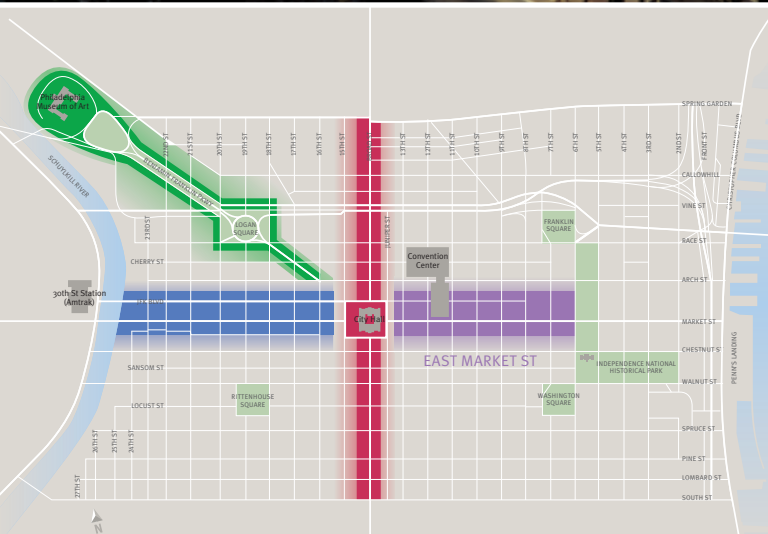




# CENTER CITY: PLANNING FOR GROWTH EAST MARKET STREET

*The primary analysis and design work for Market Street East was done by Cope Linder Architects.*

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Prepared by  
Center City District &  
Central Philadelphia Development Corporation  
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## KEY PRINCIPLES & OBJECTIVES

- Market Street East is Philadelphia's historic main shopping street and is well positioned for 21st-century prominence between the historic district and the Convention Center.
- Major infrastructure, including excellent regional transit connections and convenient auto access and parking garages, are already in place.
- Market East has attractive historic buildings and major parcels available, creating opportunities for large-scale development.
- Public and private investments should enhance east/west connections for visitors, while activating the north/south streets to draw residents to Market East and strengthen connections to Chinatown.
- Public and private sectors need to collaborate and "think big" about a comprehensive approach to planning, coordinated land acquisition, streetscape and facade improvements.

Market Street East, only two-thirds of a mile from 6th Street to City Hall, is the setting for some of Center City's greatest redevelopment accomplishments and biggest challenges.

Seven department stores, including legendary retail names like Lit Brothers, Strawbridge & Clothier, Snellenburgs and John Wanamaker, once lined Philadelphia's original shopping street as great cathedrals of commerce drawing throngs of pedestrians.

Though many of these buildings have been beautifully restored, Market East today is a place of marked contrast. High-quality retail, historic buildings and the city's first international style skyscraper coexist with obsolete and underperforming low-scale structures, unattractive storefronts, neglected historic assets and large, vacant parcels at key locations.

Market Street has been the beneficiary of enormous public investment. The Gallery at Market East was the first regional shopping center built in a U.S. downtown following the construction nationally of thousands of suburban shopping centers in the decades following World War II. Millions of redevelopment dollars made Market East the nexus of the city's transit system in the 1970s, providing diverse shopping opportunities for residents of many city neighborhoods.

Following the redesign of the street in the 1980s, the Center City District carried out an additional \$6 million in streetscape investments in the late 1990s, adding new landscaping and lighting and enhancing transit shelters and subway access.

Development trends and market conditions now provide a major opportunity to leverage new investment. The Pennsylvania Convention Center expansion will be complete by 2010, attracting more visitors and prompting new hotel construction. Center City's residential population con-



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Market Street East is a place of great contrasts: **(1)** preserved and restored historic department stores coexist with **(2)** Philadelphia's first international style skyscraper, now converted to a hotel, along with office buildings, new hotels and **(3)** obsolete low-rise retail.

tinues to grow with new developments within a half-block of Market East. With retail rents on West Walnut and West Chestnut streets having risen significantly in the last several years, Market East offers a good alternative both for large-format retailers looking for downtown locations and for developers thinking big about mixed-use projects.

But the public and private sectors have more work to do to get Market East ready for prime time.

On its easternmost end, Market East in Old City is now a lively locus for restaurants, nightlife and one-of-a-kind galleries, attracting tourists and locals. A few blocks west, the home for the Liberty Bell, the Independence Visitor Center and the nearby Constitution Center draw over three million annual visitors.

# EAST MARKET STREET



Weaver Lilley

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MGA Partners

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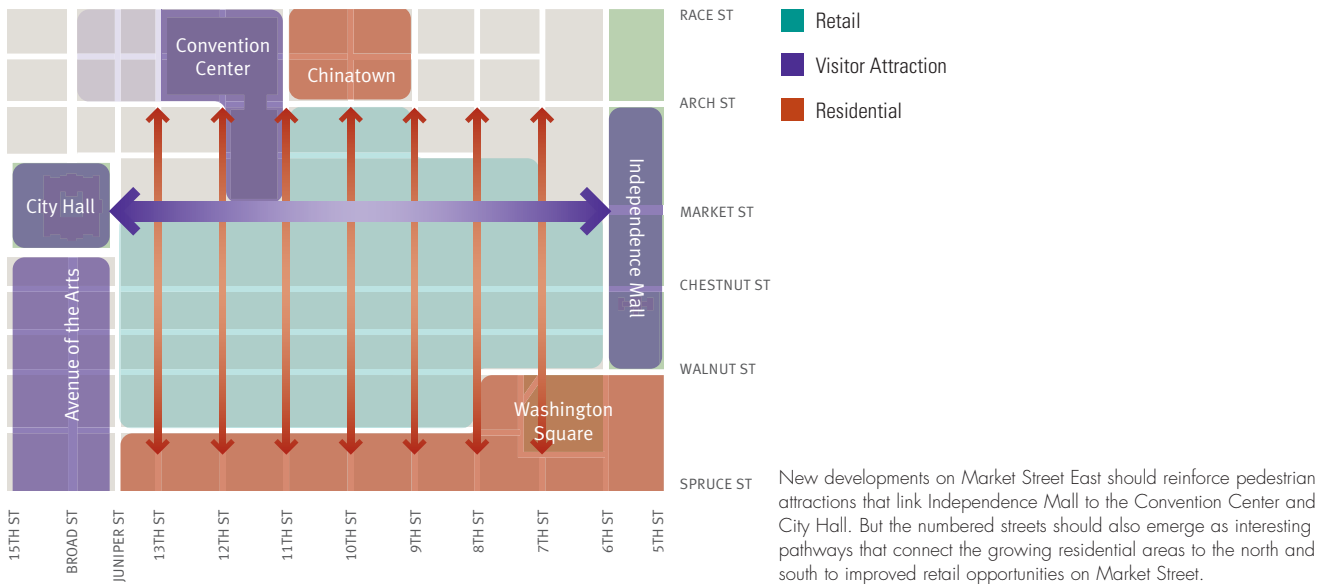


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(4) Cafes like those on Market Street in Old City should enhance the walkways between the Liberty Bell and the Convention Center. (5) MGA Partners envisions the blank facades of the federal courthouse adorned with interpretive panels about the history of the federal courts in Philadelphia and suggests relocating from Fairmount Park a statue of Justice that stood atop the old courthouse at 9th and Market streets in the early-20th century. (6-7) Poor quality retail facades should be significantly upgraded.

## Enhance connections that link retail to residential, and that link the major visitor destinations.



But west of Independence Mall, Market Street contains buildings with blank street walls, neglected facades, vacant and undeveloped sites and low-end retail oriented to neither the growing visitor nor residential markets. Many upper stories are also vacant and neglected. For those walking from neighborhoods to the south, blank walls and surface parking lots create what Jane Jacobs called a “border vacuum,” a place you aren’t drawn to or easily cross. When walking on the street, large megablocks obscure visual connections to Chinatown, a vibrant mixed-use community just to the north. Not until 12th Street and the cluster of hotels surrounding the Pennsylvania Convention Center and the new Macy’s does Market Street rehang a welcome sign for pedestrians and visitors.

To reposition Market East from end to end, the public and private sectors need to collaborate on a coordinated improvement strategy:

**Goal 1: Link together the major visitor destinations — Independence National Historical Park and the Pennsylvania Convention Center — that now act as bookends.**

The first glimpse of Market East for visitors emerging from the Independence Visitor Center should be a welcoming one.

Activating the blank walls that they face with outdoor cafes, upgraded and re-designed retail storefronts, adding statuary

and interpretive panels at the federal court building to break up the monotony would encourage visitors to step onto Market Street. With better use, Ranstead Street, the small street between Market and Chestnut, could be an attractive connection to smaller-scale historic buildings and the garden entrance to the Atwater Kent Museum.

**Goal 2: Add destination and entertainment-oriented retail along with high-rise residential and hotel development to bring greater density and activate the street 24 hours a day.**

Market Street requires not only quality ground-floor retail, but also upper-floor uses that generate 24-hour activity. The wide sidewalks of Market Street East should be alive and vibrant with outdoor cafes, as they are in Old City, to encourage visitors to walk from the Convention Center hotels to the historic district.

**Goal 3: Activate the north/south streets to draw Center City’s expanding residential to Market East.**

New residential towers around Washington Square are adding customer density along with new residential projects that are filling in once-vacant sites at the edges of Chinatown. Developers of all Market and Chestnut Street parcels should maximize retail activity on north/south streets to enhance connections to adjacent residential communities.



**(8-9)** Residential developments are occurring within a block of Market Street East to the north and south.

# EAST MARKET STREET



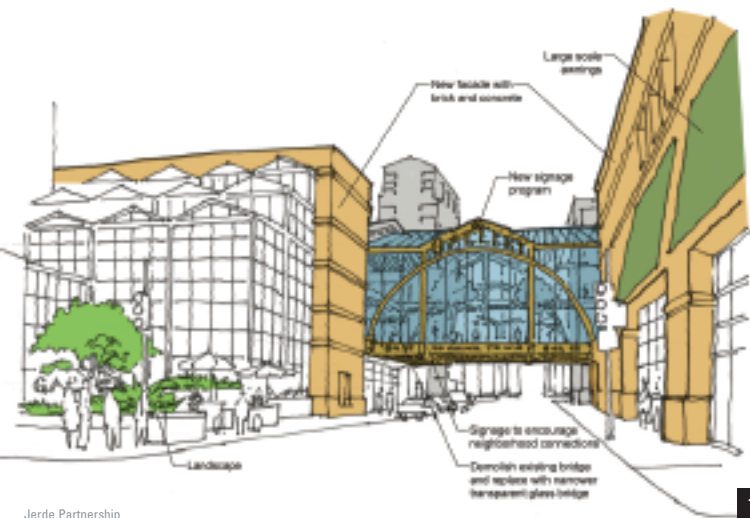
TKA Associates

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TKA Associates

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Jerde Partnership

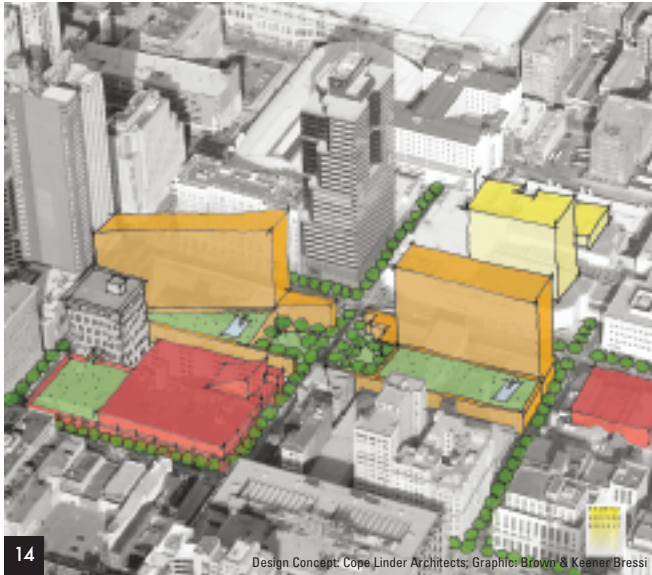
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(10-11) Thomas Jefferson University and Hospital is expanding north towards Chestnut Street with a proposed ambulatory care building, while adding generous new landscaping on 10th Street and a new campus green between Walnut and Locust streets. (12) In 2004, the Jerde Partnership suggested making the Gallery more transparent and enhancing the connections to Chinatown. (13) The vacant site at 8th and Market streets provides a major opportunity to fill in a strategic gap with ground-floor retail on both Market and 8th streets, while providing room for a large format store on the upper floors.



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Design Concept: Cope Linder Architects, Graphic: Brown &amp; Keener Bressi



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(14) The Girard Estate site, between 11th and 12th, Market and Chestnut streets, provides a major opportunity for wholesale redevelopment of an entire city block, providing destination retail and entertainment uses, as well as hotel, residential or office space on the upper floors. (15-16) Narrow alleyways can be reclaimed as interesting pedestrian walkways by unifying the ownership of smaller parcels and centralizing the management of dumpsters.

#### Goal 4: Connect with Thomas Jefferson University and Hospital's growth.

Center City's largest private employer is embarked on a major expansion plan that will bring activity and more outpatient, educational and administrative uses into close proximity with Market Street. A landscaped 10th Street will serve as a new gateway to Jefferson's campus from the north, while enhanced landscaping on Walnut Street and new retail on Chestnut Street will encourage east/west pedestrian movement.

#### Goal 5: Enhance connections to Chinatown.

The Gallery's architecture creates a physical barrier to the vibrant mixed-use district of Chinatown. Renovations should make the connections more transparent with creative design solutions. Signs, even another Chinatown gate on Market Street, could signal proximity and encourage visitors on Market Street to explore the restaurants and shops to the north.

#### Goal 6: Make City Hall a destination.

A restored visitor center in City Hall, now underway, is just a first step in highlighting Center City's only public observation tower and activating the plazas and public spaces of Center Square. (See the Broad Street & City Hall plan.)

#### Goal 7: Activate small alleys where possible.

Throughout Center City, small alleys and streets provide a unique and pleasant pedestrian experience. The blocks around Market East could be considerably enhanced by

cleaning up alleys, moving dumpsters and creating interesting mid-block connections that would encourage pedestrians and draw tourists onto Market East.

#### Realizing the Vision

There are many locations on Market East where the marketplace is working largely on its own and opportunities abound for the private sector. Forward-looking developers have opportunities to acquire interesting historic buildings that line Market East, improve ground-floor retail and convert upper floors to apartments. Obsolete, single-story structures can be assembled for large-scale, mixed-use redevelopment of entire blocks between Market and Chestnut streets.

But several owners are still neglecting key parcels and quoting resale prices far in excess of market value. A comprehensive redevelopment plan for these crucial blocks is essential, including a public-private partnership to coordinate land acquisition and a sufficiently funded facade improvement program to assist cooperative owners. Transit could be made more accessible with improved signs and real-time information at street level. Many cities have made successful use of tax increment financing (TIF) to carry out similar objectives.

Market East is well positioned for renewed growth. What is required is for the private and public sectors to once again think big about re-reinvigorating Center City's original shopping street as a major destination and retail entertainment district.



**CENTER CITY DISTRICT**



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