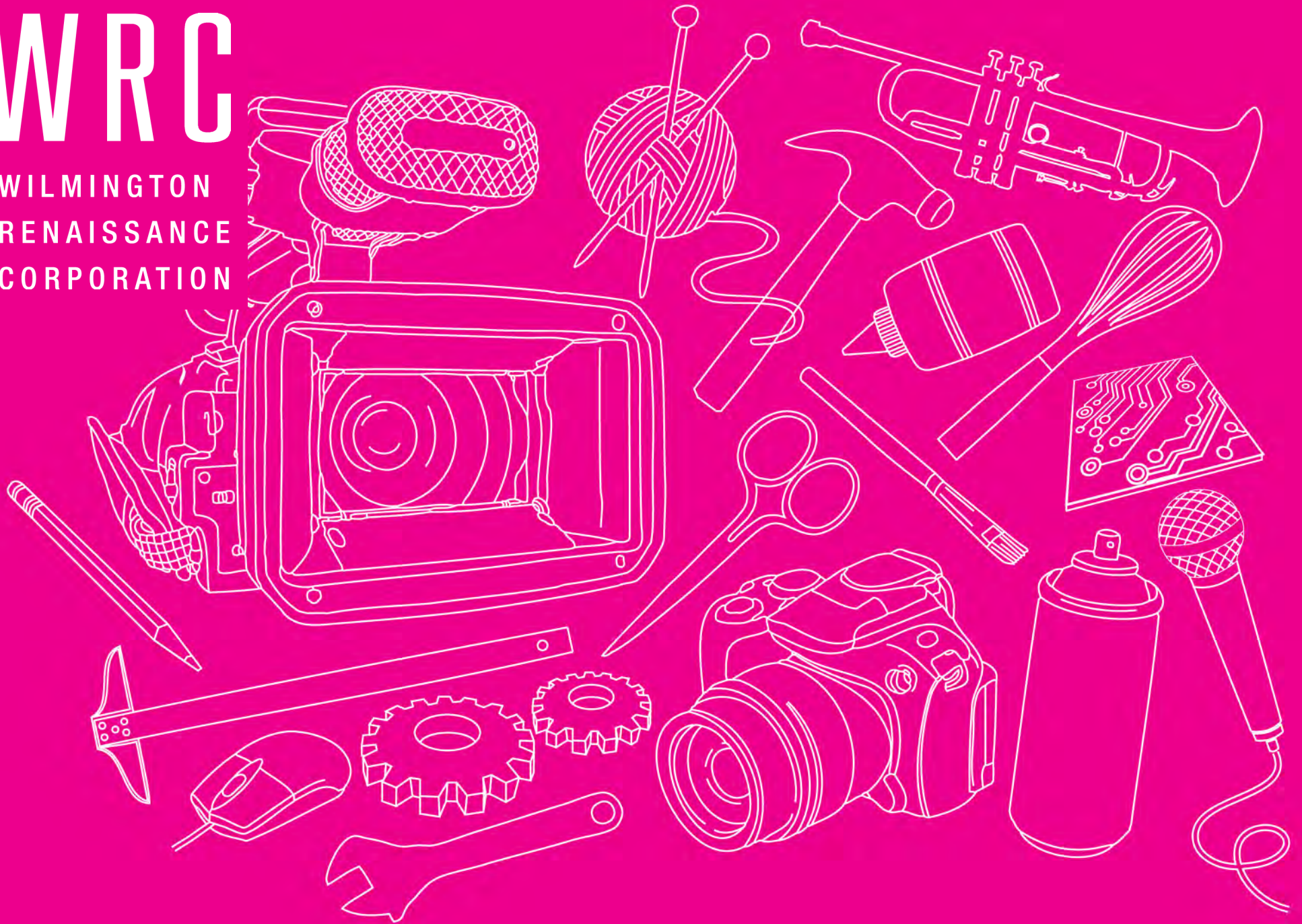


# WRC

WILMINGTON  
RENAISSANCE  
CORPORATION



A VISION FOR  
**WILMINGTON'S CREATIVE DISTRICT**

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

## CREATIVE DISTRICT VISION LEADERSHIP

The Creative District Vision plan was generously funded by JPMorgan Chase and United Way of Delaware. The plan was led by Wilmington Renaissance Corporation [WRC] and a committed Steering Committee comprised of local stakeholders and representatives of arts and cultural organizations, financial institutions, city agencies, civic groups, and institutions.

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## PREFACE

In 2010, Wilmington Renaissance Corporation, Christina Cultural Arts Center, and the City of Wilmington began to explore the idea of establishing artist live/work housing in Quaker Hill, the historic neighborhood immediately west of downtown. Over time, the list of partners grew and the conversation evolved from a single development project into a vision for a Creative District that links the cultural assets of Market Street to the Quaker Hill community.

Building on the successful completion of Wilmington's first artist live/work facility, Shipley Lofts; the millions of dollars invested by both the public and private sector to revitalize Market Street; as well as a long legacy of arts-based initiatives in the same area, this Creative District Vision Plan looks to expand the social and cultural experience of Market Street beyond a single corridor and into an approximately 25 block creative community. It identifies place-based strategies to redevelop and revitalize a historic community utilizing arts, culture, and creative industries in a manner that will not only improve the quality of life in Quaker Hill, but also help bring critical mass to downtown and support the ongoing efforts of local artists and arts and cultural institutions to make Wilmington a celebrated and well-known artistic and creative destination location.

This plan is meant to be a living document that will evolve as more discussions take place, new partnerships are created, and potential funding becomes available. As implementation progresses, the recommendations and priorities in this plan will continuously be re-evaluated to adapt to changes on the ground. Wilmington is a city rich with cultural assets and we believe this vision plan will help those assets play an even greater role in making Wilmington a more beautiful, livable, and economically prosperous city.

WRC and its partners invite you to be a part of this vision and to support its evolution and development.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carrie W. Gray". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and prominent.

Carrie W. Gray  
Managing Director  
Wilmington Renaissance Corporation

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Make use of blank walls to create an outdoor gallery throughout the District  
Work with business and property owners to improve signage  
Implement streetscape enhancements along Shipley  
Engage local talent to design and fabricate streetscape elements

**TURN ON:** Shed some light on the District  
Pursue short term solutions to improve lighting  
Use temporary light installations to draw visitors at night

**MAKE A SCENE:** Create vibrant public spaces  
Temporarily repurpose vacant land to promote District vitality  
Sponsor a parklet design build competition  
Make space for outdoor public performances  
Establish stronger connections between Shipley and Market

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# INTRODUCTION

The combined impacts of public and private investment and public policy over the past thirty years have brought transformative change to Wilmington's greater downtown area, with corporate investment in Center City and the Riverfront Wilmington redevelopment bookending the smaller scale, more incremental revitalization of LOMA [lower Market Street]. This continued building of momentum in parts of Wilmington's downtown is contrasted by the persistent challenges faced by nearby neighborhoods just beyond the reach of this reinvestment.

As seen in cities across the Country with revived downtowns, the success of past initiatives is an opportunity to expand in new directions. Wilmington has a long legacy of arts organizations and creative businesses. Those that are familiar with the City are well aware of the local benefits provided by major arts institutions as well as small creative non-profits organizations. This vision for a Creative District is about expanding and promoting a local resource that is often overlooked. With proactive guidance and investment, an established Creative District can help to improve local communities and the City's overall economic position.







## **SUCCESS STORIES:** Urban reinvestment in Wilmington's downtown area

### **Downtown Investment**

With an emphasis on historic preservation, the promotion of the arts, and economic development, the redevelopment efforts in downtown Wilmington over the past few decades have built upon the historic, cultural, and economic assets of the city. The City of Wilmington has played a critical role as a supportive legislator and municipal funder alongside private investors in many of these efforts.

The favorable tax climate established by the 1981 Financial Center Development Act has effected a lasting definition of the character and identity of Wilmington's Central Business District as a distinct cluster of towers housing primarily corporate headquarters and financial, legal and social services; and campuses housing government offices and the Christiana Care Wilmington Hospital [one of the largest employers in the city]. In 1994, the Wilmington Downtown Business Improvement District (WDBID) was established following the passing of an ordinance by City Council. The BID comprises 70 blocks and over 730 properties, including the Central Business District and all of Market Street between the Christina River and Brandywine Creek.

As a primary commercial corridor in Wilmington, Market Street has seen continued investment in downtown vitality over the past few decades. Historic preservation and rehabilitation has played a primary role in investment efforts. In 1976, several historic buildings were relocated to the 500 block of Market Street to develop Willingtown Square, which is maintained by the Historical Society of Delaware, and the Delaware History Center. The Christina Cultural Arts Center (CCAC) relocated to a green renovated property in the 700 block of Market Street between 1991 and 1992. With a mission to expand access to arts, education, employment, and cultural experiences, CCAC is the largest employer of local artists in the downtown area. It has also set an important and successful precedent for the basis of the Creative District initiative by connecting creative strategies with neighborhood revitalization and economic development.

Additional major renovation projects include Delaware College of Art and Design (DCAD), which was established in 1996 at 600 Market Street in the former Delaware Power and Light building, a National Register Historic Place distinguished by its Art Deco architecture. 1999 saw the redevelopment of a former bank in the 500 block of Market Street to house the Kuumba Academy, a charter school affiliated with CCAC that integrates the arts and academic instruction. In 2000, the Baby



[ The Grand Opera House on Market Street. ]

Grand, which houses a 300-seat theater in addition to offices, rehearsal rooms, and teaching spaces, was established adjacent to the Grand Opera House, which had been successfully renovated in 1973.

Market Street has also seen investment in its public infrastructure. In 2007, the pedestrian mall on Market Street was decommissioned, thus returning the street to vehicular traffic. Upgrades to public utilities took place as part of the conversion.

Housing has been another target of reinvestment. The redevelopment of the Delaware Trust Building into the Residences at Rodney Square by the Buccini/Pollin Group [BPG] with support from the City of Wilmington was completed in 2003. Also that year, Ships Tavern Mews (now known as the Lofts @ 2nd & LOMA), a \$36 million mixed-use development that included 80-unique loft-style apartments above ground-level retail spaces, was completed with the assistance of an \$11.7 million Multi-Family Revenue Bond issued by the City of Wilmington.

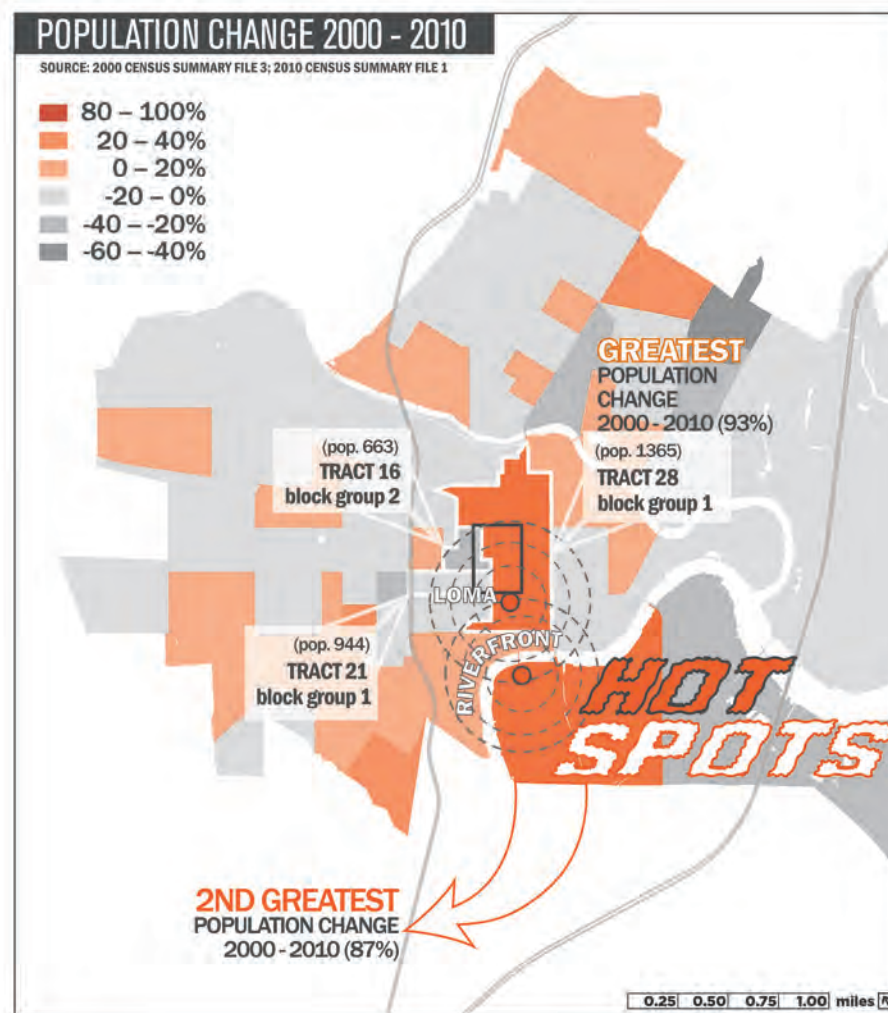
The LOMA Design District, a collaborative effort between developers, local creative professionals, Wilmington Renaissance Corporation, and others, is a rebranding of Market Street from 2nd to 6th Streets that began in 2007 and soon gained traction with visible results in the next few years. Its goal is to attract

creative firms, shops, and people and link the Riverfront to Wilmington's Central Business District, connecting "creativity to commerce" while cultivating a local "creative class."

Linking their investments in the Residences at Rodney Square to their projects at the Riverfront, BPG began a large-scale redevelopment of scattered sites along Market Street with the first phase of the ongoing project completed in 2008. Branded, "The Residences at LOMA," the project was supported by City investment through the \$15 million Upstairs Fund loan-to-grant program established the same year to incentivize rehabilitation of vacant upper stories within the Lower Market Street Historic District.

South of LOMA is the Riverfront Wilmington, a large-scale mixed use redevelopment of a former shipyard area in Wilmington, began in 1996 as a state-funded effort led by the Riverfront Development Corporation [RDC]. It extends roughly 1.2 miles along the Christina River from the Russell Peterson Wildlife Refuge to the Amtrak Station. The development transformed the brownfield into a unique extension of the City, with restaurants, shops, high-end residential, office space, a stadium, open space, and numerous cultural offerings, including the Delaware Theatre Company, the Delaware Center for the Contemporary Arts, and the Delaware Children's Museum. Within its first ten years, the project generated \$67 million in fiscal revenues. By the end of this period, its funding had largely shifted away from public investment, with over 90 percent coming from private sources.

Among many other things, the more recent revitalization and redevelopment efforts have brought a new factor into the equation: attracting middle and upper income residents to buy or rent in Wilmington's greater downtown area. Though the City's population overall suffered a 2.4% loss between 2000 and 2010, Tract 28—comprising the majority of Center City and LOMA, right up to the threshold of Riverfront Wilmington—nearly doubled in population over the same period, the greatest percent growth in Wilmington. Similarly, the same tract currently has the third-highest income in Wilmington, and had the largest percent increase in household median income in Wilmington over the same timeframe. This concentrated influx of higher income earners is helping to support more commercial services—mostly food- and entertainment -related—that primarily serve those new residents in LOMA and Wilmington's reinvented Riverfront.



**FIG 2:** 2000 - 2010 Percent change in population context map

## Neighborhood Investment

The City has also focused investments in its neighborhoods outside of the downtown area. Such efforts include Transportation Enhancement (TE) projects in Downtown, the Triangle, Midtown Brandywine, and Trolley Square. These projects target sidewalks, curbs, trees, striping, curbs, among others, with the goal of addressing the cultural, aesthetic, safety, accessibility, and environmental aspects of the transportation system.

The City has also engaged in efforts to improve parks in its neighborhoods, including Kirkwood Park in East Wilmington and the Cool Spring Reservoir Plaza. In Cool Spring, significant renovations to its reservoir took place between 2006 and 2009. The Plaza has been transformed to include concrete paths, two waterfalls, benches, plants, trees, and flowers around the reservoir tank and adjacent pond.

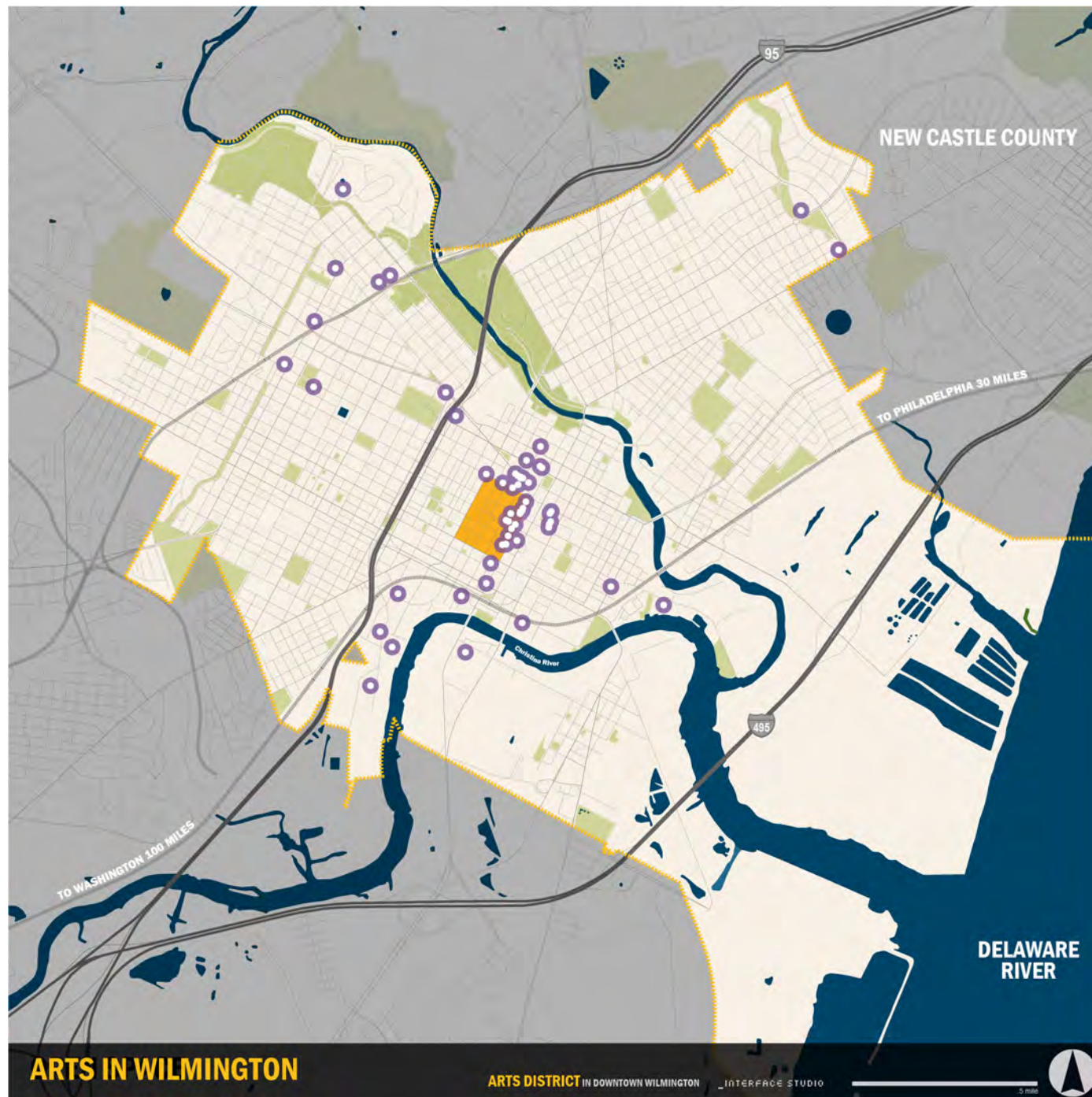
Developments seeking to increase homeownership and stabilize communities in the city include Eastlake, Franklin Chase, Speakman Place, and the Villas of Little Italy. The lattermost development consists of energy- efficient homes with off-street parking that took the place of an abandoned, blighted restaurant and vacant lot.



[ Above: Cool Spring Reservoir Plaza. Below: Villas of Little Italy. ]







Over **50** arts & entertainment venues, groups, & organizations



And roughly **30** more in the surrounding area

- arts & entertainment amenity
- open space
- arts district study area
- city limits
- rail

**FIG 3:** Context map of arts and entertainment venues, groups, and organizations



## LOOKING FORWARD: New opportunities for revitalization

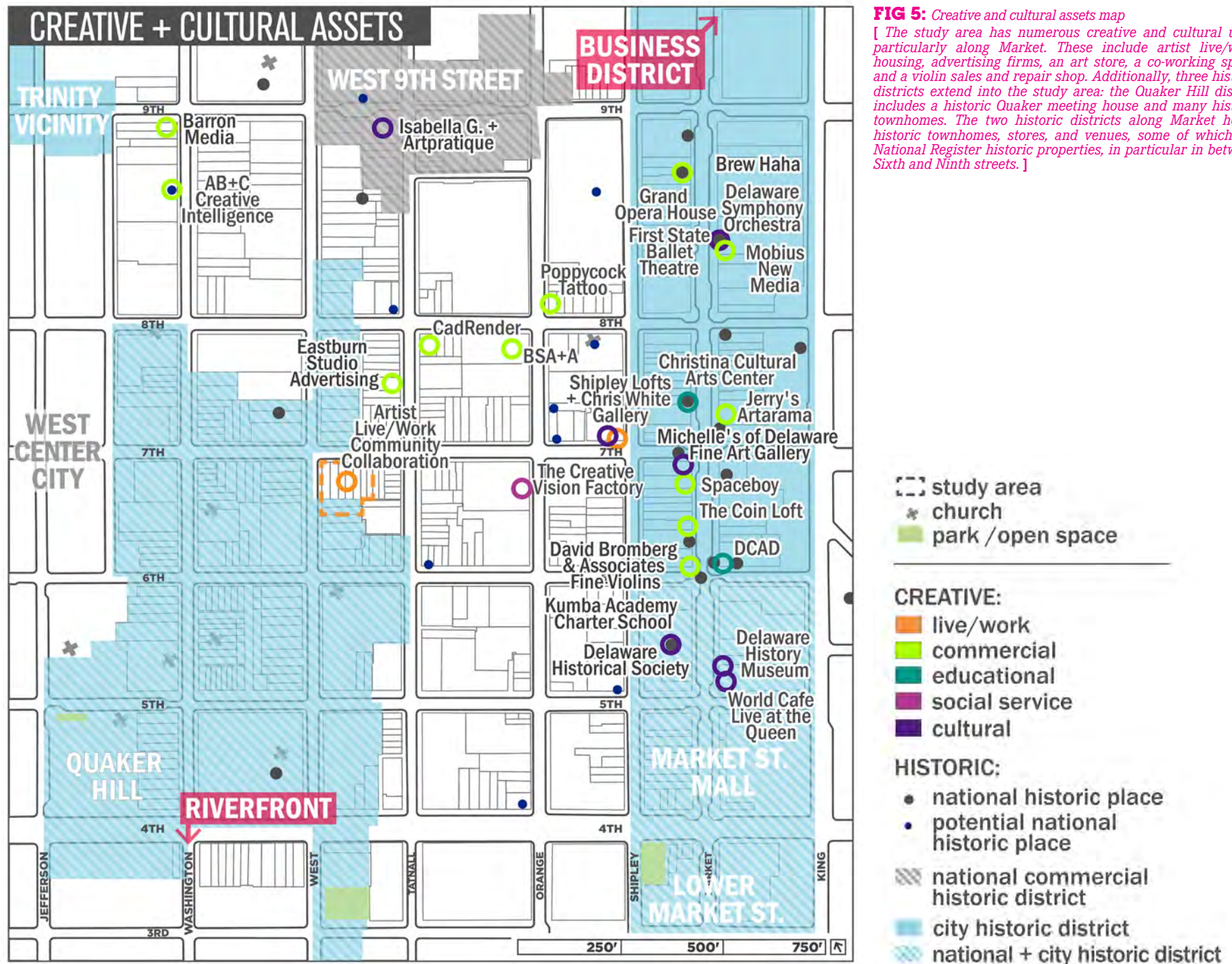
The area bounded by Washington, Market, 4<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Streets is strategically positioned to build off of the energy mounting nearby, drawing revitalization westward in a form that strengthens neighborhoods by bringing benefits to existing residents as well as welcoming new neighbors. However, this area currently acts as a large gap between riverfront redevelopment, LOMA, Market Street and the concentration of office workers in Center City. Efforts to carry the momentum of reinvestment into neighborhoods west of Market are faced with a number of challenges—primary among them being the perception of crime, but also persistent social and economic issues. Census data shows that neighborhoods to the west of Center City are significantly less wealthy, younger, and have a lower level of educational attainment. These issues are currently being addressed through local neighborhood revitalization activities including the West Center City Futures initiative.

As local residents and the City work to improve local neighborhoods, they remain disconnected from services, jobs and entertainment along Market Street and toward the River. Shipley Street—which in some ways still fulfills its historic role as the alley serving properties facing Market—has acted as a somewhat natural barrier to revitalization. Aside from the historic Quaker Hill neighborhood to the west and south and the 9<sup>th</sup> Street commercial corridor at its northern edge, the urban fabric and identity of this target area is fragmented and undefined. Almost one third of the area spanning Market to Washington, from 4<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> Streets is comprised of vacant land, vacant buildings, or surface parking lots, contributing to a sense of general inactivity and lack of cohesion. At the same time, the vacancy is seen as an opportunity for targeted infill and rehabilitation and the large surface parking lots [constituting one-fifth of the area] present opportunities for longer-term and larger-scale development. Overall, three-quarters of all buildings are in excellent/above average condition; the same proportion of the 54 vacant buildings in the area is in need of significant repair.

Neighborhood amenities are varied within the area. Transportation is easily accessible from the district, with the Amtrak station, Rodney Square, and I-95 only a few minutes away. However, despite the area's convenience to public transportation, the system itself underperforms. The area's lack of open space, which has a negative impact on quality of life, the environment, and may negatively influence property values. Commercial services are highly limited for many nearby residents, as a number of businesses cater to higher income earners.



**FIG 4:** Vacant properties and parking map  
[ Vacant and undeveloped land comprises one-third of the study area ]

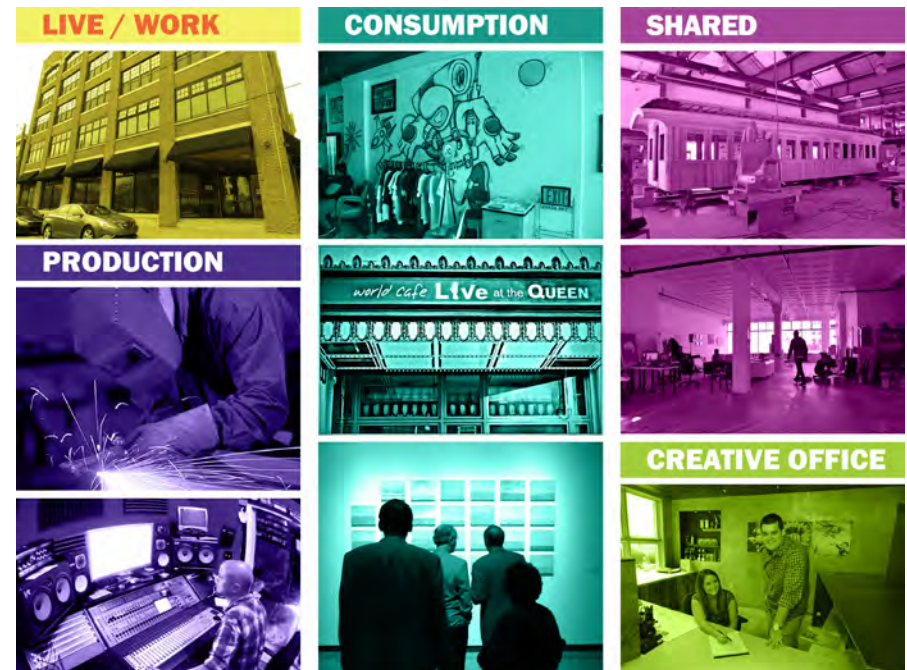




On any given weekday, Wilmington's population of 72,000 increases by roughly 45,000. At the end of the day, when the commuter population migrates out of Wilmington, the shift in the energy of the City is palpable. Most businesses close when Center City office workers leave for the day—and many don't hold weekend hours at all.

Despite these challenges, the area is located near the densest clusters of Wilmington's arts and cultural organizations. Market Street is anchored by three historic destination venues—DuPont Theatre, the Grand, the newly restored Queen—and is also home to the Delaware History Museum, Delaware College of Art and Design, Christina Cultural Arts Center, and a number of smaller scale art and cultural entities. This is one of the area's greatest and most distinct assets: its proximity to the many creative, cultural, and institutional organizations, venues, and businesses that have a notable presence in the area. This presence extends well into the study area itself, with a range of creative commercial spaces, arts and cultural organizations, to religious organizations with arts programming, and educational institutions. These assets help form a strong foundation for the concept of building on the greater area's emerging identity as a Creative District.

In addition to forming the basis for a revitalization strategy for this fragmented pause between Market Street and neighborhoods to the west of Center City, reinvesting in this area as a Creative District could also strengthen the north-south connection initiated by LOMA between the Riverfront and the central business district. To that point, looking beyond the study area itself, the gap between 4<sup>th</sup> Street and Martin Luther King Jr Boulevard presents additional future opportunities for public and private investment to knit together the urban fabric to establish vital connections within the greater downtown area.



**FIG 6:** *Typologies of creative production and consumption*





# CREATIVE DISTRICT VISION

Much more robust than a traditional concept for an “arts” district, the Creative District vision seeks to accommodate the arts along with a more comprehensive range of creative endeavors. In order to build critical mass in the Creative District, attracting creative professionals and makers from the greater Wilmington area and beyond, the vision must embrace and support everyone from visual artists [painters, sculptors, writers, film makers, illustrators, printmakers, etc.], to performance artists [actors, musicians, comedians, etc.], to technical innovators [programming and development entrepreneurs, bloggers, web designers, etc.], to designers [graphic, architecture, planning, interior, clothing, etc.], to craftspeople [artisanal manufacturers, welders, woodworkers, etc.] to marketing strategists, engineers, research and development consultants—essentially anyone whose profession harnesses their creative capacity to innovate and create.

As the resident population immediately in and around the district is varied, it is important that the district itself serves the diverse interests represented in the area. Central to the concept of the creative district is the idea of merging the arts and creative culture with that of community, working to eliminate the perceived divide between the economy of arts and culture tourism and the needs and desires of local residents.



## VISION STATEMENT: Laying a foundation for Wilmington's Creative District

Wilmington is a **CREATIVE HUB** that attracts artists, designers, entrepreneurs, makers, manufacturers, and others from the **LOCAL AREA** and **BEYOND**. The Creative District concept is equally focused on both **CREATIVE PRODUCTION** and **CONSUMPTION**: a **WORKING DISTRICT** where locally designed goods and original works are made and local creative entrepreneurs are supported, as well as a **DESTINATION** drawing in visitors looking for a unique experience.

The Creative District is the heart of this vibrant and collaborative community. Its creative identity reflects and **CELEBRATES DIVERSITY** in the city and of its residents and visitors. This **IDENTITY IS VISIBLE** throughout the entire district, enhancing its physical environment and informing residents and visitors of **ACTIVITIES** and **EVENTS**.

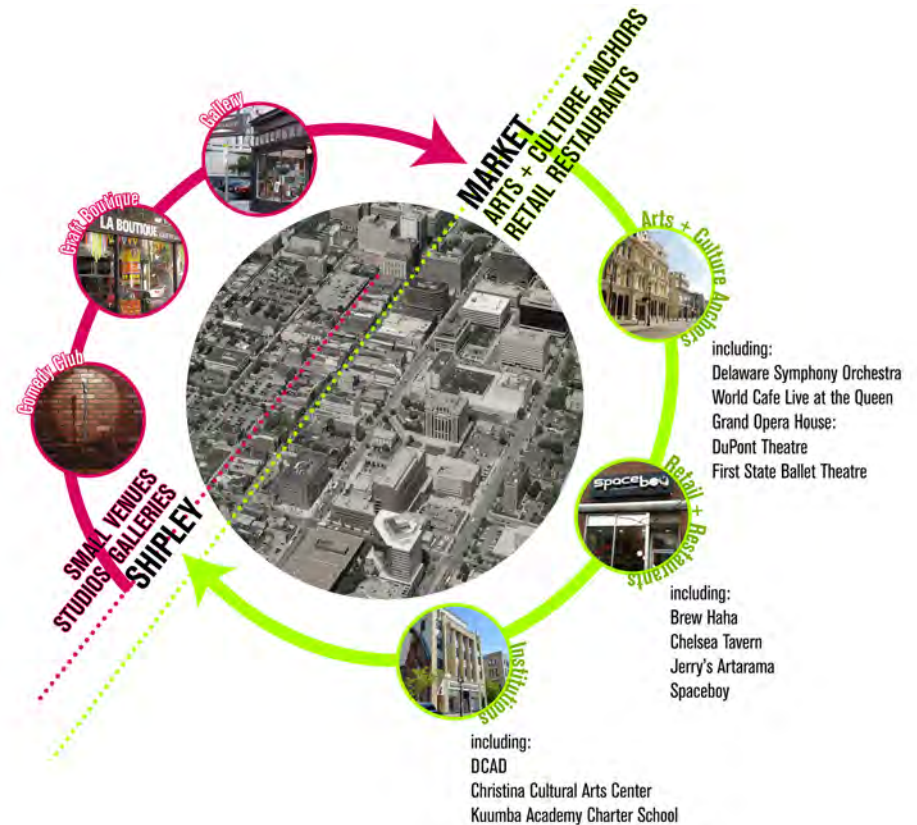
With housing choice, support for entrepreneurial endeavors, and strong ties to local business, the District is a place to both **LIVE AND WORK**. In addition, inspiration is a medium to **ADDRESS SOCIAL NEEDS**, with outlets that **ENCOURAGE YOUTH** to explore their creativity and support those facing physical and personal challenges, among others.

## PLACE-BASED STRATEGIES: A framework to guide targeted initiatives

Cultivating the Creative District will require an incremental approach enabling it to take root over time. Subsequent chapters detail a number of strategies to establish the Creative District organized according to thematically related and phased actions. As a preface to those recommendations and to translate the vision to the specific cultural and built landscape of the study area, the opportunities for targeted place-based strategies are as follows:

### Creating a creative community in Quaker Hill

Given the demographic profile of the area as well as the understanding that emerging artists need affordable options both for housing and production space, creating low-cost live/work options in the Creative District is key. The historic Quaker Hill neighborhood presents a number of opportunities for infill development and rehabilitation of vacant residential or mixed use buildings, concentrated on or near West Street.



**FIG 7:** Shipley and Market streets identity diagram

[The identity of Market and future identity of Shipley will work together well. Market has larger-scale cultural anchors; the venues on Shipley will be smaller-scale and complementary in nature.]

### Establishing critical mass along Shipley Street

A new vision for Shipley Street to become the backbone of creative culture in the area is one that could serve as part of an integral and mutually reinforcing relationship with Market Street. Market is currently defined by its retail and distinguished by the historic arts and cultural venues anchoring the street. Reimagining and rebranding Shipley as a corridor where smaller scale creative culture—including opportunities for live/work, programming through events and temporary installations, galleries, and small-scale venues—can emerge could effect a powerful symbiosis between Shipley and Market. The concept would harmonize and reinforce the emerging creative culture growing out of LOMA and the long-standing Market Street cultural and retail corridor.

## Focusing art-based social practice programs on Washington Street

A number of social service programs are clustered along Washington Street. Community members, city officials, non-profit and business leaders, have been engaged in ongoing conversations regarding the impact of these services, which address social, economic, and health-related issues. An effort to improve perception and increase awareness of the positive impacts of these entities, paired with partnerships to integrate art-based social practice programs within a “village” of such organizations could help reverse perception and make their positive influence on the neighborhood more visible, while also improving the impact of social services and providing more skills training for employment and job re-entry.



Vacant historic house on West Street

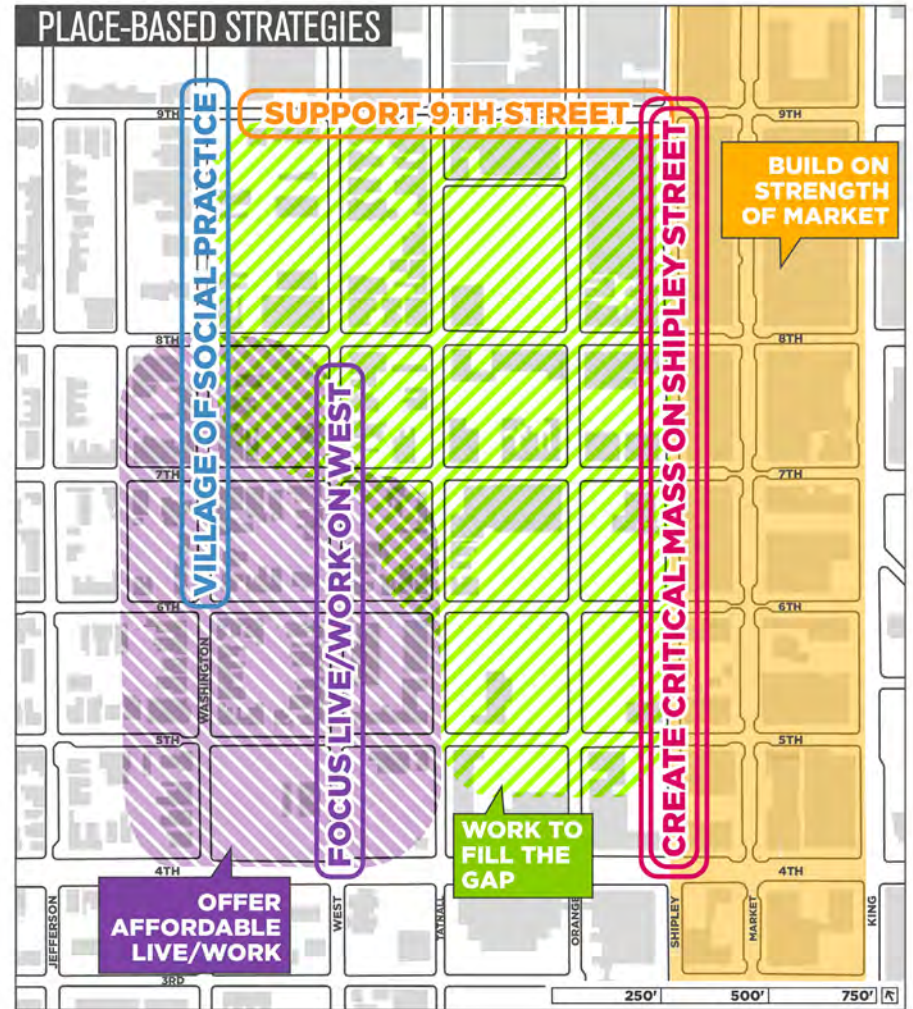
The pioneering Shipley Lofts on Shipley Street



The Creative Vision Factory, currently on Shipley--a local model of social practice



The recently restored Queen, one of the three main anchors of Market



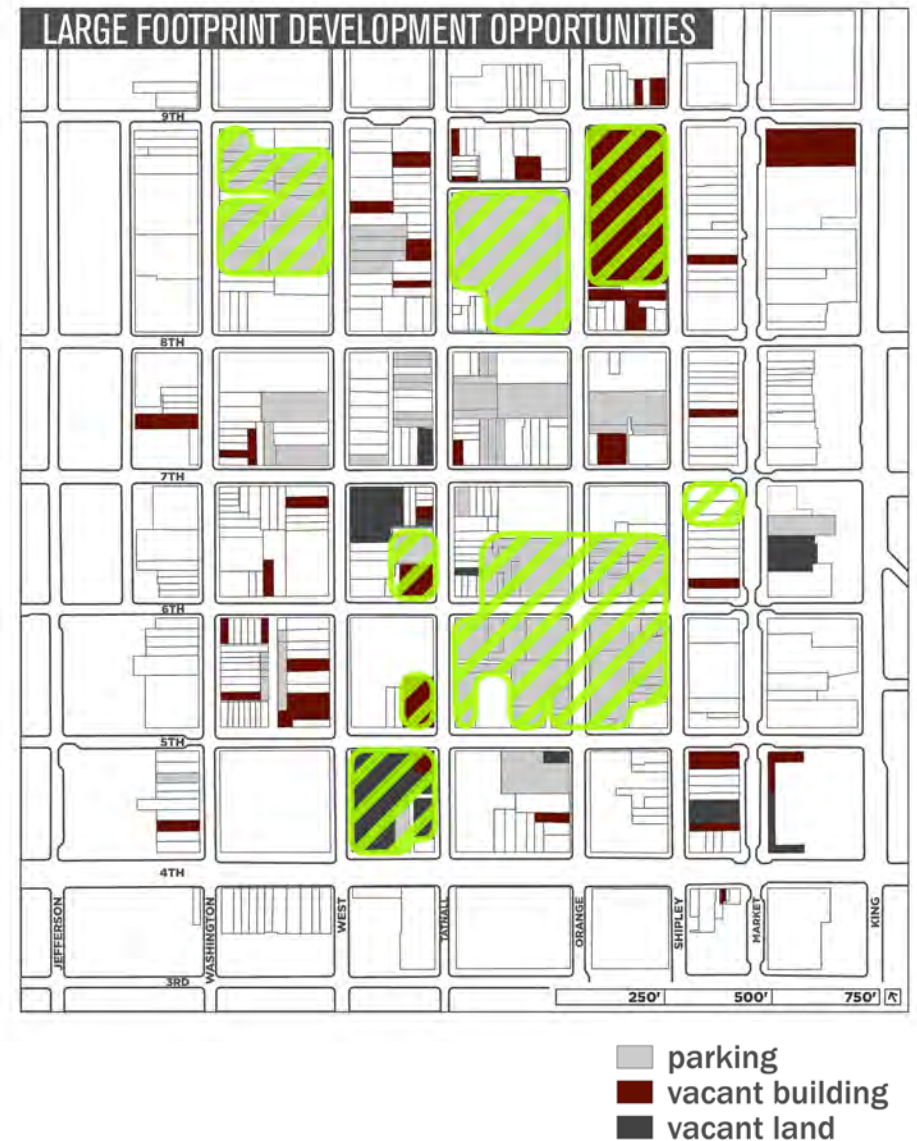
**FIG 8:** Place-based strategies map

[ The main strategies behind the Creative District plan that build on the area's strengths: a historic commercial corridor along Ninth; a strong cultural and commercial corridor along Market; historic housing in and around West; and a cluster of social services along Washington.]



## Filling in the “gap”

Large swaths of the study area’s interior are comprised of surface parking lots. As the market position of the area continues to improve, property owners may be motivated to explore other options for these parcels. Longer-term development opportunities could serve the Creative District vision in a number of ways, including accommodating a larger footprint anchor arts and cultural institution or creative production facilities.



**FIG 9:** Large footprint development opportunities  
[ 20 percent of the study area is vacant or undeveloped land. Several larger clusters of this type of land could accommodate larger footprint development in the future.]



## **BENEFITS & IMPACTS:** Positive outcomes of investing in creative culture

Implementation of the Creative District plan will have a range of impacts bringing both economic and social benefits.

### **Potential social impacts of the creative district**

The introduction of creativity-based programming and policies in isolation will not tackle the social challenges faced by neighborhoods in Wilmington. Creative efforts in the District should serve as avenues to address issues relating to quality of life. Through social practice, or bringing social goals, cultural values, and community engagement into the creative disciplines, the Creative District can reinforce and expand programming that engages underserved communities.

Artists and “non-artists” can work together to address and raise awareness of social issues affecting Wilmington, including drug use, crime, poverty, drugs, poor housing conditions, youth delinquency, unemployment, and access to quality health care. Engagement in arts-based activities and events fortifies existing social networks and creates additional ones as well. This is particularly important to those with limited social capital, as may be the case in more socio-economically disadvantaged neighborhoods throughout the city.

Further, through involvement in one’s community—be it through participating in a collaborative project or event—residents will gain a sense of ownership. Unique enhancements to the physical environment, e.g. through things like artistic street furniture on both prominent and less-prominent corridors and murals on the District’s currently blank sidewalls, could foster a shared sense of place and belonging, especially in parts of the District with limited visual appeal. Increased personal investment in one’s community coupled with the deepening of social ties could have numerous additional benefits, including a reduction in crime, which currently presents a great challenge to Wilmington.

The Creative District has the potential to empower local residents, create jobs, and strengthen the local economy. Incubators and shared facilities could provide skills training and access to facilities and resources one may not be able to afford individually. This training and access creates economic opportunities for individuals regardless of level of

educational attainment or current employment standing. These facilities can expand their programs as they mature to offer additional resources to communities, such low-cost residence programs and classes for at-risk youth and young mothers. This type of programming is important given the demographic trends apparent in the city, as it presents an opportunity to cultivate desirable skills for job placement. Further, as implementation of the District’s programs and policies progresses, more job opportunities will become available for or be generated by those with creative skills and training.

Moreover, these incubators and facilities could carve a niche out for Wilmington: if high-quality incubator and shared-work spaces are available in the city, residents from the surrounding area may be more inclined to make use of them instead of traveling the extra distance to Philadelphia or other cities.

Additionally, through social practice, or bringing social goals, cultural values, and community engagement into the creative disciplines, creative districts reinforce and expand programming that engages underserved communities. Artists and “non-artists” can work together to address and raise awareness of social issues affecting Wilmington, including drug use, crime, poverty, drugs, poor housing conditions, youth delinquency, unemployment, and access to quality health care.

### **Potential economic impacts of the creative district**

The economic benefits of implementing the Creative District vision will be generated by construction of new housing, facilities and public improvements in the target area as well as the increase in arts patronage and attendance that could be expected to grow out of the increased sense of identity and vibrancy in the neighborhood. All investments in implementation will have positive direct and indirect “spin-off” impacts. Every \$1.00 in construction expenditures during implementation will generate \$1.87 in economic impact in the State of Delaware. Moreover, every \$1 million in new construction expenditures creates 11.7 jobs during the construction period and adds more than

\$512,000 in earnings to Delaware households. An energized Creative District is likely to attract spending on entertainment, made objects and dining that would have taken place in Philadelphia or other areas out of state, thus creating net new impacts for the State. On average, attendees at Delaware arts venues spend \$29.80 every time they attend a performance or visit a cultural institution, and these expenditures trickle through the state's economy creating new jobs and increasing household earnings. Additional payments to artists, performers and other creative professionals adds \$1.57 to the state economy for each \$1.00 of expenditure. Every \$1 million spent purchasing goods and services from independent artists, writers and performers supports more than 15 jobs and results in additional household earnings of more than \$412,000 annually. Similarly, increasing activity at restaurants and bars, a likely outcome of a more vibrant creative district in downtown Wilmington, creates \$1.82 of economic activity in Delaware for every \$1.00 spent. In addition, every \$1 million in new expenditures at restaurants and bars supports 19.6 jobs and increases household earnings by an estimated \$473,000.

Each new residence developed in the Creative District will generate City, County and School District property tax revenues after any abatements expire. For the homeownership units envisioned in the plan, annual City, County and school district property taxes are estimated to total at least \$2,000 per unit. Home sales will also generate incremental transfer tax revenue to the City of Wilmington and the State. Residents moving to the District from outside of Wilmington will also generate net new earned income tax and per capita tax revenues for the City. Investments in improving the neighborhood's housing stock should help to support and increase property values in surrounding blocks, adding to the local real estate tax base.

Implementation of the Creative District will raise the profile of arts venues and organizations in and around the target area which may allow them to expand their programming. Every \$100,000 of spending by arts organizations [not including their audiences/visitors] creates the following impacts in Delaware: 2.7 full time equivalent jobs, more than \$81,000 in earnings and nearly \$7,000 in local and state tax revenues.



**FIG 10:** Economic impacts of creative industries and complementary industries per dollar invested

## AT A GLANCE:

**What:** A live/work creative district that leverages existing artistic and cultural assets to redevelop the surrounding neighborhood

### Why:

- Celebrate the arts and cultural assets of the city
- Counter disinvestment
- Support business and create job opportunities
- Preserve historic properties
- Improve quality of life for existing residents
- Improve health and livability of the Quaker Hill community
- Promote homeownership
- Reduce crime and violence
- Spread investment to other areas of downtown
- Leverage the arts and creative industries to generate a positive economic impact
- Foster connections between residents and arts community
- Address social needs
- Establish Wilmington as a destination

**Where:** Market to Washington and 4th to 9th streets

**How:** Through partnerships between city officials, active figures in the arts and creative communities, foundations, and residents.

# ORGANIZE: ESTABLISH DISTRICT DESIGNATION and MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

Successful creative districts around the country are the result of overlapping interests and investments dedicated to attracting and growing the local creative economy. To create a home base for Wilmington's creative enterprises and artists, new partnerships are needed to generate momentum and a critical mass of activity around this vision. The following recommendations outline strategies to create sustainable leadership for the district, attract artists and creative businesses, market the district and actively program events to help strengthen the area's identity. These components are essential to realizing the goals of new development and local economic growth that supports the revitalization of downtown Wilmington and surrounding neighborhoods.









## **LEAD:** Formalize collaborative partnerships to establish and manage the Creative District

The first and most critical step towards making the creative district vision a reality is to ensure that the right individuals and groups take ownership of this vision and work together to carry it through implementation. Essential to the success of the Creative District Vision is expanded leadership from the City of Wilmington in addition to targeted public investment geared towards achieving the goals of the District. Wilmington Renaissance Corporation should assemble and lead a “Creative District Alliance” that bridges the private, public, and nonprofit sectors, ideally recruiting members from the Creative District Steering Committee.

### **NOW Establish the Creative District Alliance**

Representatives of local business associations, community based organizations, and institutions; artists and creative professionals; artisanal manufacturers and owners of creative industries; and so on, should be recruited as members of the Creative District Alliance not only to work collaboratively in cultivating and promoting creative culture in the district, but to serve as liaisons to their own networks.

### **Develop a sustainable fiscal structure**

This plan identifies the necessary actions and players to help foster a vibrant creative district. To carry out this plan’s recommendations, the Creative District Alliance will require dedicated, multi-year funding streams to support an annual operating budget for district management, staffing and programming under the WRC umbrella. Larger capital projects such as development or streetscape enhancements will require specific fundraising efforts from a combination of public and private sources.

## **PAVE THE WAY:** Align policy with district objectives

Successful arts districts across the world have utilized a range of policies to support growth of the local arts scene. Getting decision-makers within multiple levels of government on board with the vision in the earliest stages is critical to building a foundation for attracting creative professionals, businesses, and visitors—removing barriers to and creating incentives for growth of the Creative District. For instance, changes in zoning policies to help remove land use regulatory barriers will allow more flexibility for creative production within the district. Certain financial incentives, like rent subsidies and income tax shelters, are also effective tools in the recruitment of artists and creative businesses, some of which also require legislative acts.

### **NOW Coordinate change with the Creative District Vision**

Coordination and cooperation with decision makers will also ensure that the interests and objectives represented within the Creative District Vision are considered as factors in ongoing planning and development efforts and other influences in the area. These include the following:

1. Delaware Greenways trail connection to the Riverfront
2. DART/DelDOT bus circulation planning
3. West Center City Futures Council planning efforts
4. Connections interest in dissolving some its holdings
5. Mid-town parking garage future development
6. Planned Shipley Street streetscape improvements from 4<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> Streets
7. 9<sup>th</sup> Street streetscape improvement plan
8. Upstairs Fund efforts by Downtown Visions
9. Wilmington Housing Partnership & Wilmington Housing Authority redevelopment efforts
10. Potential Capital One 360 expansion plans
11. Wilmington Hospital expansion
12. DCAD student housing and campus services expansion

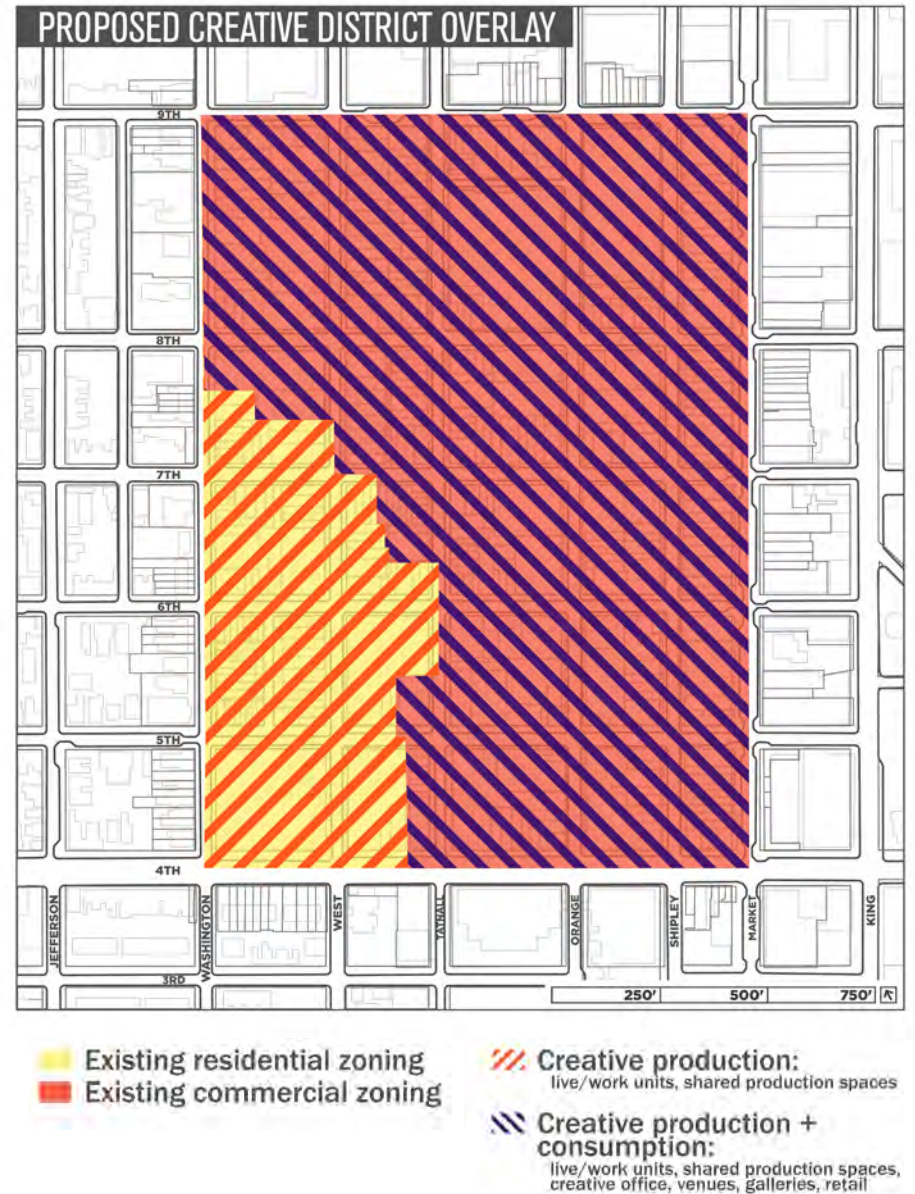
## **NOW** Establish a creative district zoning overlay

Wilmington's zoning code currently lacks a classification allowing a mix of residential and light industrial uses, which would be necessary to pave the way for legitimate live-work developments. Likewise, the Creative District vision calls for a more diverse mix of uses along the Shipley corridor and potentially other locations including live/work as well as retail sales and entertainment uses. The Creative District Alliance should work with the city to develop a zoning overlay that would allow a broader mix of uses to help cultivate creative production and consumption.

## **NOW** Set forth guidelines for live/work and creative production spaces

Supplemental live/work and creative production design guidelines should be developed as a resource to inform design and construction of projects geared towards artisanal production. These working spaces have special requirements that should be well thought-out and reviewed by design professionals. Design details including loading, fire rating, facilities for storage of hazardous waste materials, ventilation, provision of deep basin sinks, sound proofing, and so on are important to consider both for ensuring the utility and safety of these spaces as well as mitigating effects on nearby neighbors.

[ The boundaries of the proposed overlays follow existing zoning boundaries but would allow for a broader mix of uses. ]



**FIG 11:** Proposed creative district overlay

## **CULTIVATE COMMUNITY:** PROMOTE STRONG NETWORKS and SOCIAL CAPITAL

Building a creative district isn't just about events and bricks and mortar. It's the social and professional networks that truly define a place. Investing in the connections between artists, innovators, and makers—as well as those between the creative community and local neighborhoods—lays the foundation for the Creative District Vision. The recommendations are geared toward establishing those strong ties, as well as setting policies and enacting programs to welcome and support emerging artists and creative entrepreneurs.

2





## BUILD BUZZ: Spread the word about the creative community

The success of the Creative District will rely heavily on brand identity, marketing, and promotion requiring a number of initial steps as well as long-term oversight. Wilmington already attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors from outside the City—and, according to the 2012 Arts & Economic Prosperity IV: The Economic Impact of Nonprofit Arts and Culture Organizations and Their Audiences in the State of Delaware, Delaware's tourism rates are increased by 46% by bringing in out of state visitors—and it is well understood that while establishing the Creative District will require targeted hyper-local efforts and support, it also must cast a wide net with broad-reaching buzz bringing in artists, investors, and visitors to create critical mass in the district. The Creative District Alliance and its partners should be called upon to:

### **NOW** Develop a targeted marketing strategy

A comprehensive and targeted marketing strategy is needed to attract a number of distinct groups that will each play critical roles on realizing the Creative District. Hire a consultant to develop a marketing plan designed to promote the district in step with its development, including both print and web marketing tools tailored to the specific needs and interests of these groups:

**> Business owners looking to relocate or entrepreneurs seeking new opportunities** will be interested in information about business and financial assistance programs, available commercial spaces, and demographic profiles of those who live, work, and visit the area—their potential customers or clients. Packaging this information specifically for business recruitment should be coordinated as part of a comprehensive business recruitment and retention strategy.

**> Developers who may be open to investing** in the Creative District by establishing live/work space, shared production facilities, galleries, office space for creative professionals, and so on, should be provided with marketing materials highlighting the Creative District vision, locations and types of existing assets to build on, available opportunities for investment within the district, and any development incentives or assistance programs that may be accessible to them. Marketing materials pitching the vision for real estate investment should be brief but powerful and regularly updated with new information.

**> Attracting artists to live, work, or show their work**—or any combination thereof—in the Creative District will take more than marketing alone, but marketing will play a central role in creating awareness of the advantages of setting up shop in the district as opposed to elsewhere. An online database of available live/work spaces, shared production facilities, and programs available to support creative careers should be part of the marketing component of an overall recruitment strategy for artists and creative industries.

**> Marketing to visitors and customers** should be distinct from marketing that targets developers/investors and artists/creative professionals. IN Wilmington—the City's established robust marketing campaign designed to draw in visitors to the City's events and destinations—presents a readily available opportunity to spread the word about events and destinations in the Creative District. A stand-alone website for the Creative District with an events calendar, maps to key destinations, and links to websites of local arts groups or venues, should be established after the district has developed more fully.

[ *The IN Wilmington website includes a calendar of arts, entertainment, and music events as well as a listing of destinations and cultural organizations throughout the greater Wilmington area.* ]





### **NOW** Hold a district logo design competition

Engage local talent in developing a graphic identity and branding package for the creative district by hosting a logo design competition. Install the logo design entries in a public venue in or near the creative district along with display boards promoting both the district vision and awareness of the concentration of assets it builds on. Post the entries on the web and consider making it an interactive site—allowing users to weigh in with comments and vote for their favorites. This will act to further promote sharing through social media and increase overall awareness of the creative district concept.

### **Encourage local businesses to help reinforce district identity**

Restaurants, bars, retail establishments, and commercial offices that are not necessarily a part of the creative scene should be called upon to reinforce the Creative District identity by bringing the vibe into their own space. Works of local artists could be integrated within interior design concepts—ideally with placards or other identification informing patrons that the piece was made by local talent.



#### **ART THROUGH ARCHITECTURE**

Art through Architecture (AtA-KC) was created to support artists and the arts community in the Kansas City area and to enrich architectural practices and architect-client relationships by providing architects and clients with incentives and tools to collect, commission, place, and integrate artwork by Kansas City artists into their process and projects.

**LEARN MORE** [artarch.org](http://artarch.org)



### **RALLY:** Attract and support local creative entrepreneurs

Affordable spaces to live and work, as well as access to opportunities to show work, perform, or find clients locally, are baseline needs of creative professionals. In order to compete with other areas in the region that are already capable of fulfilling these fundamental needs, Wilmington's Creative District should seek resources to draw artists, makers, performers, designers, and other creative professionals and entrepreneurs to locate in the district.

### **NOW** Encourage organizations and businesses to hire local artists

Local community-based nonprofits, arts and cultural organizations, and businesses often need graphic design and print/web production services to create promotional and communication materials, storefront displays, and so on. Encouraging organizations and businesses to keep it local by hiring from within the Creative District to provide graphic design and production services would be an easy way to help the local creative community develop. One way to facilitate this is to produce an annual business directory of local creative professionals providing basic information about the services they provide along with contact information.

### **Formalize an artist and creative business recruitment strategy**

In addition to targeted marketing, Creative District leadership should implement policy and financial incentives that make the district more attractive as a place to live and work for creative professionals. Paducah, Kentucky's LowerTown Arts District sets forth a successful model for building a community of local artists through a number of recruitment strategies, including relocation assistance and financing packages tailored to the needs of artists through local banks—both ideas that should be considered for fostering Wilmington's Creative District.

As the Creative District Alliance builds momentum, it is important to start organizing targeted incentives through discussions with City leadership. Learning from other successful cities, a variety of incentives could be considered including:





## LOWERTOWN ARTS DISTRICT

The LowerTown Arts District in Paducah, Kentucky seeks to establish an artistic enclave through attracting artists, businesses, and tourists to the 30-square-block portion of LowerTown. Among its main policies are zoning for mixed uses, such as live/work spaces, and relocation incentives, which permit the sale of properties for a little as one dollar to applicants with qualifying proposals.

In addition to financing arrangements with a community partner bank, assistance ranging from \$2,500 to \$25,000 is available to qualifying applicants for a variety of needs, including designing a home, moving, and starting a business or restaurant. Between 2001 and 2007, Paducah spent approximately \$3 million on arts-related initiatives and infrastructure in the District, and artists invested \$35 million in its restoration. Over 100 artists now live and work there, bringing increases in property values, tax revenues, and tourism.



LEARN MORE

[paducahalliance.org/lowertown-arts-district](http://paducahalliance.org/lowertown-arts-district)



> **Tax Exemptions:** Some artist recruitment strategies have included exemption from state sales tax for purchase of original works created within a designated arts district. Delaware's lack of sales tax altogether already makes it competitive for incentivizing commerce within the Creative District, but additional policies could be put in place to make income generated from sales of creative works exempt from individual state income taxes for qualifying artists living and working in the Creative District.

> **Property Incentives:** Often times the cost of acquiring or renovating a space can be the barrier that prevents a creative business from settling in a given district. Other cities, including Paducah, Kentucky, offer varying levels of forgivable loans for rehabilitation, fit-out, and façade work as appropriate. The SALT district in Syracuse offers homes for as low as 1 dollar [with the agreement that artists renovate them] as well as rehabilitated structures below market rates.

> **Marketing Assistance:** Helping new creative businesses to thrive is in everyone's best interest. Marketing assistance in the form of matching dollars for advertising, web design, and signage can help to entice new businesses looking to create a brand and customer base.

## Provide entrepreneurial skills workshops to help creative self-starters get established

Develop partnerships to expand entrepreneurial support programs to attract and grow creative businesses in the district in partnership with local community nonprofits. Support services could provide logistical and strategic guidance for running a small business, handling taxes, obtaining legal advice, applying for grants, acquiring a business license, and so on. The Creative District Alliance should work with Christina Cultural Arts Center, Interfaith Community Housing of Delaware, First State Community Loan Fund, COIN Lofts, and others to organize workshops and one-on-one consultation services around small business practices specifically tailored to the needs of creative professionals.

## Establish a creative use rent subsidy program

Creative businesses may not be able to compete with other commercial uses that do not contribute to the identity of an emerging arts district—especially when taking the leap to relocate. District leadership can give galleries, shared production facilities, design studios, and so on an edge over other prospective tenants through a creative use rent subsidy loan to grant program. Such a program could help defray the costs in the first year and also provide incentive for the business owner to stay for a number of years until the loan is forgiven. This kind of program can also be used to leverage certain business practices that will help the district thrive by setting eligibility requirements. For instance, the program could require that businesses be open at least 6 days a week, including Saturday and Sunday; that they participate in a “keep the lights on” lighting program, that they participate in a determined number of district events [such as Art Loop] per year, and so on.



[spaceboyclothing.com](http://spaceboyclothing.com)

### SPACEBOY CLOTHING

Spaceboy Clothing on Market Street does on-site custom designing and printing of T-shirts and accessories. In addition, the store offers a range of consumer goods, including items by local artists, vintage clothing and retro antiques and serves as a gallery and music venue.



[outpostcle.com](http://outpostcle.com)

### OUTPOST POP-UP

This pop-up camper in Cleveland is a rentable space for artists, entrepreneurs, and makers to vend their goods, thus creating "on-the-go" markets. Its inaugural use was by a vintage barware and glassware seller.



[dedo.delaware.gov](http://dedo.delaware.gov)

### PROJECT POP-UP

Project Pop-up offers entrepreneurs a commercial space free of rent for three months during the holiday season in a downtown area in Delaware. The program began in 2012 with locations in Middletown and Milford and is expanding in 2013 to also include Dover, Milton, Smyrna, and Wilmington. Two of the 2013 locations are within our study area.



[dekalbmarket.com](http://dekalbmarket.com)

### DEKALB MARKET

The Dekalb Market was a temporary use on the site of a future development in downtown Brooklyn. The market featured work-sell spaces in repurposed shipping containers for creative entrepreneurs to sell their goods. An incubator farm, events, performance venue, and eateries were also part of the market.



[r5productions.com](http://r5productions.com)

### PUNK ROCK FLEA MARKET

The Punk Rock Flea Market is housed in a large warehouse in the Spring Garden neighborhood in Philadelphia. It occurs twice a year and features over 500 vendors, both private and commercial, ranging from emerging artists to more established local or regional brick-and-mortar retailers. Vendors sell local art; jewelry, clothing, and accessories; graphic T-shirts; home accessories; and baked goods and snacks.

## SELL OUT: Create new opportunities for local artists and makers to sell their work

There is often a long road between becoming an artist and having your work featured in a gallery space. The District needs to offer emerging artists, makers, and creative entrepreneurs a variety of options to sell their goods in the Creative District with a lower barrier to entry. Many of the opportunities for vending highlighted below would furthermore increase the visibility of artistic and creative endeavors within the District.

### Encourage gallery mash-ups with local businesses

Established retail businesses, bars, restaurants, and entertainment venues can provide another avenue for local artists to show and sell their work. As a bustling commercial corridor during weekdays, Market Street gets enough foot traffic to bring tremendous attention to the work of local talent. The Creative District Alliance should facilitate arrangements with business owners enabling artists and makers to create displays of their work in storefronts. Storeowners could also reserve some amount of floor or wall space for local art. This art and commerce partnership would give artists opportunities to show and sell their work and benefit business owners by diversifying their patronage and increasing foot traffic to their business.

### Organize temporary and mobile vending of locally-produced goods

Permanent space can be cost-prohibitive to emerging entrepreneurs and makers looking to sell their goods. Temporary and mobile spaces offer lower-cost opportunities for those looking to test the waters and learn the ropes of commerce before committing to a lease or more permanent space. Mobile spaces also present the opportunity for complementary uses: a mobile vendor, for example, could park outside a building where a gallery opening, musical performance, or other event is taking place. These spaces can also serve those whose vending needs may only be seasonal.

### WEST PHILADELPHIA TOOL LIBRARY

The West Philly Tool Library is an open community lending program that provides tools on loan, as well as informal instruction in their use, to local community members. The tools available are geared toward home and auto maintenance, woodworking, and landscaping, and the library is staffed by two “Tool Librarians” and one “Tool Mechanic.” As of April 2013, the Library had accumulated over 3,500 tools and more than 1,500 paying members. Approximately one-half of the program is funded by membership dues and late fees, with the rest coming from community support – including local universities, community associations, and commercial building suppliers.



### THE RESOURCE EXCHANGE

The Resource Exchange was founded in 2009 to divert valuable materials, initially from theatrical stage productions, from the landfill back into the local economy. In its first year, RE diverted over 30 tons of material for reuse, and redirected another 600 tons bound for landfills to local recycling centers. The organization has expanded into a larger location and now sells or rents a dramatically expanded collection of reclaimed materials – including canvases, books and magazines, building materials, and office supplies and equipment – for about a third of what the materials would typically cost new.



## WORK IT: Facilitate creative production

### Establish a tool sharing program

Tool-sharing opportunities are highly valuable to both community members and emerging artists and makers who lack the means to buy expensive tools. Similar to the concept of a library, tools are stored and regularly maintained at a central location, where members can “check out” tools for periods of time, as well as learn from experienced craftspeople staffing the program about how to use the tools properly. As a precursor to a more robust Fab Lab concept [or a more affordable membership option], a tool share program would be an invaluable resource in enabling creative training to evolve into viable skill sets and creative entrepreneurship.



## Convert underutilized spaces into artist studios

Offering creative production space for local artists, craft-persons, and small-scale industrial design and production businesses is an important part of the Creative District equation. Currently vacant upper floors of some buildings in the area could be outfitted as studio spaces with a very “raw” finish, which would minimize construction costs and provide affordable work spaces for creative professionals. For buildings that have no immediately viable way of creating a second means of egress to enable upper floor residential uses, converting these spaces into artist work studios would generate rent income from those spaces, potentially as an interim strategy until property owners have the resources to convert them to residential or other uses.



[ A building on Shipley Street that appears to have some residential vacancy in its upper floors. ]



■ partial commercial vacancy  
■ partial residential vacancy

**FIG 12:** Partial vacancy map

Establishing production spaces could also be tied to an initiative to increase local access to arts education and youth engagement programming. Once established, some studios could become part of artist-in-residence programs providing creative individuals with working space at low to no cost as long as they teach a community class or do some other form of community-building project as a condition of their residency.



#### 40TH STREET AIR PROGRAM

The 40th Street AIR (Artist-In-Residence) Program was founded by artist Edward M. Epstein in 2003 to provide free studio space to artists for a year in exchange for community engagement and service. The artists lead workshops, teach classes, show their work on- and off-site, and support the local arts community with gallery invitations mentoring, and promotion. The program helps foster career development for its Artists-In-Residence while exposing the surrounding community to the rich West Philly visual arts scene that has developed around the 40th Street AIR gallery and work space.

[40streetair.blogspot.com](http://40streetair.blogspot.com)



#### THE CLAY STUDIO

Founded in 1974, in the Old City neighborhood of Philadelphia, The Clay Studio supports and advocates for the ceramic arts locally and internationally, with a special focus on engaging the local community with the art form. The Studio provides artist residencies, exhibition and work space, and many successful educational programs, classes, and workshops—often taught by the resident artists themselves.

[theclaystudio.org](http://theclaystudio.org)

## ENGAGE: Address community needs through Social Practice

Social Practice, through the lens of the art and design world, is the idea of bringing social goals, cultural values, and community engagement into the creative disciplines through art education, participation and collaboration between “artists” and “non-artists,” research, activism, and a range of other means. The fundamental goal is to find common ground and shared understanding between creative practitioners and communities—particularly those that are faced with socioeconomic or political challenges and especially those that don’t typically engage in acts of creative expression as they are traditionally defined. The outcome is a shared sense of place and belonging, raised awareness of social issues, strengthened community networks, and skills training. Many programs are also centered on addressing particular needs within the community, such as improving literacy rates, addressing health and well-being, and helping immigrant communities put down new roots—all through arts-based Social Practice initiatives.



#### CHALLENGE PROGRAM

The Challenge Program is a paid training program for youth who face a barrier such as a criminal record, disability, low income background, homelessness, or lack of high school diploma. Located on the 7th Street Peninsula, the program focuses on the cultivation of skills related to labor and construction, including housing rehabilitation, woodworking, and organic gardening, among others. A certification program for CERT, OSHA, and others, a GED program, and training in the “soft skills” relating to the job application and interviewing process, are also available to participants. Training runs four to eight months; approximately 25 youth between the ages of 17 and 21 are accepted per year. Funding comes in roughly equal parts from donations and foundations, the Department of Labor, and income generated through jobs.

[challengeprogram.org](http://challengeprogram.org)

## Expand programming to integrate creativity into social services

Many residents in and around the Creative District face serious challenges ranging from drugs, crime, poverty, poor housing conditions, youth delinquency, unemployment, and lack of access to quality health care, to name a few. Building a community around the arts and creative production has the potential to offer new and expanded programming to help address some of these long-standing concerns. In many ways, the success of this Creative District depends on the overall health of communities nearby and should continue to focus on arts programs and initiatives that involve and empower community residents. District leadership should secure resources and create partnerships to establish or reinforce programming engaging underserved communities through Social Practice—especially at-risk youth and individuals with physical or emotional challenges.

The concentration of social services along Washington face a perception issue in that there is a lack of awareness of the positive impacts they have on communities and residents in need. Partnering with these social service providers to bring more arts-related programming into the area as well as to reframe the image of both these service providers and the individuals they work with, District Leadership can work to form a “village” founded on the values of Social Practice.



### CREATIVE VISION FACTORY

The mission of the Creative Vision Factory is to support artistic endeavors of those with behavioral health disorders and encourage their participation in the local artistic community through exhibitions and workshops. The factory recognizes the value of creativity and expression in assisting in the promotion of recovery. Michael Kalmbach, who developed the Factory, feels it can serve as a path to employment. Located within the Creative District, the communal workspace is free to those with behavioral health disorders and open to the community for a minimal monthly membership fee.

**LEARN MORE** [thecreativevisionfactory.org](http://thecreativevisionfactory.org)



### CLEVELAND PUBLIC THEATER

The Cleveland Public Theater has several educational programs that operate with the understanding that the arts can play a significant role in personal development. As such these programs are focused on demographics that are at critical points in personal growth due to age and/or socioeconomic circumstances. These programs are: the Student Theater Enrichment Program, which offers arts education and job training for low-income urban teens; the Brick City Theatre, an after-school arts program targeting children between the ages of five and 14 who live in public housing; and the Y-Haven Theatre Project, a theater program for homeless men living in Y-Haven, a transitional facility.

**LEARN MORE** [cptonline.org](http://cptonline.org)



### VILLAGE OF THE ARTS AND HUMANITIES

The Village of the Arts and Humanities is an arts organization based in North Philadelphia offering programs and opportunities in the arts, youth leadership, place making, and community development. Examples include: after-school art classes in dance, clay arts, fashion, and other areas; the Creative Apprenticeships Initiative, which gives teens an opportunity to apply their arts skills to social enterprise; Philadelphia Green, which has transformed over 150 vacant lots into parks, gardens, and passageways; and the Village Workshop, which offers skills training in carpentry and construction, tutoring, and job placement assistance, among others, to lower-income individuals.

Public art has a strong presence in the Village and contributes to the beautification of the challenged neighborhood in which it is situated. The Village engages in regular collaborations with artists through events, workshops, programs, residencies, installations and other projects.

**LEARN MORE** [villagearts.org](http://villagearts.org)





## **PLACEMAKING:** BRING INSPIRATION to the STREETS

What's the vibe of the Creative District and how can we communicate that through streetscape elements and public realm improvements to form a unique District experience? The District identity—and, therefore, the character of the streets—should be distinct from other parts of Wilmington and particularly distinct from the traditional main street aesthetic of Market Street, given its very close proximity. Public investment in streetscape and public realm improvements are necessary means to the end of not only creating a sense of arrival and a sense of place in the District, but also leveraging private investment in development opportunities.

3





## **BOOK IT:** Organize and promote regular arts events

Especially in the early phases of Creative District development—while there aren't many permanent venues where arts-related programming is being offered by individual entities—district programming through regular events will play a critical role in establishing the district's identity and building momentum.

Particularly before visitors begin to recognize the Creative District as a destination, events should be designed to target populations that are already readily accessible to the area: Downtown Wilmington's significant weekday population of commuters, residents of communities nearby, and visitors who are already coming to arts and cultural destinations within the District or in the area. While the Creative District programming should continue to serve these user groups even after visitorship to the district itself increases, the timing and content of events in early phase District development should be specifically tailored to the needs and interests of these groups. District leadership should place a priority on the following programmatic efforts to kick start foot traffic and bring attention to the District's potential.

### **NOW Create more activity after business hours and on weekends**

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, approximately 40,000 commuters head to their homes outside the city from their jobs in Wilmington every weekday, often facing the daunting task of jockeying for position even before they leave the parking garage. This cohort, which has significant spending power, is in some ways a captive market for arts and entertainment spending in the Creative District for a couple of hours after close of the workday—which would also make for an easier commute once the peak rush hour traffic has died down. However, the majority of the area's businesses—retail, galleries, and restaurants—close at 5pm. Visitors to the entertainment venues in the area or the monthly Art Loop are faced with the same problem—there aren't many opportunities to grab a bite before the show or socialize afterwards—regardless of whether they're visiting on a weeknight or weekend. District leadership should work with local businesses to expand their hours to stay open later on weeknights as well as hold weekend hours. This has the potential to not only increase local spending, but also improve the experience of the District, make it feel safer and livelier.



organize events  
featuring local talent



make the district "ground  
zero" during art loop



encourage businesses  
to stay open later  
during events

In addition to working with local businesses to reconsider their permanent hours, the Creative District Alliance could consider organizing other temporary evening events such as night markets, coupon incentives for use at any business in the area on a specific evening, and organizing food truck corrals on the street adjacent to entertainment venues on evenings that are expected to bring in higher numbers of visitors, and so on. Eligibility requirements for business and development incentives should also include extended evening and weekend.

### **NOW Turn up the volume on Art Loop**

Now in its 25th year, Wilmington's Art Loop "Art on the Town" has great potential to bring buzz to the Creative District. Leveraging the positive impact that this event already has on Market Street and the downtown, the Creative District Alliance should identify ways to extend the reach of the event by coordinating programming and activities in the District on Art Loop nights and by expanding marketing of the event by co-promoting Art on the Town and Creative District events.

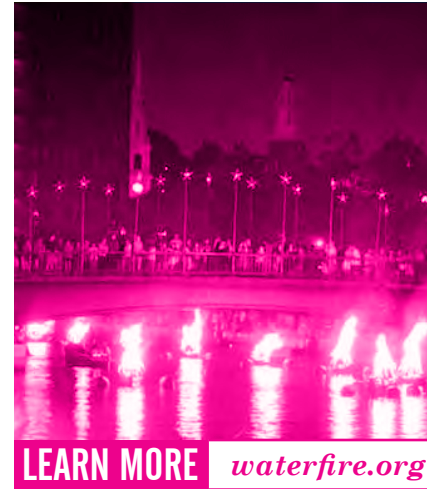
Building on the idea of working with business owners to create a more active nightlife in the downtown, and specifically during Art on the Town and similar events, the Creative District Alliance should work with the Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs and its partners to consider other ways of improving Art on the Town, such as bringing in music and dance performance or other interactive elements. Diversifying the primarily visual art event can expand audiences by attracting visitors who are interested in different forms of art. Coordinating something like this as a "closing event" for Art Loop evenings—especially if held within the District as the "homebase" for Art Loop—would help make the multi-site concept feel more cohesive.



Additionally, Wilmington's Art Loop, which is held on the same day as Philadelphia's monthly First Friday, may place it in competition for visitors. In conversations with local decision-makers, artists, and those involved in the business/arts/culture world in Wilmington as a part of this process, several speculated that not only does Wilmington's Art Loop lose locals to Philadelphia's First Friday, but that perhaps Wilmington could draw more attendees for Art Loop from the Philadelphia area if Art Loop were not held on the same day as First Friday. Additional research and analysis should be done to understand the potential benefit a change in scheduling could have on both Art on the Town and the Creative District.

## Organize major events showcasing local talents

Wilmington's larger arts and cultural destinations showcase works from around the world. Many of the area's smaller community-based arts programs, local artists, performers, and craftspeople, don't have much of a platform or venue for demonstrating the capabilities of local talents. Instilling a focus on the local arts scene and its potential is central to the concept of building a community around creativity within the District. The Creative District Alliance, potentially in partnership with Gable Music Ventures and others, should organize annual events that promote local talent and foster greater connections across disciplines within the arts, cultural, and business communities—as well as with neighborhoods nearby.



### WATERFIRE

Waterfire was created by Barnaby Evans in 1994 to celebrate the 10-year anniversary of First Night Providence. Accompanied by music from around the world, the sculpture consisted of bonfires floating on braziers on the three rivers passing through the downtown area. Since then, with support from volunteers, staff members, donations, corporations, the City and the State, the WaterFire lightings have become a regular event in Providence. Each season, which runs from spring to fall, hosts roughly 20 lightings and can attract up to tens of thousands of visitors per lighting. The high degree of success of Waterfire underscores the potential public art has to revitalize cities.

LEARN MORE [waterfire.org](http://waterfire.org)



### KENSINGTON KINETIC SCULPTURE DERBY

Since 2007, the annual Kensington Kinetic Sculpture Derby has invited entrants to parade their wild and crazy custom modifications of bikes and other wheeled and pedaled self-powered transportation machines in a wacky "race" through neighborhood streets in one of Philadelphia's hipster enclaves. Reaching the finish line [a goal secondary to that of creating a totally off-the-wall kinetic sculpture] is usually preceded by a major blooper moment as participants try to navigate their rides across a

treacherous mud pit, which, as any cyclist would know, is pretty darn near impossible on two wheels. The Derby, organized by the New Kensington Community Development Corporation [NKCDC] as a part of the Trenton Avenue Arts festival in East Kensington, brings together thousands of bike enthusiasts, local artists, residents, and visitors, increases exposure of Philadelphia's creative community, and promotes local bike culture.

LEARN MORE [kinetickensington.com](http://kinetickensington.com)



## STAND OUT: Visually distinguish the Creative District

District branding efforts can often lead to the same end: banners. While some districts have found them to be effective, the Creative District Alliance is encouraged to pursue other methods of visually distinguishing the District by demonstrating its identity through a variety of streetscape elements and public realm improvements.



street furniture by local designers and fabricators



alternative pavement accents



temporary streetscape treatments to create a buzz



mural gallery/district branding



signage identifying creative culture



temporary lighting installations



pedestrian lighting [not too traditional!]



LEARN MORE

[thewynwoodwalls.com](http://thewynwoodwalls.com)



### WYNWOOD WALLS

The Wynwood Walls is an art park in Wynwood, a warehouse district in Miami. The park features dozens of graffiti and street art murals from international artists on warehouse walls in addition to a restaurant and pop-up shop. Additional murals have been commissioned in the surrounding neighborhood as well. Art walks occur the second Saturday of every month and can attract up to 10,000 visitors. The success and scale of the project has been a driving force in the revitalization of a previously dilapidated neighborhood.

## NOW Make use of blank walls to create an outdoor gallery throughout the District

The blank side walls found throughout the area present an opportunity to create a District-wide canvas to showcase local talent, help visually distinguish the Creative District, and, in some locations, promote the District's branding. A mural program is also an excellent way to integrate youth engagement and job skills training into District activities.



[ Top: The Creative Visions Factory crew working on their first mural project on the 7th Street Peninsula. Bottom: A highly visible Shipley sidewall between 5th and 6th would make an ideal location for a high-impact mural. ]

**FIG 13:** Shipley sidewalls map [ Mural opportunities along Shipley Street ]

## Work with business and property owners to improve signage

Oftentimes arts studios or other types of creative production spaces tend to fly under the radar when it comes to street presence. Simple identification through signage, window displays, or other visual cues of the creative activity that goes on within can go a long way to promote awareness of the local arts scene among visitors and within the community itself.

Businesses in the District that aren't necessarily related to the arts and cultural scene can nevertheless contribute to this emerging identity by rethinking their exterior signage with the help of local artists and fabricators. Creative District leadership should seek resources to implement a sign grant program to boost the visual impact of District signage and develop stronger ties between the business and arts communities. The sign grant program could be promoted as a distinct "mini-grant" program through façade improvement programs.



### ICY SIGNS

Icy Signs seek to reinvigorate challenged economic corridors in Philadelphia through bold, colorful storefront signage that play with "classy" aesthetics. Steve Powers, a former graffiti artist known as ESPO, and his group of artists draw inspiration from garish style of signs seen in the fifties in New York. The artists use their sales of artwork and signs in New York to offer the signs pro bono in Philadelphia.

LEARN MORE [icysigns.tumblr.com](http://icysigns.tumblr.com)



## Implement streetscape enhancements along Shipley

A major component of the framework for the Creative District vision is to concentrate foot traffic, programming, and activity on Shipley Street. The concept originates not only from the strategy of capitalizing on the momentum of Market Street nearby, but also from the opportunity of working with the already distinct character of Shipley Street. Compared to the feel of other streets in the proposed Creative District, Shipley has the best bones to become a creative corridor—the backbone of the District.

The challenge is two-fold: turn public perception of Shipley as a forgotten "back alley" upside-down by reinventing it as a gritty but welcoming destination, and retrofit rear spaces of buildings facing Market to have active ground floor uses fronting on the Shipley Street corridor. Establishing a strong sense of place by building on Shipley's existing character and infusing some new elements that speak to an emerging culture of creativity is one way to pave the way for private investment in repurposing spaces with frontage on Shipley.



*[ Despite Shipley Street's current alleyway character, it just takes a little imagination to see how it could become something much more. ]*



Some part of this equation is not new. Since 2004, the City has identified a streetscape overhaul of Shipley among its priority projects. The Delaware Department of Transportation's 2010 conceptual designs for Shipley between 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Streets propose extending the sidewalk on the east side of the street by two feet into the excessively wide roadway, adding street trees and pedestrian scale lighting on both sides, and providing ADA accessible curb ramps. Creative District leadership is encouraged to advocate for the advancement of this project, but with the following alterations tailored to the concept of making Shipley an arts and cultural destination.

#### > Extend the improvement area to 9<sup>th</sup> Street

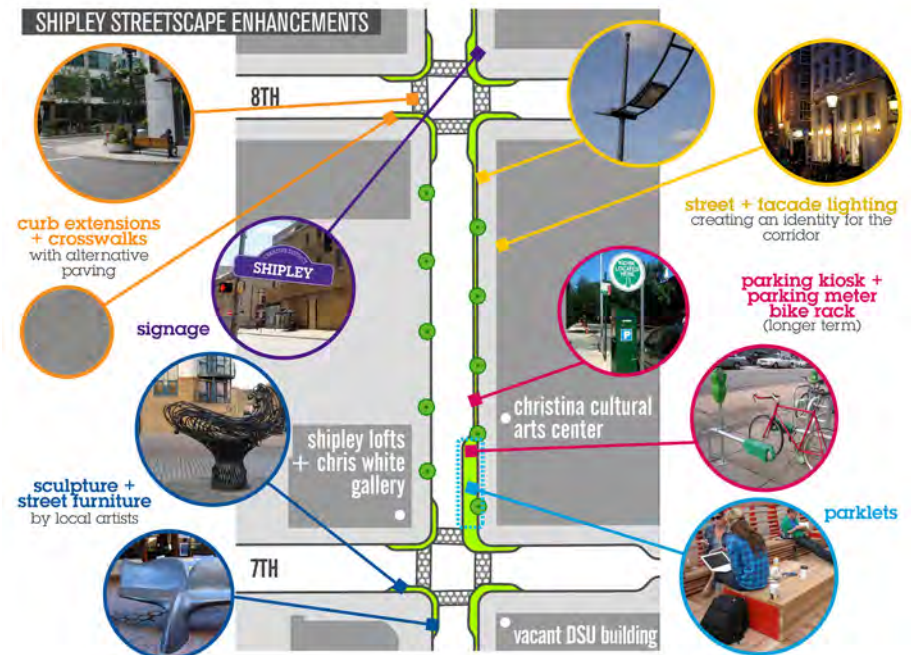
The DDOT designs propose improvements on Shipley between 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Streets only, but the gap from 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> is a critical connector to the 9<sup>th</sup> Street corridor and the potential large development at the former Midtown Parking Garage site at 9<sup>th</sup> and Shipley/Orange.

#### > Build bumpouts

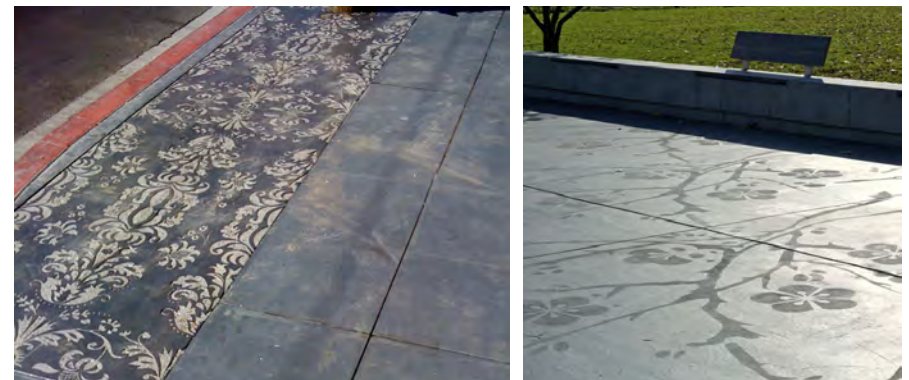
Even with the planned two-foot extension of the east side of the sidewalk, Shipley's sidewalks are too narrow to accommodate many streetscape elements such as bike racks and benches. Bumpouts would also provide extra space for public sculpture at cross-streets, which would make the creative corridor more visible to foot traffic on Market.

#### > Explore decorative sidewalk and crosswalk treatments

DDOT's plans for streetscape enhancements on Shipley specify a standard concrete sidewalk. To make the street stand out as a distinctive corridor, alternative pavement options can go a long way—especially if the aesthetic distinguishes Shipley from the character of the Market Street aesthetic, which employs traditional red brick walkways to complement the main street identity. Other alternative paver strips, etched sidewalks, permeable pavers, rain-activated patterns, and a variety of other options should be considered. Using the same or similar materials and patterns to extend into the crosswalks can act as a signifier that the crosswalk is an extension of the sidewalk, increasing motorists' awareness of the presence of pedestrians.



**FIG 14:** Proposed Shipley streetscape elements and public realm improvements



[ Left: Etched sidewalks in San Francisco's Mission District distinguish the streetscape. Right: Etched sidewalks in Normand Park, London ]

### > Improve bike & car parking

Bumpouts will create additional sidewalk space for bike parking. A longer-term plan would be to install parking kiosks to replace car parking meters, and in turn repurpose the parking meter poles as bike parking, as has been done in several cities. This approach would improve the experience for those visiting on either two or four wheels and also reduce clutter in the sidewalk utility zone.

### > Explore the opportunity to bury utility lines

As the cost of burying utility lines is drastically reduced if this can be coordinated with planned streetscape construction, the Shipley Street improvement project would be a great opportunity to consider cleaning up the wires running overhead.

### > Light up the corridor

A priority should be placed on installing pedestrian scale street lights on Shipley streets and on cross streets connecting Shipley to Market as



[ Proposed Shipley bumpouts make space for bringing the district's identity to the street. ]

well. Lighting will not only help distinguish the corridor, it will also help improve perception of safety. A variety of lighting fixture styles is found in the downtown Wilmington area, from the traditional lantern-style luminaires on Market Street to the more modern rectangular post lights on 9<sup>th</sup> Street. The style of pedestrian lighting will figure prominently in the streetscape and identity of the Shipley Street corridor, and District leadership is encouraged to consider lighting aesthetic that harmonizes with the grittier “back-alley” vibe of Shipley with perhaps a more “industrial” look.

### > Customize street signs

Swapping out standard street signs for signs that are designed to speak more to the corridor's character would be a subtle but effective way to brand Shipley and make it stand out.

## Engage local talent to design and fabricate streetscape elements

Bike racks, tree cages, benches, public sculptures, and so on are all opportunities to highlight the skills of local designers and fabricators by inviting them to be a part of defining the District's unique identity, as well as opportunities to create a sense of cohesion and throughout the



### SIXTH STREET AUSTIN

The East 6th Street National Register Historic District is a nine-block corridor passing through downtown Austin. Its success as a funky and accessible arts and entertainment street stems in part from an initiative starting in the mid-2000s between the Downtown Austin Alliance (DAA) and individual property owners. At the time, 54 of the 74 street-level storefronts were bars. Those involved in the initiative formed retail strategy to address the character of the corridor, which included promotion of the area under the “6ixth” brand. The DAA also created a position for a retail recruiter to attract businesses from other cities as opposed to national retailers in order to create a unique, diverse and also family-friendly experience along the street. 6ixth Street Austin is a non-profit consisting of property and business owners who advocate for, preserve, and enhance the corridor.

LEARN MORE [6thstreetaustin.blogspot.com](http://6thstreetaustin.blogspot.com)





District. In addition to concentrating these kinds of streetscape elements along Shipley Street—which will also draw attention from Market Street foot traffic when placed on bumpouts at the cross streets—locations should be identified throughout the district for custom designed and fabricated streetscape elements, especially where they can be located close to existing arts and cultural assets in the area.

## **TURN ON:** Shed some light on the District

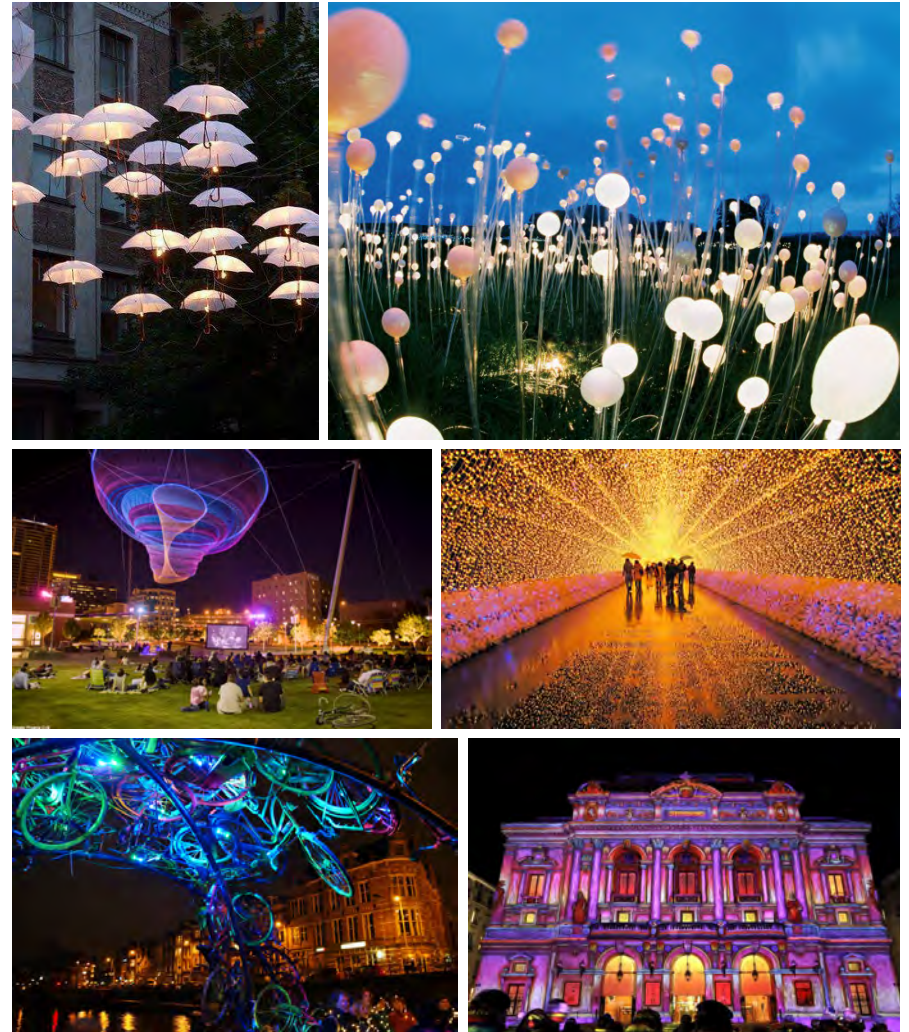
### **NOW** Pursue short term solutions to improve lighting

New pedestrian streetlights are costly streetscape elements that require extensive coordination with the City and utilities. Installing pedestrian scale lighting along Shipley [9<sup>th</sup> Street and Market Street already have pedestrian scale lighting installed] should indeed be a long-term goal integral to the Delaware Department of Transportation’s proposed Shipley Street improvements [including this study’s proposed extension of those improvements to 9<sup>th</sup> Street], but in the meantime, local partners should evaluate more immediate solutions. Façade, awning, or storefront lights offer a lower-cost solution. Business associations could spearhead a larger-scale storefront lighting program, negotiating a bulk purchase and installation rate from selected vendors.

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

### **Use temporary light installations to draw visitors at night**

Cities across the globe have used innovative annual lighting festivals to draw crowds at night. Some lighting installations have been designed to highlight the architectural character of historic structures or visually distinguish an area by completely reinventing the way it is experienced,



[ From top, left to right: Umbrella street light installation; Bruco Munro installation at Longwood Gardens; Janet Echelman installation in Phoenix; Japan Winter Light Festival; Amsterdam Light Festival; Lyon Festival of Lights ]



and are often a traditional component of a larger national or religious holiday celebration [think beyond the main street holiday string lights and tinsel garlands]. A large-scale, immersive lighting installation should be timed strategically during another event or time of year when there is increased visitorship in the area as a way of attracting folks to a specific place while there's a larger crowd in the area to tap into. Potential opportunities include the Mid Atlantic Wine and Food Festival, the Wilmington Flower Market, St. Anthony's Italian Festival, the Greek Festival, the Clifford Brown Jazz Festival, and LOMA's Ladybug festival. The festival should be conceptualized along with strategies to maximize the return on investment through visitor spending, simultaneous arts and culture programming in the district, and sponsorship opportunities.

## MAKE A SCENE: Create vibrant public spaces

### **NOW** Temporarily repurpose vacant land to promote District vitality

Vacant and underutilized land in the Creative District study area is seen as an opportunity for future development that would either help establish or harmonize with the District's identity. In the meantime, targeted sites should be considered for interim programming that would bring more activity to the area, turning eyesores into assets to the District. From pop-up beer gardens to mini golf courses to food truck



**FIG 15:** Interim solutions for vacant land

[ The vacant lot on the 400 block of Shipley/Market is large enough to accommodate interim uses and also is adjacent to lots on the east side of Market Street and west side of Shipley Street. ]

corrals to public sculpture gardens—or any combination thereof—there are any number of temporary uses that could help bring the Creative District vibe into the public realm. Following the model of the Serpentine Gallery Pavilion in London [only on a much smaller scale], the vacant lots could become the grounds of an annual installation featuring temporary public programming structures designed by architects.



#### PHS POP UP GARDEN

The PHS [Philadelphia Horticultural Society] Pop Up Garden is an outdoor beer garden occupying a vacant lot on Broad Street, a main north-south arterial street in Philadelphia. The garden features trees, lights, picnic tables, chairs, a large custom-built seating area, a play area for children, and a restaurant. Drinks include local craft beer; the menu for the restaurant was created by the Garces Group of the famed local restaurateur Jose Garces. The space also houses exhibitions, installations, performances, events, and live music by students of the nearby University of the Arts.



#### THE PUTTING LOT

In the summer of 2009, a group of recent college grads pooled their resources and creative talents to transform a vacant lot in Bushwick, Brooklyn, into a temporary mini golf course. The individual holes were designed and built by nine design studios and individuals who competed in an open design competition to participate in the project. The course attracted thousands of visitors and earned the project's organizers an impressive amount of press coverage, including a feature in the New York Times.

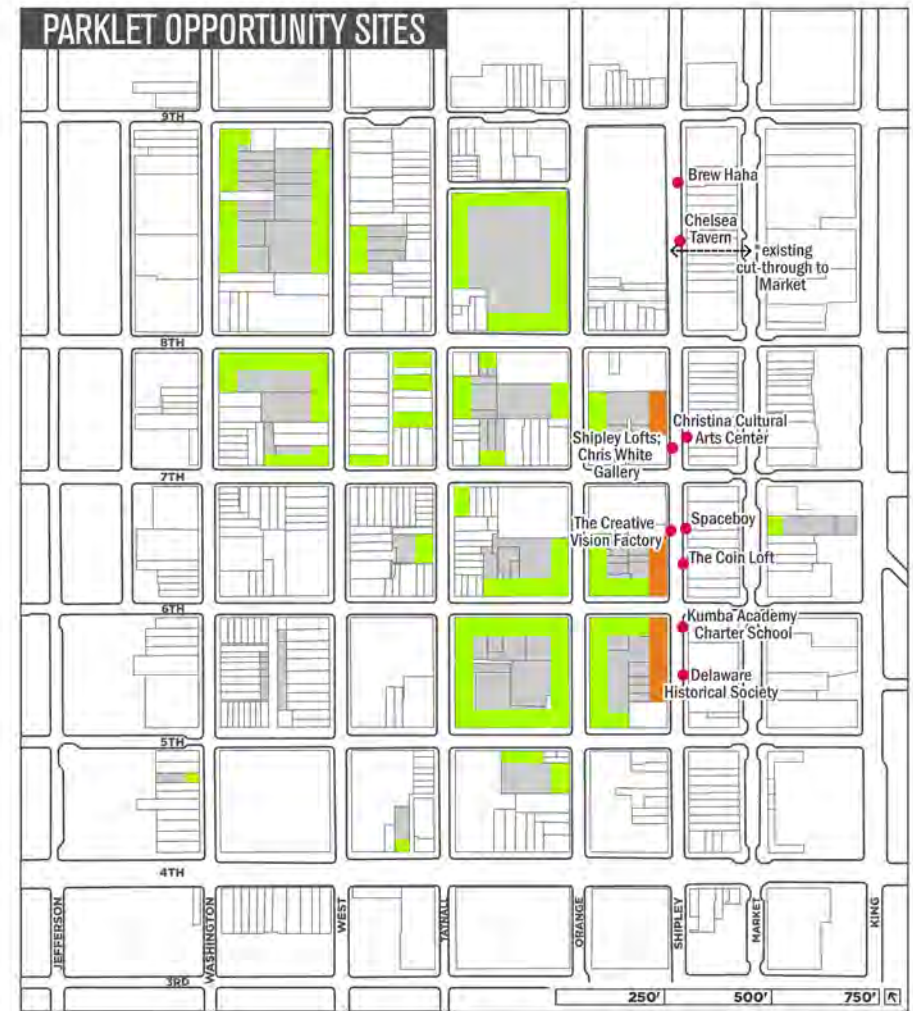
The large vacant lot on the 400 block of Shipley/Market is large enough to accommodate a range of ideas that could help establish the lot as a connector between Shipley and Market Streets. Creatively repurposing the lots on the corner of 7<sup>th</sup> and Tatnall Streets could help build momentum along with the planned development of live/work housing units on 7<sup>th</sup> and West.

### Sponsor a parklet design build competition

A parklet is a semi-permanent micro park integrated within the public right of way, typically occupying the footprint of one on-street parking space. Given the lack of public open spaces in the District, parklets are a great way to establish small spaces for passive recreation and socializing and bring greater activity outside and into the public realm, especially when they are located adjacent to locations that are already generating some foot traffic. A parklet design build competition could tap into local inspiration and fabrication skills, promoting the District's identity at the same time.



**FIG 16:** Potential parklet locations on Shipley Street



[ Left: A selection of parklet opportunity sites along Shipley Street next to creative entities. Above: Phase 1 of opportunity sites for parklets along Shipley Street. Phases 2 and 3 are opportunities for parklets in parking lots along Shipley and throughout the District. ]

- phase one options
- phase two options
- future options

**FIG 17:** District-wide parklet opportunity sites

## **Make space for outdoor public performances**

An outdoor venue integrated into a public open space could be designed to accommodate events and performances but with the flexibility to function as a passive recreation space for the majority of the time. The venue could accommodate regular programming of smaller scale events featuring local musicians and performers.

More permanent potential locations include Delaware Tech Plaza at 4<sup>th</sup> and Shipley and Willington Square, the courtyard of the Delaware History Museum; a “pop-up” approach could be taken with surface parking lots along Shipley [which are underutilized on weekends] or integrated within interim use programming for vacant land.

## **Establish stronger connections between Shipley and Market**

A key strategy to creating a more vibrant public realm specifically on Shipley is to link it to the activity happening on Market Street. Streetscape strategies along the cross streets could be supplemented by taking advantage of site-specific opportunities to create stronger connections:

### **> Willington Square**

The courtyard of the Delaware History Museum has great potential to become a public space that “belongs” just as much to Shipley as it does to Market. The Shipley frontage of the Delaware History Museum currently reads and functions as the “back,” of the Museum, which could be addressed through rethinking the perimeter fencing and entrances to the courtyard from Shipley.

### **> 800 Block of Shipley/Market Passageway**

An arched breezeway running through the 800 block of Shipley and Market Streets is an opportunity to use public art and lighting to call attention to this interesting mid-block connection.

### **> 400 Block of Shipley/Market Vacant Land**

The temporary programmatic elements described above would function to activate both Market Street and Shipley, forging a stronger connection between the two.

## **PLUG IN: Cultivate creativity through temporary programming and installations**

An incremental approach to cultivating the Creative District must include ways to expand opportunities for creative production and consumption through smaller scale investment, allowing the arts to grow organically and ensuring that demand for the local art scene is progressing in step with the supply of new spaces. Artists who are working to establish themselves need ways to support and promote their work; likewise, this District, working to define itself, needs artists and makers to have a strong presence visible in the public realm. These strategies are tailored to make use of existing resources to enable District momentum to build.

## **NOW Feature work of local talent through outdoor projections and installations**

Digital media, including film and photography, can be used to activate underutilized spaces, as any relatively flat surface can serve as a projection canvas for these media. Furthermore, these media would create nighttime programming within the District, helping to combat perception issues within the area, particularly at night. Promoting screenings as events and bringing a food truck corral into the equation would round out the experience for an evening of all-ages fun.

Sidewalls, or large blank walls on the sides of buildings, present numerous opportunities throughout the district to feature local digital multimedia work—or just good old fashioned neighborhood movie nights. Many of the best projection surfaces are located on the numbered streets that run either east or west, as most buildings in the District front streets that run north or south. Artwork on these sidewalls will also serve to activate numbered streets that have limited or no building frontage.

## **Repurpose vacant storefronts to showcase local works**

Commercial market demand in the Creative District is not robust enough to fill every vacant storefront. Though market dynamics may improve as plan implementation moves forward, vacant storefronts can be used in the meantime as space to promote the work of local artists, as well as improve perception and the experience of the District by minimizing the visual impacts of vacancy. Viewed only from the street, these temporary window displays could serve as one interim strategy to reactivate vacant



storefronts, particularly on Shipley Street. Several storefronts read together in close proximity to one another have the combined effect of essentially making Shipley Street itself a linear gallery. The Creative District Alliance should approach property owners with protected but open [not shuttered or otherwise covered] storefront windows and business owners with blank wall space about hosting temporary exhibits.

Taking the concept one step further, initiatives like the Charlotte Street Foundation's Urban Culture Project in Kansas City repurpose vacant commercial spaces as readily-occupied temporary gallery spaces until permanent tenants can be secured. This type of incremental strategy may work well on Shipley Street, as it tests the viability of future permanent arts venues while reactivating its underutilized storefronts.

The Art Loop could incorporate these storefront galleries into its offerings as well. In the initial phases of growth within the Creative District, the turnover of these galleries will create an interesting diversity to this monthly event—a reason to check out Art Loop every month to see what's new. In addition, the Art Loop could offer a "Shipley Art Walk." The audio tour could be available online for free download as a podcast.



[ A vacant storefront on the 600 block of Shipley Street shown here with an installation to activate the space until a more permanent use comes along. ]



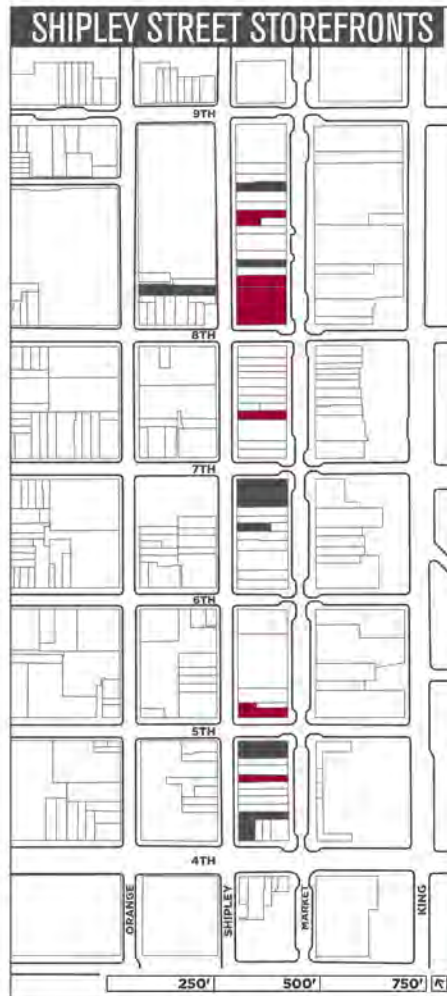
## MAKE BELIEVE - REACTIVATING VACANT SPACES IN WICKER PARK & BUCKTOWN

As part of Chicago Artists Month 2010, the Make Believe project, initiated by the Wicker Park Bucktown Special Service Area [WPB], reactivated otherwise vacant storefronts with temporary art displays to re-invigorate those spaces and bring positive attention to the area's commercial corridors. WPB issued a nation-wide open call for artist proposals to create temporary window installations in 10 vacant storefronts on a struggling segment of Milwaukee Avenue. The Make Believe theme asked artists to re-imagine what commerce in WPB would look like in the distant future.

A jury of well-known Chicago art professionals chose 10 teams or individuals to produce and install their proposed concepts, and once the exhibits were in place, a project website encouraged all members of the public to visit the storefronts and vote online for their favorite installation. The winning installation received \$5,500, the largest art prize in Chicago at the time, and the project succeeded in reaching its goals of "heightening neighborhood pride, supporting local businesses, increasing foot traffic, improving the pedestrian experience, garnering exposure for vacant retail spaces, and supporting the arts community."

**LEARN MORE** [makebelieve.wegotitnwpb.com](http://makebelieve.wegotitnwpb.com)





**EXISTING STOREFRONTS**  
 ■ unused storefront (used as loading entrance or back door)  
 ■ vacant building (w/ Shipley Street storefront)

**FIG 18:** Existing Shipley Street storefronts  
 [ Unused and vacant storefronts on Shipley Street.  
 These spaces could be temporarily occupied with  
 installations or galleries. ]

# MAKE SPACE for CREATIVITY: GUIDE DEVELOPMENT to SUPPORT CREATIVE PRODUCTION and CONSUMPTION

Cultivating a stronger creative scene requires finding additional space for both creative production [studios, workshops, and shared facilities] and creative consumption [galleries, performance venues, and event spaces]. Strong leadership, buy-in from private investors, and cooperation with City agencies is needed to lay the foundation for facilitating this type of development, which will require a combination of public and private investment. The following set of recommendations sets forth a range of targeted strategies for establishing new spaces to accommodate creative production and consumption within the Creative District.





## **MAKE IT:** Support establishment of new creative production spaces in the area

Musicians need recording studios. Carpenters need wood shops. Industrial designers need high tech equipment to develop prototypes. Creative producers of all varieties often need access to equipment and facilities they can't afford on their own. Larger scale investment in creative production spaces with shared facilities would likely have a powerful multiplier effect in that they would enable artists and makers to expand or improve their own operations, amounting to a greater collective impact. These types of facilities require a larger footprint, but could easily be accommodated in a number of potential adaptive reuse projects or future development opportunities in the area.

### **Explore opportunities for starting a kitchen incubator**

A kitchen incubator is a facility outfitted with a variety of food preparation equipment and staging areas designed for use by food manufacturing startups, home-based operations looking to expand, catering businesses that don't have their own facilities, and similar smaller-scale culinary enterprises. Successful kitchen incubators often provide more than high-quality, safe, sanitary shared food production facilities and taking care of necessary health department regulations in return for the user fee based on level of use of the facilities—they can also offer culinary skills

classes, provide business and marketing guidance from experienced industry professionals to help food entrepreneurs scale up, link food entrepreneurs with access to capital and advice on loans, hold special workshops for things like testing new products, and so on.

A number of models across the nation have shown that kitchen incubators bring significant social and economic benefits with wide-ranging impacts, including job skills training and creating economic opportunity for individuals regardless of level of educational attainment.

### **Recruit a Fab Lab to become a hub of creative production**

Many creative pursuits require using expensive equipment and production spaces with proper ventilation, sufficient space, and fire ratings. Printmaking, photography, woodworking, fabrication, and many other production methods are difficult to undertake on limited budget and working out of an artist's home. Artists tend to self-organize to share resources, working spaces, and costs, often resulting in an artist co-op or other membership-based model. Many modern tools used in creative production—things like laser cutters, waterjet cutters, CNC routers, 3-D



#### **HAMILTON CENTER FOR CULINARY ENTERPRISES**

West Philadelphia's Hamilton Center for Culinary Enterprises (CCE) is a 13,000 square foot facility offering high-quality commercial kitchen space and technical assistance to food businesses and startups at affordable hourly rates. The Center is also active in the surrounding community through partnerships with public schools and local organizations. CCE is an initiative of the Enterprise Center, which provides education and assistance to minority entrepreneurs who demonstrate a high degree of potential.

**LEARN MORE** [theenterprisecenter.com](http://theenterprisecenter.com)



#### **NEXT FAB STUDIO**

NextFab Studio is a collaborative workspace with tools and equipment for woodworking, metalworking, laser cutting and engraving, 3D printing, textile processing, electronics, photography, and 2D printing. Computer stations with professional design software are also available for use. The facility also houses a work area, private offices available through residencies, conference room, kitchenette, lounge, and cafe. Different types of membership are available, including weekend-only use. The facility also offers classes.

**LEARN MORE** [nextfabstudio.com](http://nextfabstudio.com)



printers, and so on—have created a new niche in creative production facilities offering high-tech equipment used to produce close to anything a maker can dream up.

A Fab Lab combining facilities to accommodate both traditional and cutting-edge production and fabrication methods would not only serve the immediate area's existing base of artists and makers and provide a means of entry for those looking to explore their creative potential; it would also be seen as a significant amenity to artists and creative professionals looking to relocate and would likely build a membership base drawing from those living in the greater Wilmington area as well.



#### AS 220

AS220 is a non-profit community arts center in Providence, Rhode Island that comprises three mixed-use buildings totaling over 100,000 feet. Included in this space are four dozen affordable live/work studios, galleries, public-access art studios, a high-tech fabrication and electronics lab, and an AS220 owned and operated bar and restaurant, among other amenities. AS220 serves roughly 1,000 artists annually and is a destination for over 90,000 people. The center places emphasis on accessibility to the surrounding community and has served as a driving force in the revitalization of downtown Providence.

**LEARN MORE** [as220.org](http://as220.org)



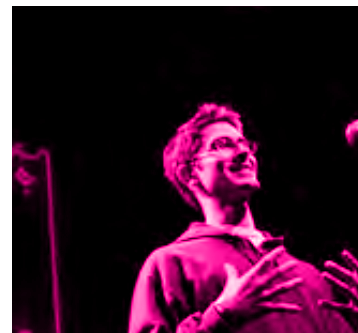
## ANCHOR: Support arts and culture venues

The Market Street corridor and riverfront are home to a variety of large performance and visual art venues and destinations that bring a solid base for visitorship and cultural identity to the area. Supporting that identity and the area's existing venues through strategic growth and diversification is a critical part of building on the District's existing assets.

### Encourage establishment of smaller venues to put local performers in center stage

Tourism research has shown that visitors are highly unlikely to visit more than one large arts or cultural destination in the same trip. For instance, visitors who spend a few hours at a natural history museum are not likely to then head for a contemporary art museum afterwards. It is much more likely that visitors will round out an arts and cultural visit with some shopping, dining, or entertainment. In that sense, smaller scale arts and culture venues and programming would act to reinforce existing anchors in the area by providing more things to do on an extended trip to the District.

Smaller venues are commonly found paired with a bar/restaurant or café. These more informal settings are a prime example of an arts and cultural venue that would be complimentary to larger destinations in the area, and also provide both booking opportunities for local and lesser-known performers and more affordable events for local communities to enjoy. Stand-up comedy routines, open mic nights, poetry slams, and storytelling events could accompany more intimate music shows in smaller venues, acting to diversify the District's offerings.



#### FIRST PERSON ARTS STORY SLAM

Story slams are premised on the idea that real life is more interesting than fiction. During this monthly event occurring in two locations in Philadelphia, audience members are invited to tell a story on a given theme. Each storyteller has five minutes to tell his or her story and is scored by a panel of judges. The receiver of the highest score is invited to a "Grand Slam" event, in which the monthly winners compete for the title of "Best Storyteller in Philadelphia."

## Explore potential for attracting additional anchor arts and cultural destinations

Some of the District's future development opportunity sites are large enough to accommodate new anchors. If the District manages to generate significant increases in levels of visitorship and activity—getting to the idea of establishing critical mass—there could be demand for and investment interest in additional larger scale arts and cultural venues that could further reinforce the area's identity as a destination drawing visitors from the greater Wilmington area and beyond. Being strategic about what types of venues would be the best fit will require further study that evaluates visitorship leakage and demand. The short term approach is to have early conversations with the owners of large sites about potential futures for their properties.



### TORPEDO FACTORY ART CENTER

The Torpedo Factory Art Center [TFAC] in Alexandria, Virginia is a non-profit organization housed in a former torpedo factory renovated in 1983 that provides workspaces, showrooms, and community for artists and opportunities for the public to visit working studios and take classes. The Factory consists of over eighty studios, six galleries, an archaeology museum, an art school, and a café, among others. TFAC is also a venue for meetings, special events and performances. It houses more than 165 visual artists, has roughly 2,000 art students and 1,000 cooperative gallery members, and attracts half a million visitors annually. In addition, Factory receives \$16 million in direct revenue per year. Support for the TFAC comes through the City of Alexandria, which provides rent at below market rates. In addition, TFAC has several partners: the Art League School, which offers educational services, among others, the Friends of the Torpedo Factory Art Center, Inc., which focuses on community outreach, and Friends of Alexandria Archaeology, a not-for-profit organization that supports the archaeological museum. Additional support for TFAC comes in the form of sponsorships and volunteering.

## CONCENTRATE: Focus development and rehabilitation efforts to anchor District growth

### NOW Advocate for preservation and reuse of historic buildings

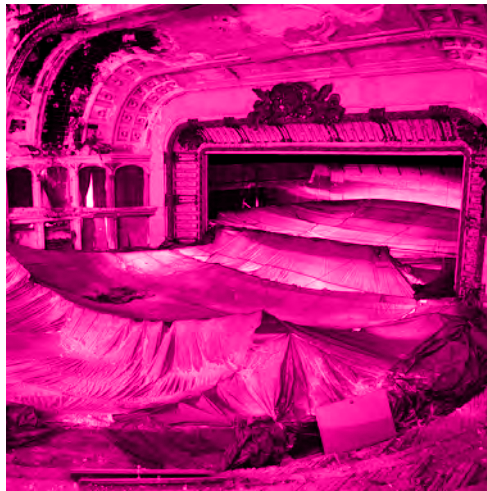
For a number of reasons, many arts districts across the country have taken root in historic structures, whether through adaptive reuse of formerly industrial buildings to create loft studio spaces or quaint main streets lined with galleries and craft shops. For one, historic architecture lends great value to that certain “sense of place” that is more difficult to achieve through new construction. Additionally, reuse of existing structures tends to result in rents that are more affordable to creative users.

The proposed District overlaps three distinct historic preservation districts, each with its own character and identity, and each with opportunities for adaptive reuse to house activities integral to the Creative District vision. Luckily, many residents of the Quaker Hill neighborhood and owners of properties along Market Street and West 9th Street have put tremendous effort and investment into preserving the historic character of their properties and the collective effect of this is visible and forms the foundation of the experience of these areas. Unfortunately, so much of the historic fabric of other areas has been lost primarily to demolition and paving the way for surface parking lots that dominate the middle of the proposed District. The Creative District Alliance should work with property owners and local preservation agencies to set a proactive course of action for preserving and reusing historic buildings in the District.

Programs to educate property owners about historic preservation methods and resources are necessary. Organize workshops for property owners providing guidance on both short-term and long-term architectural conservation methods for threatened buildings, as well as advising on available city, state and national historic preservation policy and incentive programs and where and when they may be applicable within the Creative District.

Towards the end of highlighting the potential of vacant or underutilized structures, creative temporary programming and events can generate activity and buzz, help remove the stigma of vacancy, and increase





## HIDDEN CITY PHILADELPHIA

The 2009 and 2013 Hidden City Festivals in Philadelphia invited the public into vacant and forgotten architectural gems throughout the city, making these hidden spaces visible to the people who walk, run, or drive by them every day. Each destination of the festival celebrated “the power of place through the imagination of contemporary artists,” treating visitors with installations and shows by performing and visual artists who created dance, music, sculpture, video, print, and mixed media pieces inspired by site-specific history and architecture.

## CANDY CHANG: BEFORE I DIE

Artist Candy Chang created the “Before I Die” installation on a vacant house in her neighborhood in New Orleans. With friends and members of the community, Chang used chalkboard paint on one side of the house, stenciled “Before I die I want to \_\_\_\_\_” in a grid on the painted exterior, and left a basket of sidewalk chalk for passersby to fill in the blank. The installation helped Chang grapple with the loss of a loved one while also deepening bonds within the community. In Chang’s words “... our public spaces can nourish our well-being and help us see that we’re not alone as we try to make sense of our lives.”



awareness of the neighborhood’s assets. This programming can invite the public to engage with the exterior of buildings or offer the chance for a unique opportunity to explore these structures from within. At the same time, reanimating the District’s forgotten structures can simultaneously serve as both a marketing tool, awakening the imaginations of potential investors, and as an advocacy tool, bringing attention to the value of preserving architectural diversity and existing character.

## Pursue scattered site infill and rehabilitation for affordable live/work units in Quaker Hill

West Street is a notable north-south corridor within the Quaker Hill Historic District, both a city and national register historic district. This area possesses a diversity of historic housing stock, including traditional brick row homes and detached houses.

While substantial rehabilitation and preservation efforts have taken place in this area through organizations including Interfaith Community Housing and the Quaker Hill Neighborhood Association, there is still a need for additional rehabilitation to fully stabilize this neighborhood. Properties identified for scattered site rehabilitation and adaptive reuse for live/work housing development are assumed to be fully vacant and are clustered along the West Street corridor within the Quaker Hill Historic District. Almost all of these structures are in average or distressed condition [C or D respectively].

The scattered-site rehabilitation opportunities include three-story attached or semi-detached townhouses and several detached houses as well. These structures could function as either single-family homes or multi-family apartments, either as rental properties or fee-simple sales, for artists and makers in the market for live/work configurations. Similar initiatives to provide affordable live/work opportunities have offered sliding scale rents based on income.

Properties within the historic district may be eligible for city tax abatement. A 10-year abatement program for renovations of properties within any historic district in the city is accompanied by a 5-year abatement for new infill development in a historic district. A 10-year abatement also exists for registered vacant properties [85% for rental properties and 100% for owner-occupied homes on the increased value of the rehabilitation improvements]. Properties may also be eligible for Delaware’s Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program or Federal and tax credits, although the latter are limited and extremely competitive. A partnership with a local bank is another option for financing rehabilitations in and around West Street, similar to the Paducah’s LowerTown Arts District model.



**FIG 19:** Vacant housing in the scattered site area  
 [ Scattered opportunities exist in and around West Street for the rehabilitation of housing into artist live/work spaces. ]

Some limited opportunities for new infill construction of live/work development also exist along the West Street corridor. The proposed live/work development by Interfaith Community Housing at 7th and West could be a critical catalytic project leveraging additional investment in the area. This plan also proposes infill development on the block bounded by West, Tatnall, 5th, and 4th to allow a greater diversity of live-work housing typologies, as well as to accommodate shared creative production facilities in a prospective adaptive reuse of the historic gymnasium on the north side of the block. This building could be rehabilitated to include over 10,000 square feet of multifamily housing and at least 5,100 square feet of creative production space. Adjacent to the historic gymnasium and across the street are two additional buildings that are also potential opportunities for rehabilitated creative production spaces, totaling approximately 8,000 square feet. In addition



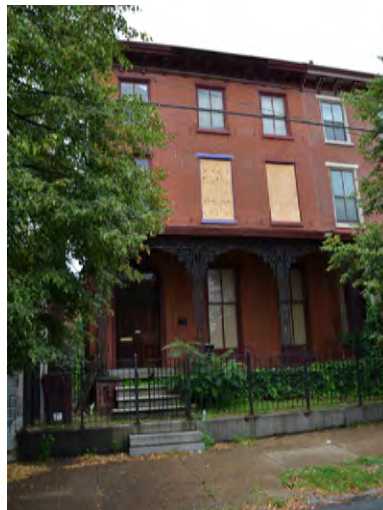
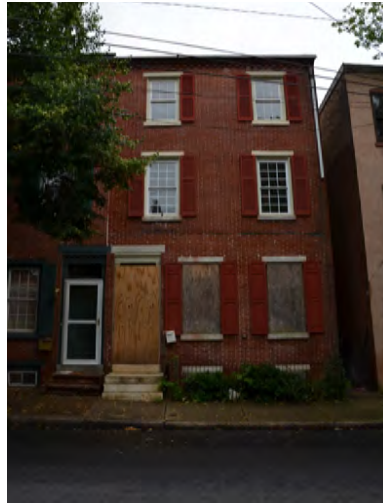
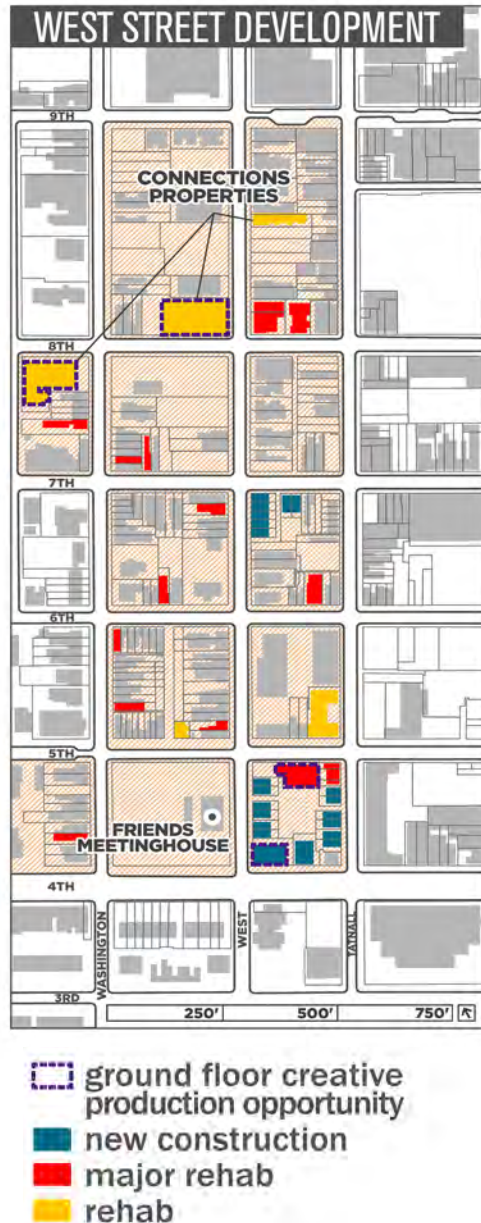
#### PROJECT ROW HOUSES

Project Row Houses (PRH) is a nonprofit art and cultural organization founded in 1993 in the historic Third Ward of Houston, Texas. Its campus began as a one-and-a-half-block site with 22 shotgun houses and has grown to encompass six blocks with over 50 properties. It now includes low-income residential, commercial, office, exhibition/residency, and studio spaces as well as houses for artists and young mothers, a community gallery, and a park. PRH offers programs addressing arts and culture, neighborhood revitalization, low-income housing, education, historic preservation, and community service. These include artist residencies, after-school and summer programs, and a program for young mothers. Row House Community Development Corporation (RHCD) is an affiliated entity that further focuses on housing needs and community development through designing and building low-income housing. Support for PRH has come in the form of volunteering, partnerships, donations, and funding from individuals, foundations, corporations, and educational institutions, among others.

**LEARN MORE** [projectrowhouses.org](http://projectrowhouses.org)







**FIG 20: West Street development**  
 [ Left: Vacant structures in the West Street area present opportunity for development. Those in poor condition would be in need of a major rehabilitation. Presently vacant land could be sites for new construction. Above: Vacant homes along West Street. ]

to these rehabilitation projects, this plan proposes new construction in the infill development: twelve single family townhomes comprising approximately 31,000 square feet and two live/work multifamily buildings comprising over 24,000 square feet. The zoning of this block is primarily R-3 at present, but allowing this type of development would require rezoning to allow creative production uses as well as building typologies currently not permitted.

### Create critical mass along Shipley Street

Market Street is both an established retail corridor and home to a number of large arts and cultural venues. Combined with its historic building stock and public investment in the quality of the streetscape, Market is a major asset to build on in developing the Creative District. In addition to its close proximity to the foot traffic and activity on Market, Shipley Street also has something you won't find anywhere else in the Creative District—a continuous street wall [albeit primarily on the east side of the street] distinguished by historic character, comprising a very promising sense of place. Many might describe the existing “sense of place” as an unpleasant alley serving primarily as a place for trash cans and finding parking convenient to Market. But with some imagination backed by public and private investment, Shipley is strategically positioned and has the right bones to become the Creative District's main corridor—a place where galleries, studios, shops selling locally produced goods, and small entertainment venues could take root and drastically expand downtown Wilmington's offerings and complement the activity already energizing Market.

Shipley Street comprises numerous artistic, cultural, and social entities within the Creative District. Some front on Market Street but have active storefronts on Shipley Street as well. The Shipley Street Storefronts graphic classifies frontage typologies fronting on Shipley. These are separated into two categories: existing storefronts and potential storefronts.

All existing storefronts have the physical components of an active store entrance, namely an entrance door and large storefront windows. Their level of use on Shipley Street ranges, however. Active storefronts serve



as either primary or secondary entrances to the store or location. Unused storefronts serve as a loading entrance or back door, i.e. not for customers. There are also several vacant buildings with leasable spaces on Shipley—already equipped with entrance doors and storefront windows. Potential storefronts are those which do not yet have the physical components of an active commercial frontage.

Activating underutilized spaces and potentially reorganizing interior configurations to accommodate active frontage on Shipley as well as on Market for those floor plates that are continuous through the block will take some time. Public investment in the Shipley streetscape, as well as interim strategies to activate vacant storefronts with creative installations, are intended to be a part of an incremental approach to leveraging buy-in from property owners along Shipley to take part in the effort to create a presence on Shipley. Further incentive may be provided to reactivate or convert storefronts through matching loan-to-grant programs supporting façade improvements and interior space reconfigurations.

Eligibility requirements for a loan-to-grant program could support additional design objectives by prohibiting projects which propose to include solid security grates, vinyl awnings, or EIFS [synthetic stucco]; reduce the size of masonry openings or eliminate windows; or cover previously uncovered masonry with paint, stucco, siding, or other cladding.

Creative District leadership should engage the city in conversations to set forth design guidelines for any alterations proposed for properties with frontage on Shipley including façade design guidelines, minimum requirements for active frontage and percent transparency, and sidewalk use regulations including prohibiting storage of waste bins. Some of these guidelines and regulations should be specifically coordinated with the city's Design Review and Preservation Commission and the City Planning Commission, as these properties fall within the Market Street Historic District and are subject to additional regulations and review for proposed alterations.



#### EXISTING STOREFRONTS

- active storefront
- unused storefront (used as loading entrance or back door)
- vacant building (w/ Shipley Street storefront)

#### POTENTIAL STOREFRONTS

- existing loading entrance or back door
- no loading entrance or back door



**FIG 21:** Shipley Street frontage



**FIG 22:** Conceptual rendering of Shipley Street transformation through public and private investment





# IMPLEMENTATION

## APPENDIX

The following implementation matrix tables should be actively used, updated, and changed to track the implementation progress. It should be noted that the costs are preliminary and will need to be refined as efforts move forward with each recommendation item. Similarly, although a number of potential funding sources are identified for some items, it is the responsibility of the plan's leadership to determine the most attainable source of funds at the time fundraising efforts are underway.



## IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH

This Vision for Wilmington's Creative District was developed under the guidance of Wilmington Renaissance Corporation and a diverse Steering Committee comprised of institutional partners, artists, Downtown stakeholders and City representatives. The discussions generated during this process reveal the growing level of interest in establishing a visible home for Wilmington's creative industries.

The recommendations that resulted from this process include a full spectrum of ideas that range from lower-cost solutions that can be implemented quickly with the time and energy of WRC and their partners to more visionary projects that will require extensive fundraising and close coordination with the City and private interests to accomplish over a longer timeframe.

To address the range of strategies contained in this Vision, different implementation strategies with different partners are required to best align local resources and capacity to the task at hand. Implementation will require a combination of an organized and committed implementation entity, engaged stakeholders, and the partnership of City and State agencies, local institutions, private foundations and developers.

This plan is a living document. It can and should evolve as more discussions take place, new partnerships are created, and potential funding becomes available. As implementation progresses, the recommendations and priorities in this plan should continuously be re-evaluated to adapt to changes on the ground.

## IMMEDIATE NEXT STEPS

The WRC and the Creative District Steering Committee will need to take several important next steps in the coming months to jumpstart implementation activities. These steps will serve to ensure that participants stay involved and that potential partners embrace an active role in the plan's implementation.

### **Present the plan to local foundations**

The next immediate step is to submit the plan to local and regional foundations for implementation support. Foundation support and investment is essential to help further collaboration among local creative businesses and institutions to make this vision a reality.

### **Present the plan to the City**

Ongoing coordination with City representatives is necessary to ensure that this Vision supports the City's goals with regard to Downtown and economic development. Although City representatives participated in Steering Committee discussions, this Vision should be formally presented to the City's Department of Planning, City Council, and the Mayor's Office for further discussion. Copies of the plan should also be submitted to the Department of License and Inspection, Department of Public Works, Department of Real Estate and Housing, Department of Economic Development, Wilmington Police Department, Wilmington Initiatives, and DelDOT, to bring in the expertise of these agencies and develop partnerships for implementation.

### **Market the plan to attract volunteers and funding**

Printed copies of the Executive Summary and electronic copies of the full plan should be distributed to neighborhood organizations, local partners, and foundations. Use media outlets, including print, radio, TV, and online and social media to further spread the word.

### **Formalize a Creative District Alliance**

The Steering Committee should evolve from a planning entity to an implementation body called the Creative District Alliance (as described in Chapter 1 of this Vision). The Creative District Alliance would be tasked with coordinating the activities of this plan and working with City agencies, potential funders, and private partners. As an early step, the Alliance can operate in name only with staff support from WRC but serious consideration should be given to either establishing the Alliance as a separate non-profit or as a formal entity under WRC. Regardless of the

organizational structure, the Alliance should have its own identity, brand and on-line presence as a one-stop shop for creative industries in Wilmington.

The Creative District Alliance will meet at least three times a year over the next five years to guide the implementation of this Vision by prioritizing projects, tracking plan implementation milestones, and coordinating the activities of the various partners leading each initiative.

## PHASING AND PRIORITIES

The following implementation matrix identifies the potential time frame and costs for each of the Vision's strategies. Short-term actions are strategies that can or should be implemented in the next two years, medium-term strategies are characterized as actions that can take place in less than 5 years with long-term actions taking place in the coming decade. Recognizing that resources are limited, it is important to identify the priority projects that should become the focus of the Creative District Alliance.

At the end of the planning process, Interface Studio ran a priority exercise with Steering Committee members. While there were some varying ideas about what could or should happen first, there was a clear consensus amongst the stakeholders to start tackling the following strategies:

1. Cultivate a strong network around creativity and develop a sustainable fiscal structure (form a Creative District Alliance)
2. Coordinate change with the Creative District Vision (link to existing plans and initiatives)
3. Establish a creative district zoning overlay
4. Formalize an artist and creative business recruitment strategy
5. Expand programming to integrate creativity into social services
6. Encourage organizations and businesses to hire local artists
7. Create more activity after business hours and on weekends
8. Implement streetscape enhancements along Shipley Street (4th to 9th Streets)
9. Recruit a Fab-Lab to become a hub of creative production
10. Pursue scattered site infill and rehabilitation for affordable live/work units in Quaker Hill

Priority status is indicated in the following implementation matrix with the following symbol: **PRIORITY**



1	ORGANIZE: ESTABLISH DISTRICT DESIGNATION and MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE	Timeframe [short, medium, long]	Potential Costs*	Notes
<b>LEAD:</b> Formalize collaborative partnerships to establish and manage the Creative District				
<b>PRIORITY</b>	Establish the Creative District Alliance	short	-	staff time and organizing amongst existing organizations
	Develop a sustainable fiscal structure	medium	-	setting fundraising goals among the Creative District Alliance
<b>PAVE THE WAY:</b> Align policy with district objectives				
<b>PRIORITY</b>	Coordinate change with the Creative District Vision	short	-	advocacy and working with the City of Wilmington
<b>PRIORITY</b>	Establish a creative district zoning overlay	short	-	advocacy and working with the City of Wilmington
	Set forth guidelines for live/work and creative production spaces	short	\$75,000	consultant services

2	CULTIVATE COMMUNITY: PROMOTE STRONG NETWORKS and SOCIAL CAPITAL	Timeframe [short, medium, long]	Potential Costs*	Notes
<b>BUILD BUZZ:</b> Spread the word about the creative community				
	Hold a district logo design competition	short	\$55,000	for advertising, award for finalist and logo application & installation
	Develop a targeted marketing strategy	short	\$90,000	for marketing consultant, design / production of postcards, posters, etc., and website
	Encourage local businesses to help reinforce district identity	medium	\$10,000	organization, assistance with promotional materials
<b>RALLY:</b> Attract and support local creative entrepreneurs				
<b>PRIORITY</b>	Encourage organizations and businesses to hire local artists	short	\$10,000	for initial design and creation of directory including limited printing - an additional \$2,500 each year to update
<b>PRIORITY</b>	Formalize an artist and creative business recruitment strategy	medium	\$250,000	relocation and fit-out assistance - this is a goal for fundraising and can be offered in varying amounts based on demand
	Provide entrepreneurial skills workshops to help creative self-starters get established	medium	\$50,000	for marketing and expanding existing programs
	Establish a creative use rent subsidy program	long	\$20,000	per year with the idea that the program can subsidize 10 business annually by covering approximately half of their monthly rent (based on prevailing rents)

<b>SELL OUT: Create new opportunities for local artists and makers to sell their work</b>				
	Encourage gallery mash-ups with local businesses	medium	\$10,000	promotional materials and assistance with installation costs in local businesses
	Organize temporary and mobile vending of locally produced goods	long	\$60,000	per year: lots of marketing, some licensing and attraction of mobile vendors
<b>WORK IT: Facilitate creative production</b>				
	Establish a tool sharing program	medium	\$75,000	annually: includes rent, staff, cost of tools and maintenance
	Convert underutilized spaces into artist studios	medium	\$1,150,000	\$2.3 million to convert all underutilized space in the study area into studios. This assumes 60% conversion as a goal
<b>ENGAGE: Address community needs through Social Practice</b>				
<b>PRIORITY</b>	Expand programming to integrate creativity into social services	medium	\$100,000	supplemental funding for existing and future arts-based orgs to establish programming designed to serve challenged communities - could be a competitive grant

3	PLACEMAKING: BRING INSPIRATION to the STREETS	Timeframe [short, medium, long]	Potential Costs*	Notes
<b>BOOK IT: Organize and promote regular arts events</b>				
<b>PRIORITY</b>	Create more activity after business hours and on weekends	short	\$10,000	targeted marketing, event planning
	Turn up the volume on Art Loop	short	\$10,000	public relations to boost attendance & interest
	Organize major events showcasing local talents	medium	\$50,000	for two major events
<b>STAND OUT: Visually distinguish the creative district</b>				
	Make use of blank walls to create an outdoor gallery throughout the District	short	\$100,000 - 150,000	2-3 large murals
	Work with business and property owners to improve signage	medium	\$50,000	for a goal of 20 storefronts each benefitting from a max of \$2,500 in subsidy
<b>PRIORITY</b>	Implement streetscape enhancements along Shipley (4th to 9th)	long	\$2,000,000 - 2,250,000	for trees, lighting, sidewalk extensions, bumpouts, decorative crosswalks, bike racks, benches, trash cans, parklet and public art
	Engage local talent to design and fabricate streetscape elements	long	-	cost above includes mark-up for custom design benches, tree grates and bike racks
<b>MAKE A SCENE: Create vibrant public spaces</b>				
	Temporarily repurpose vacant land to promote District vitality	short	\$30,000	organizing, temporary programming and structure, site prep for food truck corral
	Sponsor a parklet design build competition	medium	\$55,000	award money, competition materials and installation
	Make space for outdoor public performances	medium	\$25,000	
	Establish stronger connections between Shipley and Market	long	\$40,000	

TURN ON: Shed some light on the District				
	Pursue short term solutions to improve lighting	short	\$50,000	lighting reimbursement for upgraded façade lighting or for keeping the lighting on late
	Use temporary light installations to draw visitors at night	medium	\$10,000-\$100,000	depends on final design but this should be large scale
PLUG IN: Cultivate creativity through temporary programming and installations				
	Feature work of local talent through outdoor projections and installations	short	\$20,000	includes purchasing of equipment (projector, etc). Cost reduces with equipment in hand
	Repurpose vacant storefronts to showcase local works	medium	\$25,000	for simple installations

4	MAKE SPACE for CREATIVITY: GUIDE DEVELOPMENT to SUPPORT CREATIVE PRODUCTION and CONSUMPTION	Timeframe [short, medium, long]	Potential Costs*	Notes
MAKE IT: Support establishment of new creative production spaces in the area				
	Explore District opportunities for starting a kitchen incubator	medium	\$1.2 - \$1,500,000	Depends on size, this is for a 10,000 sq. ft. facility. Includes 1st year salaries of staff but not future years
PRIORITY	Recruit a Fab Lab to become a hub of creative production	medium	\$2.0 - \$2,750,000	Depends on size, this is for a 20,000 sq. ft. facility. Includes 1st year salaries of staff but not future years
ANCHOR: Support arts and culture venues				
	Encourage establishment of smaller venues to put local performers in center stage	medium	\$100,000-\$500,000	funds for either ramping up an existing arts space or renovating a larger room / floor of an existing building
	Explore potential for attracting an additional anchor arts and cultural destinations	long	N/A	Depends on institution, scale and type of development
CONCENTRATE: Focus development and rehabilitation efforts to anchor District growth				
	Advocate for preservation and reuse of historic buildings	short	\$50,000-\$250,000	temporary programming for vacant structures: funding depends on reuse and size of the event
PRIORITY	Pursue scattered site infill and rehabilitation for affordable live/work units in Quaker Hill	medium	\$30 - \$40,000,000	includes new townhomes, apartments and creative production space
	Create critical mass along Shipley Street	long	(TBD)	Total amount of fund pool should be a product of discussion between WRC and its partners. Maximum cost of renovation (façade and interior) is \$250,000. Loan to grant program should be a matching program.

\* The dollar amounts in the Potential Costs column are meant to be a ballpark estimate of expenses associated with Creative District Vision Plan recommendations and are not meant to suggest an implementation budget. Actual expenses for plan recommendations are subject to a number of variables, including market conditions and the specific scope of work identified by the Creative District Alliance.





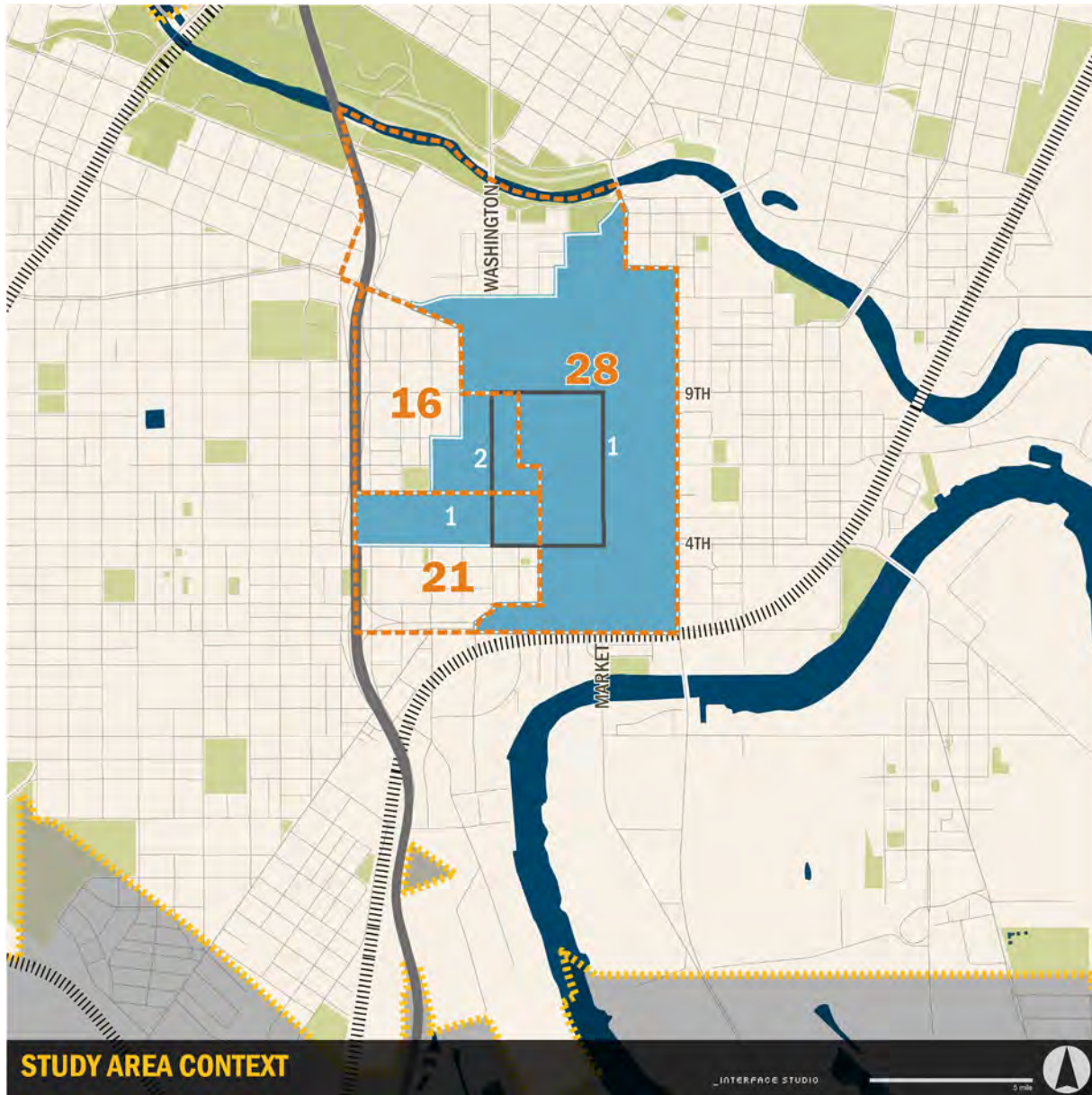
# EXISTING CONDITIONS

The analysis of existing conditions information from a variety of sources serves to ground a data-driven understanding of the Creative District and its context.

Demographic data came from the US Census Bureau Decennial Censuses and the American Community Survey. The sources of data relating to crime were the FBI, Neighborhood Scout, and Delaware Online Data Center. The City of Wilmington provided information on zoning, parcels, and ownership.

Land use, building condition, and vacancy data were collected through on-the-ground surveys performed in the late winter and early spring of 2013. Data relating to parking lots were culled from GIS parcel data, conversations with the lot owners and operators, and public online resources.





## Context

The study area for the Creative District spans east-west from Market to Washington streets and north-south from Ninth to Fourth streets.

The following Census tracts and block groups are located within the “study area”:

Census Tract 16, Block Group 2

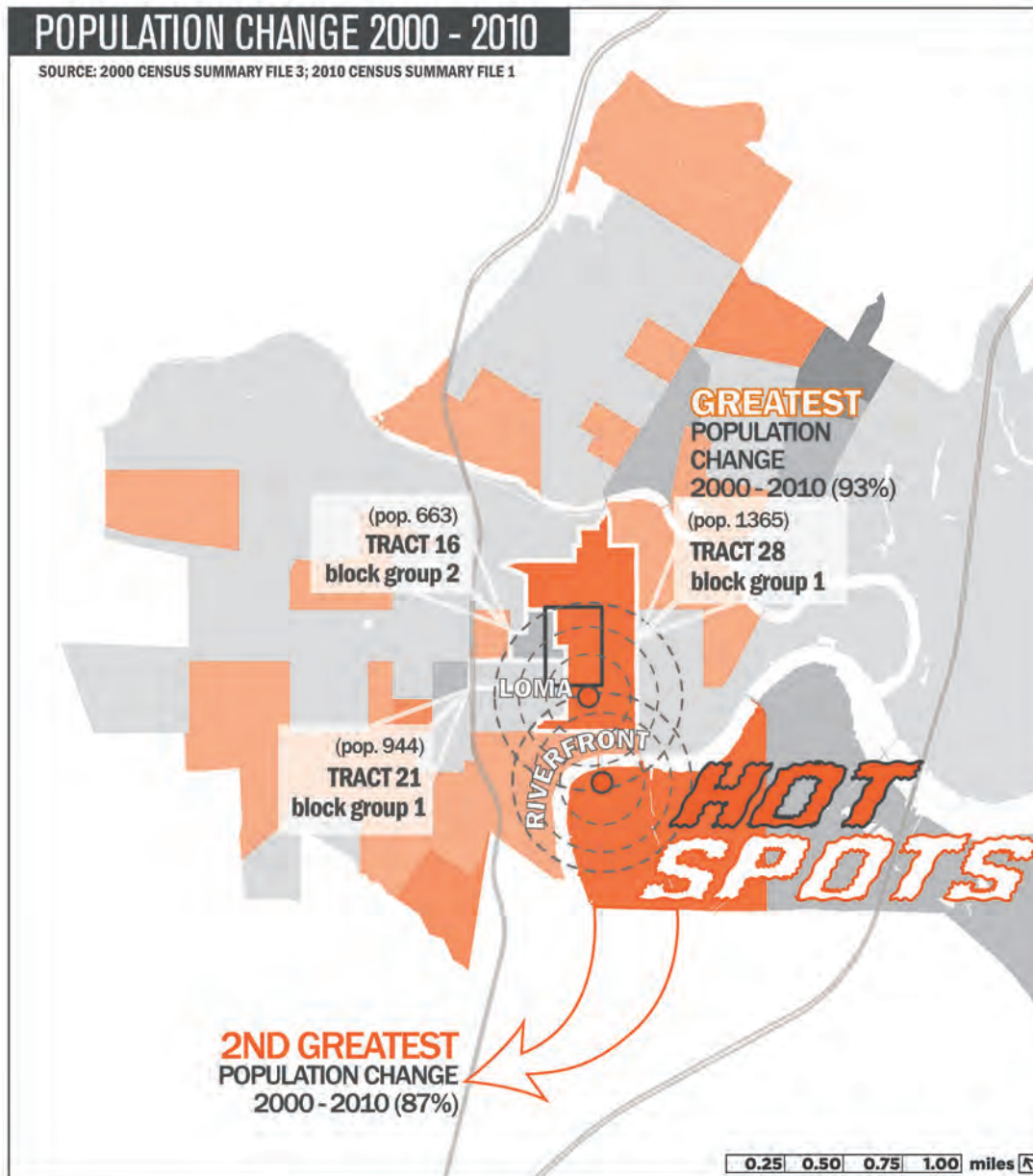
Census Tract 21, Block Group 1

Census Tract 28, Block Group 1

■ census block groups  
▬ census tracts  
— study area

**FIG 44:** Study area context map





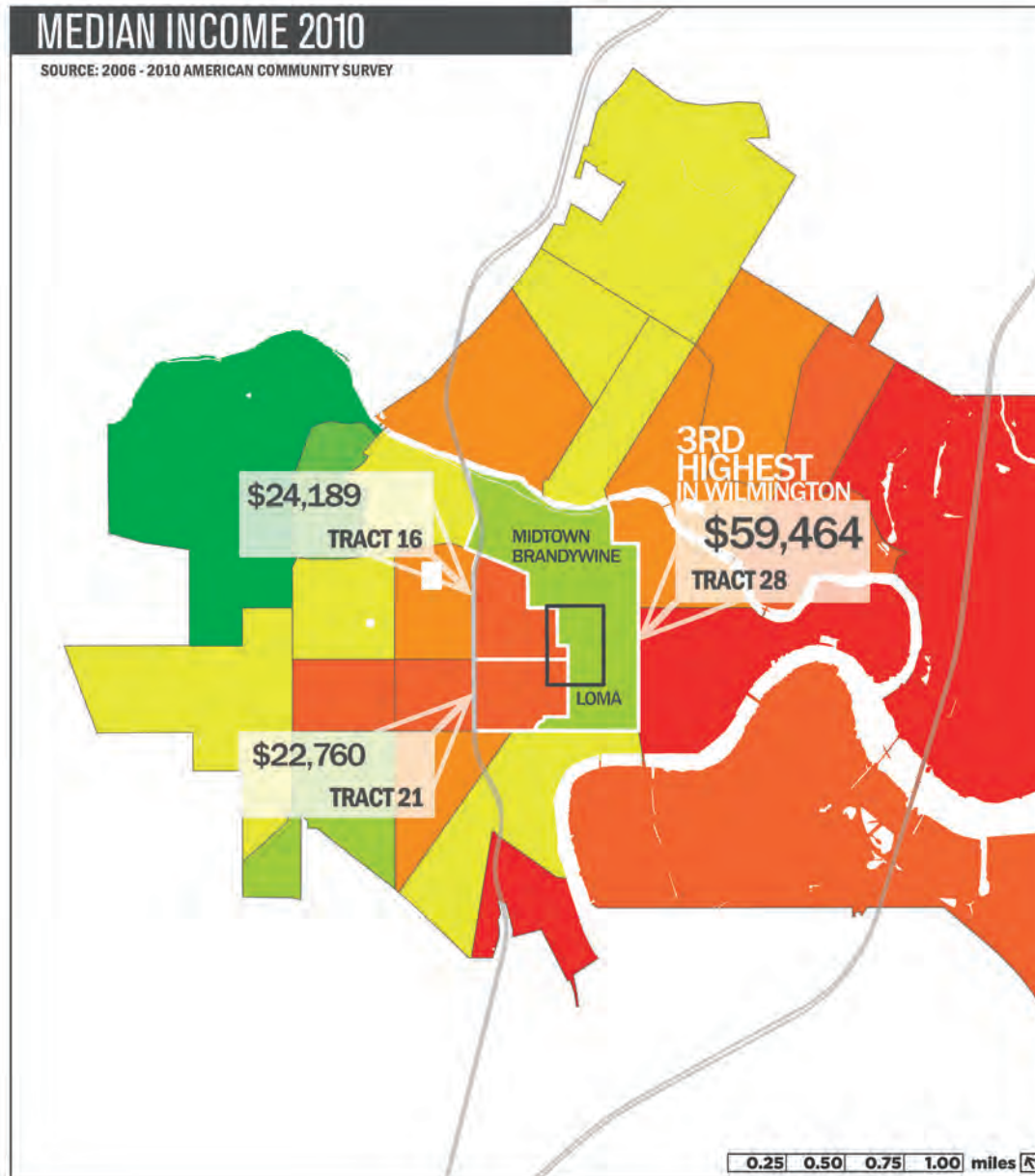
## Population

The area in and around our study area is growing in population and becoming wealthier. Between 2000 and 2010, tract 28 almost doubled in population. It is important to note, however, that the area has a limited population (1,365) and population density (5,068 people per square mile compared to 6,500 for the city as a whole). Further, much of this growth in tract 28 could be contributed to residential development in LoMa. While this influx of residents may currently be concentrated in LoMa, it also helps to form the basis of a population needed to support the creative district. Moreover, the tracts skirting the western edge of the district are much more densely populated, also forming a population ready for new amenities.

As of 2010, Tract 28 touts the third-highest income in Wilmington, with the largest percent increase in the entire city since 2000. As with the change in population, much of this growth can be attributed to the residential development in LoMa.



**FIG 45:** 2000 - 2010 population change

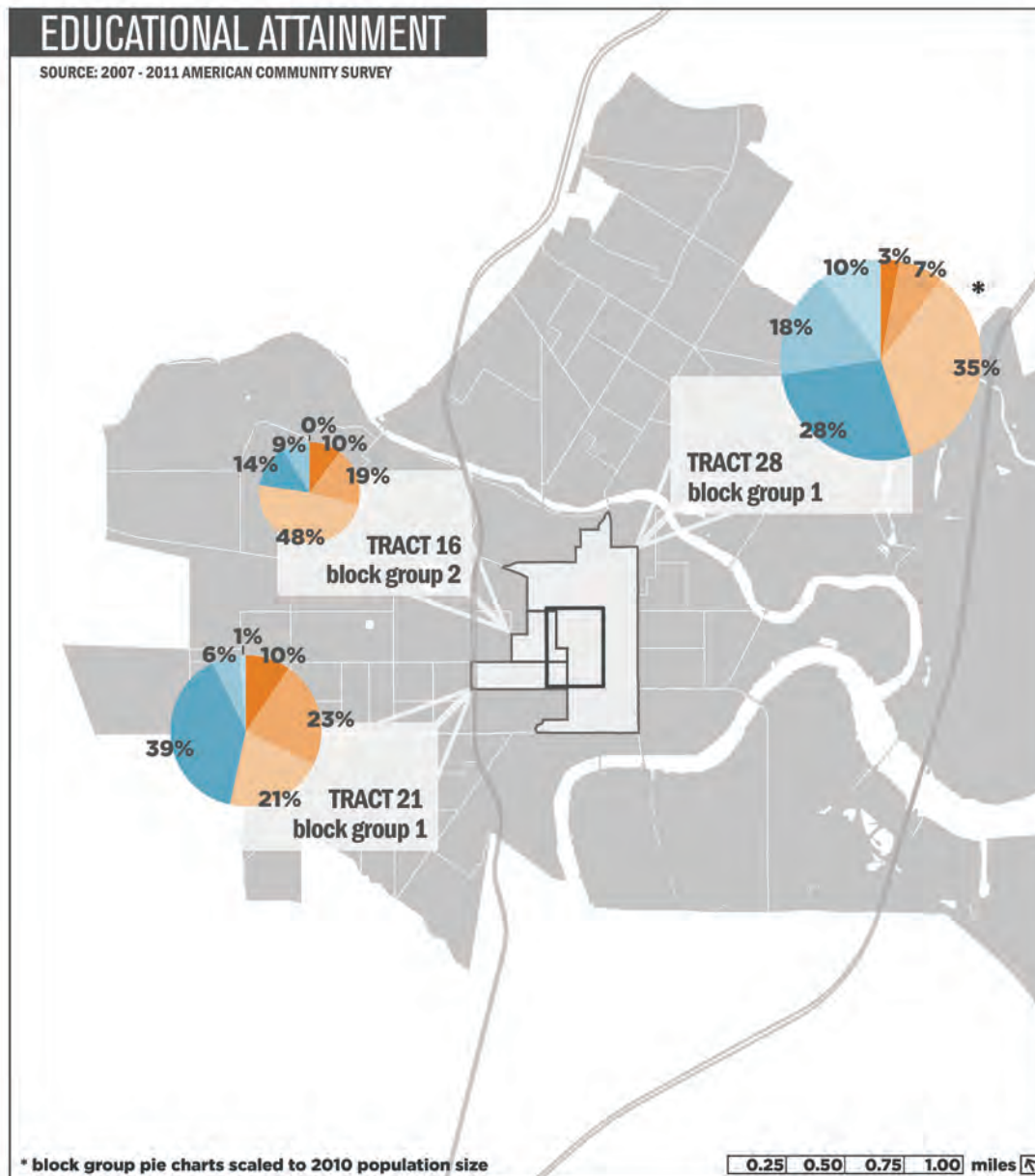


## Income

As of 2010, Tract 28 touts the third-highest income in Wilmington, with the largest percent increase in the entire city since 2000. As with the change in population, much of this growth can be attributed to the residential development in LoMa.

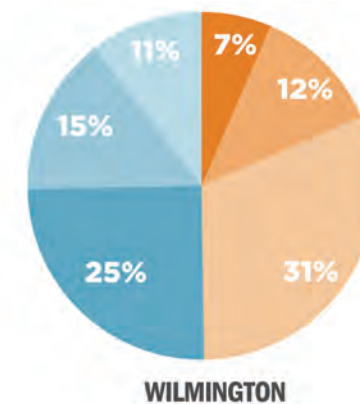


**FIG 46:** 2010 median income



## Educational Attainment

Educational attainment is higher in Tract 28 compared to the tracts in the western edge of the study area. 10 percent of residents in Tract 28 have a graduate or professional degree, whereas this percentage falls to one in Tract 21 and zero in Tract 16. Only 10 percent of the population in Tract 28 did not graduate high school (i.e. less than ninth grade or some high school), whereas in Tract 21, this proportion was 33 percent, and in Tract 16, 29 percent.

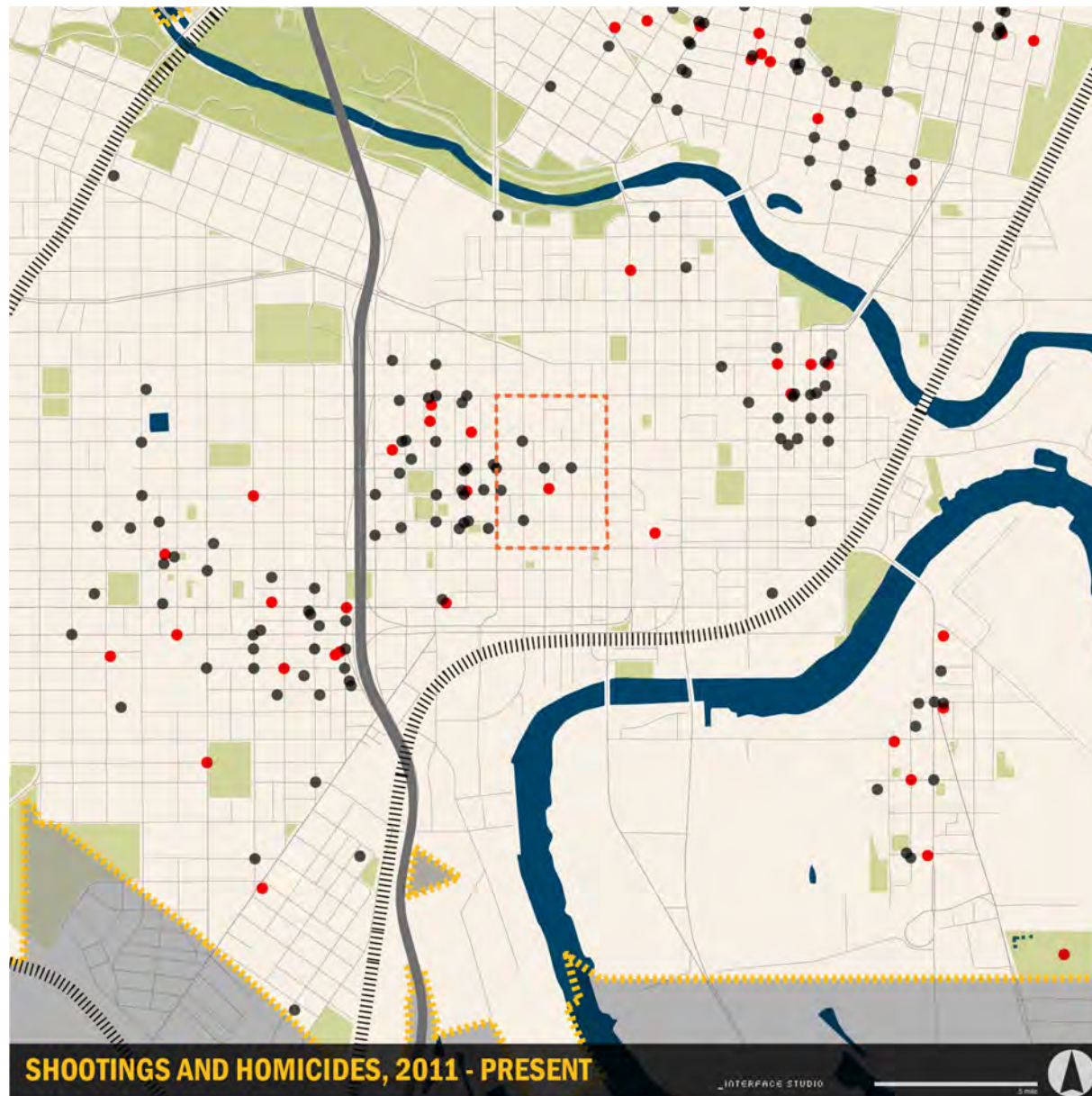


- Less than 9th grade
- Some high school
- High school graduate
- Some college or associate's degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Graduate or professional degree

**FIG 47:** Educational attainment







## Crime

While there are clear assets in and around the study area, it is faced with significant challenges as well. A high concentration of shootings and homicides exists immediately to the west of the area.

Wilmington has a higher rate of both property and violent crime than the state of Delaware. Property crime decreased from the late nineties into the early 2000s in Wilmington. While violent crime has been relatively constant in Delaware since the late nineties, Wilmington illustrates a slight upward trend since 2004.

In comparison to other US cities of a similar population (between 50,000 and 99,999), Wilmington has a much higher proportion of crime. Its crime rate is also above that of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and twice as high as Newark, Delaware. Crime in the study area Census tracts is over twice as high as in Wilmington.

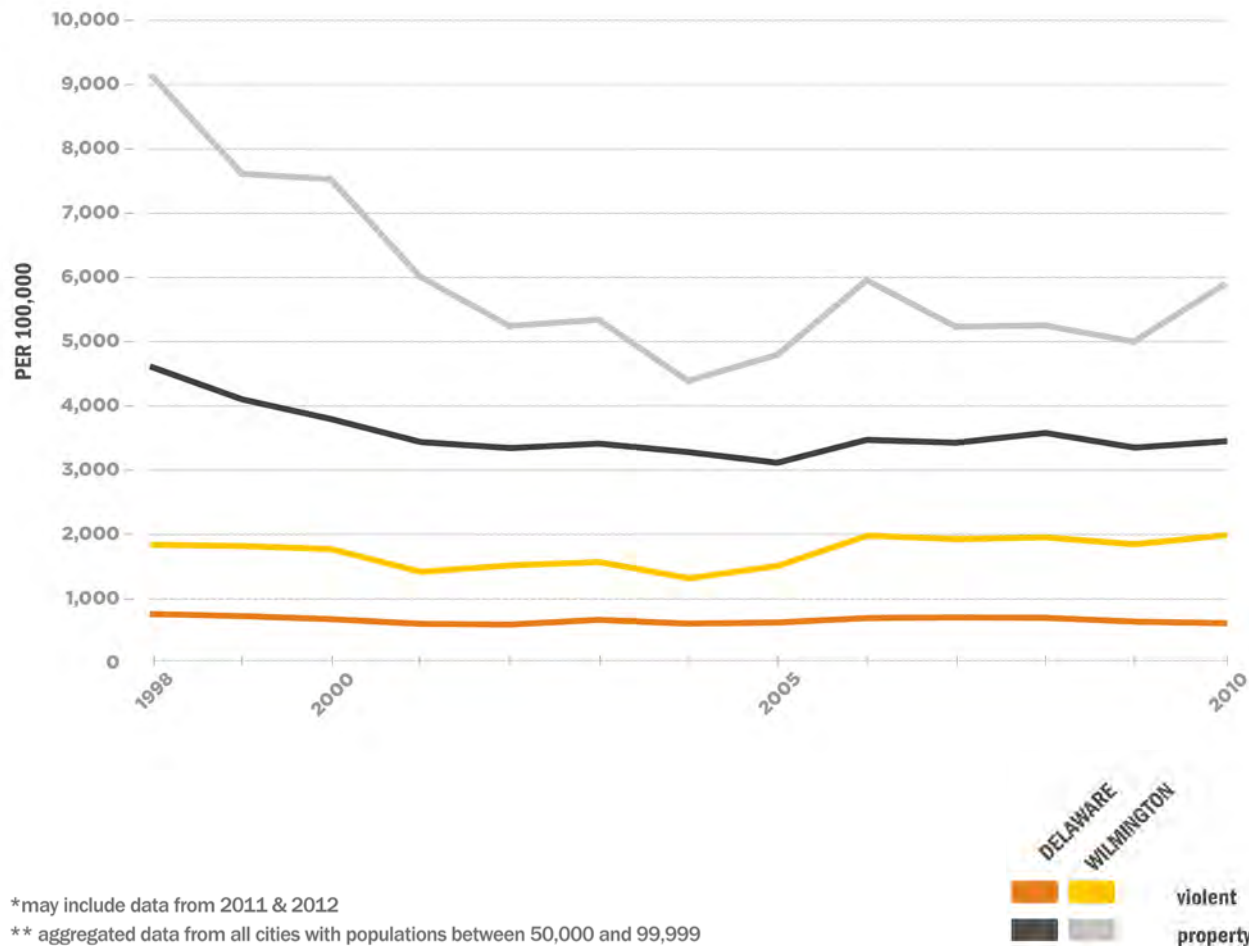
Splitting out the Census tracts within the study area illustrates that the westernmost tracts (16 and 21) have a much higher rate of crime than Tract 28.

**FIG 49:** Shootings and homicides map

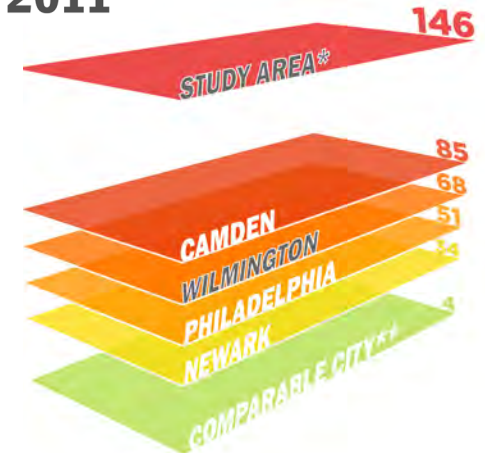


## CRIME

SOURCE: FBI, UNIFORM CRIME REPORTS DATA TOOL  
2011 UNIFORM CRIME REPORT, TABLES 8 & 16; NEIGHBORHOOD SCOUT



2011



CRIMES PER 1,000 INHABITANTS

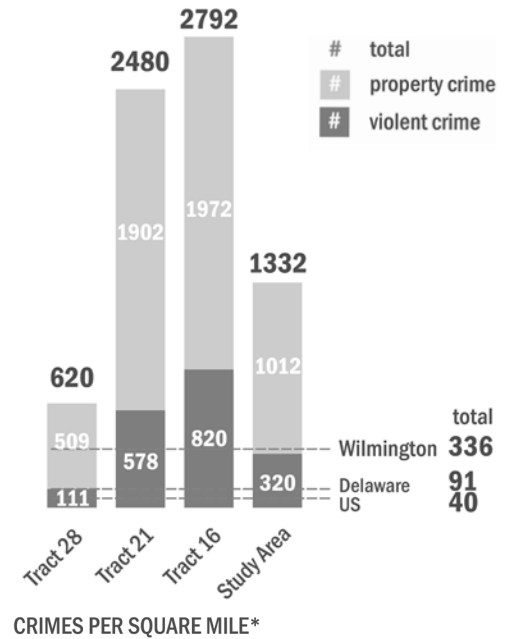
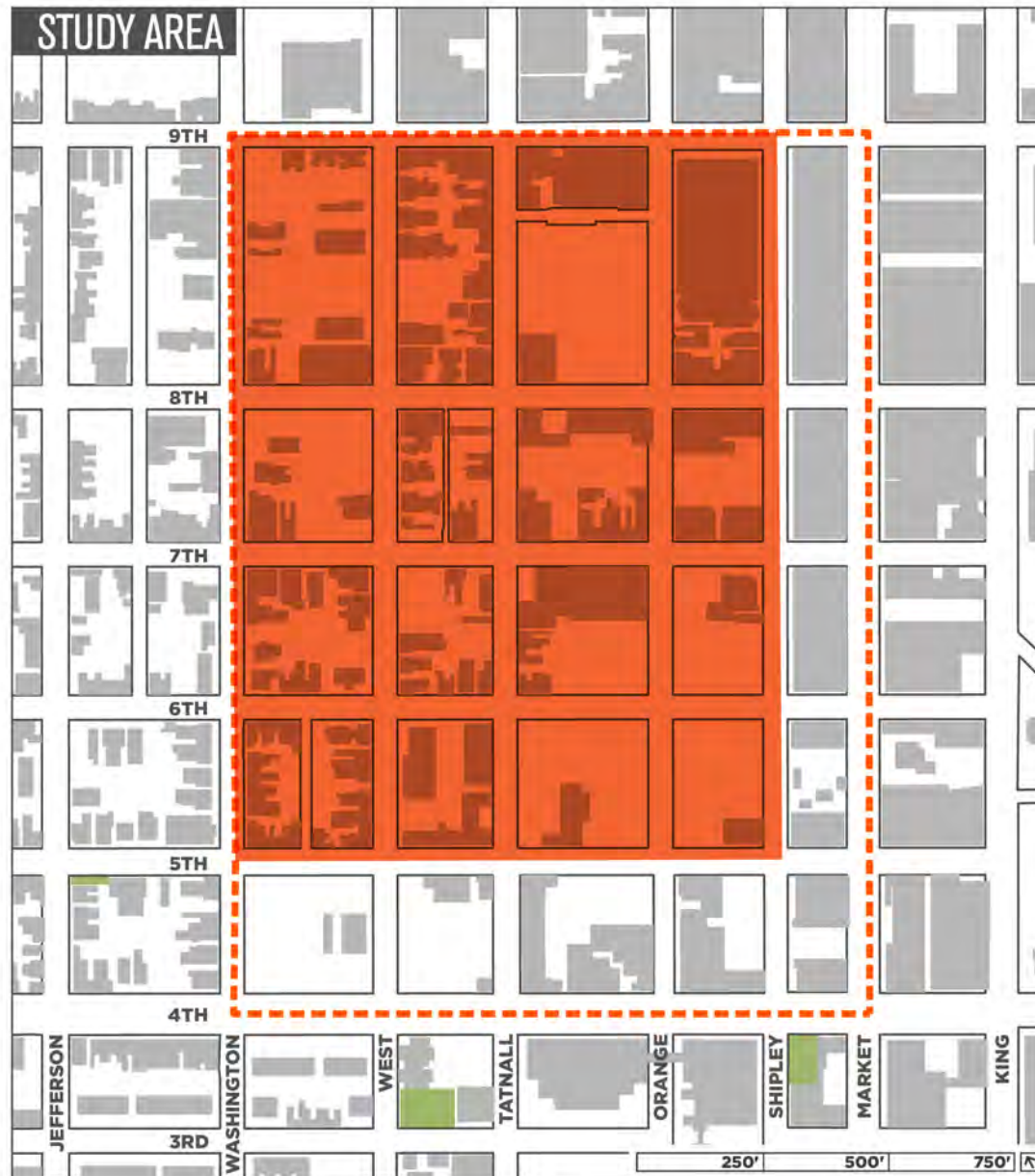


FIG 50: Crime graphs





## District Geographies

The context area extends one block east and south of the focus area for the in-depth survey of land use, building condition, and vacancy, as well as the demographic analysis.

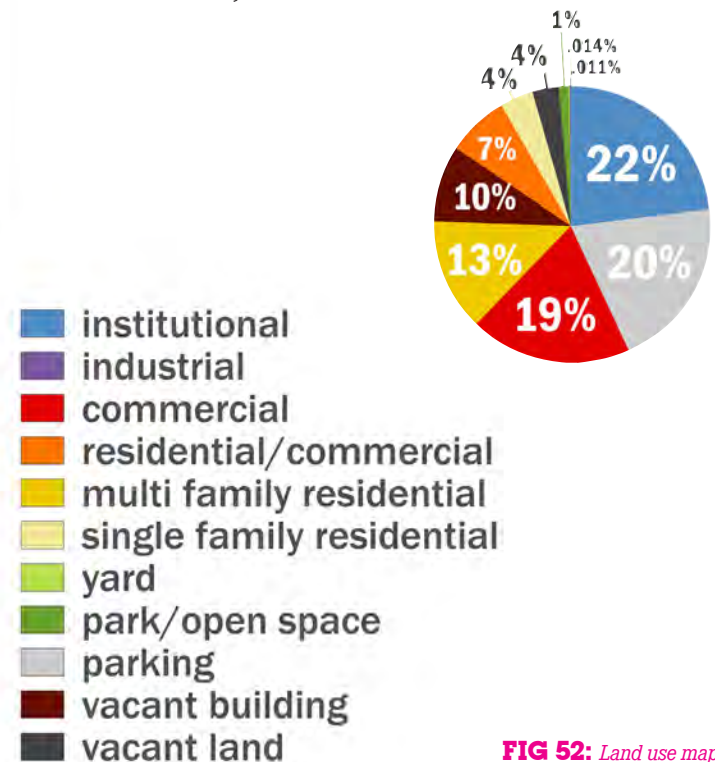
■ focus area  
□ context area

**FIG 51:** Study area geography map



## Land Use

Land use within the study area is very mixed. A clustering of commercial exists along Market and Ninth streets. Housing is present on almost every block; a higher concentration of multi-family residential exists in the western half of the study area, in particular in the southwestern portion. Institutional use is the most dominant, comprising 22 percent of land area; parking, visible in large clusters in the center of the study area along Orange and West streets, is the second most dominant use, forming 20 percent of land area. Parks and open space comprise only one percent of the study area.



**FIG 52:** Land use map





## Commercial Land Use

The commercial land use map reveals the distinct clustering of commercial use towards the central business district. Retail is prominent along Market Street; office use and services are more interspersed.

RETAIL	34
SERVICES	33
OTHER	30
OFFICE	21
RESTAURANT / TAKEOUT	20
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>138</b>

- mixed commercial
- services
- restaurant / take out
- retail
- office
- other

**FIG 53:** Commercial land use map





## Vacancy

20 percent of the study area is affected by vacancy in the form of a fully vacant building, partially vacant building, or vacant land. Of the 388 buildings in the area, 26 percent are affected by vacancy, with 15 percent of them fully vacant and 12 percent partially vacant. Of the 50 acres of land the area comprises, almost four percent is vacant. Roughly three quarters of this is maintained.

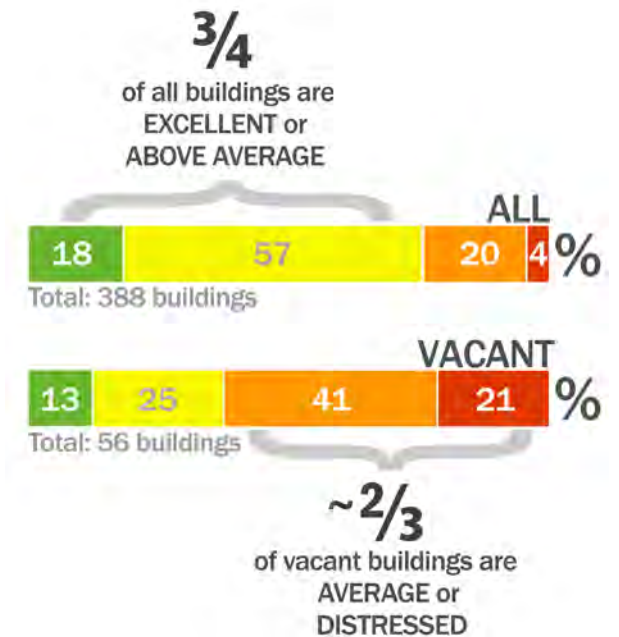
- vacant building
- partial commercial vacancy
- partial residential vacancy
- maintained vacant land
- unmaintained vacant land

**FIG 54:** Vacancy map



## Building Condition

The building stock in the study area is generally in good or excellent condition. The impact of vacancy on building condition, however, is notable. 24 percent of all buildings are average or distressed condition; when zeroing in on vacant buildings alone, this proportion increases to 62 percent.



**FIG 55:** Building condition map





### Surface Parking Lots

Surface parking comprises one-fifth of all land use in the study area. Most of the parking is privately-owned, with Colonial Parking as the predominant owner. Two large city lots are located on Sixth and Eighth streets; the only structured parking in the area, the Midtown Parking garage, now stands vacant.

TOTAL  
SPACES:

**1587**

private parking **171**

public parking **1416**

- city-owned public parking
- privately-owned public parking
- patron or employee parking
- for sale
- vacant parking structure
- residential private parking

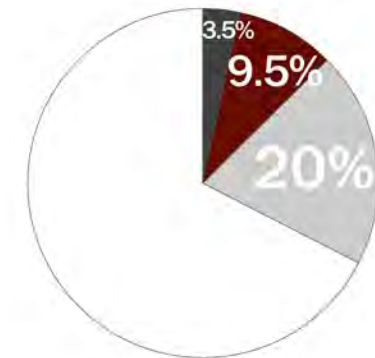
**FIG 56:** Surface parking lots map





## Vacancy + Parking

Vacancy and surface parking uses comprise one-third of land area. Vacancy and lack of development present public safety challenges but also represent opportunity for infill.



**1/3**  
of land area is  
**VACANT**  
or  
**UNDEVELOPED**

- parking
- vacant building
- vacant land

**FIG 57:** Vacant properties and parking map



**continuous use**  
(same store, institution, etc. on both Shipley  
and Market streets)

## Shipley Street Continuity

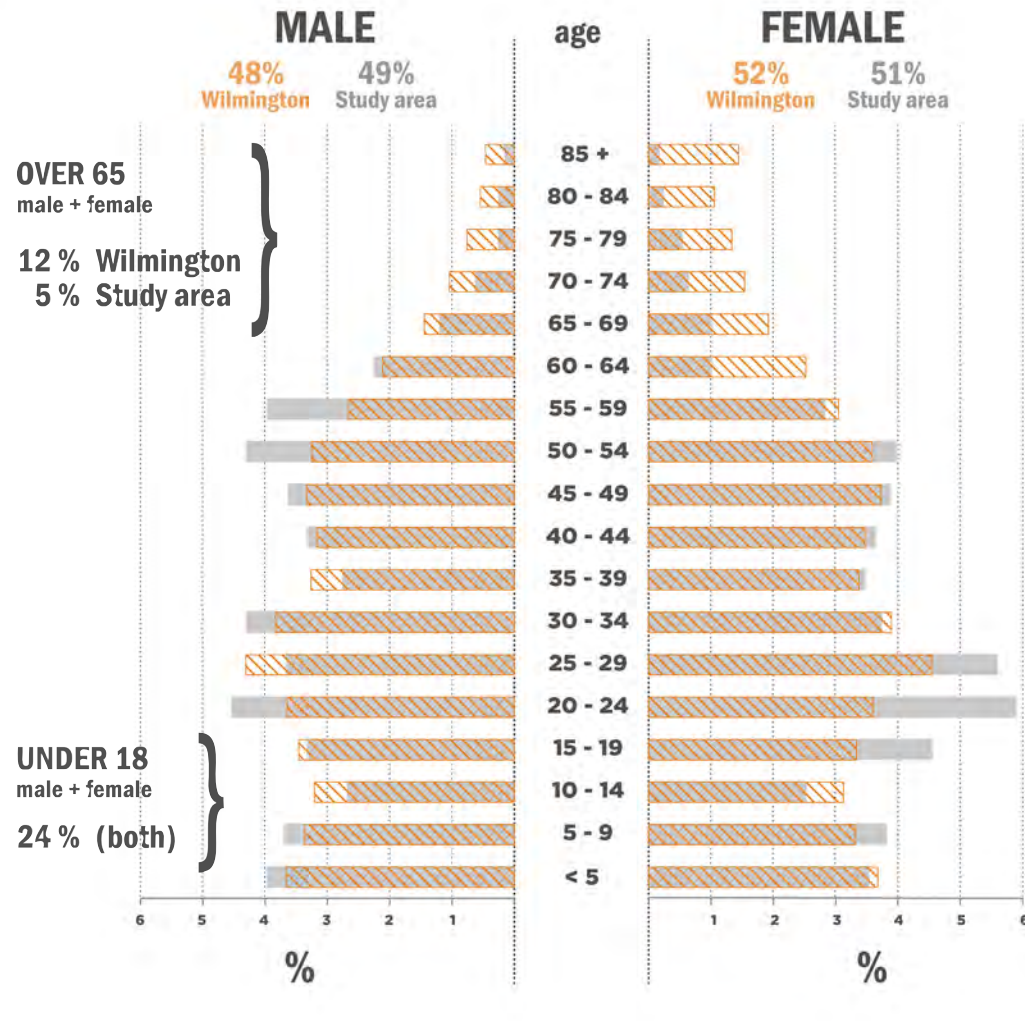
A closer survey was performed on Shipley Street to determine which buildings could be rehabilitated or repurposed for active use on Shipley Street. The Shipley Street Continuity graphic depicts properties that appear to have the same use [store, institution, etc.] on both Shipley and Market streets.

This could be either through an active storefront, and unused storefront, or an existing loading entrance or back door that clearly belongs to a use that fronts on Market Street. Some parcels, however, have a non-continuous use in which the building extending from Market to Shipley streets is divided. These non-continuous buildings have potential for a new use to occur on Shipley Street.

**FIG 58:** *Shipley Street continuity map*

## AGE PYRAMID

SOURCE: 2010 CENSUS SUMMARY FILE 1



## Age Pyramid

The age pyramid illustrates the distribution of ages by gender. Each percentage relates to the entire population of a given geography, either Wilmington or the study area. For example, males in the 70-74 year old age bracket comprise roughly one percent of the population in Wilmington.

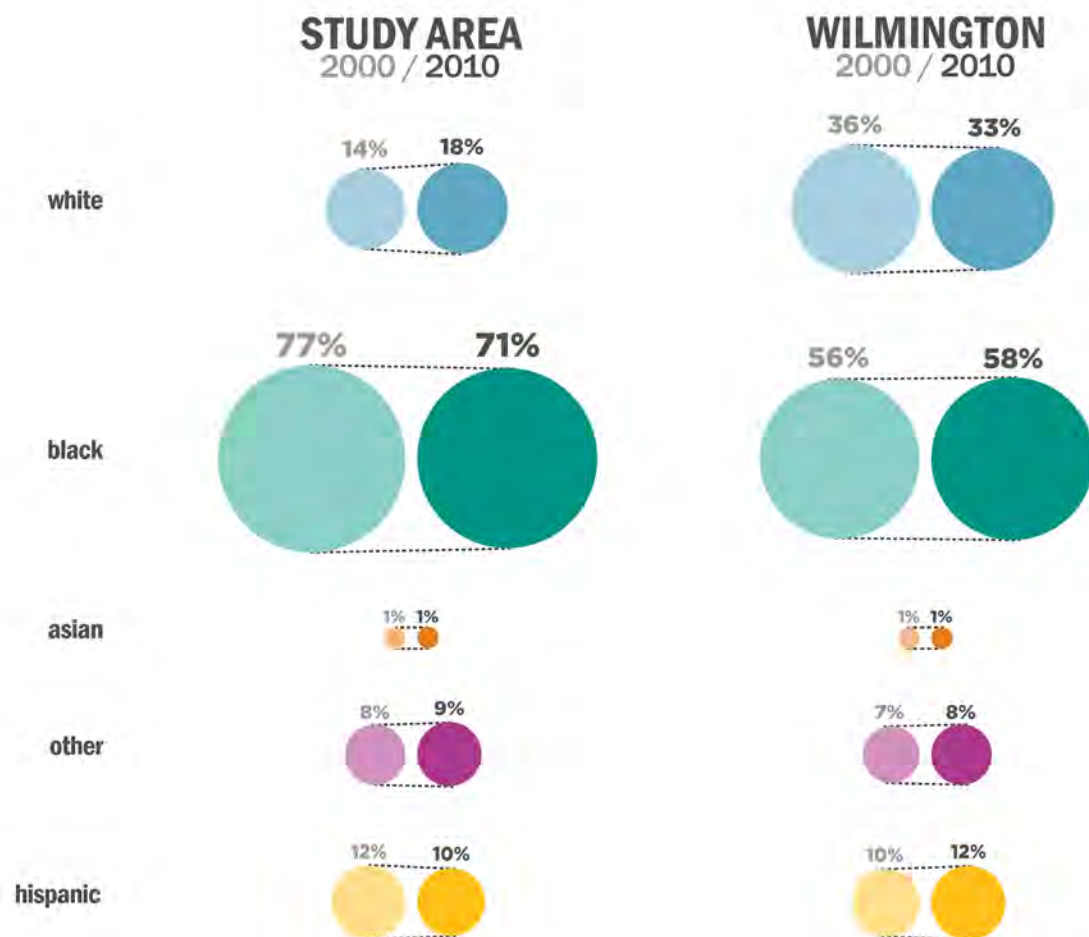
The study area data is overlaid with Wilmington data to highlight differences between the populations. A higher proportion of women aged 15 to 29 and a lower proportion of seniors in both genders live in the study area. The area also has a higher concentration of males approaching the age of retirement (50 to 59).

**FIG 59:** Age pyramid graphic



## RACE + ETHNICITY

SOURCE: 2000 CENSUS SUMMARY FILES 1 & 3,  
2010 CENSUS SUMMARY FILE 1



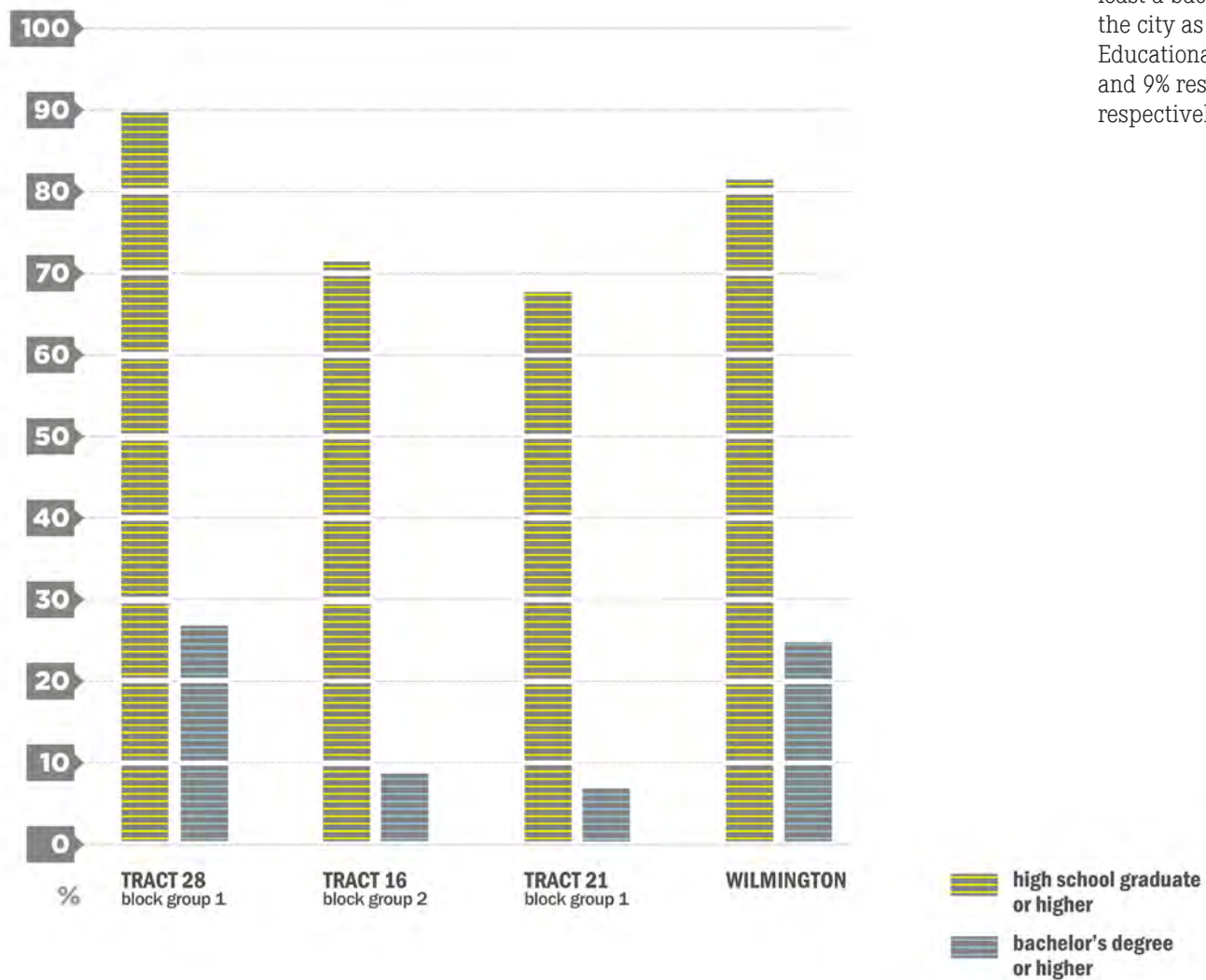
## Race + Ethnicity

The study area has a lower proportion of whites and higher proportion of blacks than Wilmington. These proportions are shifting, however: that of whites is increasing and that of blacks is decreasing. The proportion of Asian residents, Hispanic residents, and those identifying as “other” in the study area is comparable to Wilmington as a whole.

**FIG 60:** Race and ethnicity graphic

## EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

SOURCE: 2007-2011 AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY



## Educational Attainment

The proportion of residents in Tract 28 who have at least a high school diploma (90%) or at least a bachelor's degree (27%) is higher than the city as a whole (81% and 25% respectively). Educational attainment is lower in Tract 16 (71% and 9% respectively) and Tract 21 (68% and 7% respectively).

**FIG 61:** Educational attainment graphic

## COMMUTE TO WORK

SOURCE: AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY 2006-2010 FIVE-YEAR ESTIMATE

### Commute to work

Commuters in the study area are less reliant on cars than in Wilmington. Public transit use even exceeds automobile use in one of its tracts (21). Walking is a more common mode of commuting to work in most of the study area than in Wilmington.

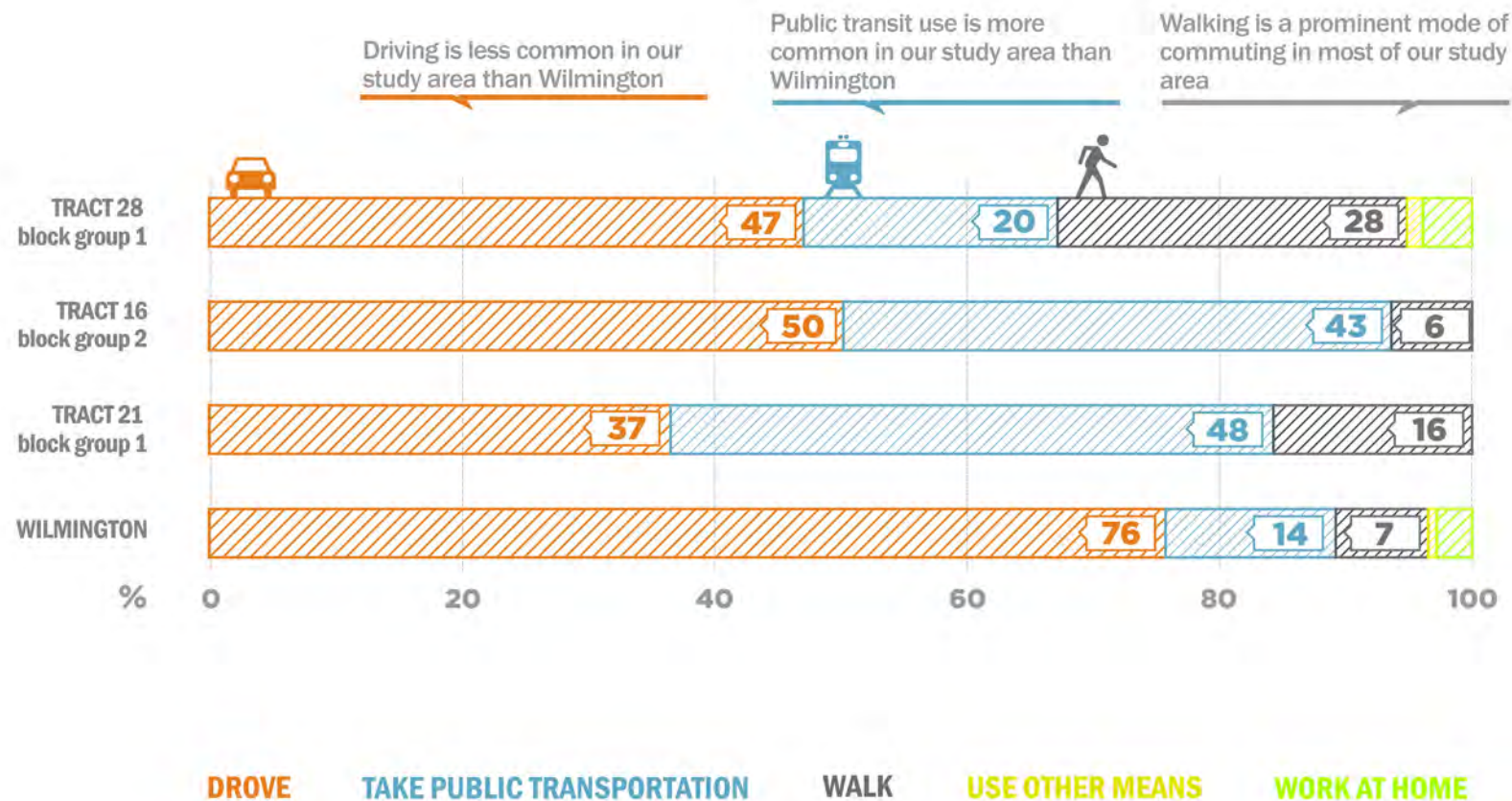


FIG 62: Commute to work graphic



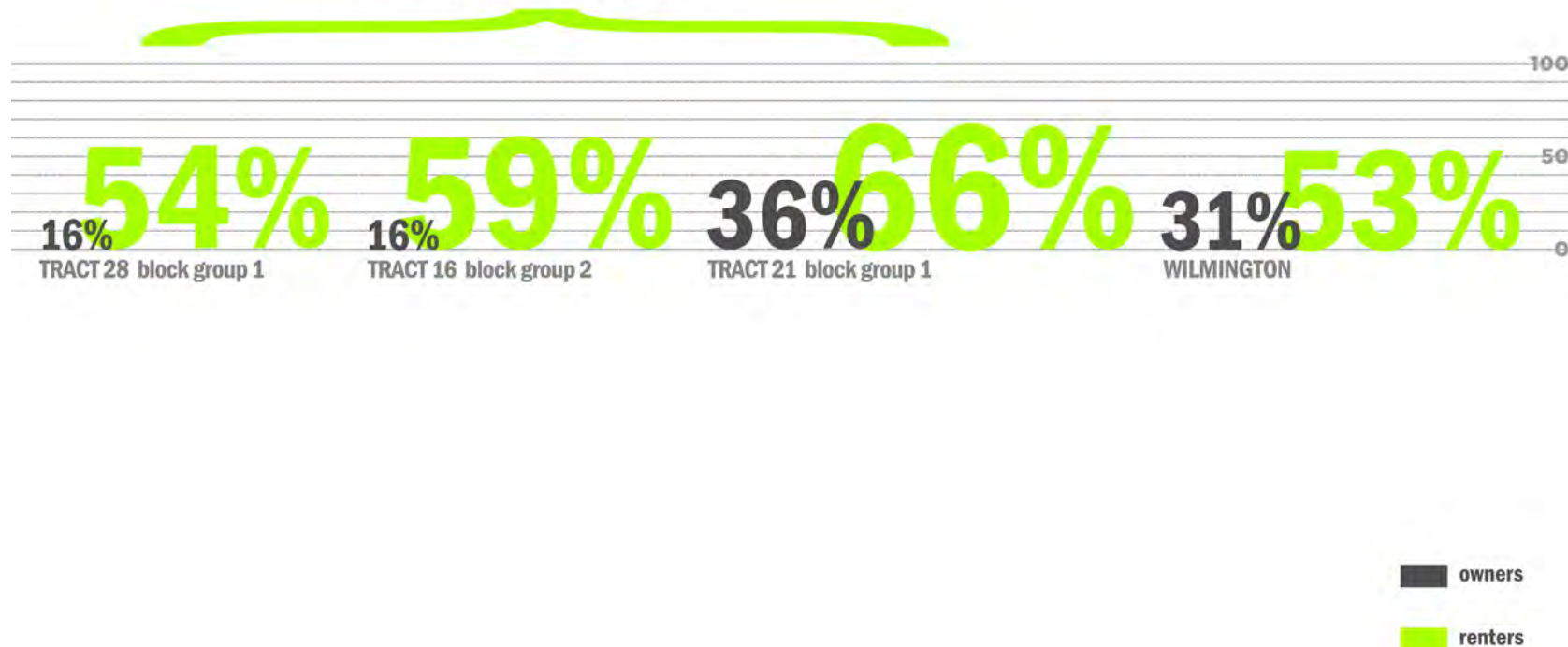
## HOUSING COST BURDEN

SOURCE: 2006-2010 AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY

### Housing cost burden

Renters and owners who are cost-burdened spend 30% or more of household income on housing. The study area has a higher concentration of cost-burdened renters than Wilmington as a whole. Owners in the majority of our study area (Tracts 28 and 16), however, are half as likely to be cost-burdened.

Renters in our study area are more cost-burdened than in Wilmington



**FIG 63:** Housing cost burden graphic

## TENURE + VACANCY

SOURCE: 2010 CENSUS SUMMARY FILE 1; DIVISION OF INTEGRATED TECHNOLOGIES, CITY OF WILMINGTON, DELAWARE

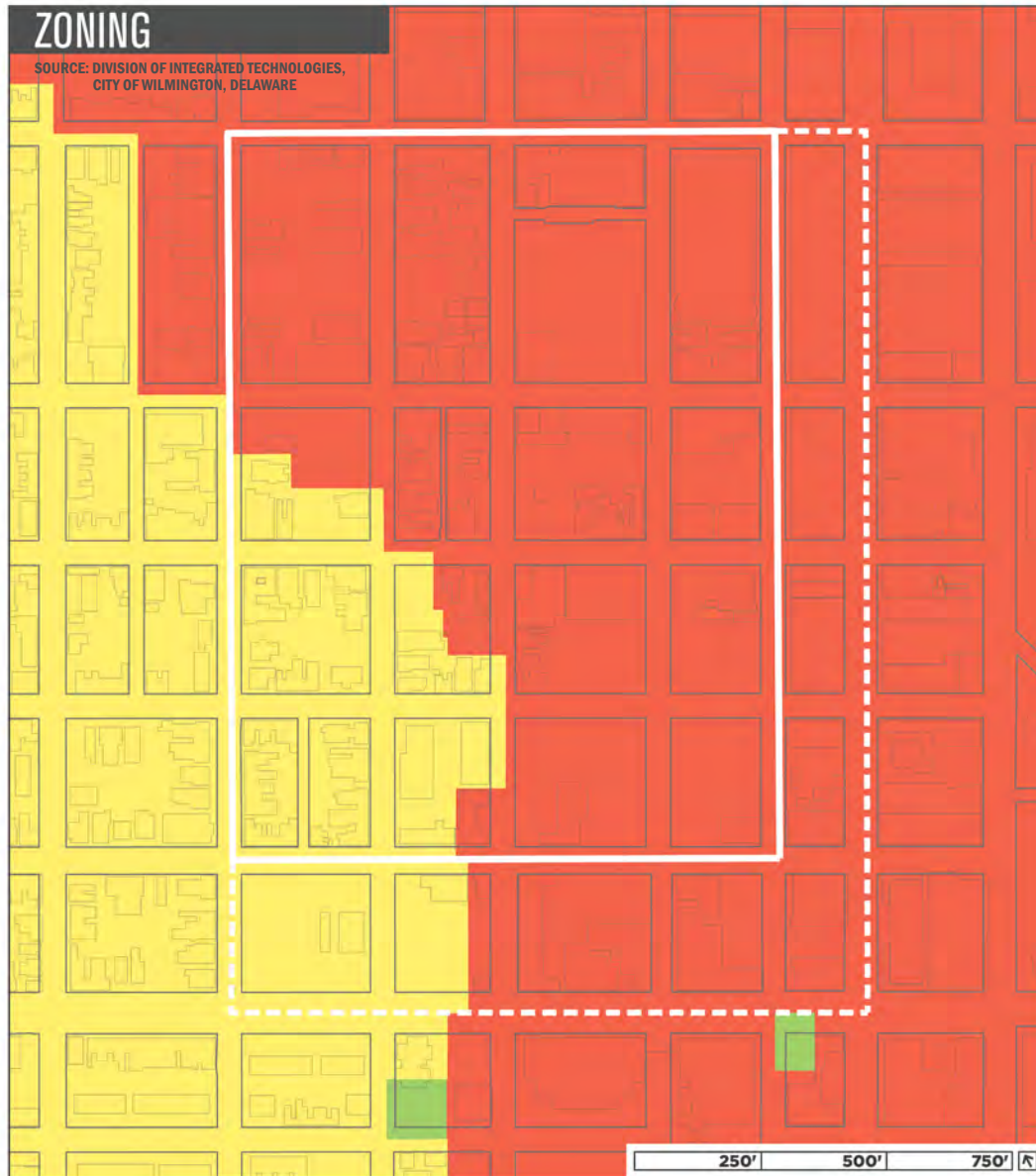


### Tenure / Vacancy

According to the 2010 Census, the study area has twice the proportion of vacant housing compared to Wilmington as a whole. Owner-occupied housing units are significantly less common in the study area (10 percent) as compared to the city (48 percent). Parcel data reveals that within the specific boundaries of Washington to Market streets and 4<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> streets, 24 percent of parcels are owner-occupied.

**24%** of residential parcels within our survey area are owner-occupied

**FIG 64:** Tenure and vacancy graphic



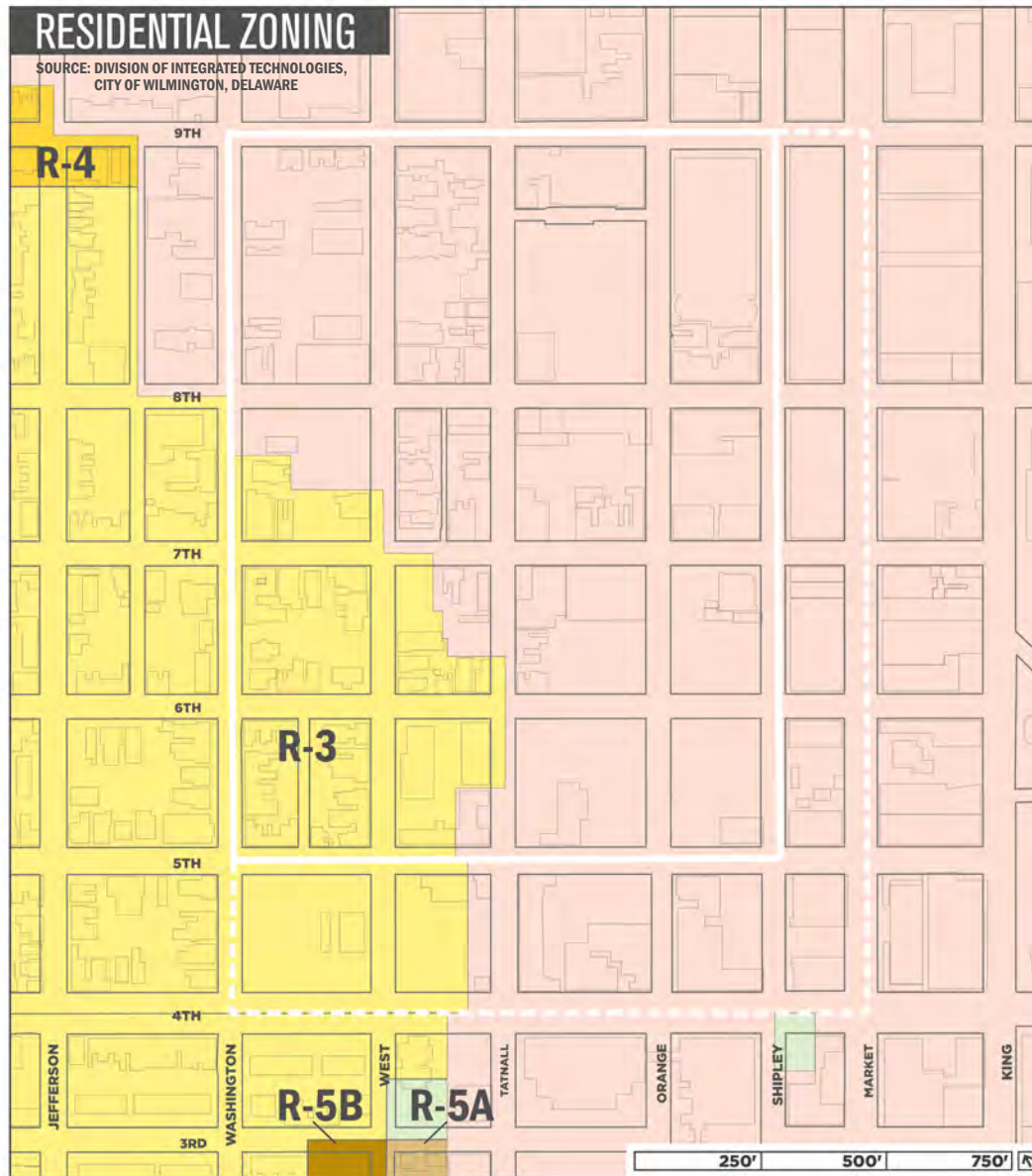
## Zoning

The study area is zoned mostly for commercial use with a pocket of residential use in its southwestern reaches.

residential  
commercial  
open space

**FIG 65:** General zoning map



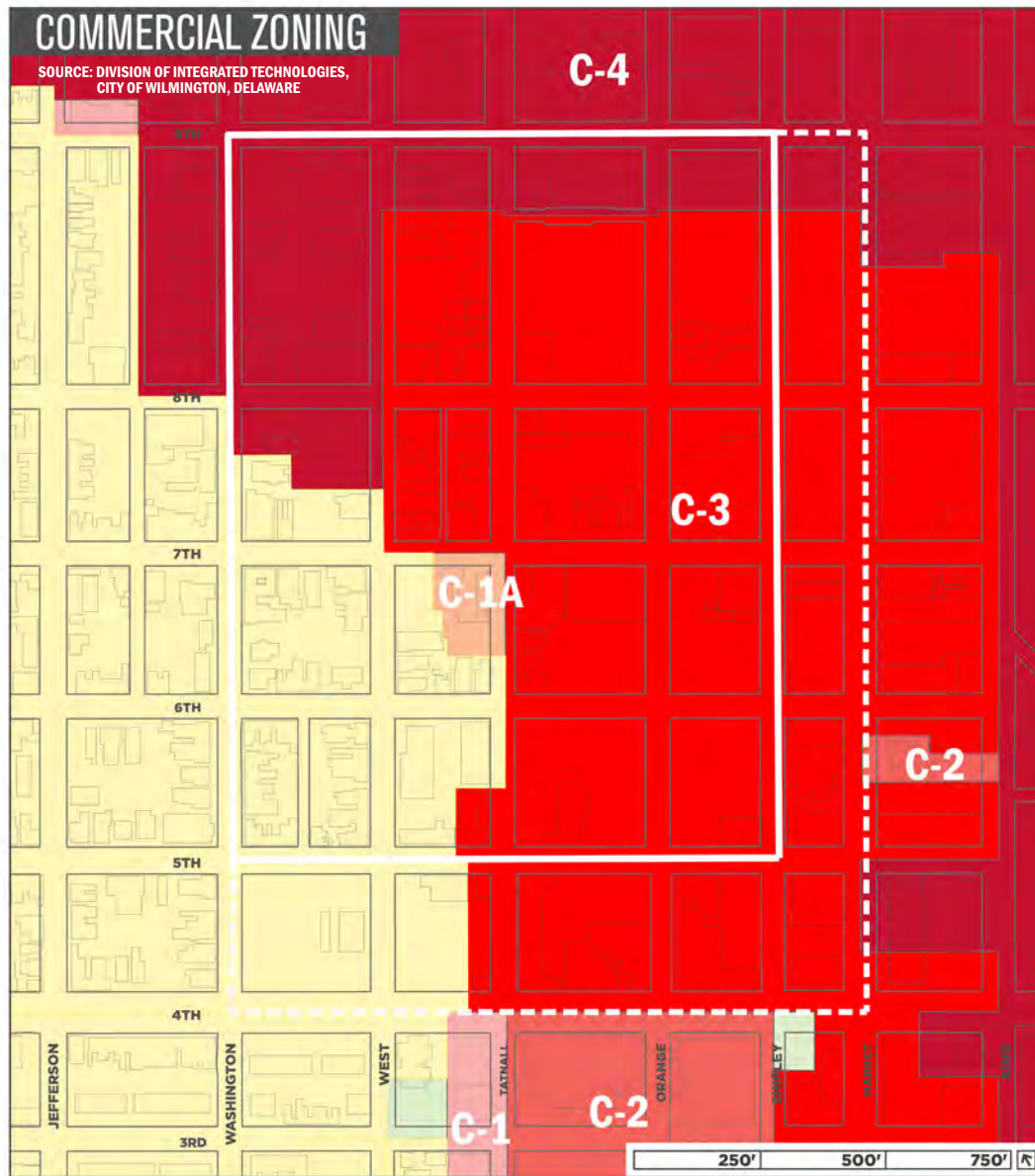


## Residential Zoning

The study area is zoned for one family row houses, yet the survey revealed there were multifamily conversions that have already taken place.

- one family row houses (R-3)
- row houses w/conversions (R-4)
- apartment house, low density (R-5A)
- apartment house, medium density (R-5B)
- open space

**FIG 66:** Residential zoning map



## Commercial Zoning

The study area reveals a diversity of permitted commercial uses.

**FIG 67:** Commercial zoning map