



CLEANING AND GREENING

“There was endless short dumping on the lots,” remembers resident Donna Cooper. “It felt like a community without a vision — a community on it’s way down.” In fact, when NKCDC began working on our strategic plan in 1994, the community identified vacant, debris-filled land as a major problem in the neighborhood.

Through support from the city’s Office of Housing and Community Development and the Philadelphia Horticultural Society’s Philadelphia Green program came together to test the feasibility of a neighborhood-based approach to vacant land management. With residents and NKCDC taking the lead, this program has involved a number of treatment options for abandoned land, including regular cleaning and mowing, tree plantings, community gardens, a neighborhood garden center, brownfield reclamation, urban farming, and the transfer of vacant lots to adjacent homeowners as private side-yards. The goal has been to improve the overall appearance and “curb appeal” of the area, thereby helping to stem population loss, attract new residents, and encourage reinvestment.

The first community in Philadelphia to utilize vacant land management as a revitalization strategy, to date, the program has reclaimed more than 65% of the neighborhood’s 1,100 vacant land parcels, planted over 650 neighborhood trees, converted 40 parcels into community gardens and has received three national awards including HUD Best Practices. Most importantly, this is now a neighborhood with a vision.

Special thanks to the William Penn Foundation and our numerous other partners and, volunteers and supporters.

NEW KENSINGTON COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION