

THIS IS

**EAST
GIRARD**

FISHTOWN

EAST GIRARD CORRIDOR DISTRICT MARKETING PLAN

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This plan was generously funded by the [City of Philadelphia Commerce Department](#) and [Pennsylvania's Department of Community & Economic Development](#). The plan was led by New Kensington Community Development Corporation [NKCDC] and a committed Steering Committee comprised of local stakeholders, business and property owners, and community group representatives.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 1

Background 2

Plan components 4

CORRIDOR IDENTITY VISION 5

PLACE BASED FRAMEWORK STRATEGY 12

Walking assessment overview 13

Priorities and focus areas 15

General streetscape and "interval" improvements 16

Corridor gateways 23

Frankford and Girard focal point 28

APPENDIX A: PLACE-BASED STRATEGY

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX 31

APPENDIX B: BRAND GUIDELINES 34





[branding on the corridor at present is minimal, and promotes fishtown--not necessarily east girard as a place]

[INTRODUCTION]



BACKGROUND

A combination of targeted neighborhood revitalization efforts and an improved market position have strengthened Fishtown over the past several years. The changes are visible and palpable on residential streets and if you haven't been to Frankford Avenue in a few years, prepare yourself to be impressed by the apparently sudden transformation. East Girard Avenue is starting to catch up with the times, but it's re-emerging as something slightly different than what it was before. After serving Fishtown as a bustling traditional main street for over a century, East Girard suffered along with the rest of most urban areas and commercial corridors through the latter half of the 20th Century, during which Philadelphia lost nearly 27% of its population. With fewer residents to support the corridor, and with many commercial entities transitioning away from the small floorplates of urban main streets in favor of much larger suburban typologies, many of East Girard's small businesses and services were shuttered and East Girard became more a route traveled along to get somewhere else rather than a place to be.

The fragmented and chaotic character of the streetscape presents a challenge to cultivating the building momentum of activity along the Avenue. Likewise, a general lack of cohesiveness is, in part, a result of ground floor commercial vacancy, conversion of ground floor space to residential or other non-commercial uses, and inactive frontage created by gaps such as parking lots and vacant/underutilized



+ HISTORIC BUILDING FABRIC

[east girard avenue has a long history as a "main street" serving the community. some of the corridor's historic character is still visible, including the prominent first pennsylvania banking and trust company building at frankford and girard, now a wells fargo branch.]



“it's a shame to see some properties renovated with small windows on the first floor—and to see non-commercial ground floor uses on east girard. the ground floor at least should be some kind of store or business.”



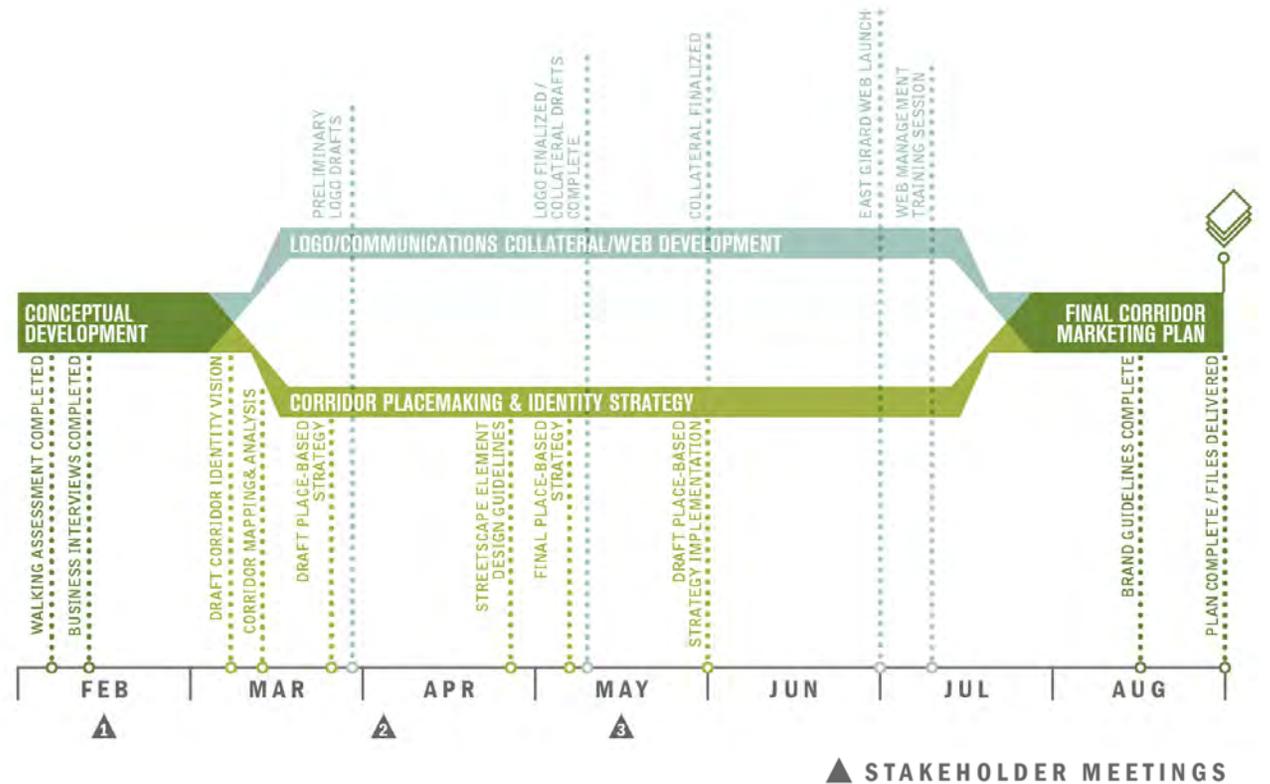
[vacant/underutilized properties, as well as businesses that don't create active frontage on east girard or add to the corridor experience also disrupt the corridor's continuity]

land. However, despite the experiential challenges of visual interference and discontinuity, a number of new businesses have popped up on East Girard over the past several years, breathing new life into the corridor and contributing in meaningful ways to the emerging identity of the avenue. However, there is a need to connect the dots, so to speak, between these islands of activity—both physically and perceptually. A comprehensive branding and identity development initiative that results in both tools to promote the corridor and create a distinct sense of “place” on the avenue is vital to encouraging continued reinvestment and reanimation along East Girard.

It’s clear that a vision to give direction to how people think about East Girard Avenue as a place is very timely. Recognizing this, NKCDC initiated the East Girard Corridor District Marketing Plan to engage stakeholders in generating a shared vision for the corridor’s identity, to develop strategies for promoting the East Girard brand through various channels, and to set forth a framework for public realm improvements to make the corridor’s emerging identity more visible within the character of the streetscape itself. Through a seven-month process beginning in February 2013, the consultant team, led by Interface Studio and with Letter27 bringing their talent to the branding and marketing aspects of the initiative, benefitted from multiple opportunities to tap into local expertise. The stakeholder group, comprised of business and property owners along East Girard as well as representatives of community-based organizations, was recruited and convened to provide feedback throughout the process. Stakeholder meetings, along with interviews with



[new storefronts and businesses are breathing new life into formerly listless stretches of east girard]



individual business owners held early on in the process, offered a range of perspectives on how East Girard has evolved over time and how the corridor experience could be improved to support continued reinvestment and increased foot traffic seen over the past few years.

PLAN COMPONENTS

What's the vibe of East Girard and how do we want to see it evolve? Forming a shared understanding of what makes East Girard unique and deciding how best to communicate its distinct identity, the **CORRIDOR IDENTITY VISION** served as a foundational direction driving forward the development of communications collateral, the East Girard website, and the corridor place-making and identity strategy.

Like its public image, the experience of East Girard as a corridor is somewhat fragmented and incohesive. Resulting from conversations with the stakeholder

group and a corridor walking assessment conducted as a part of this study, a number of strengths and opportunities as well as weaknesses and areas [both locational and topical] in need of improvement emerged. These formed the basis for streetscape enhancement priorities within the **PLACE-BASED FRAMEWORK STRATEGY**. More than simply responding to the corridor's strengths and weaknesses, the Place-Based Framework Strategy seeks to set a tone for streetscape improvements so that they resonate with and reinforce the Corridor Identity Vision.

Over the course of this project, implementation of marketing initiatives has already begun. Collateral materials have been produced and an East Girard

website launched to draw more visitors, businesses, and investors to the corridor. Setting an agenda for continued implementation activities, **APPENDIX A: PLACE-BASED STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX** serves as a target implementation timeline with phased budgets for installation of physical elements on East Girard Ave. The matrix is a working document that can be used to help secure resources, set priorities among potential projects on the corridor, and provide an action plan for future corridor initiatives.

To ensure brand integrity and consistency, **APPENDIX B: BRAND GUIDELINES** sets forth graphic standards and best practices for future use of the East Girard logo and graphic identity.



[CORRIDOR IDENTITY
VISION]



CORRIDOR IDENTITY

VISION

The overall goals of the corridor branding and marketing strategy, below, formed the foundation for conversations with the stakeholder group about how their vision for the future of East Girard might be translated into a graphic identity and streetscape improvements.



WE ENVISION A CORRIDOR BRANDING AND MARKETING STRATEGY FOR E GIRARD THAT...

promotes a unique identity/vibe without being too narrow or excluding stakeholder or user groups.

speaks to both long-time business owners and more recent arrivals and their patrons.

embraces the identity and history of the greater fishtown area while also promoting a distinct identity for e girard avenue.

serves to resonate with and attract both fishtown residents and visitors alike.

WHAT'S THE VIBE OF EAST GIRARD?

Though there is plenty of opportunity for continued evolution of the corridor, the East Girard brand should build on its history and emerging identity. Through conversations with the stakeholder group, a number of buzzwords surfaced in discussion of East Girard's existing vibe that align with subcultural themes and an independent spirit—elements that those who are invested in the corridor's future would like to see come through in East Girard's branding and in the character of the streetscape itself.

“focus on small business--no chains!”

“independent”

“keep it affordable. weird and affordable.”

“you should just take a david bowie album cover and use that as the logo.”

“mom & pop”

“grassroots”

“keep it artsy and punk rock.”

“east girard is the last frontier--everywhere else is gentrified and bro-ified.”

“funky”

“fishtown is still a place where you can come up with a wacky idea and make a business out of it.”

“open a business here if you don't want to wear a suit and tie.”

“bohemian??”

“local”

“retro”

AN EMERGING “[RE]FAB” AESTHETIC SPEAKS TO A THEME OF “MAKING OLD NEW AGAIN.” HOW CAN WE BUILD ON THIS THEME AND MAKE FISHTOWN’S HISTORY AND IDENTITY VISIBLE ON EAST GIRARD?



[the vintage route 15 trolleys have an iconic presence on girard ave]



[some businesses have created a presence on the sidewalk, pointing to the creative/artisinal identity of fishtown]

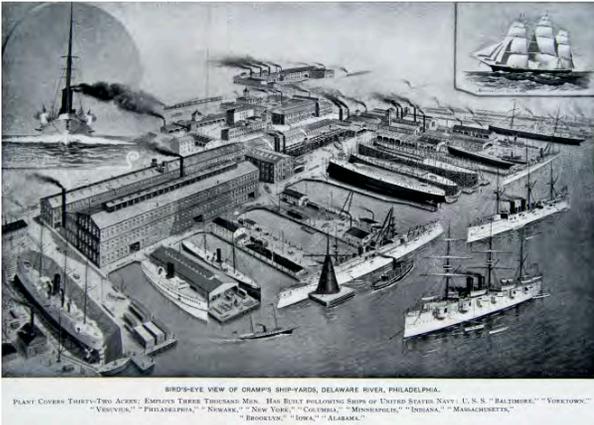
ASSOCIATIONS WITH * FISH * TOWN AND THE * RIVER * WARDS ARE VISIBLE ON THE CORRIDOR ITSELF AND IN THE GREATER NEIGHBORHOOD.



A parallel theme was that of “making old new again.” Some businesses have existed on the corridor for decades. Some have relocated or established themselves on East Girard in tandem with new residents being drawn to the Fishtown neighborhood—both residents and businesses contributing to a wave of renovations, rehabs, and adaptive reuse projects that have revitalized Fishtown over the past ten years or so. This theme is visible also in the “[RE]fab” aesthetic along East Girard, with some businesses hiring local artists to use salvaged materials to create streetscape elements like bike racks and signs. The refurbished vintage Route 15 trolleys, which resumed service on Girard in 2005 [after the trolleys were replaced with buses in 1992], speak to the same [RE]fab vibe, which was adopted as one of the driving themes framing this branding and identity initiative.

Fish imagery is commonly found around the greater East Girard area—a reference to the neighborhood name “Fishtown” and its many cultural and historical connections to the nearby Delaware River. Though the fish symbol resonates strongly with neighborhood pride, the stakeholder group decided to avoid any direct reference to fish in the branding and identity development, and embraced another strategy to visually and conceptually re-link East Girard to the history of the Delaware waterfront on the streetscape itself.

The history of the greater Fishtown neighborhood is intricately tied to the Delaware riverfront. Fishtown was so named, in fact, because of the bountiful shad fishing industry that emerged along the Delaware in



[above: historic illustration of the cramp shipyard. below: the last-standing cramp building just before its demolition in 2011]

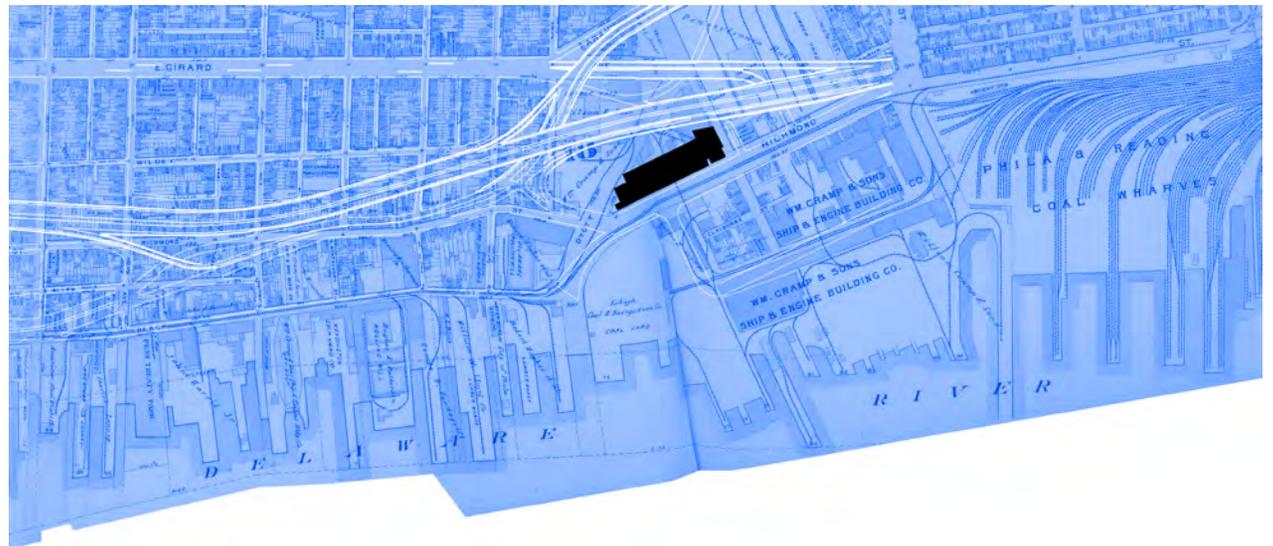


the 18th and early 19th centuries. The waterfront evolved dramatically as industrial production expanded in Philadelphia—and as it disappeared.

The Cramp Shipyard, in operation from 1830 to 1927, grew to become a dominant 60-acre presence on the riverfront bordering Fishtown and Port Richmond. Thousands of Fishtown and Port Richmond's skilled workmen were employed here, tying the riverfront's industrial heritage to neighborhood identities. The



[Cramp shipyard facilities highlighted in the 1910 Philadelphia Atlas]



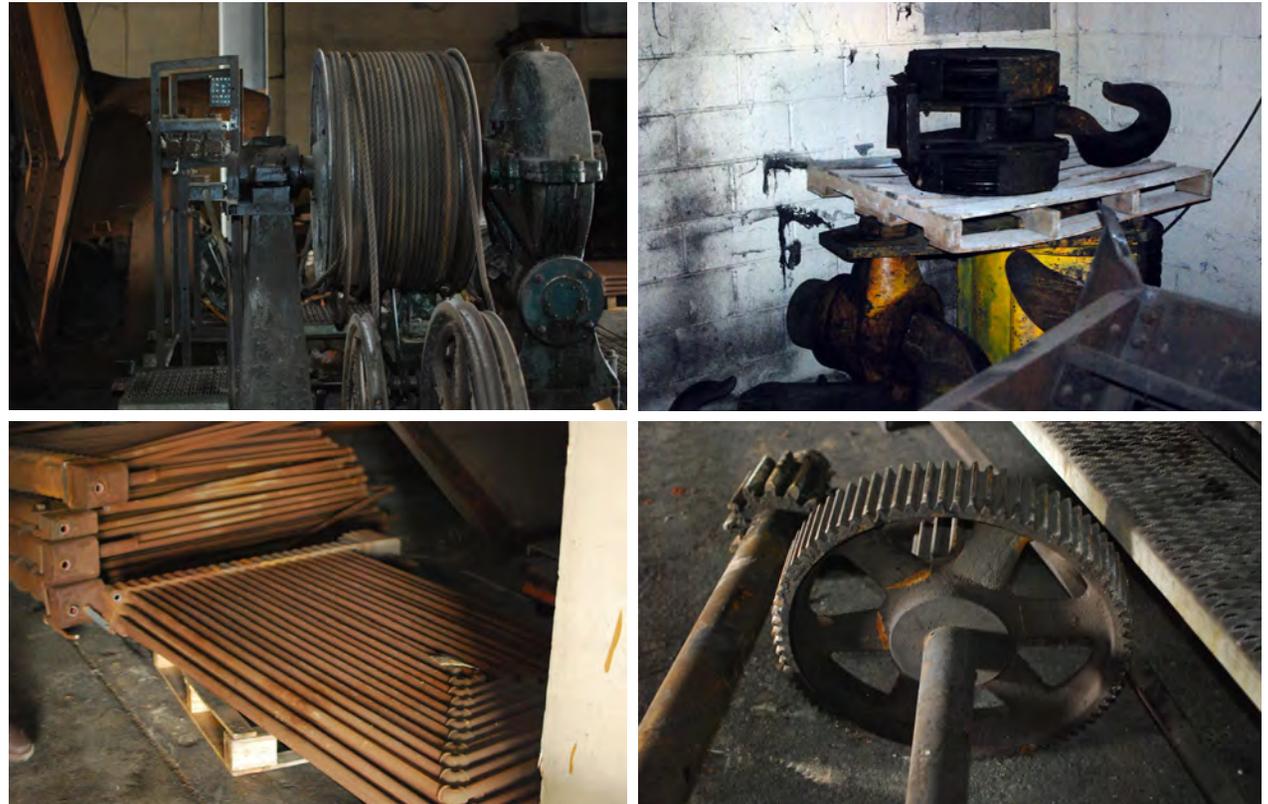
[Location of the former last-standing Cramp shipyard building shown in black; the I-95 alignment is overlaid in white]

site was overhauled in 1940 to build navy cruisers and submarines through the end of World War II. The last standing Cramp building, built in 1913 to produce steam turbine engines and later to manufacture gun turrets during World War II, was demolished in 2011 to accommodate PennDOT's expansion of I-95, currently underway.

A collection of industrial relics were salvaged from the historic Cramp building before it was torn down. Cramp shipyard salvage items are currently being stored with the hope that they can be integrated into public art projects nearby in the coming years. Some of these items will be integrated within landscape improvements along I-95, but specific plans for the inventory have not yet been determined. The stakeholder group embraced what seems to be a perfect opportunity to tie streetscape improvements on East Girard to both the greater Fishtown neighborhood's history and the themes of an emerging identity along the corridor, including the concept of "making old new again" and reinforcing the [RE]fab aesthetic already taking root. Integrating salvaged materials and repurposing industrial relics along East Girard to comprise some part of the streetscape improvements became an idea central to the concept of making East Girard's identity visible on the corridor. However, as these materials are limited in quantity and there are many unknowns regarding the details of their potential reuse, the general approach should be considered a "direction" for the streetscape not necessarily tied to these specific salvage materials alone.

The concentration of artists, skilled craftspeople, and artisanal manufacturers comprise another significant dimension of Fishtown's neighborhood identity—one that translates the area's industrial legacy into contemporary production on a smaller scale. Public realm improvements of this kind present the opportunity to support the arts community by

engaging local talent in the design and fabrication of streetscape elements—thereby simultaneously supporting creative entrepreneurs in the Fishtown area and local businesses on East Girard, while also improving this major neighborhood thoroughfare for both residents and visitors.



[Cramp shipyard salvage items currently being stored with the hope that they can be integrated into public art projects nearby.]



[final east girard avenue logo]

Translating the themes and conversation about the corridor's past, present, and future into a graphic identity for East Girard, studies for "retro" or "vintage" logos resonated strongly with the stakeholder group. After rounds of feedback and refinement, this logo was developed for use in branding and marketing materials to promote the corridor. The graphic identity has already been launched on the East Girard website

and in printed promotional materials produced as a part of this initiative. Brand guidelines are included as an appendix to this document, providing standards for the best use of the logo and graphic identity.

[PLACE-BASED FRAMEWORK
STRATEGY]



WALKING ASSESSMENT

OVERVIEW

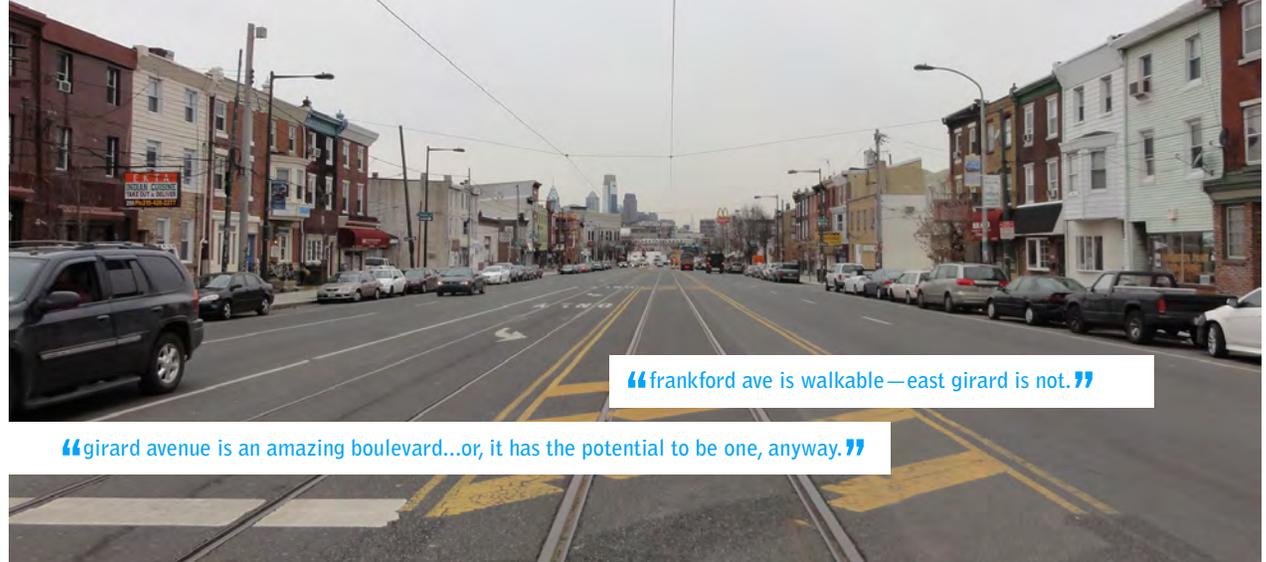
The corridor walking assessment and discussions with the stakeholder group resulted in a comprehensive list of physical strengths to build on and weaknesses to address through streetscape improvements along East Girard. Many of these directly informed some of the recommendations in the following pages, in which references are indicated by the green tag lines with a plus symbol [strengths and opportunities] and red tag lines with a minus symbol [weaknesses and areas in need of improvement].

The two most fundamental physical challenges faced by East Girard are its scale and infrastructure. Stakeholders were quick to contrast the experience and feel of East Girard with that of Frankford Avenue, which is approximately 60 feet wide near Girard and has a pedestrian-friendly scale and relatively low traffic volumes. At 120 feet, the width of East Girard creates a significant enough divide to compromise the integrity of the relationship between both sides of the street.

A more appropriate scale comparison would be I-95, which ranges from approximately 110' to 140' as it passes through Fishtown—and some might also compare the behavior of drivers on East Girard to that of those flying by on I-95. In fact, at its easternmost point, East Girard is continuous with an I-95 off-

+ SCALE OF STREET CREATES POTENTIAL FOR “BOULEVARD” CHARACTER

- PERCEPTION THAT EAST GIRARD ISN'T PEDESTRIAN-FRIENDLY



“frankford ave is walkable—east girard is not.”

“girard avenue is an amazing boulevard...or, it has the potential to be one, anyway.”

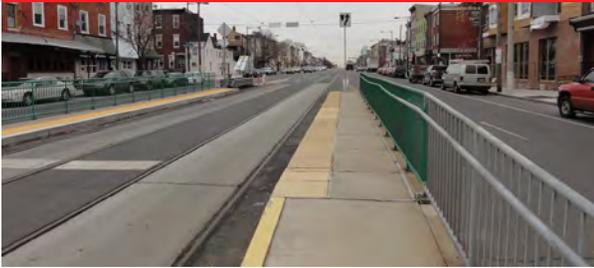
ramp, and some motorists don't adjust their speed and driving style to what would be more appropriate for a major surface street with pedestrians, regulated intersections, and crossings.

While access to public transit is an amenity to the corridor and adjacent neighborhoods, the Route 15 trolley infrastructure itself further complicates traffic flows on East Girard: narrow islands serve as trolley platforms between traffic lanes, which shift and shuffle in number, direction, and position along the 0.7 mile

stretch of East Girard from Front to I-95 in order to accommodate turning lanes and trolley infrastructure. The transportation infrastructure has proven itself to be hazardous to both motorists and transit passengers waiting on the platform, as vehicles regularly collide with the trolley platforms and railings.

By the wayside of this roadway chaos, small businesses, bars and restaurants, entertainment venues, and professional services offices—old and new—are faced with the challenge of making a welcoming

- UNSIGHTLY AND UNCOMFORTABLE TROLLEY INFRASTRUCTURE



“when i’m on the trolley platform, i feel like if i put my hand on the rail, it might get taken off by a passing car.”



[septa repair crews are a regular sight on east girard, as the railings and trolley platforms are damaged often by vehicles.]

environment for their customers. Stakeholders along East Girard were very vocal not only about the lacking aesthetics and harshness of the streetscape, but about its transportation safety shortcomings. The opportunity here is both to address transportation hazards across modes while also investing in the streetscape character to cultivate continued reanimation of the commercial corridor. That said, improving the quality of the pedestrian environment and enhancing crossings to better unify both sides of East Girard should be priorities in strengthening the corridor. Traffic calming

[CORRIDOR WALKING ASSESSMENT SUMMARY]

+ STRENGTHS & OPPORTUNITIES

+ SCALE OF STREET CREATES POTENTIAL FOR “BOULEVARD” CHARACTER

+ EASY ACCESS FROM GIRARD STATION

+ [ALMOST!] EASY ACCESS TO/FROM 95

+ FRANKFORD & GIRARD AS A CROSSROADS OF ACTIVITY

+ NEW STOREFRONTS ADD TO STREET CHARACTER & IDENTITY

+ MURALS CONTRIBUTE TO CORRIDOR IDENTITY

+ MORE BLANK CANVASES TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF!

+ UNIQUE STREETScape ELEMENTS [A FEW, ANYWAY!]

+ NEW BUMPOUTS AS NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR CREATIVE INTERVENTION?

+ SOME BUSINESSES AND RECENT IMPROVEMENTS ENHANCE THE NIGHTSCAPE

- WEAKNESSES & ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

- PERCEPTION THAT EAST GIRARD ISN'T PEDESTRIAN-FRIENDLY

- FRONT & GIRARD PUBLIC REALM ISSUES

- EASTERN GATEWAY NOT WELCOMING

- “GAP” BETWEEN EL STATION AND FRANKFORD AVE

- FRANKFORD & GIRARD TRAFFIC TANGLE

- COMMERCIAL GAPS CREATE SENSE OF DISCONTINUITY

- INACTIVE FRONTAGE CREATES SENSE OF DISCONTINUITY

- STANDARD COBRA HEAD LIGHTS DON'T CUT IT

- UNSIGHTLY UTILITY WIRES IN SOME PLACES

- UNSIGHTLY AND UNCOMFORTABLE TROLLEY INFRASTRUCTURE

can be achieved to some degree through addition of streetscape elements, but community leadership should continue to engage SEPTA and City agencies to work towards improved traffic engineering solutions to improve safety on East Girard.

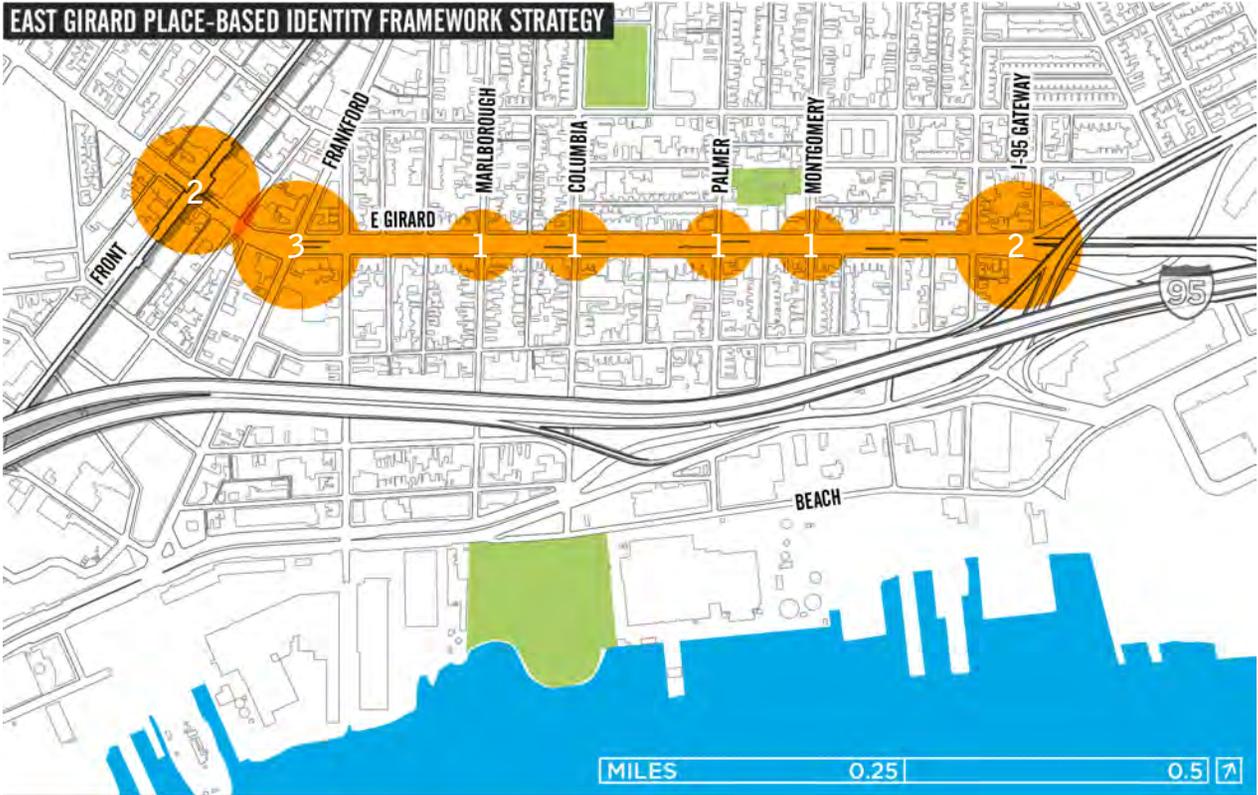
The physical challenges are a major part of one of the more intangible challenges—the perception of East Girard. Unlike many struggling commercial corridors in Philadelphia, East Girard doesn't necessarily have a “negative perception”—it simply doesn't exist as

a “place” yet. Coordinated investments in the public realm have the potential to raise the corridor's profile and reinforce its emerging identity, having the cumulative effect of making East Girard read as a whole—as a “place”—and attracting new businesses while strengthening existing ones.

PRIORITIES AND FOCUS AREAS

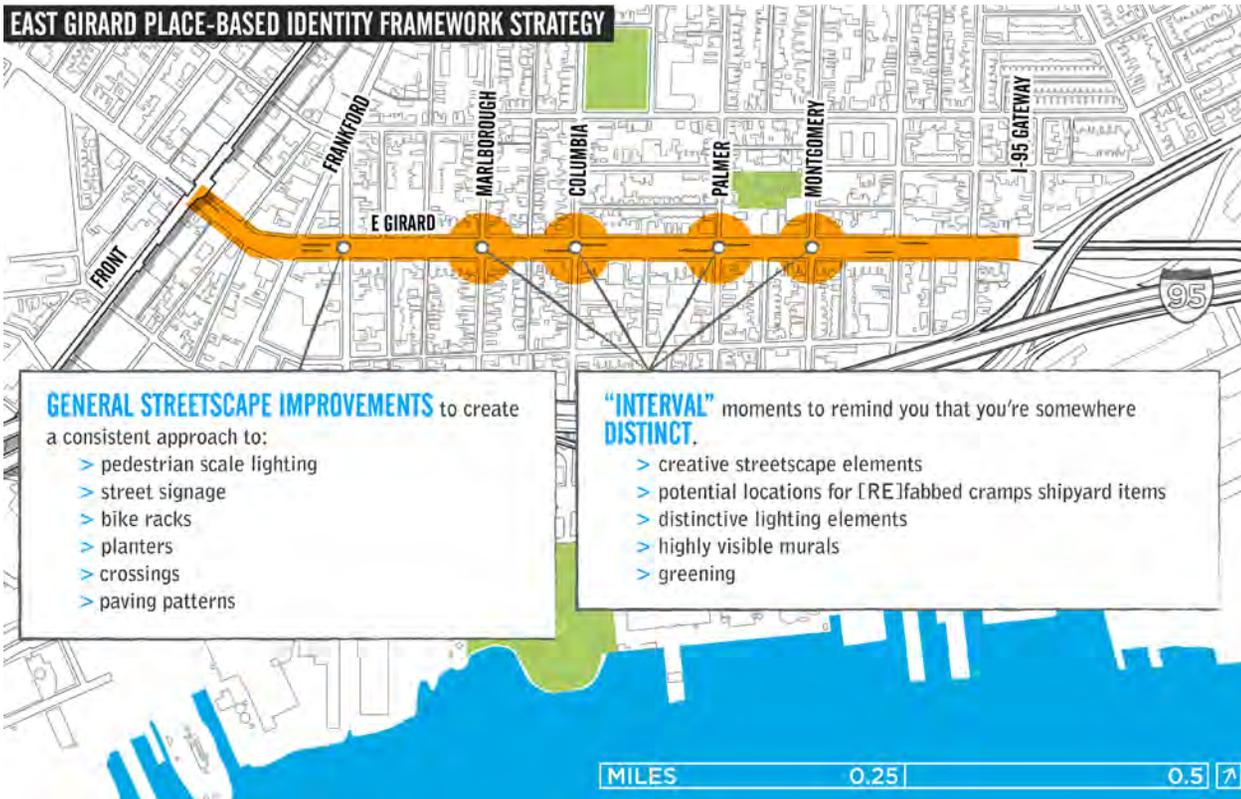
Given limited resources and the particular needs and opportunities of specific locations along this 0.7 mile corridor, focus areas were identified to set priorities within the place-based framework strategy. The higher priority areas for public realm improvements, indicated by the larger circles in the East Girard Place-Based Identity Framework Strategy diagram, are the eastern gateway at Front Street, the intersection of Frankford and Girard Avenue, and the I-95 gateway at the eastern terminus of Girard Avenue. Secondary priority “interval areas” for focusing improvements were identified at the more major cross streets: Marlborough, Columbia, Palmer, and Montgomery.

Specific opportunities and recommendations for improvements at these locations, along with general streetscape improvements for the corridor are set forth in the following pages.



- 1 - INTERVAL INTERSECTIONS
- 2 - CORRIDOR GATEWAYS
- 3 - FOCAL POINT

EAST GIRARD PLACE-BASED IDENTITY FRAMEWORK STRATEGY

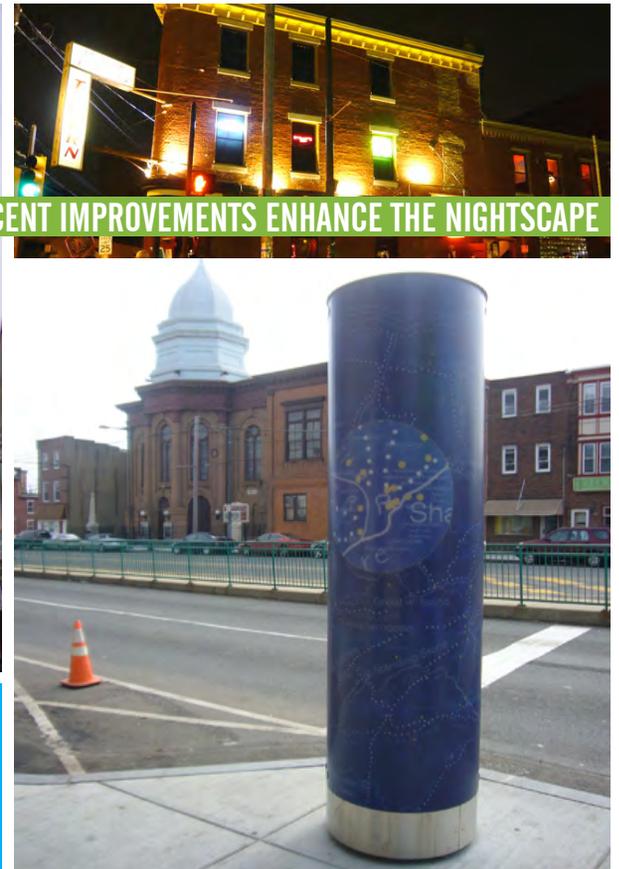


GENERAL STREETScape AND “INTERVAL” IMPROVEMENTS

A consistent approach to improving the character of the East Girard streetscape is an important part of placemaking and reinforcing the corridor’s identity through working towards a holistic vision for East Girard as an identifiable and distinct place. The following areas of improvement are applicable to the entire corridor, but with the intent of concentrating investments in the public realm to achieve a greater, more visible impact at four “interval” intersections. The recent addition of bump-outs or curb extensions at some of these corners afford the opportunity for clustering creative streetscape elements, greening, or distinctive lighting to make them stand out on the corridor.

> UTILITY WIRES

Business owners noted that some areas along East Girard have messy tangles of utility wires criss-crossing above the sidewalk, which have negative visual impacts on the corridor. Some have found that many of these wires are obsolete and can be removed. As a short-term solution, community leadership should partner with business and property owners along East Girard and local utility companies to remove unnecessary overhead utility wires and explore ways of cleaning up the lines that are still in use.



Burying utility lines is a very common practice among successful commercial corridors across the world. Though this is costly, it vastly improves perception and the quality of the public realm. For East Girard in particular, which is also encumbered by the presence of trolley support poles and wires, hiding the utility wires underground would help mitigate the visual impacts of infrastructure along the street. If alternative sidewalk paving projects are pursued, that could be a strategic opportunity to coordinate relocation of utility wires.

> PEDESTRIAN SCALE LIGHTING

Adding pedestrian lighting along East Girard would not only support the corridor's restaurants and evening entertainment destinations, it would serve to improve perception of safety and nighttime visibility of pedestrians, raising awareness among motorists that they should drive with caution especially at night.

New pedestrian streetlights are costly streetscape elements that require extensive coordination with the

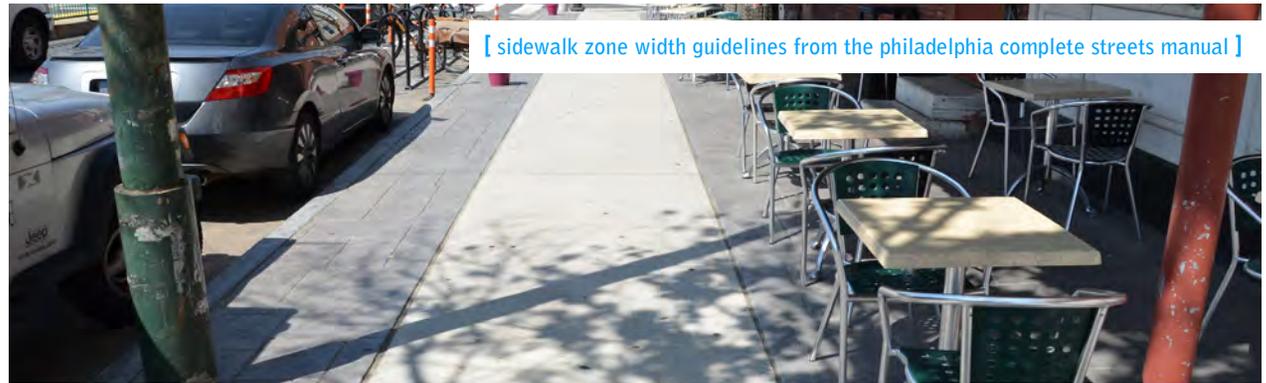
City and utilities. Installing pedestrian scale lighting along East Girard should be a long-term goal integral to the initiative to distinguish the corridor as a place, but in the meantime, community leaders should consider interim strategies to improve the nightscape. Façade, awning, or storefront lights offer a lower-cost, more immediate solution. A larger-scale storefront lighting program might include negotiating a bulk purchase and installation rate from selected vendors.

Additionally, as NKCDC continues to work with business owners on storefront improvements, lighting should be prioritized. Part of this work could include establishing a façade or sign lighting reimbursement or cost sharing program to assist business or commercial property owners with installation and the increased utility costs of keeping the lights on all night.

A lower cost solution to bringing pedestrian scale lighting to East Girard may be found in installing lighting fixtures to existing utility poles or trolley support poles. This would also serve to reduce clutter within the sidewalk’s furnishing zone, preserving more space for other sidewalk amenities. This approach is not always feasible, given the limitations of existing infrastructure and liability issues. Community leaders are encouraged to explore this possibility with SEPTA, City agencies, and local utility companies. If it is not feasible to attach lighting fixtures to existing utility poles, stand-alone pedestrian scale lights should be pursued.

> ALTERNATIVE SIDEWALK PAVING PATTERNS

Establishing consistent alternative sidewalk paving patterns is a powerful way to distinguish East Girard and make it stand out as a corridor, simultaneously improving the “curb appeal” of available properties or spaces along the avenue. Some property owners have already invested in sidewalk improvements and community leadership should work with others to strive for a consistent character along East Girard. The stakeholder group supported the idea of using permeable permeable pavers in the furnishing zone [the four-foot strip along the street’s edge] to help



promote Fishtown’s identity as an environmentally-progressive neighborhood. Some property owners with outdoor seating areas may also be encouraged to extend alternative sidewalk treatments into the “building zone” to distinguish these areas from the walking zone.

NKCDC and its partners should explore potential funding opportunities for a cost sharing program to incentivize the installation of alternative sidewalk paving projects. Coordinating these improvements on a larger scale may bring cost savings through efficiencies of working with one contractor and negotiating a bulk price.



[etching sidewalks is a way to bring some character to the street that doesn’t require repaving. left: etched sidewalks in san francisco’s mission district. right: etched sidewalks in normand park, london.]



[variable pavers can make crosswalks and crossing buffer areas more visible, but they are very costly]



STAMPED ASPHALT CROSSWALK IMPROVEMENTS

- > keep it simple—complicated patterns will not wear well
- > high contrast colors will be most visible
- > consider stamped asphalt buffer areas on each side of crosswalks
- > crosswalk should be at least as wide as the sidewalk



> PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS

Making East Girard’s crossings stand out visually is a critical means of improving pedestrian safety—including both crossings across East Girard and those bridging the cross streets. Stamped asphalt is a more cost-effective solution than pavers and many won’t discern the difference. Thermoplastic paint designs can also be explored, but these will need to be re-

installed every few years. If stamped asphalt is used to distinguish the crossing walkway, a one-foot band of standard white pavement striping should also be used to demarcate the vehicle stopping point in advance of the crosswalk. Additional buffer zone patterning on each side of the crossing can serve to keep motorists from encroaching upon the crossing itself.

[top: custom signage identifying 6th street in austin as a historic district. middle and bottom: examples of custom signage in philadelphia.]



> STREET SIGNAGE

Replacing standard street signs with a custom design that conveys East Girard’s identity is another way to help distinguish the corridor. Street sign customization in Philadelphia tends to be limited to an additional horizontal band underneath the standard street sign. However, the street signs along Broad Street are an example of a more customized look.

> STREETScape ELEMENTS

While some businesses and property owners along East Girard have contributed to the vibe of the corridor by commissioning creative streetscape elements on the sidewalk, there are just as many undermaintained or altogether abandoned streetscape elements that have become eyesores along the avenue. An immediate-term effort to do a “clean sweep” of dilapidated streetscape elements should be coordinated with residents, property owners, and business owners.

New street furniture such as public art, bike racks, tree cages, benches, planters, bollards, and trash receptacles, are all opportunities to engage local makers in repurposing the Cramp Shipyard salvage inventory. Given the limited quantity of the salvage items, the gritty, post-industrial aesthetic could easily be accomplished using materials sourced elsewhere. Ideally, these public realm amenities would be clustered at higher visibility intersections [the “interval” areas], at gateways, and at Frankford and Girard. However, the most feasible locations are those where adjacent property or business owners are willing to agree to maintain streetscape elements.

> MURALS

Murals can be a part of a place-based strategy to make East Girard branding visible on the corridor. Recent efforts by NKCDC in partnership with Philadelphia Mural Arts Program have brought new murals to East Girard geared toward making the presence of the Delaware River more visible in the avenue. Some local businesses have also gotten creative with their facades and contribute to the vibe of East Girard.



[not all of east girard’s streetscape elements are adding to the experience of the corridor or its identity]

STREETScape ELEMENTS

SHORT TERM...coordinate a “clean sweep” of dilapidated streetscape elements

IN THE MEANTIME...recruit business and property owners who are willing to sponsor/maintain streetscape elements

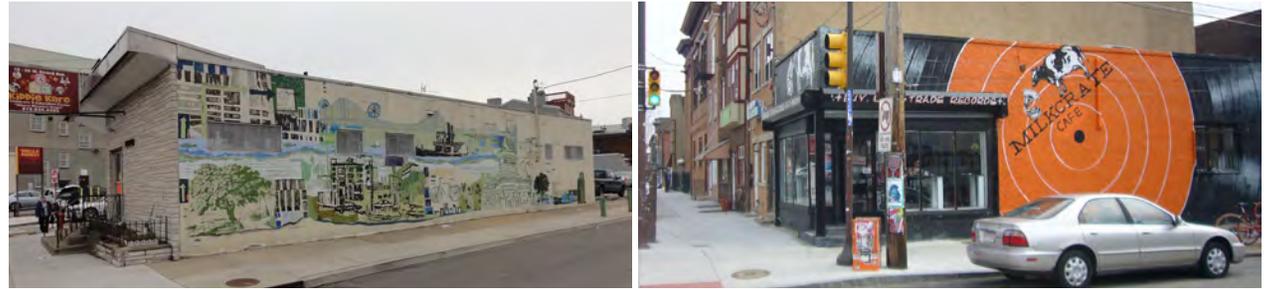
WITH THE GOAL OF...pursuing resources to bring new/[re]fabbbed streetscape elements to east girard, with a maintenance plan in place



[top left: stained glass water tower by artist tom fru in brooklyn’s dumbo neighborhood. top right: bike rack/planter mashup in portland, oregon. bike rack nearby on frankford avenue in fishtown.]



Still, there are a number of blank sidewalls that are highly visible mural opportunities along the avenue. Thinking of public art as a “curated” collection or linear gallery along both sides of the street would both help “close the gap” and bridge both sides of this wide right-of-way and visually distinguish East Girard as a unified corridor. Relevant precedents are found in Austin’s historic 6th Street, where businesses have gotten behind the “retro”/“vintage” branding of the corridor by offering up their facades for murals that speak to the historic identity and branding of the street, and the Wynwood Walls, an art park in a Miami warehouse district. The park, created by the late real estate entrepreneur and placemaking visionary Tony Goldman, features dozens of graffiti and street art murals from international artists on warehouse walls in addition to a restaurant and pop-up shop. Additional murals have been commissioned in the surrounding neighborhood as well. Art walks occur the second Saturday of every month, attracting up to 10,000 visitors. The success and scale of the project has been a driving force in the revitalization of a previously dilapidated neighborhood. Pointing to this precedent is not a suggestion that East Girard should become a playground for accomplished graffiti writers, but that a holistic vision for public art—where individual pieces are linked thematically or aesthetically, especially as they can relate to the emerging identity of East Girard and build on the themes that emerged from this process—can reinforce the brand and vibe, as well as help build buzz about East Girard.



[above left: recent mural commissioned by nkcdc and mural arts connecting east girard to the delaware river. above right: milkcrate cafe mural at girard and columbia ave.]



[above: place-based branding through murals along historic 6th street in austin tx]

> STREET TREES

Street trees are known to have positive impacts on commercial corridors, ranging from improved perception, increased quality of public space, and boosting sales. Neighborhood leadership should work with Philadelphia Parks and Recreation to ensure that ongoing efforts to bring quality street trees selected and planted appropriately for commercial corridors continue on East Girard. Tree pit guards and grates are another opportunity to make East Girard’s identity apparent within the streetscape.



[branding of the wynwood walls district through signage and murals.]

> TROLLEY STOPS

As noted in the Walking Assessment Overview, the Route 15 trolley platforms need to be redesigned along the entirety of the corridor to improve the safety of transit users, motorists, and pedestrians alike. This specific issue was raised a number of times as a part of this process, but its resolution is ultimately outside the scope of this project—community leadership should work with City agencies to conduct a transportation engineering study to explore potential design solutions. This study recommends consideration of the following general improvements:

1. Extend the width of trolley platforms

The current platform width does not provide enough of a buffer from travel lanes on either side, which makes passengers feel unsafe and uncomfortable. In fact, it's common practice for transit users to wait at the corner until a trolley approaches, and then dart across travel lanes to get to the platform just before it arrives. In other words, some feel safer running across traffic than waiting on the narrow platform itself.

The underlying issue is that passengers don't just feel vulnerable on the platform—they are vulnerable there. Evidence of the regular vehicular collisions with the trolley stop railings are visible at every stop, which not only provides some clear indication that the design is inadequate, but also negatively impacts the image of East Girard, as it appears as if the infrastructure is not well-maintained, when the reality is that these railings receive regular repair and maintenance by SEPTA crews.



[the narrow trolley platforms provide very little space separating waiting passengers from traffic lanes on either side.]

Because the platforms are always to the outside of the tracks—essentially between the tracks and the sidewalk—extending the width of the platforms would have to happen outwards, away from the tracks and toward the curb. It's possible that this may require removing a travel lane, but this would still preserve two travel lanes in each direction.

2. Provide transit stop amenities

In addition to providing more buffer area between waiting passengers and passing traffic, extending the platform width would provide more space for transit stop amenities like benches and shelters. These improvements would make the platforms more visible, thereby making them safer and promoting awareness of the option of public transit along East Girard.

3. Add vertical elements

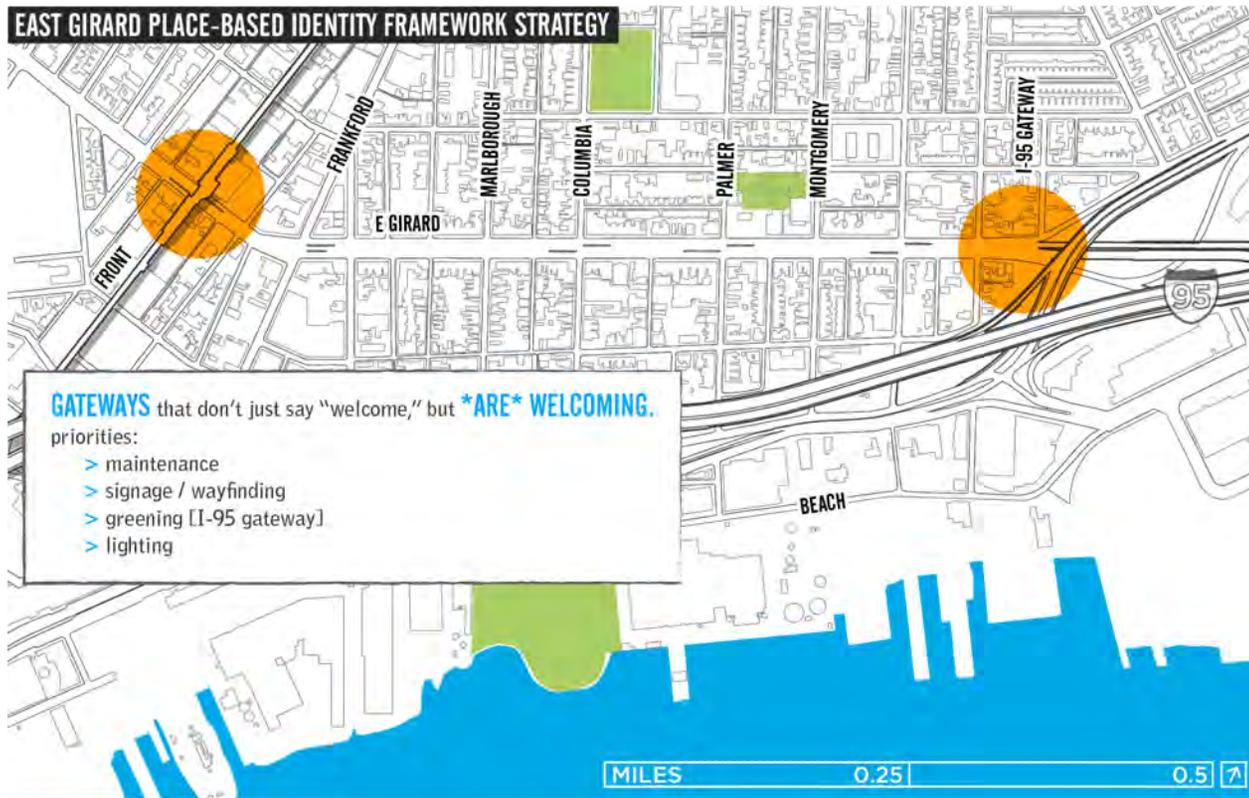
The current lack of vertical elements makes the trolley platforms entirely invisible to oncoming vehicles that are directly behind another vehicle. A last-minute decision to change lanes and pass when the lead car turns on the turn signal can easily result in a sudden collision with the trolley platform or railing. Vertical

elements such as poles or lights that are tall enough to be visible over the tops of cars would serve to alert drivers to the location of the approaching platform while also acting as a natural traffic calming device, as vertical elements are known to make drivers ease off the gas pedal.

4. Install lighting on the platform

Lighting would pronounce transit stops, improving driver awareness of their presence at night and also promoting greater transit use through increased visibility.

EAST GIRARD PLACE-BASED IDENTITY FRAMEWORK STRATEGY



CORRIDOR GATEWAYS

Improving East Girard's two gateways—Front Street/Girard Station and the I-95 underpass—could easily be the biggest challenge to revamping the East Girard corridor as a whole. Taking this challenge on could also have the biggest positive impact on perception of not only East Girard, but the greater Fishtown area. Both gateways are dominated by transportation infrastructure elements framing the public realm experience that are not net positive aesthetic presences. As these locations form impressions of East Girard, they should be reimagined as gateways that don't just say "welcome to East Girard," but are welcoming thresholds to the corridor. This will require significant investment and partnerships with City agencies, PennDOT, SEPTA, and others. Recognizing that improving East Girard's gateways is a long-term goal that will require action to be taken immediately, the stakeholder prioritized gateway improvements over other focus areas, particularly identifying the Front Street/Girard Station gateway as having the most critical need for infrastructural and public realm improvements.



“before anything else happens on east girard, something’s gotta be done about front and girard!!”

> WEST GATEWAY AT FRONT STREET/GIRARD STATION

One stakeholder group member put it simply: “before anything else happens on East Girard, something’s gotta be done about Front and Girard,” a statement that received resounding agreement among the rest of the group. While East Girard’s access to the Market-Frankford line is a major asset to the commercial

corridor and Fishtown neighborhood, the poor quality of the public realm around Girard Station has negative impacts on perception of East Girard and surrounding neighborhoods. Because the EI station is such a prominent gateway to East Girard—whether or not you arrive by train—accumulated trash and general filth around the station, unfortunately, is often the first “welcome” visitors and regulars receive



[the race street connector in old city, philadelphia transforms the underpass experience]

when they arrive. Maintenance is a large part of the equation—a factor which has been improved, at least as far as sidewalk litter, by recent efforts by NKCDC to coordinate regular trash pickups of the area—and regular power washing of the sidewalk and cleaning of the station itself would have a significant impact. Even with a good cleaning, however, there is still plenty of room for improvement.

The elevated train line creates a dark, cave-like environment along Front Street. Improving lighting under the EI would improve the quality of the space both during the day and at night. Community leadership should pursue resources and work with SEPTA and City agencies to explore creative lighting solutions and surface treatments that would not only make the space feel safer, but could also improve the aesthetics of the space. Local precedents like the Race Street Connector demonstrate that it is possible to reclaim spaces marginalized by infrastructure to make them assets rather than eyesores.



[top left: existing view of girard avenue at front street. right: conceptual rendering of potential gateway improvements.]

The conceptual rendering proposes a number of additional improvements to the Girard Station gateway. Stamped asphalt crosswalks would help make pedestrians more visible, which is especially critical here, given the distracting visual cacophony of the infrastructure and general level of activity at this intersection. The station itself has a bulky and heavy presence on the streetscape. Future station renovations should consider some relief from this effect by increasing glazing or otherwise reducing the visual prominence of the station.

Trolley stop improvements described in the previous section are also visualized. Vertical elements in the spirit of the [RE]fab theme—repurposed telephone poles arranged in a way that resembles the vestiges of docks along the Delaware could be easier and cheaper to replace in case of damage from collisions than would a manufactured bollard or fence. Of course, they would also serve to protect passengers waiting on the platform from careless drivers.





> EAST GATEWAY AT I-95

Like East Girard's western gateway at Front Street, the eastern gateway at I-95 faces both public realm and infrastructural challenges. The majority of motorists entering East Girard from the east are doing so from an I-95 off-ramp. The transition to a city surface street is fairly sudden and there is a great need to provide more visual indicators before motorists pass beneath I-95 and onto the street that they must slow down. On the west side of the I-95 overpass, the urban fabric terminates abruptly against the slack spaces and retainer walls of I-95. Furthermore, toward the eastern end of East Girard, the integrity of the commercial corridor weakens significantly as the level of commercial activity drops and inactive frontage increases.

The I-95 expansion project, currently underway, could be an opportunity to coordinate improvements to areas along I-95 as implementation progresses. Proposed improvement areas for East Girard's I-95 gateway seek to soften the presence of the overpass as well as slow traffic existing I-95 onto Girard. The plan diagram on the following page identifies four improvement opportunity areas, described below:

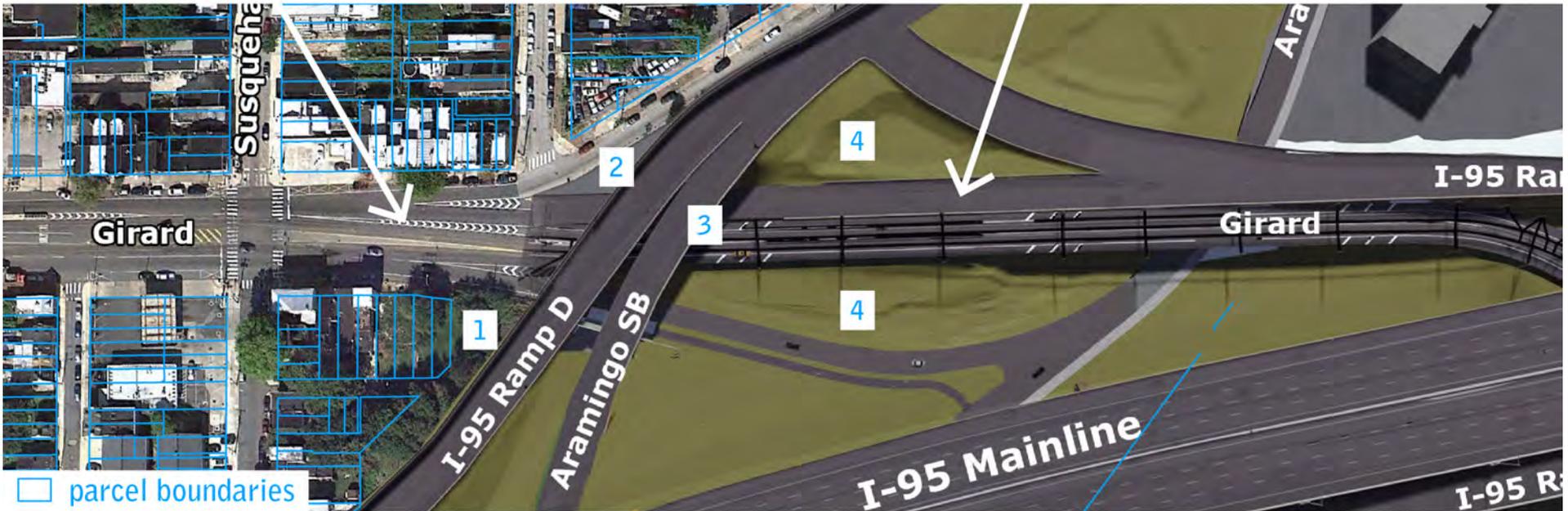
1. This embankment is currently an overgrown eyesore, but with improved maintenance and some well-considered plantings, it could provide some attractive green to help counter the harshness of the infrastructure concentrated here. Neighborhood leadership should engage with PennDOT in discussion

of possible landscape improvements and regular maintenance at this location to help improve the appearance of this corridor gateway.

2. Currently the site of a small dog run, any usable ground space at this location will be eliminated as the result of the realignment of I-95. The opportunity here is to coordinate with PennDOT's improvement plans to use creative surface treatments on the highly visible vertical support wall for the overpass on the north side of Girard that speak to neighborhood identity and harmonize with other public realm improvements along the corridor.

3. Following the model of the Race Street Connector or planned improvements to I-95 underpasses at Columbia, Montgomery, and Marlborough connecting to the Delaware River, this underpass could benefit from some improved lighting and higher quality surface treatments. The wall above the overpass is also an opportunity for branding or public art that ties the gateway into the East Girard streetscape beyond

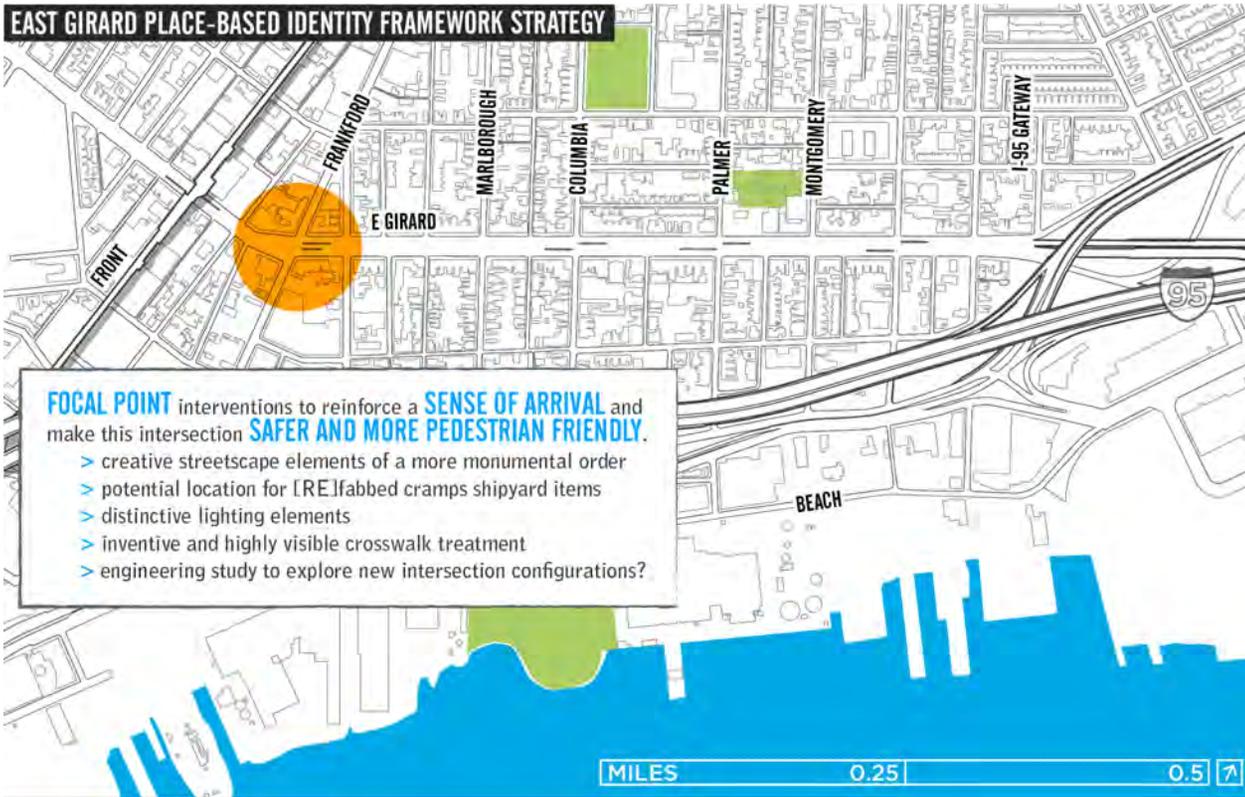
4. Landscaped areas between ramps on the east side of the overpass provide opportunities for repurposing Cramp Shipyard salvage items as landscape follies just feet from the original Cramp site. This conceptual rendering uses a visualization of the reconstructed underpass and adjacent ramp shoulders generated by URS Corp for PennDOT as a base image with repurposed industrial riverfront items superimposed.



1 landscape elements
 2 surface treatments & landscape elements

3 identity branding & "welcome" messaging / underpass treatments
 4 landscape elements & vertical elements to slow traffic

EAST GIRARD PLACE-BASED IDENTITY FRAMEWORK STRATEGY



FOCAL POINT interventions to reinforce a **SENSE OF ARRIVAL** and make this intersection **SAFER AND MORE PEDESTRIAN FRIENDLY.**

- > creative streetscape elements of a more monumental order
- > potential location for [RE]fabled cramps shipyard items
- > distinctive lighting elements
- > inventive and highly visible crosswalk treatment
- > engineering study to explore new intersection configurations?

FRANKFORD AND GIRARD FOCAL POINT

The intersection of Frankford and Girard is a natural hub of the East Girard corridor. As a crossroads of activity, the intersection also acts as the true gateway to the Fishtown neighborhood. The intersection is already arguably the most dynamic in the area, but with the building momentum along Frankford Avenue, recent and planned developments along the Delaware Waterfront that will carry this energy south of Girard Avenue, and hopes for continuing reanimation along East Girard, this intersection—and the stretch of East Girard linking it to the EI station—promises to become an increasingly prominent focal point in the neighborhood.

Investing in the public realm would have great impact, serving to help improve the market position of this area and the image of the corridor and neighborhood overall. These investments could take the form of creative streetscape elements potentially repurposing Cramp Shipyard salvage items, murals, lighting installations, and public art.

+ FRANKFORD & GIRARD AS A CROSSROADS OF ACTIVITY

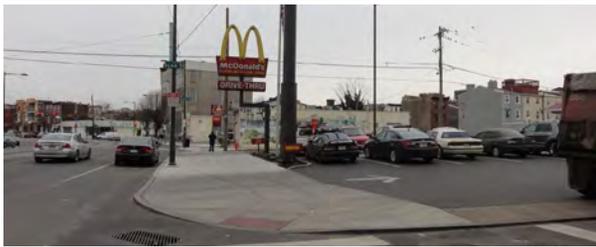


The historic First Pennsylvania Banking and Trust Company building at the southwest corner of Frankford and Girard, now a Wells Fargo branch, helps to anchor this very expansive and fragmented intersection. One way of calling greater attention to this iconic asset and helping to tie it into the overall corridor identity would be to take advantage of its visual prominence through public art that could also be visible from the elevated Market-Frankford Line. "Landmarking" this building could take a number of forms, from customized lighting to rooftop installations, assuming this would not conflict with any relevant historic preservation guidelines.



[top left: historic building lit up for the Lyon festival of lights. bottom left: the waffle shop billboard by jon rubin and pablo garcia was a participatory installation soliciting messaging ideas from the public. right: existing view of girard avenue at frankford avenue, showing the former first pennsylvania banking and trust company building. above: conceptual rendering of potential intersection improvements including crosswalk patterning, the addition of pedestrian walk signals, and a highly visible public sculpture atop the historic bank building.]





[chain stores set back from the street behind parking lots create inactive frontage and detract from the "gateway experience"]

Greening or other investments targeting the stretch of Girard from Front Street to Dunton Street could help close the "gap" created by inactive frontage and surface parking lots. The presence of several curb cuts may prove limiting, but a series of lighted bollards or other elements at the sidewalk edge would help improve the pedestrian environment as well as prevent parking on the sidewalk, which is a regular occurrence along this stretch.

Like the two gateways, the issues of this intersection must be addressed through interventions beyond public realm improvements. There are both real and perceived safety concerns around conflicts with pedestrians, large trucks having trouble negotiating turns, and the generally confusing configuration of this intersection. Community leadership should work with city agencies and SEPTA to initiate a comprehensive



“I don't even cross the street at Frankford and Girard with the crossing signal. I just wait until there are no cars around at all.”



[the intersection is confusing and dangerous for pedestrians and motorists alike; as well as a challenge for trucks turning north onto frankford from girard, as evidenced by the damage done to the utility pole on the northeast corner of the intersection. local business owners also reported that the pole gets hit regularly and trucks are often the culprit.]

traffic engineering study to identify ways of improving the design of the intersection to increase safety across modes of transportation. As short-term means of addressing these safety concerns, adding a pedestrian priority phase and installing a walk signal for each crossing is strongly recommended for this intersection. Frankford and Girard should also be considered a top priority for crosswalk improvements and lighting to make pedestrians more visible.



APPENDIX A:
PLACE-BASED STRATEGY
IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX



1	GENERAL STREETScape AND “INTERVAL IMPROVEMENTS”	Timeframe [short, medium, long]	Priority	Potential Partners
UTILITY WIRES				
	Remove unnecessary utility wires and clean up lines that are still in use	short	-	Business and property owners; local utility companies
	Explore opportunities to bury utility lines	long	-	Business and property owners; local utility companies; Streets Department
PEDESTRIAN SCALE LIGHTING PRIORITY				
	Partner with businesses and property owners to light up east girard with facade and signage lighting	short	-	Business and property owners; Commerce Department
	Explore feasibility of attaching pedestrian lighting fixtures to existing utility poles	medium	-	Business and property owners; local utility companies; Commerce Department; Streets Department; SEPTA; PennDOT
	Potentially pursue free-standing pedestrian lights	long	-	Business and property owners; Commerce Department; Streets Department; PennDOT
ALTERNATIVE SIDEWALK PAVING PATTERNS				
	Implement a cost sharing program to incentivize the installation of alternative sidewalk paving projects.	long	-	Business and property owners; Commerce Department; Streets Department
PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS PRIORITY				
	Install highly visible crosswalks across Girard and along cross streets	medium	-	Commerce Department; Streets Department; PennDOT; SEPTA
STREET SIGNAGE				
	Replace standard street signs with custom designed signs	long	-	Commerce Department; Streets Department
STREETScape ELEMENTS PRIORITY				
	Remove dilapidated streetscape elements	short	-	Business and property owners
	Install street furniture at priority locations and where business owners agree to maintain it	medium	-	Business and property owners; Commerce Department; Streets Department
MURALS				
	Coordinate mural projects along the corridor	ongoing	-	Business and property owners; Mural Arts Program; Commerce Department
STREET TREES				
	Continue ongoing efforts to bring quality street trees to East Girard	ongoing	-	Philadelphia Parks and Recreation
TROLLEY STOPS PRIORITY				
	Improve trolley platforms	long	-	SEPTA; PennDOT; Streets Department; Mayor's Office of Transportation and Utilities

2 CORRIDOR GATEWAYS		Timeframe [short, medium, long]	Priority	Potential Partners
WEST GATEWAY AT FRONT STREET/GIRARD STATION			PRIORITY	
	Clean and maintain Girard Station and immediate area	short	-	Business and property owners; SEPTA
	Improve lighting under the El and nearby	medium	-	SEPTA; Commerce Department; Mayor's Office of Transportation and Utilities; Streets Department; PennDOT
	Pursue Girard Station renovations that would improve its presence on East Girard	long	-	SEPTA; American Street Empowerment Zone; Commerce Department
EAST GATEWAY AT I-95			PRIORITY	
	Implement landscape improvements coordinated with I-95 construction, potentially integrating Cramp Shipyard salvage items	medium	-	PennDOT
	Make underpass improvements with lighting and surface treatments	medium	-	PennDOT; Streets Department

3 FRANKFORD AND GIRARD FOCAL POINT		Timeframe [short, medium, long]	Priority	Potential Partners
"LANDMARKING" ELEMENTS			PRIORITY	
	Explore opportunities for public art and creative streetscape elements	medium	-	Business and property owners; Commerce Department; Mural Arts Program
IMPROVE INTERSECTION SAFETY			PRIORITY	
	Add highly visible crosswalks, a pedestrian priority phase, and a walk signal for each crossing	short	-	Streets Department, PennDOT
	Initiate a comprehensive traffic engineering study	medium	-	SEPTA; Commerce Department; Mayor's Office of Transportation and Utilities; Streets Department; PennDOT

[APPENDIX B:
BRAND GUIDELINES]



EAST GIRARD



FISHTOWN

IDENTITY GUIDELINES

COLOR PALETTE



PMS 5473C
R 62 G 95 B 97

C 82 M 0 Y 28 K 52
HEX #415859



PMS 5493

PMS 5493C
C 43 M 0 Y 14 K 21
R 147 G 184 B 186
HEX #619392



PMS 611C

PMS 611C
C 0 M 1 Y 92 K 11
R 192 G 170 B 19
HEX #COAA13



PMS Cool Gray 8C

PMS Cool Gray 8C
C 0 M 1 Y 0 K 43
R 153 G 153 B 153
HEX #808080

FONT INFORMATION

PRIMARY FONTS

GOTHAM BOLD
GOTHAM LIGHT

ACCENT FONT

GIPSIERO

WEB FONT

EFFRA

HEADINGS #415859

- **HEADING 1** 34px Bold
- **HEADING 2** 30px Bold
- **HEADING 3** 24px Bold
- **HEADING 4** 16px Bold
- **HEADING 5** 14px Bold
- **HEADING 6** 13px Bold

BODY COPY 13px Regular #808080

LINKS 12px (all caps) #619392

PHOTO CAPTIONS 12px (all caps) Bold #808080



FULL COLOR LOGO

This is the primary logo variation, and should be used whenever possible.



B/W LOGO

This logo is for use in black & white print (gray = 45% black)



WHITE KNOCKOUT

These logos should be used whenever the background is darker than 40% gray.



SMALL SPACE LOGO

One of these simplified logos should be used when it will need to be less than 1" in height

LOGO USAGE “NO NO”s



NO SQUISHING OR STRETCHING

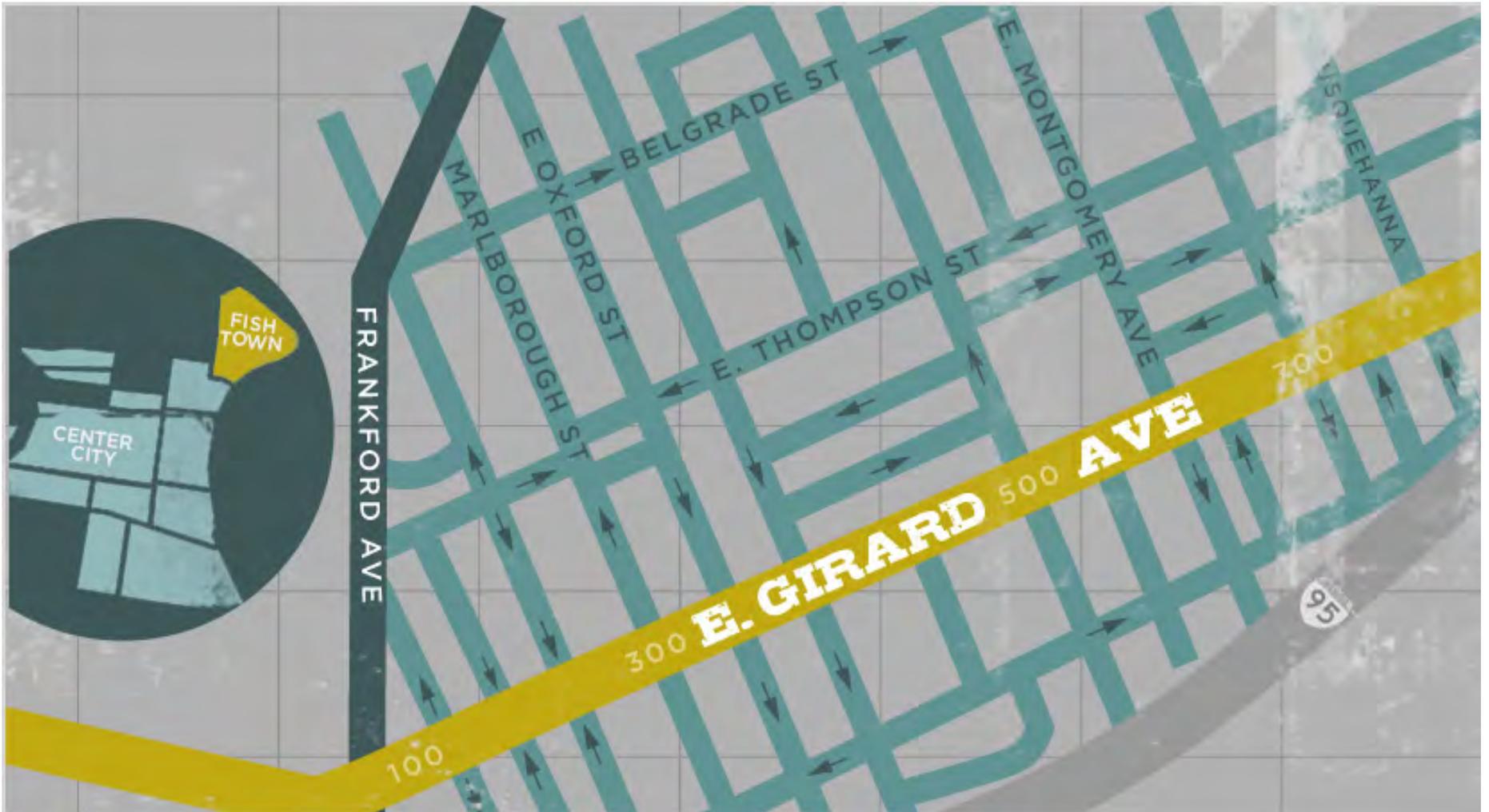


NO OFF-BRAND COLORS
(OR PATTERNS!)



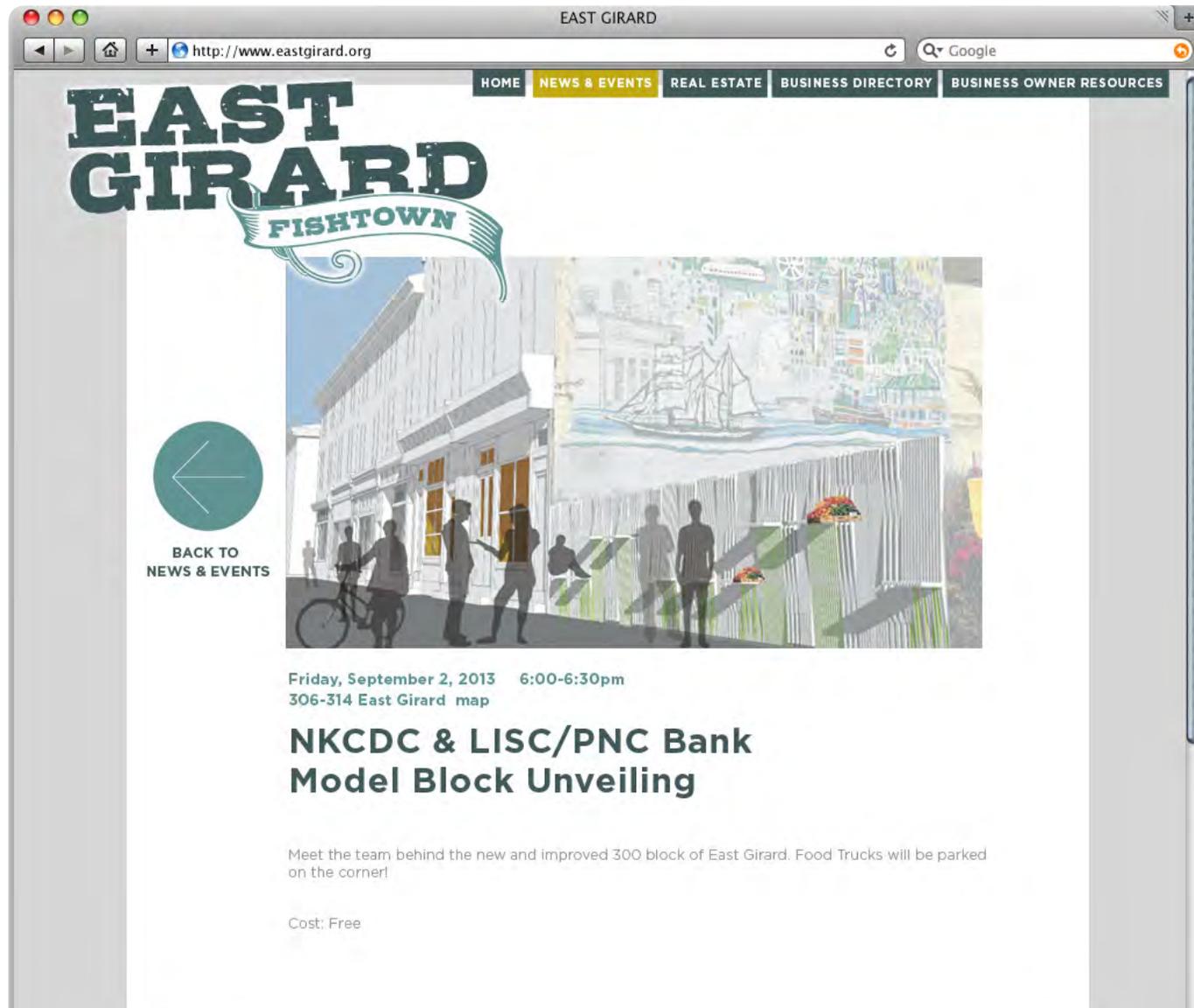
NO MIXING LOGO VARIATIONS

SAMPLE CREATIVE: MAP GRAPHIC









SAMPLE CREATIVE: WEBSITE

