Lehigh Somerset

A Conceptual Master Planning Study

Lehigh Ave.-Somerset St./Frankford-Kensington Aves.
Philadelphia, PA 19134

July 2011 • Project Number 2010-22
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Prepared for
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Building neighborhood visions as communities and design professionals work together; the Community Design Collaborative is a 501(c) 3 nonprofit that provides preliminary architectural, engineering, and planning services to nonprofit organizations.

Design professionals—volunteering their services pro bono through the Collaborative—help nonprofits communicate their goals for improving the physical and social fabric of their neighborhoods through design.

The Collaborative relies on a variety of resources to achieve its goal of assisting nonprofits in need of preliminary design services. Our programs are supported through grants from the City of Philadelphia’s Office of Housing and Community Development, The William Penn Foundation, PNC Bank Foundation, Wachovia Foundation, Claneil Foundation, Connelly Foundation, AIA Philadelphia, Citizens Bank Foundation, NEA Design Arts, The Quaker Chemical Foundation and the Union Benevolent Association.

Operational support is also provided through the generosity of individual and corporate donors. The Collaborative’s Annual Bowling Ball is a signature event, raising funds while offering a night of fun for firms, friends, and fans. In addition, the Collaborative’s volunteers donate hundreds of hours of in-kind services each year.

To learn more about the Collaborative, visit our website at www.cdesignc.org or contact us at cdesignc@cdesignc.org.

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The New Kensington Community Development Corporation (NKCDC) was awarded a service grant from the Community Design Collaborative (Collaborative) to engage in a neighborhood planning effort culminating in a conceptual vision/master plan for the area bounded by Kensington Avenue, Somerset Street, Frankford Avenue and Lehigh Avenue, adjacent to the Somerset station of the Market-Frankford Elevated Line (MFL).

The 23-acre study area is located at the center of Philadelphia’s Kensington District, approximately 4.5 miles north and east of the City’s Central Business District.

For over 25 years, NKCDC has worked to strengthen the physical, social and economic fabric of the neighborhoods it services by acting as a catalyst for sustainable development and community building. The work of NKCDC has played a significant role in the striking transformations currently occurring within the 19125 area code. By supporting and nurturing civic associations, fostering the development of market rate and affordable housing, and working to stabilize, beautify, and reinvigorate the area, NKCDC’s stewardship has guided the neighborhoods’ rebuilding, strengthening and return to vitality. This plan marks a significant step for NKCDC’s recent expansion to the north of Lehigh Avenue into Kensington’s 19134 zip code. Here, NKCDC seeks to build on its successes south of Lehigh Avenue and develop strategies tailored to the needs of this expanded service area. The redevelopment of the Orinoka Mills site and surrounding blocks covered in this study is seen by NKCDC as an important opportunity for NKCDC to establish a presence and facilitate change in one of the area’s most troubled spots.
Lehigh Somerset Neighborhood
Lehigh Ave.-Somerset St./Frankford-Kensington Aves.

River Wards

Organization: Housing and Community Development
Facility Type: Mixed-use neighborhood
Neighborhood Context

Study Area Overview

Dominated by a vacant industrial complex, formerly the Orinoka Carpet Mill, and bisected by a broad, underutilized, railroad viaduct – the Lehigh Viaduct - the study area is currently known for high levels of illegal activity including drug dealing and prostitution. The Somerset station of the Market-Frankford Elevated, along with several SEPTA bus routes and nearby I-95, provides convenient, affordable access from the study area to the greater Philadelphia Metro Region. Easy access is among the location’s primary assets, but also fuels a strong current of illegal activity in the surrounding blocks. The commercial corridor around the station includes several useful businesses and community services such as a deli, a youth boxing gym, and a bike shop. However the “strip” suffers from vacancy, crime, and visible deterioration of existing structures. Open-air drug dealing, particularly in and around the transit station entrances, intimidates residents and visitors and deters legitimate use of the station. Stands of traditional row-homes are clustered on Somerset, Ruth, Emerald, and Jasper Streets. Scattered abandonment within these relatively intact blocks increases the sense of blight and provides additional shelter for illicit behavior. Numerous vacant parcels between Frankford Avenue and Emerald Street serve to isolate the study area from the surrounding neighborhood. The confluence of rapid transit with the unattended vacancy of the viaduct and abandoned industrial complex creates an environment that fosters illegal activity and leaves current residents overwhelmed, their homes and businesses virtually indefensible. Transforming these current liabilities into assets is a necessity for the restoration of the study area to vitality and prosperity.

Leveraging existing transit and market opportunities, and anticipating development of a proposed linear park network on the viaduct, the proposed plan envisions the creation of a vibrant neighborhood center within the blocks of the study area. Proposed strategies address the immediate needs of current residents, while providing a long-term vision for community development. The creation of new places to produce, buy, sell, live, work, play and learn fill the void left by the vacant industrial infrastructure and bring new amenities that promise to strengthen the existing community and foster development of a newly productive neighborhood. The blocks of the study area can be strategically transformed into a cultural, economic and residential center for the surrounding area.
The Collaborative engaged in a series of meetings with NKCDC, Community stakeholders, and neighborhood residents, listening to, and learning about, the current challenges and future hopes of their neighborhood. These meetings, along with site visits and research, identified primary focus areas and provided a basis for the proposed vision plan.

**Key Neighborhood Concerns:** In meetings between the Collaborative and current residents, several quality of life concerns were voiced by the community:

- Drug dealing is a problem and has been increasing in the recent past;
- Multiple vacant homes and empty lots create opportunities for criminal activity and illegal dumping;
- Pedestrian access to Lehigh Avenue and points south is impeded by dark and dangerous underpasses at Kensington Avenue, Frankford Avenue, and Emerald Street;
- The railroad viaduct attracts illegal activity and accumulation of trash;
- There are limited recreation opportunities for the many children in the neighborhood, in particular outdoor recreation;
- The presence of the MFL, as well as several SEPTA bus routes, provides good transit connections. However, there is a need to increase safety at the station; residents are afraid to use it or encourage visitors to use it;
- The commercial corridor on Kensington Avenue contains several useful and successful businesses, but the variety of services and appeal of the streetscape need to be improved;
- Many of the existing homes and lots would benefit from increased space to accommodate the needs of today’s families;
- There is a need for education and employment opportunities in the neighborhood;
- Improved accessibility or targeted housing could help seniors remain in the community;
- A focus on “green” development and infrastructure is important.
Existing Conditions

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Narrative

Key Stakeholder Objectives

NKCDC and key area stakeholders, including resident leaders, Community Women’s Education Project (CWEP) and local enterprise, identified the following objectives for the neighborhood:

- Reuse the Orinoka Mill site to provide housing (artist/affordable) and community services/amenities. (eg: community kitchen, light industry, offices, etc.);
- Strengthen/improve existing residential blocks. (eg. New housing, renovations, side-yards, combining structures, etc.);
- Rethink circulation pattern to improve connectivity and access;
- Control access to the viaduct and reduce illegal activity and dumping;
- Consolidate and relocate NKCDC’s offices to the site, at the center of its expanded service area;
- Extend Frankford Avenue improvements north into the study area;
- Create new housing opportunities for families and seniors;
- Identify a location for urban agriculture;
- Focus on “green” transit oriented development;
- Improve the existing public lot on Helen Street;
- Re-imagine viaduct crossings (over or under); create new access points to the viaduct.
A confluence of rapid transit, with the underutilized and fragmented urban fabric that is the legacy of the area’s industrial past, presents the opportunity to re-envision the physical, social, and economic structure of the neighborhood. Leveraging existing transit amenities, stabilizing the historic residential fabric, and identifying opportunities for new development and amenities create the potential to revitalize the study area as a vibrant and sustainable urban hub.

**Challenges:**

- Scattered pockets of abandonment create instability on otherwise intact residential blocks;
- The unsecured rail viaduct acts as an attractive nuisance for crime and trash;
- The derelict, unstable mill complex separates the neighborhood from the station and provides cover for criminal activity;
- The existing playground is inadequate and dangerous; children have no access to recreation space in the neighborhood;
- High volume drug activity deters residents from using the station or patronizing nearby businesses;
- Dark, unsafe underpasses below the viaduct hamper access to schools, shopping and recreation south of Lehigh Avenue.

**Opportunities:**

- Pockets of vacancy within the residential area create an opportunity to provide new, diverse housing for families, artists, and seniors, as well as private and public recreation spaces, while stabilizing existing blocks.
The Mill site provides an opportunity for large-scale development, near transit, that can accommodate a mixed-use commercial, residential, and civic hub in new and existing structures.

Reduced rail freight activity creates the possibility of significantly reducing the length of the existing overpasses to bring light to the viaduct crossings.

Improving the Somerset station area will allow the presence of mass transit to be leveraged as an asset that will attract residents and commerce to the site.

The significant fallow acreage of the viaduct presents an opportunity for regional-scaled recreation and urban agriculture.
Existing Conditions

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Analysis and Concept Diagrams
Despite current physical and social challenges, the study area is well positioned for revitalization, with significant development opportunities and excellent transit connections. Neighbors are in favor of bringing new uses to the mill and viaduct, as well as the redevelopment of empty lots for housing and recreation space. The process of land acquisition and procurement of funds, needed to transform the former industrial sites into new uses, will require significant time and resources. While the groundwork is laid for these development goals, residents need near-term improvements that will increase quality of life and help form a cohesive community. Short-term, intermediate, and final development strategies must work in concert to form a successful community-building process. This process must include existing residents, who, despite significant challenges, express great dedication to their community. In partnership with NKCDC, government agencies, and other stakeholders, residents will form the nucleus of the new community to be created.

The study area comprises only a handful of city blocks, yet is home to a diversity of urban environments. The proposed plan identifies six distinct strategic areas. Each location has its own set of challenges, opportunities, stakeholders, and recommended action items. Working on each of these areas in tandem, as opportunities and funding arise, will incrementally bring positive change and foster the creation of a whole and sustainable community where residents can once again live, work, play, and learn securely.

1. SOMERSET STATION AREA – Impact the physical and social environment around the station to restore its position as an important asset for residents and businesses.

2. ORINOKA MILL SITE – Acquire and redevelop the former industrial site as a mixed-use neighborhood hub with opportunities for housing, recreation, commercial activity, and neighborhood services.

3. RESIDENTIAL CORE – Stabilize vacant land and properties with infill and green-space development, improve traffic circulation, and work with residents to create a safe community play area for children.

4. LEHIGH VIADUCT – Introduce urban agriculture as a method of reutilizing the vacant land and stabilizing the neighborhood edge in anticipation of developing a regional linear park connected to the river.

5. LEHIGH AVENUE – Re-envision the high traffic arterial road as a green, pedestrian and bicycle-friendly neighborhood edge and commercial corridor.

6. STAIRS TO NOWHERE – Stabilize and secure the abandoned parcels to prevent dumping and other illegal activity in anticipation of consolidation, remapping and development.
1: SOMERSET STATION

COMMUNITY DESIGN COLLABORATIVE

Project Number: 2010-22
Date: 06/15/2011
Scale: NTS

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1. Somerset Station Area

**Area Description:**

The Somerset Station of the Market Frankford Line is, effectively, the front door of the study area. Running from the Frankford Transportation Center to the 69th Street Terminus in Upper Darby, SEPTA’s MFL provides access to Center City Philadelphia and facilitates connections to a regional network of trolleys, railroads, and regional bus lines, which connect residents to employment and education centers throughout the region. The proximity of the 3, 5, and 57 SEPTA bus routes provides additional access from the site to Temple University, the Broad Street Subway, and a developing entertainment/recreation district on the Delaware River, making the area a significant local transit hub.

Currently, a significant amount of vacant commercial, industrial, and residential property surrounds this vital transit node. In the blocks surrounding Somerset Station, unused former industrial land, shuttered storefronts, and empty houses create a perfect environment for illicit activity. Open-air drug sales and street prostitution are visible at all hours. Streets are littered with trash and drug paraphernalia. Residents report harassment by drug dealers who obstruct access to the station and clog sidewalks. This environment discourages residents from utilizing the station and patronizing nearby businesses. Deterred by the potentially dangerous atmosphere around the station, intimidated residents often travel to alternate, safer-feeling transit and shopping opportunities.

While avoided by many local residents, the station area, with its broad accessibility and significant vacancy, is widely known as a “drug bazaar”, functioning as an illicit regional marketplace. Those desiring to participate in activities related to illicit commerce travel from other parts of the city and region to engage in illegal activity in the blocks surrounding the station. Working to improve the atmosphere around the station is key to increasing the livability of the study area and to attracting new residents and businesses to the area.

The built environment around the station presents additional challenges. Introduced to Kensington Avenue decades ago, the stations were unceremoniously dropped into the existing city fabric. Nothing in the streetscape creates a sense of arrival or place at Somerset Station. Kensington Avenue, under the MFL, is dark...
1. Somerset Station Area

and congested, sight lines are limited, and there are few “eyes on the street”. The station entrance on the southwest corner of Kensington Avenue and Somerset Street has no visual connection to the station exit located on the southeast corner of the same intersection. Revitalizing the physical environment around the station, in conjunction with introduction of new activities, is critical to enabling the neighborhood to capitalize on this significant asset.

Restoration of the station to a safe, useable amenity is critical for the revitalization of the surrounding area. Introduction of new, legitimate uses has the potential to turn the study area into a vibrant, safe, urban place. For long-term vitality, the station area should be developed into a multi-use retail and service district. In addition to strengthening the retail mix and improving the physical environment, establishing a regional marketplace attraction that has a significant culinary focus, and that is connected directly to productivity and consumption within the neighborhood, will rebrand the station and surrounding area and bring wealth and vitality to the site.
Immediate Action:

Safe, accessible public transportation is necessary for the revitalization of the study area. The Orinoka Mill building, a key structure in the rebuilding of the neighborhood is one block away. Improving the station area will help attract users to a restored mixed-use facility planned for the mill site, and will make the station more attractive to neighborhood residents. NKCDC, along with other important stakeholders, must work to make immediate, and significant, positive impact at the station area. Changing the atmosphere around the station with a series of interventions, improvements, and happenings, will help restore the station to a place residents feel belongs to them and their neighborhood.

Increase Safety

- Increase safety around the station through improved law-enforcement presence. Introduce a police sub-station or other additional police presence.
- Install security cameras and/or lighting in and around SEPTA station entrances.
- Encourage existing businesses to open sightlines to Kensington Avenue. Secure funding for façade improvements, additional lighting and improved signage. Open and attractive storefronts will increase “eyes on the street” and improve the sense of security within the retail district around the station.

Diversify Activity

- Place an active use, even if just during peak commuting hours, on the entrance plaza (SW corner of Kensington and Somerset) possibly including a new kiosk, market stand, food truck etc. This will activate the space and discourage loitering.
1. Somerset Station Area (cont.)

- Extend the activity of the Kensington and Allegheny Business Improvement District, run by Impact Services, to the blocks around Somerset Station. Create relationships between existing retailers and service providers, and work to attract new tenants for vacant buildings.

- The storefronts adjacent to both station exits are currently vacant. Drug dealers congregate in front of these storefronts competing for customers exiting the station. Working with owners of these structures to find interim ground floor uses in these structures will mitigate this problem.

Infrastructure and Streetscape Improvements

- Persistent litter and trash contribute to the sense of danger and decay around the station. Local residents may be intimidated to participate in clean-ups or other streetscape improvement activities for fear of reprisals from the drug-dealing community. NKCDC and Impact Services can work with area schools, religious institutions and community groups to bring needed manpower and establish a regular schedule of street cleaning for the station area.

- Kensington Avenue and Front Street to the south have benefited from sidewalk reconstruction and streetscape improvements through the Re-Store Philadelphia corridor programs. If funding becomes available, this program, or a similar incentive, should be extended north through the station area.

- Blank walls, vacant storefronts and empty lots can become locations for murals, message boards and other temporary beautification projects that will improve the atmosphere around the station.

![Murals and beautification projects will improve the physical appearance of the station area.](image)
1. Somerset Station Area (cont.)

Long Term Plan:

Improving the social culture and economic health in the area around Somerset Station lays the groundwork for establishing the station and its environs as the neighborhood’s front door, and the creation of a newly vital urban place. Reimagining the built environment and introducing a signature destination are key strategies for the rebranding of the station area.

Selective demolition of key structures adjacent to the southeast station exit provides the opportunity to create a dialogue between the two station access points and the Orinoka Mill building, which this plan envisions as a mixed-use community hub. The newly open station area creates a small urban plaza activated on three sides by the station, bus stops, an existing business, a church, and the renovated mill complex.

The south side of the new plaza presents the opportunity to create a destination marketplace that will further activate the streetscape and increase economic vitality in the area.

The marketplace is envisioned as the public face of a proposed community-based culinary facility. This facility includes a commercial kitchen that will create entrepreneurial opportunities for neighborhood residents, as well as a retail component that will enliven the streetscape and attract a regional clientele - a Kensington version of Tony Lukes! A third component of the proposed culinary facility is development of a mobile food unit commissary that will provide additional business opportunities for the neighborhood.

Establishment of a culinary enterprise is often challenged by a lack of access to affordable certified facilities. The community culinary facility provides this needed access to potential entrepreneurs affordably and locally. The proposed facility creates a place for residents to develop and expand food-based businesses within the neighborhood by providing the opportunity to make, sell and market local goods.

Participants: NKCDC, Philadelphia Police, Local Merchants, Impact Services, SEPTA, SEPTA Police, Local Substance Abuse Services, Mural Arts Program.

Land Acquisition: Parcels extending from the east side station exit, from Kensington Avenue to Ruth Street, should be investigated for acquisition by NKCDC immediately. The former Cambria Boxing Club should also be acquired for re-use. Its location, square footage, and open high-bay structure make it an ideal candidate to house the culinary facility or other significant community amenity.
CULINARY PLAZA: An open-air servery and gathering space connected to the new 7,000 SF community kitchen in the old Cambria Boxing Club on Ruth St. capitalizes on the high profile location and allows local businesses to produce and market goods to the neighborhood and the city while activating the plaza around the station. Removal of key structures opens views to the station entrance on the west side of Kensington Ave.
2. Orinoka Mill Site

Area Description:

Five stories tall, and including approximately 50,000 square feet of space, the remaining structure of the former Orinoka Carpet Mill dominates the study area. The vacant, block-sized complex is a dangerous eyesore for the surrounding community. In tandem with the adjacent viaduct, this unsecured vacancy is in close proximity to one of the city’s most active drug markets. This synergy creates a perfect cover for illicit activity. The mill complex’s current state of deterioration also presents a physical danger to surrounding structures and residents. Portions of the sidewalk around the building are closed due to a failing parapet, the interior is frequented by transients and drug users, and its vast perimeter is unsupervised and poorly maintained. A significant portion of the complex was recently demolished by the City. The remaining structure can be saved and rehabilitated.

As with the viaduct, the challenges presented by the mill site are also its greatest assets. A high visibility structure with a vast amount of available space, in close proximity to mass transit, the mill presents a unique opportunity to bring a variety of new uses to the neighborhood. The restoration of this historic industrial structure and its return to use as a productive part of the local economy will enhance the quality of life and improve the image of the area. The existing mill building, and its site, has the capacity to be developed into a mixed-use neighborhood hub that includes: indoor and outdoor community recreation space, office space for NKCDC, community-based education and employment services, public safety amenities, light industrial work lofts, housing, and off-street parking.

Immediate Action:

Securing ownership, development partners and funding sources will be an exhaustive process that will require significant dedication from NKCDC, City agencies and resident support. Until the mill site is restored to use, it will be critical to secure the site from intruders and stabilize the structures to minimize danger to residents.
Increase Security:

- Secure the perimeter of the site, provide and repair fencing.
- Provide lighting on all sides of the building.
- Increase police surveillance of all sides of the complex, particularly Ruth Street.

Report Infractions:

- NKCDC can work with community members to organize reporting to City agencies (L&I) if and when the property is non-compliant.

Obtain Site Control

- NKCDC should continue their efforts to work with property owners and City agencies to obtain control of the entire mill site for redevelopment.

Long Term Plan:

Through selective demolition, restoration, and new construction, the Orinoka Mill can be redeveloped into a mixed-use community hub that will foster revitalization of the surrounding area. By incorporating the right mix of community services and amenities, providing space for development of new business, and introducing new housing options, the renovated mill will be transformed from a dangerous void to a center of activity and entrepreneurship. The enormous scale and high visibility of the mill ensure the transformative power of the complex for the entire neighborhood.

Incorporating some of the desired community uses into the mill complex will help link the redeveloped site to the lives of current residents and provide a safe and secure location that is currently lacking in the neighborhood. Program elements envisioned for the Mill by the community include:

- Work loft space for light-industrial/artisan type businesses;
- Residential loft apartments;
- Office space for New Kensington CDC and other community service organizations;
- Office space for health care providers or clinics;
- Indoor and outdoor recreation facilities for neighborhood children;
- Facilities for day care and after school programs;
- Community center and playground;
- Community services;
- Police sub-station.
A full survey of the structure and an extensive planning and design study will be required to develop a complete program and plan for the mill redevelopment. The scale of the site, along with the unique qualities of the existing industrial structure, invites a multitude of uses.

**Participants:** NKCDC, Philadelphia Planning Commission, Department of Licenses and Inspections, local social service organizations, public and private development interests.

**Land Acquisition:** The entire mill site should be acquired and consolidated. The abandoned funeral home site on Somerset Street, adjacent to the mill will provide the opportunity to create a new, accessible entrance to the complex from the main street and should be investigated for acquisition.

**Potential Funding Sources:** Historic Tax Credits, New Market Tax Credits, PHFA Tax Credits, HUD
ORINOKA MILLS BUILDING: Renovation of the historic mill into over 100,000 sf of mixed-use space brings vitality to the area around the station and provides much needed “eyes on the street”. Selective demolition of existing structures and creation of an open plaza between Kensington Ave and Ruth St. draws the converted mill into a dialogue with the station.
3: RESIDENTIAL CORE

EXTEND AND WIDEN STERNER STREET

SUSTAINABLE INFILL HOUSING

HELEN STREET COMMUNITY SPACE

COMMUNITY DESIGN COLLABORATIVE

Project Number
2010-22

Date
06/15/2011

Scale
NTS

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3. Residential Core

Area Description:

The “Residential Core” of the neighborhood includes intact blocks of row-houses on Somerset, Jasper, Helen and Emerald Streets. These blocks are home to a stable group of residents with an active desire to improve their neighborhood. NKCDC has been working with residents to address ongoing community concerns and bring physical improvement to their blocks. The Elm Street program offered financial assistance for sidewalk replacement, façade and cornice restoration, and installation of exterior lighting, and localized street cleanups have helped to improve the appearance of these blocks, and the morale of the residents.

Despite these recent improvements, neighbors in the area report feeling overwhelmed by the vacancy and blight that surrounds them, and the illicit activity emanating from the station area. Neighbors cited ongoing concerns about the lack of secured fencing and unstabilized vacant properties. NKCDC will continue working with these residents to address their concerns and help residents form stronger community bonds as the work to improve and redevelop the surrounding area continues.

Immediate Action:

The creation of a safe, securable, civic space in the neighborhood will be a critical first step in bringing together core residents who will work with NKCDC to define a vision and transform their neighborhood.

The neighborhood currently lacks a safe and convenient place for neighbors to meet and share ideas, information, and concerns. Community Women’s Education Project, located in a former school building on the corner of Frankford and Somerset, is seen as a safe place and should continue to be used as a site for community meetings and briefings. However, residents need a multi-purpose social gathering space that will be a safe, clean place for children to play, a place for neighbors to meet and talk, and a staging area for community events. While a full-service community center with indoor and outdoor facilities is envisioned as part of the mill site redevelopment, a near-term solution is critical to support and sustain current residents while the neighborhood improves and grows.
3. Residential Core (cont.)

The small playground on Helen Street is a logical choice for developing a programmed community space. While the site is not ideal in the long term as open space, in the short term it is available, centrally located, and is already recognized by residents as a public space. The process of creating a community space here should be a civic process where residents have input into its development. Spaces in the south portion of NKCDC’s service area such as Pop’s Playground, the Garden Center, Fire Park, Haggert Street Playground, Crease Street Garden, etc., can serve as examples of possibilities for this space.

NKCDC has already begun the process of engaging neighbors in a community-based effort to design and program this space. This process should be continued and accelerated as this site has the potential to be a key component in the community building effort that will be required to reconstitute the neighborhood as a whole community.

Possible programmatic and physical improvement elements for the space that have been discussed are:

- Children’s play equipment
- BBQ grill and cookout area
- Community garden plots
- Fruit trees (Orchard Project)
- Staging area for “Farm To Families” CSA distribution
- Neighborhood flea market days
- Community bulletin board
- A mix of hard-surface paving and grass
- Trees and landscaping improvements
- Secure and attractive fencing
- Lighting
- A community-created mural
3. Residential Core (cont.)

Long Term Plan:

Improve and increase housing stock

The residential core will benefit greatly from redevelopment of the surrounding abandoned industrial zones and increased safety and usability of the station area. The current residents of this area, if organized and activated, will form the nucleus from which the neighborhood will grow and thrive. Providing support to current residents to increase safety and improve the physical environment is essential to keep them in place. Improving the housing stock by taking advantage of vacancies and available lots to create new housing opportunities for families will strengthen the area and increase the community. NKCDC should engage in a lot-by-lot ownership study of the area to determine occupancy, ownership and tenancy of the existing housing stock. Opportunities for development of new housing should focus on sustainable strategies and family-friendly housing.

Improve Vehicular Circulation

Currently, in the residential core, narrow one-way streets impede vehicular circulation and inhibit access to the neighborhood. Widening and extending Sterner Street from Ruth Street to Frankford Avenue, will improve circulation and make the neighborhood more accessible. The first and most critical stage of this intervention is made possible with acquisition of the Orinoka Mill site. Creating a connection from Jasper Street to Ruth Street will begin to restore the street grid and complete the area streets. This connection will help knit the neighborhood together by improving pedestrian and vehicular flow. Increasing the width of the Sterner Street right-of-way (R.O.W.) to the south creates the potential for much-needed on-street parking and enhanced ease of circulation. A final connection from Ruth Street to Emerald Street will require additional property acquisition and significant grading and should be considered as a long-term strategic goal along with the potential closing of the Emerald Street Tunnel. With a revitalized housing stock, improved circulation pattern, and new community amenities, the residential core of the site is transformed into a complete urban neighborhood at the center of the revitalized study area.
3. Residential Core  (cont.)

Participants: NKCDC, Current Residents, Philadelphia Police Department, Streets Department, Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, The Orchard Project, Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority.

Land Acquisition: The Helen Street lot should be acquired and consolidated to protect its status as a neighborhood open space. The acquisition of vacant parcels and homes for redevelopment by private developers should be facilitated.
THE HUB: The Orinoka Mills building, restored as a cultural and productive center, has the presence to establish stewardship over the station, viaduct, and surrounding blocks. Community services, work spaces and housing support existing residents and provide a unique array of amenities designed to attract new people and businesses and markets to the area.
4: LEHIGH VIADUCT

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4. Lehigh Viaduct

Area Description

The Lehigh Viaduct traverses the southern end of the study area. Once home to the Port Richmond branch of the New York & Pennsylvania Railroad, the R.O.W. extends from the Amtrak station at Broad Street to the old Port Richmond coal yards on the Delaware. The branch once served a multitude of freight lines on which the coal that fueled local and regional industry was hauled. Today the wharves are defunct and the former yards along Lehigh Avenue have been converted into scrap metal yards, used car lots, and other secondary uses. The viaduct now handles only the occasional slow-moving freight train on a single in-service rail line.

In NKCDC’s Riverfront Plan, the Viaduct is envisioned to be reborn as part of a large regional park network that will occupy the vacant and underutilized former industrial sites along the Delaware, serving as a greenway connecting interior neighborhoods of North Philadelphia to planned recreation amenities on the riverfront (this vision is anticipated in the recently published Delaware River Waterfront Master Plan). The Study area represents a unique opportunity to capitalize on the intersection of this new, green, infrastructure with existing mass transit, and to re-imagine how this long isolated swath of land connects to surrounding communities.

Its current condition, however, presents a significant challenge to adjacent residential neighborhoods. The viaduct and its former coal yards occupy a total of approximately 8 of the study area’s 27 acres. Overgrown, neglected, and largely unseen from major streets, this vast expanse invites illegal dumping and provides cover for a multitude of criminal activities. The proximity of open-air drug markets at the Somerset and Huntington El stations only enhances the attractiveness of the viaduct for illicit use.

In addition to acting as an attractive location for undesirable behaviors, the viaduct interrupts the street grid and creates a strong neighborhood boundary on the southern end of the study area. At the end of the 19th century, Kensington Avenue, Frankford Avenue and Emerald Street were all excavated to allow the rail lines to pass overhead. As a result of these excavations, dark underpasses now form an unpleasant southern gateway to the neighborhood. The tunnels harbor crime and impede pedestrian access to shopping, schools, and transit.
Secondary streets, Ruth, Jasper and Helen, simply terminate at the rail line. The current discontinuity in the local street pattern and isolation of the neighborhood’s residential blocks is the legacy of this 19th century reconfiguration. Demolition of many homes that once backed up to the viaduct leaves interior blocks exposed to the expanse. Unchecked vegetation swallows the abandoned and untended vacant lots adjacent to the right of way. Haphazardly placed modular concrete barriers and battered iron fences are all that protect adjacent residential blocks. Increased control of this critical edge is necessary to establish a higher quality of life for residents and to discourage illegal activity within the viaduct.

Planning in anticipation of the future park network must happen concurrent with more immediately feasible strategies in order to address the immediate challenges presented by such a large, vacant area. Better definition of the viaduct’s edges, identification of temporary and permanent uses, and increasing surveillance and stewardship are key elements for reducing the impact of the viaduct on adjacent residents and beginning its transformation from a local nuisance to a regional asset.

**Immediate Action:**

**Increase Oversight**

The unsecured borders and unstewarded acres of the viaduct are a key component in the pattern of illicit activity in the neighborhood. Strategies to control access and improve oversight of the viaduct area will interrupt the current patterns of criminal behavior and increase the sense of security in the adjacent residential neighborhoods. NKCDC will continue to work with CSX and Police to develop a plan for maintenance and oversight of the railroad tracks.

**Clean and Green**

The interior of the viaduct is the responsibility of the property owner (CSX), however, the community can contribute to reducing trash by working to clean and green the public edges and underpasses. Organized community
efforts are required to clean areas along the edges of the viaduct of trash and debris. This requires significantly more manpower than residents of the immediate neighborhood can provide. NKCDC can assist neighbors by providing additional manpower and equipment resources.

For areas that are hard to access and resist regular landscaping efforts such as slopes and embankments, “seed bombing” with native wild flowers is recommended as a low cost strategy that can beautify the area and deter dumping, as well as serve as part of an attractive community-building event.

![Community greening such as wild flower ‘seed bombing’ events and installation of fencing beautifies vacant areas interim to development](image1)

![Establishing an urban-agriculture zone along the edge of the viaduct presents an opportunity to create a defined edge and utilize its acreage.](image2)

**Reclaim**

Much of the north side of the viaduct is bordered by vacant parcels not within the railroad right-of-way. This creates an opportunity to acquire, consolidate, and redefine this edge. It is recommended that community gardens or other green uses be established on these sites to facilitate control and maintenance. Appropriate improvements to this area could also serve as the genesis of an urban agriculture zone.

The portion of the viaduct south of the freight line, ultimately slated to be parkland, is currently difficult to access and isolated by the tracks and active industrial parcels on Lehigh. However, the acreage north of the tracks is easily accessible, relatively flat, and is bordered by the private parcels that have been identified for acquisition. An agreement to lease this land from the railroad and convert it to agricultural use (i.e. tree farm, raised bed gardens, etc.) will begin to create an agricultural zone complementary to development of a future park. An agricultural enterprise will bring economic, educational, and environmental opportunities to the neighborhood.

**Open the tunnels**

The long underpasses are no longer required for train movement since only one set of tracks is still active; several segments can be removed without interfering with the existing rail service. Reducing the covered portions of Frankford Avenue and Kensington Avenue by up to 80% will greatly improve the pedestrian experience traveling to the south. Eliminating the rail overpass will also help isolate segments of the viaduct making it more manageable for law enforcement and harder to move through undetected. Lighting, murals, and sidewalk improvements will also help improve the sense of safety as an interim step.
4. Lehigh Viaduct (cont.)

**Long Term Plan:**

The short term interventions of cleaning, greening, and occupying the viaduct all work to set the stage for its ultimate redevelopment as a key part of the Delaware River waterfront revitalization. The viaduct has the potential to serve as a greenway linking several North Philadelphia neighborhoods to the riverfront and its developing park network. The confluence of the viaduct and the Market Frankford Line, in proximity to both Huntington and Somerset stations, provides an opportunity to create a major public access point to the park. The intersection of Lehigh and Kensington Avenues is ideally suited for the creation of this new gateway. The unique steel bridge, spanning Lehigh Avenue and the viaduct, serves as a visual landmark and provides a distinctive sense of place at the intersection. Currently, the walls of the Strathman coal yard isolate the viaduct from Lehigh and Kensington Avenues. Removal of these structures presents the opportunity to re-imagine the intersection as a unique urban place and gateway to the park network. Opening the park to Lehigh Avenue and modifying the landscape to create a major park entrance will convert the dark congested intersection to a vibrant urban space, a space where recreational green-space collides with a busy urban neighborhood, dramatically highlighted by the historic bridge structure. Inherently theatrical, the park gateway is a place of contrast and connection where Philadelphia’s industrial past and green future directly engage the diverse residents of Kensington and all Philadelphia.

There is significant demand for large-scale public green space in Kensington. While the area has many recreation centers, playgrounds and small neighborhood parks, it does not benefit from proximity to one of Philadelphia’s larger regional parks. Acquisition of the viaduct lands for recreational use should be a priority. The significant acreage of the viaduct also provides opportunities for development of sustainable storm-water infrastructure that can complement and help fund parkland development. The acreage of the viaduct within the study area can be developed independent of, and earlier than, the remainder. The presence of transit access, borders with three major roadways, and a central location to several densely populated neighborhoods, all with a deficiency of recreation opportunities, provides a clear case for prioritizing conversion of the viaduct to parkland. The current undesirable activities on the site heighten the priority of this transformation. Development of a fully integrated park system, serving Kensington and the River Wards, will take significant time and resources and involve many partnerships, funding sources and political action. The portion of the viaduct between Kensington and Frankford Avenues presents an opportunity to start in a location where the impact will be significant.

**Participants:** NKCDC, CSX Railroad, The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, Philadelphia Parks and Recreation, Philadelphia Water Department, Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, and groups interested in establishing urban farming in the city should be sought as potential future and interim users for portions of the viaduct lands.

**Land Acquisition:** Private parcels bordering the northeast edge of the viaduct should be the first acquisition priority. A large portion of this border would be acquired with the Orinoka Mill site. In addition, the south side of the 2000 block of Sterner Street is critical for control. Long-term strategies should focus on consolidating the former coal yards on Lehigh Avenue for integration with the park plan.
Kensington and Lehigh: Reclamation of the viaduct as parkland presents the opportunity to create a neighborhood gateway and regional entrance point for the new regional park & greenway.
5. Lehigh Avenue

Area Description:

Severed from the rest of the site by the viaduct, Lehigh Avenue forms the southern border of the study area. The north side of the Avenue is lined with former coal yards. These old yards are currently commercial operations that do not take full advantage of the high traffic boulevard or enhance the streetscape. Here, story-high concrete walls and chain link create a hard edge with little activity and no “eyes on the street”. Due to this industrial legacy, the retail potential of Lehigh Avenue remains under-capitalized. Strategies for the Avenue envision its conversion from a gritty industrial artery into a landscaped greenway that enhances surrounding neighborhoods and creates a transition from the southern residential neighborhoods to the proposed greenway park coming to the viaduct.

Some of the historic structures along Lehigh retain historic character and are of appropriate scale to reuse as a market or retail location. Conversion of these structures to a retail marketplace takes advantage of high visibility and will ultimately create a destination point for the park.

The concrete stanchions of the old coal yard at the corner of Frankford and Lehigh tell part of the industrial history of the neighborhood and are suitable for reuse as a parking lot that could serve the market and the park.

The steel arches of the bridge at Kensington and Lehigh already create a sense of place and act as a landmark for Kensington. The distinctive structures, located at a high traffic intersection, present the opportunity to create a significant Architectural “moment” where the viaduct park is accessed by transit.

Lehigh is a wide thoroughfare and could accommodate curb extension and a planted median to enhance its appearance and increase safety for pedestrians.

First Steps:

Clean and Green

- Greening Lehigh Avenue will improve the area well in advance of introducing the park, and requires no property acquisition.

- Work with existing property owners to plant trees along the north and south sides of Lehigh Avenue. Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, along with local volunteers, can provide trees at minimal cost to property owners.

Enhance Pedestrian Environment

- Convert portions of the turn lane in the center of Lehigh Avenue into a treed, landscaped median. Increased tree cover and additional permeable surface help forward green objectives laid out by the City.
5. Lehigh Avenue (cont.)

- Extend curb cuts and improve crosswalk markings to enhance the pedestrian connections to the south.

**Façade Improvements**

- Work with residents of the residential properties on the south side of Girard Avenue to add exterior lighting and repair facades and cornices.

- Work with businesses on the north side of Lehigh Avenue to improve the appearance of their properties and add exterior lighting.

**Long Term Plan**

The gradual transformation of the viaduct into a regional park, along with green and pedestrian friendly improvements to Lehigh Avenue, work together to transform a gritty, post-industrial arterial road into a lush, new parkway. A newly greened Lehigh Avenue, with adequate lighting and a pedestrian-friendly streetscape, will cease to be an edge, and will serve as a green focal point that joins, rather than divides, the adjacent neighborhood. Re-use of some of the historic industrial structures will give the Avenue and Park a link to the area’s industrial railroad past. Converting the old coal yard on the corner of Frankford and Lehigh, currently in use as a tire shop, into a parking resource and entry point to the park will tie the new green infrastructure to the area’s industrial heritage. The historic industrial structures fronting Lehigh Avenue present an opportunity to create a community marketplace. The market will be a place to vend locally-made goods and produce. Here the artisans, craftsmen, artists and farmers who brought new life to the mill, viaduct and surrounding neighborhood, along with local entrepreneurs taking advantage of the newly available facilities, can sell and market their goods to the community and the region.

**Participants:** Philadelphia Water Department Office of Watersheds; Streets Department; NKCDC; EKNA; ORCA; Port Richmond community groups, and Sustainable 19125.

**Land Acquisition:** Private industrial parcels bordering Lehigh Avenue should be acquired to foster a connection between the Avenue and the future Viaduct Park.
VIADUCT PARK: Lehigh Greenway

LEHIGH GREENWAY: Removal of concrete walls and introduction of a treed median integrates Lehigh Ave into the new greenway and transforms a harsh neighborhood boundary into a community asset.
6. Stairs to Nowhere

Area Description:

At the height of Kensington’s industrial era, the streets surrounding the rail lines along Lehigh Avenue were excavated to allow passage under the then-active railroad tracks. Existing homes on the 2000 blocks of Sterner, Silver and Seltzer Streets, and the adjacent blocks of Emerald Street and Frankford Avenue, were outfitted with steep staircases for access to the “at grade” residences from the depressed streets. Today, with the houses largely demolished, these narrow streets lined with remnant staircases form a virtual “no-man’s land” on the eastern edge of the study area. Only three homes remain standing on desolate blocks. The lack of visibility and numerous hiding spaces make this area very attractive to drug use and prostitution. The narrow streets do not allow room for on-street parking, and the existing parcels are small and difficult to access. Ownership of the small lots is divided up among numerous absentee owners, presenting an additional challenge.

In order to be suitable for redevelopment, the land must be acquired, consolidated and re-graded. As a consolidated site with frontage on Frankford Avenue and Emerald Street, this location will become attractive and viable for development.

Immediate Action:

The process of land consolidation, re-zoning and identifying development partners and funding is a lengthy process. Intermediate steps are necessary in this area to address quality of life issues for nearby residents.

- **Clear the area.** Cleanup of the vacant lots in this area requires resources beyond the capability of the limited number of immediate neighbors. NKCDC can tap into their larger volunteer pool to include this area in regular community clean up efforts.

- **Demolish the stairs and create a uniform street-wall.** The existing abandoned staircases provide cover for criminal activity and collect trash. As they are in the public right-of-way the City should be encouraged to demolish the stairs and stabilize the street wall.
6. Stairs to Nowhere (cont.)

- **Plant untended areas with deterrent landscaping.** Seed bombing and stands of trees will beautify the area and deter dumping and illegal activity until larger-scale redevelopment is feasible.

- **Close and decommission unused streets.** The 2000 block of Silver Street currently has no active addresses, and serves no traffic circulation purpose. The Street should be formally “abandoned” and closed to vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

**Long Term Plan:**

Due to the topographical constraints and challenging block, lot and R.O.W. dimensions, the parcels in this area must be acquired, consolidated and rezoned to sustain new development. NKCDC should solicit the help of a private developer and work with the City Planning Commission, City Council and other City agencies to acquire, consolidate, and re-zone the area to create a single development parcel. The scale and location of the newly consolidated tract will be ideal for the development of a mixed-use, multi-family residential development. Senior housing, currently lacking in the area, is a good fit and was a popular idea with neighbors. On Frankford Avenue, a mixed-use commercial and residential corridor, there is an opportunity to provide neighborhood retail spaces and a potential senior center.

**Participants:** NKCDC should work with local police and residents to address criminal activity. Cleanup requires extensive manpower and equipment funding should be secured from City agencies, as this area is currently a public safety threat. The Planning Commission and Redevelopment Authority can facilitate the condemnation and consolidation of the site. New development should be the result of a public private partnership facilitated by NKCDC.

**Land Acquisition:** All parcels should be acquired and consolidated to form a new development parcel that will be suitable for the proposed redevelopment. The existing lot and block structure, along with the current ownership pattern, are significant obstacles to redevelopment.
The Conceptual Master Plan presents a vision and strategy for transforming the blocks of the study area from an area besieged by blight and crime into a diverse, sustainable and mixed-use neighborhood hub. Vacant industrial land is transformed into recreation space, while restored historic industrial structures provide space for new businesses and community services. Opportunities for urban agriculture, business development, and a variety of housing types are identified. Strong residential blocks are reinforced through reducing vacancy and providing residents the resources they need to improve the structures and safety of their homes. Community efforts to create new public spaces and engage in community building beautification events bring residents together to collectively improve the physical and social fabric of their neighborhood. Residents and businesses, alike, benefit from a safer and more attractive transit connection and commercial district. In order to address current challenges and steer the neighborhood to a vital and sustainable future partnership and collaboration with NKCDC, a collective effort by residents, government, and social agencies is required.

NKCDC

- Continue to engage the community and identify willing leaders.
- Work with neighbors to facilitate community building events and projects.
- Assist neighbors in the restoration of the lot on Helen Street.
- Identify, pursue, and market residential and business development opportunities.
- Serve as a liaison between residents, government, and the development community.
- Collaborate with Impact Services and other stakeholders to improve the station area.
- Provide volunteer resources to assist the community with projects.
- Survey tenancy to determine ownership versus rental housing in the area.

Public Agencies

- Assist NKCDC and the development community in strategic land acquisition.
- Prioritize the creation of new recreation spaces for the community.
- Provide funding to restore and improve infrastructure with a focus on sustainability.
- Work with NKCDC and developers to create opportunities for affordable housing.
- Improve public safety, particularly at Somerset Station.

Community

- Organize and participate in beautification and cultural events assisted by NKCDC.
- Engage public agencies regarding issues in the community; report hazardous conditions.
- Work together to utilize and maintain public spaces.
- Identify leaders from the community to organize and coordinate projects.
- Join with NKCDC to create a community asset from the Helen Street lot.
- Promote social events such as block-parties and flea market days.
- Green the neighborhood by planting trees and establishing community gardens.
- Request exterior lighting and security gates be installed where needed.
OVERALL VISION PLAN

SEE AND BE SEEN
A new public space as a regional park entrance creates the opportunity for urban theatre at the busy intersection of Kensington and Lehigh Avenues, the primary access point for the new park from mass transit.

BUY & SELL
Reuse of the historic industrial complex on high-traffic Lehigh Ave as a community marketplace where farm goods, and work of local artists and artisans can be sold to a regional market.

BREATHE
Greenway connects to the extensive new park network on the Delaware.

GROW
Urban agriculture provides a new use for neglected land along the old rail line. The farm introduces nutritional and educational opportunities for the neighborhood and provides stewardship over this critical neighborhood edge.

MAKE THINGS
The vacant mill building is repurposed as a mixed use complex with over 100,000 sf of living and working spaces that will attract new businesses, create jobs and provide needed services to the community.

PLAY/LEARN
A community center attached to the renovated mill complex provides safe and supervised recreation for children and space for community based programs and activities.

Renovation of existing housing stock and support to current homeowners is coupled with the introduction of new housing opportunities for artists, families and seniors.

LIVE

COMMUNITY DESIGN COLLABORATIVE

LEHIGH SOMERSET: CONCEPTUAL MASTERPLAN STUDY
PROPOSED VISION PLAN

Project Number
2010-22

Date
06/25/2011

Scale
1”=50’

The Community Design Collaborative products are intended to provide visual conceptual tools to aid in project design and planning. All drawings are drafted to conceptual design and are neither intended nor may be used for construction. The Community Design Collaborative disclaims any responsibility or liability for the technical accuracy of concepts after any visual presentation.
Lehigh Somerset
A Conceptual Master Planning Study
2010-22

Description
of Services
# Value of Services Calculation Sheet

**Lehigh Somerset**  
*A Conceptual Master Planning Study*  
2010-22  
July 2011

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<tr>
<th>VOLUNTEER</th>
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<tr>
<td>Jay Appleton, P.E.</td>
<td>Civil Engineer/Principal</td>
<td>35</td>
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<td>Claudia Bitran, AICP, PP</td>
<td>Planner</td>
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<td>Keith Johnson</td>
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<td>Stephen Schoch, AIA, LEED AP</td>
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<tr>
<td>John Theobold</td>
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<td>Heidi Segall Levy, AIA, Project Manager</td>
<td>Senior Architect</td>
<td>35</td>
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**TOTAL VALUE OF DESIGN SERVICES**  
$40,075

* Billable Hourly Rates in the Philadelphia area for 2008

Principal ($125 to $220)  
Senior Architect/Designer ($100 to $135)  
Architect/Designer ($70 to $90)  
Intern Architect/Designer ($50 to $65)  
Senior Landscape Architectural Designer ($100 to $135)  
Landscape Architectural Designer ($70 to $90)  
Intern Landscape Architectural Designer ($50 to $65)  
Planner ($90 to $115)  
Historic Preservationist ($90 to $115)  
Engineer ($100 -$150)  
Cost Estimator ($100 to $135)  
Senior Interior Designer ($90 to $135)  
Interior Designer ($50 to $80)

Billable hourly rates are based on the 2005 American Institute of Architects Compensation Report and a survey of a representative sample of local design professionals. Revised in January 2008.
October 26, 2016

Shanta Schachter
Deputy Director
New Kensington Community Development Corporation
2515 Frankford Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19125

RE: Project 2010-22
Lehigh Somerset: A Conceptual Master Planning Study

Dear Shanta:

We are pleased to inform you that your application for services has been accepted. We understand that New Kensington Community Development Corporation (NKCDC) is looking for assistance with the development of a conceptual master plan for the area bounded by Lehigh Avenue and Somerset Street and Kensington and Frankford Avenues. We understand that NKCDC plans to use the master plan study to leverage funding for the development of multiple sites within the area. The design process will include working with the community to develop a vision and identity for the neighborhood.

This letter outlines the work that the Community Design Collaborative (Collaborative) will perform for NKCDC. Design professionals volunteering through the Collaborative will provide the services and products listed below. Your project will require a team of 5 volunteers – 4 experienced architect(s)/intern architect(s) and urban designer/planners, one of whom will act as Lead Volunteer, and an historic preservationist.

Collaborative volunteers will provide the following products and services:

1. Attendance at two meetings with the community, as arranged by NKCDC – the first to discuss the community’s issues and concerns with the volunteers and to reach a consensus on the direction of their priorities for revitalization of this area. The volunteers will use the direction given at this meeting, as documented in meeting minutes provided by NKCDC, as a basis for their preliminary design. At the second meeting, the volunteers will present their preliminary master plan to the community for feedback. The volunteers will use the direction given at this meeting, as documented in meeting minutes provided by NKCDC, as a basis for the completion of their master plan study.

2. If requested by NKCDC, the team may make one presentation of their final proposal to either a group of stakeholders or to the community immediately following completion of the final report.

3. An 8½" x 11" bound report including:
   a) Written Introduction: Providing background information on the client organization, the community and the Collaborative project
   b) Project Location Map: Indicating the location of the focus area within the city
   c) Photographs: Photographs of the focus area
   d) Site Context Map: Based on maps and aerial photos provided by NKCDC and field investigation, the map will be done at an appropriate scale to be presented in 11" x 17" format. This map will indicate the focus area within the larger neighborhood context, as well as key features within the surrounding context that will influence the proposed development strategy.
   e) Focus Area Map: Existing Conditions: Based on information provided by NKCDC, a City building and lot data map and field investigation and drawn to an appropriate scale to be presented no larger than 8½" x 11" format. This plan will include the existing conditions of the focus area: parcel lines, building footprints, streets and street names, addresses, institutions, vacant lots, vacant structures, land use including single-family and multi-family residential, and existing streetscape conditions such as
sidewalks, lighting, street furnishings and trees will be included. The map will also include the adjacent Lehigh Viaduct and the MarketFrankford EL. The photographs of the existing conditions may also be incorporated into this base map.

7) Proposed Master Plan Map: Based on the existing base map and drawn to an appropriate scale to be presented no larger than 11" x 17" format. This plan will indicate the proposed strategy for revitalization including: recommendations for reuse and/or demolition of existing structures; recommendations for new construction; identification of opportunities for property improvement; recommendations for the incorporation of an area for community gardening and urban agriculture; streetscape improvements including trees, plantings, furnishings and lighting; and recommendations for traffic calming, pedestrian circulation and parking, as appropriate. Recommendations will be based on input from the task force and community, neighborhood planning studies; review of current conditions, and historic preservation considerations.

8) Co-Rendered Perspective Drawing: A rendering of an aspect of the proposed master plan to be presented no larger than 11" x 17".

NKCDC will be responsible for providing the following:

1. Creation and coordination of the task force, as well as the larger community group; a list of the task force members is to be provided to the Collaborative prior to the in-house team kick-off meeting.

2. Scheduling of meetings with the Collaborative volunteers, the task force and the community

3. Written information about the history of the organization, the task force, and the community, to be included in the introduction of the final report

4. Copies of plans of the focus area, electronic and hard copy as available

5. Copies of relevant neighborhood plans/studies previously done

6. Information regarding any proposed development in the area

7. Site program information and initial concepts to be further developed during community meetings

8. Attendance at a follow-up meeting at the Collaborative to review the final report

9. Completion of a questionnaire evaluating the performance of the Collaborative staff and volunteers

We expect this work will take approximately six (6) months to complete after the volunteer team gets started. It must be noted that inclement weather and unforeseen circumstances have a volunteer's schedule could delay this project. All professional and technical services provided by the Collaborative volunteers are pro bono and we estimate the value of these pro bono services to be approximately $12,000 – $25,000.

Work on your project will begin after this letter of agreement is signed and returned to the Collaborative. Please note that the Collaborative has already received a check made payable to the "Community Design Collaborative" in the amount of $1000.00 for direct costs. This letter must be returned within thirty (30) days of the date of this letter to remain eligible for the services described.

The Collaborative's products are intended to provide visual concepts and to assist in the preliminary phase of project design and planning. All drawings and construction budgeting figures are limited to conceptual design and are neither intended nor may be used for construction.

Although we endeavor to provide the highest quality volunteer services for this project, the Community Design Collaborative and our project volunteers assume no responsibility or liability for our services including the recommendations of our volunteers, the technical accuracy of our work product or for any unauthorized use. In addition, New Kensington Community Development Corporation agrees to
indemnify, defend and hold harmless the Collaborative and its officers, directors, employees, agents and volunteers (including, but not limited to, any firm or other business entity which provides services or products as a volunteer, or which permits its employees to provide volunteer services or products) (collectively the 'Collaborative volunteers') from and against all claims, demands, losses, suits, damages and expenses (including attorneys' fees and court or other costs) arising from any act or omission, or services or products, provided by Collaborative volunteers under this letter of agreement or otherwise.

The Collaborative shall be deemed the author of all reports, drawings, specifications and other documents prepared by the Collaborative volunteers for this project and, as such, shall retain all common law, statutory and other reserved rights, including copyrights, in and to them. Your organization will be provided with copies of the final report, which you may retain and use for information, reference and distribution in connection with this project. You may not, however, alter, revise or amend the report, either directly or indirectly, or use it for any purpose other than for this project, without the express written consent of the Collaborative. The Collaborative shall have the right to use the report, and to distribute copies of it, for educational, promotional or other purposes.

If you have any questions regarding the agreement outlined above, please contact me at the Collaborative offices at 215-587-9299.

Sincerely,

Heidi Segall Levy, ALT
Project Manager
Community Design Collaborative

Accepted and agreed:

Shanta Schachter
Deputy Director
New Kensington Community Development Corporation
# Service Grant Application

## Organizational Profile

<table>
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<tr>
<th>1. Organization Name:</th>
<th>New Kensington Community Development Corporation (NKCDC)</th>
</tr>
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<td>2515 Frankford Avenue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City:</td>
<td>Philadelphia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone:</td>
<td>215.427.0350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax:</td>
<td>215.422.1303</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Website:</td>
<td><a href="http://www.nkcdc.org">www.nkcdc.org</a></td>
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<td>4. Scale:</td>
<td>PA</td>
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<td>5. Zip:</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Executive Director:</td>
<td>Sandy Salaman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Project Contact:</td>
<td>Shanta Schachtler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone (day):</td>
<td>215.427.0350 x107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone (cell):</td>
<td>503.686.6706</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax:</td>
<td>215.427.1302</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Briefly state your mission and describe your services:</td>
<td>NKDC is a nonprofit organization dedicated to revitalizing East Kensington, Fishtown, and Point Richmond. Our mission is to strengthen the physical, social, and economic fabric of the community by being a catalyst for sustainable development and community building. Each year, NKDC serves more than 16,000 low and moderate income families and 60,000 residents. NKDC accomplishes its mission through 5 programs: economic development, real estate development, vacant land management, housing counseling and community engagement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Does your organization have a Board of Directors?</td>
<td>Yes [ ] No [ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board Chair:</td>
<td>Richard Levitan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Officer:</td>
<td>David Kim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. When was your organization founded?</td>
<td>1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Does your organization have 501(c)(3) status?</td>
<td>Yes [ ] No [ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What year was 501(c)(3) status established?</td>
<td>1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Operating budget for current year:</td>
<td>$2.3 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Total number of staff:</td>
<td>31 [ ] Full Time: 25 [ ] Part Time: 2 [ ] Volunteer: 4 [ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. What are your organization's current sources of funding?</td>
<td>government [ ] fee for service contracts [ ] foundation [ ] corporate [ ] individual [ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. What neighborhood(s) does your organization serve?</td>
<td>19125 and 19134 zip codes: Fishtown, Kensington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Total number of clients served by your organization in the last fiscal year:</td>
<td>60,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. What organizations, public agencies, and elected officials have assisted your organization?</td>
<td>NKDC has consistent partnerships with more than 150 organizations, officials and agencies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Has your organization ever received services from an architect, landscape architect, planner or engineer?</td>
<td>Yes [ ] No [ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If yes, identify who and describe services:</td>
<td>Multiple: WRT, Interface Studios (planning), Interface Studio Architects, Coaxo, Kramer Marks (architects), PHS, Studio Bryan Hanes (landscape architects)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Questions?

Contact us at:
215.587.9290 [ ]
215.587.9273 [ ]
de@design@deesign.org [ ]
www.edesign.org [ ]
Service Grant Application

PROJECT PROFILE

20. Project Title: Lehigh-Somerset master planning.

21. Describe the project's scope, timeline, and importance to your organization.

22. What preliminary design services are you seeking?

NCCDC is seeking master planning services for the area of Philadelphia bounded by Lehigh-Somerset, Front to Frankford Avenue.

23. Project Address: Lehigh-Somerset, Front to Frankford Avenue.

City: Philadelphia
State: PA
Zip: 19134
Neighborhood: Kensington
Census Track

24. Project Type: □ Renewal □ New Construction □ Renovation □ Expansion □ Other

25. Lot and/or building size: Blocks

26. Current Use: mixed use

27. Do you □ Lease □ Own □ Plan to Acquire

28. If you lease, note the property owner and term of the lease.

29. If you plan to acquire, list the current property owner(s) and describe your acquisition strategy and timetable:

NCCDC is looking at a number of properties with various owners to acquire through partnerships.

30. Do you have plans drawings of the lot and/or building? □ Yes □ No

31. Proposed project budget: $40,000,000

32. How did you determine this? cost estimates

33. Is funding available for the project? □ Yes □ No

34. Are there fundraising deadlines or other milestones related to this project?

35. Have you or your organization contacted other groups, companies, or contractors to assist you with the project?

36. Who referred you to the Community Design Collaborative?