

# NORTHEAST WILMINGTON COMMUNITY PLAN



OCTOBER 2022

FUNDED IN PART BY THE WELLS FARGO COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

WE **WRK** TOGETHER

WRT

# NORTHEAST WILMINGTON COMMUNITY PLAN ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A SPECIAL THANKS TO THE NORTHEAST WILMINGTON COMMUNITY WHO PARTICIPATED IN THIS PLANNING PROCESS AND GAVE THEIR TIME, ENERGY, AND IDEAS TO IMPROVE THEIR COMMUNITY.

WE WOULD LIKE TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE LENAPE AND NANTICOKE PEOPLES ON WHOSE ANCESTRAL HOMELANDS WE ARE LOCATED ON WHAT WE CALL DELAWARE.

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## TOGETHER, WE'RE GOING TO MAKE A CHANGE

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# 1

## BUILDING FROM STRENGTHS

### THE PEOPLE AND THE PLACE

#### In this section

Introduction to the NE Wilmington community

The People and Place

Current initiatives and activities

# OVERVIEW

The Northeast Wilmington Community Plan is a roadmap for community priorities and areas of investment. Led by the WRK group (The Warehouse, REACH Riverside, and Kingswood Community Center), this plan provides a ten-year vision and action plan for the future of Northeast Wilmington.

The planning process, which was funded through a grant provided from the Wells Fargo Regional Foundation, began in 2020 and builds on the Purpose Built Community model – a holistic community organization-led approach to revitalization through wellness, mixed-income housing, and cradle-to-college education/work readiness.

The geographic focus area of the plan, Northeast Wilmington, covers an area of about one square mile and is home to 9,890 residents – 14% of the city's total population. The northeast communities stretch from Brandywine Creek on the southwest to the city boundary on the north/northeast and from Market Street to the Amtrak / Septa Northeast Corridor. Notable parks and open spaces include Brown-Burton Winchester Park / Speakman Park and Riverview Cemetery. Northeast Boulevard is the major transportation corridor traversing the Northeast and Riverside community.

Northeast Wilmington has many assets - a rich history, ease of access to downtown and major highways, a network of existing parks and tree covered streets, proximity to the Brandywine Creek, and a deeply engaged network of organizations, including the WRK group partners who are committed to strengthening community opportunities.

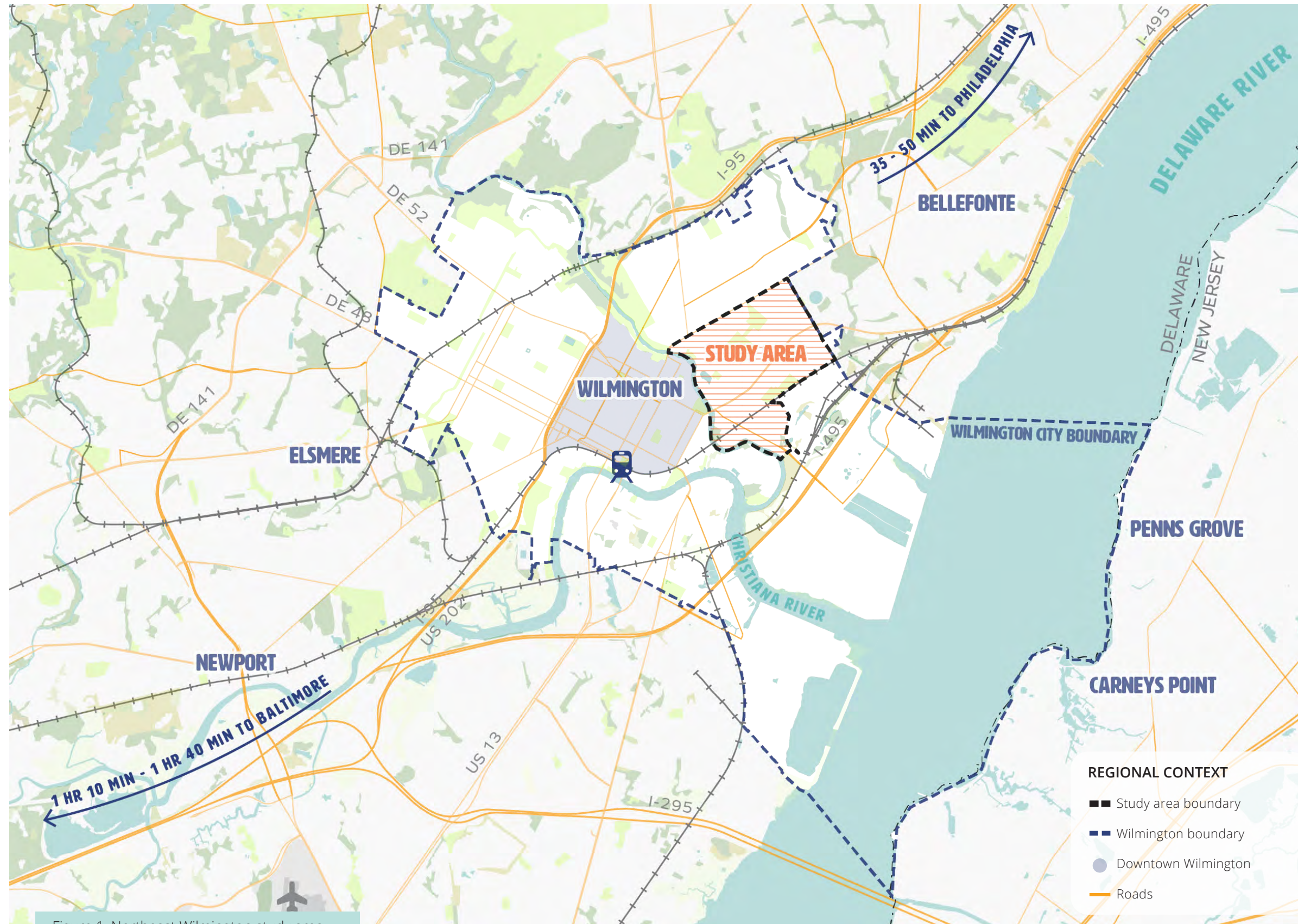


Figure 1. Northeast Wilmington study area

Still the community faces many challenges. Area residents tend to have lower household incomes, employment rates and educational attainment, and have seen crime and gun violence increase in their neighborhoods over the past two decades. Over the course of the planning process, the Northeast Wilmington community experienced increased gun violence and safety concerns, dealt with the day-to-day impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and experienced major flooding that occurred from Hurricane Ida in September 2021, damaging many homes, businesses, and streets.

Despite these challenges, there are positive signs of investment and progress towards the community's vision. After years of planning, the redevelopment of the Wilmington's Housing Authority's (WHA) Riverside neighborhood is well under way, with 141 new mixed-income rental housing units under construction, and another 450 units planned, including 50-100 units for homeownership.

The Warehouse, the "For Teens, By Teens" community space opened in the spring of 2020, has been tremendously successful in a short period of time notwithstanding the challenges of COVID-19.

The construction of a new facility for the Kingswood Community Center is planned to begin in the next few years, and EastSide Charter School is currently implementing an expansion including adding a major community STEM center. Recently REACH Riverside launched the RESTORE (Real Estate Strategy to Obtain Racial Equity) and EMPOWER programs (Economic Mobility Places Ownership Within Everyone's Reach) to support the physical development of the community, as well as the social and human capital through family support, economic stability, financial literacy, and health and wellness.

### WHAT IS THE PURPOSE BUILT MODEL?

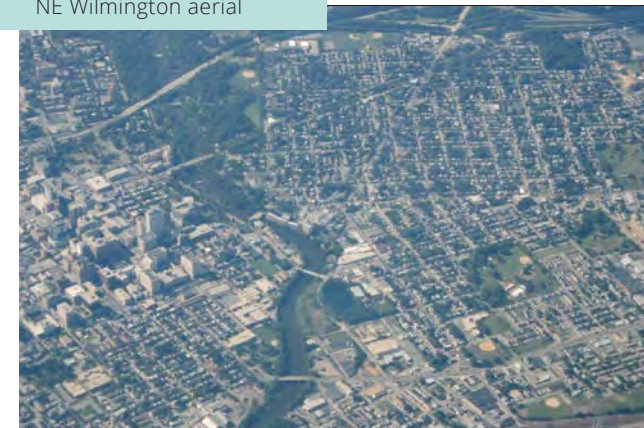
*REACH is employing the nationally renowned Purpose Built Communities revitalization model, which creates high-quality mixed-income housing, a cradle to college/career education pipeline, and community wellness initiatives to create the conditions, at the neighborhood level, where residents have opportunity and can thrive. REACH joined the PBC network in 2018.*



Current Kingswood Community Center



NE Wilmington aerial



Brandywine River passing through NE Wilmington



## A BRIEF LOOK AT THE PAST

As described in *Wilmington 2028*, the City's comprehensive plan, natural features have shaped the residential development pattern of Wilmington's neighborhoods over time. The city lies at the fall line that separates the flat coastal plain from the hilly areas to the west. East of Market Street, and along both sides of the Christina River, the land is flat, low-lying, and marshy in places. The land where Wilmington sits today was home to the Lenape tribes before the first wave of European settlers in the 17th century brought Swedish, Dutch, and British colonization. Wilmington officially became a borough in 1739 and later was designated a city in 1832.

The city quickly developed into a prosperous business and residential community, accessible by water, road, and rail. Manufacturing and ship building boomed for years and then gave way to the growth of corporations, banking, and healthcare. Urban renewal projects in the 1960s and 1970s led to the clearing of many housing blocks and the construction of I-95 segregated areas of the city from one another. In recent years, downtown and riverfront areas have experienced a resurgence that includes downtown housing, entertainment, shopping, and restaurants - mirroring national trends in downtown investment and rebirth over the last two decades.

Northeast Wilmington, today home to nearly 10,000 residents, includes a mix of walkable residential neighborhoods, large city parks, and auto-oriented commercial and industrial businesses, situated among long-time community institutions and well-known businesses within its geographic boundaries. The timeline below illustrates some of the major events, people, and changes over time in the northeast neighborhoods.



<p><b>1921</b></p> <p>Franklin Fibre-Lamitex Corp is founded.</p>	<p><b>1946</b></p> <p>The Kingswood United Methodist Church opened its doors to local youth. Later, The Kingswood Community Center was erected at its current location.</p>	<p><b>1949</b></p> <p>Mercantile Press is founded.</p>	<p><b>1957</b></p> <p>Masjid Al-Kauthar (Muslim Center of Wilmington) is the first established Muslim organization in Delaware established in 1957.</p>	<p><b>1964</b></p> <p>Charles A. Allen and his partner Jack Hare started Northeast Body Shop with a small used car lot.</p>	<p><b>1997</b></p> <p>EastSide Charter Elementary School opened its door.</p>	<p><b>2000</b></p> <p>Thomas A. Edison Charter School was established.</p>	<p><b>2020</b></p> <p>The Warehouse is born.</p>	<p><b>2021</b></p> <p>REACH awarded \$26M in COVID-19 relief funds to help accelerate redevelopment timeline.</p>
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# THE PEOPLE & PLACE

## OUR STORIES - COMMUNITY ASSET MAPPING

Disinvestment and decades of intentional and structural racial discrimination have resulted in segregation from more prosperous communities, substandard education, lack of employment opportunities, high levels of incarceration, and poor health outcomes that have devastated Black communities nationwide. The Riverside neighborhood in Northeast Wilmington exemplifies the consequences of this discrimination in the concentrated, generational poverty of those who live there. Many previous planning efforts have left the community feeling like their participation didn't result in much progress, leaving community residents fatigued and distrustful. From the beginning, REACH Riverside has been keenly aware of this sentiment among the community and has been working steadily to overcome those negative expectations by changing the approach that failed over the decades.

**As part of this planning process, the team sought out an approach focused on strengths and community stories, including ideas of personal history and memories to give voice to the community's assets. In parallel, REACH Riverside established a Proximity Committee as well as a Community Health Committee that are regularly connecting with residents, providing the community with a real voice in their planning work, and a forum to honor the past, dispel inaccuracies, and address concerns. Residents hold Board positions on all three WRK Group boards (the Warehouse, REACH Riverside, Kingswood Community Center) and serve on these committees.**

Lastly, the Riverside Relief Fund, supporting residents in 2020 during the height of the pandemic as well as more recent support of residents in the 11st St. Bridge area during Hurricane Ida flooding, has gone a long way to build trust and relationships.

As part of the community engagement event in June 2021, the planning team interviewed community members about their stories and experiences in the neighborhood. This event was part of a broader Community Asset Mapping approach, which is focused on celebrating, supporting, and building off of existing community resources as opposed to seeking out community deficits. The goals of the Community Asset Mapping approach include:

- Identify shared values and create a vision for where the community wants to be.
- Build on the community's strengths (physical attributes as well as history, legacy, and cultural assets).
- Identify features, stories and memories that are important to the community and that can help shape the vision and identity for the neighborhood.
- Identify themes that can shape priorities and opportunities for future neighborhood investment.
- Collect rich and meaningful stories from community members.
- Help understand how the community has changed over time.
- Ensure that the plan is uniquely responsive and inclusive of NE Wilmington residents.

### THE APPROACH TO THIS PLAN

#### FOCUSED ON STRENGTHS AND

#### COMMUNITY STORIES, INCLUDING

#### IDEAS OF PERSONAL HISTORY AND

#### MEMORIES TO GIVE VOICE TO THE

#### COMMUNITY'S GREATEST ASSETS.

Through the interviews and planning process, residents spoke about the value of community relationships and mutual support for families – whether it be helping a neighbor with childcare or participating in after-school and summer activities for children. Giovanni Paredes grew up in the Riverside community and spoke about the importance of community events, arts, and music in his life and to the community. Memories of after school programs at Kingswood Community Center and the people that worked there and supported him through his youth are central to the idea of the Riverside and the Northeast community. Residents spoke of safe havens – places where the community can come together and feel a sense of belonging.

Local resident and urban farmer Jessica Westcott leads the nonprofit organization Planting to Feed and is committed to the community, building stronger relationships between residents and healthy, fresh food. Planting to Feed operates a community farm at Kingswood Community Center and started the first community fridge in Delaware – located at the Senior Center - and opened a second fridge at The Warehouse. Community and urban farmers are a central part of the work that Jessica is leading. A common thread through the interviews was the connection residents feel to community places like Kingswood and the importance of safe places that feel like home – where residents come together and strive to improve their community.

### JESSICA WESCOTT RESIDENT

*"So those garden beds are actually built by the community. The kids in the community, which I think is absolutely amazing."*



### GIOVANNI PAREDES RESIDENT

*"We should be hiring some youth leaders that can relate to them [the children] and be able to build that relationship to guide them. We are all looking for someone to look up to."*





## DEMOGRAPHIC SNAPSHOT

About 14% of the city's total population, nearly 10,000 people, live in the Northeast Wilmington community within designated census tracts 6.01, 6.02, and 30.02. The study area population has many similarities to Wilmington as a whole. In terms of age distribution, residents are slightly more likely to be younger (25% are under the age of 18, compared to 23% citywide). The racial / ethnic makeup of the Northeast community has remained largely unchanged since 2000, with more African American residents living in the northeast (85% of residents) on average than citywide (57%), while Hispanic residents are underrepresented (4%) compared to citywide (10%). Poverty rates and unemployment, however, are significantly higher than in other areas of city.

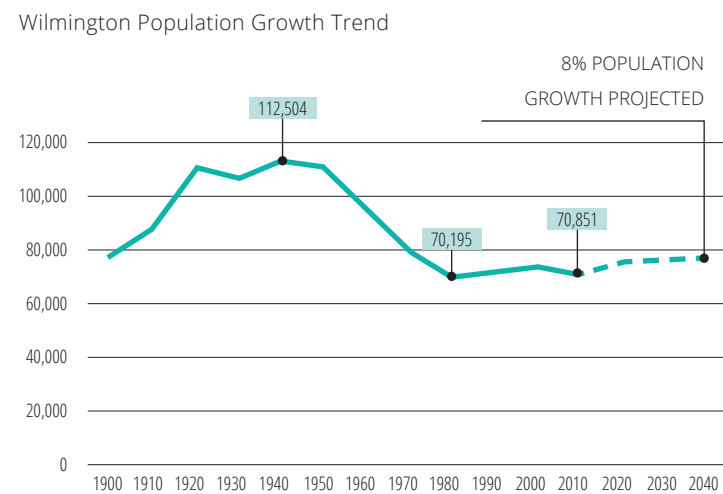


Figure 2. Population trend and projection from 1990 to 2040

Source: Wilmington 2028 Comprehensive Plan

Since 2000, overall population has declined across Northeast Wilmington neighborhoods apart from the areas south and east of Brown-Burton Winchester Park and Pine Street Park. Despite declines in total population, the number of households in the Riverside neighborhood has remained relatively unchanged from 2000 to 2014-2018, indicating that the number of “non-family” households increased, while “family” households declined. Although the majority (61%) of households in the neighborhood remain family households, between 2000 and 2014-18, the percentage of family households declined -7.3% while the percentage of non-family households increased. Single-parent households are more present in Northeast Wilmington compared to the city, county, and state averages.

Within Northeast Wilmington, the Riverside community (around census tract 30.02 and the location of WHA’s Riverside public housing) is one of Delaware’s most impoverished communities. Median household income in Census Tract 30.02 is \$25,326, and for those in public housing (roughly 20% of the Riverside population) median income is \$9,277; 35% of adults do not have a high school diploma; 68% of working age adults are unemployed or not participating in the labor force; 74% of households are single female led; and 64% of Riverside children live below the poverty line.

The uneven growth and decline, and changes in household size present opportunities to consider new housing types that meet the needs of current and future residents, as well as opportunities for capitalizing on growing areas to help reverse decline and stabilize the community.

### DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

		NE WILMINGTON	CITY OF WILMINGTON	NEW CASTLE COUNTY
<b>Population</b>		<b>9,894</b>	<b>70,904</b>	<b>555,133</b>
<b>Age</b>	Under 18	25%	23%	22%
	18-24	12%	9%	10%
	25-34	17%	17%	14%
	35-64	37%	38%	39%
	65+	9%	13%	15%
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>	African-American	85%	57%	24%
	White	8%	29%	58%
	Asian	0.4%	1%	6%
	Other	2%	2%	2%
	Hispanic	4%	10%	10%
<b>Poverty rate</b>		<b>33%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>11%</b>
<b>Unemployment</b>		<b>13%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>6%</b>

### HOUSING PROFILE

		NE WILMINGTON	CITY OF WILMINGTON	NEW CASTLE COUNTY
<b>Households</b>		<b>2,846</b>	<b>28,526</b>	<b>203,855</b>
<b>Occupancy Type</b>	Own	43%	45%	68%
	Rent	57%	55%	32%
<b>Median rent</b>		<b>\$857</b>	<b>\$974</b>	<b>\$1,141</b>
<b>Median sale price</b>		<b>\$108,900</b>	<b>\$169,400</b>	<b>\$254,500</b>
<b>Median year built</b>		<b>1953</b>	<b>1946</b>	<b>1973</b>
<b>Vacancy</b>		<b>12%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>8%</b>

Source: Esri BAO, US Census 2018 ACS 5-year estimate

## PHYSICAL CONDITIONS

Northeast Wilmington is made of several established neighborhoods, including Riverside, Eastlake, 11th Street Bridge, Brandywine Village, Price's Run, and Eastlawn. The Brandywine Creek and rail corridor separate the area from Downtown Wilmington and have long acted as barriers making it more difficult to walk, bike, or take transit efficiently to downtown. Northeast Boulevard and Market Street serve as the main connectors across the Brandywine Creek. While these conditions have acted as impediments in the past, they also provide opportunities to reconnect the community to the water, which is mostly inaccessible given brownfields, industrial uses, and limited public access.

The Northeast neighborhood of Price's Run has an industrial legacy along the waterfront. Land that was originally marshland was filled in with mills and manufacturing businesses over time, capitalizing on the Brandywine's resources. The Delaware Granite and Mining Company created the quarry pond that exists today adjacent to the H. Fletcher Brown Boys & Girls Club.

Auto and metal salvage industries later replaced some of the early industrial uses. Active, established industrial uses such as Franklin Fibre – Lamitex Corporation and Masley Enterprises exist today, but they are adjacent to blighted and vacant properties impacting the overall vibrancy and economic viability of the northeast community.

"TUCKED AWAY IN THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF THE CITY, RIVERSIDE IS ONE OF WILMINGTON'S OLDEST NEIGHBORHOODS. ONCE A VIBRANT, WORKING-CLASS COMMUNITY, THE AREA EXPERIENCED DECADES OF DISINVESTMENT. TODAY, RESIDENTS ARE EAGER TO DEFINE A NEW FUTURE FOR THEIR COMMUNITY."  
- PURPOSE BUILT COMMUNITY PROFILE

While the waterfront area remains mostly vacant and underutilized, the Northeast community includes a mix of commercial, retail, and industrial uses along major corridors, interspersed with residential neighborhoods east of Vandever Avenue in the 11th Street Bridge area. Today, about 44% of land within the study area is zoned for residential uses and made up of majority single-family attached homes (about 78% of housing units), with 22% of housing units in multi-family or duplex buildings. The residential vacancy rate (8.3% in 2019), considerably higher than in other areas of the city, is highest in the northwest area near Market Street and the Brandywine Creek. Housing value and market strength vary throughout the neighborhood, ranging from stable middle market to distressed.

The project boundary is composed of approximately 1 square mile or 3,219 parcels. NE Wilmington is a community planned for mixed-use with residential, commercial, waterfront, and parks - investment is needed to reduce vacancy and improve property conditions.

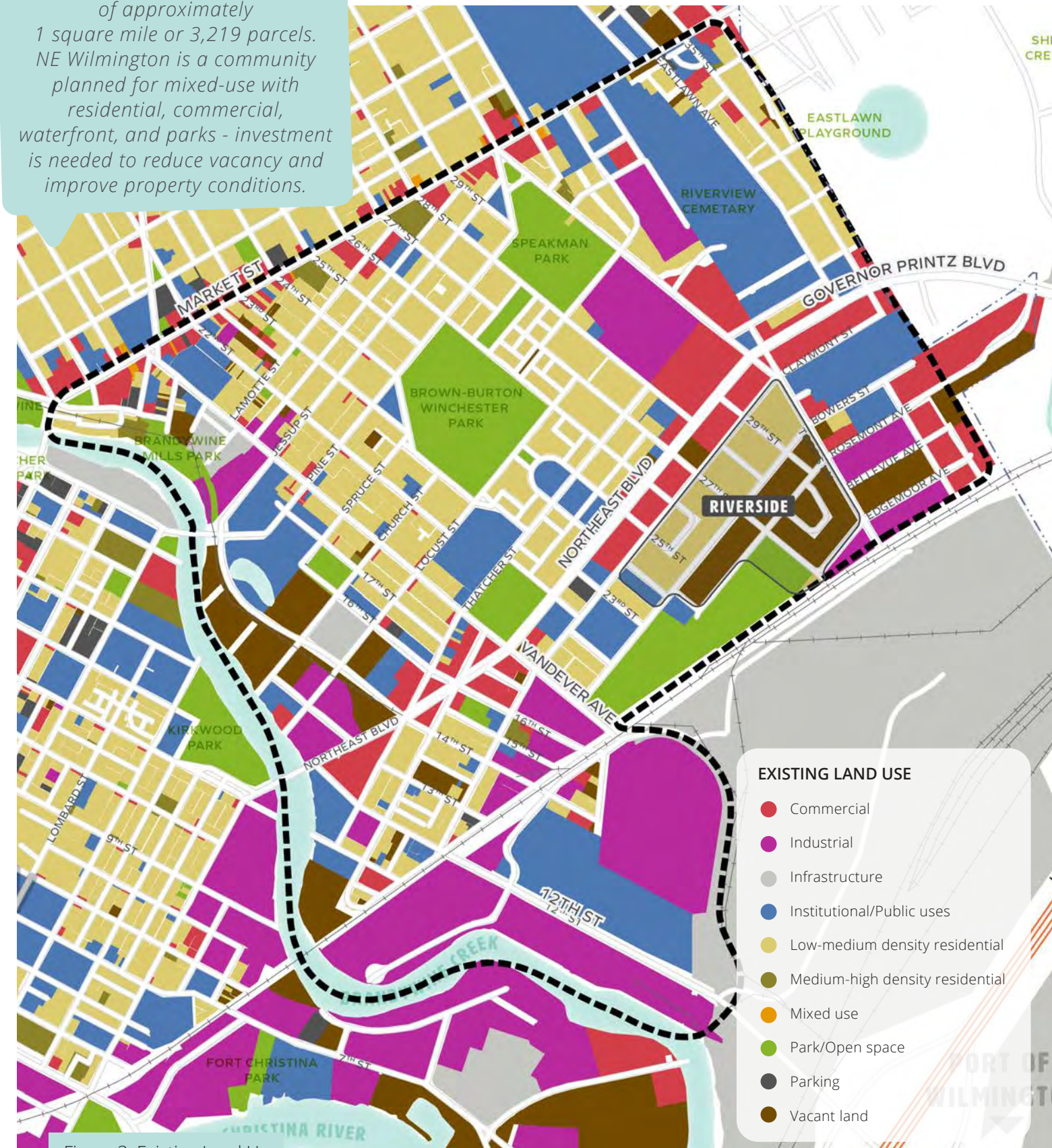


Figure 3. Existing Land Use

**PHYSICAL BARRIERS IN NE WILMINGTON**

*The Northeast Corridor's AMTRAK railroad line forms the planning area's southeastern boundary. This railroad track corridor's origins can be traced to 1837. Between 1901 and 1907, major construction was undertaken by the Pennsylvania Railroad which included elevation of the tracks on a viaduct throughout much of Wilmington and the relocation of the railroad repair shops from the downtown area to the Todd's Lane vicinity.*

Source: Neighborhood Comprehensive Development Plan for the Prices' Run/Riverside/11th Street Bridge Analysis Area, 2012.

AMTRAK railroad line



Brandywine River looking north from Northeast Boulevard



Source: Google Maps

Vacant residential units



Attached townhomes



Source: WRT

Commercial businesses at 30th and Market



NE Boulevard & 14th Street



## COMMUNITY ASSETS

### Achievement Center

The Wilmington HOPE Commission targets reduction of the impact of violence and promotes well-being in the communities by advocating for, supporting, empowering, and assisting ex-offenders to positively integrate back into the communities.



Achievement Center

### Reeds' Refuge Center

Reeds' Refuge Center is a community-focused non-profit organization committed to the holistic development and well-being of the children and financially afflicted families. It serves as a safe haven from violence, drugs, guns and idle minds by helping youth to discover their creative potential.



Reed's Refugee Center

### Thomas Edison Charter School

Thomas Edison Charter School is a tuition-free, K-8 public charter school in Delaware dedicated to educating and elevating every student, every day, to attend the best high schools and colleges.



Thomas Edison Charter School

### EastSide Charter School

EastSide Charter School is a K-8 charter school of about 480 students, striving to inspire their students to realize their vision for the future and ensure that they are equipped with the resources to achieve it.



EastSide Charter School

### Boys & Girls Club

Boys & Girls Clubs of Delaware is the largest licensed provider of childcare in the state. The H. Fletcher Brown Boys & Girls Club located in the neighborhood offers affordable before-, after- and out- of school programs for young people.



Boys & Girls Club

### Urban Promise

UrbanPromise Wilmington equips children and young adults through Christ with the skills necessary for academic achievement, life management, personal growth and servant leadership.



Urban Promise

### The Warehouse

The Warehouse is a dynamic new space designed for teens by teens that will provide our city's youth with the tools and opportunities they need to become confident, courageous, and contributing young adults who will make a positive difference in our world.



The Warehouse

### Healthcare Facilities

There are a number of healthcare facilities located in the community: Life Health Center, Nemours duPont Pediatrics, Westside Family Healthcare.



Nemours duPont Pediatrics

# CURRENT INITIATIVES AND ACTIVITIES

## THE PURPOSE BUILT COMMUNITIES MODEL

The Purpose Built Communities (PBC) vision guides neighborhood revitalization by creating pathways out of poverty for the lowest-income residents, and building strong, economically diverse communities.

This national model was pioneered in the mid-1990s after the successful transformation of the East Lake neighborhood in Atlanta. By applying that holistic model to other areas of concentrated urban poverty around the nation, Purpose Built Communities is helping local leaders make a positive impact in some of this country's most distressed neighborhoods.

### Teaming Together for Change

The proverb, "it takes a village" could not be more truly applied than in the environment of urban revitalization initiatives. It is a monumental endeavor to implement holistic change in disadvantaged communities, and it requires expertise from all walks of life. Purpose Built Communities has brought together some of the brightest minds to seek out meaningful change in our neighborhoods and cities.

Entrenched poverty is often tied to a place; if we can transform the place, we will improve lives. Purpose Built Communities works to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty by helping local leaders transform struggling neighborhoods, and bringing together the vital components necessary for holistic community revitalization: high quality mixed-income housing, an effective cradle-to-college education pipeline, and comprehensive community wellness resources, organized and driven by a single purpose non-profit community quarterback.

### Defined Neighborhood

A focus on defined neighborhoods where transformative programs and infrastructure can be established is key; if we can change the place, we can change outcomes for the people who live there. Riverside and the Northeast Wilmington community make up that defined place.

### Community Quarterback

**The PBC model requires the Community Quarterback to work closely with neighborhood residents to engage their expertise and address their needs and concerns. The establishment of a single purpose non-profit Community Quarterback is the most critical component of a successful Purpose Built Communities revitalization initiative. Our holistic model requires collaboration and cooperation under the leadership of a strong, visionary leadership team capable of bringing diverse entities together to work effectively towards a common goal. REACH Riverside is well-positioned as the Community Quarterback working with the community to realize the community's vision for the future.**

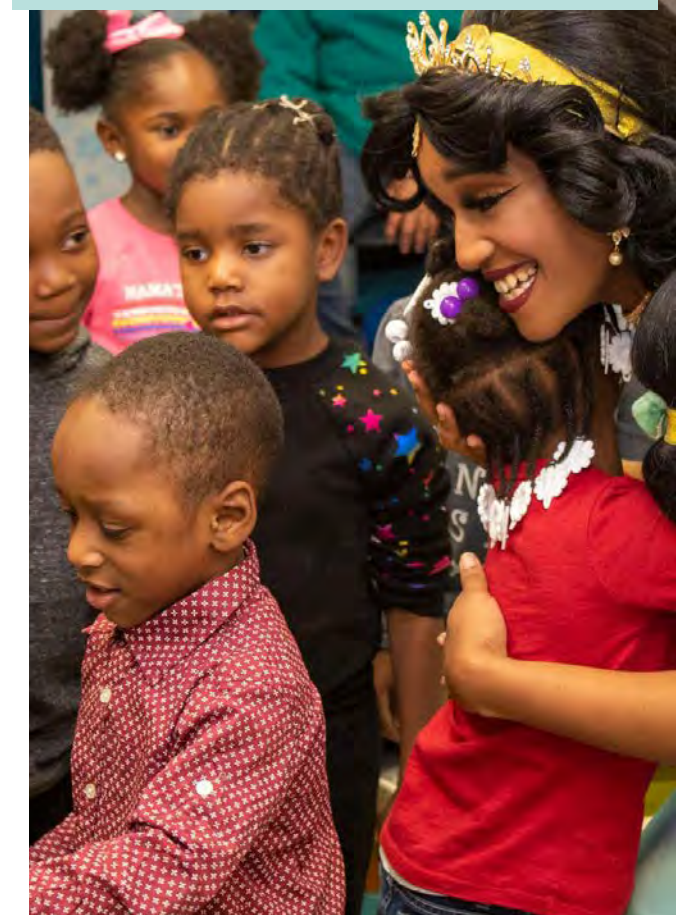
The Community Quarterback must also build strong partnerships with public and private stakeholders and investors including local housing authorities and school boards, developers, non-profits, philanthropic individuals and organizations, and elected officials.

- A Difference-Making Leader.
- The Community Quarterback is the Purpose Built Communities difference, charged with:
  - Driving the revitalization initiative to make sure the housing, education, and community wellness components are successful and sustainable.
  - Ensuring the people in the targeted neighborhood are engaged, included, and served.
  - Braiding a sustainable funding stream of public and private resources.
  - Serving as a single point of accountability for partners and funders.

### Mixed-Income Housing

Mixed-income neighborhoods provide the opportunity for people from different backgrounds to become neighbors and friends, sharing pride in their community and an enhanced quality of life. An environment that provides solid construction and practical amenities surrounded by safe walkways and streets transforms the way residents view themselves and their neighborhood. When fear and desperation are replaced with hope, pride, and possibility, you build more than a new home. You build a new way of life.

Early Learning Academy at Kingswood Community Center



## THE WRK GROUP PARTNERSHIP

Formed in 2017, REACH Riverside Development Corporation (REACH) is working to transform the Riverside neighborhood into a robust, healthy, and vibrant community. Acting as the “community quarterback”, REACH employs a holistic approach described in the Purpose Built Community Model.

In 2018, the WRK Group was created to accelerate the redevelopment of Riverside and surrounding areas of Northeast Wilmington. An alliance with shared operating services agreements between REACH, Kingswood Community Center (KCC) and The Warehouse (TWH), the WRK Group leverages the unique assets and expertise of each organization: REACH leading overall redevelopment strategy; KCC as a trusted community hub for social service delivery; and TWH as a safe place where teens can explore, learn, and develop the skills needed to be successful in school, work, and life.

Additional partners include the Wilmington Housing Authority and the EastSide Charter School.

## THE WAREHOUSE

The Warehouse is a place for teens created by teens that provides after school programming and a second home for local communities youth. The Warehouse opened in 2020 and provides youth ages 13-24 opportunities for academic and recreational enrichment and career development in preparation for life beyond high school. The mission of The Warehouse is to create a collaborative culture to revolutionize teen engagement. The Warehouse programming works to eliminate barriers to success in education and employment, as well as create well-loved spaces for building relationships and trust within the community.

The Warehouse



## KINGSWOOD COMMUNITY CENTER (KCC)

The story of Kingswood’s beginning dates back to 1946 when a group of residents asked the Kingswood United Methodist Church to open its doors to local youth. Like today, families were interested in diverting young people from idle time by giving them opportunities for organized recreation. By 1956, the programs had outgrown the original church space at 14th and Claymont Streets. With funding from local foundations and philanthropists, KCC was erected at its current location in 1958. Since that time, the center has implemented its mission through the creation of programs driven by community needs. Signature programs include the Early Learning Center; after school programming for elementary and middle school aged children and teens; counseling support for residents; and a senior center for elders.

KCC has outgrown its aging facility; the current 17,494 square foot building is no longer adequate for the current programs, let alone able to support growing demand and the ambitious REACH Riverside community redevelopment plan.

Planned Kingswood Community Center Welcome Area



A new Kingswood Community Center will be the centerpiece of Riverside revitalization, creating a tangible and meaningful structure that will catalyze this community’s transformation. Expanded programs and new amenities are urgently needed. With resident input, the team has developed a new building program and site design which includes:

- An expanded, Kingswood Early Learning Academy (ELA) that will serve up to 150 children (6 weeks to 5 years). The ELA will be a fundamental building block of the comprehensive community transformation.
- Multi-purpose community space for performances, community gatherings, and programs.
- A larger commercial kitchen to support the number of children and adults served.
- Fitness areas including a gym, basketball courts, exercise rooms and changing rooms.
- An expanded Senior Center with a large lounge area, activity rooms, and a covered outdoor porch.
- Offices and conference rooms for staff.
- ChristianaCare health resource center integrated with the Coker Family Resource Center providing primary health, services, health screenings and referrals.



# 2

## COMMUNITY SUPPORTED VISION

### ENGAGEMENT AND VISION

#### In this section

Stakeholder engagement

Resident, business, and parcel surveys

Emerging themes and community priorities

Community supported vision

# STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

To ensure that the NE Wilmington Community Plan reflects the community's values and aspirations, a robust community engagement strategy was included in the planning process, building on the work of REACH Riverside and its partners. The engagement plan included multiple opportunities for stakeholder input. Recognizing that stakeholders previously participated in several planning processes over the years, an effort was made to incorporate identified needs from previous plans and to confirm which of those are still priorities.

## STEERING COMMITTEE/ SUB-COMMITTEES

A Steering Committee comprised of local partners and stakeholders was convened to provide technical and experiential guidance and feedback to the WRT consultant team and guide the overall process, vision, strategies, and implementation of the project. The Steering Committee was also engaged in supporting outreach activities and building awareness to promote participation in the planning process.

Because existing WRK Group Committees had significant overlap with the plan focus areas, these committees were folded into the planning process:

- RESTORE – Addresses redevelopment, community and economic development and works closely with community residents, business, and government partners to develop and implement strategies that expand economic opportunities aligned with the REACH mission.
- Education Pipeline – Seeks to develop a world class “cradle to college/career education pipeline” to serve the children and youth in Riverside and the surrounding community.
- Community Health – Aims to go beyond accessing quality medical care by assuring that the social determinants of health and environmental factors that promote or impact health and well-being are addressed.
- EMPOWER and RISE – Provides guidance on how best to provide a foundation for a diverse economy with a focus on providing job training and employment opportunities for the residents and youth of Riverside.

### Steering Committee Meetings facilitated as part of the planning process:

#### STEERING COMMITTEE #1 JUNE 3, 2020

The planning team introduced key goals and outcomes of the process and roles and responsibilities of the committee members. An open discussion allowed participants to provide input on the Stakeholder Engagement Strategy; Community Plan Branding & Identity; and Community Character and Assets.

#### STEERING COMMITTEE #3 MARCH 16, 2021

Main topics included: an update on the planning process, progress on the Resident and Parcel Surveys and ways that committee members can help administer the surveys and boost participation.

#### STEERING COMMITTEE #2 NOVEMBER 10, 2020

Committee members reviewed the survey tools and collection process for the Resident Survey, Business Survey, and Parcel Survey.

#### STEERING COMMITTEE #4 OCTOBER 20, 2021

In the fall of 2021, the Committee focused on a presentation of the findings from the existing conditions analysis and surveys and key issues and opportunities that the plan would address. Following the presentation, committee members had an opportunity to help refine the community supported vision, preliminary strategies, and catalyst site conceptual development approaches. The vision and preliminary strategies were later presented to stakeholders as part of a series of focus groups discussions to delve further into specific strategies and recommendations.



## VIRTUAL AND IN-PERSON ENGAGEMENT

The planning effort launched in 2020 amid the COVID-19 pandemic required a recalibration of “traditional” on-site community engagement activities. To ensure resident safety while also boosting effective participation, the planning process included use of social media with a Northeast Wilmington Community Plan page [www.facebook.com/NortheastWilmington](http://www.facebook.com/NortheastWilmington) which served as a digital home for the planning process with materials posted in both English and Spanish.

Recognizing the additional stress that the pandemic brought on already impacted households and to limit planning fatigue, outreach activities for the survey as well as the visioning and priorities were incorporated directly into special events and activities that REACH Riverside and partners were already engaged in, including food distribution and outdoor community celebrations.



**SONIA PAREDES** REACH RIVERSIDE BOARD MEMBER AND RESIDENT

*“The changes I want to see is no violence and a place that is safe for my grandchildren to play; an environment that is safe for my grandkids.”*



**GLORIA PRITCHETT** RESIDENT

*“Education for young people is critical and improving it will help change the outcomes for their future.”*



**DAVID THOMPSON** RESIDENT

*“My goal is to continue to help others and not give up and make a difference and keep doing what we’re doing. We can’t stop.”*



### PUBLIC WORKSHOP POP-UP #1 JUNE 26, 2021

The first public workshop was held on June 26, 2021 as part of the Sun's Out, School's Out, Food's Out community celebration.

The WRT Team led a series of interactive stations that allowed residents to learn about the planning process and provide direct input.

#### OVERVIEW STATION

Station 1 provided an overview of the planning process and goals and a snapshot of neighborhood demographics.

#### ENGAGEMENT STATION

Station 2 presented a summary of what we've learned so far including findings from Resident Survey and Parcel Observations. Station 2 also included a number of brief activities to elicit feedback.

- Activity 1: Community Assets Mapping – Tell us about the places that are special to you
- Activity 2: Priorities for Neighborhood Improvements
- Activity 3: Issues and Opportunities
- Activity 4: Visioning and Community History and Memory – Story collection booth and dreams and aspirations for the neighborhood in the next ten years and the actions that members of the community can take to help realize that vision.

### PUBLIC WORKSHOP POP-UP #2 OCTOBER 14, 2021

The second public workshop was held Saturday October 14, 2021 as part of the 75-year celebration of the Kingswood Community Center. The event was well attended and included live music, food giveaways, children, and youth activities. This was an opportunity for stakeholders to provide feedback on the community supported vision, vote on priorities for neighborhood investment and identify impactful early actions and initiatives. Over 35 people participated in the exercises. The photos below provide an overview of those activities.

#### OVERVIEW STATION

Overview of the Planning Process and Results from the Survey.

#### PRIORITIZING FOR THE FUTURE

Participants were given 3 dots to vote on their priorities for the future. They were free to use all three dots on one priority or to distribute.

#### EARLY ACTIONS AND INITIATIVES

Participants were given 3 dots to vote on what they thought could be the most impactful early actions. They were free to use all three dots on one priority or to distribute. Sticky notes were provided for participants to write down additional thoughts or ideas. Facilitators also captured ideas as part of free-flowing conversations at the station. The input from these workshops informed the development of plan strategies and priorities.

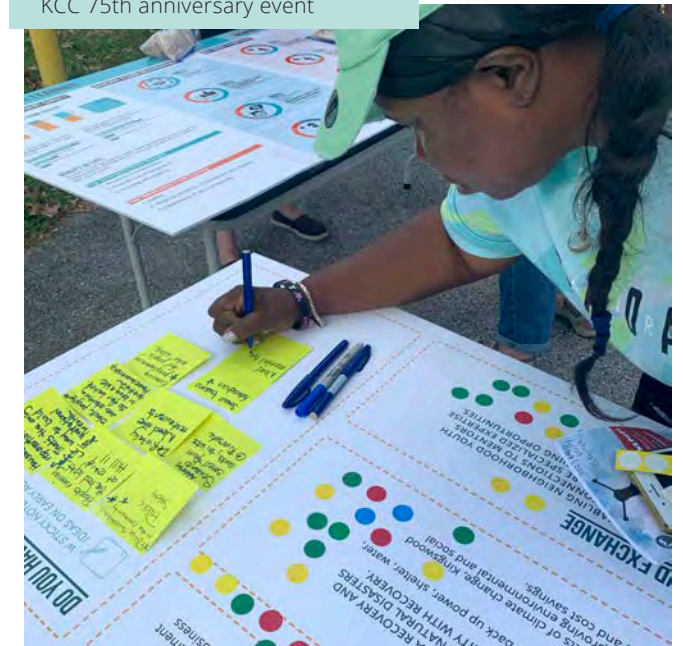
### FOCUS GROUPS DISCUSSIONS AUGUST & OCTOBER 2021

Virtual Focus Group Discussions were held between August and October 2021 around these key topics: Education, Teens and Youth, Community and Workforce Development, and Health Wellness and Safety. Opportunities and challenges that arose from these discussions helped to inform the key issues and opportunities that this plan will address.

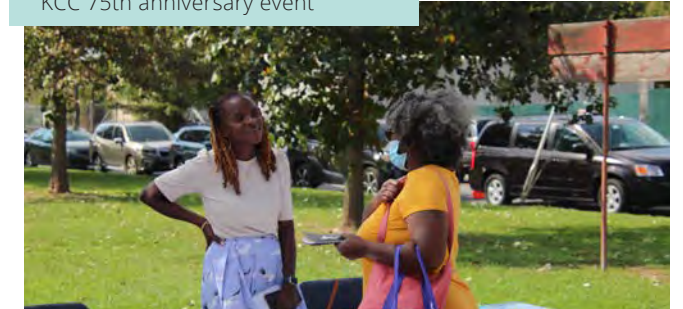
KCC 75th anniversary event



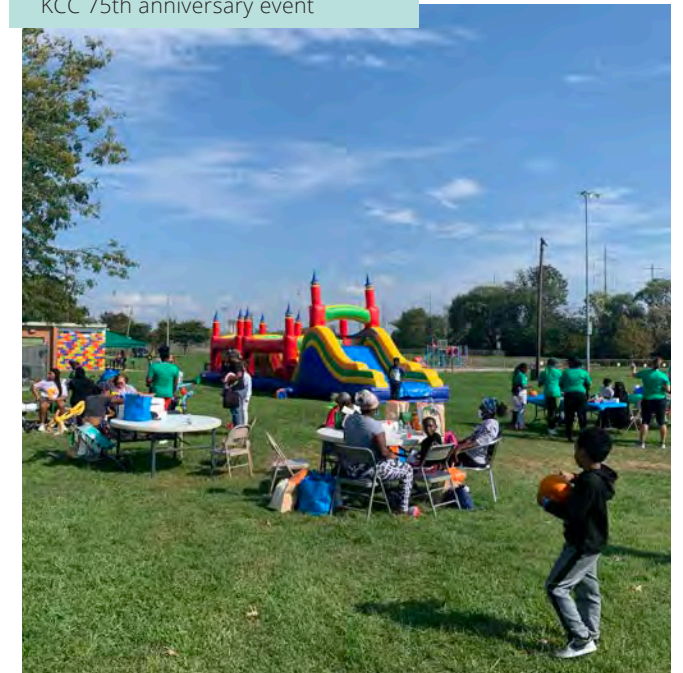
KCC 75th anniversary event



KCC 75th anniversary event



KCC 75th anniversary event



# RESIDENT AND BUSINESS SURVEYS

## RESIDENT SURVEY

A resident satisfaction survey was conducted over a 6-month time-period in late 2020 and early 2021 during the COVID-19 pandemic, making the traditional methods of drawing a random sample and going door-to-door to collect survey responses via resident conversation neither a viable nor safe option. Since the project team could not use the standard neighborhood surveying method of door-to-door, a variety of outreach methods were used to reach as broadly into the community as possible. The methods included two mailings to each household in the target area (utilizing Every Door Direct through USPS) requesting residents to go to a website to take the survey, tabling and asking for surveys from residents at multiple on-site events, and working with key community leaders to help spread the word. REACH Riverside also used their existing relationship with the Wilmington Housing Authority to obtain surveys from Riverside housing authority residents.



Survey & Resource Tabling

### Resident Survey Goals and Process

The survey was administered in English, Spanish, and Arabic. The Northeast Wilmington survey / study area included approximately 3,000 households and 10,000 residents.

- **Riverside Public Housing Participation Goal:** 60% of the 273 Riverside public housing households, approximately 176 Riverside households.
- **Broader Community Participation Goal:** approximately 300-350 community-wide responses.

The survey was administered by REACH Riverside staff, steering committee members, and volunteers. Through the data collection efforts, 292 surveys were collected from households in the target area. Not every household answered every question, and many questions have fewer than 292 responses.

As an incentive for residents to fill out the household survey, each household was given a \$25 gift card for completing the survey and all eligible participants were entered into a raffle for a chance to win five \$250 gift cards.

### Summary of Survey Findings

Key Findings of the Survey are summarized below organized under five different subsections including information on resident satisfaction, sense of community, tenure and prospective homebuyers, quality of life, and neighborhood change. The following responses are from households residing in Riverside WHA neighborhood in 2020-2021. *(Full survey results can be found in the Appendix).*

**292 COMPLETED SURVEYS!**

58% WERE WHA RESIDENTS  
 16% WERE OWNERS AND 76% RENTERS  
 20% IDENTIFIED AS MALE AND 80% AS FEMALE

Education, Employment, Health Outcomes	Metrics / Survey Question	Survey Findings
1. Children, youth, and adults that are physically and mentally healthy	+ Number and percentage of target residents who have a place of healthcare where they regularly go, other than an emergency room, when they are sick or need advice about their health	118 respondents (93%) said they typically go to their primary care doctor.
	+ Number and percentage of target residents who have health insurance	112 respondents (80%) indicated that all adults in their household have health insurance.
2. Children enter Kindergarten ready to learn	+ Number and percentage of target resident children, from birth to kindergarten entry, participating in center-based or formal home-based early learning settings or programs	Of households with children under the age of 5, 90% (60 households) said their child(ren) was enrolled and participating in early childcare center or formal home-based learning.
3. Children are proficient in core academic subjects		

Outcome	Metrics / Survey Question	Survey Findings
4. Youth, including youth with disabilities, graduate from high school college- and/or career-ready	+ Number and percentage of target resident children in kindergarten who demonstrate at the beginning of the program or school year	In 2021, 82% of children in Riverside were kindergarten ready (source: Kids Count).
	+ Number and percentage of target resident students at or above grade level according to state mathematics and English language arts assessments	In 2021, 30% of children at East Side Charter achieved literacy proficiency and 24% achieved math proficiency (Delaware Open Data).
	+ Number and percentage of target resident students who graduate from high school	
5. Households are economically stable	+ Number and percentage of target residents between the ages of 18-64 years with wage income.	69 households (48%) of respondents said they were employed in March 2020.
	+ Average annual income of target households (excluding those households who cannot work due to being elderly or disabled)	62 households (44%) indicated they had a household income of less than \$5,000 in 2019.

Source: Analysis of 2020-2021 resident survey administered in the Northeast Wilmington Neighborhood in Wilmington, DE. This survey was administered using a variety of methods. Through the data collection effort, 292 surveys were collected from households in the target area. Not every household answered every question, and many questions have fewer than 292 responses. 58% of all respondents (163 households) identified as public housing residents in the Riverside neighborhood. Above responses are from Riverside Public Housing residents only. Question #4 results from Tech Impact.

**RESIDENT SATISFACTION IN THE NE COMMUNITY**

Many survey respondents report they are satisfied living in the neighborhood, but fewer survey respondents say they *probably would* or *definitely would* recommend the neighborhood to someone as a good place to live. Survey respondents say the primary reasons they reside in Northeast Wilmington is because of the affordability of housing, because they had no other choice, or because they were born here. Respondents were split in half over whether they would continue to live in the community if they were given a choice.

**TENURE & PROSPECTIVE HOMEBUYERS**

About 16% of survey respondents were owners and 76% of survey respondents were renters. About 8% said they neither owned nor rented. Additionally, 58% of survey respondents reside in the WHA Riverside community. Respondents who do not currently own a home were split on whether they would be interested in purchasing a home in the community in the future. Of those who felt they would be interested in purchasing a home in the community, many have not purchased yet due to their personal financial situation. Of those who would not be interested in purchasing a home in the community, the primary reason is due to crime or other safety issues.

**COMMUNITY CHANGE**

Over the last three years, fewer than one-third of survey respondents said they felt the community has improved. Respondents are more optimistic about the future of the community. More than two-thirds of respondents feel that the community will improve over the next three years.

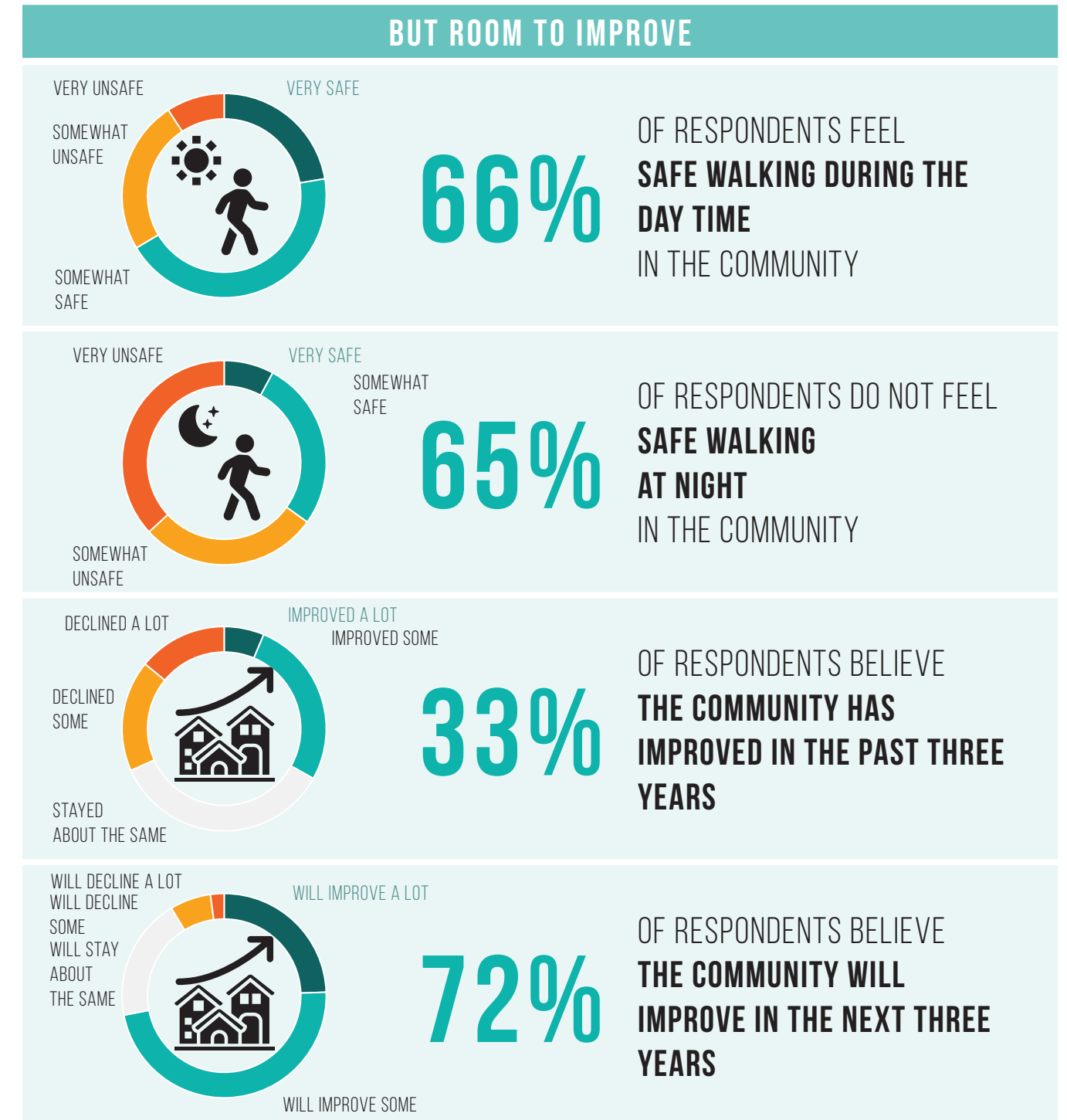
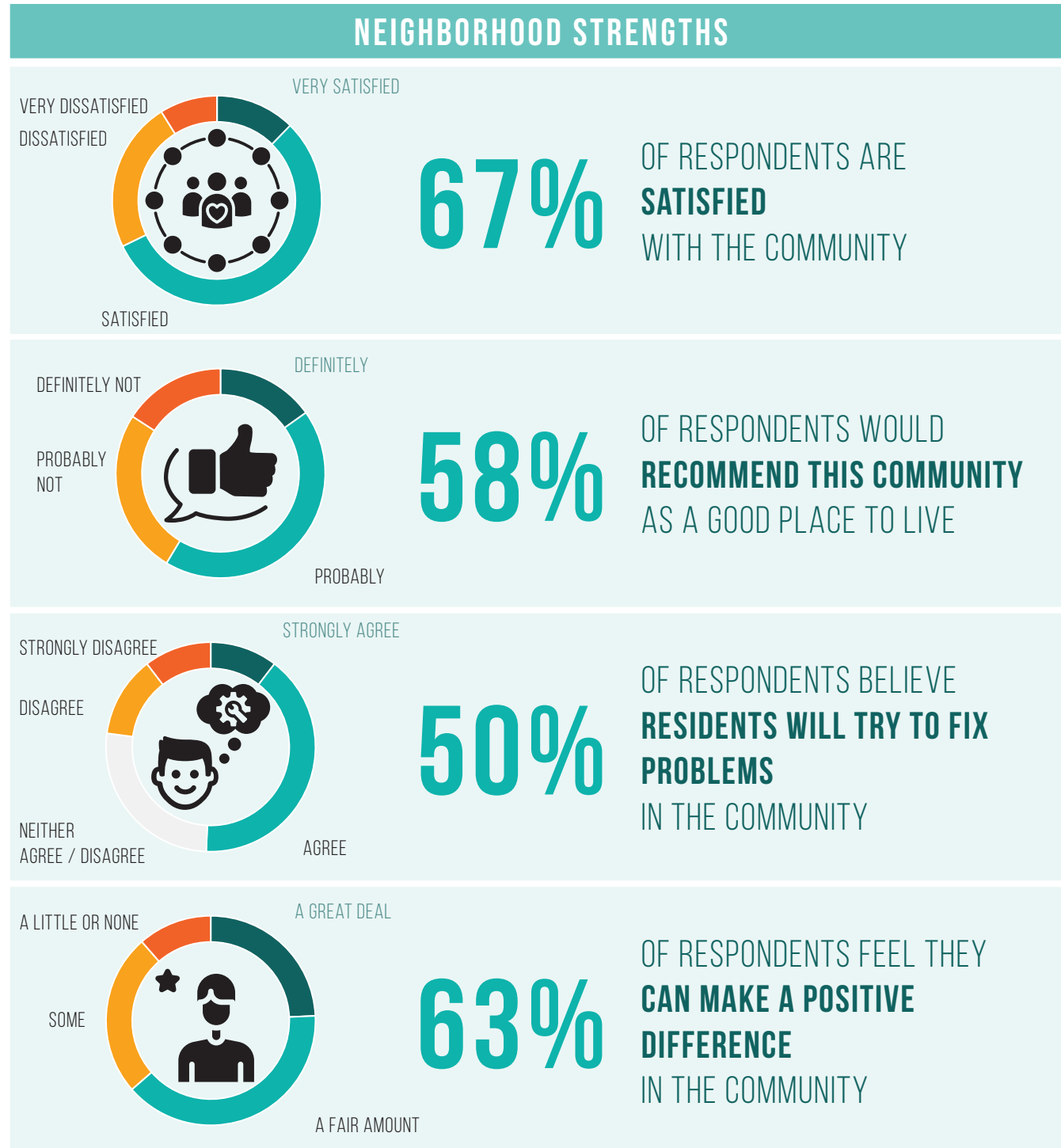
**SENSE OF COMMUNITY**

When survey respondents were asked whether neighbors would help each other out in several different situations, on average, respondents felt it was somewhat likely to likely neighbors would help. More respondents agree than disagree that neighbors would work together to fix a problem in the community and many respondents feel they can make a great deal or a fair amount of positive difference in the community. Overall, the vast majority of respondents say they were involved in at least one type of community activity over the past year.

**QUALITY OF LIFE ASPECTS**

Among the quality-of-life aspects, access to transportation was rated, on average, good by survey respondents. Access to and the quality of goods and services in the community also rated, on average, as fair to good, along with friendliness of neighbors and the affordability of housing.

Safety is a major concern in the community. Safety in the community rated, on average, poor to fair. While many respondents say they feel safe walking in the community during the day, the vast majority do not feel safe walking in the community at night. The top safety concern, cited by three-quarters of survey respondents, is gun shots and gun violence.



Source: Analysis of 2020-2021 resident survey

## BUSINESS SURVEY

REACH conducted a survey of neighborhood businesses and received responses from approximately 12 businesses throughout the study area including the Market St corridor, Northeast Boulevard and Todds Lane. Business owners described some assets and challenges operating in the neighborhood.

### Strengths:

- Location with good highway access which offers logistical advantages.
- Several of the businesses remarked that they had long-standing relationships with other businesses.
- Many older businesses were located there when the area was a strong manufacturing hub, newer businesses chose the location because of incentives and available land for their operations.

### Challenges:

- Difficulty in attracting employees to the area because of the perception that the neighborhood is unsafe.
- Lack of retail amenities and commercial vitality.
- Need for a well-trained employee base.
- Many felt that area youth were not interested in trades.

### Resources Needed:

- More technical support.
- Access to capital and funding for expansion.
- Assistance with marketing.

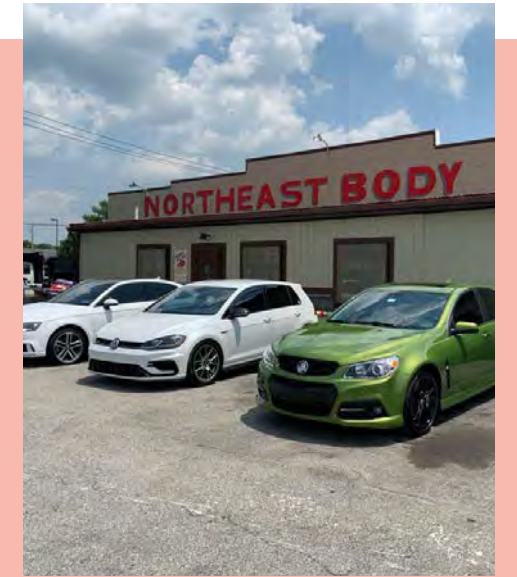
### What should improve:

- More local jobs – need skilled labor force for high tech manufacturing.
- Reduce criminal activity and gun violence.
- Improve the image of the area through marketing and branding.
- Improved mobility - more bike lanes, address traffic patterns.
- Access to quality foods.

Several of the companies interviewed shared their historical ties and commitment to the neighborhood’s resurgence.

### CHARLES A. ALLEN II TREASURER, NORTHEAST BODY SHOP

*“My Father, Charles A. Allen and his partner, Jack Hare started with a small used car lot in 1964. Since then, the business has grown to employ 22 people and is an asset to the community. There are three generations of family working here. Many of our clients are repeat customers from three generations. We look forward to still serving this community and be a stakeholder and partner.”*



### COLEMAN BYE III OWNER & PRESIDENT OF MERCANTILE PRESS, INC

*“My grandfather built our current facility in 1949 when this area was considered ‘out in the country’. We have seen the rise and fall of the area and look forward to its rebirth.”*



### SEAN KELLY OWNER, ARBOR MANAGEMENT, LLC

*“Our firm is responsible for the development of Eastlake Village, which we continue to own and operate, in partnership with the Wilmington Housing Authority. We provide housing for more than 1000 low- and moderate-income families and seniors in the City of Wilmington. We take pride in our long-term commitment to the community and rely upon long-held relationships.”*



Former Wiley Cork Site



NE Blvd & 14th Street



Single-family Attached

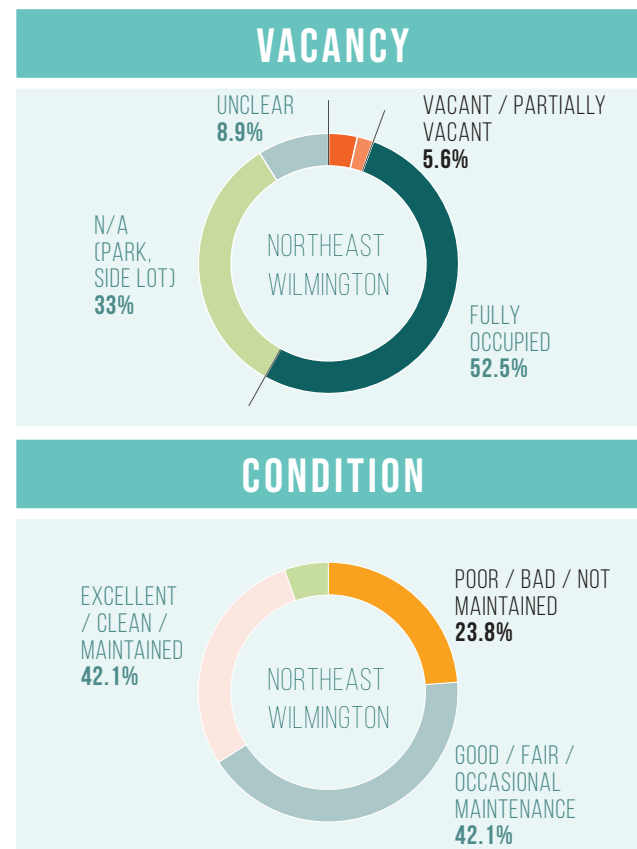


Urban farm and greenhouse - E 23rd Street

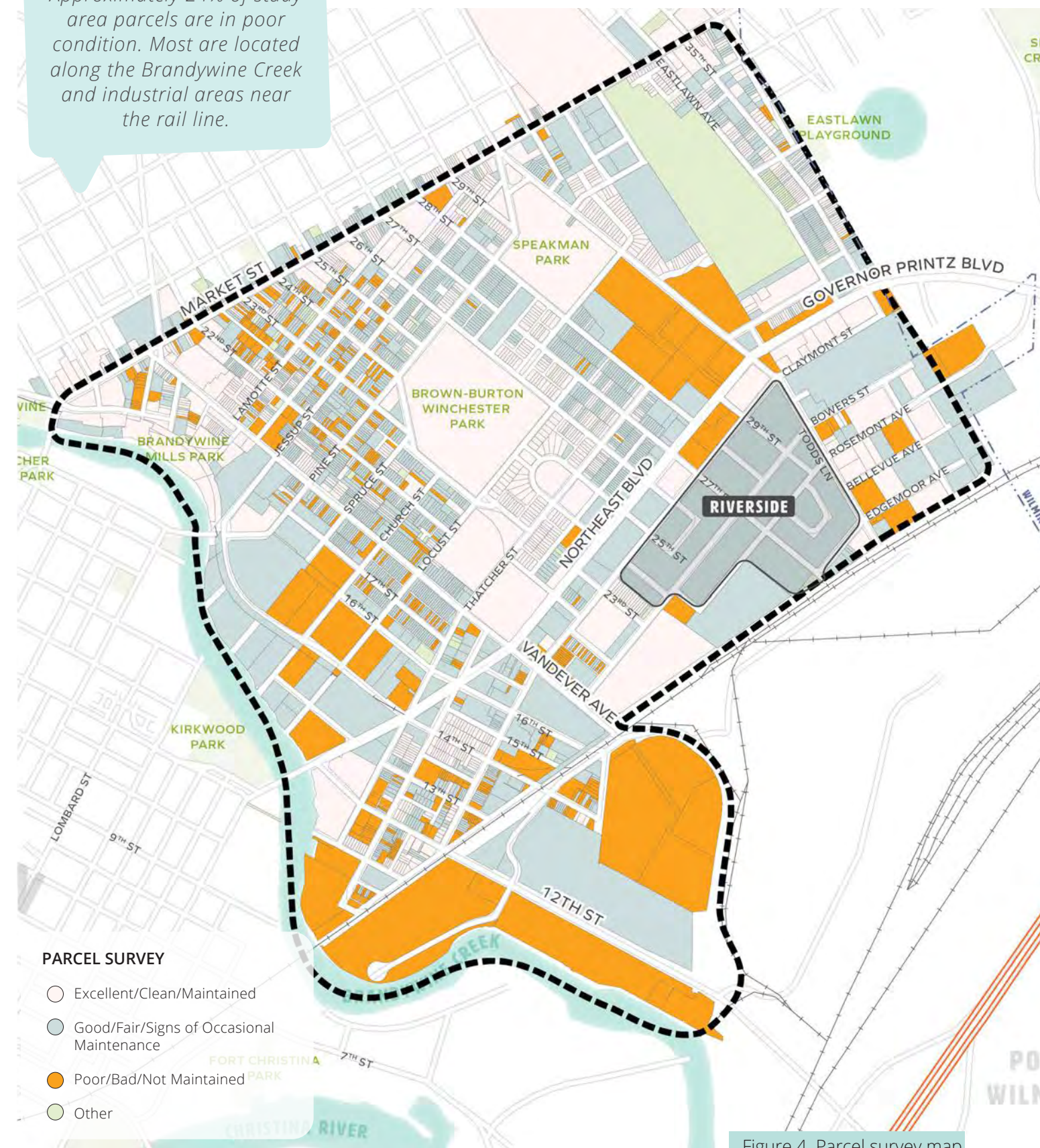


# PARCEL SURVEY

To help document the market conditions in the study area and track the changes over time, a property survey was conducted to document the condition of 3,219 study area parcels. Building conditions surveyed the basic exterior physical condition and represent a “snapshot” of the overall study area. This survey is heavily based on the Wells Fargo Regional Foundation (WFRF) Survey to allow for comparison against survey results of other neighborhood surveys completed through WFRF planning processes. To ensure that all surveys are consistently measuring the conditions and quality of the parcels, Reinvestment Fund has defined the terms for clarification.



Approximately 24% of study area parcels are in poor condition. Most are located along the Brandywine Creek and industrial areas near the rail line.



- PARCEL SURVEY**
- Excellent/Clean/Maintained
  - Good/Fair/Signs of Occasional Maintenance
  - Poor/Bad/Not Maintained
  - Other

Figure 4. Parcel survey map

## EMERGING THEMES & COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

Based on site observations, survey findings, and stakeholder conversations, key issues and opportunities emerged that this plan needed to address.

### Need for diverse, quality, and affordable housing options

The approximately 1-square mile study area contains a mix of housing stock from 2-story brick row homes built in the 1920s to newly constructed townhomes with attached garages. The U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-2018 American Community Survey shows that the neighborhood contained 3,250 housing units with over 68% being attached structures and very few detached single-family units. The median year units were built is 1953 and includes a substantial number of public and affordable housing units. Approximately 43% of the housing units in the neighborhood are owner occupied and 57 % are rental units. The neighborhood has a 12% residential vacancy which is lower than the City of Wilmington (17%), but higher than the county vacancy rate (8%).

*'Improved quality housing encourages you to invest and take care of the area.'*

One of the largest publicly owned housing sites is Riverside, built in 1950s as housing for returning World War II veterans. As noted in the 2019 Riverside Master Plan, the current barracks-style housing of the Riverside site has been in use long past its intended lifespan and is no longer serving residents well. The quality and condition of the housing has deteriorated and over 200 of the original 530 units in this Wilmington Housing Authority (WHA) property have already been condemned and demolished. The deteriorating housing conditions require rebuilding quality housing that meets the needs of families and are designed to be energy efficient.

The neighborhood also has a significant number of publicly subsidized housing units in addition to the Riverside development.

Mixed-Income housing at Riverside, rendering



Neighborhood conditions at Riverside



The Village of Eastlake was developed as part of a 1998 HOPE VI Grant which demolished the previous distressed public housing units. Eastlake Village features 160, two story townhomes including 70 public housing/tax-credit rental units and 90 homeowner properties. The property is well maintained and features front porches, garages, onsite amenities including a community building with a computer center.

Beyond the Riverside site, the neighborhood housing stock also requires significant investment. The parcel survey found areas along Vandever Avenue, and northeast of Brown-Burton Winchester Park with a higher percentage of distressed housing. With a high rental rate there is the need to improve the quality of privately operated rental units through targeted code enforcement.

There is also the need to support homeowners with limited incomes and provide access to capital and technical assistance needed to maintain and improve their homes. Maintaining and increasing the rate of homeownership in the neighborhood can also bolster neighborhood stability.

There is an opportunity to introduce new housing typologies that fit the size and makeup of the area's families, especially as the Northeast Wilmington community has seen an increase in single-parent households and smaller household sizes.



### Need to Address Blight and Vacancy

The neighborhood includes a significant number of vacant and underutilized parcels. The Parcel Survey recorded over 5.6% of the study area as vacant, including vacant residential, commercial structures and vacant land. While the vacancy is scattered throughout the neighborhood there are several areas with concentrated vacancy including:

- The area along Brandywine Creek – The large, underutilized parcels, lack of streets and sidewalks connecting to the creek, and the dense overgrown vegetation create a look of abandonment.
- SW Quadrant: Large vacant, formerly industrial properties along the southwestern edge of the neighborhood as well as existing uses like the Howard R. Young Correctional Institution makes this area an uninviting and deserted portion of the neighborhood.
- Residential Vacancy – A walk through the neighborhood along streets like 22nd show the deterioration of the neighborhood housing stock and the need for housing stabilization and reinvestment. Interspersed between well-maintained and occupied homes are vacant lots and boarded up buildings. The vacant and abandoned properties scattered throughout the residential areas of the neighborhood become places for dumping, with abandoned cars creating a negative impact on adjacent homes.
- NE Quadrant – The Eastern entrance to the neighborhood includes several large, underutilized parcels fronting Northeast Boulevard which creates an unwelcoming first impression.

There is an opportunity to improve the area’s assets by reducing blight and redeveloping the vacant and underutilized land to support housing needs, and strengthen the image of the area as a place to invest, start a business or raise a family.

### Safety, beautification, and neighborhood amenities

#### PUBLIC SAFETY

Reduction in gun violence and addressing community safety was an overwhelming priority for stakeholders. 67 % of the population surveyed did not feel safe walking at night. Many parents remarked that safety concerns limited their participation in neighborhood activities and accessing services and kept their children from enjoying parks and other recreational amenities.

2021 was recorded as Wilmington’s deadliest year for gun violence. The Wilmington Police department CompStat Reports shows 39 murders in the City of approximately 70,000 people in 2021 with 5 of the 39 murders taking place in Wilmington Police District 13 which covers the study area. In addition to gun violence, crime incidents included assaults, vandalism, burglaries, and thefts. The City of Wilmington is not alone in experiencing an increase in violent crime. Cities around the country including New York, Philadelphia, Atlanta, and New Orleans all are experiencing sharp increases in homicides.

While many blame the stresses of the COVID-19 pandemic, the location of these incidences in poor communities already struggling with deep poverty shows that a holistic and multi-pronged approach is needed.



**BRANDON WALLACE** SAFETY AMBASSADOR, THE WAREHOUSE

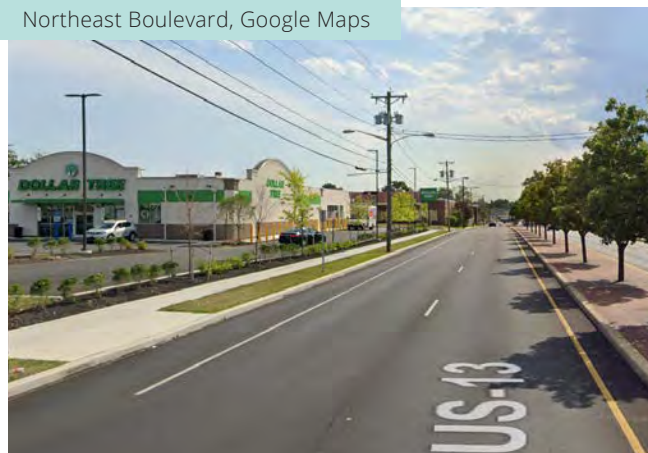
*“This is where I spent most of my adolescent years. I have experienced many struggles and hardships that the people in this community face. I firmly believe that I identify and relate with the people in the community we serve. Even though I no longer live in the Riverside community, I still live close by. This is what keeps me connected with many people who still live here. I believe with my prior experience and current knowledge of the community I could help make it a better place where the people here can flourish.”*

*'The old buildings along 12th could be used as art, business destination along the river.'*

**NEIGHBORHOOD AMENITIES**

Residents noted that the neighborhood lacked a full-service grocery store, cafes, and non-fast-food options. Northeast Boulevard is a major east/west thoroughfare with commercially zoned parcels. However, a drive along the corridor shows very little activity with few people out walking, even on a nice Saturday afternoon. Currently the 1-mile stretch between Brandywine Creek and E. 35th Street on Northeast Boulevard includes limited retail amenities to meet the needs of the community. The corridor has several car service and auto parts businesses (Northeast Body Shop, Liberty Gas, Napa Auto Parts; tires and used car sales) that are located there primarily due to the affordability and visibility on a highly trafficked corridor. Northeast Boulevard also includes storage (UHaul), fast food and convenience stores (Popeyes; Family Dollar; Dollar Tree; small local convenience stores) and several churches.

Northeast Boulevard, Google Maps



The Produce Spot, a produce oriented food store, opened in spring 2022 on Northeast Boulevard at 24th Street and is getting established. About 1.5 miles north, Merchants Square is a car-oriented shopping plaza with a Food Lion Grocery Store and discount chains Big Lots and Family Dollar. Although Merchants Square contains some much-needed retail amenities, it is not walkable or accessible to many of the residents.

**GREENING AND BEAUTIFICATION**

While the neighborhood includes over 58 acres of parks (plus an additional 22 acres of cemetery) and open space, the parks are underutilized due to a lack of programming and safety concerns. There is an opportunity to more fully utilize these recreational assets through more intense programming. In the residential area, the western portions of the neighborhood have over 20% tree canopy while the eastern area has less than 10%, this figure is lower than Wilmington overall with 21.7% tree canopy. Tree planting and streetscaping improvements would not only improve the appearance and image of the area but can also be a part of a robust green stormwater infrastructure strategy to address flooding.

Tree canopy at Brown Burton Winchester park



**Early childhood education, schools, and job training**

**EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**

As part of the resident survey, Riverside community members were asked about their family's enrollment in early childhood, day care, family care, and elementary age through high-school age programs. About 46% of households responding from Riverside have children under the age of five, and of those households most are participating in formal childcare, Head Start, or other Pre-K or early childhood education program. Nearly all households enrolled in those programs are satisfied or above with the quality. For those not enrolled, some of the issues noted include: costs, scheduling conflicts, location, and availability of openings.

KCC's Early Learning Academy (ELA) serves children ages one to five years, promoting developmental milestones using age-appropriate curricula. The ultimate goal of KCC's Early Learning Academy (ELA) is to ensure that children and families are kindergarten-ready upon completion of the program. Kindergarten-readiness includes a child's developmental domains (social-emotional, physical, language, cognitive, literacy, mathematics), an individualized transition plan, and family readiness for kindergarten (case management, assistance with the application process, access to supportive services, etc.). Currently all 60 slots are filled. A primary objective of the new KCC facility will be to build a new, state-of-the-art Early Learning Academy facility that can serve up to 150 children aged 0-5, adding infant care. This is expected to be completed in by 2025/2026.

ELA at Kingswood Community Center



**HIGH QUALITY CHARTER SCHOOLS**

Established in 2000, Thomas Edison Charter School is a K-8 tuition free public charter school serving about 750 students. Thomas Edison Charter School is located at 2200 N. Locust close to the Brown-Burton Winchester Park. EastSide Charter school educates over 500 students in grades K-8 and opened in 1997. EastSide Charter School moved from a community center to its current location, the former Martin Luther King Elementary School at 3000 North Claymont Street, adjacent to the Riverside community in 2006. The school is implementing a \$23.5 million expansion including a STEM center that will be available to the community as well as to its students, to be completed in the next two years.

**JOBS AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**

Although there are over 1,500 jobs in the study area, 97% of the residents are employed outside the neighborhood. The top places the residents are working are downtown Wilmington, Christiana, and New Castle Airport. There is a disconnect between the employment opportunities available in the neighborhood and skill-sets needed for residents to access those jobs especially in the high-tech manufacturing sector.

Residents and stakeholders prioritized investments in skills training, education, and youth employment programs, and ideas from our focus groups and work sessions included a need to develop apprenticeship/mentorship program in partnership with local businesses and educational institutions.

Through the comprehensive support program EMPOWER, the WRK Group, through service partner Kingswood Community Center, helps individuals residing in Riverside public housing develop the resources and skills for self-sufficiency and upward economic mobility. EMPOWER aims to help Riverside families achieve self-sufficiency and economic mobility through a barrier reduction model. Many aspects of life contribute to the ability to earn an income and become self-sufficient: physical and mental health; transportation; safe housing; education; credit; access to food and childcare; safety; network support; and family, intimate partner and parent-child relations. If a family needs stabilization, that is the primary focus, and then connecting to job training and employment programs follows. Launched in June 2021, EMPOWER has enrolled 99 individuals as of July 2022 who are in various stages of intake, stabilization, assessment, goal setting, case management, and receipt of services.

In 2021, The Warehouse served 101 youth with their signature RISE program. RISE provides personal development and soft skills training designed to enable youth to obtain and retain employment in any field. RISE is unique among other career training and soft skills programs in its focus on social-emotional learning, the development of restorative practices, trauma-informed care and its "Master the Basics" element which promotes respect, timeliness, and the basics of maintaining employment. Upon completion, youth are typically placed into a work-based learning experience.

**EASTSIDE CHARTER SCHOOL**

*In 1997, EastSide Charter Elementary School opened its doors for students enrolling in grades K-3. The School was founded upon the principles that all children, especially those living in low-income households:*

- *Can perform consistently at or above grade level;*
- *Can perform better in small classroom settings;*
- *Would succeed when educated in a safe, caring and nurturing environment;*
- *Would succeed when parents participated in all decisions involving their children;*
- *Would learn self-control and a sense of discipline, because of the School's structured classes and its conflict resolution program.*

*In 2000, EastSide was the first elementary school in Delaware to receive a five-year Charter; and its Charter was expanded to add grades 4-6. At that time, EastSide reported to the State Board of Education several important gains in math standards that supported its Charter renewal and expansion model.*

*The school also expanded to include 5th – 8th graders in 2006. EastSide Charter has made significant gains. In 2016-2017 ESCS ranked last in Delaware among all school districts in student academic growth. In 2017-2018 ESCS ranked second in the state in academic growth among all state districts.*



*"Parents choose schools based on how they expect the institution to prepare their children for their future. Test scores and grades are meaningless if they do not have a direct impact on a child's life goals. EastSide is so committed to a child's future that we want to begin preparing for it as early as Kindergarten. Every year each student in grades K-8 write a Vision Plan - in which students commit to their career goals and explain what impact they will have on their community and their family. We are firm believers that our youth will perish if they are not focused on a vision. Once a child is clear about his/her goals in life we want to ensure that they receive a strong education that can serve as a foundation to achieve that goal.*

*We believe that this collaborative approach - involving teacher, student and parents - is vital to the success of our students. The process enables students to see the long term impact of wise decisions they make, and there is accountability established throughout the year." - Eastside Charter Mission*

### Convenient transportation and pedestrian safety

#### ENHANCED TRANSIT NETWORK

According to the 2019 American Community Survey, the residents in the neighborhood are more reliant on public transit than their counterparts in the city. About 21% of Northeast Wilmington residents commute to work by bus, while the number of the overall city is 12%. Also over a third of households (34%) in the neighborhood do not own a vehicle.

The community is served by the Delaware Authority for Regional Transit (DART) and 83% of the community is within a 1/4 mile of a bus stop, providing a strong foundation for transit use. Access and distances to bus stops vary, however, with portions of the neighborhood having access to multiple lines while other areas require a longer walk. DART has 5 routes that serve the neighborhood as followed:

- Route 4: W 4th Street / Northeast Boulevard
- Route 9: Boxwood Road / Broom Street / Vandever Avenue
- Route 13: Philadelphia Pike / DuPont Highway
- Route 14: DHSS Campus / Wilmington / Lea Boulevard
- Route 31: Market Street / Philadelphia Pike

Riverside has good public transit access located within a five-minute walk (1/4 of a mile) of existing bus stops. While this public transit access is a strength for the community – giving residents access to the jobs available in Downtown Wilmington – the existing bus service is almost exclusively along Northeast Boulevard, which is currently quite a hostile and unsafe environment for pedestrians. Market Street has well designed, comfortable bus stops with shelters, while Northeast Boulevard has only bus stop signs with limited visibility, and no sitting areas or shelters. Residents remarked that they would like to see improvements in frequency noting that several

of the routes that serve the area run with a lower frequency of roughly 30 minutes between buses at peak hours and an hour between buses at off-peak hours. Route 4 along Northeast Boulevard will likely continue to be the most frequent and valuable service to Riverside and other neighborhood residents and so continued focus on pedestrian safety and comfort improvements for the crossings and bus waiting environments along Northeast Boulevard is critical.

#### IMPROVED WALKABILITY AND PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

Northeast Wilmington includes small blocks of walkable residential streets, as well as areas with large formerly industrial parcels. Tree cover, sidewalk and building conditions vary and the lack of consistency coupled with major thoroughfares with high traffic volumes like Northeast Boulevard creates a hostile and unsafe environment. Residents discussed the need for improvements to slow vehicles, reduce crashes, and make it safer and more pleasant to walk throughout the neighborhoods.

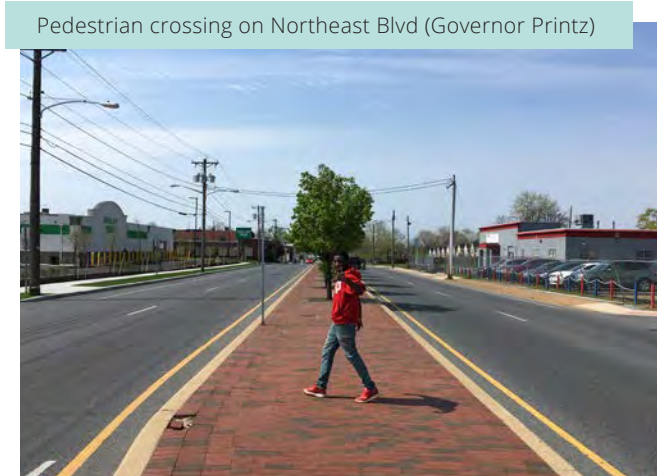


Figure 5. Convenient Transportation & Dangerous Hot-Spots

### Community health and wellness

Access to quality, convenient healthcare is a priority for residents and community partners. In 2021, ChristianaCare Virtual Health opened at the Coker Family Resource Center, located inside Kingswood Community Center. Residents are now able to connect for virtual appointments with their primary care providers, at KCC, or at home, and also receive on-site medical services (e.g., vaccines, blood pressure checks, and in-person exams).

Limited access to grocery stores and fresh, affordable food makes it difficult for households to cook and eat a healthy diet in the U.S. USDA studies food access and provides community mapping tools to identify areas that are considered both low income and low access to healthy foods. Access includes factors like distance to and quantity of grocery stores, family

income, availability of public transit, and vehicle availability. While there are several grocery stores, delis, and corner stores within the Northeast community (e.g., Northeast Market and Food Lion located along Northeast Boulevard) the Northeast community is considered low access and low income – meaning that a high number of residents are more than 1-mile from a supermarket offering. As part of the 2020 community wide resident survey, residents indicated that they were most likely to shop at Food Lion, Shop Rite of Christina Crossing, or the Fresh Grocer of Adams Plaza. Residents also indicated that they do shop at businesses within the community frequently.

Several local initiatives are helping to improve food access. In the spring of 2021, the Produce Spot opened on Northeast Boulevard with the goal to offer high-quality, fresh produce and prepared foods, helping to alleviate some of the limited access and directly connecting the community to healthy foods. Planting to Feed, a 501(c)(3) partner with Kingswood Community Center completed an urban farm and garden revitalization at Kingswood Community Center; provides food, education in healthy foods, garden revitalization, and meals; and opened the First Community Fridge in the State of Delaware – providing access to food 24 hours a day.

The community fridge project located at Kingswood Community Center was quickly followed by a free food pantry and a second Community Fridge in partnership with the Teen Warehouse.

Through this planning process residents have expressed the need for increased healthy and nutritional food options for residents and workers. There is the opportunity to enhance food access and security and build strong networks through food, education, and wellness.

ChristianaCare Virtual Health Ribbon Cutting



Jessica Westcott with the Community Fridge at The Warehouse



*'The Former Del site on NE Blvd would be a great spot for a grocery store.'*  
- Community member



#### HEALTHY FOOD FINANCING INITIATIVE PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

*Administered by the Reinvestment Fund on behalf of the USDA, the Healthy Food Financing Initiative provides grants and technical assistance to communities without easy access to fresh and healthy food options. In 2021, the program awarded \$22.5 million to 134 projects through its small grants program. The goal is to stimulate food business development and build a more equitable food system.*

**PERSISTENT POVERTY**

*Concentrated and persistent poverty is associated with a range of negative quality of life indicators that pose significant health and safety risks to residents. Chronic stress from poverty and an inability to meet basic needs, neighborhood blight and crime contributes to poor health outcomes. This is particularly serious for children whose brains are still developing and shaped by chronic stress and trauma. Poverty in Wilmington disproportionately impacts children. According to 2014 American Community Survey estimates, nearly 40% of children in Wilmington are living in poverty, more than double the rate for children in the region, and 73% of children in Wilmington are raised in single parent households, 48% of whom are living below the poverty line.*

Source: Wilmington 2028 Comprehensive Plan.

**Address poverty and increase household wealth**

Northeast Wilmington’s population of 9,894 residents who are 85% African American has a neighborhood poverty rate of 36% of residents and 59% of children living in poverty, significantly higher unemployment rate (13%) than the city (8%) or county (6%).

In 2014-2018 the median household income within block groups varied between \$37,578 and \$87,970. The median household income for the southernmost block group in the Riverside neighborhood, which borders Brandywine Creek in the west and the railroad in the south, has increased significantly (88.72% change), compared to other block groups, which only saw modest gains. Despite overall increases in median household income, 42.7% of households within the focus area earn less than \$25,000 per year.

Since 2000, the share of children living in poverty has increased substantially, especially compared to citywide increases. In 2014-2018 about 36% of all residents and 59% of children in the focus area were living in poverty. The rate of poverty, especially among children in the focus area is significantly higher than the city, county, and state averages.

With ongoing issues of systemic inequity in access to quality education and jobs, there is a need to address the barriers to building intergenerational wealth.

**Climate change and environmental concerns**

In Delaware, climate change primarily takes the form of sea level rise, increased temperatures, and more frequent intense storms, including heavy precipitation and flooding. The 2014 Delaware Climate Change Impact Assessment (Division of Energy and Climate) identified several potential impacts of climate change to people, places, and resources in Delaware, these include:

**INCREASED TEMPERATURES**

Temperature extremes are projected with an increase in very hot days over 95°F and longer and more frequent heat waves. This increase in very hot days can mean a growing demand for electricity for cooling during the summer months which increases energy costs for homeowners and businesses. Increasing temperatures can also impact public health by increasing risk of serious illness, such as heat stroke, especially for vulnerable citizens: the elderly, small children, people with asthma or heart disease, and socially isolated people who have limited access to air conditioning or health care. Hotter temperatures may also worsen air quality, by increasing ground-level ozone conditions.

**MORE FREQUENT INTENSE STORMS**

Heavy rainstorms are expected to become more frequent and more intense, with an increasing number of very wet days with 2 inches or more of rainfall. 28.3% of the neighborhood is within 100 Year Flood Zone putting residents, homes and commercial properties in danger of flooding.

As shown by the impact of Hurricane Ida in Fall 2021, flash flooding resulting from heavy rains can have a catastrophic effect on already vulnerable residents in the city. “More than 200 people had to be rescued from their homes in early September, as the river reached a record high level of 23.1 feet.” With severe damage to their homes and loss of their possessions many of those impacted were still in need of housing at the beginning of 2022 (Mark Eichmann January 14, 2022).

**INADEQUATE INFRASTRUCTURE**

Over the coming years increasing storms and flooding can overwhelm stormwater and wastewater systems, and stress the capacity of stormwater and wastewater outfalls, causing water to back up and transporting polluted waters to upland areas.

With climate change projections, hotter temperatures, and the increased frequency of extreme weather events there is a need to implement resiliency measures including protecting existing homes, preparing emergency shelter, and implementing planned green infrastructure and stream bank stabilization along Brandywine Creek that can improve water quality, provide community access to the river, and help mitigate future flooding.



### Concentration of brownfields and environmental concerns

As described in the Northeast Brandywine Riverfront U.S. EPA Brownfields Area-Wide Plan, the riverfront was the original driver of the area’s industrial history. Pre-19th century, much of the land along the Brandywine was marshland which was incrementally filled-in for the site of mills and manufacturing industries, such as the Jessup & Moore Paper Company and the Lamont Cotton Factory. Larger uses arrived in the late 19th century, such as the Delaware Granite and Mining Company, which created the quarry pond that exists today next to the Boys & Girls Club. As industrial activity in the area declined and many of the industries closed for good new uses of the riverfront included auto and metal salvage, building and furniture supply parts and distribution. Franklin Fibre-Lamitex Corporation, Masley Enterprises, and Delchem Inc are some of the few remaining active industrial operations on the river.

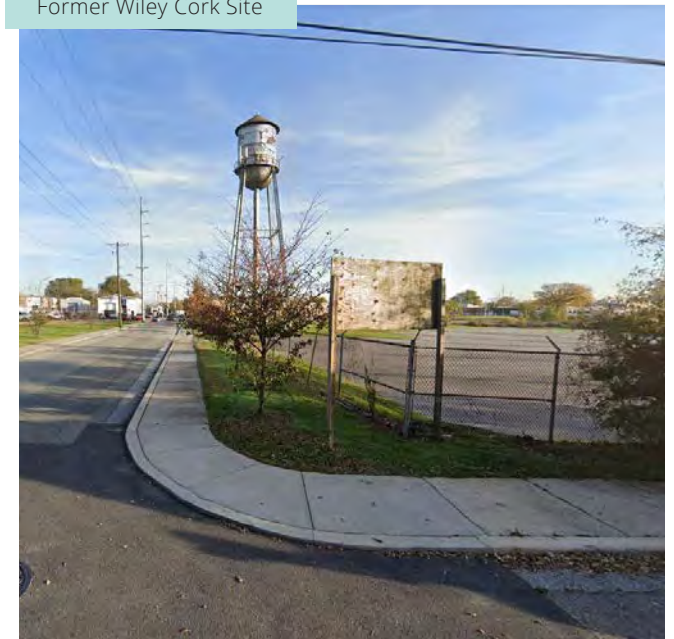
With the decline in manufacturing activities, there are large swaths of environmentally constrained and contaminated properties, impacting the adjacent neighborhoods and reducing the overall economic vibrancy of the area. There is an opportunity to re-connect the neighborhood to the Brandywine and attract significant new economic investment by reclaiming these brown field sites and putting them to productive uses that meet current community needs for high paying jobs, safe recreational activities and to mitigate the impact of climate change. Because of the nature of previous industrial uses, a number of these brownfield sites will require additional environmental site assessments and remediation before new uses can be safely introduced.

### AGING INFRASTRUCTURE

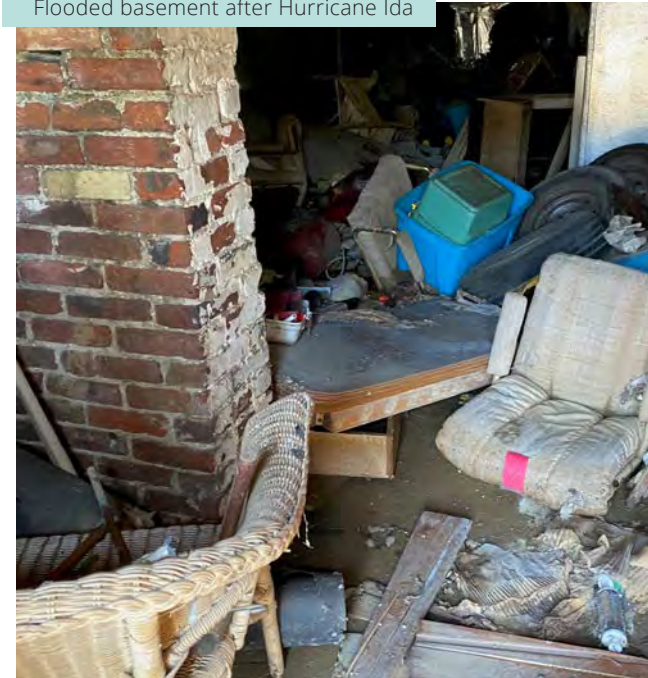
*Like many older urban developed areas in the United States, the sewer infrastructure used today in the City of Wilmington includes an extensive network of combined sewer overflows (CSOs) that carry both sewage and stormwater. CSOs can lead to water quality issues when the combined sewer system cannot handle the volume of flow from stormwater runoff in addition to the baseline sewage flow during a precipitation event. High tides can also prevent CSOs from functioning properly. When Wilmington’s combined sewer system is overwhelmed during a precipitation event, untreated sewage and stormwater runoff can be directly discharged into the tributaries of the Delaware River, including Brandywine Creek, Christina River, Silverbrook Run, and Shellpot Creek. To address this, the City of Wilmington has initiated a \$1 billion (funded through federal infrastructure funding) sewer disconnect/overflow remediation program which will rebuild the sewer system neighborhood by neighborhood.*

Source: Delaware Climate Change Impact Assessment, 2014

Former Wiley Cork Site



Flooded basement after Hurricane Ida



E. 14th & Pine St



North Church St near Brandywine River



Clean up from Hurricane Ida



# COMMUNITY-SUPPORTED VISION

After assessing and documenting the community's needs and concerns, the planning team led residents through a visioning process where the following vision and guiding principles emerged.

Wilmington's Northeast is a close-knit and welcoming community where we nurture our youth, where our families prosper, and our businesses thrive.

Together, we are making change happen by investing in:

Brandywine River future recreation



I Want to Be mural @ Kingswood Community Center



The Warehouse - Community Engagement



Quality housing attractive to all income levels.



Residents feel healthy, safe and cared for by friendly neighbors that are always willing to lend a helping hand.



Early childhood, great schools and job training to access living wage jobs.



Beautiful high-quality park system connected to the Brandywine River by quiet and safe tree-lined streets.



A vibrant local economy where community members can spend their dollars in their own neighborhood on quality goods and services.



Services and resources are available to support the health and well-being of all.



Reliable public transportation and safe, well-lit streets.



Celebrating the neighborhood's history, culture, and beauty.



## GUIDING PRINCIPLE #1

### SAFE, ATTRACTIVE NEIGHBORHOODS AND VIBRANT COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS

**Goal 1.** Focus redevelopment efforts to foster new mixed-use community destinations and gathering places along key nodes.

**Goal 2.** Reduce blight in problem areas of vacancy and hot spots for crime.

**Goal 3.** Support and grow local businesses and entrepreneurs.

**Goal 4.** Build community pride by making the neighborhood commercial corridors clean, safe, and attractive.

**Goal 5.** Deepen organizational capacity to support neighborhood wide and corridor improvements and maximize locational assets to bring value and market the neighborhood as a place to invest start a business or raise a family.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLE #2

### VIBRANT PARKS AND RESILIENT COMMUNITY SPACES

**Goal 1.** Activate parks and open spaces with welcoming recreation and programming with something for all residents.

**Goal 2.** Create a publicly accessible greenway along the northeast side of the Brandywine Creek that provides recreation and protection from flooding.

**Goal 3.** Enhance stormwater management through street tree planting and maintenance and investments in green stormwater infrastructure in areas susceptible to flooding.

**Goal 4.** Designate the Kingswood Community Center as a “Resilience Hub” with capacity to assist residents in a natural disaster (e.g., major flooding event, power outage, environmental disaster).

## GUIDING PRINCIPLE #3

### CONVENIENT TRANSPORTATION AND IMPROVED MOBILITY

**Goal 1.** Create a network of streets, amenities, and public open spaces that improve safety and community connections.

**Goal 2.** Invest in multi-modal transit improvements with increased transit access and new, welcoming amenities.

**Goal 3.** Implement the reimagined 12<sup>th</sup> Street Connector project, to alleviate congestion and provide multi-modal commuting and recreation opportunities for residents.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLE #4

### DIVERSE, QUALITY AFFORDABLE HOUSING OPTIONS

**Goal 1.** Address the need for affordable housing through the redevelopment of the WHA Riverside site and other quality affordable housing options to serve the needs of the NE Wilmington community.

**Goal 2.** Increase the rate of homeownership in the neighborhood by supporting existing homeowners and providing educational and credit counseling resources for first time homebuyers.

**Goal 3.** Introduce a diversity of housing typologies that fit the needs of residents (e.g., smaller household sizes, increase in single-parent households) and utilize publicly owned land and vacant lots for infill housing.

**Goal 4.** Work collaboratively with License and Inspections to address abandoned and vacant properties, lead abatement and other safety issues, and ensure that rental properties are up to code with current registrations.

**Goal 5.** Enhance the coordination between public, private and assisted housing providers, mental health, and social service agencies to meet housing demand among special needs population groups.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLE #5

### COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLNESS

**Goal 1.** Improve access to healthy, nourishing food.

**Goal 2.** Create healthy community spaces at the revitalized Kingswood Community Center.

**Goal 3.** Increase community cohesiveness and strengthen the social fabric through the design of the environment as well as programs, community events, and opportunities to get involved.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLE #6

### EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION, GREAT SCHOOLS AND JOB TRAINING

**Goal 1.** Implement the vision and facilities at the new Kingswood Community Center.

**Goal 2.** Develop an apprenticeship/mentorship program in partnership with local businesses and educational institutions.

**Goal 3.** Invest in training to access the jobs and opportunities of today and tomorrow.



# 3

## PLAN STRATEGIES

HOW DO WE GET THERE?

### In this section

Guiding Principles

Key Goals and Recommendations

In 10 years, we will achieve this vision through the following strategies that evolved from community priorities, previous planning, and ongoing investments.

## THE FUTURE OF NE WILMINGTON - PLAN FRAMEWORK

The NE Wilmington community is at the threshold of major transformation. This resurgence requires ongoing and coordinated investments in infrastructure, housing, and services for families that provide tools for economic stability and work seamlessly together to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty building a holistic and vibrant community.

With strong leadership and the coordinated investment strategy of the WRK Group (REACH Riverside, Kingswood Community Center, and TheWarehouse), \$300 million in neighborhood revitalization efforts are well underway that can have long-lasting impact on the lives of residents. This investment is needed more than ever as a community that was already grappling with persistent poverty, low educational attainment, and insufficient housing has been further impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and widespread flooding creating additional stressors.

The framework diagram illustrates opportunities for leveraging this ongoing investment to meet resident needs and create sustainable and lasting impact. Following the framework are recommended implementation strategies and tools to support each of the plan goals.

*The framework diagram illustrates opportunities for leveraging existing assets and ongoing investment to meet resident needs and create sustainable and lasting impact.*



Figure 6. Plan framework diagram

## SAFE AND ATTRACTIVE NEIGHBORHOODS AND VIBRANT COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS.

There is an opportunity to enhance Northeast Wilmington's position as a desirable location for new and growing businesses - and to better serve neighborhood residents by improving the physical appearance and viability of the key commercial and gateway corridors of North Market Street and Northeast Boulevard. Both corridors run east/west and are well-travelled with the potential to become vibrant and unique centers of neighborhood commerce and activity. Vandever Avenue connects these key commercial corridors and is an important neighborhood link between the community assets and amenities on North Market Street and the Kingswood Community Center. All three corridors are DelDOT maintained roadways and require public realm investments including enhanced street lighting, tree planting, sidewalk improvements, crosswalks and traffic calming to facilitate safer crossings.

The catalyst sites illustrate physical strategies for transforming underutilized land to support community investment efforts.



Figure 7. Catalyst site #1: NE Gateway. Redevelopment of former industrial uses at the Nixon Uniform Site, directly adjacent to the revitalized Riverside community.

## KEY GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: SAFE & ATTRACTIVE NEIGHBORHOODS

*Goal 1. Focus redevelopment efforts to foster new mixed-use community destinations and gathering places along key nodes.*

1.1 Position and promote the former Nixon Uniform Site and Todds Lane Industrial Park sites as a gateway development with a mix of uses, retail, small business / start-up opportunities.

The former Nixon Uniform Site location provides a catalyst site opportunity in line with The WRK Group's RESTORE initiative to invest in and gain local control over commercial, residential, and industrial properties in order to create positive community impact. Facilitating the assembly of parcels for more efficient and impactful redevelopment at these catalyst sites is underway. An initial focus project is the creation of NERDiT Recycles at 3030 Bowers, an electronics recycling center in development by the successful local Black-led company NERDiT NOW. This area will also be bolstered by East Side Charter School's new STEM Center which will break ground in the next year.

1.2. Reposition Northeast Boulevard to provide needed employment, retail, services, and amenities.

Improving the variety of goods and services found along Northeast Boulevard by attracting a greater retail mix would leverage the road as both a local and regional destination instead of just a thoroughfare to pass through the neighborhood to reach downtown and the freeway. Much needed corridor improvements on Northeast Boulevard, including streetscaping and beautification strategies, will also address safety concerns and make the corridor a welcoming and pedestrian-friendly space for neighborhood residents.



Rendering of Catalyst Site #1 at the NE Gateway illustrating safe pedestrian crossings, new retail and employment uses on the ground floor with residential above. Gateway / branding signage, street trees, landscape median, dedicated bike lane, and public amenities create a attractive, safe, and active environment for residents. (WRT)

Delaware Transit Corporation, in partnership with New Castle County and Wilmapco, conducted a traffic study to define ways to improve the corridor for multi-modal transportation that will direct these improvements.

With the number of vacant and underutilized parcels along the corridor, there is a unique opportunity to redevelop those sites into mixed-use development nodes with ground floor commercial uses and residential on upper levels with parking tucked within the blocks and to redevelop larger sites for targeted job producing industries. At the eastern gateway to the neighborhood, the former Nixon Uniform Site and Todd's Lane Industrial Park sites are positioned as catalysts with a mix of uses that can provide amenities and well-paying jobs right in the community. The site is currently zoned C2 (Secondary Business Center) and C-5 (Heavy Commercial) to support infill and redevelopment and the existing infrastructure (water, sewer, arterial roadways, etc.) can support additional commercial development.

The 2022 market study conducted by Gibbs Planning Group (GPG) found that the REACH Riverside development, at its completion, will be able to potentially support up to 60,000 sf of restaurant and retail space including: grocery stores; electronic and appliance stores; hardware and home improvement stores; pharmacy and sundries stores; limited-service restaurants; and full-service restaurants. With great visibility and access, these newly developed sites

can attract employers, increasing employment and jobs in the area while serving existing residents with additional services and retail amenities. The REACH RESTORE staff will work closely with the city of Wilmington to provide organizational support and coordination of improvements and business attraction efforts.

### 1.3 Strengthen North Market Street as a commercial corridor and attractive gateway to NE Wilmington.

Currently, the one-mile stretch of North Market Street between Brandywine Creek and E35th Street has a wide variety of retail and commercial amenities and a fine grain, walkable feel. Starting with the quaint Brandywine Village Historic District with the restored Brandywine Mills Plaza and ending with historic Riverview Cemetery, the corridor includes historic sites and intact two-story mixed-use buildings with beautiful stone and brick detailing that address the street and create a pedestrian scaled urban edge.

In the southwest corner of the study area, Brandywine Village is a National Register Historic District that was nominated to the National Register as a microcosm of the evolution of industrial, commercial, residential, and institutional development of 19th-century Wilmington. Beginning around 1741 and extending through the early 19th century, the area flourished as a grain milling center with most of the development taking place between Brandywine Creek, North Market Street, and Vandever Avenue.

Market Street was originally part of the King's Highway and served as a vital link between Brandywine Village and Philadelphia.

At the northeast end of the study area at 3400 Market St, a major investment is planned to expand the North Market St. Library. The state has committed \$22 million (through Bond Bill and ARPA funds) to expand the branch and create a new, state-of-the-art partnered location just four blocks north at 3905 N. Market St. Across Eastlawn Ave from the current library, the Wilmington Land Bank and Wilmington Housing Authority have initiated a property transfer for development of 17 parcels, called "McMullen Square."

There is an opportunity to further enhance the corridor and make it a truly vibrant local and regional destination with additional shops and services through beautification, preservation, and economic

development strategies in partnership with Old Brandywine Village, Inc. and other stakeholders. By extending the existing street tree canopy along the entire corridor, designing, and implementing consistent signage that reinforces the historic feel, seasonal planting, and façade improvements, a reinvigorated North Market Street will create a sense-of-place and build on the unique attributes of historic Brandywine Village. DeIDOT and the City of Wilmington are planning streetscape improvements that will be implemented in 2023-2025. Energized civic groups (Collaborate Northeast, Brandywine Partners, Brandywine Village Civic Association, 2nd District Council) are working to leverage this historic asset to make it a destination and attract and retain businesses.

These investments will work together to catalyze future development.



**1.4 Create a multi-modal 12th Street connector and riverfront greenway.**

The 12th Street Connector is envisioned to become a new multimodal riverfront greenway that integrates green infrastructure to minimize flood risk while improving access between Northeast Wilmington, the Brandywine River Waterfront, and Wilmington's Central Business District. This new corridor will support economic development and job creation by improving access to the new waterfront innovation district for freight movement for local businesses, while minimizing impacts to the adjacent residential community.

**1.5 Transform Vandever Avenue into a safe, mixed-use corridor.**

The distance between the Kingswood Community Center and the shops on North Market Street is a little under a mile - a 6-minute bike ride or 20-minute walk - however it is not currently an appealing street to drive, walk or bike on. There is visual clutter near the train tracks on the southern end, missing and overgrown sidewalks, large blank walls, and vacant and underutilized properties. In addition, three of the most frequent automobile crash sites are located on Vandever Avenue, at the intersections of Northeast Boulevard, Thatcher St, and Locust St. With investment in traffic calming and streetscape improvements, Vandever Avenue has the potential to be a mixed-use corridor with residential, commercial, and light industrial/innovation uses that provides an opportunity to utilize green stormwater infrastructure, art, and improved pedestrian crossings to make it a functional and enjoyable multi-modal corridor.



Figure 8. Catalyst Site #2: NW Gateway. Implementation of the 12th Street corridor with a new waterfront park and redevelopment of brownfields and vacant sites.

## CASE STUDY - JUMPSTART WILMINGTON

*Jumpstart Wilmington was launched to help Wilmington residents to become developers of their own neighborhood through quality, community-focused real estate development training and financing options. The program is modeled after the original Jumpstart Germantown Program, which was created by Ken Weinstein to facilitate the revitalization of the Germantown neighborhood of Philadelphia through high quality residential renovations.*

*Increased local developer capacity in Wilmington is the key to scaling development activity and revitalizing communities more rapidly. We see residents of Wilmington communities as the best resource for neighborhood revitalization, as many have potential to effect positive change in their neighborhoods. Jumpstart Wilmington can provide aspiring developers who live in Wilmington communities with the skills, knowledge, and support they need to rehabilitate key properties, one at a time. In the absence of established real estate developers willing to invest in smaller scale projects, this program will cultivate a force of new local developers who currently reside in Wilmington or have a commitment to improving Wilmington neighborhoods.*

### **Goal 2. Reduce blight in problem areas of vacancy and hot spots for crime.**

An attractive physical environment is an essential factor in residents' quality of life and building neighborhood pride. The parcel survey confirmed areas with significant blight and need for stabilization and investment. Addressing blight and areas of distress is necessary to prevent further decline and strengthen and stabilize the neighborhood. With a large share of the neighborhood's housing stock (57%) being rentals, there needs to be a comprehensive strategy to ensure that landlords are bringing their properties up to code and that tenants have safe quality housing. Focusing on the key corridors and areas with significant distress can help strengthen the overall neighborhood and limit impact on adjacent stable areas.

#### **2.1 Increase occupancy and investment in vacant and under-attended areas and stabilize vacant properties through a targeted acquisition strategy.**

Identify properties for targeted acquisition in strategic focus areas and utilize the Jumpstart Wilmington program to facilitate rehab and redevelopment of sites. Create a targeted Jumpstart Wilmington NE Community Loan Program to provide financing for acquisition of and renovation of residential and commercial mixed-use properties.

#### **2.2 Implement a Strategic Code Enforcement Program that utilizes the City of Wilmington's public nuisance properties program to enforce code violations and incentivizes and supports local landlords to improve their properties.**

Effective code enforcement can support neighborhood revitalization efforts by ensuring that property owners are maintaining their properties in compliance with the Delaware State Code and the Wilmington City Code and facilitate responsive action for property owners who are not being responsible. Ensuring that units are up to code and that structures and yards are free from trash, debris and graffiti, and that abandoned vehicles are removed can greatly enhance the perception of neighborhood safety and bolster revitalization efforts. The Neighborhood Improvement Coordinator can lead the Strategic Code Enforcement Program including maintaining an up-to-date property data base for problem sites, coordinating with property owners and Department of Licenses and Inspections on inspections and investigations as well as compliance actions.

- Share/advertise property registration program for increased participation among community organizations along priority corridors.
- Report vacant buildings for fee collection; Registered vacancies are accurate and being registered for development.

1603 Todds Lane



Northeast Blvd & 14th St





**Goal 3. Support and grow local businesses and entrepreneurs.**

Through the RESTORE (Real Estate Strategy to Obtain Racial Equity) initiative, the WRK Group is committed to making and attracting investments in Northeast Wilmington that help to strengthen the local economy, revitalize the built environment, and provide quality amenities that the community deserves.

**3.1 Revitalize the built environment - improve the appearance of the commercial corridors, fill vacant commercial spaces, and implement branding and placemaking projects.**

Making a positive impression along neighborhood gateways and commercial corridors to attract and retain residents, employers, and investments, improving quality of life requires a marketing and branding strategy that builds off unique locational assets and attributes - history, culture, and sense of place. Done well, this can bring value and promote NE Wilmington as a place to invest, start a business or raise a family. Collaborate Northeast, True Access Capital and the University of Delaware Landscape Architecture Program have partnered to bring Arnett Muldrow & Associates to Northeast Wilmington to conduct a branding and marketing initiative for the Northeast Wilmington Neighborhoods. The purpose of the effort is to create a consistent image package for the community and its partners to use. This effort has been made possible through a grant from DE

Sea Grant College (UD). The goal of the branding strategy is to “build local pride, recruit investment to the community, and help our residents realize their future.” The City of Wilmington provides grants to small businesses, with a focus on minority-led businesses, that can support exterior improvements.

**3.2 Launch a Small Business Incubator to help local entrepreneurs refine business ideas and launch a business in the neighborhood.**

In order to encourage locally grown businesses, entrepreneurial training and small grants are needed for entrepreneurs looking to start or grow a business in the neighborhood. A small business incubator can be a part of future commercial corridor improvements on Northeast Boulevard. True Access Capital, through the Equitable Wilmington plan funded by JPMorgan Chase, targets businesses on Northeast Boulevard for funding and technical assistance. Other local business incubators and support programs include Delaware’s Division of Small Business training and Community Navigator programs, Lazarus Education, University of Delaware Horn Entrepreneurship Program, Launcher Program, and NextFab.

**3.3 Bolster workforce development initiatives through a coordinated strategy that connect residents with training for skills that are in demand, while addressing the barriers that limit participation and successful completion building a strong and in-demand local workforce.**

REACH Riverside’s EMPOWER program provides a coordinated strategy that includes: 1) Overall coordination of workforce development programs and a one-stop job search center; 2) Free financial coaching; and 3) Skills training programs, soft skills workshops, apprenticeships, career counseling, job search & placement services.



Survey & Community Tabling



Community Building Events

**Goal 4. Build Community pride by making the neighborhood commercial corridors - clean, safe, and attractive.**

Attractive and safe neighborhood commercial corridors support the needs for local goods and services of residents and employees. They also provide attractive, walkable destinations for visitors and new residents. Cleanliness and signs of investments are critical to making a positive impression along neighborhood gateways and commercial corridors to attract and retain residents, employers, and investments, improve quality of life.

**4.1 Launch a NE Community Ambassadors Program.**

Hire local residents to serve as clean and safe community ambassadors with a commitment to clean up trash, give directions, communicate with neighbors and business owners ultimately strengthening community connections and pride. REACH is initiating

an ambassadors program for the Riverside area in 2023, which can be expanded to include the entire study area in partnership with local civic groups and the City of Wilmington.

**4.2 Partner with the 1st and 3rd District Planning Councils and Collaborate Northeast on a "Pedestrian Level Lighting Program" to address pedestrian lighting issues along N. Market Street and other key corridors.**

**4.3 The City of Wilmington is installing security cameras throughout the city; increase focus on the study area and connect with the Public Safety Camera System.**

**4.4 Support regular collaboration between Wilmington Police Department Sector One, neighborhood residents, community leaders and property owners.**

**4.5 Work with a landscape design firm to design and implement a cohesive Streetscape Improvement strategy for Northeast Boulevard that celebrates the corridors unique attributes and the community history and culture.**

The Streetscape Improvement plan should incorporate a cohesive branding strategy for Northeast Boulevard and gateways that includes façade improvements, signage and wayfinding.

**4.6 In coordination with streetscape, landscape, facade improvements, work with the City of Wilmington Clean Teams to install trash bins at regular intervals with consistent trash pickup and corridor cleaning.**

**4.7 Develop and implement a phased Marketing and Business Attraction Strategy improving the variety of goods and services along the corridors by attracting a greater retail mix. City and the Delaware Prosperity Partnership jobs incentive program helps identify resources for businesses and property owners.**

**4.8 Create a façade improvement grant program for small businesses.**

**4.9 Implement a seasonal planting and holiday decoration program (hanging flower baskets, planters, pocket parks) and street tree planting.**

Sample rendering of a revitalized streetscape with coordinated planting, signage, lighting, and mobility enhancements along Washington Lane in Philadelphia



Source: WRT, 9th District, Philadelphia

Seating, shade, and plaza design add pedestrian amenities to the street (University City, Philadelphia)



Source: www.thecityfix.com

**CASE STUDY - DOWNTOWN FACADE IMPROVEMENTS TRANSFORMATION**

*Over the last 10+ years, the Main Street Wilmington Program has been successful at awarding grants that are transforming buildings within the downtown district. Facade restorations have focused on showcasing the historic and once hidden character of the city's building stock. Grants are offered on a matching basis up to \$10,000 per façade improvement.*



Source: Main Street Wilmington

*Goal 5. Deepen organizational capacity to support neighborhood wide and corridor improvements and maximize locational assets to bring value and market the neighborhood as a place to invest start a business or grow a family.*

5.1 Hire a Commercial Corridor Manager who will be responsible for helping neighborhood businesses take advantage of programs and resources, attract new businesses, and implement marketing, branding, beautification, cleaning, and safety strategies and help implement the vision for a vibrant mixed-use corridor along Northeast Boulevard.

Specific efforts that can be led by the Commercial Corridor Manager(s) include:

- Develop and implement a phased Marketing and Business Attraction Strategy, working with local real estate professionals and property owners, to improve the variety of goods and services along the corridors by attracting a greater retail mix.
- Coordinate Marketing and Outreach Efforts – Including business engagement, seasonal programming; attract and retain neighborhood-oriented businesses and services; promote the corridor working with local real estate professionals, property owners, and other stakeholders to attract new and retain existing businesses.
- Facilitate Physical Improvements and Beautification – Implement streetscape, landscape, facade improvements and public art at key gateways.

- Organize seasonal cleanups with resident, businesses, and organizational support.
- Lead seasonal programming – Coordinating events and activities to bring residents, shoppers, and visitors to the corridor.
- Coordinate a public safety committee to work with local police and individual business owners to improve public safety and change the perception of the area through regular coordination between business owners, residents, organizations and the Police District. Utilize community-oriented approaches to local policing and boost foot patrols in areas struggling with crime/loitering.
- Manage Clean and Safe Community Ambassadors – Hire local residents to serve as clean and safe community ambassadors with a commitment to clean up trash, give directions, communicate with neighbors and business owners ultimately strengthening community connections and pride.
- Provide Technical Support to Small Businesses – Link property owners and businesses with financial resources.
- Establish a NE Wilmington Business Association.

5.2 Hire a Neighborhood Improvement Coordinator to support a thriving residential community for residents in the larger neighborhood including those living outside of the WHA Riverside site.

A Neighborhood Improvement Coordinator can provide the logistical and administrative support needed. Key tasks may include:

- Cultivating community collaboration amongst neighborhood residents through meaningful engagement and community building activities.
- Providing residents with basic information and referral services: answer questions, support application completion, and develop programs and resources that support wellness for the entire resident population.
- Supporting programs that aim to preserve affordable housing in NE Wilmington; preventing tax and mortgage foreclosure; promotion of home repair, property tax, and utility assistance resources, financial/housing counseling resources, workforce development and economic opportunities, and resident participation in and awareness of neighborhood planning initiatives and other neighborhood improvement activities.

Community conversation on issues & opportunities related to the plan



Source: WRT

- Act as a referral agent who connects residents to resources from local organizations, city government and other service providers who can meet their needs.
- Provide capacity building and training support to establish and maintain a neighborhood civic association.
- Develop and implement systems to disseminate information about neighborhood activities, resources, and events.
- Develop and maintain a database of community concerns/issues.
- Help residents submit and follow-up on code enforcement and other issues.

## VIBRANT PARKS AND RESILIENT OPEN SPACES.

While Northeast Wilmington is fortunate to have significant park and open space amenities within walking distance of residents (including the Kingswood Community Park adjacent to the Kingswood Community Center, Brown-Burton Winchester/ Speakman Park and smaller parks and plazas including Brandywine Mills Park and Brandywine Mills Plaza), safety concerns and lack of consistent programming have limited the use of these open space resources. With programming and design improvements, the neighborhood's open spaces can continue to bring a wealth of benefits including increasing adjacent property values, providing active recreation, supporting health and wellness, increasing opportunities for community cohesion, and improving the air and water quality.



Activate parks and open spaces with welcoming recreation



Create a publicly accessible greenway along Brandywine Creek



Green streets designed to manage storm water



Stormwater Wetland Park

The proposed open space network links existing with new open spaces that are connected via sidewalks and green streets that function for stormwater management.

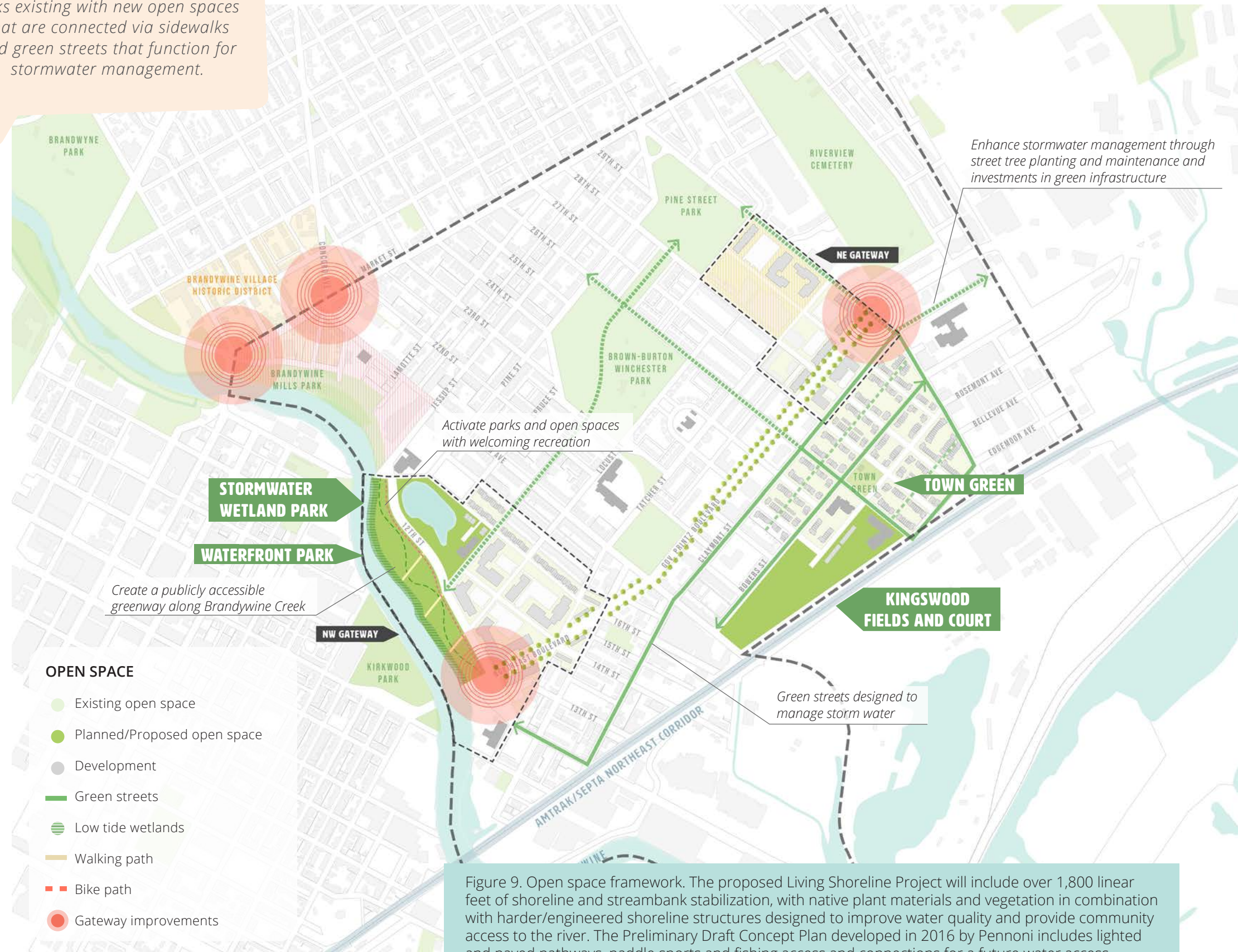


Figure 9. Open space framework. The proposed Living Shoreline Project will include over 1,800 linear feet of shoreline and streambank stabilization, with native plant materials and vegetation in combination with harder/engineered shoreline structures designed to improve water quality and provide community access to the river. The Preliminary Draft Concept Plan developed in 2016 by Pennoni includes lighted and paved pathways, paddle sports and fishing access and connections for a future water access.

There is an opportunity to further enhance existing public spaces with a diverse range of programs and add a variety of new smaller gathering spaces that can enhance the public realm, boost neighborhood image, help manage flooding and reduce heat, and increase community connections.

New spaces can include:

- Design enhancements and additional programming at existing public spaces.
- Create a calendar of year-round events that vary across the neighborhood can include: seasonal festivals and celebrations with live music, local arts, children's activities, flea markets and vendor fairs, outdoor exercise, theatre performances, gardening demonstrations, and farmers markets.
- Design and implement new signature public spaces – a new NE Wilmington Riverfront Park as a local and regional destination and leverage NE Wilmington as a riverfront community with shops, services, outdoor dining, and jobs along the river.
- Implement plazas that anchor new catalyst mixed-use nodes and make intersections safer and easier to cross for pedestrians, bikers, transit riders and drivers.
- Support existing community gardens and integrate gardening programs with other community activities.
- Design and implement parklets and pocket parks – With lush planting, movable café chairs and tables, art and lighting, parklets can convert the underutilized triangular lots found along Northeast Boulevard into unique neighborhood destinations.

## REVITALIZE THE RIVERFRONT.

There is a unique opportunity to reinvigorate and revitalize the Northeast neighborhoods and portions of the City's Brandywine Riverfront through redevelopment of many of its post-industrial properties. In addition, riverfront investment will help to manage stormwater through grey and green infrastructure and provide an opportunity to implement sewer overflow separation projects identified in the City of Wilmington's CSO Long Term Control Plan which are an important part of necessary flood mitigation and water quality improvements.

## KEY GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**Goal 1. Activate parks and open spaces with welcoming recreation and programming with something for all residents.**

Collaborate with residents and local organizations to jointly sponsor community festivals and related social events such as block parties and seasonal community fairs and outdoor art and music concerts. By widely marketing these events they can become seasonal and annual celebrations, re-enforcing the neighborly bonds among residents, businesses, and organizations doing business within the community. Events of this type have proven successful in promoting community awareness and community livability among neighbors in other places hosting such events.

**Goal 2. Create a publicly accessible greenway along the northeast side of the Brandywine Creek that provides recreation and protection from flooding**

The NE Wilmington Community has a unique opportunity to reuse significant vacant and underutilized land with large areas in public ownership an implement the Living Shoreline Project which includes 1,800 +/- linear feet of shoreline stabilization with key amenities including:

- Lighted and paved pathway/trails;
- Paddle sports access;
- Site Amenities: restrooms, benches, shade structures, bike racks and paddle sport storage, parking; concessions.
- Fishing pier;
- Water Taxi access;
- Complete streets connecting with future catalyst development areas;

Implementing the shoreline and streambank stabilization would have multiple benefits including:

- Creating a sense of place and local and regional destination for exercise, education, the arts, gardening, and farming;
- Improving water and air quality;
- Meeting a variety of community needs including providing access to the river.
- Supporting neighborhood resiliency.

## CASE STUDY - LIVING SHORELINES IN WILMINGTON

*What is a living shoreline? Shoreline protection with native materials such as vegetation and living, natural elements often times in combination with harder shoreline structures.*

Living Shoreline Concept Rendering for the Brandywine River



Low water wetland areas with rock, oyster, & coconut protection



Source: Northeast Brandywine River Living Shoreline Project, Pennoni

**Goal 3. Enhance stormwater management through street tree planting and maintenance and investments in green stormwater infrastructure in areas susceptible to flooding.**

With significant areas of flooding, NE Wilmington presents an exciting opportunity to utilize Green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) to reduce stormwater runoff and create transformational public spaces to catalyze investment. There are many types of GSI tools that can be employed at a variety of scales, from a single house to an entire city block or neighborhood. All GSI provides a mix of environmental, social, and economic benefits, though the specific benefits vary by tool.

**Goal 4. Designate the Kingswood Community Center as a “Resilience Hub” with capacity to assist residents in a natural disaster (e.g., major flooding event, power outage, environmental disaster).**

The Kingswood Community Center is already acting as a “community hub” where residents gather for a range of activities and services both before, during, and after disruptions. By formally designating the Kingswood Community Center as a Resilience Hub it would more formally recognize the Kingswood Community Center’s role as the place for NE residents to go in the case of a variety of disruptions including flooding; power outages; and food, health, and other distribution efforts. This formal designation can also support additional staffing; funding and coordination to support residents on an ongoing basis.

Key Functions of the Resiliency Hub would include:

- Apply for emergency aid and emergency services.
- Serve as a Neighborhood Energy Center that can provide resources to help residents reduce their utility bills and access utility assistance programs.
- Communicating and sharing information during disruptions and throughout recovery.
- Connecting residents to a wide range of programs and services.

With the design of the new Kingswood Community center, the facility can have the physical capacity to support these additional functions. A detailed action plan will be needed to identify specific functions of the Resiliency Hub that may include additional staffing, storage requirements and on-site infrastructure and energy production.

**CASE STUDY - WHAT IS A RESILIENCY HUB?**

*Resilience Hubs are community serving facilities (community center, recreation center, park or garden) that improve a community’s ability to recover from a variety of shocks including natural disasters such as flooding as well as social and economic challenges. Resilience Hubs can help support the community in times of disruption by providing emergency services (backup power), supplies (food, water, first aid, sanitation), and information.*

**WHAT IS GREEN STORMWATER INFRASTRUCTURE?**

*A network of natural and semi-natural systems that manage stormwater runoff, slowing the rate of water flow and filtering out pollutants.*

*Green stormwater planters, bumpouts*



*Stormwater tree trenches*



*Green parking lot*



*Pervious paving*



*Retention pond*



*Rain gardens*



*Bioswales*



## CONVENIENT TRANSPORTATION AND IMPROVED MOBILITY.

Northeast Wilmington is easily accessible to downtown via Northeast Boulevard and Market Street - both providing gateways across the Brandywine Creek. Through our engagement process, local businesses noted location and convenient access through direct highway connections to the larger region and northeast corridor as a strength and reason for locating in the Northeast. The construction of the interstate system in the 20th century shifted the transportation network away from a connected, walkable urban form with the goal of moving cars in and out of the city. With ease of vehicle access came concentrated, sometimes fast-moving traffic on certain streets, which in turn created barriers for residents walking, biking, or taking public transit to and from daily activities.

Today, residents are hesitant to even cross Northeast Boulevard given traffic speeds and harsh conditions for pedestrians. In addition, many streets are one-way making the community difficult to navigate for newcomers and residents. These barriers create real divisions between neighborhoods and highlight residents needs for improved mobility and convenient transportation options.

*The mobility framework recommends safety improvements at key intersections, pedestrian street and gateway enhancements (e.g. pedestrian bump-outs, landscape, signage, crosswalks), and implementation of the 12th St corridor.*



Figure 10. Mobility framework

## KEY GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

*Goal 1. Create a network of streets, amenities, and public open spaces that improve safety and community connections.*

Throughout the NE Wilmington community, there is the need to improve multi-modal access for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders and create safe, well-lit connections. With improvements, residents and visitors will be able to more easily get around via transit and bike to downtown, to work or school, to the Brandywine River, and to local parks and other recreational assets and amenities. Currently, missing sidewalks and crosswalks inhibit pedestrian safety, limit mobility and access to transit service. While a lack of bicycle facilities and accommodations inhibit bicycle access and safety throughout the neighborhood. Integrating green stormwater infrastructure into streetscape projects also brings additional benefits of beautification and managing stormwater that can contribute to flooding issues.

The commercial and gateway corridors such as North Market Street and Northeast Boulevard can be connected through multi-modal improvements on north-south corridors that would facilitate neighborhood-wide pedestrian and bike-friendly routes to school, parks, shops, services and jobs.

### 1.1 Improve pedestrian and bicycle safety on Vandever Ave and Northeast Boulevard.

Vandever Avenue is a two-lane connector with missing and inconsistent sidewalks, lack of street trees, and several noted high crash intersections (Northeast Blvd; Thatcher and Locust). There is an opportunity to improve Vandever Avenue with multimodal amenities to create a safe corridor that will connect key neighborhood assets (e.g., the Kingswood Community Center to Brown-Burton Winchester Park, the Boys and Girls Club, Nemours Children's Health and Northeast State Service Center WIC Clinic on Jessup Street all the way to the Wilmington Job Corps, North Market Street commercial corridor and historic Brandywine Village). In addition to lighting, intersection improvements and other safety measures, there is an opportunity to bring vitality to the corridor with art on the large blank walls of the industrial buildings at 1400 Vandever Ave, between Bowers Street and North Claymont, and industrial buildings near the intersection of Jessup Street.

Coordinated mobility improvements, safe crossings, landscape, and signage transformed this once auto-oriented corridor in Castro Valley into a welcoming and safe place for residents and employees to enjoy



Source: WRT, Castro Boulevard, CA

### 1.2 Implement safe crosswalks and traffic calming strategies at areas with high crash volumes.

The three highest crash intersections are located on Vandever Ave at Locust Street, Thatcher Street, and Northeast Boulevard. The 2019 12th Street Connector study found that there were 56 crashes at these intersections over the 2015-2018 time period. About half involved parked cars, and there were eight crashes involving pedestrians and two involving bicyclists. Once the 12th Street Connector is in place, the congestion on Vandever Ave will be reduced, lessening the volume and likelihood of crash. In addition, improvements to signal timing, sidewalk extensions and bump-outs help shorten the crosswalk and improve sight distances are needed on Vandever Avenue.

### 1.3 Enhance the character of E. 26th Street with safe pedestrian, bicycle, and transit amenities.

E. 26th is a pleasant residential street with continuous sidewalks. As the new central boulevard and public gateway to the revitalized Riverside, an improved 26th Street will help to create a safe pedestrian, bike, and transit corridor. E. 26th will connect the Kingswood Community Center and the new Town Green at the heart of the redeveloped Riverside to new mixed-use commercial opportunities on Northeast Boulevard and Brown-Burton Winchester Park to North Market Street.



1.4 Invest in East 30th Street as an important neighborhood connector linking Market Street, Speakman Park, redevelopment at the former DelTech Site, and EastSide Charter School.

E. 30th Street can become a well-designed neighborhood corridor with improved bike and pedestrian access. With a strengthened connection to EastSide Charter School and a new Gateway treatment at NE Boulevard, E. 30th Street will be well-served to create a welcoming gateway to the proposed mixed-use development at the former DelTech site, linking to Speakman Park and neighborhoods to the north to the retail and commercial services on N. Market Street.

Additional engineering study will be needed to identify and implement traffic calming and pedestrian safety improvements at key locations.

1.5 Utilize regional and local Wilmington programs and resources for street adoptions, neighborhood clean-ups, and public space activation.

Schedule regular community clean-ups in partnership with residents, organizations, businesses, schools, and institutions with a focus on public spaces, sidewalks, clearing stormwater sewer intakes, vacant lots, and public spaces. Participate in annual events like the Wilmington Community Cleanup Day, Annual Brandywine River Cleanup, and ongoing opportunities with the Clean Wilmington Committee through partnership with schools, religious organizations, and youth groups.

**CASE STUDY - CBR4**

*The Christina-Brandywine River Remediation Restoration Resilience (CBR4) project is an initiative to address legacy toxic contamination, restore the native ecology and prepare for the changing climate as well as other threats to river health in the lower Christina River and tidal Brandywine River. There are a number of engagement and advocacy opportunities, including the Annual Brandywine River Cleanup. Long-term, the goal is to make the rivers healthy for fishing, swimming, recreation, & drinking water as soon as possible.*

The City of Wilmington's Bike Plan is primarily focused on protected, on-street bike facilities to maximize opportunities for people to use bikes to access employment, schools, services, etc. Both Northeast Boulevard and 30th Street have recommended bicycle safety improvements. Additional streets in the NE community are planned to be Bike Friendly.



Source: City of Wilmington

New DART bus shelters include benches and solar lighting and will receive regular cleaning and trash removal



Source: City of Wilmington

**Goal 2: Invest in multi-modal transit improvements with increased transit access and new, welcoming amenities.**

Residents in Northeast Wilmington are more likely to rely on public transit daily. Currently, an estimated 21% of residents in the Northeast commute via bus, which is significantly higher than the citywide average of 9%. There are five DART bus routes serving the neighborhood and about 83% of households are within a ¼-mile of a bus stop. Given the relatively high percentage of transit riders with convenient access to downtown the region, a focus on the ongoing partnership with the City of Wilmington and DART is needed to increase convenience and safety and transit service and the transit environment.

**2.1 Work with DART to increase the frequency of transit service, ensuring transit routes connect NE Wilmington residents to key destinations, and waiting areas have comfortable seating, protection from the elements, and are well lit.**

Residents noted that while transit service is available, it's not necessarily frequent or convenient for travel to work, school, or shopping. Increasing the use of the DART's Mobile Apps is one way to help residents navigate transit service. Connect residents with and raise awareness of DART Mobile Apps, including the trip planner, real-time bus information, Paratransit ETA, and alert systems.

**2.2 Partner with DART to study opportunities to improve transit service and amenities at key gateways (26th Street; Northeast Boulevard) and highest traveled routes / intersections.**

Advocate for real-time next to arrive information on bus shelters, bus shelter improvements like seating, trash cans, and community art. Increase frequency of transit service for Northeast Wilmington residents.

**2.3 Use technology and amenities to improve the experience for commuters riding DART, while increasing the use of zero-emission buses.**

DART's 2030 Climate Action Plan sets a target for reducing GHG Emission by 50% by 2030 from its 2016 baseline and is committed to transitioning to at least 25% zero-emissions buses, ultimately saving the transit agency money and reducing emissions that are harmful for human health and the environment. The switch from diesel to an electric fleet reduces diesel exhaust and exposure to emissions and particulate matter that comes from roadway emissions and proximately to traffic congestion on major roadways like Northeast Blvd and Interstate 495.

**CASE STUDY - DART BUS SHELTERS & TRANSIT AMENITIES**

*City of Wilmington New DART Bus Shelters & Transit Amenities were recently installed in the City's 2nd District and provide a model for working collaboratively to improve the rider experience.*

*The new shelters were installed in the highest ridership locations and including shelters, benches, and solar lighting and will receive weekly cleaning and trash removal. In addition, the Adopt A-Shelter program allows schools or groups to create a community spirit theme with artwork displayed at the adopted bus shelter.*

**Goal 3: Implement the re-imagined 12th Street Connector project, to alleviate congestion and provide multi-modal commuting and recreation opportunities for residents.**

The lack of connectivity and environmental concerns have hindered waterfront redevelopment and economic growth and created large swaths of vacant and underutilized land along the eastern edge of the Brandywine River. The 12th street corridor is an important link within Northeast Wilmington between the I-495, Route 13, and Route 202 corridors and downtown Wilmington. The disjointed street network, however, makes access difficult and diverts traffic onto neighborhood streets. Improving multi-modal access and safety in the Northeast Wilmington waterfront area presents a valuable opportunity for redevelopment that can help spur economic growth in the underutilized land along the Brandywine waterfront.

A re-imagined 12th Street corridor will provide safe multi-modal access for all users, enhance the existing community fabric, and generate new economic growth. Additionally, public investments in transportation can benefit the community and the environment by cleaning up brownfield sites, integrating green infrastructure to minimize flood risk, and creating a more attractive streetscape. The 12th street corridor will also promote the expansion of public open space with the opportunity to build new waterfront park amenities, and to redevelop city-owned land for economic development and community amenities.

**3.1 Ensure proper funding is setup to support full transformation of the riverside edge by building on the WILMACPO Constrained Long Range Plan to implement the planned 12th Street Connector.**

The street system in Northeast Wilmington is incomplete along the waterfront. 13th, 14th, and 16th Street all end at Church Street. Linkages can be improved to provide better access locally in the community and to the Brandywine River Waterfront, and destinations in downtown Wilmington. The 12th Street Connector will improve access between Northeast Wilmington and the Brandywine River Waterfront and the downtown Wilmington Central Business District. It will benefit residents by providing access to the waterfront for recreation and entertainment uses, reduce traffic and congestion on nearby residential streets, and maintain truck access to serve local industrial businesses while improving the area's aesthetics.

**3.2 Continue to advance preliminary engineering and NEPA Documentation for the 12th Street Connector, including the refinement of concept plans, site surveys, and community engagement activities.**

Numerous planning studies over the years have identified the Brandywine River waterfront as a strategic redevelopment site for economic growth. The planning that has been completed for the 12th Street Connector includes study of alternative alignments, a waterfront park and pedestrian

access, and improved circulation, which will result in needed community and environmental benefits and remediation. The DELDOT Transit Alternative Program [TAP] funds include the redesign of streets for better pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and should include funding to advance the 12th Street Connector project. The importance of the project remains vital to the community's health, waterfront access, and transportation safety. To advance the project include community voices and engagement to restart the vision and further complete technical studies.

Rendering of Catalyst Site #2 at the future 12th Street Connector illustrating safe pedestrian crossings, new retail and employment uses on the ground floor with residential above. Gateway / branding signage, street trees, landscape median, dedicated bike lane, and public amenities create a attractive, safe, and active environment for residents. (WRT)



## DIVERSE, QUALITY AFFORDABLE HOUSING OPTIONS.

Housing is one of the most critically important elements in the lives of people as well as in the social, economic, and environmental dimensions of communities and neighborhoods. The housing types within the NE Wilmington community include row houses, semi-detached units, garden apartments, single family houses that have been converted into multi-family units, high rise residential buildings (apartments and condominiums) and scores of public housing units operated and managed by the Wilmington Housing Authority (WHA). The condition of housing within the area ranges from new construction and recently constructed, to older yet modernized homes, to dilapidated houses badly in need of repair to vacant and abandoned units.

There is an opportunity to provide a range of quality housing options to serve the needs of the NE Wilmington community. Key objectives of the housing strategy are to:

- Preserve existing affordable housing (homeownership and rental) and increase quality affordable housing options.
- Eliminate blight and stabilize declining areas and address nuisance properties that impact the character and quality of life in the neighborhood.
- Strengthen already stable areas by supporting existing homeowners and expand affordable homeownership opportunities by providing resources for homeowners with limited incomes to maintain and stay in their homes.
- Create a variety of new housing attractive to a wide range of incomes that can attract and retain neighborhood businesses.



Figure 11. Riverside housing redevelopment rendering (WRT)

### HOUSING VISION

The vision for housing in the future is to provide a range of quality housing stock attractive to all economic levels and is accessible to residents with a variety of needs.

- Ensure that the Riverside site is developed to maintain family connections and enhance community cohesion.
- Create beautiful and safe neighborhoods with amenities that attract people to the community and encourage people to return to live and raise their families.
- Include a variety of housing for all households – where seniors can age in place, families can raise their children, and you can rent and/or own your own home.
- Provide housing well integrated and connected to neighborhood amenities including shops, business, schools, parks and other recreational amenities through improved pedestrian, bike and transit routes.

### KEY GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**Goal 1. Address the need for affordable housing through the redevelopment of the WHA Riverside site and other quality affordable housing options to serve the needs of the NE Wilmington community.**

The Wilmington Housing Authority (WHA) Riverside barracks-style housing was built to provide affordable housing for veterans returning from World War II and has been in use long past its intended lifespan and is no longer serving residents well. The quality and condition of the housing has deteriorated over time and over 200 of the original 530 units in the property have already had to be condemned and demolished. Rebuilding quality housing with on-site amenities has been a top priority of residents for years. Through the concerted efforts of the WHA and its partners, in 2019 the Riverside Master Plan was developed with resident input to create a strategy to revitalize the Riverside community and secure resources for implementation.

### DESIGN APPROACH

The design of the new Riverside leverages neighborhood assets and strengthens key connections by:

- Re-establishing the small-scale blocks with townhome-style building typologies found north of Northeast Boulevard (Governor Printz) and creating a more consistent rhythm that reconnects the Riverside neighborhood to the assets around it.
- Realignment of 26th Street and integration of traffic calming strategies.
- Designing Claymont and Rosemont as multi-modal connections with improved pedestrian and bicycle environment for north-south connections.
- Establishing a new “Town Green” as the heart of the site with opportunities for active and passive outdoor programming and building community cohesion.
- Leveraging the new and improved Kingswood Community Center as a destination and anchor for the re-aligned 26th Street Gateway.
- Supporting youth development through redesigned outdoor recreational and educational spaces at Eastside Charter School, The Warehouse, and Kingswood Community Center.

Imani Village at Riverside began redevelopment in 2021 with 74 high-quality mixed-income apartments, including set-aside units for seniors, veterans, and individuals with disabilities



Source: Pennrose Companies



Figure 12. Design Approach and Redevelopment Framework

### Housing Mix

The Riverside Master Plan proposes 546-591 units of mixed-income housing, 30 of which are homeownership units. In addition to the construction of new housing, the master plan also proposes the demolition of 293 units across the Riverside area.

PLANNED HOUSING PROGRAM		
	RENTAL	HOMEOWNERSHIP
1-bedroom	66	-
2-bedroom	244	12
3-bedroom	187	18
4-bedroom	64	-
Total rental/own	561	30
TOTAL RIVERSIDE HOUSING PROGRAM		<b>591 units</b>



Figure 13. Riverside housing site plan

**PHASING PLAN**

While a significant number of the original 530 WHA units on this site have already been demolished due to deteriorated conditions, 293 units remain, meaning that the phasing of new construction and demolition will be complex. The phased construction and demolition strategy of this plan is designed to balance four critical elements: (1) minimize disruption to current residents by building first in areas with no remaining WHA units,

(2) demonstrate a visual and physical change on Northeast Boulevard as early as possible, (3) align the pace of construction and demolition to the schedule of available financing for this type of large-scale affordable housing development, and (4) take advantage of any cost efficiencies that can be achieved through construction sequencing for major site infrastructure.

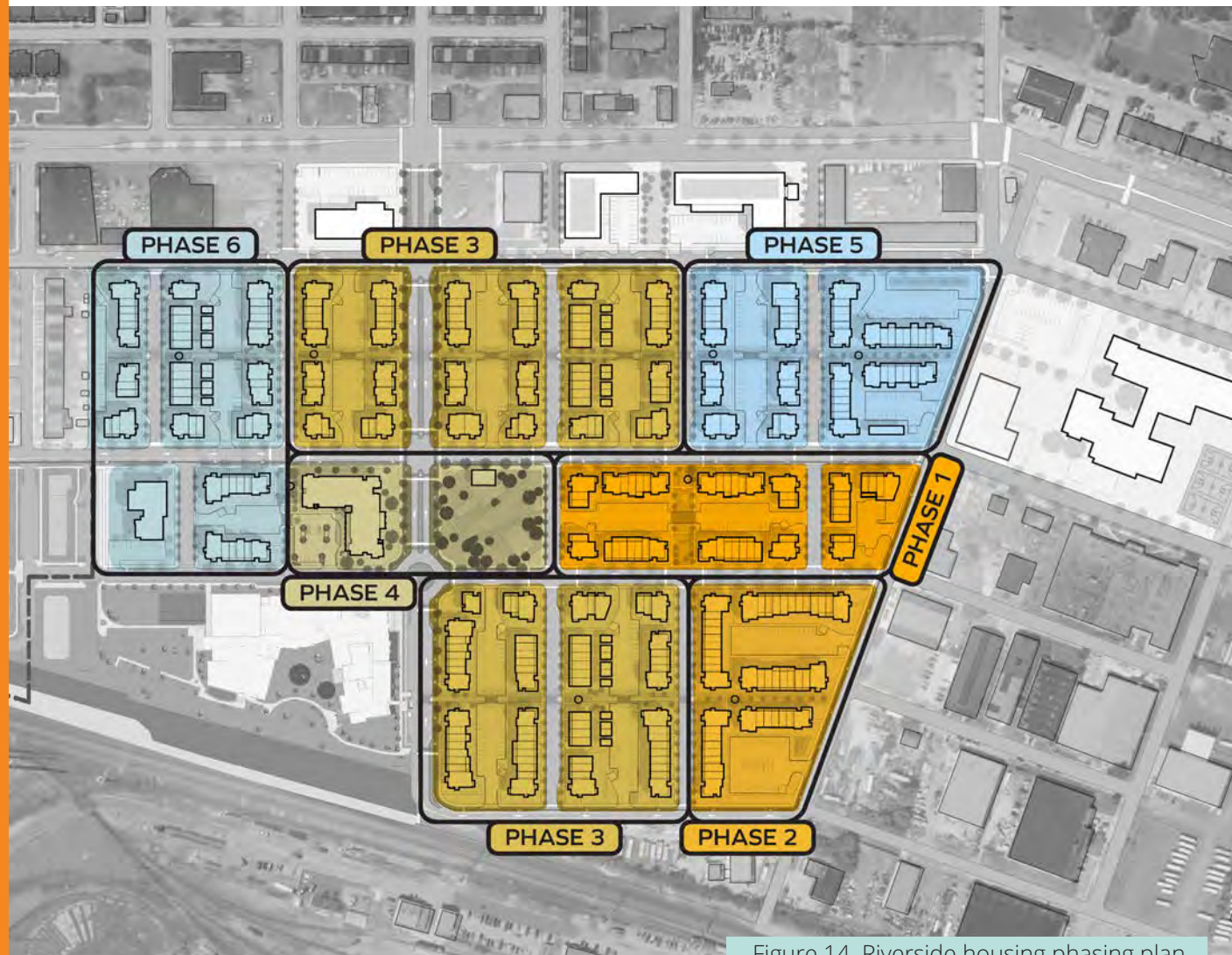


Figure 14. Riverside housing phasing plan

**Goal 2. Increase the rate of homeownership in the neighborhood by supporting existing homeowners and providing educational and credit counseling resources for first time homebuyers.**

According to the ACS Population Summary for the three census tracts in the study area, only a small percentage of all households (2%) are receiving public assistance. However, many are cost-burdened. About 52% of renters are spending 30% or more of their household income on rent and about 30% of homeowners with a mortgage are spending 30% or more of household income for housing costs.

**2.1 Provide a suite of support services for existing homeowners.**

- Fostering renovation and repair of pre-1950 homes. Develop a homeowner repair program which provides access to capital for both home improvement and basic upkeep for low-income homeowners, aging, or disabled households, allowing long-time residents to stay in their homes.
- Housing counseling services to homeowners.
- Fund legal assistance to homeowners facing tangled title issues.
- Fund legal representation for homeowners facing foreclosure.
- Build pool of qualified contractors to help homeowners with maintenance issues.
- Facilitate homebuyer education (maintenance, systems).

**2.2 Create a homeownership program that includes strategies for different pathways to homeownership (deeply subsidized, affordable, market rate homeownership) and provides ways for future homeowners to connect with their neighbors.**

Of the resident survey responses, about 16% of survey respondents were owners and 76% of survey respondents were renters. Additionally, about 58% of survey respondents reside in the Riverside apartments in the community. Respondents that do not currently own a home were split in whether they would be interested in purchasing a home in the community in the future. Of those that felt they would be interested in purchasing a home in the community, many have not purchased yet due to their personal financial situation. Of those that would not be interested in purchasing a home in the community, the primary reason is due to crime or other safety issues.

Residents of Riverside responded overwhelmingly that homebuyer education, down payment assistance, credit repair counseling, and learning how to make and manage a budget are needed and would be helpful in moving toward homeownership.

**2.3 Utilize homeownership vouchers through WHA to assist residents with paying for mortgage.**

**2.4 In partnership with Habitat for Humanity implement a curriculum for homeownership and maintenance of homes.**

### CASE STUDY - PHILLY FIRST HOME PROGRAM, HOMEBUYER ASSISTANCE

The City of Philadelphia offers homebuyer assistance grants up to \$10,000 (or 6% of the home's purchase price, whichever is lower) to assist first-time homebuyers reduce the principal, cover down payment and loan closing costs.

Eligibility:

- You must be a first-time buyer.
- You must complete a FREE City-funded one-on-one homeownership counseling program through a City-funded housing counseling agency before signing an Agreement of Sale. The Homeownership Counseling Program equips first time homebuyers with the knowledge they need to be successful homeowners topic areas include: Budgeting and money management, legal rights and responsibilities, mortgage application process, credit repair and credit maintenance, home maintenance, avoiding foreclosure, and deeds.
- You must meet income eligibility requirements.

### CASE STUDY - SUPPORT FOR LOW TO MODERATE-INCOME HOMEOWNERS

Philadelphia's supply of affordable rental and homeowner housing is threatened by several factors.

Philadelphia has very old housing stock and many low-income homeowners. As a result, many homeowners do not have the resources to maintain their homes. This threatens the housing supply with the potential loss of a unit and the homeowner with loss of a place to live. To prevent the loss of housing due to deferred maintenance, the City of Philadelphia provides several programs to help Philadelphians improve their homes and strengthen their communities. Qualified homeowners must own and live in the house with the problem and meet income guidelines.

Programs include:

Source. <https://secureservercdn.net/104.238.71.140/k05.f3c.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/RRR/Restore-Repair-Renew-Annual-Report-2019-2020.pdf>

- Basic Systems Repair Program (BSRP) provides free repairs to correct electrical, plumbing, heating, limited structural and carpentry, and roofing emergencies in eligible owner-occupied homes in Philadelphia.
- Adaptive Modifications Program (AMP) is designed to help low-income individuals with permanent physical disabilities live more independently in their homes. It provides free adaptations to a house or an apartment, allowing easier access to and mobility within the home. Modifications may include the following improvements: Accessible kitchens and bathrooms (such as lowered sinks, cabinets and countertops); stairway elevators; exterior wheelchair lifts and ramps; railings; barrier-free showers; first-floor full and half-baths and widened doorways.
- The Heater Hotline provides free emergency heater repairs for eligible households.
- Neighborhood Energy Centers to help income-eligible households lower their utility bills through education and completion of utility assistance applications.
- Restore, Repair, Renew (the Philadelphia Neighborhood Home Preservation Loan Program) is an initiative of the City of Philadelphia to help Philadelphia homeowners access low-interest loans to invest in their properties. Lenders participating in the program are offering 10-year, 3% fixed Annual Percentage Rate loans that range from \$2,500 to \$24,999 to eligible homeowners. Restore, Repair, Renew loans can fund a range of home repairs that focus on health, safety, weatherization, accessibility, and quality of life.



*Goal 3. Introduce a diversity of housing typologies that fit the needs of residents (e.g., smaller household sizes, increase in single-parent households) utilize publicly owned land and vacant lots for infill housing.*

3.1 Redevelop abandoned and vacant properties for infill housing. The property survey noted that approximately 5.6% of the neighborhood’s land area was vacant or partially vacant. These lots provide opportunities for infill housing as well as community green spaces that can manage stormwater and provide gathering places increasing adjacent property values and improving community health and well-being.

- Utilize the Northeast Wilmington Community Plan parcel survey heat map to identify vacant properties and properties in need.
- Pull together properties from public entities such as the City of Wilmington, Wilmington Housing Authority, and the Wilmington Land Bank and issue a Request for Proposals to developers.
- Acquire properties with the purpose of changing the zoning, clearing up liens, and making investment more palatable to local developer partners.
- Use the method of “mothballing” for abandoned residential properties to make them more attractive to smaller developers (e.g., acquire a vacant home; strip it down to the studs; redo the façade; and secure the structure.)

3.2 Build new infill housing and renovate existing housing utilizing Jumpstart Wilmington to create a local base of small-scale developers to implement infill housing development and rehab.

3.3 Facilitate the development of mixed-use catalyst sites.

- Create a new zoning district or up-zone properties from C-2 to C-5 (Todds Lane Industrial Park).
- Streamline permit or zoning process for developers.
- Use Wilmington Land Bank as the brownfield developer.

*Goal 4. Work collaboratively with License and Inspections to address abandoned and vacant properties, lead abatement and other safety issues and ensure that rental properties are up to code with current registrations.*

4.1 Ensure that rental properties are up to code and registered with the department of Licenses & Inspections and implement programs to support better landlords.

- Develop and implement a cohesive approach to addressing nuisance businesses and absentee or unresponsive property owners.
- Implement a “Rental Inspection Program” that requires property owners to complete an inspection to receive a rental license.

Vacant land reuse can mean re-imagining land as long-term greenspaces (pocket parks, urban farms) or more interim greenspaces planted with low-maintenance groundcover. In Cleveland, the Reimagine Cleveland process led to the Chateau Hough, a vineyard on a formerly vacant lot.



Source: NextCity, Why the ‘Greening’ of Vacant Land Is a Smart Long-Term Investment in Cities

*Goal 5. Enhance the coordination between public, private and assisted housing providers, mental health, and social service agencies to meet housing demand among special needs population groups.*

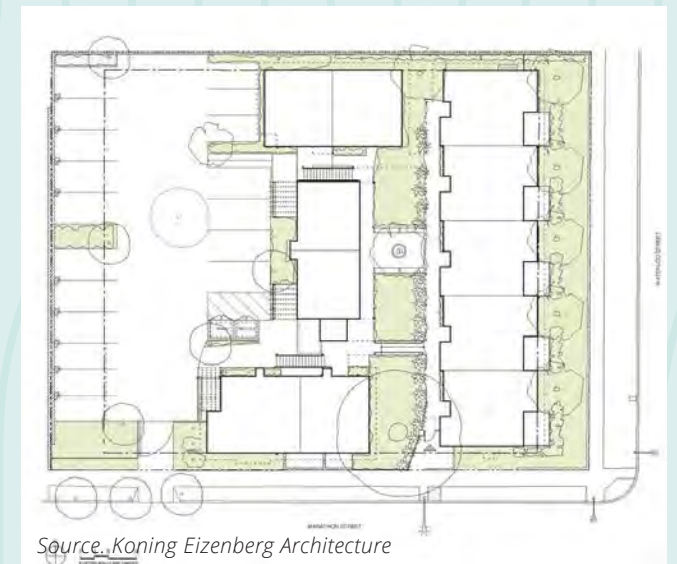
Vulnerable populations who are at the most increased risk of homelessness will require additional services to meet their needs. According to the National Foster Youth Institute (NFYI) in the United States over 250,000 children are placed into the foster care system each year. More than 23,000 children will age out of the US foster care system every year. After reaching the age of 18, 20% of the children who were in foster care will become instantly homeless.

#### 5.1 Reduce homelessness and expand special needs housing opportunities.

- Provide housing that is affordable and accessible for disabled residents. Fund adaptive modifications in existing homes to make accessibility improvements to enable people with disabilities to live more independently.
- Create an emergency fund to provide emergency shelter, homelessness prevention services, and other assistance for households facing homelessness or dealing with an emergency issue like flooding.
- Citizens with prior criminal conviction records or those returning home from prison
- Develop a Supportive Housing program for youth 17 and older aging out of foster care and the juvenile justice system. Identify specific needs and develop a comprehensive strategy with existing service providers including – job training, education, affordable housing, teen parenting, mental health services, substance abuse and prevention services and health care.
- Utilize the Neighborhood Improvement Coordinator to help connect residents with special needs to housing programs and services.

#### CASE STUDY - WATERLOO HEIGHTS APARTMENTS OF LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

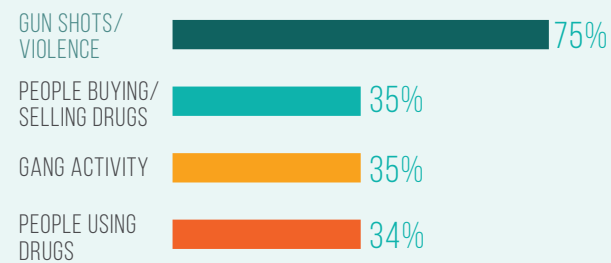
*Waterloo Heights Apartments creates high-quality, affordable housing for low-income, special-needs tenants including disabled Veterans, seniors and individuals with HIV/AIDS. The craftsman-style courtyard provides a hub for social interaction and, many of the front doors opening off this courtyard, offers informal security for the adjacent front gate and increased opportunity for chance encounter. Completed in 2003.*



## COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Over the last three years, fewer than one-third of survey respondents said they felt the community had improved. Respondents are more optimistic about the future with more than two-thirds of respondents feeling that the community will improve over the next three years. About 60% of respondents say they “probably would recommend” or “definitely would recommend” the neighborhood as a good place to live. Safety is a concern in the community, and is paramount to feelings of health and wellness. About 24% of respondents say they feel “very safe” walking in the community during the day. At night, only 9% of respondents say they feel “very safe” walking in the community. Among the top safety concern is gun shots and gun violence. In addition, stronger public safety presence, brighter lighting, and enhanced transit / bus stop environments were noted as the most needed improvements to the Northeast Boulevard (Governor Printz) corridor.

### TOP SAFETY CONCERNS



Source. NE Wilmington resident survey

## KEY GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Goal 1. Improve access to healthy, nourishing food

#### 1.1 Increase access to fresh produce and nutritious foods.

Food insecurity across the country and in Delaware increased during the COVID-19 pandemic (Feeding America, 2021). According to CDC data, 11% of the U.S. population and 12.6% of Delaware residents were food insecure in 2021. The WRK Group already has established a focus on reducing food insecurity and connecting community members to fresh, healthy foods. Kingswood Community Center partner, Planting to Feed, includes an urban farm and community fridge access at two locations. Consider increased programming to support regular farmers markets and attract non-fast-food options to the community.

Potential funding through the First State Food System Program may be available to help fund: food hubs, transportation, processing, and distribution (including food trucks, farmers markets, farm stores).

#### 1.2 Incubate local food businesses and support residents with small business & commercial kitchen resources.

The City of Wilmington and the Division for Small Business encourages small business growth and expansion by offering assistance programs. The WRK Group can partner with the City to locate a small food / restaurant incubator in Northeast Wilmington – providing both economic opportunity and reducing the gap in local, healthy food options.

### CASE STUDY - COMMONWEALTH KITCHEN IN BOSTON

*CommonWealth Kitchen is a non-profit organization in the Dorchester neighborhood of Boston, Massachusetts, developed as a resource to launch small local food entrepreneurs, by providing fully equipped commercial kitchen facilities combined with integrated business assistance to aspiring food businesses. CommonWealth Kitchen is home to over 50 companies, including food trucks, caterers, bakers, and packaged good companies. Over 75% of those companies are owned by people of color, employing 150+ in one of Boston's lowest-income neighborhoods. Being a member of CommonWealth Kitchen's food business incubator means not only having access to a fully-equipped, licensed kitchen space but also receiving technical support.*



### CASE STUDY - THE PRODUCE SPOT

*Opened in 2021, this fresh food market is located on Northeast Blvd and owned by two sisters formerly in the health care industry who saw the need for access to healthy, inexpensive fruits and vegetables. The store also provides prepared foods and drinks and seeks “to bring healthy eating and love into the community”.*



**Goal 2. Create healthy community spaces at the revitalized Kingswood Community Center.**

**2.1 Prioritize healthy community spaces, hands-on learning, and spaces for one-on-one connection and small groups at the new Kingswood Community Center.**

With the additional space and services, KCC will provide:

- Case management offered on-site including assistance with benefits
- Cognitive/behavioral therapy for children
- Primary care health services, engagement on Community Health & Wellness Committee
- Mental & behavioral health with bilingual services offered free of charge to low-income families
- Free legal services and/or case management on navigating the legal system
- Emergency assistance for food, clothing, shelter, rent, utilities, financial counseling
- Community services for those returning from prison, including case management, advocacy, mentoring, and job placement

**Goal 3. Increase community cohesiveness and strengthen the social fabric through the design of the environment as well as programs, community events, and opportunities to get involved.**

**3.1 Continue to build resident leadership capacity and encourage small business growth.**

Through KCC programming, continue to develop small cohort programs for resident capacity building skills that might include entrepreneurial training for those interested in a start-up businesses and how to put together a financial plan, how to build relationships with neighbors and local businesses, how to use social media effectively. Provide spaces and opportunities for small business growth (e.g., incubator space at the future retail / light industrial / mixed-use spaces at Catalyst Site 1 (former Del Tech Site and Todds Lane Industrial Park).

**3.2 Build relationships with community coalitions, neighborhood leaders and advocates, community-based organizations, and elected officials.**

Broaden the existing REACH Riverside Community Engagement Committee to include a wide coalition of neighborhood leaders, advocates, and residents. Continue to host community gatherings, resource fairs, and community building celebrations, that provide opportunities for the community to come together and build trusting relationships, as well as provide access to a variety of needed resources and services. Include opportunities for neighborhood building activities like clean-ups, planting & beautifying community locations, as well as outdoor fitness classes, children’s activities, and home repair workshops.

Actively engage residents in decision-making related to all neighborhood revitalization projects, including the ongoing redevelopment of Riverside community, KCC, and new development at the catalyst site locations to ensure that the projects are accomplished with community input and guidance.

**3.3 Continue to support the Kingswood Community Center’s EMPOWER and FACET programs and promote an environment that promotes positive mental health and healing**

Grow community participation in EMPOWER (Economic Mobility Places Ownership Within Everyone’s Reach) and the FACET (Families and Centers Empowered Together) programs through ongoing touch-points with the community. These programs offer skill development and financial literacy, as well as family support, using an empowerment program model and asset-based prevention approach to focus on identifying, building, and maximizing individual and family strengths. Continue to place a strong emphasis placed on parent and/or guardian empowerment.

**CASE STUDY - THE LONGEST TABLE**

*“The Longest Table, hosted by The City of Tallahassee, Leon County Government, The Village Square, and Leadership Tallahassee, is a free event that allows us to come together to break bread and have an honest discussion about our community over dinner at one continuous table. This Tallahassee tradition gives residents the opportunity to build and strengthen relationships across diverse communities to move our community forward together. Last year 1,000 people gathered after Hurricane Michael, sharing conversations about our hometown.”*

Source: <https://tth.villagesquare.us/event/the-longest-table/>



## EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION, GREAT SCHOOLS, AND JOB TRAINING

### Goal 1. Implement the vision and facilities at the new Kingswood Community Center.

Built in 1956, the 17,000-square-foot Kingswood Community Center offers programs for residents of every age, from preschoolers to senior citizens. Within 2022, a new 100,000 SF facility, to be located behind the existing center will break ground. REACH Riverside secured funding from the state and federal funds, as well as foundation partners.

#### 1.1 Support and expand existing programming at the new KCC, with community access to:

- Increased childcare capacity by double.
- Designated senior center.
- A gym and multi-purpose recreation center.
- Outdoor sports facilities.
- A commercial kitchen.
- An expanded medical facility, operating in conjunction with ChristianaCare.
- Shared programming space for partner organization like The Teen Warehouse.

#### 1.2 Strengthen partnerships and connections to area schools and other community centers in the northeast neighborhoods.

Continue to strengthen the role of The Warehouse and the relationships with existing schools (including Thomas Edison Charter, Eastside Charter within the planning areas), as well as schools that local students attend across the district. KCC provides before and after school programming for school aged children 5-12 and students are eligible for The Warehouse programs at age 13.

Explore incremental growth in enrollment of the out-of-school time programming in the evenings and on weekends through coordination with schools and partner programs. With children attending different schools throughout the city, it has been difficult to coordinate a tutoring approach that is uniform and to provide transportation as schools have been impacted by the COVID pandemic and bus driver shortages. In some cases, it may be more effective for students to attend their school's programming than to travel to KCC. At the same time, develop additional capacity for summer and weekend programs that connect students from the northeast who attend school outside of the city.

### Goal 2. Develop an apprenticeship/mentorship program in partnership with local businesses and educational institutions.

#### 2.1 Increase opportunities for youth apprenticeship and mentoring programs with local businesses and maintain an up-to-date contact list of such programs in the Wilmington area.

Most residents in the northeast community are working in other locations across the region, and the existing jobs are filled by workers from other parts of the region. There are opportunities to make it easier for youth and young adults to find part-time or after school employment closer to home, reducing commute times and costs, by strengthening connections with existing employers. This could include apprenticeship programs, mentorship programs, local job placement fairs, skill building to fill the needs of local employers.

The Warehouse recently launched a successful apprentice program including programs in culinary skills, IT, and digital media and is continuing to expand. In its first year, over 60 residents participated and throughout the planning process, expressed interest in locally based programs. Additional marketing and storytelling are needed to share these opportunities and increase participation.

Delaware Blue Coats Visit @ KCC (confirm)



Youth programs @ The Warehouse



Source: REACH Riverside

## CASE STUDY - RISE - ACROSS ALL EDUCATIONAL PLATFORMS FOR YOUTH

*In 2021, Warehouse teens participated in workforce training, which aimed to employ more than 125 teens in 2021. REACHing and Investing in youth for Sustainable Employment (RISE) is a 12-week program that helps teens develop skills through emotional intelligence training, interview preparation and service project execution. Participants gain work experience with employer partners, including culinary arts; information technology; coding and web development.*

### **Goal 3. Invest in training to access the jobs and opportunities of today and tomorrow.**

3.1 Link workforce training and retraining to jobs in local industries and businesses by improving communications and outreach for existing job training and workforce readiness programs to neighborhood residents.

Ongoing program needs include overall coordination of workforce development programs; one-stop job search center; and free financial coaching. There are also opportunities for skills training programs, soft skills workshops, apprenticeships, career counseling, job search and placement services through programming at KCC. KCC is focused on support and education from “cradle to college/career” – including focused programming on college and career readiness as the final tenants of the educational pipeline. Local businesses expressed the need for more skilled employees and interest in connecting with local training programs.

3.2 Create employment opportunities for populations that face significant barriers to employment.

Continue to support and expand opportunities for formerly incarcerated residents including job training and partnership with employers. Currently, the Wilmington HOPE Commission located on Vandever Ave near Market St, provides wrap-around services including access to employment and workforce training for those who reintegrating into their community's following incarceration. Their work has led to development of the Achievement Center and success with a model that draws from multiple disciplines and agencies to bring together the most needed services for successful re-entry.

An award winning outreach organization in NE Wilmington, Reeds Refugee Center is dedicated to fostering life enrichment skills through creative and artistic abilities



Source: REACH Riverside



# 4

## IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

HOW DO WE GET THERE?

In this section

Working Implementation Matrix

# IMPLEMENTATION

Implementing the Northeast Wilmington Community Plan will require partnerships, creative funding strategies, and a collective prioritization of where to start and how to incrementally build towards vision, guiding principles, and plan strategies.

REACH Riverside, the WRK Group, WHA, City of Wilmington, and others are already working together

to finalize and secure resources for implementation. The following implementation matrix is a working plan for prioritization, funding, and partnerships. REACH Riverside will continue to work with the community and its partners to update, track and monitor implementation of the plan. See REACH Riverside’s website for future project updates and plan monitoring.

Short term (ST): 1-5 years  
 Mid term (MT): 6-10 years  
 Long term (LT): 10-20 years

No.	Strategy / Action	Timeframe (ST, MT, LT)	Lead & Implementation Partners	Estimated Costs (\$)	Funding sources
<b>HOUSING RELATED INITIATIVES</b>					
1	Complete Imani Village, Phases 1 & 2 (141 mixed-income units)	ST	Pennrose/REACH/WHA	\$43 mil.	Funding Secured
2	Imani Village, Phases 3-5 (400 mixed income units, including senior housing)	ST/MT	Pennrose/REACH/WHA	\$140 mil.	4% LIHTC, \$25 M ARPA, Other
3	Imani Homes for Ownership (30-100 homes are planned)	MT	REACH	TBD	
4	Imani Transitional Housing	MT	REACH, Friendship House, Others	TBD	

<b>NEIGHBORHOOD RELATED INITIATIVES</b>					
No.	Strategy / Action	Timeframe (ST, MT, LT)	Lead & Implementation Partners	Estimated Costs (\$)	Funding sources
5	KCC and TWH Community Refrigerators & Gardens	established	KCC / TWH	\$35,000 annually	Corporate, Philanthropy
6	Strategic Code Enforcement Program (increased focus on NE)	established	City of Wilmington, REACH	annual budget	City
7	Public Safety Camera System	established	City of Wilmington	TBD	City
8	Clean Teams Initiative	established	City of Wilmington	TBD	City
9	Façade Improvement Program	established	City of Wilmington	TBD	City
10	NERDiT Now Technology Recycling Business	LT	NERDiT Now	TBD	TBD
11	Living Shoreline Project	LT	City, DNREC	TBD	City, DNREC, State
12	NE Boulevard Traffic Improvements	MT	DTC, NCC, Wilmapco	TBD	State, County, City
13	Locally Serving Grocery Store	MT	REACH, TBD	TBD	State, County, City, ARP Funds
14	12th Street Connector - Next Design and Implementation Phases	MT (2026-2028)	City, DeIDOT, DNREC (Brownfield)	\$17 mil	DeIDOT, DEMA/ FEMA
15	Christina-Brandywine River Remediation Restoration Resilience	MT/LT	State	TBD	State, DNREC
16	N. Market St. Library Expansion	ST	State, NCC	TBD	State, County



No.	Strategy / Action	Timeframe (ST, MT, LT)	Lead & Implementation Partners	Estimated Costs (\$)	Funding sources
17	New Kingswood Community Center	ST (2023-2025)	REACH/KCC	\$42 Mil.	\$23 mil secured. Public, Corporate, Foundation, Philanthropy
18	East Side Charter School STEM Center	ST (2023-2025)	ESCS	\$23.5 Mil	Public, Corporate, Foundation, Philanthropy
19	N. Market St. Streetscape Improvements	ST (2023-2025)	DeIDOT, City of Wilmington	Mid \$	Funded-CoW Public Works, DeIDOT
20	Branding Initiative	ST (2023)	Collaborate Northeast, True Access Capital, University of Delaware Architecture Program	TBD	True Access Capital
21	26th Street Gateway to Imani Village	ST (2023-2025)	REACH, Pennrose	TBD	US DOT, DeIDOT
22	Park activation & programming	ST	City Parks & Recreation Dept	TBD	City
23	Establish Community Land Trust	2023	REACH, WHA, Wilmington Land Bank	TBD	TBD
24	Vandever Ave Traffic Improvements/ Vision Zero Initiative	MT/LT	City, DTC, Wilmapco	TBD	City, Wilmapco
25	Small Business Incubator	MT	True Access Capital, JPMorgan Chase (Equitable Wilmington), DE Div of Small Business, UD, Launcher, NextFab	TBD	TBD

No.	Strategy / Action	Timeframe (ST, MT, LT)	Lead & Implementation Partners	Estimated Costs (\$)	Funding sources
26	Business Development Strategy	ST	City, Delaware Prosperity Partnership	TBD	TBD
27	Stormwater Management Initiatives & Climate Resiliency	MT	City, DNREC	TBD	TBD

PEOPLE RELATED INITIATIVES

28	EMPOWER	Established	KCC	TBD	Public, Corporate, Foundation, Philanthropy
29	RISE	Established	TWH	TBD	Public, Corporate, Foundation, Philanthropy
30	Coker Family Health Resource Center	Established	ChristianaCare	TBD	ChristianaCare
31	KCC Early Learning Academy	Established	KCC	TBD	Public, Corporate, Foundation, Philanthropy
32	NE Community Ambassador Corps	ST / 2023	REACH, KCC	TBD	WRK Group

