

Eastside Blueprint Community Strategic Plan

Executive Summary

The Eastside is a transitional community with a mixed quality of housing stock, vacant or blighted properties, mixed ownership and a struggling but surviving commercial corridor. Located adjacent to the development of the Riverfront and the revitalization of downtown Wilmington, the community sits on the verge of success. With proper leadership and a well developed revitalization plan, the community can develop in a comprehensive manner that benefits both Eastside residents and downtown Wilmington.

The Blueprint Community Planning Team held a series of community wide stakeholder meetings during the summer. The June 5, 2008 resulted in the development and adoption of the following Vision and Mission statements:

Eastside Blueprint Community VISION

Eastside Blueprint Community's vision is to join committed residents and stakeholders in an effort to reinvigorate the Eastside of Wilmington, Delaware. All voices will be heard in a collective effort to develop a plan to positively revitalize Wilmington's Eastside community.

Eastside Blueprint Community MISSION

Our mission is to unite citizens, public and private stakeholders, and community activists to revitalize the Eastside of Wilmington. This will be achieved by increasing homeownership, human services, public safety, entrepreneurship, and education, thereby creating a better place to live, learn, worship and work.

Through stakeholder meetings held June – August 2008, as well as efforts of the Eastside Blueprint Planning Team from March 2008 through January 2009, the following transformation strategy, strategic goals, recommendations and strategies were identified for revitalizing the Eastside:

Transformation Strategy

“Utilizing Bancroft Community School as a hub, we will increase every Eastside resident’s access to education and skills development, health services, and community resources. As we develop the human potential of our residents, we will also focus on improving public safety and housing, and the beautification of our neighborhood.”

Strategic Goal 1:

Beautify Our Neighborhood to make it a place residents are proud to call home and visitors feel welcome. Achievement of this goal will be measured by the increased presence of adults and children engaged in positive activities in the streets, porches, yards, and public spaces of the Eastside.

Recommendation 1

Enhance the beautification of the Eastside through the installation of pole banners, improved signage, and window flower box gardens.

Strategy:

Pole Banners – Pole banners will be a welcome sight for the Eastside. The Eastside Blueprint Communities will Partner with 4th District Neighborhood Planning Council to achieve this goal. As a sign of community pride, neighborhoods need recognition. This action of placing banners on poles in various visible sections of the Eastside will give the neighborhood that special boost. The banners will be adorned in rich stately colors. This will give the Eastside the look of prestige which has been overdue and much deserved. This can be accomplished by the summer of 2009 with the assistance of the Delmarva Power Electric Company.

Signage - The Eastside can benefit by having more signage to protect the children. Since the children will be at play in the neighborhood on a daily basis, children at play signs need to be posted to protect the children from motorists. This safe guard would be put into place to protect our future- our children. In addition, hearing impaired signs should be posted where appropriate along with speed signs. By the fall of 2009 this can be accomplished along with the help of the residents and the City of Wilmington.

Window Flower Box Gardens - Window flower boxes will be added to the front of the homes and businesses on the Eastside to display beautification and community pride. The homes on the Eastside have little space, on the sidewalks, to erect gardens and they usually have no lawn. The window flower boxes will serve as the garden which most homes usually showcase on their front lawns. Taking care of their flower boxes will give the residents and business owners a sense of pride in the community. The potting will start during the spring and summer of 2009 and will be an ongoing event throughout the following spring and summer of each year. Potential partners for the Window Flower Box Gardens will be the Delaware Center for Horticulture, Block Captains, City of Wilmington, and the Home Depot.

Recommendation 2

Systematically enhance the Eastside community through sidewalk repair, rear yard development, and enhancement of building facades.

Strategy:

The Eastside will take advantage of City of Wilmington and other programs related to sidewalk repair, rear yard development and façade programs. Each of these will enhance the beauty of the Eastside as well as enhance quality of life and neighborhood pride.

Strategic Goal 2

Enhance public safety in Eastside community by decreasing crime by 10% each year.

Recommendation 1:

Enhanced community policing in conjunction with the Bancroft Community School

Strategy:

Enlist help of Community Police Officers to utilize Bancroft Community School as a hub of public safety activity and implement a “Community Safety Program.”

Recommendation 2:

Develop active block captain teams whose role will be to provide a steady flow of information into and from the neighborhood related to issues of public safety. This will include identifying

public safety problems in each area (including lighting problems) and developing and implementing strategies for reducing the public safety problems in coordination with Wilmington Police and other City departments.

Strategy:

Move loitering, open air drug sales and alcohol consumption out of the area through positive engagement. Beginning with Bancroft Community School as the hub, the desired outcome is an ever broadening circle of safe and welcoming streets that will ultimately encompass all of the Eastside. The United Way Strong Neighborhoods program will be a key partner in this initiative, as will be Eastside block captains, Wilmington police and increasing outdoor presence and activity of Eastside residents

Recommendation 3:

Enhance public safety by bringing the neighbor back in the hood. The Eastside, once lively with neighborly love, has lost that loving feeling. Our vision is to see the neighborhood flourishing with laughter and happy faces.

Strategy:

The active engagement of Eastside residents will be pursued through a multi pronged approach of block captains, Eastside resident civic engagement, and increased opportunities and support for Eastside residents getting to know their neighbors and take responsibility for the safety and security of their neighborhood. This strategy will include the development of an Eastside Annual Festival. The purpose of the Eastside Annual Festival is to bring the neighbor back into the hood and uplift the spirits of the residents. This festival desires to bring unity among the residents and businesses. The festival will be held at Kirkwood Park which is a midway section of the Eastside. This site proved to be successful years ago when the 'African Festival was held there. The Eastside Festival will provide opportunities to display the talents of the residents and talent from the Christina Cultural Arts Center. This would be a great chance to showcase the arts. The Festival will be held on a Saturday during the summer of 2009. It will be held for eight hours from 12:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m.. Beside the residents, stakeholders, and the Christina Cultural Arts Center other partners will be neighborhood churches and businesses, City , County, and State elected officials, the Eastside Civic Association, 3rd and 4th District Planning Council, Peoples Settlement Association, United Way Strong Families, and Chase Bank.

Strategic Goal 3:

Establish Health Center and Community Resource Center as part of Bancroft Community School.

The Eastside Blueprint Community planning team will work with those developing Bancroft Community School with particular focus on achieving the following:

- **Health Center** – Because no health services are provided currently within the boundaries of the Eastside community, incorporating basic health services in the Bancroft Community School is a high priority. This should include basic preventive and wellness care, dental services, and mental health services.
- **Resource Center** – Bancroft Community School will incorporate a Resource Center in order to facilitate access to the many existing programs and services, as well as provide access to meeting space and information technology. This Resource Center will be open and accessible to the community (including weekday evenings and weekends), and will have staff to assist people in finding programs and services they need. In addition to space, staff, and information technology, the usefulness and viability of such a resource center will depend on a comprehensive and continually updated database of programs and services.

Strategic Goal 4:

Improve Condition and Availability of Affordable Housing in the Eastside

Recommendation 1:

Decrease the amount of vacant properties in census tracts 9, 17 and 20 by ten homes per year for five years.

Strategy:

The Eastside Blueprint Team acquires a pool of funding in the amount of \$554,100 from various funding organizations interested in investing in the Eastside. This dollar amount reflects the

average sales price of a home on the Eastside multiplied by ten. Through a Request for Proposal Process created by the Eastside Blueprint Team, existing non profits and for profit developers submit for acquisition dollars. The acquisitions must be centrally located in Census tracts 9, 17 and 20.

Recommendation 2:

Increase the Affordable Housing stock in census tracts 9, 17 and 20 by ten homes per year.

Strategy:

The Eastside Blueprint Team will acquire an additional \$250,000 or \$25,000 per property for qualified developers. A separate Request for Proposal application form will be drafted and used by the Eastside Blueprint Team. These dollars must be used for construction subsidy. Projects may include multiple areas of construction and may include demolition, rehabilitation or new construction. All demolitions, rehabilitations and new construction must adhere to City of Wilmington development codes as well as comply with all aspects of historic preservation.

Recommendation 3:

Assist potential homeowners with down payment and settlement assistance.

Strategy:

The Eastside Blueprint Team will acquire from interested funding organizations an additional \$20,000 or \$2,000 per property for individuals who purchase a newly renovated or constructed home in census tracts 9, 17 and 20. This will not be a loan but a true gift provided by the Eastside Blueprint Team with no stipulations.

Recommendation 4:

Increase the homeowner education process

Strategy:

All potential buyers must complete a HUD Certified Housing Counseling Course at a local housing counseling organization in order to qualify for all of the aforementioned subsidies. Additionally, after settlement, buyers must participate in at least 8 hours of post homeowner repair classes and financial counseling offered by the Eastside Blueprint Team. The Eastside

Blueprint Team will utilize the assets of its members to provide space and a teacher for this project. No funding will be necessary.

Eastside Blueprint Community Strategic Plan

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Eastside Blueprint Community Strategic Plan

The Federal Home Loan Bank defines Blueprint Communities as, “helping community leaders plan for and carry out effective and comprehensive community revitalization efforts. Launched in September 2005 by the FHLBank of Pittsburgh and 16 funding and program partners, Blueprint Communities initially involved 22 urban and rural communities across Pennsylvania during 2005. In 2007, Blueprint Communities expanded to West Virginia with 10 communities and 14 partners. 2008 saw the initiative reach into Delaware, involving 9 communities and 14 partners.”

“Blueprint Communities is designed to serve as a catalyst to revitalize older communities and neighborhoods by fostering strong local leadership and collaboration, focusing on planning and goal-setting strategies, and building local program capacity to sustain community growth.”

“The initiative emphasizes a team approach to community development. Participating teams are comprised of bankers, developers, community representatives, local elected officials and additional representatives. Youth participation is encouraged.”

“The initiative is designed to encourage communities to approach revitalization holistically, taking into account physical, economic and social needs. No community can rationally expect to grow if only certain areas of development are pursued. All aspects of development – including housing, infrastructure, economic stimulation and healthy, safe surroundings – must be addressed in community planning.”

Being one of the oldest communities in Wilmington, DE, the Eastside is a transitional community with a mixed quality of housing stock, vacant or blighted properties, mixed ownership and a struggling but surviving commercial corridor. Located adjacent to the development of the Riverfront and the revitalization of downtown Wilmington, the community sits on the verge of success. With proper leadership and a well developed revitalization plan, the community can develop in a comprehensive manner that benefits both Eastside residents and downtown Wilmington.

Eastside Blueprint Community Team

- Beverly Bell – Bell Funeral Home, 4th District Neighborhood Planning Council
- Kevin DiSabatino – DiSabatino Construction

- Thomas Ford – City of Wilmington, Real Estate and Housing
- Alice Harris-Marsh – Inter-Neighborhood Foundation
- Brenda Jones – Former educator
- Ronald Kimbrough – Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Nu Upsilon Chapter
- Geri Lewis-Loper – Mother UAME Church, Delaware Center for Justice
- David Mosley – Gateway House
- Patricia Ponzo – Wilmington Trust
- Tina Robinson – Community Activist
- Margaret Verduchi – JPMorgan Chase Foundation

The following sections of this plan reflect a vision and mission statement as well as a transformation strategy. The reader should recognize that while these statements were physically written by the Eastside Blueprint Team, they were conceived from the minds of many community representatives. The team merely acted as an intermediary between the community representatives and the plan. While the Eastside Blueprint Community did the actual legwork of developing and formatting the plan, the community members are responsible for its content. These community members included residents, youth, church members and business owners who all want to see change in the community. On June 5, 2008, a community wide stakeholder meeting resulted in the development and adoption of the following Vision and Mission statements:

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Through stakeholder meetings held June – August 2008, as well as efforts of the Eastside

Blueprint Planning Team from March 2008 through January 2009, the following strategic goals were identified for revitalizing the Eastside:

Strategic Goals

- 1. Beautify Our Neighborhood to make it a place residents are proud to call home and visitors feel welcome.**
- 2. Enhance public safety in the Eastside community**
- 3. Establish a Health Center and Community Resource Center as part of Bancroft Community School**
- 4. Improve Condition and Availability of Affordable Housing in the Eastside**

Transformation Strategy:

Utilizing Bancroft Community School as a hub, we will increase every Eastside resident's access to education and skills development, health services, and community resources. As we develop the human potential of our residents, we will also focus on improving public safety and housing, and the beautification of our neighborhood.

Watching the development of the strategy, statements and goals from the scribble of general brain storming sessions, to bullet point outlines, to actual paragraphs was a long and difficult process. Many revisions were made to include the concerns of all people and entities that live, learn worship and work in the Eastside.



Community Profile

Dating back to the 1600's, the Eastside is one of Wilmington's oldest communities, located in New Castle County. It consists of numerous small neighborhoods that have been historically woven together in an urban context with generations of the same family owning property and living in the community. It has a rich history and heritage with many historic sites such as Howard High School, Old Swedes Church, St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church, Clifford Brown Walk, August Quarterly and Louis L. Redding's home.

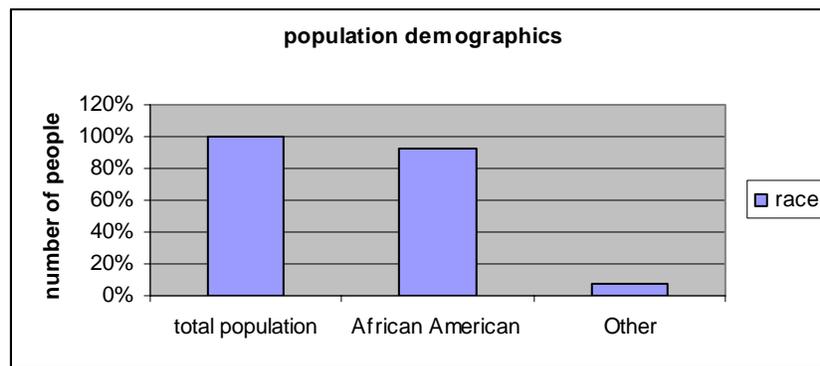
The Eastside is located next to the central business district and is within easy walking distance of employers. It has easy access to major urban areas by car, train and bus. It is between the Christina River and Brandywine Creek and has plenty of parks and open space for recreation.



Demographics

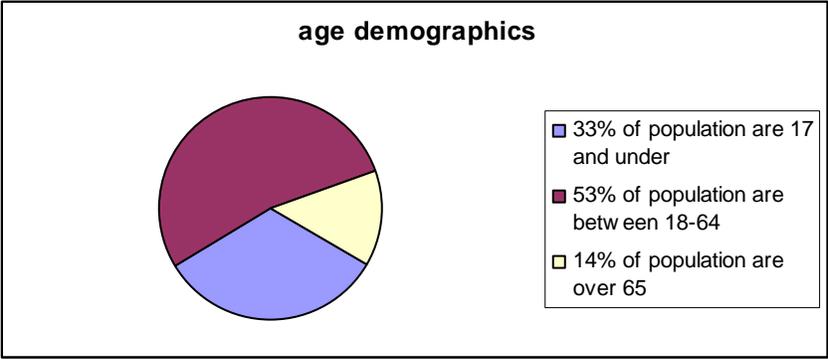
The total population of the planning area is 5,933 according to the 2000 census. This is 8.22% of the population of the City of Wilmington. Fifty-five percent of the population is female and 45% is male. The female population is slightly higher than that of the City of Wilmington, 55 % as opposed to 52 % for the City of Wilmington.

The planning area has a significantly higher percentage of African-Americans when compared to the state (19.2%), county (20.7%), and City of Wilmington (56.4%). About 92% of the population of the Eastside is African-American. Population of other races is small. (Profile of the Eastside Planning Area)



The median age of the population is 30.7 as compared to the citywide median age of 33.7. The median age of females is 27.0 and median age for men is 33.6 for the Eastside. The male population in census tracts 9 and 17 had a younger median age than the female population, while the females in census tract 20 had a younger median age than males. (Profile of the Eastside Planning Area)

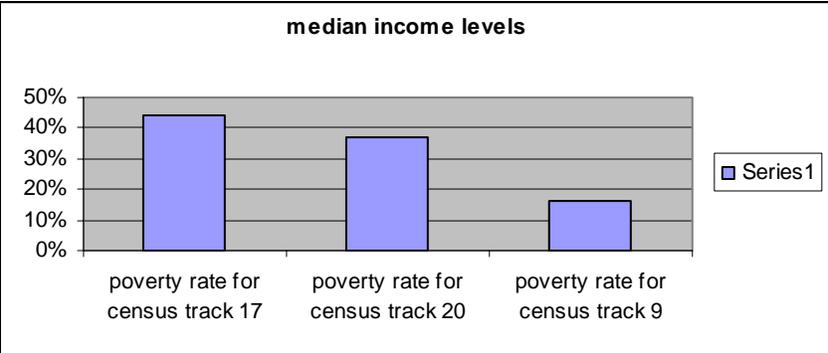
2000 Census data indicate that 33% of the residents of the Eastside are 17 and under, about 53% are between 18 and 64, and nearly 14% are over 65. When compared to the city-wide figures, the Eastside planning area has a higher number of persons less than 17 year of age; fewer people who are in the 18-64 age group, and more persons who are 65 years of age and over.



The Eastside planning area has a significantly lower per capita personal income when compared to the county (\$35,557) and the City of Wilmington (\$20,236). The per capita personal income for census tracts in the planning area are: census tract 9 - \$12,525, census tract 17 – \$12,713, and census tract 20 - \$10,376.

When looking at the distribution of household incomes in the planning area, census tract 17 has the highest percentage (60.3%) of households with incomes below \$15,000, census tract 20 has the highest percentage (64.4%) of households with incomes between \$15,000 and \$49,999, and census tract 9 has the highest percentage (19.9%) of households with incomes of \$50,000 or more.

Census tract 20 has the highest median income (\$27,946), followed by census tract 9 (\$18,672), and census tract 17 (\$11,490). Census tract 17 has the highest poverty rate (44%), followed by census tract 20 (37%), and census tract 9 (16%).

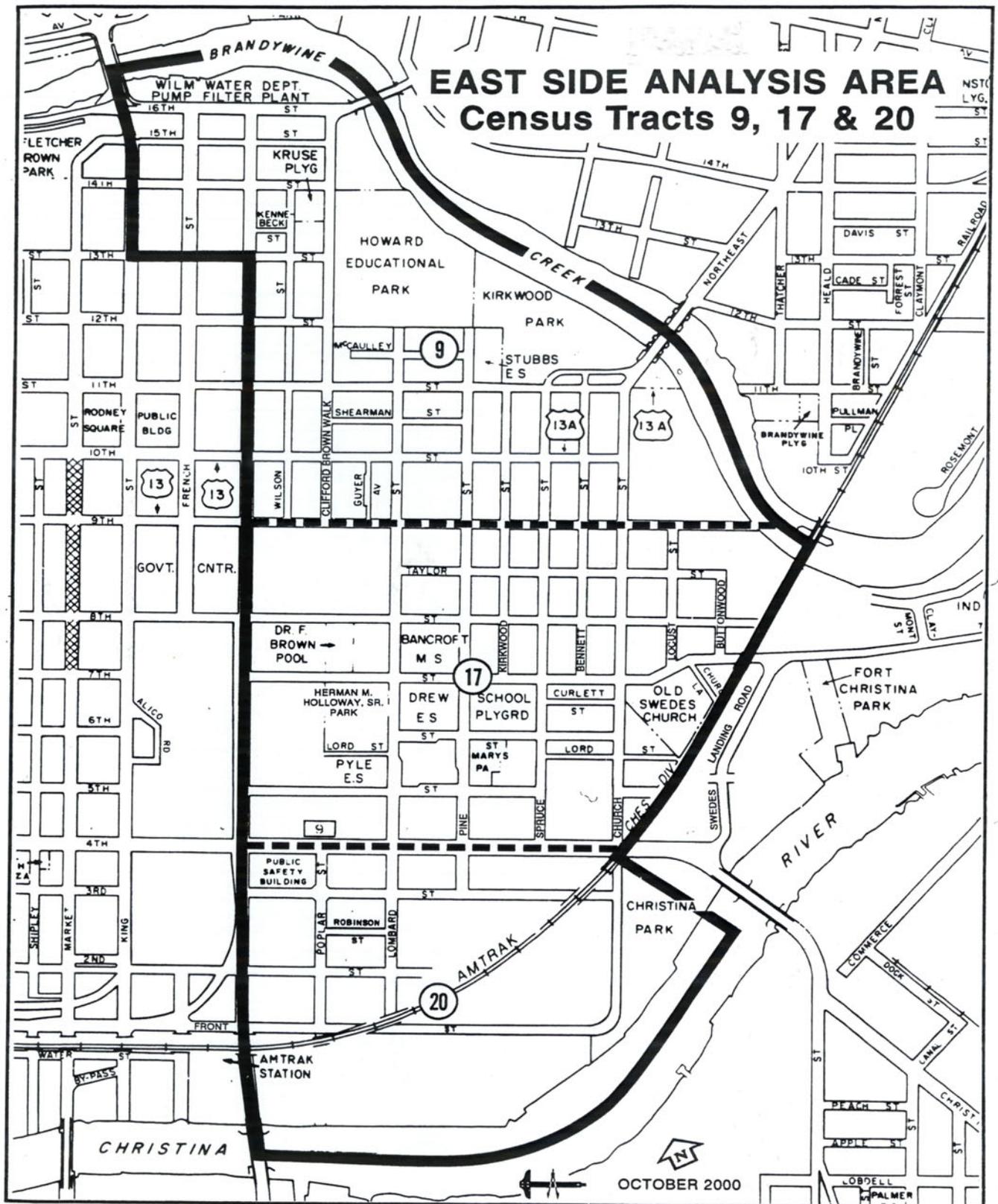


Census tract 20 has the highest percentage of female head of households (70%) followed by

census tracts 17 and 9 with 65.5% and 57.6% respectively.

In 2000, the City of Wilmington had an unemployment rate of 5.8%. Census tract 9 had an unemployment rate of 7.6%, census tract 17 had an unemployment rate of 7.8%, and census tract 20 had an unemployment rate of 24.5%. In January 2009 the City of Wilmington's unemployment rate has risen to 10.6%, and the Eastside's overall unemployment rate is estimated at 18%.

There are a total of 2,389 households in the community, or 8% of the households in the City of Wilmington. Forty percent of the households have at least one child under the age of 18, as compared to 27% for the City of Wilmington.



Historic Significance

The Eastside community has three areas that have been designated City Historic Districts. These districts all feature brick row houses dating to Wilmington's period of intense industrial growth from 1830 – 1910. The districts also contain notable structures reflecting major events in Wilmington's history. The districts are:

- The **Eastside City Historic District** - a neighborhood of continuous brick row houses with corner commercial structures. The houses feature a variety of roof lines, window treatments, and cornice trim and decorative porches.

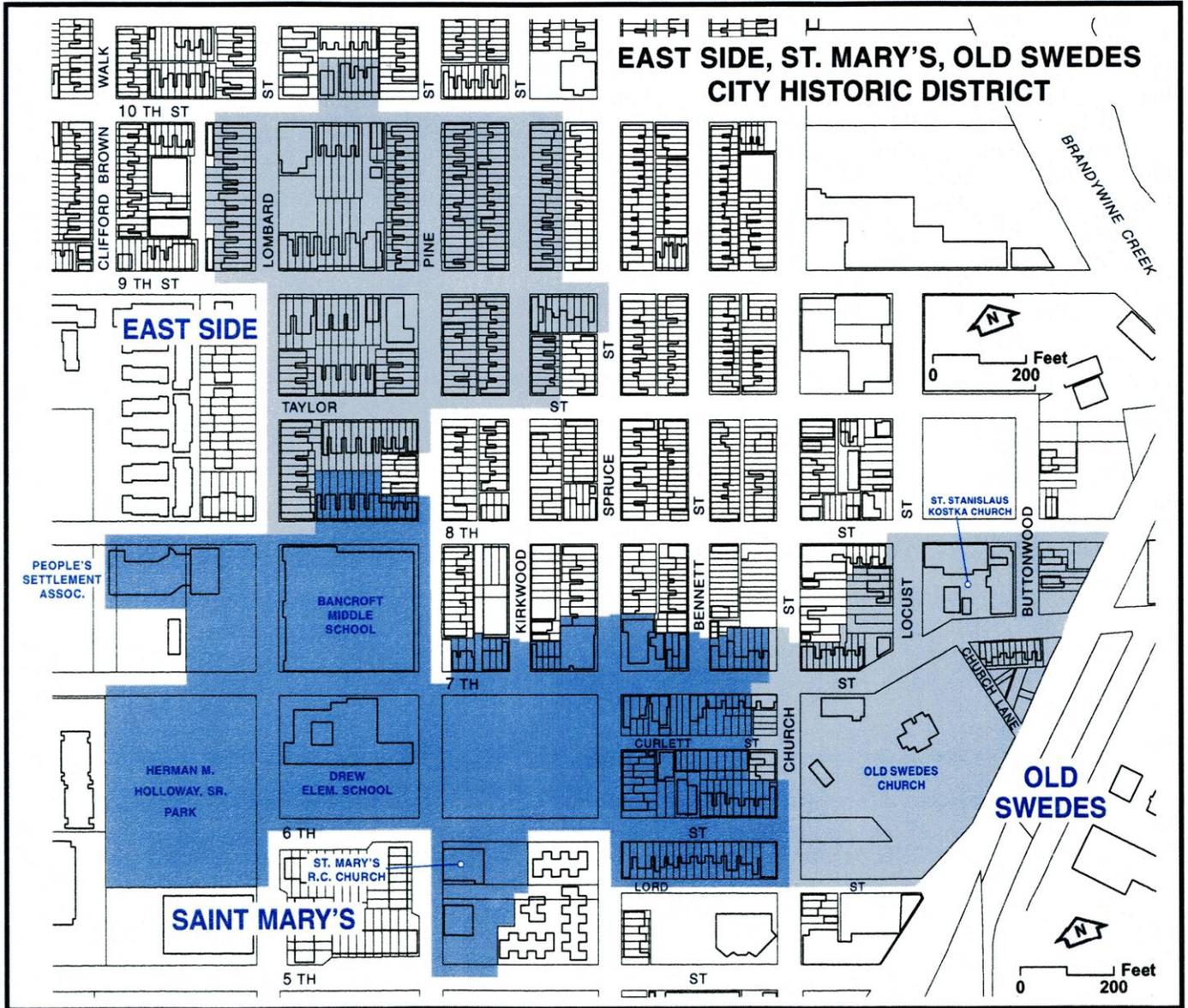


- The **Saint Mary's City Historic District** - named for Saint Mary's Roman Catholic Church and school, built in 1866 at Sixth & Pine Streets to address the needs of Irish immigrants and industrial workers of the mid-to-late 1800's.



- The **Old Swedes City Historic District** - named for Old Swedes (Holy Trinity) Church, built in 1698 at Seventh and Church Streets. The district honors the location of





The designation of an area as a City Historic District is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, such designation can help to increase property values by protecting elements that define the area's character. Property owners within City Historic Districts may be eligible for City tax abatements, Federal and State tax credits, and other limited funding programs. (Wilmington City Historic Districts Brochure)

On the other hand, such designations can increase the cost of renovations and new construction of housing in the City Historic District. Residents of Wilmington's 3rd and 4th Council Districts have discussed these issues at some of their meetings. First, they are concerned that

some of the new housing being built does not fit in with the character of the community. Second, Historic Preservation Guidelines could drive up the cost of developing affordable housing. Third, they are concerned that some renovation projects were halted because they did not meet the Historic Preservation Guidelines. Adherence to the guidelines makes the replacement of windows and other renovation projects too expensive for them.

Historic Preservation Guidelines specifically developed for the Eastside appear not to exist, with those making inquiries directed to look at the guidelines for Quaker Hill Historic District. The Eastside Blueprint Planning Team supports the development of Historic Preservation Guidelines specifically for the Eastside that are sensitive to the development of affordable housing.

Although there are three designated City Historic Districts, residents are interested in preserving and highlighting sites that are of importance to them. The Eastside Blueprint Planning Team is prepared to work with interested stakeholders to identify these sites and work with the appropriate historic organizations to preserve them and highlight them with markers.

Environment

The Neighborhood Comprehensive Plan for the Eastside Analysis Area Census Tracts 9, 17, & 20 prepared by the Department of Planning and Development, City of Wilmington states:

“The Eastside has environmental challenges because it contains numerous brownfields, some worse than others. These sites are vestiges of the areas past industries and those manufacturing processes. Each identified contaminated site presents its own unique set of challenges and opportunities both for the neighborhood’s continuing viability as a residential area and for future economic development. These challenges and opportunities must be met with rationally determined solutions which will set the foundations for the overall future growth within the City.”

The Eastside Blueprint Planning Team agrees with the above assessment and recognizes that environmental issues may affect many of the projects that may be planned.

Economic Development

The Neighborhood Comprehensive Plan for the Eastside Analysis Area Census Tracts 9, 17, & 20 prepared by the Department of Planning and Development, City of Wilmington states:

“While the Eastside’s core is predominately residential, there are actually few neighborhood level stores and commercial areas situated along the busiest streets and roadways within it which offer the products and goods necessary to satisfy the local resident’s broad range of demand for goods and services. There are a few neighborhood commercial and retail establishments that provide a very limited selection of the products that might be needed by the typical Eastside resident. However, there is no single large retail commercial area within the Eastside community.



Despite being located immediately adjacent to the Wilmington central business district, the Eastside has not enjoyed significant tangible commercial or retail advantages that have translated into solid direct economic benefits for the overall community. The Eastside does not have the array of small retail or commercial establishments normally associated with serving or supporting the commercial activities of a central business district from areas immediately adjacent to it because of slightly lower land costs.”

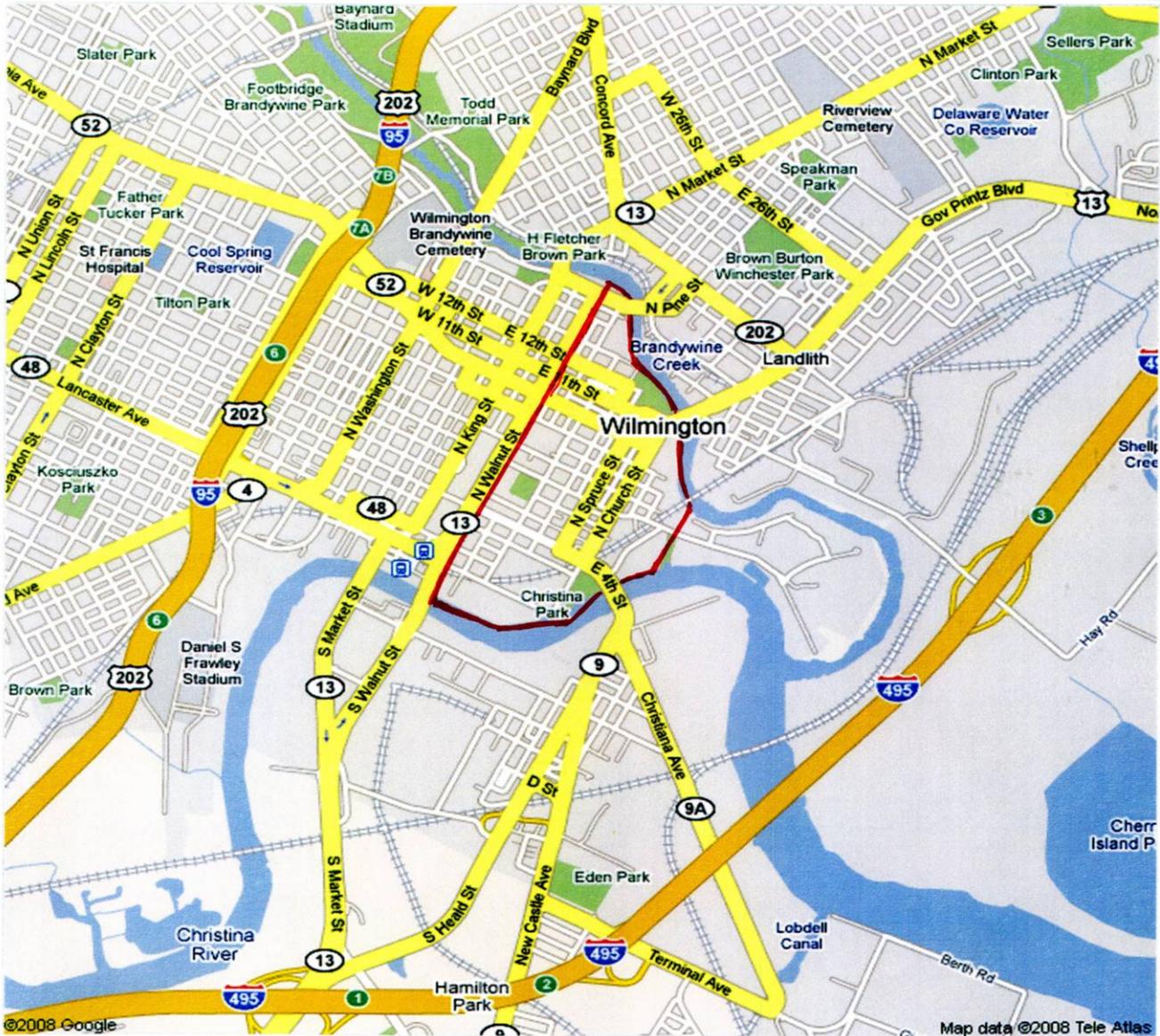
The plan goes on to state: “Based on its unique geography, every community has unique advantages that make it a special place for doing business and for supporting economic activity. Given this, within Wilmington the Eastside has unique economic advantages because of its geographic and its spatial relationship to other things, both natural and man-made, within the greater Wilmington/New Castle County region...Among these, the Eastside has superior geographic advantages with easy access to:

- Major surface transportation routes and corridors via I-495, US 13, and SR 9;
- Mass transportation service via the DART 1st State bus system's radial hub at Rodney Square, Southeastern Pennsylvania Transit Authority Regional Rail Service (SEPTA), New Jersey Transit Bus Service, and the AMTRAK Train Station;
- National and international water-bourn freight via the port of Wilmington;
- The merging riverfront commercial district along the Christina River;
- The Wilmington Central Business District's established retail and commercial areas as well as the emerging new commercial districts including the New Castle County Courthouse and the Ship's Tavern Commercial District;
- The growing number of colleges and universities locating within a 2-4 block corridor of Market Street pedestrian mall; and
- The New Castle County Regional and the Philadelphia International Airports."

Transportation

The Eastside's surface transportation is a grid of local streets consisting mainly of one-way streets which operate as traditional one-way pairs. These local streets mainly function as collectors and arterials that link the local streets and provide internal access to the Eastside's neighborhoods and to the adjacent areas. The exceptions to the one-way street pairing generalization include East 4th Street, Poplar Street south of East 4th, and short segments of East 5th Street between N. Walnut and Lombard Streets and between Church Street and the AMTRAK Viaduct. The traffic operating policies of the Eastside's one-way street scenario have not presented internal circulation difficulties for traffic unfamiliar with the operating pattern of these streets because the one-way streets are linked as pairs.

Transportation Corridors: Local Streets, Dart Bus, I-95, I-495, Rt.13, Bus Terminal & Train Station



Within the interior of the Eastside is residential neighborhoods consisting primarily of row houses. Virtually none of the older row homes have garages either attached to them, within the property lines, located adjacent to the row houses, or nearby which are available to them.

The lack of available on street parking which had historically been limited to mainly on Sundays,

now is daily and frequently extends into the evening hours as more activities are being offered in the evenings.

Taxi companies and other private transportation service companies provide limousine and other types of pre-scheduled or on-demand for hire transportation service to the residents of the Eastside for trips to airports, hospitals, and other destinations. Because this service is often pre-arranged it can be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Within the Eastside, the Delaware Transit Corporation (DART 1st State), provides fixed schedule bus service and the publicly operated demand-response paratransit (i.e., door-to-door dial ride service). The fixed route bus service network operates as a radial system within Wilmington with Rodney Square as the hub. Although the Eastside's location is proximate to the public transit system's major transfer point and many bus routes operate along North Walnut Street or along 4th Street, only a very few DART 1st State bus routes actually traverse its interior to provide circulator service therein.

Using the industry route service area measurement standard, some form of public transit service is available for virtually all of the Eastside.

(The Neighborhood Comprehensive Plan for the Eastside Analysis Area Census Tracts 9, 17, & 20 prepared by the Department of Planning and Development, City of Wilmington)

Land Use

The Neighborhood Comprehensive Plan for the Eastside Analysis Area identified six land use types in the Eastside Community. They are: residential, commercial, waterfront, manufacturing, institutional/public/quasi-public, and open space. Residential is the primary land use and constitutes most of land area.

The plan contained several recommendations for changes in land use. A review of current zoning maps indicates that most of the changes recommended in the plan have been made.

Parks and Recreation

There is considerable recreational land or open space within the Eastside community that is available to the general public. The Eastside has several historic sites, one City-owned

playground, one City-owned outdoor swimming pool, and three City-owned parks. Also, there are some fairly large areas of privately owned land that have been devoted to recreation and children's play areas.

As described in the Neighborhood Comprehensive Plan for the Eastside Analysis Area Census Tracts 9, 17 & 20, the following recreational facilities are located in the Eastside Analysis Area:

- **Dr. Foster Brown Pool** is an outdoor uncovered swimming pool located on the north curb of East 7th Street between East 7th and Lombard Streets.
- **Christina Park** is located at 4th and Church Street along the banks of the Christina River on its south. The park contains play equipment and play areas for children, older teens, and adults. Also, it is the site of neighborhood and community festivals and carnivals.



- **Herman M. Holloway, Sr. Park** (also known as Compton Park) is located primarily along the east curb of Lombard Street between E. 7th and E. 5th Streets. The park has play equipment and play areas for children as well as heavy tree cover and walkways for leisurely strolls. It has a total surface area of 2.2 acres.



- **Kirkwood Park** is located on the banks of the Brandywine Creek and is bordered by Stubbs Elementary School and the Howard High School Educational Park on the west and East 11th Street on the south. Water and fish consumption advisories prohibit water activities. The park has play equipment and play areas for children, older teens, and adults. It has a total surface area of about 7 acres.



- **Kruse Playground** is located at the intersection of E. 14th Street and Clifford Brown Walk (Poplar Street). The park is larger than a typical tot-lot and includes play equipment and play areas for children. It has a total surface area of about .70 acres.



- **The Urban Environmental Center** is located in the old horse stables of the former mounted police at North Walnut and East 15th Streets. It is an educational center whose focus is on creating awareness and an appreciation of the city as a unique and valuable environment comprised of both natural and man-made elements which deserve respect, understanding, and consideration.



- **Gardens**

13th & Walnut Streets

10th & Pine Streets



In addition to the City-owned open space and park land located within the Eastside community, there are some fairly large areas of privately owned land which have been devoted to recreation and children's play areas.

Eastside Blueprint for Success

Transformation Strategy

“Utilizing Bancroft Community School as a hub, we will increase every Eastside resident’s access to education, skills development, health services, and community resources. As we develop the human potential of our residents, we will also focus on improving public safety, housing, and the beautification of our neighborhoods.”

The Eastside Blueprint Community Plan embraces the Bancroft Community School as the hub around which our revitalization initiatives will take place. Bancroft is centrally located in the neighborhood, historically revered, and as a true Community School can begin to serve as the institutional anchor so needed in the Eastside. This Eastside Blueprint Community Plan envisions a reciprocal and mutually beneficial relationship between the Eastside community and the Bancroft Community School. The community will support the School by viewing it as a focal point around which we will enhance public safety and beautification, and develop housing improvement initiatives.

Strategic Goal 1: Beautification

Beautify Our Neighborhood to make it a place residents are proud to call home and visitors feel welcome. Achievement of this goal will be measured by the increased presence of adults and children engaged in positive activities in the streets, porches, yards, and public spaces of the Eastside.

Recommendations for Beautification:

Recommendation 1

Enhance the beautification of the Eastside through the installation of pole banners, improved

signage, and window flower box gardens.

Strategy:

Pole Banners – Pole banners will be a welcome sight for the Eastside. The Eastside Blueprint Communities will Partner with 3rd District Neighborhood Planning Council to achieve this goal. As a sign of community pride, neighborhoods need recognition. This action of placing banners on poles in various visible sections of the Eastside will give the neighborhood that special boost. The banners will be adorned in rich stately colors. This will give the Eastside the look of prestige which has been overdue and much deserved. This can be accomplished by the summer of 2009 with the assistance of the Delmarva Power Electric Company.

Signage - The Eastside can benefit by having more signage to protect the children. Since the children will be at play in the neighborhood on a daily basis, children at play signs need to be posted to protect the children from motorists. This safe guard would be put into place to protect our future- our children. In addition, hearing impaired signs should be posted where appropriate along with speed signs. By the fall of 2009 this can be accomplished along with the help of the residents and the City of Wilmington.

Window Flower Box Gardens - Window flower boxes will be added to the front of the homes and businesses on the Eastside to display beautification and community pride. The homes on the Eastside have little space, on the sidewalks, to erect gardens and they usually have no lawn. The window flower boxes will serve as the garden which most homes usually showcase on their front lawns. Taking care of their flower boxes will give the residents and business owners a sense of pride in the community. The potting will start during the spring and summer of 2009 and will be an ongoing event throughout the following spring and summer of each year. Potential partners for the Window Flower Box 'Gardens will be the Delaware Center for Horticulture, Block Captains, City of Wilmington, and the Home Depot.

Recommendation 2

Systematically enhance the Eastside community through sidewalk repair, rear yard development, and enhancement of building facades. This can be accomplished by summer 2010 with the help of The City of Wilmington and the Eastside residents.

Strategy:

The Eastside will take advantage of City of Wilmington and other programs related to sidewalk repair, rear yard, garden development and façade programs. Each of these will enhance the beauty of the Eastside as well as enhance quality of life and neighborhood pride.

The following budgetary items for the Beautification Project are based on one year of operation.

Strategic Goal #1 cost estimates.

Beautification

Total Development Cost for 26 Pole Banners	\$21,037.50
Total Development Cost for Street Signage	\$5,000
Total Development Cost for 200 Window Flower Box Gardens	\$10,000
Façade, Sidewalk, Rear Yard Developments	\$300,000
Total Project Cost	\$336,037.50

Permanent

Sources

FHLB Wilmington Trust	\$18,018.75
City of Wilmington	\$18,018.75
	\$300,000
Total Sources	\$336,037.50

Strategic Goal 2: Public Safety

Enhance public safety in Eastside community by decreasing crime by 10% each year.

Recommendations for Public Safety

Recommendation 1

Enhanced community policing in conjunction with the Bancroft Community School.

Strategy:

Enlist help of Community Police Officers to utilize Bancroft Community School as a hub of public safety activity implement “Community Safety Program” and have positive interactions between police and children.

Recommendation 2

Develop active block captain teams whose role will be to provide a steady flow of information into and from the neighborhood related to issues of public safety. This will include identifying public safety problems in each area (including lighting problems) and developing and implementing strategies for reducing the public safety problems in coordination with Wilmington Police and other City departments.

Strategy:

Move loitering, open air drug sales and alcohol consumption out of the area through positive engagement. Beginning with Bancroft Community School as the hub, the desired outcome is an ever broadening circle of safe and welcoming streets that will ultimately encompass all of the Eastside. The United Way Strong Neighborhoods program will be a key partner in this initiative, as will be Eastside block captains, Wilmington police and increasing outdoor presence and activity of Eastside residents.

Recommendation 3

Enhance public safety by bringing the neighbor back in the hood. The Eastside once lively with neighborly love has lost that loving feeling. Our vision is to see the neighborhood flourishing with laughter and happy faces.

Strategy:

The active engagement of Eastside residents will be pursued through a multi pronged approach of block captains, Eastside resident civic engagement, and increased opportunities and support for Eastside residents getting to know their neighbors and take responsibility for the safety and security of their neighborhood. This strategy will include the development of an Eastside Annual Festival. The purpose of the Eastside Annual Festival is to bring the neighbor back into the hood and uplift the spirits of the residents. This festival desires to bring unity among the residents and businesses. The festival will be held at Kirkwood Park which is a midway section of the Eastside. This site proved to be successful years ago when the African Festival was held there. The Eastside Festival will provide opportunities to display the talents of the residents and talent from the Christina Cultural Arts Center. This would be a great chance to showcase the arts. The Festival will be held on a Saturday during the summer of 2009. It will be held for eight hours from 12:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. Beside the residents, stakeholders, and the Christina Cultural Arts Center other partners will be neighborhood churches and businesses, City, County, and State elected officials, the Eastside Civic Association, 3rd and 4th District Planning Council, Peoples Settlement Association, United Way Strong Families, and JP Morgan Chase Bank.

Strategic Goal #2 Cost Estimates

Community Safety Program Implementation	\$20,000
Communication materials for Block Captains	\$ 3,000
Eastside Annual Festival Development Costs	\$ 5,000
Neighborhood Lighting	\$ 8,000
Lease and rental of equipment	\$ 5,000
Total	\$40,000

Strategic Goal 3: Community Resource Center and Health Center

**Establish Health Center and Community Resource Center
as part of Bancroft Community School.**

A theme emerged from the Eastside Blueprint Community stakeholder meetings, and it is consistent with concerns that have been expressed for years. While there are many resources

and programs available in Wilmington (health, youth activities, job skills development, social services, housing, etc.), the information and availability of those resources is so fragmented that few residents can find what they need when they need it. There is no “institutional anchor” in the Eastside that serves as a starting point for finding those programs and services that can help individuals, families and the community.

An opportunity for addressing this problem has emerged, and the Eastside Blueprint Community Plan incorporates this opportunity. Christina School District, with support from JP Morgan Chase, has identified Bancroft School as a “Community School” and is moving toward beginning implementation in Fall 2009. Conceptually a Community School functions as a focal point for creating a healthy community, serving as a hub for partnerships with a wide variety of community organizations and services.

The Eastside Blueprint Community planning team will work with those developing Bancroft Community School with particular focus on achieving the following:

- **Health Center** – Because no health services are provided currently within the boundaries of the Eastside community, incorporating basic health services in the Bancroft Community School is a high priority. This should include basic preventive and wellness care, dental services, and mental health services.
- **Resource Center** – Bancroft Community School will incorporate a Resource Center in order to facilitate access to the many existing programs and services, as well as provide access to meeting space and information technology. This Resource Center will be open and accessible to the community (including weekday evenings and weekends), and will have staff to assist people in finding programs and services they need. In addition to space, staff, and information technology, the usefulness and viability of such a resource center will depend on a comprehensive and continually updated database of programs and services.

Other strategic goals of the Eastside Community Blueprint Plan can also be served through the Bancroft Community School. Public Safety strategies such as enhanced community policing might develop in conjunction with the Bancroft Community School. Affordable housing initiatives might hold classes on home ownership, finance, and home maintenance at the community school.

The Eastside Blueprint Community Plan embraces the Bancroft Community School as the hub around which our revitalization initiatives will take place. Bancroft is centrally located in the neighborhood, historically revered, and as a true Community School can begin to serve as the institutional anchor so needed in the Eastside. This Eastside Blueprint Community Plan envisions a reciprocal and mutually beneficial relationship between the Eastside community and the Bancroft Community School. The community will support the School by viewing it as a focal point around which we will enhance public safety and beautification, and develop housing improvement initiatives.

Strategic Goal #3 Cost Estimates

Cost Estimates for the Health Center cannot be determined until the community school is operational. Estimated costs for start up and four years of operation of the Eastside Resource Information Center (ERIC) are as follows:

Development Costs	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	4 year total
Director	\$45,000	\$45,900	\$46,818	\$47,754	\$185,472
Resource Specialist	\$39,000	\$39,780	\$40,576	\$41,387	\$160,743
Resource Specialist	\$39,000	\$39,780	\$40,576	\$41,387	\$160,743
Subtotal Salaries	\$123,000	\$125,460	\$127,969	\$133,120	\$509,549
Fringe Benefits @ 30%	\$36,900	\$37,638	\$38,391	\$39,936	\$152,865
Total Salary + Fringe	\$159,900	\$163,098	\$166,360	\$173,056	\$662,414
Equipment					
desk top computers w/ Micro Office and security	\$3,080	\$600		\$600	\$4,280
Copier/Scanner/Fax/printers	\$2,740	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$2,940
Copier and printer Maintained/ink	\$1,400	\$1,400	\$1,400	\$1,400	\$4,200
Internet Access	\$1,200	\$1,200	\$1,200	\$1,200	\$4,800
pencils/pens/paper/addition supplies	\$ 4,164	\$ 490	\$ 490	\$ 492	5636
Conference Table and chairs	\$3,060				\$3,060
Work table and chairs	\$2,100				\$2,100
12 Desk chair combinations	\$2,880	\$240		\$240	\$3,360
2 cubicle panels	\$378				\$378
3 window AC units	\$2,100				\$2,100
Marketing Material	\$12,400	\$10,000	\$12,000	\$10,732	\$45,132
Utilities	\$2,400	\$2,400	\$2,400	\$2,400	\$9,600
Total					\$87,586
Total Development cost					\$750,000
Permanent Source					
Wachovia					\$750,000
Total Source					\$750,000

Strategic Goal 4: Affordable Housing

Improve Condition and Availability of Affordable Housing in the Eastside

- Identify and document vacant and abandoned homes
- Acquire and rehabilitate vacant properties
- Encourage affordable housing development and other housing related programs in the Eastside
- Job development (agreements that some rehab jobs will go to Eastside businesses or residents).
- Increasing jobs so that Eastside residents can afford homes

“The Eastside’s built environment consists of residential, manufacturing, and commercial/retail

structures and land uses. The physical structures located within the area are in varying conditions and states of occupancy. The housing stock covers a broad range of conditions. These conditions range from new and nearly new state-of-the art to historically significant well-maintained and well-preserved structures to some buildings that are dilapidated, vacant, beyond salvation and suitable for demolition....”

(The Neighborhood Comprehensive Plan for the Eastside Analysis Area Census Tracts 9, 17, & 20).

The Eastside Blueprint Planning Team identified the following strengths and weaknesses of the housing market on the Eastside:

Strengths

- New housing has been built by Habitat for Humanity, Meyers and Meyers, and others;
- There are opportunities to provide affordable housing by rehabbing vacant houses and building on the empty lots;
- The Eastside is within walking distance of downtown Wilmington;
- Recent development at the riverfront makes the area a desirable location to live;
- There are churches, schools, recreational areas for residents;
- There is some small business to support the residents;
- The Police Department headquarters is located in the community;

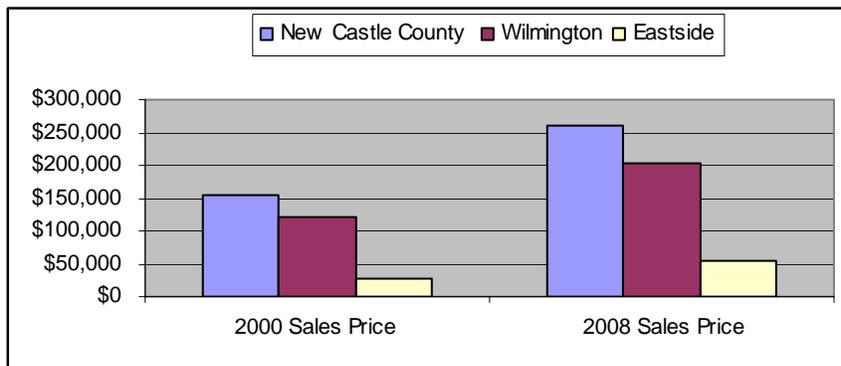
Weaknesses

- Low percentage of homeowners and a high percentage of renters;
- High percentage of section 8 rentals and public housing units;

- There are several brownfields located in the community;
- There are environmental issues with contaminated soil;
- Houses and lots are small;

Further analysis of relevant data yields the following information. Based on data supplied by the Trend Multiple Listing Service, the average sales price of a home in New Castle County was \$154,408 in the year 2000. There were a total of 9,404 units listed with 7,054 units sold or an average of 75%. In the year of 2008 the average sales price for a home sold in New Castle County was \$259,971. There were 10,985 units listed with 43.3% sold or 4761 properties.

In the year 2000 the average sales price of a home on the Eastside was \$26,397. There was a total of 49 units listed with 37 units sold or an average of 75.5%. In the year of 2008 the Eastside home had an average sales price of \$55,410 with 106 units listed with 19 sales or an average of 18%. The average sales price in Wilmington, Delaware rose 40.7% from \$119,923 in the year 2000 to \$202,138 in the year 2008. Property values on the Eastside rose 52%, but total sales significantly decreased by the year 2008. (Trend, Multiple Listing Service, 2008).



When examining the current housing stock, the Eastside Blueprint Team concluded that there are currently 2,864 housing units on the Eastside of which 83% are occupied, 17% are vacant, 74% are renter-occupied and 26% are owner-occupied. The owner occupant ratio on the Eastside significantly differs from the New Castle County average of 70.1%. (Eastside Blueprint Team 2008, U.S. 2000 Census, University of Delaware Community Profile Eastside p.20)

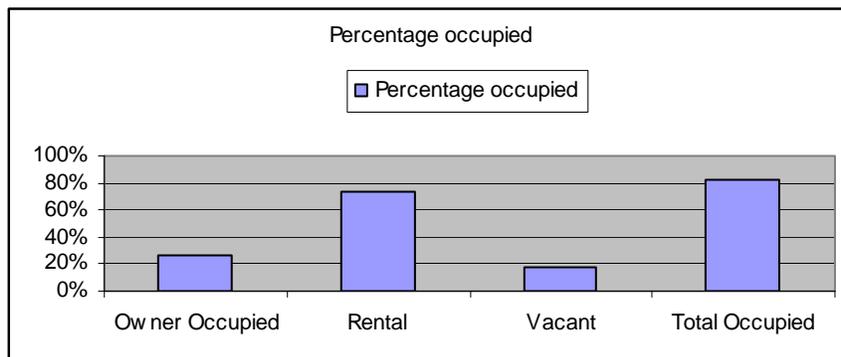
While the area median income for New Castle County is \$74,300 per year, the average area median income for the Eastside is \$22,703 per year. With Eastside residents earning only 31%

of the area median income, it becomes extremely difficult for Eastside residents to properly maintain their housing units as well as become homeowners.

Affordable Housing is a necessary component to promote homeownership to individuals who fall into the very low income category.

Per recent court filings by Lexis Nexis.com and made available by the Delaware State Housing Authority, the Eastside has reported approximately 76 owner occupied properties foreclosed upon. There were also approximately 347 of its owner occupied residents that are currently involved in subprime mortgage loans. (Lexis Nexis.com/Delaware State Housing Authority)

In many cases, not just on the Eastside but across the United States, subprime mortgage lenders offered risky adjustable rate mortgages to individuals with relatively unstable credit and small or no down payments. When these rates increased, homeowners defaulted on mortgage payments and homes slipped into foreclosure. These foreclosures left properties unoccupied and susceptible to deterioration.



As a result of the increase in foreclosures in this past year, it is inevitable that the Eastside will experience an increase in its already high vacancy percentages. Not only displaced homeowners but tenants as well will be removed from their residences as a result of mortgage delinquencies. Vacant properties scattered throughout the primary target area of the Eastside Blueprint Community, (Census Tracts 9, 17 and 20) border some of the Eastside's greatest development accomplishments. Many successful development projects such as McCaulley Court and Kirkwood Manor, completed by the Wilmington Housing Partnership, and Hope Landing, by Habitat for Humanity, are bordered with vacant and dilapidated housing.

Hope Landing



Adjacent Properties



Kirkwood Manor



Adjacent Properties



McCaulley Court



Adjacent Properties



Vacant properties threaten the economic stability of transitional neighborhoods by causing the depreciation of existing housing units. Vacant properties also pose a tremendous safety issue as these properties are usually targets for violence and criminal activity. Drug dealers and drug users gather in front of and inside these ill lit and extremely discrete properties where window and door boarding conceal the majority of the drug transactions. Per the 2000 U.S. Census the Eastside is one of the top three areas in the City where violent shootings occur.

Many environmental issues, asbestos/lead based paint, and structural issues that affect a deteriorating home can affect surrounding residents in a negative way as well. Issues such as cancer as well as personal injury are direct results of an environmental or a structural housing issue. Per the 2000 U.S. Census, Delaware's cancer rate between 1999 and 2003 was 5.3% higher than the U.S. estimate with 60.3% of these cases in New Castle County.

Recommendations for Housing

Recommendation 1:

Decrease the amount of vacant properties in census tracts 9, 17 and 20 by ten homes per year for five years.

Strategy:

The Eastside Blueprint Team acquires a pool of funding in the amount of \$554,100 from various

funding organizations interested in investing in the Eastside. This dollar amount reflects the average sales price of a home on the Eastside multiplied by ten. Through a Request for Proposal Process created by the Eastside Blueprint Team, existing non profits and for profit developers submit for acquisition dollars. The acquisitions must be centrally located in Census tracts 9, 17 and 20. Partners for this project will be the Federal Home Loan Bank of Pittsburgh.

Recommendation 2:

Increase the Affordable Housing stock in census tracts 9, 17 and 20 by ten homes per year.

Strategy:

The Eastside Blueprint Team will acquire an additional \$250,000 or \$25,000 per property for qualified developers. A separate Request for Proposal application form will be drafted and used by the Eastside Blueprint Team. These dollars must be used for construction subsidy. Projects may include multiple areas of construction and may include demolition, rehabilitation or new construction. All demolitions, rehabilitations and new construction must adhere to City of Wilmington development codes as well as comply with all aspects of historic preservation.

The total amount of subsidy in each home will determine the contract stipulations of the sale of each home. Each home will have at least a 5 year retention agreement however the length of time will increase as the subsidy increases. The amount of subsidy will also determine the median income levels of the individuals who may purchase the properties. The lower the subsidy amount will allow a higher percentage of area median income purchasers.

Retention time	AMI	Subsidy Amount
5 years	81%-120%	\$1-\$25,000
7 years	51%-80%	\$25,001-\$50,000
10 years	30%-50%	\$50,001-\$80,410

The subsidy amount will be considered a forgivable loan reflected as a soft second or third mortgage for the homeowner. The dollar amount will be prorated over the length of the retention period. Each year, the pro-rated amount will develop equity for the homeowner but may not be utilized until the entire retention agreement has been satisfied. The homeowner

must occupy the property as their primary residence for the entire length of the retention agreement. Partners for this project will be The Federal Home Loan Bank of Pittsburgh and The Delaware State Housing Authority.

Recommendation 3:

Assist potential homeowners with down payment and settlement assistance.

Strategy:

The Eastside Blueprint Team will acquire from an interested funding organization, (JP Morgan Chase) an additional \$20,000 or \$2,000 per property for individuals who purchase a newly renovated or constructed home in census tracts 9, 17 and 20. This will not be a loan but a true gift provided by the Eastside Blueprint Team with no stipulations. Partners for this project will be Wilmington Trust and JP Morgan Chase

Recommendation 4:

Increase the homeowner education process

Strategy:

All potential buyers must complete a HUD Certified Housing Counseling Course at a local housing counseling organization in order to qualify for all of the aforementioned subsidies. Additionally, after settlement, buyers must participate in at least 8 hours of post homeowner repair classes and financial counseling offered by the Eastside Blueprint Team. The Eastside Blueprint Team will utilize the assets of its members to provide space and a teacher for this project. A minimal amount of funding will be necessary. Partners for this project will be Neighborhood House and Interfaith Community Housing of Delaware.

The budgetary items for the Affordable Housing Goals are based on two to three years of operation.

Strategic Goal #4 Cost Estimates (Year 1)

<u>Total Development Cost Rehab</u>	\$1,062,960
<u>Total Development Cost New construction</u>	\$1,027,570

Total Project Cost **\$2,090,530**

**Permanent
Sources**

Sales Price	\$1,100,000
ESBP Acquisition Dollars	\$427,050
ESBP Construction Subsidy	\$250,000
Additional funding dollars (FHLB/DSHA)	\$313,480
Total Sources	\$2,090,530

**Down Payment and settlement assistance
Development of 10 units for the first year**

Housing Unit 1	\$2,000
Housing Unit 2	\$2,000
Housing Unit 3	\$2,000
Housing Unit 4	\$2,000
Housing Unit 5	\$2,000
Housing Unit 6	\$2,000
Housing Unit 7	\$2,000
Housing Unit 8	\$2,000
Housing Unit 9	\$2,000
Housing Unit 10	\$2,000
Total	\$20,000
\$20,000 donation from JP Morgan Chase or Wilm Trust	