



Building on Momentum

Heart of Kensington



Neighborhood Development Plan
Update July 30, 2011

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The hundreds of neighbors and volunteers who have contributed their time and ideas to help make the Heart of Kensington a better place to live and work.

Members of the Neighborhood Advisory Committee

Our corporate and foundation partners whose multi-year commitments and generous support has been fundamental to progress.

ACE Insurance Group

CIGNA

Independence Blue Cross

Philadelphia Coca-Cola Bottling Company

Wells Fargo Regional Foundation



STATEMENT OF INTENTION

This Plan represents a 4-year extension of the original **Heart of Kensington Plan** that was published in November 2005 and has already leveraged over \$61 million in projects and services.

It aims to build upon the accomplishments, capacity, and momentum that have been created over the last six years as Impact Services has led community efforts to actualize the Plan's vision to create a safer, more civil, and more vibrant community.

It remains committed to the original vision that was crafted with great care and remains the driving force for this work...

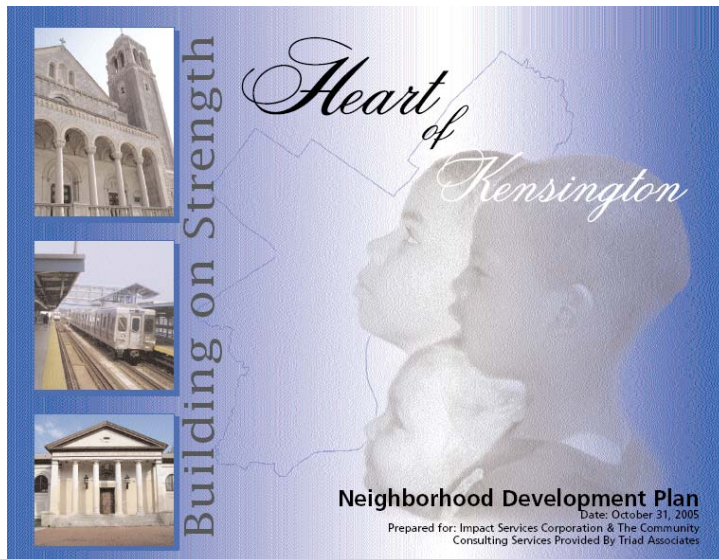


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Introduction



INTRODUCTION

In 2005, Impact Services organized a community planning effort to revitalize the 4-census tract area in the lower northeast section of Philadelphia that has come to be known as the Heart of Kensington.

Hundreds of residents and area stakeholders engaged in a year-long series of professionally facilitated focus groups and visioning meetings to define areas of concern, hopes, desires, priorities, and plans for action.

The result of that effort was the first ever **Comprehensive Community Development Plan for the Heart of Kensington**.

Since that time, much has been accomplished. Most notably:

- Over \$61 million in project support has been mobilized.
- 50 new homeowner units were built
- 45 units of affordable rental housing were renovated
- 8 units of affordable rental housing were constructed
- 3,436 found FT employment with Impact assistance
- 460 community events/service projects were organized
- 1,450 people volunteered; 28,815 participated in community events
- Over 126,000 meals were prepared or distributed to the ill, elderly, and needy children
- Commercial vacancy rate in the “heart” of Kensington fell 25%
- A net of 22 new businesses and 288 jobs came to the K&A Commercial Corridor
- People feel safer and more likely to recommend the neighborhood as a good place to live.

Much has changed.

Adaptation has been essential, as implementation has occurred in a volatile environment:

Negative Developments

- Public budgets have been slashed
- Housing prices have fallen, reversing a multi-year upward trend
- Credit availability has contracted significantly, affecting both home purchasers and businesses.
- Consumer confidence has been shattered
- Food and energy prices have soared
- Unemployment and hunger are at unprecedented levels
- Councilman was convicted and jailed
- Site targeted for HUD 202 senior housing burned to the ground
- Ascension of Our Lord Catholic School closed after 100 years

Positive Developments

- Capacity has grown—
 - Housing Development program has been successfully launched
 - Successful Community Building program was developed
 - New Employment and Service programs have been established
 - Full time Commercial Corridor Manager was hired
 - Impact Loan Fund has grown pool of lendable funds and expanded board
 - Legislation authorizing establishment of the Aramingo Avenue Business Improvement District (BID) was passed
 - Two new schools opened in the target area

This effort seeks to make adjustments necessitated by significant shifts in both the environment and the local opportunity structure.

The original vision still drives the Plan.

The Vision:

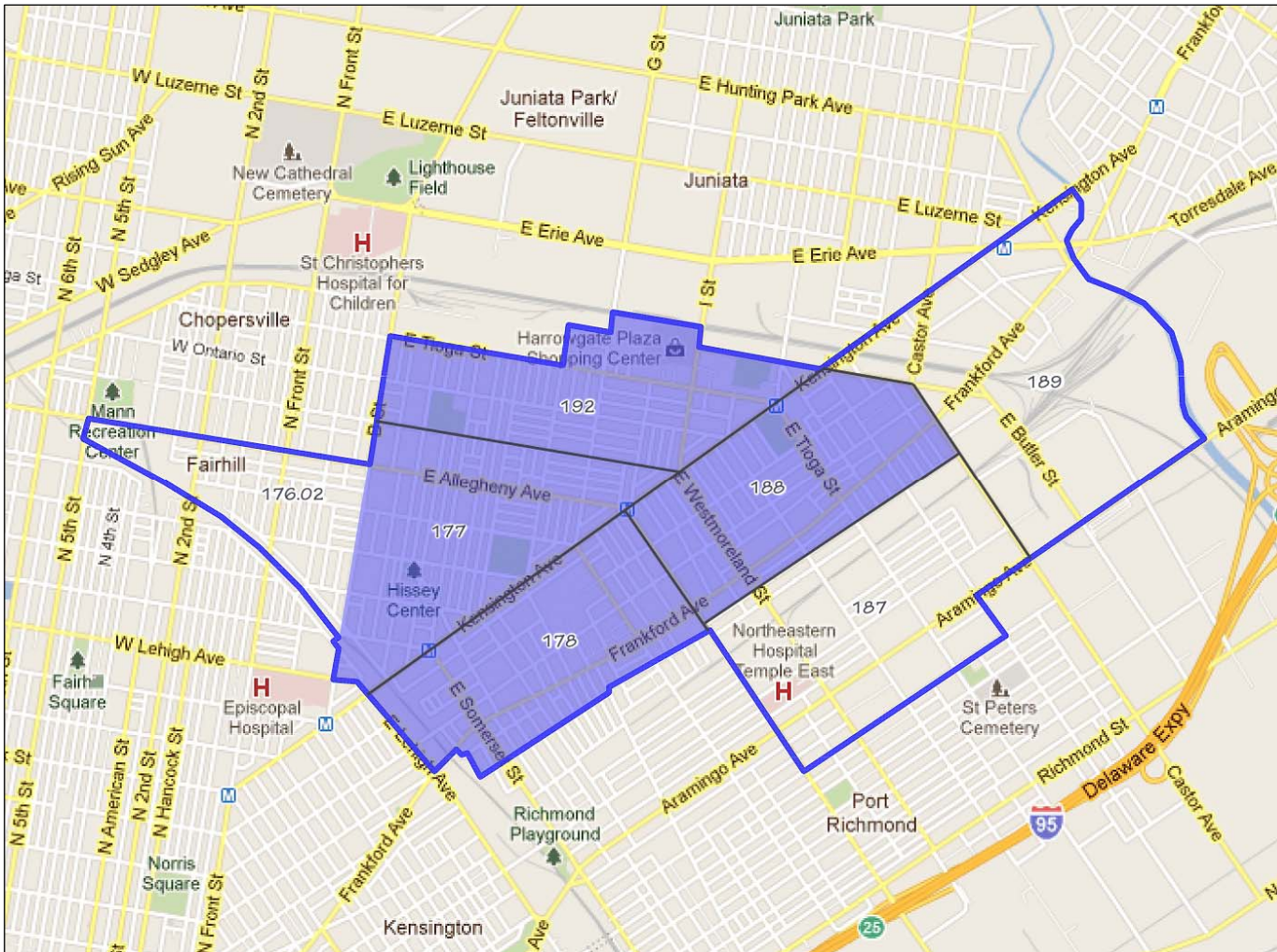
...A safe and stable neighborhood where people feel secure in their homes and on the streets and parents can allow their children to play outdoors without fear.

...A respectful and civil place where people feel like valued citizens and are more involved and at ease with one another.

...A place where there are fewer vacant properties, higher levels of homeownership, and longer term renters as well as a variety of housing that is safe, affordable, and suited to the community's many needs.

...A vibrant place that enjoys an appropriate mix of quality services and amenities.

...A distinctive, urban place that people are happy to call home and which businesses seek to serve.



THE ORIGINAL AREA: Map of the Heart of Kensington (Original Area Shaded)

The Original Area

The **Heart of Kensington** is the intersection of Kensington and Allegheny Avenues (K&A). The original Heart of Kensington Neighborhood Plan concentrated activities on the four census tracts surrounding K&A (Census Tracts 177, 178, 188 and 192).

Heart of Kensington (HOK) is a “*Distressed Area*” as defined by the Pennsylvania’s Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) Neighborhood Partnership Program (NPP) guidelines. Located within the boundaries of a City of the First Class, it also meets the DCED NPP guidelines related to unemployment levels, percentage of residents receiving public assistance, adequacy of housing, and crime levels.

Comprised of approximately 90 square blocks that fill roughly .75 square miles, the neighborhood has a number of outstanding regional advantages, many of which are related to its exceptionally robust transportation infrastructure and location.

K&A is one of the busiest transportation hubs in the City where the Allegheny station of SEPTA’s Market-Frankford Elevated Train line converges with the 5, 54, 60, and 89 bus lines.

- The Market Frankford El (the elevated train/subway) runs through the center of the area, linking it with Center City via a twenty-minute ride from the handicapped accessible station at Kensington and Allegheny.
- Allegheny Avenue, a major two-lane city street with bike lanes, is one of the City’s major east-west thoroughfares, carrying over 15,642 vehicles through the area each day. It provides ready access to the riverfront and Interstate 95.

This excellent transportation infrastructure serves both the densely populated **K&A residential community** and the **K&A Commercial Corridor**, which extends from Orleans to Ontario along Kensington Ave, and from Jasper to G Street along E Allegheny Ave.

The area’s location relative to both Center City Philadelphia and Exit 25 of Interstate 95 confers additional advantages on the area.

- K&A is less than 5 miles northeast of Philadelphia’s business district and situated just over a mile from I-95, one of the busiest highways in the Northeastern United States.
- Three major north/south thoroughfares run through the neighborhood, Kensington Ave, Frankford Ave and Aramingo Ave. These transportation routes (in addition to I-95) provide



Map of Original HoK Area
Includes 4 census tracts: 177, 178, 188, 192

Key Demographics from Heart of Kensington Community Profile

RACIAL CHARACTERISTICS*	HOK Original Area 2009	
	% of Total Population	% change 2005-2009
White	30.83%	-27.95%
African American	26.48%	46.31%
Asian	2.64%	-0.57%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.00%	0.00%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0.28%	-48.30%
Other Race	35.67%	51.04%
Two or more races	4.11%	-0.07%
ETHNICITY		
Hispanic	53.31%	42.26%

AGE DISTRIBUTION 2005-2009*	% of People in Age Group	# of People in Age Group
Under 18	39.05%	12,878
Working Age (18-64)	56.71%	18,702

Families and Households	% of Families	Number of Families
Families	n/a	5,829
Single with children	47.54%	2,771
Single female with children	40.81%	2,379

an opportunity to attract additional commercial activities to the area. Aramingo Ave carries an average of 32,149 vehicles daily.

The area is home to the Northeastern Ambulatory Care Center (an acute care facility operated by Temple University Health System on the site of the former Northeastern Hospital), Esperanza Health Center, and Hispanic Community Counseling Center (HCCS). It is also proximate to several large medical institutions including the Episcopal Hospital on Lehigh Ave, and St Christopher's Children's Hospital at B and Erie Streets. All of them are within 10 minutes of K&A.

The Heart of Kensington Residential Community¹

The Heart of Kensington Residential Community has over 32,978 residents and has emerged as one of Philadelphia's major centers of Latino population. It has been the locus of tremendous amounts of change in the last 22 years, as an older predominantly white population has been substantially replaced by one that is much younger, less wealthy and much more diverse.

A quick look at some of the key demographics of the area sketches a portrait of change that relates to many of the issues that have been identified as priorities. The primary source for these demographics is The Reinvestment Fund's Policy Map (see Appendices).

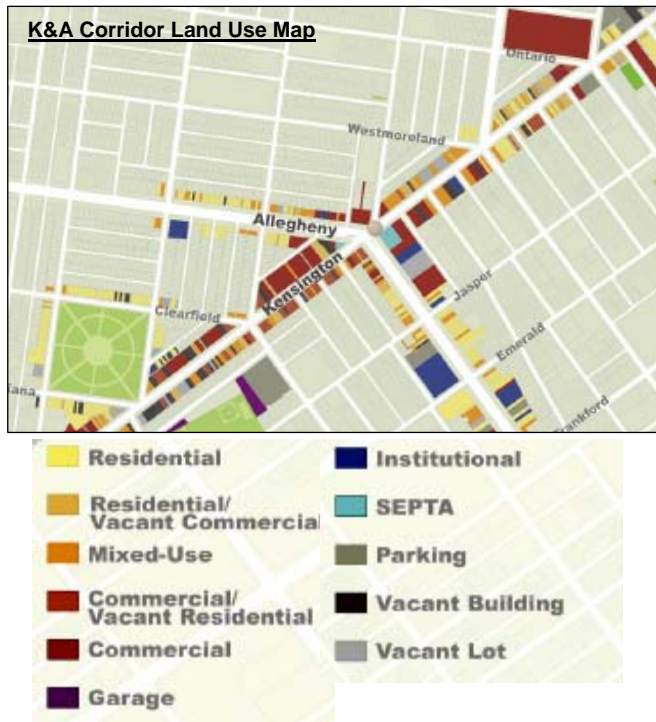
- Between 2000 and 2009 the neighborhood's population grew 8.93%, or 2,703 residents
- Ethnic and racial characteristics of the neighborhood continued to change in fundamental ways. Large increases in the numbers of African American and Latino residents have continued into the decade that followed the 2000 Census. Between 2000 and 2009 the white population continued its downward trend, decreasing by 27.95%. The Latino population continued to grow, increasing by 42.26%. The African American population also continued to grow, increasing by 46.31%. For this reason, the area is still characterized as an "emerging community".
- The number of single parent households with children is 2,771 or 47.54% of the population.
- The number of persons under the age of 18 continued to increase between 2006 and 2009 to 12,878 or 39.05% of the population
- 86.44% of the neighborhood population has a median income below \$50,000 (60.9% of the population had an income lower than \$25,000).

¹ For a complete report See Appendices: Heart of Kensington 1- Community Profile



K&A: New Logo and Corridor Planning

The new logo is used in brochures to promote the corridor and complement the comprehensive planning initiative. Below, a land use plan, part of the corridor planning efforts.



K&A Commercial Corridor

The Building of the Market-Frankford El and the opening of the Allegheny Station in the 1920’s was a key turning point in the development of this area and its commercial corridor. The transportation infrastructure continues to be of great significance.

- In 2010, average weekday ridership boarding and disembarking at the Allegheny El station exceeded 5,000 persons; with bus ridership, over 43,200 transit riders travel this transportation hub each week.
- Vehicular and bus traffic is extremely high along Allegheny Ave with 2009 statistics from DVRCP showing 15,642 vehicles per day traversing the intersection.
- Last available data indicates that over 54% of the area’s households are without cars.

Banking and financial service firms share prime space in the first block surrounding the El with stores like Walgreens and King’s. These businesses serve both the transit riding public and residents. Wells Fargo Bank, whose regional foundation supported the development of this plan, has the largest presence in the area. It is joined by Beneficial Bank, Bank of America, the Impact Loan Fund, Philadelphia Federal Credit Union and H&R Block in providing banking and financial services to the area. The Greater Philadelphia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce has acquired rental space in the Wells Fargo branch and is expected to bring additional resources for small and Latino businesses into the area within the coming year.

Field research done for this plan indicated that average rents for first floor commercial space in the K&A Business District are between \$2 and \$10 per square foot, which is low compared to the \$40-\$50 per square foot rents that Center City properties command. However, well-designed, modern commercial buildings in good locations and dedicated parking have commanded rents as high as \$20 to \$30 per square foot. The recently developed Flomar building located right at the K&A intersection is earning rents of \$12.50 to \$13 per square foot, triple net for the upper floors. Asking rents for the ground floor retail space are higher at \$15 to \$18 per square foot (triple net). Demand for upper floor office space was greater than expected, an indication that even with the current challenges there is effective demand for space at this location.

The overall vacancy rate along the K&A Corridor is around 20%, which is high, but comparable to similar commercial corridors in the City (i.e. 19% in Logan, 16% in N 5th Street Corridor). It ranges from under 5% on blocks closer to the K&A intersection to as high as 65% in sections closer to the edges of the corridor (Orleans St and Ontario St).

In 2006, Impact invested in a Streetscape Plan for the K&A Commercial Corridor. In 2009 the City of Philadelphia invested in an infrastructure plan for the K&A Corridor, the “ReStore

The Lights Are On for Kensington's Skyscraper!

Flomar Building in the spotlight at K&A

The switch was thrown, well, not quite. The lights were "tested" to make sure they had power to them but it was the setting sun and the approach of dusk that activated the switch that turned the lighting on.

Standing in front of the "Queen" Donata on Allegheny Avenue looking to the top of the building—the register radiating light did come on. It has a blue, almost lavender neon look to it—almost surreal as it glows along the leading edge of the rooftop of the nine-story Flomar Building.



The new look for the venerable Flomar Building is part of a new design—streetscape—for the Kensington and Allegheny intersection as a whole. The streetscape is part of a larger plan put together by Impact Services Corporation, the Kensington Allegheny Business Association, Wachovia Regional Foundation and the City of Philadelphia Department of Commerce Neighborhood Transformation Initiative.

Many hours of planning and community input went into the formation of the Plan and it is taking shape. The new mural was dedicated by Mayor Nutter this past weekend at the Market East and in addition new solar-powered trash compacting receptacles were unveiled.

The Flomar Building itself has taken on a new life after almost 30 years of being vacant—with the addition of a new tenant in Esperanza Health Center occupying multiple floors and the Hispanic Community Counseling Service has also moved into the building and occupies two floors.



This past weekend also marked the Grand Opening celebration of Esperanza in this location and a large crowd was on hand to celebrate. It happened to coincide with the K&A Market East, the K&A Heart of Kensington Mural dedication, and many other events happening that day.

through this new facility, and its second location, at 2940 N. 37th Street, Esperanza Health Center provides care to over 5,000 patients through over 20,000 patient visits annually. Esperanza's new main health center increases access for individuals and families throughout North Philadelphia. According to Susan Post, Executive Director of Esperanza: "Esperanza can now serve greater numbers of adults and children in this community who are either uninsured or underinsured, by providing comprehensive, affordable and bilingual health care services that address a wide range of needs."

Esperanza has a team of 18 full- and part-time, board-certified primary care providers including 12 physicians, two dentists, one nurse practitioner, and one physician assistant. The multi-discipline team meets patients needs through the following services: primary medical care, preventive care and immunizations; comprehensive STD/AIDS testing, outreach and medical care; spiritual and pastoral care; mental health counseling; social work and case management; nutritional counseling; and community health education and outreach. In addition, two new services—primary dental care and an on-site medication dispensary—are now available at the new main office.

Esperanza accepts Medicaid, Medicare and CHIP, as well as some private insurance. For those who are uninsured, services are offered on an affordable sliding fee scale based on income. This means that there will be no financial barriers for those in the community who are in need of care.

The health center's new location in the heart of Kensington provides easy access to thousands of residents of the neighborhood. The center is easily accessed by the Market East line and is served by many bus routes.

And now, the addition of the new lighting, outlining the Flomar Building stands almost like a beacon of hope to those residents seeking the services of the Esperanza Health Center.

For more information about health services or to make an appointment call (215) 831-1100.



The staff of Esperanza Health Center

Impact Services and Kensington Allegheny Business Association First CDC and Business Association in Philadelphia to Install Compacting Trash Bins

Two brand new BigBelly™ Solar-powered automatic compacting trash receptacles now adorn the Northeast and Southeast corners of Kensington and Allegheny Avenues in the Heart of Kensington.

Through these solar-powered trash receptacles have been installed by the Philadelphia Housing Authority for two months now, the units placed today at Kensington and Allegheny are the first in the City of Philadelphia to be purchased and installed by a Community Development Corporation (CDC) and Business Association.

Impact Services Corporation and the Kensington and Allegheny Business Association are in the forefront in redesigning the Kensington neighborhood streetscape. These new trash compactors will aid in that endeavor by reducing litter and eliminating overflowing trash containers.

With the installation of these first two Solar-powered compactors Impact Services Corporation and the Kensington and Allegheny Business Association are looking toward the long-range view of further improvement as the redevelopment of the Kensington Corridor continues.



The BigBelly™ holds over 150 gallons of trash allowing communities to collect less often and when it is more convenient, improving service levels and costs. More benefits include greener parks and streets from fewer trash receptacle overflows as well as the cost-effective deployment of clean, solar energy.

An added value benefit is the solar panels of the unit can also be utilized for advertising by companies and communities.

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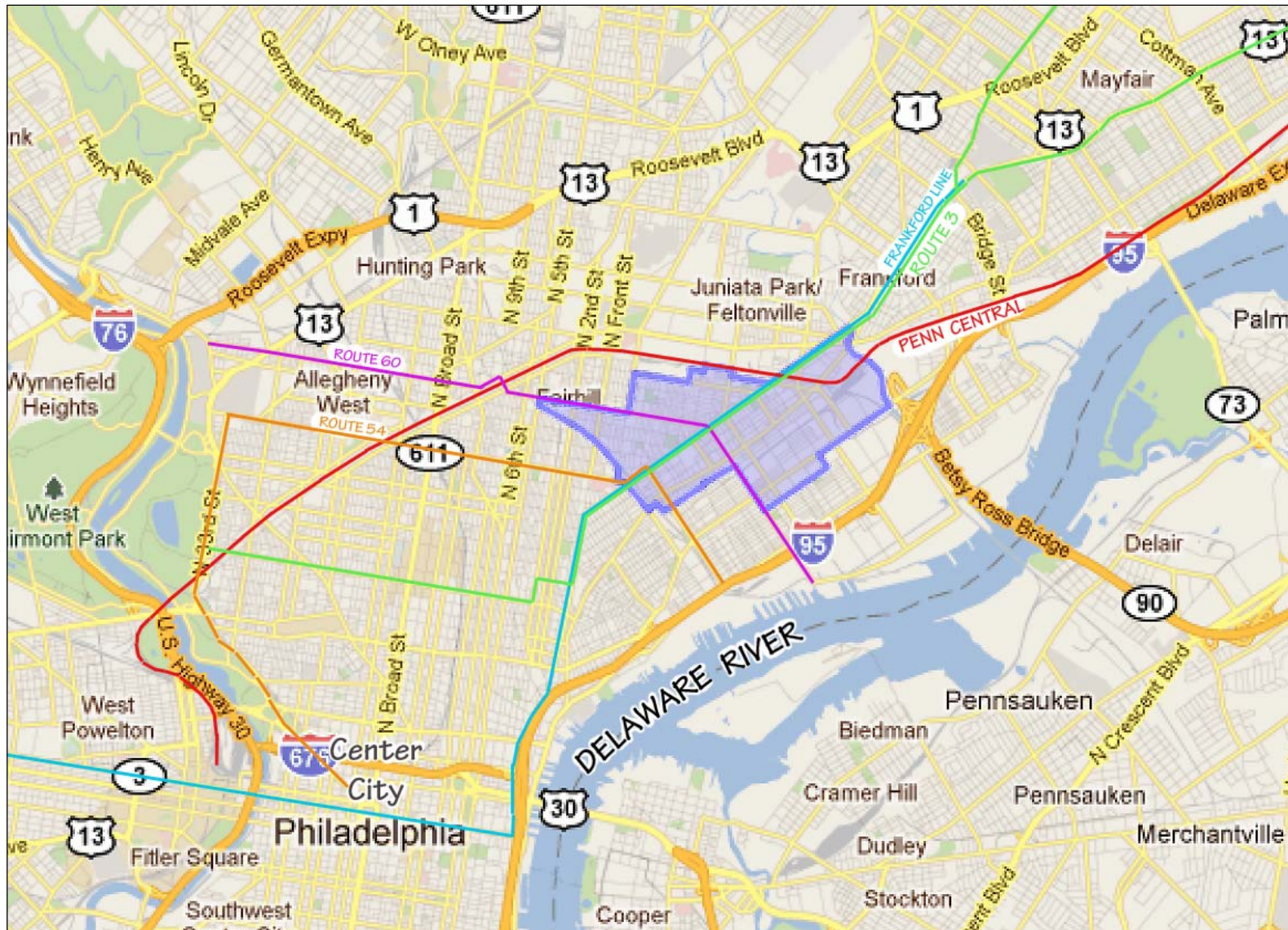
Philadelphia Corridors Improvement Plans for Kensington Ave Between Clearfield and Westmoreland and Allegheny Ave Between G and Jasper.”

The efforts of the Kensington and Allegheny Business Association (KABA) have been valuable in welcoming new businesses to the community, helpful in connecting them with appropriate City services; supportive of needed zoning changes; and useful in collecting information in one location about what is happening in the area. KABA's membership now includes 75 area businesses and stakeholders, both large and small. Private investment is also being made at much higher levels than have ever been seen in the past. Several recent arrivals to the commercial corridor have experienced dramatic success, in large part due to their understanding of the opportunities offered by both the location of the area and its sizeable and undervalued market.

- **Flomar Building**, the 9-story “skyscraper” that towers over the southwestern corner of the K&A intersection, reflects another significant investment of private capital in the area. The prime location was purchased by Deep Sea, LLC in 2004. The developers were successful in attracting Esperanza Health Center and Hispanic Community Counseling Services (HCCS) as prime tenants. In addition, Deep Sea LLC has purchase the old Salvation Army Thrift Store at 3221-25 Kensington Ave and is in the process of renovating the building for HCCS.
- **Major Cuts and RAM Medical Supplies** are separate businesses owned by 2 brothers who purchased 3200-3204 Kensington Ave (3 adjacent properties at the heart of the K&A Corridor, site of the old Miller Medical Supplies) in 2009. Their project has transformed one of the most visible corners at K&A that was previously vacant and derelict.
- **King's Discount**, a local convenience store underwent a major makeover with funds from the Department of Commerce's Targeted Façade Improvement Program. This project transformed a local eyesore into a refinished exposed brick building with elegantly restored bay windows and woodwork, completely transforming this corner at the center of the Heart of Kensington.
- **Quick Stop** is a family-owned grocery and convenience store started in 2008 in an abandoned warehouse on the corner of Kensington Ave and Orleans St. Less than a year after opening, a terrible fire started by an arsonist decimated the store. With much hardship and an investment of over half a million dollars, Quick Stop re-opened its doors at the end of the summer of 2010.

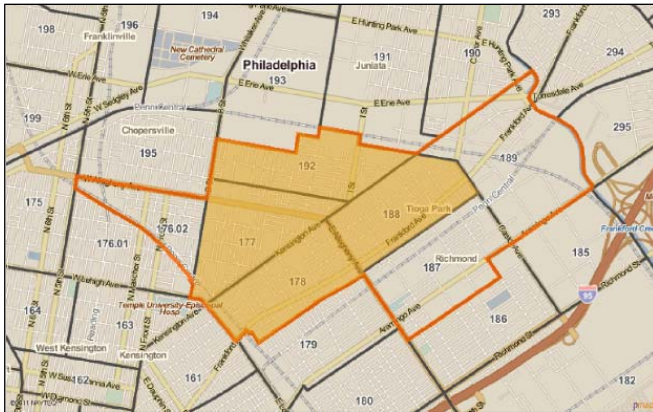
Juniata News

Article about Flomar Building Renovation and streetscape improvements on K&A Corridor



THE EXPANDED AREA: Heart of Kensington
Rich Transportation Infrastructure and Location Advantages

The Expanded Area²



Map of Expanded HoK Area

Includes 7 census tracts: 176.02, 177, 178, 187, 188, 192

Key Demographics from Heart of Kensington Community Profile

Population*	2000	2005-2009	% Change 2000-2009
HoK Original Area	30,275	32,978	8.93%
HoK Expanded Area	36,682	40,350	10.00%
Philadelphia County	1,517,550	1,531,112	0.89%
Pennsylvania	12,281,054	12,516,596	1.92%

* Source: PolicyMap Community Profile Report for CT 177-178, 192, 188 and CT 176-178,187-189, 192

Age Distribution 2005-2009*	HoK Original Area		HoK Expanded Area	
	# of People	% of People	# of People	% of People
Under 5	3,852	11.68%	4,846	12.01%
Under 18	12,878	39.05%	15,431	38.24%
Working Age(18-64)	18,702	56.71%	23,027	57.07%
Aging (65+)	1,398	4.24%	1,892	4.69%

* Source: PolicyMap Community Profile Report for CT 177-178, 192, 188 and CT 176-178,187-189, 192

Over the last six years, private investment activity along the **Aramingo Avenue Commercial Corridor** led Impact to pioneer development of the Aramingo Avenue Business Association (ABA) and the Aramingo Business Improvement District (BID). This activity has expanded the focus of the Heart of Kensington neighborhood to the east so it now includes two additional census tracts (187 and 189). Additional affordable housing developments at 124 E Indiana Ave and 174 W Allegheny Ave (Hancock Manor) led to broadening the focus area to the west, so it now includes Census Tract 176.02.

The combined seven Census Tracts (176.02, 177, 178, 187, 188, 189 and 192) compose the expanded Heart of Kensington Neighborhood.

The Expanded Heart of Kensington Residential Community

The expanded HOK Residential Community area has over 40,000 residents. Its income and racial characteristics are very similar to those of the original area. It is a young, growing and increasingly diverse community with a large Latino population. Between 2000 and 2009:

- The neighborhood grew by 3,678 residents, or 10%, much faster than either the city (.89%) or the state (1.92%).
- The composition of the population continued to shift, with white population decreasing by 24%, Latino population increasing by 34% and African American population increasing by 54%. The 21,131 Hispanics now living in the area comprise 52% of the area's population and account for more than 100% of the area's total population growth. The 10,781 African Americans in the community now constitute 27% of the residents. These demographics differ significantly from those at the state level where 4.7% of the population is Hispanic and 10.4% African American.
- The number of single-parent households with children is 3,463 or 48% of the population, more than 3.7 times higher than the state level.
- Children under the age of five now comprise 12% of the population,
- The number of persons under the age of 18 in 2009 had increased to 15,431, or 38% of the population.

² For a complete report See Appendices: Heart of Kensington Expanded Area Community Profile

Key Demographics from Heart of Kensington Community Profile

- 81% of the households had incomes below \$50,000 comparing unfavorable with the both the city (63%) and the state (49%).
- Median income in the area ranged from \$18,924 in the poorest sections to \$29,583 in the less distressed Census Tracts. State median income was two to three times higher--\$62,520.

2009	HoK Original Area	HoK Expanded Area	PA
Median Income*	\$19,539 - \$22,262	\$18,924 - \$29,583	\$62,520

* Source: PolicyMap; Census' American Community Survey estimate for 2009

Comparison of 2009 demographics between the original and expanded Heart of Kensington area shows them to be very similar to each other:

2005-2009	HoK Original Area		HoK Expanded	
Families and Households	# of Families	% of Families	# of Families	% of Families
Families	5,829	n/a	7,170	n/a
Married with children	849	14.57%	1,002	13.97%
Single with children	2,771	47.54%	3,463	48.30%
Single female with children	2,379	40.81%	2,980	41.56%
Other families	2,209	37.90%	2,705	37.73%

* Source: PolicyMap Community Profile Report for CT 177-178, 192, 188 and CT 176-178,187-189, 192

Racial Characteristics*	HoK Original Area	HoK Expanded Area
	% of Total Population	% of Total Population
White	30.83%	31.96%
African American	26.48%	26.72%
Asian	2.64%	2.55%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.00%	0.00%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0.28%	0.23%
Other Race	35.67%	35.12%
Two or more races	4.11%	3.43%
Ethnicity	% of Total Population	% of Total Population
Hispanic	53.31%	52.37%

* Source: PolicyMap Community Profile Report for CT 177-178, 192, 188 and CT 176-178,187-189, 192



Aramingo Avenue Business Association

New Logo of Aramingo Business Association and Cover of Annual Report Cover. ABA: 110 businesses strong... and growing!



Aramingo Avenue Commercial Corridor

The **Aramingo Avenue Commercial Corridor** extends from Lehigh Avenue to the Frankford Creek along Aramingo Avenue. The Aramingo Avenue Shopping area is one of the few shopping areas within the city that is more suburban in character featuring strip malls and large parking areas at its northern end. The corridor includes anchor stores such as Target, Home Depot, Kmart, ToysRUs, ShopRite, and Lowes. Three events define the recent history of Aramingo Ave:

- The creation of the **Aramingo Ave. Business Association** in 2005,
- The creation of the **Aramingo Business Improvement District** (Aramingo BID) in April 2008, and
- The development of **Aramingo Crossings**, a shopping center complex anchored by Lowe's Home Improvement which includes Chick-Fil-A and Sonic (started in Fall 2008 and completed in December 2009) and will also host Walmart, a financial institution and six small retailers (breaking ground in July 2011).

Impact formed the **Aramingo Ave. Business Association** (ABA) in March 2005 with ten (10) original members. ABA has grown to one hundred and ten (110) businesses with forty-eight (48) paid members who meet monthly. Under Impact's management, ABA has developed a shared vision and coordinated marketing strategy for the commercial shopping district and sponsored development of the Aramingo BID.

Impact began organizing the **Aramingo BID** in 2006. The development of a Business near Aramingo Ave. The BID was authorized by City Council in April 2008 and started operations in April 2009, providing cleaning, additional security, and marketing support for the area. The initial BID budget was \$262,612; with increased commercial development on the corridor the 2011 budget was \$304,850. Continued growth is expected.

Subsequent developments included the placement of "Safety Ambassadors" on Aramingo Ave. in November 2009, the placement of District banners and Gateway signage in Spring 2011 and will culminate in the opening of Walmart, a financial institution and six retailers (generating an additional 225 permanent jobs) in Spring 2012. The combination of previous and impending development will total over **\$45 million** in development, in 311,132 square feet of new commercial space and over **500 jobs**, many of which have been secured by low-income neighborhood residents and Impact clients.

Community Involvement



Meetings and Issue Boards...

One Source of Community Input.

Planning is a multi-stage, collaborative process that occurs over time. The facts, figures, and analyses compiled are combined with the accomplishments of the first six years of implementation, and blended with public input to help define an updated neighborhood vision.

Through the efforts of Impact Services Corporation, a strategy for involving residents and stakeholders has developed over time. This strategy includes regular community meetings, the use of regular community surveys, and daily interaction with community residents and businesses including the following:

- **Neighborhood Partnership Advisory Committee.** A steering committee for the Heart of Kensington Neighborhood Plan was established in 2004 and was made up of citizens, businesses and organizations in the neighborhood, as well as representatives from the Councilman's office and the City Planning Department. The group has evolved as many of the key church, hospital and Archdiocese representatives saw their organizations retrench, falter, downsize or close. Activity related to the Kensington and Allegheny Business Association has been a source of continued refreshment.
- **Impact Services Board of Directors Meetings.** In addition to the Steering Committee, Impact has representatives of ACE and Independence Blue Cross (two of three HOK Corporate Partners), the Philadelphia Coca-Cola Bottling Company (the corporate partner under the Philadelphia Economic Development Tax Credit Program) and the City Councilwoman on its Board of Directors, which meets on a quarterly basis. The Impact Board reviews reports to Impact's funders.
- **Neighborhood Meetings.** Neighborhood meetings are scheduled to solicit the input of residents and continuously involve them in providing feedback on the plan as it emerged. Neighborhood Meetings include the following:
 - **Semi-Annual Neighborhood Planning Meetings.** In the spring and fall of every year, residents and outreach staff gather to reflect on accomplishments and plan for the next season. These meetings are an important source of new ideas.
 - **Kensington and Allegheny Business Association (KABA).** Impact manages the Kensington and Allegheny Business Association. On a monthly basis, 25 to 30 stakeholders from the business, residential and non-profit communities surrounding



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Have a Safe & Happy SUMMER

Market Fest helps define Kensington



The Heart of Kensington is much more on a beautiful sunny day at Kensington & Allegheny Avenues... and at the "heart" of the festivities was a special dedication with Mayor Michael Nutter, celebrating the people who make up the "Heart" of this fantastic neighborhood.

Impact Services Corp., the lifeblood in the Heart of Kensington, held its Eighth Annual Market Fest on Saturday. Crowds enjoyed music, games, dancing, a motorcycle and car show, and

See the wrap around special edition on this newspaper for more of the wonderful things happening.

Mayor Michael Nutter takes a seat on a "Conversation" bike, a six-seat cycle in the mood, pictured with 3rd District Councilwoman Maria Quiñones-Sánchez, Sam Kuttan, and Marnie Asmunt-Loughrey at Saturday's Eighth Annual K & A Market Fest.

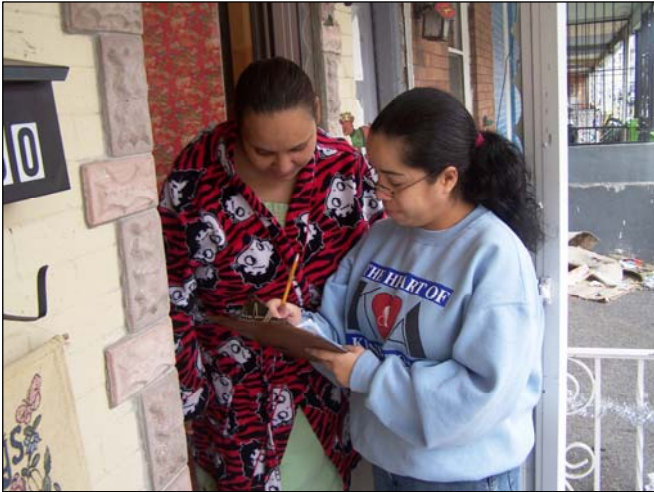
Market Fest

An annual time to celebrate and share

K&A meet to discuss crime statistics with the Police, progress on the Heart of Kensington Plan and issues related to the commercial corridor.

- **Aramingo Business Association (ABA).** Impact manages the Aramingo Business Association. On a monthly basis, 40 to 50 business representatives meet to discuss issues of concern on the Aramingo Commercial Corridor
- **Kensington Independent Civic Association (KICA).** Impact has collaborated with this long-established group since 2004. Three officers from the organization attend KABA meetings monthly, and the HOK staff make monthly community presentations at the KICA meetings.
- **Topic Meetings.** When needed, Impact conducts meeting on specific topics related to projects. Most recently, Impact conducted two meetings related to Senior Housing in the neighborhood; one at St Phillips United Methodist Church and another at 1952 E Allegheny. Meetings help identify the needs of seniors for housing in the area related to the Westmoreland Senior Apartments project. Additionally, meetings were held within the last year related to the Commercial Corridor Design Process.
- **Festivals and Events.** The annual K&A Market Fest, attended by over 2,500 residents, occurs in June each year. The HOK Staff continues its tradition of surveying attendees. Almost 200 new surveys are completed at the Fest each year.

Community Impact—Highlights



Boots on the Ground

One of the 447 randomly selected residents to complete a Community Quality Survey

In both developing and implementing the original HOK Plan, Impact needed to obtain broad support from a variety of funders. All funders wanted to ascertain that their resources were being used productively.

For this reason Impact measured outputs and, when possible, outcomes associated with its many activities. The metric challenges of assessing impact abound, as Impact operates in an uncontrolled environment populated with many actors and swayed by many broad market forces. Despite these difficulties, there is considerable evidence that the Plan mobilized exceptional amounts of resources, generated significant activity, and was perceived as making a difference by the residents.

Key metrics that demonstrate progress against plan and community impact are provided below.

Demonstrated Impact on Community Quality

The Wachovia Regional Foundation (WRF)³ invested \$975,000 in both the Planning and Implementation of the HOK Plan. They demanded a rigorous impact analysis of all their grantees. The key indicator of community impact was changes in resident perception of neighborhood quality as measured by a standard Survey of Community Quality, developed by NeighborWorks America. Outside consultants were retained by the Wachovia Regional Foundation to provide the technical assistance needed to draw random samples of residents and assist in analyzing the survey data.

In the summer of 2007, Impact conducted a baseline survey of a random sample of Heart of Kensington (HOK) residents. In the fall of 2009, another random sample of residents was surveyed. In total, 447 residents participated in this survey assessment.

Large and statistically significant improvements in 13 measures of community quality were identified in this evaluation process. There were no areas where community quality was viewed as declining.⁴

³ Wachovia Regional Foundation underwent a name change in April 2011 to reflect Wells Fargo's acquisition of Wachovia. It is now called Wells Fargo Regional Foundation.

⁴ Heart of Kensington Impact Evaluation, Success Measures Survey Results, February 24, 2008, I Squared Community Development Consulting, Inc.



Scanlon Rink Saved Again

Philanthropic investments account for millions in area investment. Scanlon Rink received over \$3 million from the Flyers Foundation

Residents reported feeling safer, were more likely to see their neighbors as friendly, and were more likely to think that neighbors would try to fix things in the neighborhood that are wrong. They were more hopeful and more pleased with the quality of public services and schools. They were also more likely to recommend the neighborhood as “a good place for anyone to live”. A small “piggy-back” survey designed by the HOK team found that 96% of those surveyed thought that the Heart of Kensington team was doing a good job and making at least a modest difference in the neighborhood.

A full copy of this evaluation report is provided in Appendix A. Full survey results are available upon request.

Leverage

Every year since plan implementation started, Impact has leveraged DCED’s investment by at least 10-fold, annually generating between \$3,617,181 and \$18,692,739 in projects and services. Over \$29,000,000⁵ was leveraged in pursuing originally planned goals. This leverage has been reported to DCED annually in the Goal/Project Schedule financial report.

Unplanned efforts made possible by WRF-funded resource were associated with targets of opportunity that emerged during the implementation period. These included three significant affordable housing projects that mobilized another \$31.475 million in public and private investment and produced 50 new homeownership units, 14 new rental units, and 45 renovated rental units. These projects were all developed within a mile of the target area and were not reflected in previous reports since they were not directly supported by DCED resources. They nonetheless contributed significantly to the housing and economy of the area. In total \$18 million was paid in wages to the construction workers who built these projects. City, state, and federal government also benefited as all these wages generated income taxes for the relevant government entity.

Previously unreported impact can also be attributed to the 5000-signature petition campaign that saved Scanlon Recreation Center from closing in 2005. That bore amazing fruit. In 2009, the Flyers Foundation initiated a free hockey education program at the rink. In 2010, Ed Snider, president of the Philadelphia Flyers, decided to invest over \$12 million in improving three existing rinks in the City. Scanlon was selected and is currently undergoing a \$3 million expansion and renovation to support year-round hockey.

⁵ **Leverage Summary**, per DCED Project Schedule Reports 2006-07 through 2010-11

Kensington and Allegheny coming along strong

By Hayden Mittan

The intersection of Kensington and Allegheny avenues may be the most maligned locale in the city.

The simple mention of a trip to "K and A" to many Philadelphians can be met with a raised eyebrow or a chiding, "Who would you go there?"

It's a negative, pessimistic mindset that many Philadelphians seem to have for this area, and it's not entirely without reason.

It's only been a few months since Antonio Rodriguez, the man called the "Kensington Strangler," stalked these streets, even without the threat his murder-obsession actions posed, the area has long kept police busy.

The intersection and surrounding neighborhoods fall into the Philadelphia Police Department's East Division, which has the highest crime rate of any division of the city.

But it's also a cultural diverse area full of vibrant individuals and families.

The intersection recently held its 11th annual family-friendly Market Fest, a day when celebration and musical performances take over Kensington Avenue.

But that's not all.

Everyday, locals are working to revitalize the area and Impact Services, a local community development group, already has a number of programs underway.

Glimmers of hope such as these counter K&A's decades-long bad rap as a place solely defined by a criminal underworld.

"That's actually a misconception," Randy Hoyer, marketing director for Impact Services, an organization that provides employment, housing and economic development opportunities to the Kensington community, said of the area.

On the avenue, "we've had oppor-



DAVE LONGHES / FOR THE STAR

K & A Shop owner Danny Patel cut side of his business along Allegheny Avenue.

Impact Services also secured a streetscape redesign proposal from Interface Studio and CityPlan, which, if implemented, could spruce up the drab areas under the E at Kensington and Allegheny avenues.

That's a real focus for the Kensington and Allegheny Business Association — another arm of Impact Services — because more than 5,000 people a day use the SEPTA stop at Kensington and Allegheny avenues, which makes the area a busy thoroughfare able to sustain a variety of businesses.

The business association touts about 75 member businesses and though someone strolling the avenue might see vacant properties, the commercial corridor only has about 45 empty commercial properties out of the 215 on the strip.

However, these are concentrated on some of the blocks, Codina said, where as much as 60 percent of the properties are vacant stores.

Hoyer, who's been working to improve this community for 10 years, said monitoring these vacant properties is also an element of Impact's work.

He said the group works closely with the city's Licenses and Inspection department to seal vacant buildings so they can't become harbors for drug dealers or worse, houses with elaborate booby traps.

He said he knows stories of area buildings — usually blocks of high-rise homes — that are booby trapped by drug dealers. The scammers, he said, place holes in the floor behind closed doorways, and then enter the building through safe passages, waiting for an unsuspecting officer in pursuit to spring the trap.

Impact Services works closely with the police and City Council offices — the area falls within the First and Seventh Districts — to seal vacant properties and, when possible, find tenants

neighborhood has changed a lot."

A steady commercial corridor in the 1950s, Kensington Avenue has seen shuttered storefronts replace formerly active businesses as industrial plants, and the jobs they provided, left the com-

den as well with many minority-owned businesses, said Codina.

"It's a multicultural corridor," she said, noting a Muslim prayer house on the avenue that holds regular services. "We are working to revitalize it, but it

Reduced Commercial Corridor Vacancy

Reducing Commercial Corridor vacancy levels was a key goal of the original Heart of Kensington Plan. A 25% reduction in the vacancy rate on the core blocks of the K&A Commercial Corridor was a notable accomplishment. While Impact cannot claim credit for such a complex community result, shaped both by market forces and private investment decisions, it is worth noting that in difficult times, when many areas are seeing lots of "empty glass" on their Commercial Corridors, the vacancy rate on the 3000-3200 blocks of Kensington Ave fell from 29.2% in 2005 to 21.9% in 2011. It is hoped that a strengthened core will continue to attract new businesses that align with the needs of the changing population.

Good Press

An article published on the Port Richmond Star Newspaper on August 17, 2011 gives the K&A Commercial Corridor a good name.

Crime Prevention



CRIME PREVENTION

Accomplishments

The HOK Plan proposed a multi-faceted approach to improving public safety and fighting crime. It included bringing more employment services into the area to help the many ex-offenders returning to the community from prison, reducing locations conducive to crime, and building a stronger sense of community and social efficacy among the area's many new residents.

The Plan motivated considerable action in the area and exceeded its commitments to improve a number of troublesome conditions. It produced statistically significant improvements in how safe residents felt.

It cannot claim to have produced statistically significant improvement in the level of crime in the area. Indeed, crime rates in the area and Philadelphia fluctuated over the last six years in response to forces much more significant than those supported by the Plan or the Philadelphia Police Department.

The strong relation between hard times and crime seems clear. The Pew Trust's Philadelphia Research Initiative reported that in 2010, the total number of major crimes in the city rose nearly 2%. It was the first time since 2006 that major crime did not fall on a year-to-year basis.⁶

Poverty, unemployment, and crime are intimately related. This understanding was reflected in the original Plan's comprehensive approach to addressing crime.

Dangerous Locations

The demolition of 76 abandoned houses in 2005-6 addressed one of the community's top concerns. This accomplishment exceeded the plan goal by 52%.

Regular monitoring and reporting of other vacant houses has resulted in an additional 29 houses being sealed, most by L&I, but some by the residents. Between 2005 and 2011, concern about abandoned houses moved from first to fourth place on neighbors' list of concerns.

⁶ Philadelphia 2011 The State of the City, Philadelphia Research Initiative, p. 24



Webster School's "Walking School Bus"

The rape of an 11-year-old, 120 registered sex offenders, and a community response....

Impact worked with the school's social worker and administration to organize area parents and get \$2,000 of foundation funding

A second school aims to replicate the program in fall 2011.



Marching Masters Drill Team

Helping to create more wholesome recreational opportunities for area youth is part of the crime fighting strategy. Impact worked with resident group leader to obtain a \$1,500 foundation grant for drums and uniforms.

Two high-powered security cameras were installed by the city, and 8 successful interventions were made before the Zoning Commission to address nuisance properties.

Re-entry Assistance

Impact exceeded its commitment to seek and find additional resources to help ex-offenders more successfully reintegrate back into the community. Over the last six years, it served 5,371 and helped 1,394 obtain jobs.

Impact was awarded a contract to run the city's second Community Re-entry Center in 2007, quintupling its service to ex-offenders. In its first year of operation, it placed 642 ex-offenders into jobs, exceeding its contract commitment by 83%. This extremely productive program was abruptly discontinued part way through the next year, when city administration changed and funding was cut. Numerous efforts to find alternative funding for a large scale job assistance program for ex-offenders have been unsuccessful. Two proposals are currently in preparation, in a continuing quest to bring services that are clearly needed back into the community.

In 2011, Impact operated three programs to provide 750 ex-offenders with some sort of re-entry assistance. Of the 230 persons enrolled in job placement programs, 88 obtained employment by year's end.

In addition to helping ex-offenders gain full time employment, Impact's Helping Offenders Work program has also provided part-time work opportunities for its 70 program participants each year since 2005. A total of 420 people had a legitimate source of income while they were looking for full-time work.



Branding and “Street Cred”

Serious attention was given to managing the Heart of Kensington “brand”. The logo is now strongly associated with food, friendliness, and family fun



A More Cohesive Community

A key element of the HOK Plan vision was to:

“Promote a respectful, civil place where people feel like valued citizens, and are more involved and at ease with one another”.

The Plan sought to add the capacity to organize more community building activities, build grass root leadership, and foster community involvement. These attributes had been identified by the research of Dr. Felton Earls of Harvard as important characteristics of safer communities.

This work far exceeded Plan commitments or anyone’s expectations. Wachovia Regional Foundation, impressed with the results evident in the rigorous evaluation of the Community Building effort, awarded Impact Services the first follow-on grant ever made to one of their Community Planning grantees.

In meeting its Plan commitment to build capacity in the area of Community Building, Impact appointed its first Director of Community Development and hired a Community Outreach Coordinator in 2007. They were responsible for organizing a variety of community engagement activities designed to bring isolated and uninvolved neighbors together and build a stronger sense of connection, concern, and cooperation. Focus groups and planning meetings generated the original project list; constant feedback keeps it evolving.

Since that time, Impact has organized over 460 community events/projects that engaged over 25,815 participants and 1,450 volunteers in some sort of community-based activity.⁷ The area’s many children were a major focal point for this activity. Besides cleanups, flower sales, and workshops for the adults, there were summer camps, play streets, weekly music and movie nights in the park, skating parties, free holiday parties, tennis and hockey lessons, and Bookathons, where thousands of free books were distributed to area children. The annual Market Fest remains a signature event for the area and draws thousands of people every June.

Tasked with creating at least 2 new partnerships a year, commitments were exceeded by an order of magnitude. At last count, 185 organizations have collaborated on some level. The Play Street Program has become a significant part of Community Building work. Operating for 50 days each summer, the program engages the neighbors in working together to create safe

⁷ Play streets run for 50 days but are counted as 1 project; its participants and volunteers are counted once. VITA sessions were counted as separate events since the people are different each time.



Over 100,000 lunches served and counting!

HOK organizing enabled the program to quintuple in size since 2008. Summer 2011 saw 17 blocks and 845 area children involved in the 10-week Summer Nutrition Program.



play opportunities and distribute free lunches and snacks. Starting with three blocks and 180 children in 2008, 17 blocks were participating in summer 2011 and 845 children are involved.

To establish the program, the Outreach Coordinator worked first to identify or develop block leaders. At least 75% of the residents must then sign the city’s application form. Impact’s Community Outreach team then assures that all applications are submitted to the city by the May deadline. During the summer, Impact’s staff coordinates workshops, clinics, field trips, and the placement of college interns.

Two health care organizations, two businesses, one church, five college interns, and 31 residents are currently engaged in helping to run this vibrant program which was built around underutilized access to a USDA nutrition program.

The program has created an important opportunity for neighbors to come together for the good of their children. It is also an important focal point for garnering additional community support and resource for the area’s children.

Although started as a community engagement activity, the Play Street Program could also be characterized as Community Service. Since 2008, community residents recruited by Impact have distributed over 102,000 meals thanks to this productive collaboration with the city’s Summer Nutrition Program. The program is on track to break 42,000 meals in the summer of 2011. At 2011 prices, the value of the food and snacks distributed by this program now exceeds \$399,000.

In terms of impact on improving public safety and creating a safer neighborhood, there is strong anecdotal evidence that the Community Building activities make a difference. Adults are naturally protective of children and are moved to act when they see they are at risk.

As noted in the Impact Analysis, this high level of community engagement has encouraged people on organized blocks to be bolder in confronting people dealing drugs. Police and drug kingpins have both taking unprecedented action to assure that the children on the play streets and attending park events are safe.

Results of the Community Quality Survey Analysis and various support letters give a more rounded view of this work.



Over 158,000 Flyers

Flyers have been effective in communication and organizing

Communications and Community Building

Plan commitments to build community by enhancing communication evolved and continue to do so as technology changes.

The promised website that serves the community, Impact, both business associations, and the Impact Loan Fund was launched in 2008. (See www.impactservices.org)

Flyering activity and email superseded much of the planned “newsletter” activity. Flyers typically reached 2,500 households for an event, getting a response rate in excess of 5%, double what is usual for such outreach. Feedback from community surveys indicated that even people who didn’t attend events remembered the flyers and liked knowing about events.

The power of flyers as an organizing and engagement tool exceeded expectations.

Flyer distribution provided a reason to interact and engage with residents at least weekly during the summer. While decidedly low tech, this high-touch communication strategy provided an easy way for many neighbors to begin to engage. Over 158,000 flyers were distributed since community-building efforts began.

As noted in the Community Impact Analysis, Community Building effort is attributed with driving improvement in several key Community Quality Indicators. Among the 13 indications that saw statistically significant improvement, the ones that measured neighborhood friendliness, willingness to help each other, and the ability to solve community problems are thought to be most directly impacted. Interestingly, people also reported feeling safer, even though crime rates didn’t fall measurably.

Community Priorities Revisited

Not surprisingly, crime and drugs continue to top residents' list of concerns. This was confirmed in the project prioritizing meetings held in collaboration with KICA in the spring of 2010 and by both the June 2010 and 2011 Market Fest surveys.

Police are frustrated. Even when arrests are made, the dealers are typically back on the street within days, if not hours.

The battle rages on. People are especially fearful of the gun violence associated with turf-wars. Robberies, theft, and prostitution associated with getting the money needed to support drug habits present another layer of irritation.

One mother listed the goals she had for her 3 pre-adolescent sons. "I don't want them on drugs, I don't want them shot, and I don't want them in prison." She is an ambitious woman. She deserves support in pursuing these lofty goals.

Environmental Trends and Strategy Adjustments

The general deterioration of the economy and higher unemployment levels are among the most salient shifts that have occurred since the original Plan was constructed in 2005. These negative macro-trends suggest that crime levels are likely to rise as people without jobs increasingly meet their needs by engaging in illegal activity.

The uptrend in the city's 2010's major crime rate suggests this has been happening.

Impending cuts in city and state programs that provide a safety net of services and supports for the most impoverished residents are expected to exacerbate need levels. Children are especially vulnerable

The multi-faceted strategy presented in the original HOK Plan remains relevant and drives activity across all areas of endeavor. The Plan aims to:

1. Foster the building of stronger relations between the many decent, law-abiding residents and the development of capacity for joint action.
2. Help improve employment levels.
3. Enhance income levels.



City Wide Clean Up!

Hundreds of people and half dozen groups collaborate on several annual cleaning events.



Abandoned Houses

Over 100 houses have been razed or sealed, but the problem is still not solved.

4. Help assure that people's basic needs are met.
5. Educate residents and businesses about risks and how to protect themselves and prevent crime.
6. Address locations conducive to crime, including abandoned houses, nuisance properties, zoning changes that are not in the community interest.

The relationship development and higher levels of community engagement associated with Impact's Community Building, Business Association, and BID activity will continue to be fundamental to future efforts. Nurturing and growing this network of relations is an on-going challenge.

On-going and Future Projects

The Plan's comprehensive strategy to address the community's highest area of concern reverberates through work that falls into a number of activity areas. It is intimately related to its Employment, Community Economic Development, and Community Services work as well as work that has improving public safety as its primary focus.

1. Community Building Activity/Crime Prevention

- Heart of Kensington Community Engagement
- Abandoned House Reporting
- Walking School Bus
- Participation in Zoning Hearing

2. Employment and Training Programs (See Jobs and Employment Training)

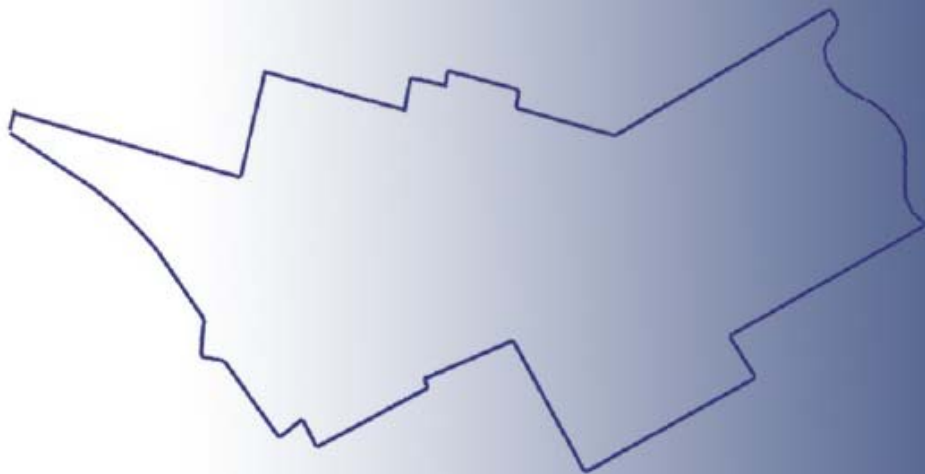
3. Income Enhancement Programs (See Community Services)

4. Basic Needs Assistance (See Community Service-Food & Energy Referrals)

5. Business Improvement District (BID)/Community Economic Development

- Business Association Meetings
- Safety Ambassadors (See Neighborhood Assistance)

Community Economic Development



COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Accomplishments

When the original Heart of Kensington Plan was developed, Community Economic Development was not an eligible activity, for that reason, significant activity in support of Plan goals was under reported throughout the period. None of this activity was forecast by the Plan, so it all can be viewed as “over performance”.

That under reporting is remedied here so the shape of future developments is understandable.

Construction--Commercial Buildings

The development of the 25-acre site of the old Tioga Pipe Company was totally unforeseen when the original Heart of Kensington Plan was prepared.

Over \$45 million has been literally plowed into the location since then as the **Aramingo Crossing Shopping Center** was constructed producing a new Lowes, Sonic, and a Chick-Fil-A.

To date, 260 permanent jobs have been created by the project.

Impact’s involvement on the Aramingo Commercial Corridor began in 2005, when it helped organize the **Aramingo Business Association (ABA)**. This involvement expanded. It retained a consultant to help develop the initial plan to establish a Business Improvement District (BID). Building on that investment, it succeeded in having City Council authorize a BID for the area. That project, designed to improve the cleanliness and safety of the area, generates between \$275,000 and \$300,000 annually in fees paid by Aramingo Corridor businesses.

Eight full time permanent jobs for low-income people were created by the BID.

In seeking to maximize community access to the new jobs at the Crossings, Impact successfully proposed a Customer Service Training program. That program trained 210 low-income job seekers, and accounted for 111 of the FT aggregated job placements.

Impact obtained a grant of \$600,000 from DHHS’s Office of Community Services. This was loaned into the Crossing project and will be repaid over the next five years. This loan helped



Faster Than a Running Shop Lifter

Three full time Safety Ambassadors patrol the Aramingo Commercial Corridor thanks to funding provided by the newly organized Business Improvement District (BID)

secure a commitment for the hire of at least 47 low-income workers. Repaid funds are eligible for re-investment in other retail development projects.

A Walmart, a financial institution, and five other stores are slated for development over the next four years.

Clearly, Impact has developed significant involvement and momentum along the Aramingo Commercial Corridor. For that reason, in the Plan Update, Impact seeks to extend its eastern boundary several blocks so it now includes this project.

Rehabilitation of Old Industrial Buildings

As noted in the Impact Analysis, significant development has occurred that was ancillary to pursuing plan goals. Most notable is the development that occurred in the old factory site that is the headquarters and home of many Impact programs.

Between 2005 and 2011, Impact rehabilitated 31,200 SF of the complex at **1952 E. Allegheny Avenue** for a total investment of \$2,679,115.

- Re-entry Services—7800 SF, Basement
- Social Employment Center—7800 SF, 3rd floor
- Document Management Training Center—7800 SF, 4th floor
- Admin Offices/Business Association/Loan Fund-7800 SF, 5th floor

The \$404,000 conversion of the Freight Elevator made full utilization of the main 5-story building possible.

The first and second floors of the building were rehabilitated in 1998, when the Technitrol company left town and Impact acquired the building to accommodate Philadelphia's first EARN Center. State tax credits were used for that acquisition. In addition to classrooms, offices, and computer resource centers, the building's common space and conference rooms are used to host health clinics, blood drives, business association meetings, and the free tax service. It has become a major center of community activity and service.

Fifty-six people are currently employed in the building. Twenty-six FT jobs were created by the Social Employment Center that opened there in 2009. At least two new employment programs are slated to open in the building during FY 2011-12.



Silk Ribbon Factory Now Serves Ex-offenders

Impact's headquarters building has seen a variety of uses over the last 150 years.



Business Improvement District (BID)

Daily cleaning on commercial corridors improves the shopping and business environment

This strategy of incrementally developing old industrial sites is part of Impact’s DNA. It has been doing it successfully since 1979, bringing revitalized space, jobs, and services to distressed areas.

In the Update, two projects reflect a continuation of this successful strategy.

Removal or Elimination of Physical Blight

Two activities related to Business Association work and blight reduction are forecast to continue:

- Facades improvements will continue along Kensington and Allegheny Avenues for the foreseeable future.
- Daily cleaning on both the Kensington and Aramingo Commercial Corridors will also continue to reduce the blighting influence of trashy streets and sidewalks.

These activities are discussed in the Neighborhood Assistance section of the Plan.

Multi-Year Initiatives

Now that CED has been established as a separate plan category, it seems the appropriate home for several activities required to support community revitalization:

- Planning Work
- Proposal Writing
- Business Association Management
- Operation of a Business Improvement District (BID)
- Impact Loan Fund

Planning

The original Heart of Kensington Plan was completed as part of Impact’s first year of NPP work. The Plan has been a powerful organizing and fundraising tool that exceeded its \$40 million resource mobilization target by over 52%.

The development of a **Commercial Corridor Design** for the Kensington Corridor cost \$26,000. It resulted in a city investment of over \$200,000 in engineering studies needed to support construction. It also shaped over \$200,000 in façade improvement work. When additional implementation funding becomes available, the area is “shovel ready”.



Piles of Proposals Propel Plan Progress

Housing proposals generate the most leverage and are the most costly to prepare.

Proposal Writing

This is the primary way CDCs like Impact bring development resources into the area. Development and approval cycles often cross years and require high quality managerial talent.

Producing Housing Development proposals is a particularly onerous and expensive task that often requires \$50,000 in pre-construction investments to prepare. The outcome of this investment is always uncertain, but the payoffs have been substantial. Investments in proposal production have huge payoffs. In round numbers, the investment in a Director of Housing has already produced returns in excess of 50:1.

Multiple requests were made to the Community Development Financial Institution before winning a grant of \$400,000 for the Impact Loan Fund in July 2011.

Business Association Development and Management

Relations fostered by the **Kensington and Allegheny Business Association (KABA)** have been invaluable to the community.

The monthly meetings are widely advertised by flyers and attract a range of community stakeholders—business owners and managers, non-profit and religious leaders, civic leaders like the president and officers of Kensington Independent Civic Association (KICA), ward leaders, city officials, and representatives of the police, I&I, City Planning Commission, Streets Department, and the Philadelphia Parking Authority.

Most of the original steering committee was drawn from the KABA crowd. Reports on Plan Progress are made at each monthly meeting, as well as to Impact’s Board, which meets quarterly and includes include representatives from Impact’s corporate partners.

The meetings are used for information sharing, problem solving, and the development of collaborative relations. Community building activities and joint marketing events, like the annual Market Fest, create vehicles to engage everyone more deeply in the community and in efforts to improve it.

It is hard to quantify the value that higher levels of community cohesion create, but examples can be illustrative:



K&A Vacancy Rate is Down 25%

Major Cuts is one of the KABA members whose new business is strengthening the core of the Kensington and Allegheny Commercial Corridor

- One KABA member, the Wachovia branch manager, was highly instrumental in creating interest in the area. She convinced Wachovia's regional president to attend Market Fest. He created interest at their Regional Foundation. Six years later, this relation has produced over \$975,000 of grant investment in planning, community building and capacity building efforts. Their multi-year investment made it possible to hire Impact's first Director of Housing, and to fill a pipeline with development projects. As noted, returns on this investment are already in excess of \$25 million.
- The developer of the Flomar Building began bringing prospective tenants to meetings. When Esperanza Health Center wavered over concerns related to safety, and staff and patient parking, KABA secured agreements with the Philadelphia Parking Authority to resolve these show-stopping concerns. Established relations enabled this to happen in record-breaking time. Esperanza has expanded 3 times since coming to the area. It has bought not only needed medical and dental services for low-income people, it brought over 100 high quality jobs to the area. Its very successful fund-raising efforts have enabled it to also build a new headquarters to the northwest of its current location.

Vacancy rates on the Commercial Corridor were 29% in 2005⁸. Despite a terrible economy that has devastated many Commercial Corridors in the city, the Kensington Commercial Corridor held its own. Parts of it thrived.

- The 9-story Flomar Building is now fully rented after a decade of vacancy, and its developer has acquired another building in the area to accommodate a tenant with expansion needs. This substantial development has strengthened the core of the target area and brought quality tenants and needed services. Esperanza Health Center and Hispanic Community Counseling Services both provide culturally sensitive health services to low-income members of the area's large and growing Latino community. Both have expanded several times.
- A net of 10 new businesses have opened on the Corridor since 2005
- A net of 288 new jobs have been created, many in health services
- Commercial property vacancy rates fell from 29.2% in 2005 to 21.9% in June 2011, and improvement of 7.3 percentage points or 25% reduction.
- \$8.8 million of private investment has been made on the corridor.

⁸ The 2005 data set included only the 113 addresses between 3000-3376 Kensington Avenue. The corridor now includes 800-1862 Allegheny Avenue for a new total of 282 addresses. The change in vacancy rate reflects development on Kensington Avenue only.



Vegetarian Fare for the Region

Moshe Foods found labor and space in the neighborhood where it now prepare its tasty and healthy treats.

Investments made in revitalizing the area's business association greatly exceeded all expectations as well as the more limited plan goals which were set to continue its monthly meetings and expand paid membership.

Work with KABA has been extremely encouraging. So many people want to do good; KABA created a platform for them to engage, collaborate, and express their caring and desire for a better community. It has become an extraordinary community resource, like a well for tapping good will.

Successes like this encouraged Impact to take on organizing another business association on the Aramingo Commercial Corridor.

Aramingo Business Association (ABA), founded in 2005, serves the Aramingo Commercial Corridor, which is very different from Kensington and Allegheny Business Corridor.

Impact Loan Fund (ILF)

The Impact Loan Fund received its Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) certification in 1999 and is chartered to provide loan services in 25 census tracts in northeastern Philadelphia. Its service area overlays both the new and updated boundaries of the Heart of Kensington target area.

While the original Heart of Kensington Plan set no goals for the Impact Loan Fund, effort to build its capacity and improve access to capital for small businesses was part of Impact's established Community Economic Development effort.

Recent proposal writing effort resulted in the award of a \$400,000 grant from the CDFI Fund. This award will support additional community lending, help sustain operations, and be used to attract additional lending capital.

Impact's Director of Community Development and new Commercial Corridor Manager worked with the ILF to craft a new product, "low-doc" mini-loans, to assist KABA merchants in accessing the match funds needed to participate in several Commerce Department programs. To date, 2 loans have been made in the original HOK area and have been associated with the creation of 2 jobs. More are expected.

Environmental Trends and Strategy Adjustments

Several significant opportunities have emerged in the community since the original HOK Plan was published. Changes in the funding environment have also invited reconsideration of what to include in the Updated Plan.

The intention is to pursue these opportunities, build upon the momentum that exists, and enhance project competitiveness by tweaking project development strategies so they align better with funder requirements and goals.

Aramingo Commercial Corridor

As noted in the earlier discussion on Construction of Commercial Buildings, the Aramingo Commercial Corridor has become a hotbed of development over the last several years, as developers have poured over \$45 million into the old Tioga Pipe site. During 2011, additional \$800,000 of development was also completed at the southern end of the Aramingo Commercial Corridor where a new ATT store and Checkers restaurant opened in the spring.

Development is slated to continue over the next two years, with a new Walmart and six other businesses in the planning and development stages. Walmart construction began in the spring of 2011. This project is forecast to create over 200 new jobs.

Past and planned development activity on the Aramingo Commercial Corridor, as well as Impact's now significant involvement there has motivated a shift in strategy.



Aramingo Avenue Development Charges Ahead

A 92,000 square foot Walmart will bring new jobs and competitive pricing to Aramingo Crossing

On-going and Future Projects

Rehabilitation of Industrial Buildings

The Plan Update reflects the fact that Community Economic Development and the rehabilitation of old industrial buildings is now an explicit area of interest to Department of Community and Economic Development.

Momentum has already been created around three projects:

- Development of **29 units of affordable rental housing** in the old 3-story factory building that adjoins Impact’s headquarters at **1952 E. Allegheny Avenue**. This project would continue the very successful strategy that Impact has pursued of acquiring old industrial property and incrementally developing it as funds become available.

This project is more fully discussed in the Housing section of the Update.

- Additional development of the old billboard factory at **111 W. Erie Avenue**. There, the plan is to **expand an existing childcare center** and **build a large commercial kitchen** to prepare the meals for the tenant’s citywide network of 30 childcare centers. The kitchen is being scaled to produce over two million meals a year, and will serve 4,500 low-income children 210 days a year.

Impact is enthused to have an opportunity to help this 4-Star childcare facility add jobs and bring quality services to the community.

The tenant, Bright Side Academy, has already retained an architect to produce preliminary drawings for the project. Impact Services prepared and submitted an \$800,000 request to DHHS/Office of Community Services in July 2011 in hopes of mobilizing federal support for this project which revitalizes old factory space, creates jobs, expands supply of quality child care, and can make significant contributions to the nutrition and health to 4,500 of Philadelphia’s poorest children.

An additional opportunity on this site also exists. Impact has recently fulfilled obligations under a “not-to-compete” agreement it signed when it sold its records management business. So, it is now free to revitalize the document management business it used to run in the high-bay section of the 111 W. Erie facility. This would create several additional jobs and contribute to the area’s economy.



1952 E. Allegheny Avenue Concept Drawing

The 150-year-old building aims to begin its fourth life as 29 units of affordable rental housing



Aramingo Avenue Marketing Campaign

Design of banners placed along the Aramingo Avenue Shopping District, creating a unified aesthetic along the corridor.

- Renovation of the Downs Carpet Mill Building at 124 **E. Indiana Avenue**. Acquired in 1979, this site has seen much change serving first as Impact’s headquarters and home to a variety of economic development projects. In its fourth development cycle, Impact will renovate part of this 150-year-old factory building into 40 permanent affordable rental units for Veterans. The location currently provides housing for 56 veterans in 14 apartments that have been built since 2001.

Impact Loan Fund

- Increase lending capacity from the current \$224,000 to \$1 million by 2015. A July 2011 award of a \$400,000 grant from the US Department of the Treasury/CDFI Fund was a giant step forward.

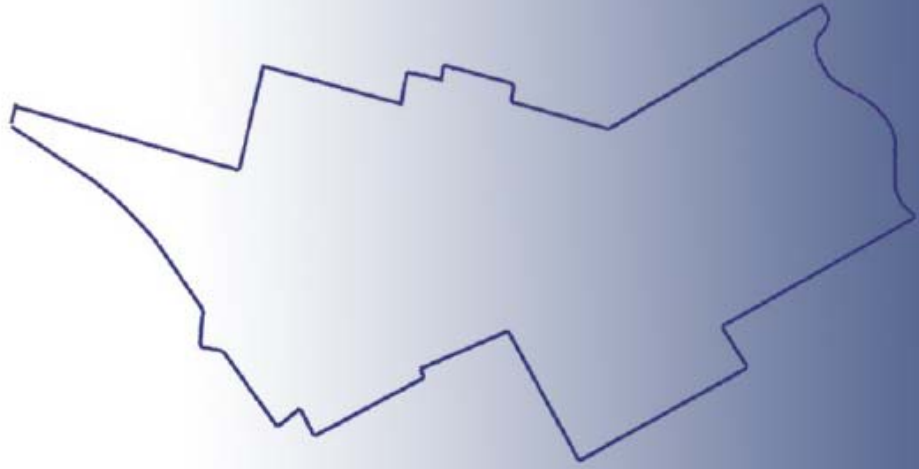
Multi-year Planning and Proposal Writing

- Undertake community planning and fundraising activities in relation to plan goals

Business Association Management and Commercial Corridor Support Activities.

- Support Business Associations at K&A (KABA) and Aramingo Avenue (ABA)
- Undertake Marketing Campaigns for both commercial corridors

Neighborhood Assistance/Physical



NEIGHBORHOOD ASSISTANCE/PHYSICAL

Accomplishments

Part of the original vision of the HOK Plan was to create “a vibrant place with...mix of quality services and amenities” and “a distinctive, urban place that people are happy to call home and which businesses seek to serve.”

Impact’s business association work, discussed more fully in the Community Economic Development section of the Plan, has been a prime vehicle for advancing work in this area. Beginning first on the Kensington Commercial Corridor, and then expanding to the Aramingo Corridor, CED projects like completing a commercial corridor design plan, obtaining \$200,000 worth of engineering drawings to support design implementation, and acquiring the services of a full time commercial corridor manager laid the ground work for physical investments.

The vision moved toward reality with the following physical improvements on the Kensington Commercial Corridor:

- Creating a 3-story landmark mural,
- Improving cleanliness by adding trash cans, including the city’s first two solar-powered compacting cans
- A daily cleaning program on the both the Kensington and Aramingo Commercial Corridors which has been strengthened by buying two cleaning machines with a Commerce Department grant from the City of Philadelphia.
- Completing four façade upgrades, including the highly visible renovation of the SE corner of the K&A intersection.
- Two new security cameras

Private sector investment is starting to kick in on the Kensington Commercial Corridor. In 2010-11, 27 businesses renovated their business in some way. This activity is encouraged by demand growth and seeing other investment. It is supported when possible by improving access to a variety of funding sources.

In residential areas, the Community Land Care program made a major contribution to fighting area blight by providing bi-weekly cleaning and mowing of 100 parcels of vacant land in the



A Stronger Heart

The \$138,000 rehab of King’s Discount eliminated the last blighted property on the K&A crossroads.



That's ME!

Years of events, photos, and community design ideas were brilliantly combined into Ann Northrup's three-story high Heart of Kensington mural.



Residents Loved Helping

community. The program was cut from the city's budget in the spring of 2011. It is a great loss to the community.

Community members and area stakeholders will continue to be organized and supported in doing a major spring clean up. The Spring Into Your Park event held annually at McPherson Square assures that all the benches are painted, and all the debris that collected over the winter is removed.

Community Priorities Revisited

The 2011 Market Fest Survey showed that cleanliness and trash remain high priorities for both the businesses and residents. However, for every person who listed street cleaning as a concern (87), almost twice as many were concerned about safety-related issues. Reducing Drug Dealing remains by far the community's top concern (148).

Playgrounds for the children were also of great interest.

Environmental Trends and Strategy Adjustments

City funding for capital projects has been slow to arrive and modest in amounts. The biggest public investments in the area are being made by ARRA funds that are currently being used to complete "shovel-ready" projects—mostly related to modifying sidewalks to meet ADA requirements.

Funding for installation of bus shelters, lighting, and "place making" cosmetic improvements has been extremely limited.

Public funding for any sort of physical investment moved from modest to virtually non-existent. This is a significant environmental shift. It is disappointing and frustrating.

Improvement is not expected in the foreseeable future. This change in the funding environment invites modest goal setting in areas where public funding is important to the project.

In November 2010, Impact wrote a successful proposal to the Community Development Financial Institution Fund. The \$400,000 grant, which the US Department of Treasury awarded to the Impact Loan Fund (ILF) in July 2011, will enhance its ability to make loans in the area and improve access to capital for small projects.



Cleaning Efforts Address Area Concerns

The ILF has sharpened its focus on KABA members. During the year, its board, which includes representatives from several area banks, developed a new line of short term, low-documentation loans. This product was crafted to assist small area businesses in acquiring the 50% match needed to participate in the City’s Façade Improvement Program and other programs that require matching dollars.

If city funding for the Façade Improvement Program remains intact, KABA businesses are well positioned to access it.

When more funding becomes more available, the Kensington Commercial Corridor has “shovel ready” projects. In the residential area, all the cleaning efforts now seem to fall on volunteers.

If tree-planting resources are available, they will be pursued and efforts to organize volunteers to help will be integrated into community building efforts.

On-going and Future Projects

Community Building Activities

- Engage neighbors in developing and implementing programs and projects of interest.
- Assist neighbors in accessing needed services and information. Provide translation assistance for neighbors with language barriers. Share information about community activities and resources
- Continue to acquire seed capital to finance early stage community projects.

Community Cleaning and Greening Projects

- Spring Into Your Park-community cleanup
- Tree planting, McPherson Square Park (40)

Manage the Aramingo Avenue Commercial Corridor

- Infrastructure Improvements
- Façade Improvements
- Commercial Corridor Cleaning



Kensington Avenue

Allegheny Avenue



Allegheny Avenue Streetscape Improvements

- Safety Ambassadors

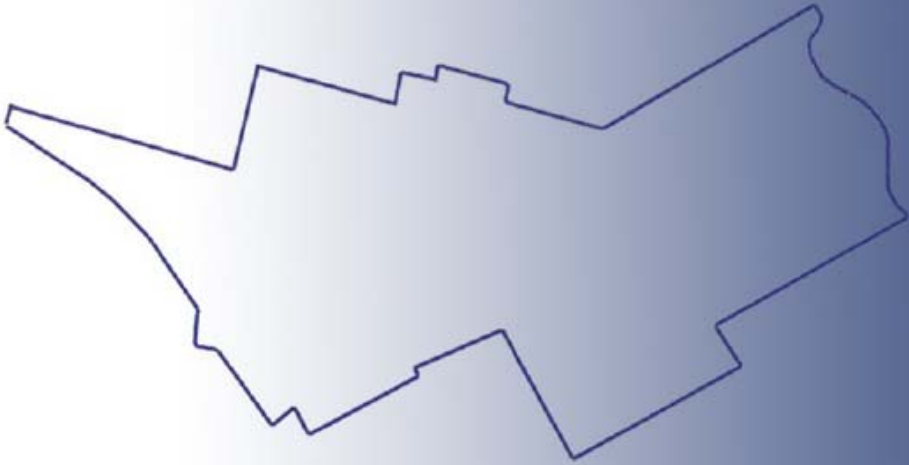
Manage the K&A Commercial Corridor

- Infrastructure Improvements
- Façade Improvements
- Commercial Corridor Cleaning
- Safety Ambassadors

K&A Corridor Infrastructure Improvements

The Streetscape Plan for K&A Outlines a series of infrastructure improvements designed to create a distinct aesthetic for the corridor.

Affordable Housing



AFFORDABLE HOUSING



50 New Homes the Twins at Powder Mill

Proud new homeowners outside their new homes



Accomplishments

As part of the Heart of Kensington Implementation process, in 2006 Impact hired a Director of Housing Development whose salary was funded by Wachovia Regional Foundation's \$975,000 investment in the Heart of Kensington. This new director crafted Impact's first housing development plan, shaped by the needs, market trends, and the available resources and opportunities. Since that time, Impact has completed three (3) housing projects.

- **The Twins at Powder Mill**, located at Castor Avenue and Wingohocking Street, was completed in 2010 and included fifty, semi-detached, homeownership units in the Juniata Park neighborhood. The project site was a Brownfield previously used for industrial and commercial purposes. Sale prices started at \$165,000 and all fifty homes were sold during the worst recession in recent history. The homes featured three or four bedrooms, two full bathrooms, a one-car garage and off-street parking. Six homes were reserved for disabled buyers. Twenty homes were sold to low-income buyers at or below 80% of median income.
 - Total Project Budget: \$15 million
 - Public Investment: \$5.5 million, Private Investment: \$ 9.5 million
 - Wages Paid for Temporary Construction Jobs: \$8.5 million
 - Remediation of over 3 acres of Brownfield.
 - Real Estate tax abatement for homeowners will end in 2019
- **Dual Diagnosis Expansion, (DDX)**. The DDX at 124 E. Indiana Avenue was completed in 2010. The project rehabilitated part of the existing structure into eight, 2-BR rental units expanding the current capacity by 32 beds. The program serves Dually Diagnosed (mental health and substance abuse) Homeless Veterans, providing housing for persons who had been homeless as well as significant economic benefits to the City and State.
 - Total Project Budget: \$1.6 million
 - Public Investment: \$1.2 million, Private Investment: \$.4 million
 - Wages Paid for Temporary Construction Jobs: \$1.3 million
 - \$371,000/year HUD and VA support



45 Rehabilitated Rental Units Hancock Manor

The \$14.9 million project created \$8.2 million in construction job wages and housing for homeless veterans.



- **Hancock Manor** was completed in 2011. Hancock Manor, located at 164-176 West Allegheny Avenue, includes 45 units of affordable rental housing for homeless Veterans (32 Supportive Housing Program (SHP) transitional units funded by the HUD McKinney program and 14 VA Grant and Per Diem transitional units). The building consists of six stories and two elevators, with a total square footage of 62,252. There are 1 one-bedroom, 41 two-bedrooms, and 3 three-bedroom units. This project, made possible by new funding streams associated with American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) and Philadelphia’s new Housing Trust Fund, would not have been feasible during the planning period.
 - Total Project Budget: \$14.875 million
 - Public Investment: \$14.875 million
 - Wages Paid for Temporary Construction Jobs: \$ 8.2 million
 - \$1 million/year HUD and VA support annually, expected for next 15 years.

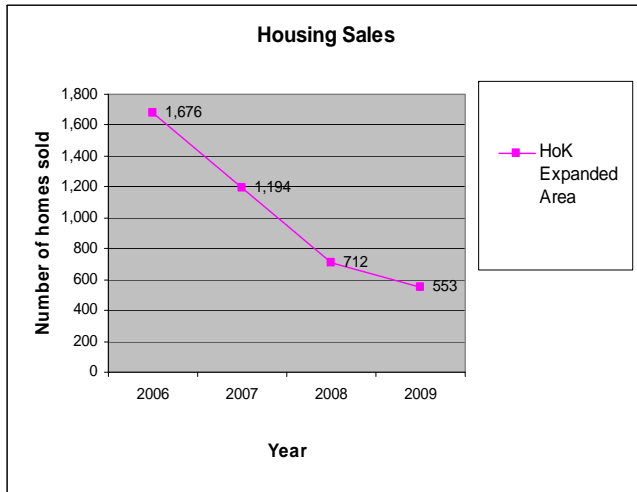
This project also established an annual federal-funding stream of \$1 million from the Veterans Administration and HUD. In this way the project will continue to drive money into the community, the city, and the state.

Time and attention was spent on the 400 “Landvest” properties owned by Robert Coyle in the neighborhood. Over a twenty-year period, Mr. Coyle targeted the neighborhood surrounding the Heart of Kensington for real estate speculation. Mr. Coyle purchased properties cheaply and converted them to rental properties without renovation. Many of the properties were blighted to begin with; over time the properties became more and more deteriorated. Concurrently, Mr. Coyle re-financed large batches of properties with four different financial institutions using inflated appraisals and then defaulted on his loans. Mr. Coyle is being investigated by the FBI. Meanwhile the majority of his properties have gone into “legal limbo” leaving former tenants stuck in blighted properties, and vacant properties in a legal no man’s land. Impact has been working with the Councilwoman’s office and the other local CDCs to attempt to rescue vacant properties for renovation and conversion back to homeownership. To date, the legal mess has proved to impossible to untangle.

Additionally, Impact pioneered development of a new coalition of agencies drawing together homeless veteran service providers to form the Philadelphia Homeless Veterans Coalition (PHVC).

Environmental Trends and Strategy Adjustments

Over the last six years, the housing market in the Heart of Kensington has seen a dramatic shift. In 2006, the market was robust. Homes were selling for higher prices every year. Since 2006, the market has shifted from homeownership to rental.



- In 1990, homeownership levels topped 70%. Homeownership levels have been falling and continue to do so. Rentals now comprise 48.7% of all units. Between 2000 and 2005-09, the percent of households renting rose an average of 16% in the 41 block groups comprising the area, with 29 of the 41 block groups posting increases. Some areas saw rental percentages increase by 149%. In some block groups, over 93% of the households now rent. The increasing number of rental units has a great impact on the tenure of the residents and their commitment to their homes and the neighborhood. (Appendix C)
- Over the period from 2006 through 2009, the number of housing sales in the neighborhood declined steadily, from 1,676 in 2006 to 553 in 2009; sales volume fell 67%. This compares unfavorably with the city as a whole where the number of sales decreased by 46%.
- Housing values in the neighborhood decreased by approximately 15-20% between 2006 and 2009, with the median sale price of a home being \$32,500 in 2009. This compared to Philadelphia as a whole where the median home price increased by 13% from 2006 to 2009.

While mortgage rates have declined through the Plan period, the ability of low-income renters to purchase homes is virtually non-existent due to the tightening of credit requirements, demands for higher down payments, and reduced job security.

The shift toward renting is associated with a continued decline in the tenure of the neighborhood's residence in the neighborhood. In 2009, only 51% of the residents had lived in their homes for more than five years, slightly down from 54% in 2000.

Quality of rental housing and its affordability are greater issues than ever. In Spring 2011, Impact conducted a survey of 261 renters in the neighborhood. It was discovered that 74% of renters pay in cash. The average rent was \$524.89. Over 25% of renters had one or more major housing conditions that were an on-going problem (23% had roof leaks). A total of 21% of tenants had landlords described as NEVER responding to serious repair problems at their homes.

These trends reflect two major threads:

1. The value of houses in the neighborhood has declined (bucking the trend of Philadelphia as a whole), in spite of lower mortgage rates, availability of housing stock, and demand by current renters.
2. The neighborhood has become more of a rental neighborhood over time, but rent is not particularly affordable and recent housing condition surveys indicate that approximately a fifth of the area's landlords are collecting rent in cash, most likely evading the payment of city income tax, and allowing serious condition problems to persist in their rental property.



**Architect's Rendering:
Westmoreland Senior Housing**

On-going and Future Projects

Expand the supply and variety of quality housing options for low-income residents

- **Construct more affordable senior citizen housing.** Impact will continue to pursue funding and development of the fifty-nine (59) Westmoreland Senior Apartments at H and Westmoreland Streets. Once it is completed, Impact will pursue a second fifty-unit (50) HUD 202 development in the Heart of Kensington neighborhood.
- **Construct affordable rental housing.** Impact will pursue development of twenty-five (25) units of affordable rental housing for Veterans at 1952 E. Allegheny and forty (40) units of affordable rental housing for Veterans at 124 E Indiana Avenue and renovate four units at Hancock Manor at 174 W. Allegheny Avenue.
- **Renovate homes for rental in the neighborhood.** Impact will pursue development of six (6) units of affordable rental housing for neighborhood residents and Veterans at scattered locations in the Heart of Kensington. A secondary aspect of this development will be to strengthen existing blocks that have one or two vacant houses by renovating the vacant houses.

Continue to provide quality affordable, transitional housing for formerly homeless Veterans.

- **Continue to provide 45 units** of transitional housing to formerly homeless Veterans at Hancock Manor at 174 W Allegheny Avenue.
- **Continue Provide 56 beds** in 14 units of transitional housing for dually diagnosed formerly homeless Veterans at the Veterans Shared Housing Initiative at 124 E Indiana Avenue.

Jobs and Employment Training



JOB AND EMPLOYMENT TRAINING

Accomplishments

Since 1979, Impact has been serving the community by providing employment services to men and women on public assistance. It has given ex-offenders a chance to re-establish themselves in the community, reconnect with their families, and once again become contributing members of society.

These programs have helped people identify and develop work skills, get documents required to apply for jobs, and remove barriers to employment like domestic abuse, and lack of essentials such as child care, work appropriate attire, and transportation.

Many of the programs provide part-time work opportunities that strengthen work histories, build skills, and create a source of legitimate income for some of the poorest residents in the community. Much of the work done by these programs is crafted to provide benefits to the broader community. They work in area non-profits, clean commercial corridors, prepare meals for the sick and elderly, distribute food to residents, and assist with community improvement projects.

This organizational capacity was one of the key community assets identified in the original HOK Plan. During a period of exceptionally high unemployment, this capacity has grown in response to greater community need.

Impact also rents space in its headquarters building to Accu-Staffing, a local “temp-to-perm” employment agency. This for-profit entity provides employment services to the many residents who do not qualify for any of Impact’s employment programs. They typically serve 50-80 people on a walk-in basis each week.

Impact successfully met its commitment to continue to run a PWDC-funded EARN Center to serve TANF recipients, and exceeded its commitment to expand employment assistance services for people returning to the community from prison.



Learning, Earning, Serving The Social Employment Center (SEC)

The SEC engages pregnant TANF recipients in building experience and serving the community

While ancillary to the primary goals of the various Employment and Job Training contracts Impact has managed to obtain, the community and economic impact of the paid work experience associated with many of Impact's programs has been far from trivial.



Computer Classes

Most employment programs offer opportunities to acquire or improve computer skills

- At least 30 ex-offenders a year have received part-time work while conducting their search for employment.
- The income of some of the city's poorest people was enhanced, providing benefits to them, the general economy, and the city, which taxes all these wages. In 2010-11, the Social Employment Center paid out over \$1 million in Paid Work Experience wages. Much of this funding was cut by the state in mid-June 2011. The outcomes of this move are still reverberating and the future of these income flows to the poorest people in the Commonwealth remains uncertain.
- The Social Employment Center has served over 950 pregnant moms and completed 215 service projects for 60 area non-profits. They also made 420 service outings to help groups like Phil Abundance, Manna, Ronald MacDonald House, and St. Philip's Senior Club. The 67,200 meals this group prepared during a 2-year period are an ancillary benefit of running work experience programs.

Success in increasing the supply of jobs for youth has been disappointing. The unemployment program for young blacks and Latinos is staggering, in excess of 50%.⁹ It was very disappointing to see Philadelphia's Summer Career Exploration Program gutted. Impact had organized over 50 organizations to make hiring youth commitments. During the Plan period to date, foundation funding provided for a modest number of summer jobs, mostly leading camp and dance activities for younger children. Proposal writing in this area has not been fruitful, but persists. After many attempts, in July 2011, Philadelphia Youth Network awarded Impact a contract to provide employment services to some of the area's many out of school youth.

Impact has sought to at least create work experience opportunities for students so they can build their resumes, acquire skills and contacts, and learn more about what interests them. To this end, it engaged 3 high school interns, 3 work-study students, 9 church-sponsored summer workers, and 6 college interns over the Plan period. The Work Study Coordinator at Philadelphia University was especially pleased with the variety of experiential learning opportunities available in

⁹ BLS Table A-2 Household Date and Table A-3 Employment Status of the Hispanic or Latino Population by Sex and Race

the area, and is expected to be a strong partner going forward. Impact is hopeful that the state's work-study program budget is not totally decimated by budget cuts.

BLS Full of Blue News

African Americans experienced an unemployment rate 100% higher than whites

Hispanics are 43% more unlikely than whites to be unemployed

Community Priorities Revisited

Lack of full time employment was a huge need in the community. The nation's economic situation has only exacerbated a huge problem.

Lack of employment for youth is seen as a key contributor to the high level of drug selling activity that so troubles residents. People have basic needs that must be met. If they can't find a legitimate job, they will find something else.

Reducing poverty by increasing employment levels and improving access to better quality jobs is a key strategy for reducing crime and drug activity. Plan efforts in the employment arena remain supportive of the broader goals of improving the economic situation of poor families, and creating legitimate work options for youth who otherwise are likely to engage in criminal behavior.

This work dovetails with Community Economic Development Efforts to attract, retain, and expand employment opportunities in the area.

Environmental Trends and Strategy Adjustments

Philadelphia's unemployment rate in May 2011 was 8.7% (seasonally adjusted). This unemployment rate is 17.6% higher than Pennsylvania's rate of 7.4%. It does not come close to portraying the dire employment situation for blacks, Latinos, and youth.

If national BLS patterns hold, young blacks and Latinos between the ages of 16 and 19 experience unemployment rates of 57.3% to 39.2% respectively.¹⁰ In the June 2011 BLS report published July 8, unemployment rates by race show that African Americans experienced an unemployment rate 100% higher than whites (16.2% vs. 8.1%); Hispanics are 43% more unlikely to be unemployed (11.6% vs. 8.1%).¹¹

¹⁰ BLS, Ibid.

¹¹ www.bls.gov/new.release/aus.nr0.tm



Skills, Knowledge, and Credentials

Many programs offer opportunities for adults to improve their literacy, numeracy, and work chances. GED attainment opens many doors.

Discouraged workers, involuntary part-time workers, and those who have not looked for work in the last 4 weeks are not reflected at all in the BLS's standard U3 unemployment measure.

The employment outlook remains weak.

Strategy Update

In recognition of the area's unemployment problem, in CY 2010 Impact Services was awarded over \$3 million and 5 new contracts to provide employment assistance to a variety of low-income job seekers, including ex-offenders returning to the community from prison.

Impact intends to continue its extensive and highly productive proposal writing efforts with the aim of bringing additional employment and training resources into the community.

It will continue to seek resources that serve:

- TANF recipients
- Ex-Offenders returning to the community
- Youth
- Low income residents

It expects to submit at least 5 proposals/year in this pursuit. This proposal writing effort is being reflected as one of the multi-year Community Economic Development initiatives that will have a significant impact in a Distressed Area.

While the funding outlook is extremely foggy on the city, state and federal level, it expects to continue serving these populations by continuing to run the following programs:

On-going and Future Projects



Work with Veterans Keeps Expanding

Housing, employment, and health services are now all part of the assistance package available from Impact

1. Work to improve the income level of families and increase access to legitimate employment and job opportunities for community residents, including youth.

- **Continue to operate the Impact EARN Center and SEC.** Provide area TANF recipients with help finding work, entering training, and advancing their education, all with a goal to improving their income. Leverage relations with the thousand area mothers participating in this program annually. Foster higher levels of civic engagement by program participants and their children.
 - The EARN Center
 - The Social Employment Center (SEC)
- **Continue to seek funding to provide employment assistance to neglected and underserved groups.** Target people returning to the neighborhood from prison, Veterans and unemployed youth, and populations with higher levels of involvement in illegal activity.

For Ex-Offenders:

- Helping Offenders Work (HOW)
- Incarcerated Veterans Transition Program (IVTP) in 2011
- Weekly walk-in

For Veterans:

- Homeless Veterans Reintegration Project
- Veterans Workforce Incentive Program

For Youth

- Serve out-of-school youth.

- **Continue to operate a community job training and employment resource for residents who do not qualify for any other employment assistance program.**

For General Public:

- Host Accu-Staffing
- Increase direct placements



Impact's Partners

Impact will continue to work with its partners to generate employment and support activities in business corridors.

2. Start businesses or business-related enterprises and/or leverage funding /lending to private enterprises that will generate employment for area residents
 - If funded by OCS, expand the childcare center at 111 W. Erie Avenue and create jobs by adding a commercial kitchen to prepare food for all regional Brightside Childcare Centers.
 - Use Office of Community Services (OCS) Funds to generate additional jobs and/or work experience for neighborhood residents at 1952 E Allegheny Avenue in the new 4th floor Document Management Training Center.
 - Continue to work with the Wolfson Verrichia Group, Inc. to generate employment for area residents through the Impact Loan Fund to the Aramingo Crossing Shopping Center Project and other ventures that emerge in the area.

Community Services



COMMUNITY SERVICES



Volunteers in Tax Assistance

Dedicated volunteers helped file over 3,600 returns bringing \$6.5 million in Earned Income Tax Credits and returns into the community.

EITC is regarded as one of the nation's most effective poverty-fighting programs. It can enhance low-income earners' pay by up to 43%

Accomplishments

During the last six years, Impact Services worked to improve the quality of life for area residents by both directly providing them with a variety of Community Services, and acting as an intermediary, bringing services from other providers into the neighborhood.

Many of the services provided or mobilized were in direct response to explicit Plan commitments. Others were targets of opportunity.

The Volunteers In Tax Assistance (VITA) Center

The VITA Center has been a key element of service since the Plan was launched. Since January 2006, it has filed over 3,600 free state and federal returns and brought over \$6.5 million in tax refunds and credits into the community. In 2010-11, 663 people benefited from this service and \$1.3 million in returns and Earned Income Tax Credits (EITC) were remitted to low-income residents. About half of the filers received the EITC. This federal poverty fighting program is regarded as one of the nation's most effective. For some low-income earners with large families, the credit can enhance earnings as much as 43%.

Health Services

Health related services were a variable but important element of Community Service. In an area where many people engage in risky health behaviors, lack insurance, and do not see a doctor regularly, there were many service opportunities. Lack of pediatric dental care, high incidence of obesity, hypertension and diabetes are just some of the health problems that became focal points.

Impact had virtually no involvement in community health projects prior to making Plan commitments to bring new resource into the area. It has made most of its contribution in this arena by organizing an eclectic set of community partnerships that have brought a variety of health services to the community.



Tooth Decay...the “Silent Epidemic”

Tooth Fairy visits during Movie Night before making her nightly rounds.

Ongoing relations were established with the Ronald MacDonald Care Mobile, which provides free pediatric dental care, Temple Hospital’s School of Nursing, Health Partners, and Northeastern Ambulatory Care Center’s community health department.

These relations have created a foundation for providing around 180 children with free dental care each year, running an annual flu clinic that typically serves 80, and an annual day of free blood pressure, blood sugar, and BMI tests.

Nutrition

Nutrition and cooking classes have been integrated into TANF programs by collaborating with Penn State, Esperanza Health Center, and Drexel’s School of Public Health. They typically serve 100 mothers annually. The Salvation Army located next door to Impact has graciously allowed access to their kitchen facility 2 days a week.

Public Health Awareness

Access to **free HIV testing, AIDS education, and breast-feeding workshops** is also arranged in collaboration with Northeastern Ambulatory Care Center’s community health department.

MPH interns from Drexel conducted extensive outreach to assure that eligible families completed applications for CHIP, the state’s free health insurance for children. A total of 741 families using the VITA Center had a chance to register their children for the program.

Impact brought **Tobacco Education** classes to students in area schools, and **hosted Smoking Cessation** classes run by health educators from University of Pennsylvania.

The Maternity Care Coalition provided **post-partum wellness visits** to 275 TANF moms who participated in the Social Employment Center program. Both the women and their newborns received a variety of health services and counseling through this collaboration. State funding cuts in spring 2011 unfortunately ended this program. Earlier counting strategies did not reflect this contribution to the health and well being of our tiniest citizens.

Without stable funding, collaborations wax and wane.



Layering Services Enhances Impact

Collaborating with Health Partners brings health education lessons to young learners on Play Streets.

In doing surveys of soda and snack consumption of the pregnant women in its Social Employment Center, Impact learned 73% were drinking at least 20 oz. of regular soda a day. All things equal, this drives 15 lb/year of weight gain.

High levels of obesity bode ill for the health of these young African American and Latino women who demographically are more than 50% more likely than non-Latino whites to become diabetic. The state is missing important opportunities to use Department of Public Welfare programs as potent vehicles for community health education.

Emergency Services

A system of referrals for a variety of community services also evolved over time in response to community needs. To date, over 2,800 of these services have been provided.

Emergency food referrals are the centerpiece of the effort, accounting for 1078 (56%) of the 1916 service referrals made in 2010-11. This demand has grown over eight-fold since 2008 when Impact casually began providing this service. **Emergency clothing assistance** was a distant second at 642 services.

Collaboration with the Energy Coordinating Agency began in 2010-11. As energy prices have soared, interest in free weatherization materials, and energy assistance has increased. In a single year, Impact hosted 8 weatherization workshops, helped arrange 4 more at area schools, and made 63 emergency energy or LiHeap referrals.

The system of emergency referrals was developed by the Outreach Coordinator in her attempts to help neighbors in need.

Communication Services

Distributing informational flyers to residents was a service intimately connected with the community building activities. Over 165,000 flyers were distributed since record keeping began in 2007. Some flyers announced events. Others, such as the ones related to changed eligibility requirements for Real Estate Tax Rebates, both informed people and invited them to come to a workshop where application assistance would be available.



Social Employment Center helps at Manna

SEC women prepared over 67,000 meals for the ill and elderly while serving with this community partner

Community Surveys and Research

The original Heart of Kensington Plan was built by collecting and sharing information about community needs. The project has been extremely effective in helping to bring to life to the area. It has revitalized the community by bringing people together, making them hopeful, and mobilizing additional resources.

Collecting and sharing information about community needs continues to be an important part of efforts to stabilize and revitalize this Distressed Area. It's strategies and tools have evolved over the last six years.

Building on the momentum of both the Market Fest and Community Quality Survey required by Wachovia Regional Foundation, additional surveying was done. Shopping habits, food budgets, food stamp utilization rates, access to Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), housing conditions, and landlord practices were all explored in an effort to develop quantifiable information that could be used in program development and proposal writing.

Survey Monkey, an on-line service that didn't exist at the time of the original Plan, has become a key tool for collecting and analyzing data. Digital divide issues are resolved as women in TANF training programs enter data from hard copy surveys done in the community.

Community Priorities Revisited

Much of the work that has occurred in Community Services evolved in response to requests for help. The pattern of services requested or used is a good indicator of community need.

Environmental Trends and Strategy Adjustments

Hunger and food insecurity is more problematic now than in 2005.

The deterioration of the economy has resulted in increased unemployment, decreased income levels, and increased poverty across the city and the nation.

This situation, coupled with higher food prices and higher costs for other basic commodities is increasing the level of food insecurity in the community.



Hunger...A Growing Problem

Food stamp eligibility in Philadelphia grew 42% between 2006 and 2009

When food prices started to rise in 2008 in response to higher energy prices, Impact conducted an intercept survey of 237 pedestrians passing its building. A full 150 (63%) of those surveyed already received food stamps. Their average value was \$80.98/person/month or \$2.70/day. The food budgets of persons not receiving food stamps were almost identical to those of food stamp recipients. Overall, average daily expenditures on food were \$2.85 per person per day.

Since 2005, oil and gasoline prices have risen over 64%¹². Between June 2010 and 2011, BLS CPI-U stats show the area/s energy index rose 17.5%.

Food costs have also increased with jumps in 2008 of over 5%. Price increases continue to batter low-income residents. The June 2011 BLS CPI-U for Philadelphia-Wilmington-Atlantic City showed a 3.5% year-over-year increase, the largest since 2008.¹³

Numerous hunger-oriented projects have been developed in response to these needs:

- Play Street Program
- Emergency Food Referrals
- Weekly Lunch Preparation for Seniors at St. Philips Church
- Engage TANF recipients from Social Employment Center in helping various food and hunger programs such as Manna and Phil Abundance, helping these hunger fighting organizations maximize their service.

Driven by Impact's commitment to serve the Heart of Kensington area, its Social Employment Center served 1900 hot lunches to local seniors. The meals cost a \$1 each, allowing the program to recover the cost of meat, cheese, eggs, and other materials not available from Phil Abundance's "Fresh For All" Program. During the last 2 years, the Social Employment Center prepared 67,200 meals for distribution by Manna.

None of this service was originally envisioned, but the need to continue them is now clear.

Risk of homelessness is increasing. People are losing income and having no idea what they are going to do. Resources to help them are insufficient or non-existent.

In June 2011, state cuts in Paid Work Experience for the pregnant moms in the Social Employment Center caused many women's income to decrease by as much as \$300/month.

¹² US Energy Information Agency

¹³ [Http:// data.bls.gov/cgi-bin](http://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin), CPI June 2011



Energy Saving and Weatherization

Impact will keep working to improve community access to services

Many of these pregnant women are already living in some type of crowded shared housing situation. One was living on an air mattress in a family member's basement.

Thirty-three of the 76 surveyed indicated they were behind in their rent or had eviction notices.

Impact Services' will continue efforts to bring additional housing counseling services to the area and to educate people about resources that already exist.

Access to Needed Medical Care and Prescriptions

Repercussions from long time unemployment are beginning to be painfully obvious in the community. One vibrant community leader, who has been out of work for over a year, confided that she didn't know how she would be able to continue to buy her diabetes supplies and prescriptions. She is over 60 and doesn't have a college education. She is afraid she will never get another job.

Even for the employed, access to medical care remains problematic as low-income workers in the community opt out of company health plans that have become increasingly unaffordable.

One uninsured resident had a heart attack while at Impact recently. She was taken to the emergency room and admitted. Her care costs will be completely externalized, borne by the public and increased burdens on private health insurance providers.

Overarching strategies guiding future community service are based on past success. They include:

- Continue collaborating with other organizations to maximize community benefits.
- Continue using labor resources from TANF programs to serve the community.
- Identify relevant resources through research
- Organize efforts to share information about resources and improve residents' access to available services.
- Mobilize additional resources
- Sound the alarm. Collect and share information with DPW, BETP, Council Person, and State Representatives about significant findings of need.

On-going and Future Projects

For the foreseeable future, need for the following services is expected, and will be provided:

- Emergency Referrals
 - Food
 - Children and Family Clothing
 - Work Attire
 - Energy related-Weatherization/LiHeap
- Community Communications
 - Flyers
 - Surveys
- Housing
 - Housing Counseling
 - BME
- Income
 - VITA
 - Bank on Philadelphia/Second Chance Accounts
- Health
 - Continue current collaborations
 - Affordable Prescription Research and Education Project

As in the past, every attempt will be made to respond to changing community needs.



Free Pediatric Dental Care

One of the many services now more available thanks to new community partnerships

SUMMARY

- The Planning process has been inclusive and productive.
- Over \$61 million in plan-related projects has already been leveraged.
- The original Vision was robust and remains relevant.
- Flexibility has been key to progress, as unanticipated environmental changes have dramatically changed the need and resource situation.
- Pro-social behaviors such as helping, sharing, and cooperating have been successfully fostered among residents, agencies, businesses, and government entities.
- Social capital in the form of relationships and volunteerism is at the highest level ever.
- Commitments have typically been exceeded.
- Considerable momentum for future progress has been built.