

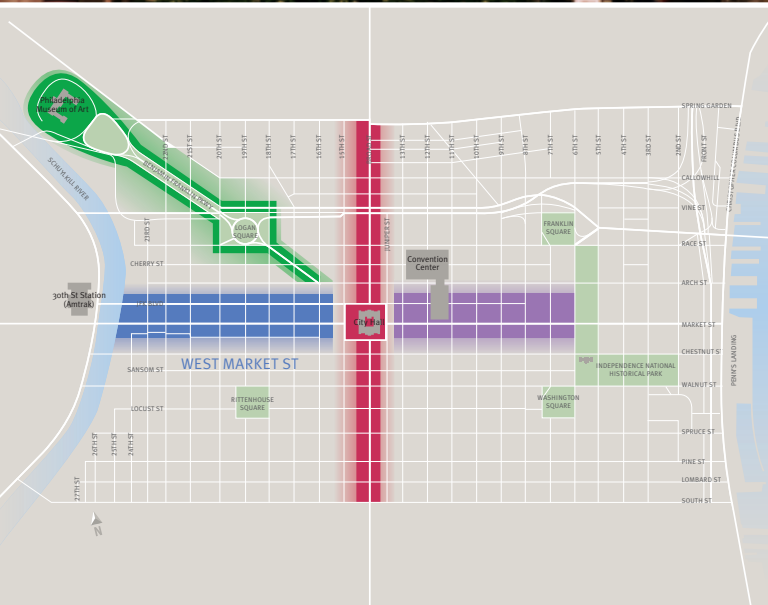


Mark James, PCVB

CENTER CITY: PLANNING FOR GROWTH

WEST MARKET STREET & JFK BOULEVARD

The primary planning and design work for West Market and JFK Boulevard was done by Brown & Keener Bressi. Two-way traffic concepts were developed by Kise Straw & Kolodner. The light-rail concept was developed by Urban Engineers.



Prepared by
Center City District &
Central Philadelphia Development Corporation
April 2007

KEY PRINCIPLES & OBJECTIVES

- After a decade of slow growth, West Market Street is now well positioned to emerge as a mixed-use development zone linking Center City to University City with office and residential buildings with active ground-floor uses.
- Former warehouses and parking lots are now being developed as housing, adding over 2,500 residential units to the area. But job growth is essential to sustain the residential revival.
- Infrastructure investments that enhance highway and transit connections and that minimize the barriers created by grade changes are needed to make the area more competitive and pedestrian-friendly.
- West Market and JFK Boulevard should be made two-way streets east of 20th Street with new landscape medians. Pedestrian links to University City should be enhanced.
- A linear green park along JFK Boulevard with new stairway connections to Schuylkill River Park and a riverbank promenade between JFK Boulevard and Chestnut Street would enhance access to the river and create a new civic gathering space on downtown's western edge.

Overcoming the Industrial Past

From the mid-19th century until the early 1950s, the blocks around Market Street west of Center Square functioned as downtown's back door. The elevated Pennsylvania Railroad tracks extended east from 30th Street Station to the Broad Street Station across from City Hall. This "Chinese Wall" was surrounded by warehouses and factories. Along the banks of the Schuylkill River, additional railroad tracks serviced more industrial establishments, while the riverfront itself was dominated by factories, warehouses and working piers.

In the early 1950s, the Pennsylvania Railroad demolished the elevated tracks seeking to realize a dream conceived in the 1920s of a major new office district connected to underground train lines. Working without public subsidies, the railroad slowly fashioned the modern Penn Center on reclaimed real estate. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, even as the Penn Central railroad went bankrupt and SEPTA took over, office, hotel and residential development proceeded west on Market Street and along a new JFK Boulevard. Planners continued to draw pictures of office buildings marching west across the Schuylkill River to forge a seamless link between Center City and University City.

Growth Comes to a Halt

The office boom of the late 1980s, sparked by Liberty Place's breaking of the city's informal height limit, expanded downtown's inventory by 24%. As late as 1988, the *Plan for Center City* envisioned an additional 22 million square feet moving west across the Schuylkill River over the next 15 years. But downtown office occupancy peaked in 1990 and with a recession, office development came to a halt at 21st



(1) View from City Hall: West Market and JFK Boulevard were created by a huge capital investment that placed rail lines underground and demolished the elevated tracks that formed a major barrier to development.

Street, followed by over a decade of no growth. Today, even with the Comcast Tower as Philadelphia's tallest building, downtown has fewer office jobs than it did in 1990 due to mergers and downsizing.

Throughout the 1990s, the area west of 21st was dominated by surface parking, deteriorated properties, vacant lots and marginal uses. The marquee of an "adult" theater remained a primary landmark. Physical barriers and changes in elevation, vestiges of the old Chinese Wall, elevated JFK Boulevard and a lack of street-level activities rendered the area unwelcoming for pedestrians and disconnected from adjacent residential areas and from University City. Today, the area remains an inappropriate gateway to Center City from 30th Street Station.

A Mixed-Use Future

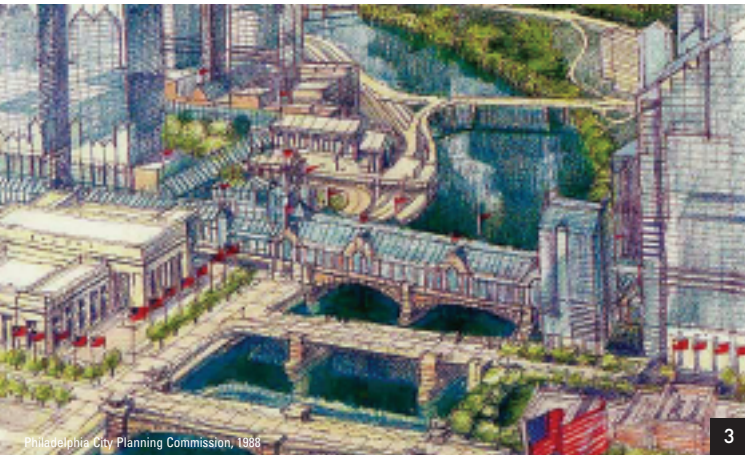
Since 2000, the conversion of two major buildings to residential use, the opening of a new supermarket and the construction of luxury condominiums have begun to diversify land use and animate the area. But the expansion of office jobs, even as part of a more mixed-use district, is critical to the area and to the economy of Center City.

The decentralization of office jobs is a national trend, but Philadelphia has lost market share to its suburbs at a faster rate than many peer cities. In 1960, Center City held 90% of the region's office space. By 1980, its share had fallen to 50%. Between 1986 and 2005, the region's office inventory



Temple University Libraries, Urban Archives

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Philadelphia City Planning Commission, 1888

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(2-3) Since the 1960s, planners have envisioned office buildings marching west across the Schuylkill River. (4) The slowing of office growth after 1990 left Market Street, particularly the south side, with deteriorating low-rise buildings and surface parking lots. (5-6) At the beginning of this decade, Thomas Properties retained the Olin Partnership to prepare concept drawings that envisioned the area as a mixed-use office and residential zone.

expanded from 58.9 million to 122 million square feet, an average gain of 3.3 million square feet per year. But as no office buildings were started downtown in the 1990s, Center City dropped from a 41% share of the region's supply to only 27% in 2006, six points below the national average for central business districts.

A New Cycle of Growth

Steady reductions to the wage tax that began in the mid-1990s will accelerate dramatically as gaming revenues flow to the city beginning in 2008. Significant reductions to the business privilege tax made by the next administration, as part of a broader effort to restructure the tax base, will highlight the competitive strengths of Center City and could prompt demand for an additional two million square feet of office space by 2012, over and above that supplied by the new Comcast Tower. Two million square feet of new



Olin Partnership

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Olin Partnership

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Brown & Keener Bressi

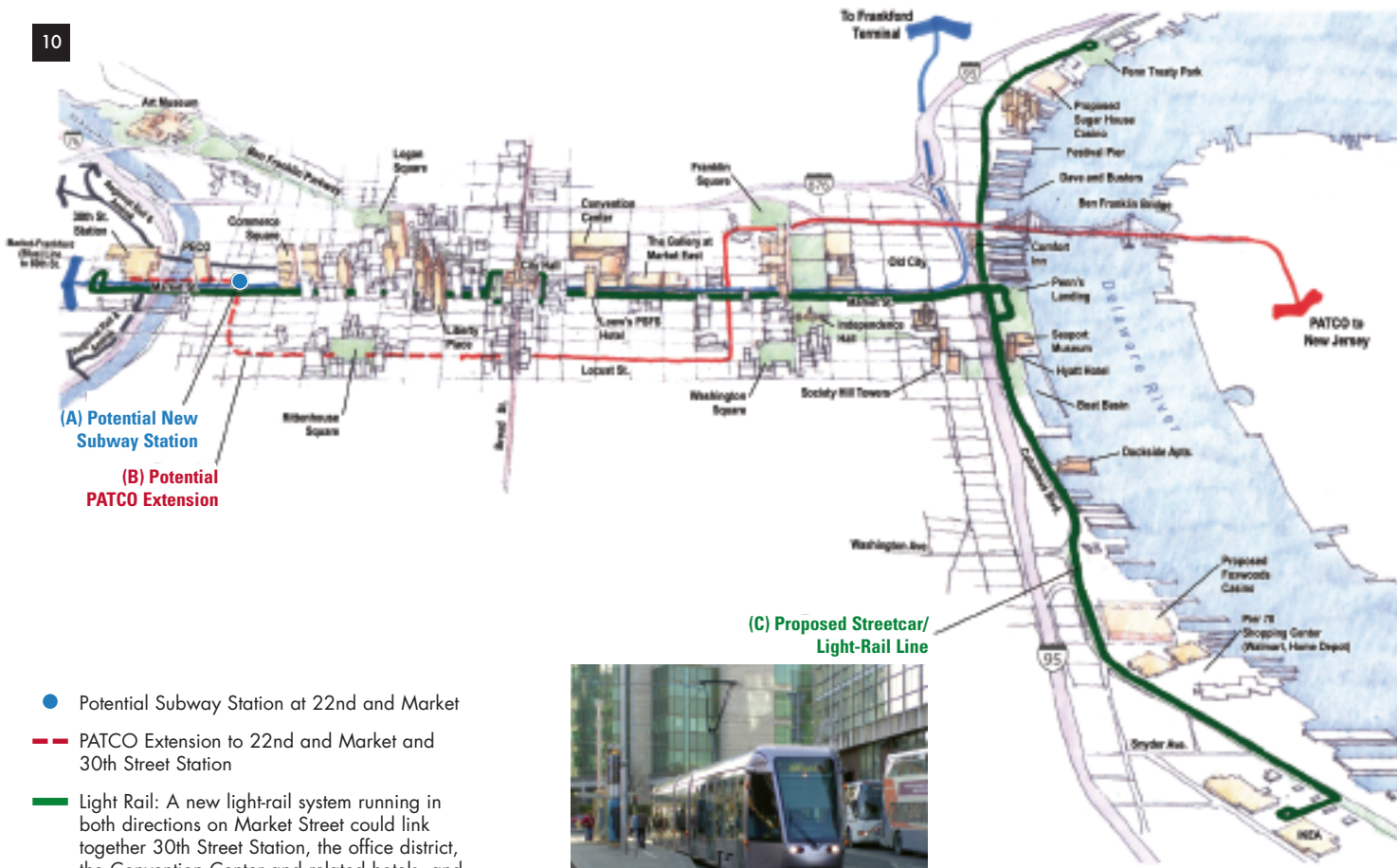


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Brown & Keener Bressi; Joel Katz Design Associates

(7) Realignment of the southbound off-ramp from the Schuylkill Expressway at 30th Street so it connects with a two-way 29th Street would allow a direct left onto JFK Boulevard and Market Street. (8) Making West Market Street and JFK Boulevard two-way streets from the Schuylkill River all the way to City Hall would reduce traffic congestion and increase access into and throughout the office district. (9) New distinctive headhouses, a new "mark" for transit, improved signs and real-time information would increase use of the trolley lines that connect Center City and University City. (10) Regional transit access to West Market Street could be improved through one of three alternatives: (A) a new 22nd Street Market-Frankford subway stop; (B) extending PATCO from 16th and Locust Street to 22nd and Market and 30th Street Station; or (C) a new light-rail line could connect all of Center City along Market Street to emerging developments along the Delaware River.

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- Potential Subway Station at 22nd and Market
- PATCO Extension to 22nd and Market and 30th Street Station
- Light Rail: A new light-rail system running in both directions on Market Street could link together 30th Street Station, the office district, the Convention Center and related hotels, and the historic district, and then run both north and south on Columbus Boulevard, connecting new residential and entertainment destinations to downtown.



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Dublin, Ireland's new light-rail system provides a model for Philadelphia.

Concept: Urban Engineers
Rendering: Wallace, Roberts & Todd

office space provides 8,000 new permanent jobs and \$550 million in salaries for neighborhood residents. The same jobs generate sufficient new tax revenues to put more than 700 new police officers on neighborhood streets.

The thinned-out western edge of Center City can thus be transformed into a vibrant, mixed-use commercial and residential district, well served by public transit connected to employment both downtown and in University City. With active ground-floor retail uses on both Market and the numbered streets, this new neighborhood can link together the high-quality residential areas to the north and south.

But significant infrastructure improvements are needed to realize this vision.

Goal 1: Improve vehicular access to the area.

Far west Market Street would benefit from improved auto access. Eastbound traffic exiting the Schuylkill Expressway at 30th Street must first proceed west to circle around Amtrak's station, encountering significant congestion. Using the 22nd Street off-ramp requires challenging conflicts with merging traffic. Realignment of the southbound 30th Street off-ramp from the Schuylkill Expressway so it connects with a two-way 29th Street would allow a direct left onto JFK Boulevard and Market Street.

Goal 2: Extend two-way traffic on West Market Street and JFK from 20th Street to City Hall.

Making both West Market and JFK Boulevard two-way would improve access to both streets from the east and the west, reduce congestion and improve circulation. A landscaped median on both streets would improve the ambiance and retail appeal.

Goal 3: Highlight transit links with distinctive design, graphics and real-time information.

The subway-surface lines that connect Center City and University City are a key, though largely invisible, transit link. Attractive transit entrances that add architectural interest, real-time information and better signs would activate this strategic asset.

Goal 4: Improve transit access to far west Market Street.

Regional transit access to West Market Street could be improved substantially through one of three alternatives: (A) a new 22nd Street Market-Frankford subway stop, as originally suggested in the *1988 Plan for Center City*; (B) extending PATCO underground from 16th and Locust streets to 22nd and Market and to 30th Street Station to connect the office district directly to New Jersey, whose residents earn 18% of all wages in Center City; or (C) a new light-rail line could connect Center City office, hospitality and retail attractions all along Market Street to emerging developments on the Delaware River.

Goal 5: Improve north/south links by reducing physical barriers and changes in elevation.

Physical barriers and changes in grade separate the thriving residential neighborhoods to the north from Market Street and JFK Boulevard. Buildings with shops, active lobbies and cafes at the ground floor should activate street life. Stepped gardens, attractive public stairways and landscaping would reduce the intimidating tunnel-and-canyon effect created by the elevated SEPTA tracks and JFK Boulevard at 22nd and 23rd streets.

Goal 6: Create a linear green park from 20th and JFK with connections to Schuylkill River Park.

A green pathway would soften the hard northern edge of JFK Boulevard, improve access for pedestrians and bicycles to the riverbank park below and create a seamless entrance to Fairmount Park as far east as 20th at JFK Boulevard.

Goal 7: Extend pedestrian-scale lighting to residential neighborhoods to the north and south.

Since 1997, the Center City District has installed more than 2,000 pedestrian lights, doubling or tripling illumination on walkways and encouraging active street life into the evening hours in the commercial district. These same amenities should be provided to all adjacent residential communities to enhance public safety and the walking connections between home and work.

Goal 8: Make pedestrian and bicycle improvements to the bridges spanning the Schuylkill River.

Together, Center City and University City already account for 57% of all salaries paid to residents of Philadelphia. As the University of Pennsylvania extends east to the Schuylkill River and as more development occurs around 30th Street Station, Center City should expand west, joining together the city's two largest employment nodes into one large regional employment center that stretches from the Delaware waterfront to 40th Street.

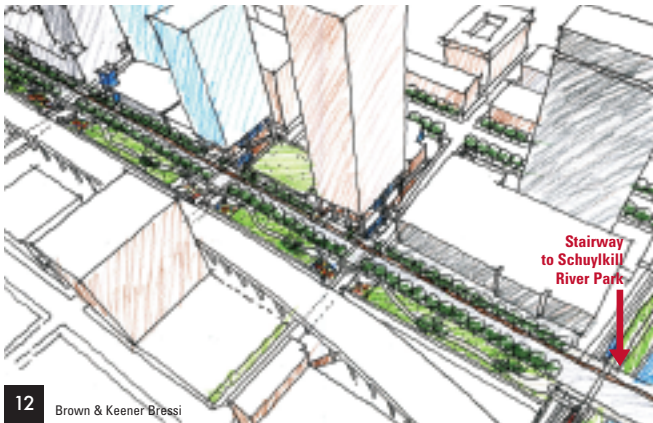
Such changes would make it safer and more appealing for workers, university students, faculty and residents to walk between Center City and University City.

Goal 9: Create an upper-level pedestrian promenade along the east bank of the Schuylkill.

An attractive, upper-level riverfront walkway stretching from JFK Boulevard to Chestnut Street, lined with shops, cafes and benches, would be a major amenity, like the promenade in Brooklyn Heights, and would create an attractive new civic gathering space.



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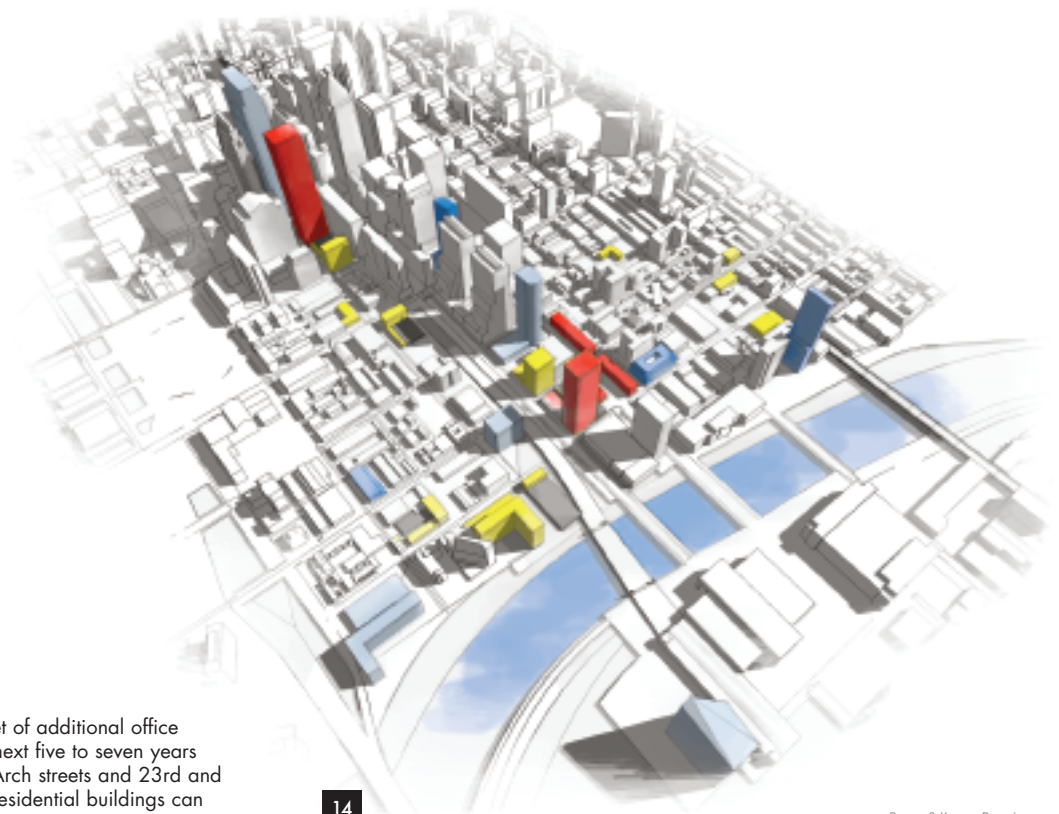


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Sasaki Associates, Inc.

(11) New stepped gardens can create pedestrian connections from elevated portions of JFK Boulevard to north/south streets below. (12) A linear green park along the northern edge of JFK Boulevard can create a gateway to Fairmount Park at 20th Street, connected at river's edge with a stairway down to Schuylkill River Park. (13) A pedestrian-level promenade extending from JFK Boulevard to Chestnut Street along the western edge of buildings facing the Schuylkill River can create a scenic overlook, mirroring a similar promenade on the west bank.

- Office Development
- Residential Development



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Brown & Keener Bressi

(14) A total of two million square feet of additional office space can be accommodated in the next five to seven years on several sites, including 18th and Arch streets and 23rd and Market streets, while mixed-use and residential buildings can fill in remaining gaps.



CENTER CITY DISTRICT



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