partnerships.

a. Re-apply for Community School

designation: Mantua families have expressed interest in the Philadelphia Community Schools Program as a model to help remove barriers that prevent McMichael students from thriving in the school environment. Through a partnership between the City of Philadelphia and the Philadelphia School District, Community Schools offer students at designated schools supportive services and additional resources addressing school climate, physical and mental health, community engagement opportunities and expanded access to out-of-school educational and recreational programs. Introduced in 2017, the Community Schools Program is supported by the Philadelphia Beverage Tax and has been implemented in twenty Philadelphia schools, demonstrating that case management at the school level can have a positive impact in school attendance, learning outcomes and student engagement. Individual schools must apply to be designated a Community School. The McMichael community can mobilize and seek partnerships in support of the next round of applications.



UNIVERSITY ASSISTED COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Another potential direction for consideration by the McMichael School community includes a model where one of the local universities serves as the lead partner in support of the school. While McMichael has benefited from ongoing partnerships with higher education institutions like Drexel University, the model of University Assisted Community Schools defines a sustained role for partnering universities as anchor organizations that are able to mobilize funding, expertise and human resources to improve student learning and well being at local schools.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOME

- McMichael is designated a community school by the City of Philadelphia

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

- TBD

KEY PARTNERSHIPS

- Philadelphia School District
- City of Philadelphia
- Mantua parents and caregivers

STRATEGY Y1.2

Leverage space at McMichael for out of school youth activities

Community members hope to see McMichael leverage its ample physical facility for community use, serving as a safe haven where children, teens and young adults from Mantua and surrounding neighborhoods can access out-of-school recreation and learning activities. Underutilized school spaces can help match the local demand for youth enrichment activities with service providers in need of space for their programs.

a. Assess space capacity at McMichael School: A smart use of existing school facility can help meet community aspirations while also generating income for the school district. A careful assessment of the school's physical assets and space capacity should help inform opportunities for partnerships with service providers aiming to repurpose underutilized school spaces for out of school programs. Underutilized classrooms, auditoriums, community rooms and outdoor spaces can support a multitude of youth oriented programs without impacting the school's schedule and operations. .

b. Recruit program partners: After school programs, evening classes and summer camps are some of the many ways to expand the use of the school building into a hub for youth learning and enrichment activities. Activities discussed by the community include: sports, theater, dance, arts, tutoring, homework assistance, nutrition and cooking lessons among others.



The PAL operates 18 locations in the City but has limited presence in West Philadelphia

POLICE ATHLETIC LEAGUE

PAL Centers provide a good example of successful partnerships between non-profit organizations and schools. Mantua residents expressed interest to partner with the PAL to establish a new youth development center at McMichael School. The PAL offers after-school activities and summer camps with a focus on education, athletic and recreational opportunities to children ages 6 to 18. Three of the PAL locations in Philadelphia are school based sites. A new location in Mantua would fill a void of services in West Philadelphia.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOME

- Youth Development Center is established at McMichael School

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

- TBD

KEY PARTNERSHIPS

- McMichael School / School District
- Philadelphia Athletic League
- Parents Association

STRATEGY Y1.3

Empower parents and caregivers to have an active involvement in their children's education

Parent engagement in schools has been proven to have a positive impact in student's behavior and academic performance. McMichael parents, who fought hard, back in 2012, to protect and keep the school from closing, can become instrumental partners supporting their children's education through engagement and advocacy.

a. Restore the McMichael Home and School Association: With assistance from the Mantua Civic Association and guidance from other HSAs in West Philadelphia, McMichael parents can reorganize, recruit members and restore activities in support of their neighborhood school. As a liaison between parents and school staff, HSAs meet regularly to share updates with parents, plan activities and discuss concerns. They help build community through seasonal events, fundraise in support of school needs and advocate at the school district level on behalf of families. A strong HSA will be an important building block in Mantua's civic organization.



Parents and teachers come together to welcome students on their first day back to school (Photo: McMichael School)

b. Expand families' participation in Action for Early Learning: Led by Drexel University, the Action for Early Learning Initiative (AFEL) emphasizes the importance of quality early childhood education as the foundation for children's development. The program seeks to connect families of young children in West Philadelphia to high-quality local childcare providers, preparing children for kindergarten and a successful educational experience at grade level school. A partnership between AFEL and the Mantua Civic Association can help build awareness and increase participation of Mantua families in the program.



AFEL initiative brings families, childcare providers and community ambassadors together around early education opportunities (Photo: AFEL Five Year Report)

ANTICIPATED OUTCOME

- Active Home and School association
- Increased number of families enrolled in high quality Pre-K programs

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

- TBD

KEY PARTNERSHIPS

- MCA
- McMichael School parents
- School staff
- School district
- Drexel AFEL Initiative

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

GOAL Y2

Maximize opportunities for youth engagement in and out of school

Beyond improvements at McMichael School, community members stressed the need to expose kids to a wide range of enrichment opportunities. The Mantua Civic Association has been instrumental in establishing partnerships with organizations like the Dornsife Center, the Philadelphia Zoo and the Academy of Natural Sciences to bring enrichment programs to the neighborhood. Families have flocked to these opportunities, demonstrating a pent-up demand for kids activities. But youth programs that are more typically available beyond the boundaries

of the neighborhood have limited reach among Mantua's families. Expanding access to these resources is an important community goal. Families also expressed the need to support skill building activities and introduce young people to practical, hands-on experience that can help shape them as they grow into productive members of their community. Youth participation in community work and leadership opportunities was identified as another top priority for community action.



The Dornsife Center offers hands on programs in science and technology (Photo: Dornsife Center website)



Dimplez 4 Dayz is a teen resource center located on Haverford Avenue and a reference in youth-led programming and leadership

WHAT ARE MANTUA'S YOUNG RESIDENTS PASSIONATE ABOUT?

A first step in the effort to maximize youth engagement in community programs will be to listen and understand young people's areas of interest and goals. An in-depth focused discussion across different age groups will help identify areas of interest and inform the focus of future work required to connect residents to out of school programs. Consider forming a Youth Advisory Council to help conduct surveys and participate in workshops .

STRATEGY Y2.1

Connect Mantua families to youth programs

While Philadelphia offers an abundance of enrichment activities for young people, Mantua families have not been able to fully benefit from access to those resources. Key steps can help overcome the typical barriers faced by local families looking to participate in youth programs.

a. Use neighborhood communication channels to disseminate information about out-of-school programs:

The Mantua NAC, local schools, churches and community groups can lend their communication channels (newsletters, social media and website) to help disseminate information about youth programs in the neighborhood. Additionally, Mantua NAC can also serve as a first stop to help families negotiate the process of registering their kids in programs and address potential barriers to access those programs, including transportation and registration costs. Another local solution to enhanced information includes a quarterly newsletter (online or printed) advertising out-of-school programs available throughout the year.

b. Promote events to connect youth service providers to the community:

Community events and fairs allow service providers the opportunity to connect directly with families and share information about programs available to children across age groups. Local neighborhood groups can partner with McMichael School and other local schools to organize annual events geared specifically

to the youth demographic. Informational sessions can also be included in the agenda of regular neighborhood meetings as a practical and inexpensive ways to introduce these opportunities to the broader community.

c. Address barriers to participation:

Transportation and registration costs are often seen as barriers to participation in out-of-school programs outside of the neighborhood. Transportation services offered by service providers would help minimize logistical challenges for working families. Another alternative could include the coordination of a shared ride program bringing local parents and caregivers together to help transport students to their activities during weekdays.

Multiple programs offered by the City or local non-profits are free of charge but may still require a registration fee. To help families cover fees and other costs associated with participation in youth programs, consider establishing a Mantua Youth Fund to be supported through local donations and/or organizational grants.

(See Strategy Y2.3 for further detail)

ANTICIPATED OUTCOME

- Increased number of Mantua students participating in out-of-school programs

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

- TBD

KEY PARTNERSHIPS

- Mantua NAC
- Philadelphia Parks and Recreation
- Local schools and churches
- Service providers

STRATEGY Y2.2

Establish partnerships for skill building and youth leadership opportunities

As the community works to expand out-of-school opportunities for local youth, functional skill building and community service were identified as two key areas of attention. From driving lessons to cooking or swim lessons, from communication skills to financial literacy, from civic engagement to community leadership, families wish to provide their children the essential skills they will need to become self-sufficient adults and active members of the community.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOME

- Skill building program at future community center
- Youth leadership

a. Partner with Drexel University to include skill building opportunities at the future community center:

With Drexel's plans to revitalize the old West Philadelphia Community Center, comes a unique opportunity to integrate a youth skill building program fully dedicated to preparing young people with the essential life competencies they will need as they transition into adulthood. This program can include topics like cooking and nutrition, CPR, swimming, driving, financial literacy, social and communication skills.

b. Establish a youth leadership council in Mantua:

Mantua has a long history of powerful youth leadership initiatives. From the Young Great Society in the 1970s to DB4 ten years ago, generations of Mantua leaders have committed their time to mentor and guide young people for active engagement and future leadership roles in their community. An organized Mantua youth group will help mobilize kids and create a central hub for youth interaction and communication with organizations, creating opportunities for involvement in neighborhood initiatives, community service and employment.

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

- TBD

A local youth group will also be able to partner with organizations to promote events and disseminate information about topics of interest to the young demographic.



DB4

Da Bottom for Community (DB4) provides a powerful example of successful youth leadership. Established in 2012 to bring youth voice to the We Are Mantua! planning effort, this group of young residents ages 18 to 24 quickly became actively involved in multiple facets of their community's life, working in local summer programs for middle school kids, organizing anti-violence and pro-voting events, inviting speakers to discuss youth themes and coordinating community campaigns.

KEY PARTNERSHIPS

- Mantua Civic Association
- MVMCDC
- Drexel University / Dornsife Center
- Program providers
- Philadelphia Student Union

STRATEGY Y2.3

Develop a program of incentives for youth involvement in out of school activities

Incentives can be an effective tool to motivate youth participation in out of school activities and community service. Community members support the concept of tangible and targeted incentives as a way to recognize young residents' commitment to their personal development and to their community.

a. Seek youth input on appropriate incentives : Mantua residents wish to reiterate the community's commitment to its youth with a program that supports and recognizes youth's participation in out of school activities. Research shows that incentives are effective ways to boost participation, promote consistent attendance and reinforce a sense of responsibility among pre-teens and teenagers. Beyond the sense of fulfillment derived from doing something that benefits themselves, incentives also help youth understand that their involvement in out of school and community activities is an important investment they make in their community.

At planning sessions, participants suggested ideas such as annual awards or 'mileage' models which allows program participants to rake in participation points and exchange them for tangible rewards on a regular basis. Although these appear to be effective approaches, incentives should be directly informed by input from young program participants. They may also vary across age groups and according to the nature of programs.

b. Identify a lead partner for incentives program: A local neighborhood organization such as the MCA or a local church can help develop and manage the future Mantua youth incentive program. The nature of their responsibilities will vary according to the anticipated program but can include outreach, coordination of award events, fundraising, management and partnership with potential donors and sponsors.



IMAGINE.. THE ANNUAL MANTUA YOUTH AWARDS!

What if Mantua had its own version of an Oscar Ceremony fully dedicated to encouraging and recognizing youth excellence and participation in programs and community initiatives?

ANTICIPATED OUTCOME

- TBD

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

- TBD

KEY PARTNERSHIPS

- TBD



4

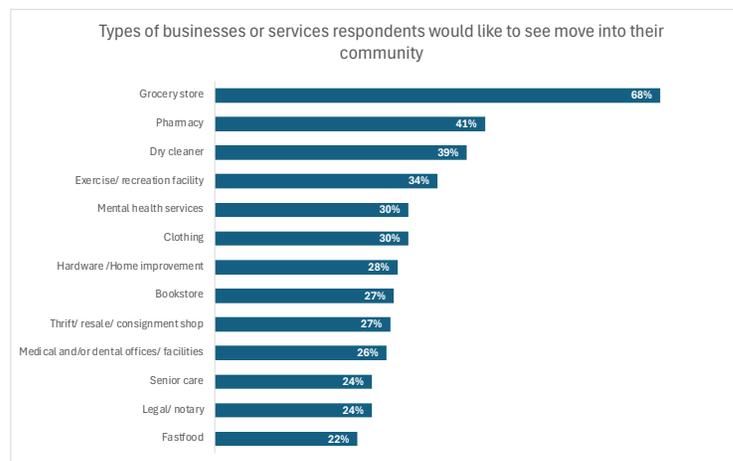
PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Mantua leverages its community assets to secure an equitable and vibrant community for residents and visitors alike

Residents and community partners have made significant progress in the last ten years in their efforts to improve Mantua's physical environment and upgrade community assets. For the next ten years, neighborhood goals include a more effective and equitable use of these assets with a focus on sustainable programming, environmental sustainability, neighborhood identity and economic opportunity.

Several of the priorities from the 2013 WAM! Plan associated with the neighborhood physical environment have been accomplished or are well underway. Ongoing real estate development has contributed to repopulate the neighborhood, reducing vacancy and putting vacant land back to active and productive neighborhood uses; public and private investments have ensured that Mantua's parks and open spaces were upgraded, and helped secure new community spaces like the Mantua Urban Peace Garden, the Dornsife Center and the Mantua Civic Association. The goal for the next ten years is to maximize the use of these critical investments and ensure equitable access for all residents across age and income groups.

Neighbors are eager to see the old West Philadelphia Community Center re-activated as a community recreation facility; they wish to see an organized structure supporting the maintenance and programming of neighborhood parks and playgrounds; they have also stressed the goal to tackle environmental challenges with local solutions addressing stormwater infrastructure, neighborhood trees, access to fresh food, and education programs. The future mixed-use development on Haverford Ave provides a unique opportunity to re-imagine the avenue as a hub for economic activity, attracting desired neighborhood businesses and services. Finally, residents expressed the goal to see Mantua's rich history of community work, planning and leadership memorialized throughout the neighborhood through public art initiatives, historic markers and other physical interventions celebrating the neighborhood's past, present and future.



Results from the community survey describe desired neighborhood services and businesses. The future Haverford Village mixed-use is slated to include a grocery store and a health clinic, two uses that can help anchor other small businesses along the avenue.



New storefronts, public art and neighborhood history are envisioned as key components of a revitalized Haverford Ave.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

GOAL E1

Optimize the use of existing public spaces to meet community needs

Open spaces and community facilities are places where Mantua residents gather for recreation, social connection, physical activity, collaboration and community work. Mantua is well served with playgrounds, green spaces and community buildings, the result of intentional work by community members who fought for generations to create and maintain these critical assets for community use. Today, every Mantua resident has access to an open space or an indoor community facility within walking distance from their home.

Since the last plan, existing playgrounds were upgraded and new spaces were added to the neighborhood inventory, including the Mantua greenway (1st Phase), the MCA community space and the Mantua Urban Peace Garden. The neighborhood also lost spaces like the Haverford Community Center, and the Old Boys and Girls Club on Haverford Avenue remains temporarily closed.

A primary goal for the next decade is to leverage Mantua's network of public spaces to create a hub of sports, recreational and wellness activity in West Philadelphia. Increased programming opportunities, strategic partnerships and enhanced organizational capacity are at the heart of future initiatives. Optimizing the use of these assets and generating the resources required to keep them active, serving the needs of Mantua residents and neighbors from surrounding communities.



The 37th and Mt Vernon Playground was upgraded in 2016 with support from the Trust for Public Land.

DID YOU KNOW?

In 2024, the City of Philadelphia ranked 32 among the top 100 cities in the Country with respect to access to park and open spaces. The ParkScore rating was established by the Trust for Public Land to measure the quality of park systems according to five different indicators.

Philly ranked very high on ACCESS, with 95% of its population living within less than half-mile from a park. But the City ranks low on INVESTMENT, with a total of \$86 spent per capita each year in public spaces, well below the average of \$124 spent per capita nationwide. Investment includes resources allocated from City agencies, private organizations, non-profits and volunteer hours.



Sources (Philadelphia):
City agencies (72%)
Private Orgs (28%)
Volunteer hours (1%)

STRATEGY

E1.1

Target the Miles Mack Recreation Center as a hub for organized youth sports and wellness activities

With 2.3 acres of land area and an upgraded facility, Miles Mack has the infrastructure required to support an organized calendar of outdoor sports and wellness activities. Easy access from Mantua Avenue and connection with the Mantua Greenway make this space an ideal hub for sports and wellness serving Mantua and other neighborhoods in West Philadelphia.



Youth sports has the potential to bring the neighborhood together"

Mantua resident, 2024

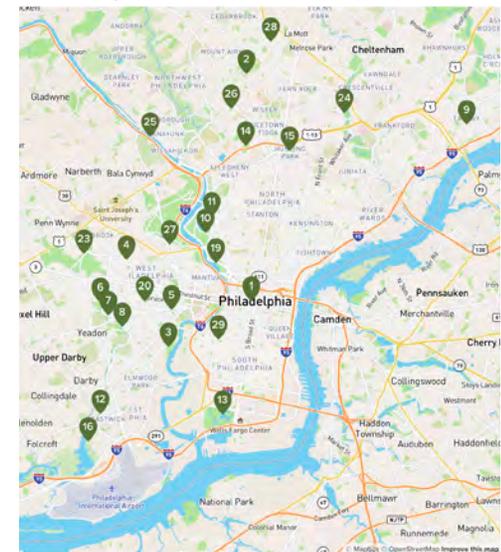


a. Activate the sports field with organized sports: The sports field at Miles Mack is a unique amenity in West Philadelphia and has the potential to serve the needs of a broad range of organized sports activities. While youth recreation should be at the center of any programming, the space can also be activated with summer camps and adult recreation teams. A partnership between the Department of Parks and Recreation, local families, churches and non-profit organizations can help bring a seasonal youth recreation program to the neighborhood along with summer camps and other uses. Given the proximity to local universities, partnerships with Drexel or Penn should also be considered to help support local sports at Miles Mack.



Miles Mack is a completed recreation center with a sports field, basketball courts, playground and fitness equipment, a sprinkler, and restrooms. The space can accommodate a programs across age groups

b. Promote wellness activities: Residents stressed the important role of physical activity in their lives during the COVID pandemic. At that time, the community came together to participate in outdoor wellness activities including yoga, meditation and dance classes. Building on the existing space and presence of outdoor fitness equipment, Miles Mack can serve as an ideal hub for organized outdoor fitness and wellness activities. For residents who expressed the desire to create a local chapter of We Walk PHL, Miles Mack can serve as a meeting location for a route including Mantua greenway and 34th Street, along the Philadelphia Zoo.



We Walk PHL is a partnership between City agencies and the Fairmount Park Conservancy to promote walking groups in 28 City locations. Mantua residents have expressed interest to form a local chapter. (Source: My Philly Park Blog)

ANTICIPATED OUTCOME

- Miles Mack becomes a hub of organized youth sports and wellness programs

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

- TBD

KEY PARTNERSHIPS

- We Walk PHL
- Philadelphia Dept of Parks and Recreation
- Philadelphia Dept of Public Health

STRATEGY

E1.2

Activate the Mantua Urban Peace Garden as a hub for sustainable gardening programs and resources

Established in 2013, the Mantua Urban Peace Garden (MUPG) was envisioned as a space where Mantuans could build community while growing and sharing fresh food. For the next ten years, the community has the opportunity to expand on that core vision and create a hub where residents can also access educational programs, jobs, and resources around gardening and food security.



The Urban Peace Garden includes a total of 52 plots available to residents and community groups.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOME

- Active involvement by Mantua residents
- Expanded resources and programming
- Long term protection of the land for gardening purposes.

a. Expand resident involvement:

Although active for over ten years, the MUPG is still not broadly known by community members. Resident involvement has been steady but limited. A concerted outreach and communication effort about the garden's annual activities along with partnerships with schools, local churches and businesses can help increase awareness and resident involvement. Fresh food stands, community gatherings, seed and plant donations are some of the ways to invite community members to learn and get involved with their neighborhood's community garden.

b. Reimagine the MUPG as a resource center for all things gardening:

Reimagined as a gardening hub, the MUPG can provide residents the resources they need to keep a private or shared vegetable garden. That may include gardening lessons, gardening supplies, seed sharing, a tool library and a range of educational programs organized around fresh food and nutrition. This expanded scope can help build a gardening community in the neighborhood and turn Mantua's private backyards into productive sources of fresh food.

c. Expand organizational capacity and partnerships:

The long term success of the MUPG will lie on an expanded organizational and operational capacity to support current and future activities. A non-profit partner can help MVMCDC take the gardening hub concept to the next level, bringing in staff, dedicated budget and a clear mission guiding future work. Businesses, City organizations and universities will be critical partners in that endeavour, helping with capacity, resources and programs.

d. Consider a partnership with the Neighborhood Gardens Trust:

As Mantua continues to attract development, protecting and preserving the MUPG as a community resource becomes a priority. The Neighborhood Gardens Trust has been a critical partner of community gardens throughout the City, helping ensure their protection for the long term. NGT also provides technical assistance and funding for capital improvements.

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

- TBD

KEY PARTNERSHIPS

- MVMCDC
- Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (PHS)
- Neighborhood Gardens Trust (NGT)
- Farm Philly
- Black Girls with Green Thumbs

STRATEGY

E1.3

Establish a Friends of Mantua's Parks group to help maintain and program open spaces

Philadelphia has over 100 community led groups partnering with the Dept of Parks and Recreation to make local parks and open spaces stronger and more welcoming to local residents. With a unique network of open spaces, Mantua will benefit from having a dedicated Friends of Mantua's Parks group to protect and reinforce the importance of these spaces for the community, help with programming, fundraising and community initiatives.

a. Form the Friends of Mantua Parks group:

The very first step towards creating a new park friends group is to identify neighbors willing to volunteer their time to support and advocate for Mantua's open spaces. Fortunately, the neighborhood already has several residents who dedicate themselves to maintaining existing open spaces safe and welcoming to residents. These individuals will likely be the first ones to see the value of an organized stewardship group to plan and leverage their individual efforts into effective initiatives. Once a core group of neighbors is identified, the Stewardship Office at the City's Department of Parks & Recreation (PPR) can provide guidance towards the group formation, helping establish a mission, goals and strategies for communication and community engagement. Although the Park Friends group can be established with a very small group of neighbors, community members should include representation from each of the four Mantua parks to ensure equal representation in planning and decision making.

b. Join the Parks Friends Network: A great benefit in forming a Parks Friends Group is the opportunity to learn and work collaboratively with many Park Friends group across Philadelphia. PPR works with the Fairmount Park Conservancy to bring parks friends groups together to exchange experience and resources at quarterly meetings, social media and annual events such as the LOVE Your Park Day.



PARTNERSHIPS FOR PARKS

Multiple organizations locally and nationwide recognize the importance of open spaces in local communities and are eager to support local park initiatives. In the face of limited public resources available for open spaces, one of the major benefits of having a well established Park Friends Group is the opportunity to develop partnerships with such organizations and seek their support. Whether it be through grant funds, capacity building or material resources, partnership with organizations in and outside the neighborhood are increasingly the way to advance physical improvements, events and programs.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOME

- Friends of Mantua's parks group is formed

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

- TBD

KEY PARTNERSHIPS

- Philadelphia Parks and Recreation (PPR)

STRATEGY

E1.4

Partner with Drexel University to secure community recreation opportunities at the old West Philadelphia Community Center

Drexel acquired the old community center on Haverford Avenue in 2018 to expand community programming offered at the Dornsife Center. This building provides a unique opportunity to address three key priorities identified by the community:

a. Multipurpose community spaces:

An important program for the future community space includes the return of the old gym as a multipurpose space for community gatherings, performing arts and indoor sports program. Residents also want to see programming for senior residents including fitness classes and social gatherings.

b. Swimming pool: Mantua residents have fond memories of the old indoor swimming pool as a place for recreation and physical activity. As one of the very few indoor pools in West Philadelphia, this space can benefit the broader community of residents, students and University City workers.

c. Skill building and youth center: Youth development opportunities were identified as a top priority for the neighborhood and the old community center provides the ideal setting for a program mixing recreation with education, health and leadership programs.



THE TEEN WAREHOUSE

Located in Wilmington, Delaware, the Warehouse provides an innovative model for a youth development program that could be housed at the future community center. The Warehouse provides teenagers a safe haven and a place for growth and career development, offering a comprehensive program of activities for teens age 13-18, including recreation, education, arts, career and health programs.

RISE is a flagship 12-week workforce program offered at the Warehouse looking to prepare teens and young adults with the skills and resources they need to pursue professional careers.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOME

- Community programs included in the renovated community center

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

- TBD

KEY PARTNERSHIPS

- Drexel University / Dornsife Center
- Others TBD

STRATEGY

E1.5

Mantua Greenway

The Mantua Greenway is a 1.5 mile pedestrian and bicycle corridor running along the northern end of Mantua. The greenway emerged as a concept during the 2013 WAM! planning process with the aim to create a welcoming neighborhood 'front yard' with safe and pedestrian-friendly amenities. Ten years later, a portion of that vision has been implemented, activating the stretch between Spring Garden and 34th Street. Completion of the project is a neighborhood priority for the next ten years.

a. Revisit and update concept design:

Mantua Avenue has seen significant changes in recent years as a result of the many redevelopment initiatives transforming properties along the corridor. With more residents in the immediate vicinity, the greenway will become a major focal point in the neighborhood. As the City continues to pursue funding for implementation, the community can work to revisit design concepts prepared in 2016 to verify that they still reflect the community's vision for the area.

b. Advocate for implementation:

Throughout the planning process, the City has reinforced the intention to move the greenway initiative to implementation. Mantua residents can continue to advocate for this project with consistent communication with the PCPC, OTIS and Council representatives.



Excerpts from design concepts prepared by a landscape design team in collaboration with Mantua residents (2016)

ANTICIPATED OUTCOME

- Completion of Phase 2 project

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

- TBD

KEY PARTNERSHIPS

- PCPC
- OTIS

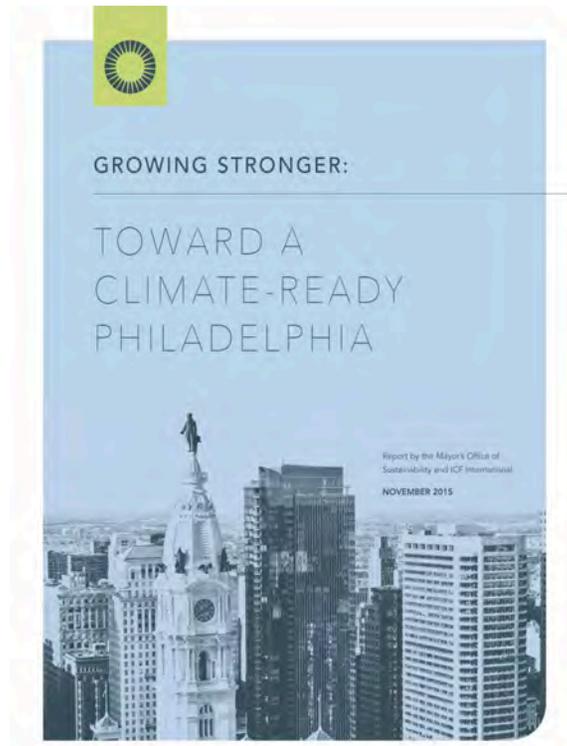
PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

GOAL E2

Advance neighborhood resilience and sustainability

Mantua residents identified resilience and sustainability as a key neighborhood goal for the next ten years. From strategies to prepare the community against climate related threats to promoting sustainable practices at home or in the community, there is a strong interest and commitment to integrate these priorities in community dialogue and action.

As the City embarks on an updated Climate Resilience Plan, Mantua residents and community leaders have a renewed opportunity to engage in neighborhood and City wide discussions addressing climate related risks and vulnerabilities and identify actions at the neighborhood and household levels to help mitigate risks and promote sustainable practices.



Mantua residents have now an opportunity to participate in the updated Climate Resilience Plan coordinated by the City's Office of Sustainability and prepare against risks associated with climate change and extreme weather events.



Ellis Playground Pool at the Olive Street Playground is one of the neighborhood resources available to help residents cope with extreme heat.



The Mantua Urban Peace Garden can become a hub for environmental education and sustainable practices

STRATEGY E2.1

Expand opportunities for environmental education and awareness

Environmental education is a key strategy identified by the community to help Mantua achieve green, resilient and sustainable goals. From youth to senior residents and across income groups, there is an incredible opportunity to integrate environmental education in current and future neighborhood initiatives. Neighborhoods provide, in fact, the ideal platform for environmental awareness and practical community initiatives with positive impact to the environment.

a. Envision the MUPG as a hub for environmental education and advocacy:

The MUPG is well positioned to become a local resource for action towards resilience and sustainability. From vegetable gardens that are kept by local youth to guest speakers and recycling campaigns, the garden can expand its mission and capacity to promote environmental programs through sustainable practices and hands-on community activities.

b. Promote in and out of school programs around environmental education:

Mantua has a well established partnership with the Philadelphia Zoo and the Academy of Natural Sciences, bringing learning opportunities about the environment to Mantua's youth. Similar partnerships can help integrate environmental education in school activities and after school programming.

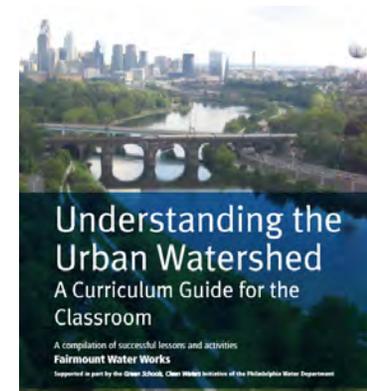
c. Promote household initiatives:

Environmental awareness starts at home. Residents can contribute to make a positive impact in the environment by adopting sustainable initiatives in their homes. Residential rain barrels, composting and recycling are just a

few practical examples of resident action that reduce environmental impact and which can be organized at the community level with support from agencies like the PWD.



The Center for Environmental Transformation in Camden (NJ) models an effective example of a community gardening resource also focused on education and advocacy.



Public agencies like PWD offer educational programs and resources to schools and community groups looking to learn about water systems and water quality.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOME

- MUPG becomes a hub for gardening and environmental education
- Partnerships for in and out of school environmental education
- Household initiatives

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

- TBD

KEY PARTNERSHIPS

- Mantua Urban Peace Garden
- PWD
- Institutional partners

STRATEGY

E2.2

Integrate green stormwater infrastructure into the scope of future development and neighborhood projects

Beyond the primary goal of managing rainwater runoff, green stormwater infrastructure helps improve air quality, reduce urban heat island effect and expand greening opportunities in neighborhoods. Through the Green City, Clean Waters program, the Philadelphia Water Department (PWD) has made consistent efforts to implement green stormwater solutions through the city. Looking forward, green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) should be an intrinsic component of future neighborhood projects in Mantua.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOME

- Green stormwater infrastructure projects are implemented in Mantua
- Improved stormwater conditions in the neighborhood

a. Advocate for GSI projects in coordination with traffic safety investments:

Traffic safety projects discussed in under Goal S3 of this plan will provide a unique opportunity to expand GSI in Mantua. Solutions like stormwater bumpouts, planters and rain gardens can also serve as traffic calming tools. PWD has already included a series of GSI projects in the scope of future Mantua Avenue improvements. Expanding that concept to other neighborhood corridors would be a natural long-term next step.

b. Advocate for GSI along the Haverford Ave corridor:

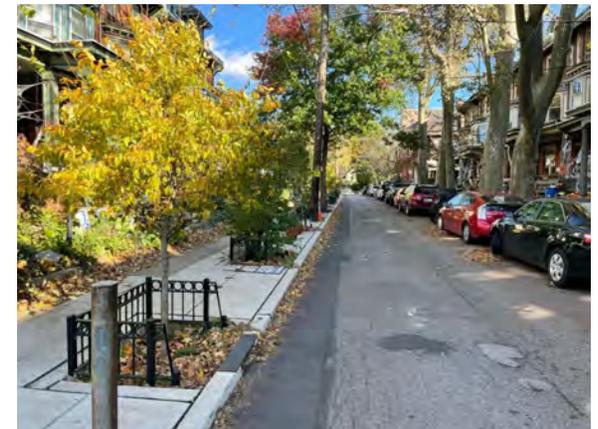
Upcoming redevelopment initiatives along Haverford Avenue will help re-activate that neighborhood corridor as a hub of commercial activity and community life. Combined to community investments proposed under Goal E3, GSI projects will help enhance safety and physical appearance along the avenue.

c. Join Soak it Up Adoption: PWD partners with communities in the City to implement, maintain and educate residents about green stormwater infrastructure. As a neighborhood

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

- TBD

with current and anticipated investments in GSI, Mantua is well positioned to apply for civic grants to help maintain existing spaces and raise awareness about their importance in the neighborhood environment.



Traffic safety and tree planting initiatives provide an opportunity to expand stormwater solutions such as bumpouts and tree trenches. (Photos: PWD)

KEY PARTNERSHIPS

- PWD

STRATEGY

E2.3

Expand tree coverage at parks and neighborhood streets

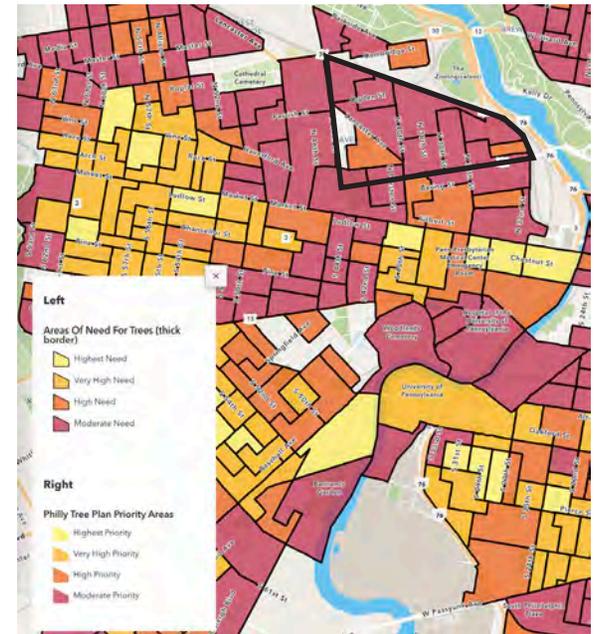
Neighborhood trees are a critical part of Philly's green infrastructure and responsible for many benefits to our urban environment. In 2023, the City of Philadelphia released the Philly Tree Plan, a 10-year strategic plan to address Philadelphia's urban forest. The plan identifies Mantua as a neighborhood with moderate to high need of trees to help mitigate the effect of extreme heat and other environmental risks.

a. Coordinate a tree planting plan for Mantua's streets:

A partnership between residents, Department of Parks and Recreation and PHS will leverage the momentum and recommendations from the Philly Tree Plan to engage the community and bring in resources in support of a multi-year neighborhood effort to add new trees to Mantua's streets. The initiative will require assessment of existing neighborhood trees and identification of priority areas for future planting. Real estate developers, institutions, churches and community groups can be important partners in the effort.

b. Identify opportunities for trees at parks and playgrounds:

Mantua's parks and playgrounds have generally limited green spaces and few opportunities for trees. A careful assessment of each park condition can help identify an opportunity to expand the tree canopy in these outdoor spaces. Trees at playgrounds also create more welcoming experience for families as they help with thermal comfort and shade.



The Philly Tree Plan identified Mantua as a neighborhood in moderate and high need for trees to help address heat island effects and other environmental risks.



The image above shows an entire block by the Wallace playground with no street trees. This is an area that could benefit from tree planting on both the sidewalk and at the park.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOME

- Expanded tree canopy along neighborhood streets

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

- TBD

KEY PARTNERSHIPS

- Department of Parks and Recreation
- Pennsylvania Horticultural Society

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

GOAL E3

Leverage Mantua's history and identity to create unique community spaces and promote economic opportunity

Community conversations held during the planning effort emphasized the important role that Mantua's history and culture play in shaping the neighborhood's character. As a neighborhood deeply committed to shaping its future over the past six decades, Mantua has a rich history of community activism, struggles, achievements, committed leadership and engaged citizenry.

In the next ten years, residents want to see that heritage recorded and passed on to future generations. Future investments in the physical environment provide a unique opportunity to celebrate Mantua's culture and identity, integrating local history and stories in community spaces. A strong and visible identity will also help attract investments and support economic activity.



Engine 44 is one of the many historic landmarks in Mantua



Neighborhood gateways, public buildings and community spaces are some of the neighborhood spaces where Mantua's identity can be celebrated.

STRATEGY E3.1

Take Mantua's history to the streets

Mantua has a rich and unique history. Residents have expressed the desire to see that history recorded and memorialized in the physical environment. From documentation efforts to public art and community markers, the next ten years should include an intentional effort to celebrate the Mantua's history and identity and integrate it into the fabric of the neighborhood.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOME

- Mantua History Initiative
- Neighborhood historic markers and other physical expressions of community history

a. Work with local partners to preserve, record and disseminate Mantua's history:

Neighborhood leaders and residents who have lived through historic moments of community engagement and action have much to share with current and future generations. An intentional effort to organize, preserve, document and share Mantua's culture and history will help reinforce the neighborhood identity and celebrate that heritage with meaningful interventions in the physical environment. A partnership with the Mantua branch of the Free Library, local universities and non-profit groups can help residents advance this initiative. Local youth can also play a major role in the effort.

Precious Places Community History Project



The Scribe Video Center, a non-profit organization located in Mantua, has supported communities looking to document their history through the Precious Places Community Project. This is one of multiple resources that could be tapped to advance the goal to preserve and share Mantua's history.

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

- TBD

b. Adopt historic markers and public art as opportunities to celebrate people and places:

At planning meetings, Mantua residents talked about the need to educate the younger generation about their community's history and encourage them to follow in the footsteps of previous leaders. Public art and historic markers can be valuable tools for commemorating neighborhood activists, places and historic moments. Mantua already has a tradition with murals. Local artists and writers can build on that tradition to establish a program of physical interventions celebrating neighborhood's places and people.



Historic markers can help identify neighborhood landmarks and celebrate local leaders.

KEY PARTNERSHIPS

- Neighborhood groups and residents
- City of Philadelphia
- Universities

STRATEGY

E3.2

Revitalize Haverford Avenue as a focal point for community life and economic activity

The revitalization of Haverford Avenue was a critical neighborhood project outlined on the 2013 WAM! Plan. Implementation steps towards that goal are now underway, with the anticipated Village Square mixed-use development currently under construction and Drexel's plans for the renovation of the old West Philadelphia Community Center in progress. Together, these initiatives will serve as catalysts for the avenue's transformation into a hub of economic activity and community life in the neighborhood.



I want to be able to shop in my neighborhood".



a. Attract businesses and services to the avenue: Once completed, Village Square and the renovated community center will bring new uses to the neighborhood and generate a significant amount of pedestrian and vehicular traffic along the avenue. That new dynamic will help attract new businesses and fill vacant storefronts with retail and services that meet the community needs. Steps to market Haverford Avenue as an attractive business location can start immediately by bringing property owners and existing businesses together around shared goals and initiatives.

Beyond a grocery store and a medical clinic, which are now included in the program for Village Square, residents have identified the following as services and businesses they would like to see in the community: pharmacy, dry cleaner, recreation facility, clothing, home improvement store, bookstore, thrift shops, medical and dental services, senior care, notary and food establishments (fast food and coffee shops).

b. Streetscape Improvements: Street lighting, landscaping, signage and street furniture (bike racks, trash cans, benches) will help tie the stretch between 34th and 40th street together into a safe, walkable and vibrant neighborhood corridor.

c. Facade improvements: Partnerships and incentives will also help local property owners with facade improvements and signage.

d. Bring the community together: By restoring Haverford Avenue to its original role as a neighborhood corridor, Mantua will be creating a place where neighbors can come together for holiday celebrations and festivals. A calendar of seasonal events on the avenue will help foster community connection and reinforce neighborhood identity.

e. Apply for funding: From national grants to local opportunities like the City's Corridor Enhancement Grant, there is a wide range of resources in support of commercial corridors. MVMCDC, MCA can lead the effort to pursue such opportunities with support from community partners.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOME

- Growing number of neighborhood businesses on the avenue
- Revitalized buildings
- Increased pedestrian traffic

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

- TBD

KEY PARTNERSHIPS

- Drexel University
- LISC
- Philadelphia Dept of Commerce



Haverford Ave has a mix of new and old ground floor retail spaces that can accommodate several of the services and businesses needed in Mantua. A collaborative effort between property owners and community partners can help create an attractive environment for private investment.



Bringing new residential units, a grocery store and a health clinic to the neighborhood, Village Square will re-energize Haverford Avenue and help attract other businesses to the area, establishing a small district.



The City's Storefront Improvement Program is among multiple funding opportunities available to businesses in support of physical improvements to buildings exteriors. This can be a tool to enhance and upgrade retail spaces on the avenue.

Once completed, the new Village Square development and the renovated community center will help re-activate the avenue, generating pedestrian traffic and creating opportunities for new businesses occupying currently vacant storefronts.



Haverford Avenue can home holiday celebrations and seasonal events like the monthly community dinner organized by the Dornsife Center. Streetscape improvements such as string lighting can help enhance the character of the avenue

A renovated community center will help re-activate and attract new investments to the avenue



STRATEGY

E3.3

Promote economic opportunity

As Mantua continues to push for improvements and attract new public and private investments, a top priority for the community is to ensure that local residents can be active participants in their neighborhood's economic activity through meaningful employment and entrepreneurship opportunities.



ANTICIPATED OUTCOME

- Local business directory is established
- Local jobs are advertised in local channels

a. Connect residents to local employment opportunities:

Between new incoming businesses, ongoing real estate development and public improvements, multiple employment opportunities will be generated in the next ten years. By advocating for local hiring and creating clear channels of communication between employers and the community, Mantua can help ensure that some of these positions are filled locally, benefiting both residents and the community. Practical solutions to advance that goal include:

- **Develop and maintain a local business directory**, listing existing businesses and professional services available in the neighborhood. This resource can be especially helpful for construction companies looking to hire contractors and sub-contractors for local construction jobs. Mantua has a wealth of professionals in the building trades who could benefit from exposure on a local business directory. Through the RCO process, the community also has the chance to advocate for local hiring and refer the neighborhood business directory as a resource for contractors.

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

- TBD

- **Establish a channel where businesses and employers can advertise open positions in the neighborhood.** Local community organizations can help connect residents to local jobs by advertising open positions through their community channels, including social media, websites and newsletters.

b. Promote and support black and brown entrepreneurship:

As new investments are made in the neighborhood over the next ten years, a priority for local community members is to ensure meaningful representation from minority owned businesses. Partnerships with organizations that support minority-owned businesses will help connect budding entrepreneurs to resources. Residents also call for retail and services that align with the needs and demand generated by local Mantua households.

KEY PARTNERSHIPS

- MCA
- MVMCDC
- The Enterprise Center



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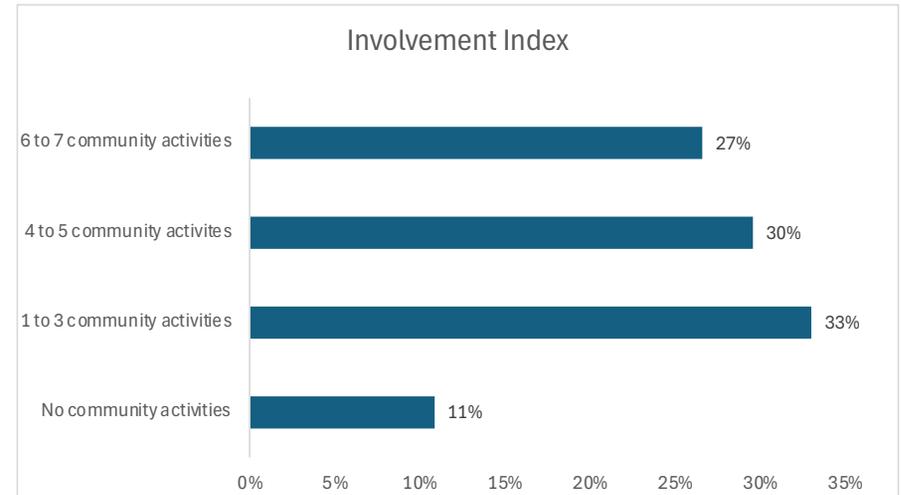
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Mantua is a model of community engagement and leadership

"If you are not at the table, you are on the menu "- Dwayne Drummond, President Mantua Civic Association

Mantua's long history of community engagement has become an intrinsic part of the neighborhood identity. Long term residents have grown up and aged in an environment driven by volunteerism, advocacy and community building.

As senior residents pass the torch of community work and leadership to a new generation, a renewed effort takes place to promote connections between neighbors, organize and empower residents to have an active role in the future of their community. Over the next ten years, Mantua community groups will build on the current civic structure to expand capacity and strengthen their ability to carry out the implementation of priorities outlined on this neighborhood plan.



According to the neighborhood survey conducted in the Summer of 2024, Mantua residents are highly engaged members of their community. The survey reported that nine in ten participants were involved in at least one community activity over the prior year and that six in ten participants were involved in at least four activities in that same period of time.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

GOAL C1

Promote a positive environment for resident engagement

Mantua has developed a well established framework for resident engagement over the past several years. The challenge for the next ten years is to continue to promote an environment where residents can connect with each other and identify the next generation of community leaders who will be able to carry out future community goals . As the neighborhood demographic continues to shift to a more racially and income diverse population, intentional strategies engage long term residents, young families, professionals and students will help reinforce the neighborhood identity and create a positive space for new leadership to emerge.

"Getting outside of your block helps people know who you are and who they are. People get to know each other"

Mantua resident, 2024



Family event organized in partnership with the Dornsife Center



FRIDAY, JULY 18th 2025
4:00 PM-7:00 PM
39TH & OLIVE STREET PLAYGROUND

Food & Drinks	Information Tables
Games	Basketball
Local Performers	Competitions
Children's Village	Give-a-Ways

••• For more info, contact Lorraine Gomez: 215-475-9492



A partnership between the MVMCDC and the 16th Police District, the annual Community Fun Day is a great example of an annual community event bringing residents and their families together. Approximately 300 people attend annually.

STRATEGY

C1.1

Promote informal opportunities for community connections

As a neighborhood that experiences an ongoing influx of new residents, Mantua will benefit from initiatives that help promote community connections. The following ideas were identified by community members as positive and effective ways to invite neighbors to connect and engage with in community life.

a. Maintain a regular calendar of community wide events: Mantua already holds monthly community dinners at the Dornsife Center, annual neighborhood clean ups and an annual Community Fun Day in partnership with the Philadelphia Police District. Community-wide events provide a wonderful opportunity for neighbors to come together and build relationships. Consider adding new events to the community calendar such as an annual meet and greet, a holiday celebration or a community yard sale.

b. Create a "Welcome to the neighborhood" brochure: As a neighborhood that experiences an ongoing influx of new residents, a 'Welcome to Mantua' brochure can provide a welcoming introduction to the community and provide essential information about local resources, services and volunteer opportunities.

c. Create a business directory: A neighborhood business directory can be a valuable tool for community building by showcasing local businesses and services provided by residents and encouraging

neighbors to support small businesses.

d. Promote opportunities for intergenerational connections: As a neighborhood with a unique blend of senior citizens, college students and families, Mantua residents can benefit from an intentional effort to promote intergenerational connections. That may include assistance with technology, errands to doctors or grocery stores, babysitting or opportunities for shared meals with neighbors.

e. Encourage residents to create an online neighborhood forum: Social media can be a helpful tool to share information about neighborhood news and promote interaction between neighbors. While local non-profit groups maintain a presence on Facebook and other channels, an informal online neighborhood page can be a simple but effective way to promote community connections and advertise resident led initiatives. Identify a group of residents who can help create, maintain and moderate this neighborhood page.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOME

- Welcome brochure and business directory
- Neighborhood Facebook page
- Intergenerational activities

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

- TBD

KEY PARTNERSHIPS

- MCA
- Local community groups
- Mantua residents

STRATEGY C1.2

Support resident led community initiatives

Throughout the planning process, residents discussed a wealth of ideas about initiatives to bring neighbors together. Between wellness groups (walking, yoga or cooking lessons), informal meets and greets, dance and game nights, book clubs, garden clubs and community projects, interest based groups can empower residents, bridge social gaps and reinforce connections between neighbors. Local organizations can help resident-led initiatives by facilitating access to resources and promoting activities through their communication channels.

a. Facilitate the use of community spaces: Resident initiatives may require access to physical indoor, outdoor spaces where neighbors can meet. Local organizations can help facilitate the use of community spaces for such activities and make their own spaces available for community use.

b. Create a community micro grant: Resident initiatives may also require access to funds to support the purchase of supplies and outreach efforts. Consider establishing an annual competitive process for the allocation of microgrants or help residents identify potential grant opportunities in the City.



We Walk PHL is a popular resident-led initiative promoting fitness and community throughout the City

c. Promote and recognize resident initiatives: Local community groups can also help resident projects by sharing information about initiatives and recognizing resident efforts on their communication channels.

d. Identify a point of contact for resident initiatives: To encourage and support resident-led initiatives, consider identifying a point of contact who can help residents navigate the process of organizing and promoting their activities. The point of contact can be a volunteer member of the MCA or a local community partner.



The "Bulbs not Bullets" project was started by a Mantua resident and became an annual community project bringing neighbors together to add beauty and spread an anti-violence message in the neighborhood. The project was recently selected for funding by the Clean Air Council and Feet First Philly.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOME

- Growing number of resident-led initiatives
- Neighborhood Facebook page

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

- TBD

KEY PARTNERSHIPS

- Mantua Civic Association
- Mantua residents

STRATEGY C1.3

Establish consistent channels of community communication

The need to improve community communication was a recurring theme in discussions during the planning process. Although local neighborhood organizations have developed effective ways to disseminate information about their own activities and programs, residents want to see a more unified approach to information sharing, especially when it comes to community news, events, programs and services. Community groups can work together to coordinate information and ensure that it gets disseminated across the neighborhood in a regular and consistent manner.

a. Maximize the effectiveness of monthly community meetings: Monthly meetings provide a convenient platform where neighbors can connect, hear updates, discuss concerns and ideas. They also provide community partners an opportunity to share information about projects, programs and topics of interest to the community. To increase attendance at meetings, consider the following:

- Disseminate information about monthly meetings through text reminders and flyers.
- Diversify agenda by inviting guest speakers (service providers, local representatives, residents) at every meeting.
- Provide childcare at meeting location.
- Add an option for remote attendance.
- Share meeting updates via email or social media.

b. Leverage the MCA youth ambassadors program to support neighborhood communication: The youth ambassador program can help expand the neighborhood's capacity to promote and publicize information about events and programs available to the community.

c. Maintain a neighborhood newsletter:

Build on the newsletter issued by Mt Vernon Manor NAC to integrate information from neighborhood events, programs and opportunities. The existing newsletter already provides a helpful overview with updates about neighborhood events and city services but an additional page tailored to Mantua neighbors can add a calendar of upcoming community events and other relevant information shared by neighborhood organizations.

WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO DISSEMINATE INFORMATION IN MANTUA?

Results from the community survey show that Mantua residents still rely heavily on traditional communication channels for neighborhood news. Fliers, mailers, door knocking and word of mouth are seen as most effective communication tools, especially among families with children and senior citizens. Residents also appreciate text message reminders for community meetings and events.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOME

- Improved neighborhood communication
- Neighborhood newsletter and calendar
- Neighborhood Facebook page

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

- TBD

KEY PARTNERSHIPS

- MCA
- Mt Vernon Manor NAC
- Mantua community groups

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

GOAL C2

Strengthen organizational capacity for community action and plan implementation

Over the past ten years, Mantua has solidified its civic capacity with the establishment of the Mantua Civic Association and the reorganization of Mount Vernon Manor Inc. into a community development corporation. Looking into the next ten years, the community will rely heavily on these two groups to advance the goals outlined on this Neighborhood Plan while maintaining their current initiatives in the community. An expanded organizational capacity will allow the MCA and the MVMCDC to fulfill their current roles while leading the implementation of this neighborhood plan.

Likewise, partnerships with City agencies, organizations and institutions will continue to play an important role for community projects and initiatives. An intentional effort to strengthen and expand partnerships will help attract new resources, programs and services to the neighborhood.



Michael Thorpe, MVMCDC Executive Director at community open house kicking off the planning process for the WAM!10YL Neighborhood Plan

STRATEGY

C2.1

Expand capacity of the Mantua Civic Association (MCA)

Established in 2012, the MCA empowers Mantua residents to be part of the decision-making process in their community. The organizations relies primarily on volunteer members and leadership to carry out its responsibilities as a registered community organization (RCO) and in other facets of its community work. As the MCA continues to expand its role, funding paid positions for critical outreach and coordination will increase organizational capacity and provide part-time employment opportunities for residents.

a. Expand capacity for Zoning Board (ZBA):

Providing input to the Zoning Board of Adjustment is the primary role of an RCO in Philadelphia. The RCO voice is most impactful when meetings are well attended, resident voices are heard and recorded and there is follow up coordination. A part-time paid position can support the volunteer leadership with the following activities:

- Community outreach with flyers, social media and direct calls to other neighborhood groups.
- Coordinate results post meeting with council and other neighborhood groups
- Attendance at ZBA meetings to address ZBA members with neighborhood concerns.

b. Improve communication about MCA initiatives and:

Providing input to the Zoning Board of Adjustment is the primary role of an RCO in Philadelphia. The RCO voice is most impactful when meetings are w

b. Expand leadership capacity for plan implementation:

As this neighborhood plan comes to completion, MCA leadership will have the opportunity to determine its role in advancing proposed projects and recommendations. In light of its current involvement with youth initiatives and programming, MCA may become the ideal lead partner to carry out future projects, discussed in Priorities 3 and 4, residents expressed the need for enhanced programming at existing neighborhood parks and community spaces. The City budget does not support staffing to keep playgrounds active and organized. A program manager can help bring new activities



A positive step for Mantua in the next few years is to encourage residents and local leaders' participation in the 8-week course offered by the Citizens Planning Institute. The CPI program provides neighborhood organizations with information and tools to help shape and improve their communities. Mantua has sent a few representatives in past years!

ANTICIPATED OUTCOME

- Paid position(s) to support MCA's community initiatives

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

- TBD

KEY PARTNERSHIPS

- Mantua Civic Association
- Institutional partners
- Foundations and philanthropic organizations

STRATEGY

C2.2

Expand capacity of the Mount Vernon Manor CDC

Just like the original 2013 WAM! plan created an opportunity for Mount Vernon Manor Inc to redefine its mission and goals, this WAM!10YL Neighborhood Plan provides the MVMCDC with a renewed opportunity to revisit its organizational mission and determine goals guiding its work for the next ten years. A close focus on board organization, staff capacity and financial support will help the CDC prepare for its expanded role moving forward.

a. Prepare for a lead role in the implementation of this neighborhood plan:

MVMCDC will work in collaboration with community members to determine the best path for implementation of the WAM!10YL Neighborhood Plan, including roles and responsibilities assigned to local community groups in advancing neighborhood goals. However, as the lead organization facilitating the preparation of the neighborhood plan and as an organization responsible for a wide range of neighborhood services, MVMCDC will play a central role in shepherding the plan through implementation. That effort will require additional staff capacity and an enhanced operational budget to support coordination activities, communication, and community engagement efforts that go beyond current responsibilities.

b. Housing Services: Beyond its role in coordination and oversight, MVMCDC will be a lead partner helping advance the Housing goals outlined on this plan. That may include the need to expand existing housing services and manage new programs. As the plan comes to completion, MVMCDC has the opportunity to review current capacity and determine future staffing needs, training and potential funding sources to support expanded capacity and help advance Housing recommendations.

c. Expand Board capacity: The Board of Directors will continue to play a key role in guiding and overseeing the CDC's activities over the next ten years. Consider the potential to expand the board with members who can bring a diversity of skills, expertise and resources to the board. A strong and expanded board will serve as ambassadors and advocates for the CDC's current and future work.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOME

- MVMCDC expand its organizational capacity to support plan implementation

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

- TBD

KEY PARTNERSHIPS

- MVMCDC
- Institutional partners
- Foundations and philanthropic organizations

STRATEGY

C2.3

Strengthen community partnerships

Positive partnerships and coalition building between community stakeholders are critical to the successful implementation of this neighborhood plan. Collaboration will allow stakeholders to act on plan implementation, working towards common goals, shared efforts and bringing resources to bear towards positive outcomes

a. Establish the Mantua Collaborative to advance plan implementation: In order to fully realize the goals of this Neighborhood Plan, community serving organizations will need to coordinate resources and work together to maximize impact. The Mantua Collaborative (proposed name) will provide a regular platform for engagement between residents, community organizations, City agencies and institutional partners. This forum will help partners share updates about their initiatives, coordinate efforts and identify opportunities for collaboration. The collaborative will help define priority projects for implementation, reinforce collaboration and accountability between partners. Two key components of this effort include:

- **Identify lead partners:** To advance the goals of this Neighborhood Plan, consider identifying a lead organizational partner to carry out each of the five neighborhood priorities outlined in this plan.
- **Organize and connect:** Tracking progress on implementation efforts will be a core responsibility of the Collaborative. Establish a regular calendar of meetings and other communication tools to keep members and the broader community up to date on

implementation efforts.

b. Secure Mantua's representation in key West Philadelphia and City groups:

West Philadelphia Groups:

- Mantua Powelton Alliance
- Philadelphia Police Dept - 16th district
- Promise Zone / Office of Community Empowerment and Opportunity

City Groups:

- **Philadelphia Association of Community Development Corporations (PACDC):** advocates and provides technical assistance to CDCs
- **Philadelphia Coalition for Affordable Communities (PCAC):** advocates for legislation addressing housing affordability
- **Crosstown Coalition:** Brings RCOs together around advocacy and collective action on issues facing Philadelphia neighborhoods.
- **Trash Academy:** Works directly with neighborhood groups to develop place based solution for litter, trash and short dumping.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOME

- The Mantua Collaborative is established to advance plan implementation
- Mantua has dedicated representation in West Philly and City groups

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

- TBD

KEY PARTNERSHIPS

- MCA
- MVMCDC
- City agencies
- Non-profit partners

