



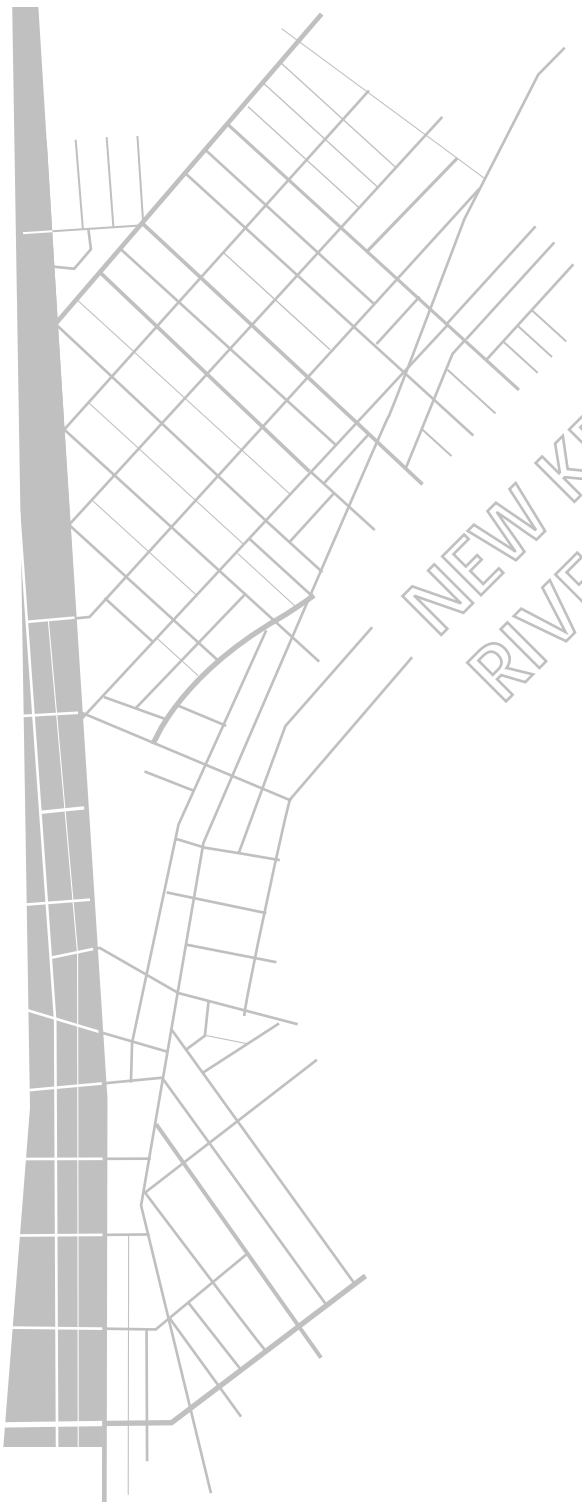
NEW KENSINGTON  
RIVERFRONT PLAN  
FEBRUARY 2008

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



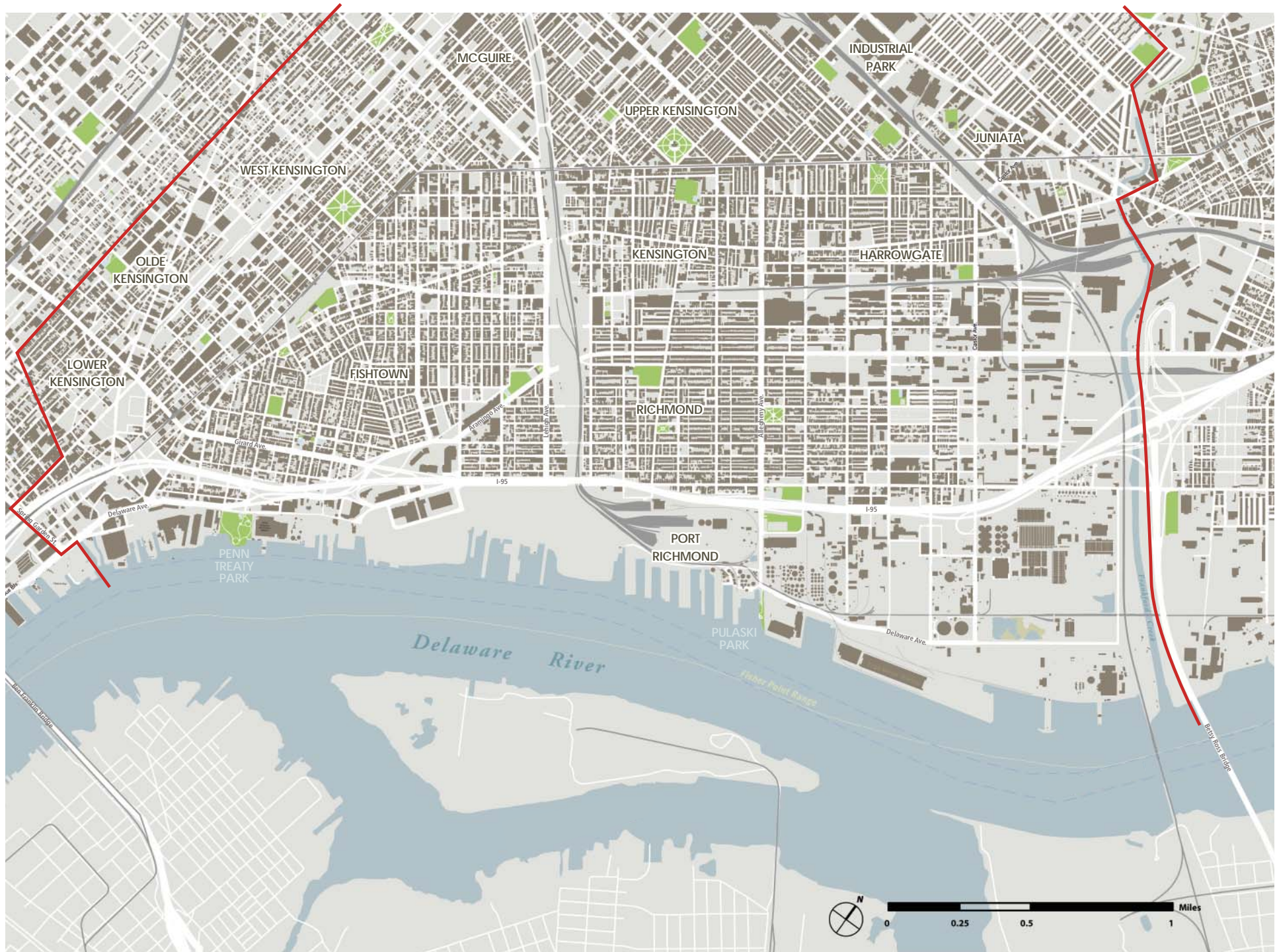
Wallace Roberts & Todd, LLC  
Planning & Design





# NEW KENSINGTON RIVERFRONT PLAN

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



# NEW

This plan is the result of a year-long process that involved the communities of Fishtown, Kensington, and Port Richmond; state and local agencies; the New Kensington Community Development Corporation (NKCDC) and Wallace Roberts & Todd, LLC (WRT). Rooted in a public outreach initiative and guided by a broad task force, the New Kensington Riverfront Plan

# KEN

provides a flexible framework for development along, and public access to, the Delaware River. Funded by the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) in cooperation with the Pennsylvania Environmental Council, the plan focuses on the balance between development and open space, with three major plan elements:

# SING

**1) Development Framework 2) Gateway Concepts 3) Implementation.**

The first two plan elements will enable NKCDC and the community to work with the city to shape future development while ensuring access to natural resources. The third plan element focuses on partnership and funding opportunities to accomplish the first two plan elements.

# TON

## A Civic Vision for the Central Delaware



**Cover for the *Civic Vision for the Central Delaware* report**  
With one-third of the Central Delaware's study area in the NKCDC service area, it is important that the two plans represent one community vision.

## PURPOSE OF THIS PLAN

The purpose of this plan is to expand upon and update the neighborhood plan prepared by WRT in 2003, in reaction to current development pressures, state infrastructure investments, and opportunities to coordinate with other planning efforts. Specifically, NKCDC finds itself in the midst of development pressures moving north from Center City, other planning efforts in and around the NKCDC service area, and the broader planning efforts that began with the 2001 North Delaware Riverfront Plan and continued most recently with PennPraxis' *Civic Vision for the Central Delaware*.

NKCDC participated in the year-long planning process conducted by PennPraxis that resulted in a development framework that is the basis for NKCDC's riverfront plan in this document. Because of NKCDC's involvement in that inclusive and ongoing effort, the development framework is viewed as the basis for future dialogue with the city and developers. The purpose of this plan is to provide a flexible framework that is focused on implementation, particularly in light of the zoning reform effort currently underway and endorsed by the city administration.

## PROCESS

In order to build consensus for the plan and to set an implementation strategy, a Riverfront Task Force was convened that included community organizations, stakeholders, and future project funders. The broad membership of this guiding body reflects an attempt to ensure that the effort will be followed through to implementation.

NKCDC designed a community outreach process that included coordination efforts with neighborhood associations, both inside the NKCDC service area and outside. Of particular relevance was the Northern Liberties Neighborhood Association's waterfront plan that overlapped with the NKCDC area. Best Practices presentations were held in a variety of neighborhood locations over a period of three months, culminating in the community design workshop "Draw Me a River." Working closely with the Riverfront Task Force, WRT developed a framework plan, development guidelines, gateway concepts, and an implementation matrix.



Despite the sweltering heat of the June 2<sup>nd</sup> "Draw Me a River" workshop, residents and stakeholders came together to discuss their concerns and share their aspirations for a reinvented riverfront.



In 2003, the Center City District studied the impact of high-density housing proposals on the riverfront in their plan to create a multi-use trail from Penn Treaty Park to Pier 70 in the south. Shown here, new commercial and high-rise development is proposed along the river at Spring Garden Street.

## BACKGROUND

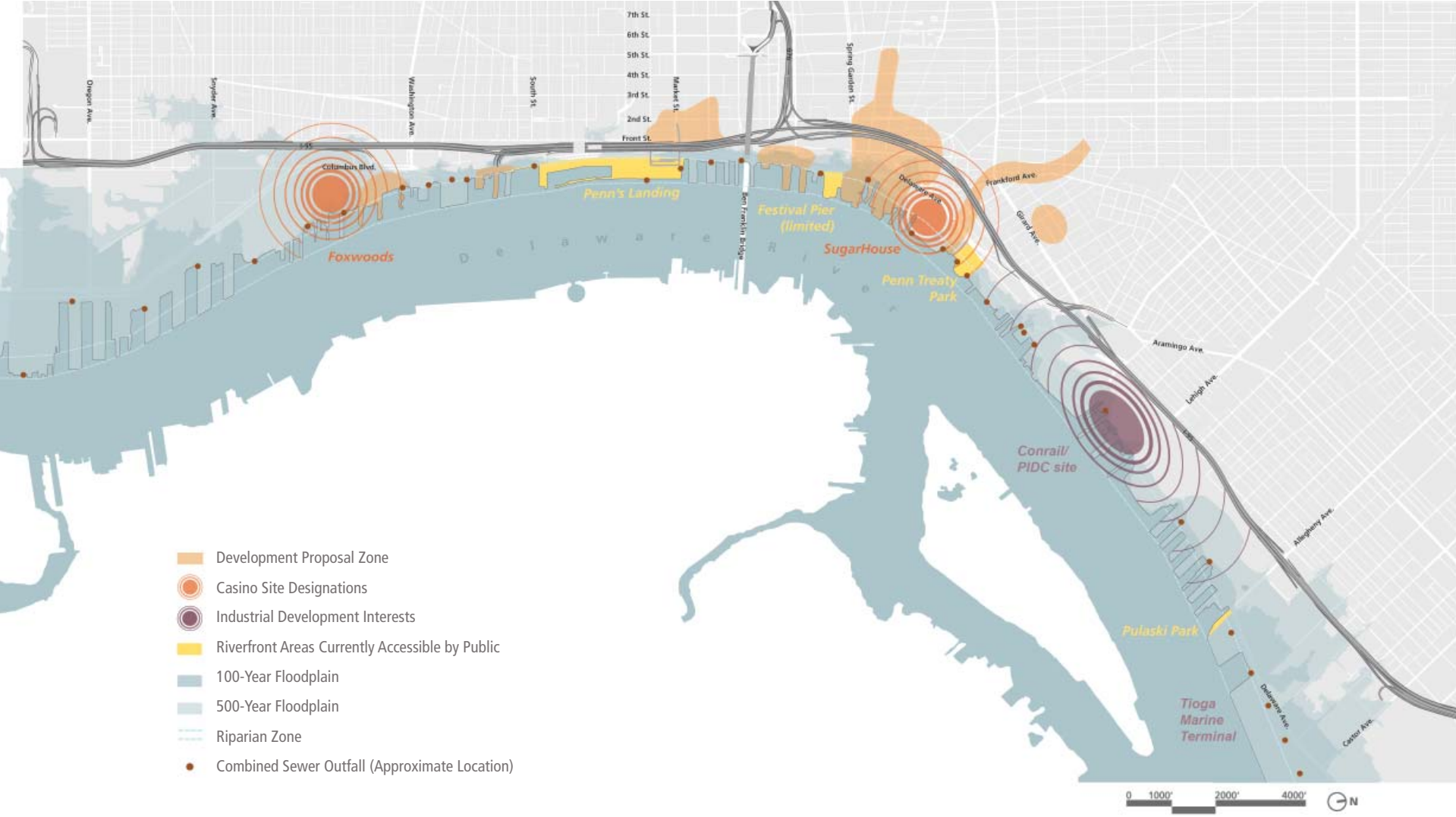
In 2007, NKCDC and the neighborhoods within its service area found themselves facing development pressures that ranged from state-initiated casino sites to high-density housing development proposals. The development of riverfront property continues to be the focus of local government, neighborhood groups, and property owners at the same time that the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) is finalizing plans to rebuild Interstate 95 in the NKCDC service area.

Other development interests include plans for port-related uses from the Girard Avenue interchange north through the

property associated with the Tioga Marine Terminal. An area of significance is the Conrail property between Cumberland Street and Allegheny Avenue. The Philadelphia Industrial Development Corporation (PIDC) has been in discussions with Conrail and its owner companies – Norfolk Southern Railway and CSX Transportation – for the sale and development of a warehouse and distribution center in the area south of the current rail line. The area south of Allegheny Avenue has seen little change in the past decade, but talks of a bio-mass energy facility at the Tioga Marine Terminal occurred in the past year.

## Development Pressures

Philadelphia's Delaware Riverfront is facing many kinds of development pressures. New Kensington's riverfront is experiencing all of them and offers very little public access to the river.





# DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

## INTRODUCTION

The development framework envisioned by NKCDC and the Riverfront Task Force is a flexible one that can accommodate changes in market conditions but provides access and open space amenities that will serve the riverfront neighborhoods as well as the development of private property. The primary goals of the framework are:

- Public access to and along the river.
- Defined character of the “greenway” and the river’s edge.
- Integration of environmental, historic, and cultural program and identity.
- Defined character of the development in the riverfront area.

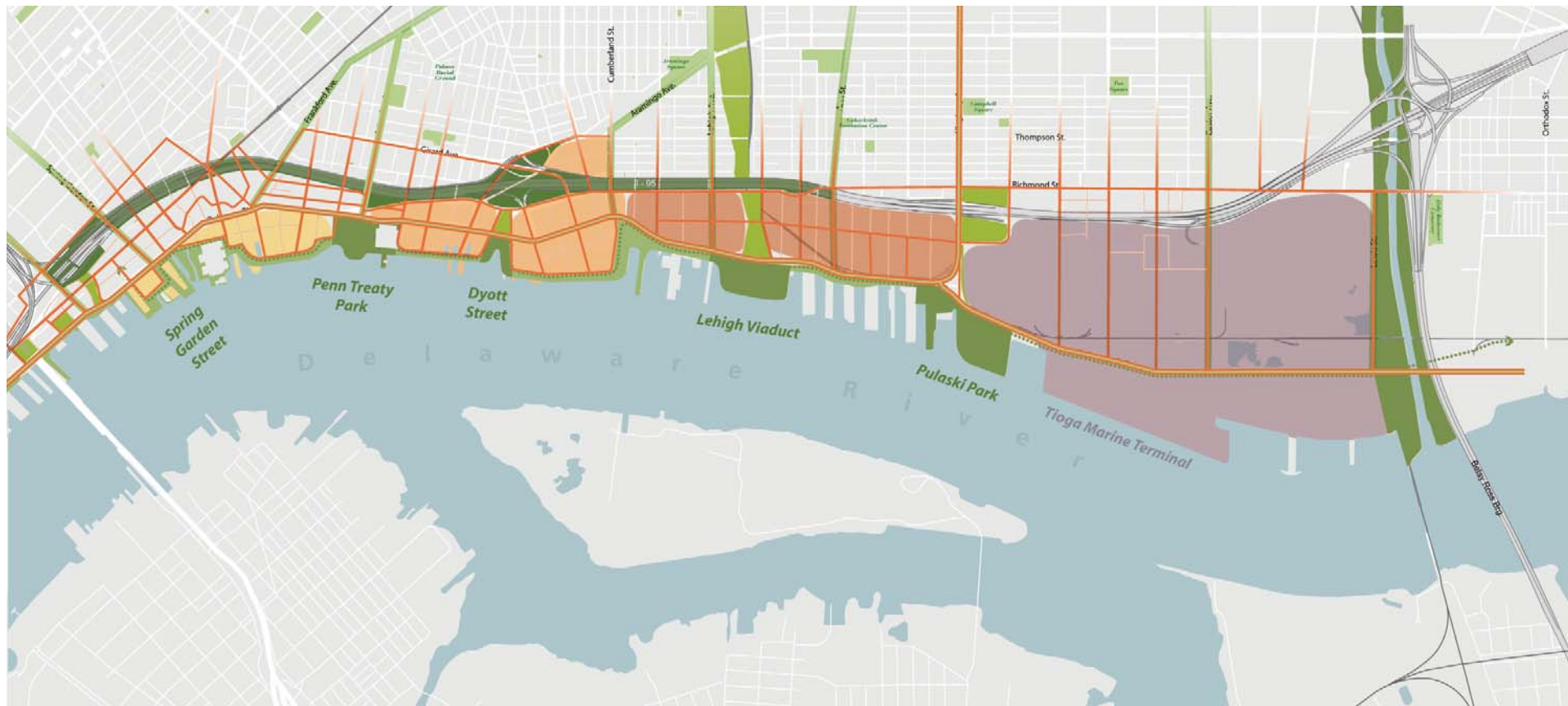
The development framework is presented in two sections:

A Framework Plan and Development Guidelines

## A FRAMEWORK PLAN

The Framework Plan is the basis for discussions with the city on issues of access, open space, and land use in the development of an updated neighborhood plan, which can inform a future Comprehensive Plan, currently underway through the Philadelphia City Planning Commission’s (PCPC) Imagine Philadelphia initiative. The Framework Plan was developed in concert with PennPraxis’ *Civic Vision for the Central Delaware* with three framework components:

- Land Use Concept
- Circulation and Access Concept
- Open Space Concept



- Land Use Concept
- Circulation and Access Concept
- Open Space Concept



## DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

The Development Guidelines are the basis for specific zoning changes or overlays that relate to the form of development. As the zoning reform initiative begins to take shape, these guidelines have been crafted to be general enough to begin more neighborhood-specific discussions with the PCPC about the form of development and allow for different approaches along the length of the riverfront. The guidelines are an outgrowth of the general urban design guidelines in the *Civic Vision for the Central Delaware*, addressing block configurations and how buildings relate to the street. They were developed as models based on residential and residential/mixed-use block types.

### Mixed-Use Development Type: Block Dimensions

As defined by the primary, secondary, and alley streets, the dimensions of the blocks continue the scale and rhythm of neighborhood streets and provide for a variety of street types. These are for illustrative purposes only and can be used in discussions with the city for more in-depth planning.



**Rowhouse Type: Distribution of Uses**

The model addresses the basic elements of architectural design at the urban scale without prescribing or limiting architectural style. The important elements focus on building articulation and relationships at the human scale.



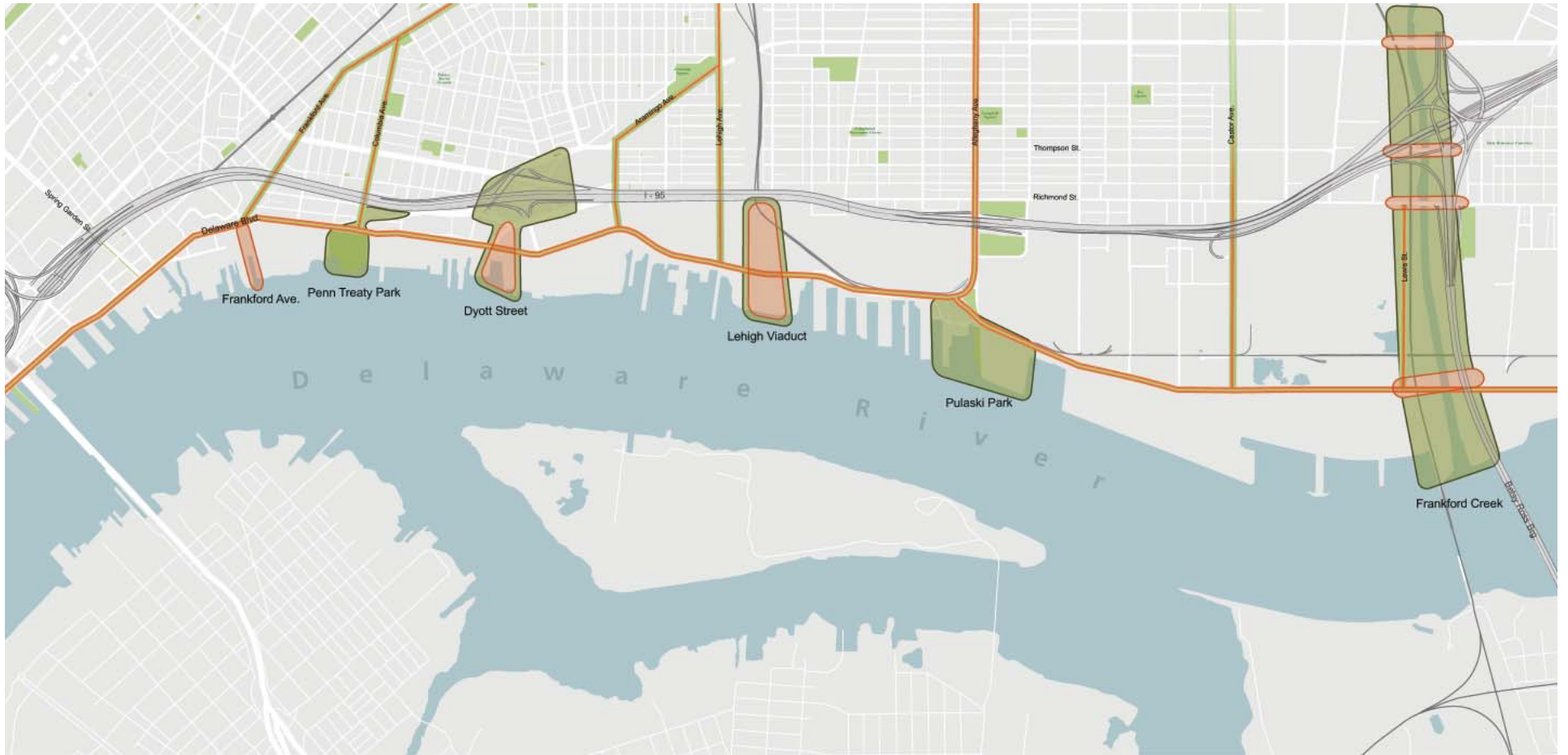
# GATEWAY CONCEPTS

## INTRODUCTION

Working with the Riverfront Task Force and NKCDC, WRT developed concept plans for public access and open space. These concept plans set early action projects to seek funding for implementation and are categorized into three types:

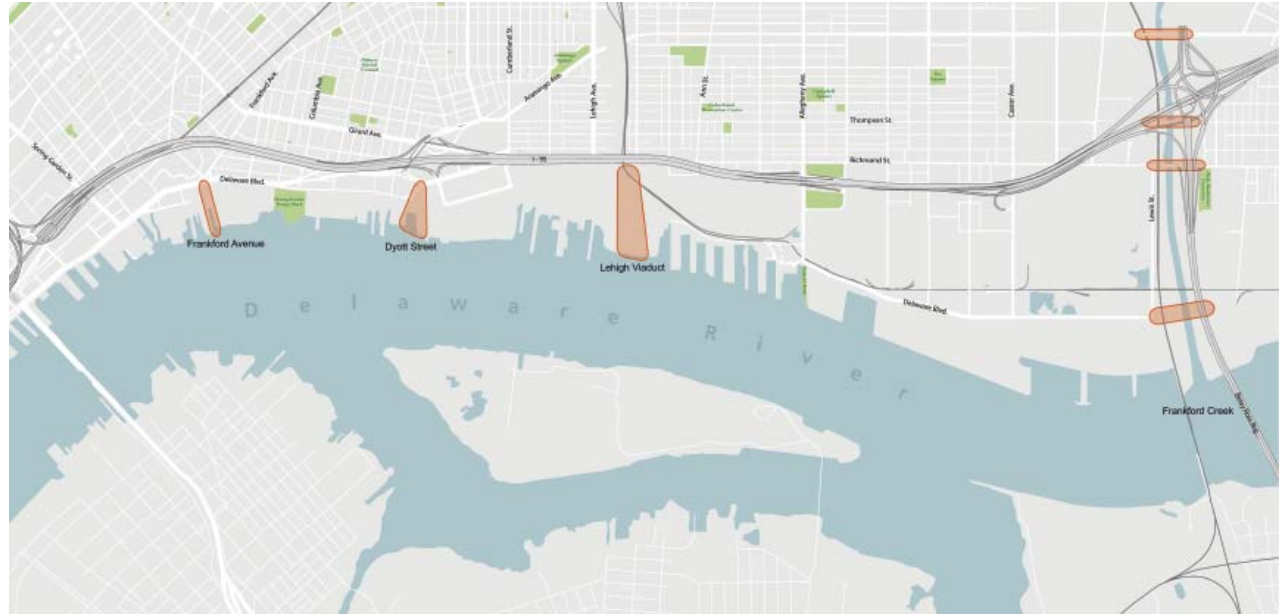
- Access
- Parks
- Streetscapes

COMPOSITE GATEWAY CONCEPTS



## ACCESS

Acquiring access to Frankford Avenue, Dyott Street, Lehigh Viaduct, and along Frankford Creek are important early action projects to set the stage for public access through parks and streets on an otherwise privatized riverfront. While these actions do not have immediate physical manifestations, they allow the community to advocate for the implementation of the larger Framework Plan, specifically, parks and a riverfront greenway trail. The Riverfront Task Force identified Frankford Avenue and Dyott Street as priority projects because of the ability to leverage the investment in reconstructing I-95 and the future redevelopment of the SugarHouse Casino site. Partnerships for NKCDC include the city and the state who can exercise their powers and bring money to the table for these acquisitions.



Access Concepts Diagram



**Stormwater Park at Girard Interchange**

Working with PennDOT during the Central Delaware planning process, WRT developed conceptual plans for this NKCDC gateway. Continuing the dialogue with PennDOT is critical for the successful implementation of this gateway concept.

## PARKS

Enhancements and the creation of new parks include a redevelopment of Penn Treaty Park, the creation of Dyott Street Park in coordination with the I-95 reconstruction, an expansion of Pulaski Park, and the restoration of Frankford Creek. The early action projects that the Riverfront Task Force determined to be a priority are Penn Treaty Park and Pulaski Park. In the case of Penn Treaty Park, the partnership opportunities to invest in the park, as both a local and regional asset, include DCNR, the Friends of Penn Treaty Park, the Fairmount Park Commission, PennDOT, and the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society. For Pulaski Park, land to the north occupied by the state-run Philadelphia Parking Authority offers a prime opportunity to create another riverfront park in the north that is at the same scale of Penn Treaty Park in the south.



Park Concepts Diagram



**An Enhanced Penn Treaty Park**

Creating a wetland at the river's edge would offer the opportunity to provide an outdoor educational center for school children. Moving and expanding the playground to higher ground at the southern edge of the park would distribute activities around the edge of the park. A comprehensive landscape plan that extends over Beach Street to I-95 will link the park to the neighborhood.

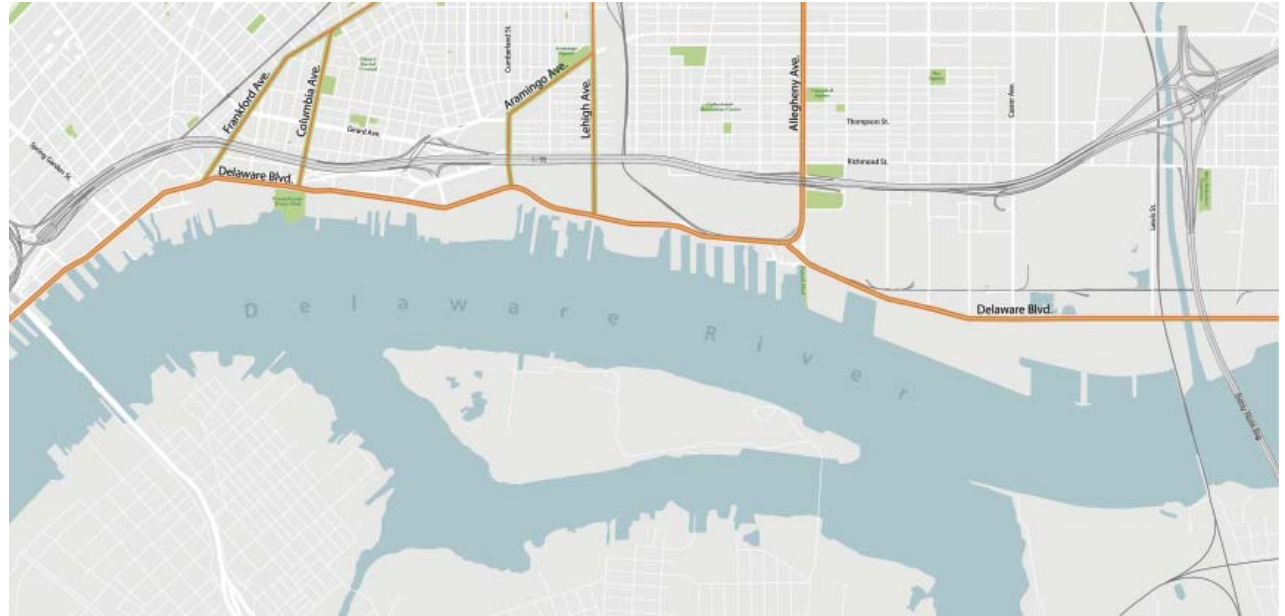


**An Enhanced and Expanded Pulaski Park**

Expanding Pulaski Park north and creating a tidal wetland at the river's edge would create a recreational asset unlike any found along the Central Delaware. Relocating the adjacent state-run parking authority impound lot and warehousing elsewhere would provide enough land for playing fields and community festivals. Planting wetland vegetation at the water inlets along the north edge of the Conrail site and adaptively reusing the piers would enhance habitat, fishing opportunities, and other kinds of river recreation.

## STREETSCAPES

Recommended improvements to key streets seek to implement the green streets identified in the Framework Plan and create early action projects that set the stage for a street network along the riverfront. The key streetscapes from north to south include: Frankford Avenue, Columbia Avenue, Cumberland Street, Lehigh Avenue, Allegheny Avenue, and Delaware Boulevard (north of Allegheny). Working with the Philadelphia Water Department's Office of Watersheds, PCPC, and DCNR concepts for integrating stormwater management as well as bikelanes and multi-use trails is the focus of these streetscape proposals. Frankford and Columbia Avenues were determined to be the priority projects among the early action projects.

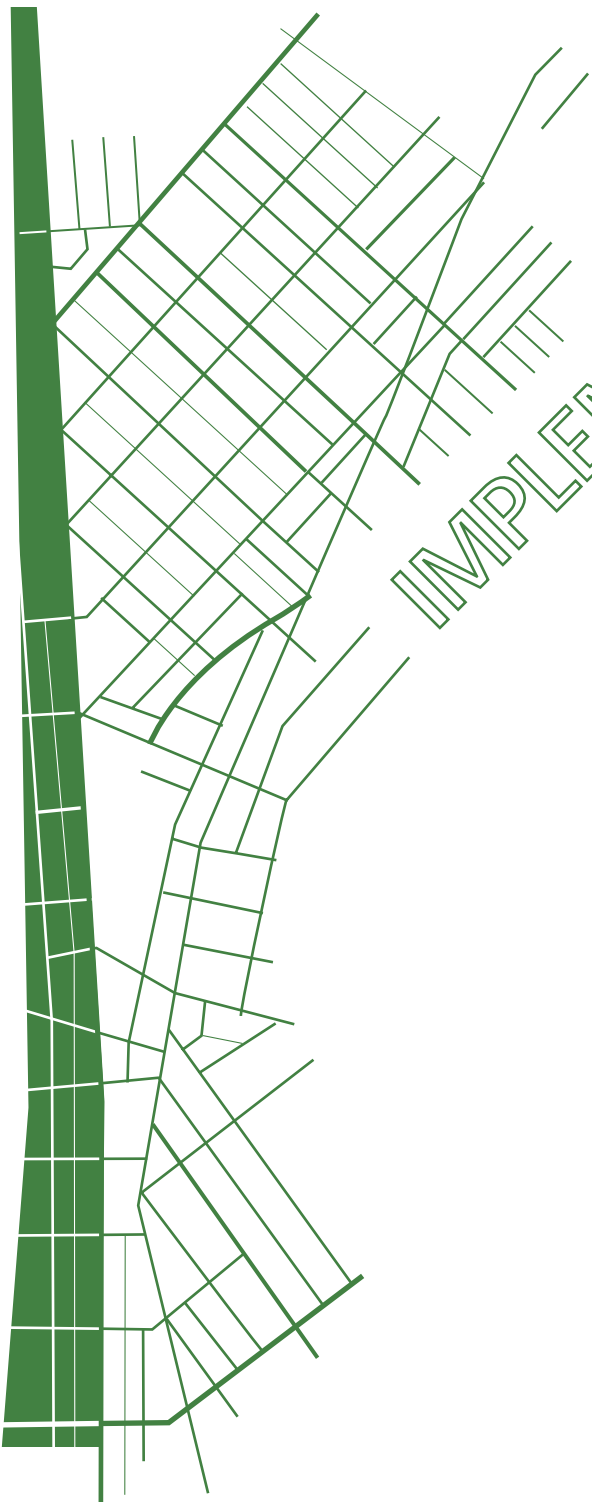


Streetscape Concepts Diagram

**Frankford Avenue East of Girard Avenue**

This photo simulation illustrates the streetscape concepts for Frankford Avenue, which include bike lanes, rain gardens, the reconstruction of I-95 as a viaduct, and parking and recreational uses under I-95. This model for I-95 emulates the skating rink and public parking in South Philadelphia.





# IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation includes short-term actions and longterm improvement campaigns. Some of the improvements described in this plan can be realized in the near term by creating strategic partnerships and employing available funding streams.

Potential near-term improvements include:

1. Frankford Avenue
2. Columbia Avenue and Penn Treaty Park
3. Girard Interchange Accessibility Improvements and Park
4. Lehigh Viaduct Access
5. Pulaski Park
6. Frankford Creek Corridor

## IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX: ACCESS SYSTEM

Access System	
Action	Partners/Potential Funding Sources
Create a river access corridor at Frankford Avenue and build Frankford Square.	Casino Community Benefit Agreement Transportation Enhancements
Create a continuous Beach Street connected with Dyott Street.	PennDOT I-95 Project
Create a new state park and greenway corridor at the Lehigh Viaduct that connects to the river.	Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Transportation Enhancements
Create a linear greenway, park, open space, and habitat restoration at Frankford Creek.	Treevitalize Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection Growing Greener Transportation Enhancements Delaware River Port Authority Philadelphia Water Department

## IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX: PARK SYSTEM

Park System	
Action	Partners/Potential Funding Sources
Enhance Penn Treaty Park.	City of Philadelphia Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Fairmount Park Friends of Penn Treaty Park Private Grants
Create a new state park and greenway at the Lehigh Viaduct.	Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Transportation Enhancements
Expand and improve Pulaski Park.	Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Philadelphia Water Department Philadelphia Parking Authority
Create a linear park, greenway, and open space at Frankford Creek.	Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Transportation Enhancements Delaware River Port Authority City of Philadelphia Philadelphia Recreation Department
Recreate Frankford Square.	PennDOT Developer Agreements
Create recreation space under I-95.	PennDOT I-95 Project City of Philadelphia Parks and Recreation Private Partners

## IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX: STREETSCAPES

Streetscapes	
Action	Partners/Potential Funding Sources
Create a Frankford Avenue Bikeway and Green Street.	Home Town Streets Transportation Enhancements Treevitalize
Create Riverfront Greenway Connections.	Developer Agreements
Create the Columbia Green Street.	Transportation Enhancements Home Town Streets Safe Routes to School I-95 Reconstruction Treevitalize
Implement Aramingo Avenue Streetscape.	PennDOT
Implement Lehigh Avenue Streetscape/Bikeway.	Home Town Streets Transportation Enhancements Treevitalize Philadelphia Water Department
Implement Allegheny Streetscape/Bikeway.	Transportation Enhancements Growing Greener Safe Routes to School I-95 Reconstruction Home Town Streets Treevitalize ReStore Philadelphia Corridors



**NKCDC**  
NEW KENSINGTON COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

[www.nkcdc.org](http://www.nkcdc.org)