

OLD YORK ROAD

LIVE, LEARN, WORK,
SHOP & PLAY
IN THE 9TH!

*OLD YORK ROAD: "HEALTH &
WELLNESS CORRIDOR"*

9TH

DISTRICT
COMMERCIAL
CORRIDOR
PLAN

NOVEMBER 2019

Office of COUNCILWOMAN CHERELLE PARKER

WRT

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"HEALTH AND WELLNESS CORRIDOR"



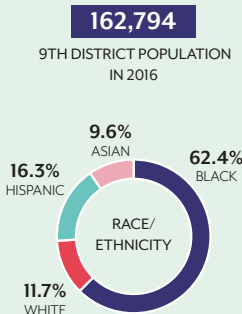
// ABOUT

The Old York Road corridor is a four-block stretch of the street between 66th Avenue and the city limits at Cheltenham Avenue between the East Oak Lane and West Oak Lane neighborhoods. It is anchored by the unique and historic Wedge Building at the southern end where the street crosses Broad Street at an angle. It was originally built in the 18th century along a

Lenape Indian trail in order to connect Philadelphia with New York City, becoming one of the earliest and most significant land routes in the mid-Atlantic region and the first highway of any significant length built in the United States.

9TH DISTRICT AT A GLANCE:

The 9th District includes a variety of diverse, family-friendly neighborhoods that are well-connected to city and regional transportation networks.



The 9th District contains highly diverse neighborhoods with different ethnic and racial profiles.

Source: RES 2017 Estimates; RES



64.1%
OWNER-OCCUPIED



// CURRENT CONDITIONS

Old York Road sits in between East Oak Lane and West Oak Lane, two neighborhoods that include long-term residents who are civically engaged, contributing to

neighborhood life and reinforcing the stability of the area. The mostly residential area includes a variety of housing types with single-family homes, twins, and attached row houses. These neighborhoods have very low vacancy.

The Old York Road corridor branches away from Broad Street and runs to the city line at Cheltenham Avenue, and has a markedly quieter atmosphere than Broad Street. It is struggling with a reputation as a through-street to destinations beyond the city limits as opposed to a destination in its own right.

OLD YORK ROAD IS A CALM RESPITE FROM BUSTLING NEARBY BROAD STREET AND HAS A UNIQUE SET OF SERVICES TO OFFER.



Old York Road has a wide variety of building types, from multi-storefront buildings with homes above to single-family homes—some of which have been converted into businesses. There are also a number of more suburban-style auto-oriented businesses.

The corridor has a number of large street trees that shade the sidewalk, as well as a pedestrian-friendly scale and street width. However, littering is a frequent issue that detracts from the quality of the public realm.

The multi-storefront property at 6814-20 Old York Road has sat vacant for a number of years, representing a redevelopment opportunity along the corridor.



EXPLORING THE CORRIDOR



The unique Wedge Building at the intersection of Old York Road and Broad Street anchors this commercial corridor and represents a placemaking and identity-building opportunity.

// HEALTH ANCHORS

The Old York Road corridor is anchored by the Wedge Medical Center building, which acts as both a visual and programmatic gateway to the corridor.

Other health services are conveniently co-located nearby, including specialty medical care, a pharmacy, and senior services. Wellness and beauty services are also located here, including a healthy food cafe, acupuncture, and a nail and skin care business.

COMMUNITY ASSETS:

- » Oak Lane Branch Library
- » Sturgis Playground
- » Tookany Tacony-Frankford Watershed Park (TTF)
- » Northwood Cemetery

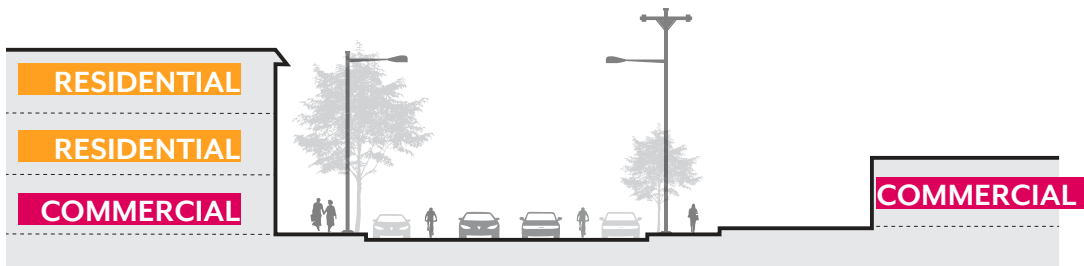
Holistic Health Suite & Cafe



Much of the corridor has pedestrian scale mixed-use on one side and more auto-oriented uses on the other.



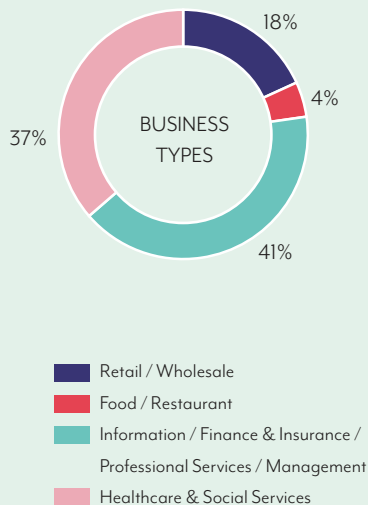
THE OLD YORK ROAD CORRIDOR
BOASTS MATURE STREET TREES.



// EXISTING BUSINESSES AND SERVICES

Old York Road contains a unique variety of stores and services, many in the health and wellness arena. Others include eateries, childcare and senior care, and auto-related businesses.

- » 611 Auto Service
- » Bruce R. Hawkins Funeral Home
- » CJ's Tire and Auto
- » Corfu Pizza
- » Garden Path Nail & Skin Care
- » Holistic Health Suite & Cafe
- » Hope Church Preschool
- » Jaisohn Home Health Care Inc.
- » Jaisohn Medical Center
- » Loving Lee Stars of Tomorrow
- » Oak Lane Medical Center
- » Oak Lane Pharmacy
- » Orth Home Care
- » Penn Asian Senior Services
- » Reliant Renal Care Inc.
- » Sovereign Home Realty
- » U-haul Neighborhood Dealer
- » Wash Express
- » Wedge Medical Center
- » Wise People Home Health
- » York Nursing & Rehabilitation



VISION FOR THE FUTURE

// OPPORTUNITIES

The presence of so many health and wellness related amenities presents an opportunity to expand the range of similar services offered and brand Old York Road as a “health and wellness corridor.” Major health institutions nearby, such as Einstein Medical Center, represent opportunities for future partnerships or expansions into this area.

There are also two key vacant properties on and near Old York Road that could be returned to productive use through

conservatorship, which transfers ownership to an entity tasked with redevelopment. These include 6814-20 Old York Road, a multi-storefront building, and 6751 N. 13th Street, an elegant former condo building that could be rehabbed to add housing stock to the neighborhood. This corridor and surrounding areas fall within a federal Qualified Opportunity Zone, which further incentivizes investment and redevelopment.

Finally, the angular space created by the divergence of Broad Street and Old York Road could

be transformed into a welcome pedestrian plaza and gateway, marking the corridor as a destination.

EXISTING CONDITIONS



ILLUSTRATIVE RENDERING OF CORRIDOR WITH PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS



RECOMMENDATIONS

1 Mixed-Use Development Opportunity

Explore conservatorship to bring 6814-20 Old York Road up to code and sell it to an interested developer. A new mixed-use building could include a wellness cooperative to help incubate new businesses as well as co-working spaces.

2 Facade Improvements

Utilize available resources to improve storefront signage and create a cohesive feel along the corridor.

3 Pedestrian Amenities

Repurpose some of the excess space that results from the angled intersection at Old York and Broad to create a small plaza.

4 Streetscape Improvements

Add physical interventions like street trees, planters, and benches to make the corridor more inviting.

5 Living Walls

A green wall would shield pedestrians from unsightly views of auto storage and repair while still remaining permeable to ensure feelings of safety.

6 Improve Crossings & Placemaking

Enhance pedestrian safety and encourage drivers to slow down and stop at this destination.

7 Gateway Signage/Branding/Identity

Develop a corridor identity tied to health and wellness and communicate it via gateway signage and other physical investments.

8 Street Trees & Greening

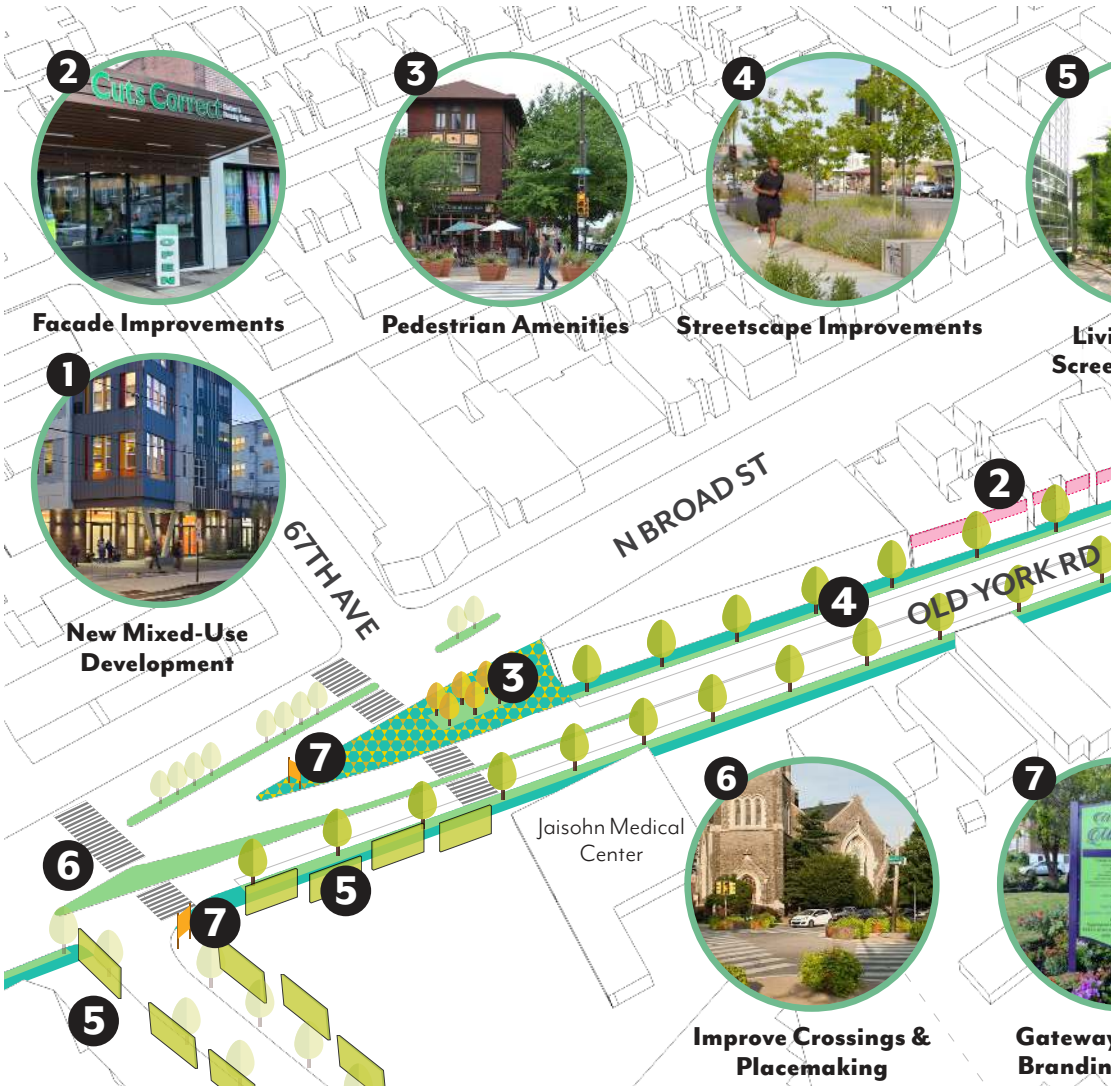
The corridor already has a number of mature street trees, but enhancing the green quality of the street will reinforce the area's identity as a hub for health and wellness.

9 6751 North 13th Street

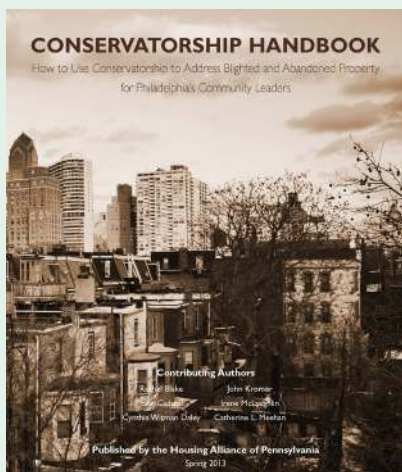
This historic former condo building just off the corridor is another property that could be taken into conservatorship in order to properly rehabilitate it into new housing.



RECOMMENDATIONS



CONSERVATORSHIP



WHAT IS IT?

Conservatorship is an anti-blight strategy that was created by Pennsylvania Act 135 of 2008 that offers a legal route for someone other than the owner of a blighted property to bring the building up to code and sell it with clear title. In response to a formal request, a judge may designate a conservator—either a private or nonprofit entity—to bring a blighted property into compliance with property maintenance and building codes. The judge bases the determination of whether to appoint a conservator based on evidence presented in a hearing showing that the property is blighted and unsafe and that the owner either cannot, or will not, bring the property up to code.

A PROPERTY IS NOT ELIGIBLE FOR CONSERVATORSHIP IF IT:

- » ***Has been listed for sale within the past 60 days***
- » ***Is owned and/or regulated under the Public Housing Act***
- » ***Has been legally occupied within the past 12 months***
- » ***Has been owned by the current owner for less than 6 months***
- » ***Is in foreclosure***
- » ***Is owned by someone who is absent from the property on active military duty in time of war***

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

The Housing Alliance has prepared a detailed Handbook outlining the steps necessary to pursue conservatorship of a blighted property in Philadelphia:

https://housingalliancepa.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/ConservatorshipManual_Philadelphia-final.pdf

BUSINESS TYPES THAT CAN COMPETE IN PHILADELPHIA CLOSE TO THE CITY LINE

What type of businesses will complement the existing business mix on Old York Road as the neighborhood begins to pursue the potential for new mixed-use infill development?



CHALLENGE

The entire retail sector is undergoing dramatic changes as e-commerce captures demand formerly served by bricks and mortar stores.

POTENTIAL

The sectors that continue to thrive nationwide include:

- » **food** - restaurants and specialty food
- » **fitness**
- » **entertainment and wellness/beauty** - doctors, dentists, salons, etc.



WHY DO SOME BUSINESS TYPES THRIVE WHILE OTHERS STRUGGLE?

The categories of businesses that thrive on Philadelphia's urban commercial corridors are typically ones that emphasize experiences and are less impacted by the sales tax differential between Philadelphia and adjacent Montgomery County and that require consumers to visit the establishment making these businesses resistant to the impact of e-commerce.

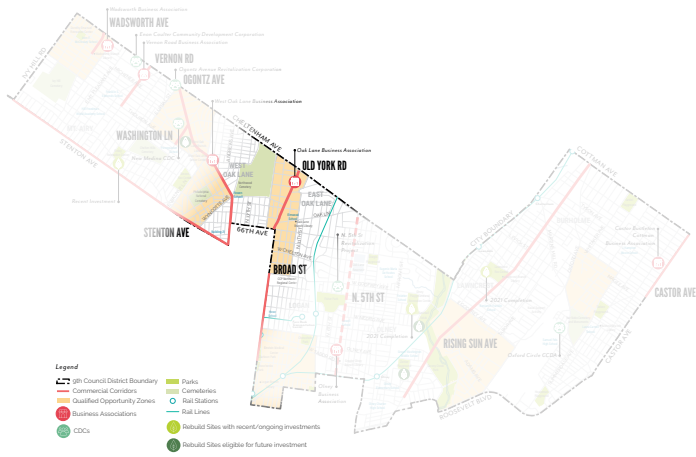
Unique, specialty and destination businesses

(for example a store providing supplies for a specific hobby) also can succeed in close proximity to chains, particularly in parts of the 9th District with higher household incomes.



// OPPORTUNITY ZONES

The Qualified Opportunity Zone (QOZ) program is a federal capital gains tax incentive offered to taxpayers in exchange for the deferral and investment of capital gains into designated, distressed census tracts. The 9th District includes six QOZ where economic development and job creation can be targeted.



// GREENING BEYOND STREET TREES

These planters along the Market Street Bridge provide greening along a portion of the street where it would be difficult to plant trees. The planters also create a physical and visual barrier between pedestrians and fast moving traffic. A similar approach can be used for Broad Street.



POTENTIAL PARTNERS & RESOURCES

// GETTING IT DONE

The following potential partners and resources can help residents and interested stakeholders achieve the vision for Old York Road.

Strategy	Potential Partners	Existing Resources
1. Mixed-Use Development Opportunity	Local developers and property owners	Under the new federal tax bill, this census tract is designated as an Opportunity Zone, an effort to incentivize redevelopment and long-term investment in distressed census tracts using private investments. Individuals who invest in Qualified Opportunity Zones are eligible to benefit from capital gains tax incentives.
2. Facade Improvements	Philadelphia Commerce Department	The Storefront Improvement Program is a program of the Department of Commerce that provides eligible business and property owners grant money for facade improvements. Eligible improvements include masonry/brick pointing, painting, doors, windows, lighting, signage, and other details. The program can reimburse up to 50% of the cost of eligible improvements to a maximum of \$10,000 for a single commercial property, or up to \$15,000 for a multiple-address or corner business property. To find out if you can apply: Email SIP@phila.gov or call (215) 683-2025.
3. Pedestrian Amenities	Streets Department, OTIS, local community organizations	The City's Office of Transportation, Infrastructure, and Sustainability is responsible for managing street furniture and in 2014, a bill was passed stipulating that over \$12 million will be invested to replace existing shelters and install an additional 300 shelters. The program also includes new public amenities like benches, art information kiosks, and newspaper condos. To vote for your favorite transit shelter location, go to www.PhillyTransitShelters.com .

POTENTIAL PARTNERS & RESOURCES

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Strategy	Potential Partners	Existing Resources
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4. Streetscape Improvements

Philadelphia Streets Department; Philadelphia Water Department; Community Design Collaborative; Philadelphia Parks and Recreation; Office of Transportation, Infrastructure, and Sustainability

The Philadelphia Water Department's Green Stormwater Management grant program is an opportunity to reduce stormwater bills, add new landscaping, fix drainage problems, and improve the appearance of properties. The grant covers up to 100% of the cost to design and construct a stormwater retrofit project, small or large, on non-residential properties. After a project is complete, the property owner qualifies for lower stormwater charges. To find out if your property is eligible, visit phila.gov/swgrants and select "Parcel Viewer" from the Grant Applications Resources menu. For more application information, visit: <https://www.phila.gov/water/wu/stormwater/Pages/Grants.aspx>. Additionally, property owners, including both residential and commercial properties, can request free street trees from the Philadelphia Parks & Recreation Street Tree Management Division by calling (215) 685-4363 or (215) 685-4362.

5. Living Walls

Pennsylvania Horticultural Society

A "living wall" or "green wall" is self-contained vertical garden system that can be a free-standing structure or attached to an internal or external wall. Living walls provide an attractive design feature and can be used to screen unsightly uses. They can also be used as a temporary design feature before a site is redeveloped.

6. Improve Crossings and Placemaking

Streets Department

The Traffic Calming & Safety Plan is an initiative aimed at reducing serious injuries and fatalities through the three Es: engineering, education, and enforcement. Efforts include implementing road right-sizing, traffic controls, and gently raised pavement on problematic streets. Residents can submit requests for traffic calming measures to see if their block qualifies, and if a study reveals that it does, a petition requesting traffic calming measures must be signed by 75% or more of the properties whose address falls on the block. Visit: <https://www.philadelphiastreet.com/traffic-and-lighting/traffic-calming-policy-information>.

7. Gateway Signage/Branding/Identity

Mural Arts

The Community Murals Initiative is a program put forth by Mural Arts Philadelphia that collaborates with community members to imagine and lead projects that build social capital, develop communal ownership, represent diversity, and empower people. Mural projects often highlight and respond to the area's history and current needs. Any community member or group can apply, and applications are open twice a year. For more assistance, call (215) 685-0750.

8. Street Trees and Greening

Philadelphia Water
Department, Philadelphia
Parks & Recreation

To get a free street tree planted in the right-of-way in front of your home, business, or other property, you can request a free tree from Philadelphia Parks & Recreation at (215) 685-4363 or <https://www.phila.gov/services/trees-parks-the-environment/tree-related-services/get-a-street-tree>.

9. Rehab Condo Building at 6751 N. 13th Street

Local developers and
property owners

Under the new federal tax bill, this census tract is designated as an Opportunity Zone, an effort to incentivize redevelopment and long-term investment in distressed census tracts using private investments. Individuals who invest in Qualified Opportunity Zones are eligible to benefit from capital gains tax incentives.



// **KYASHA TYSON**

Director of Community & Economic Development

Councilwoman Cherelle L. Parker - 9th District

1538 E. Wadsworth Avenue

Philadelphia, PA 19150

Tel: (215) 686-3454

Fax: (215) 685-9271

Email: kyasha.tyson@phila.gov