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To: Philip Green

From: Donna Ann Harris

Subject: SWOT Analysis, Observations and Recommendations

The SWOT Analysis workshop held on July 28, 2015 is part of the scope of work for the Financial Sustainability and Program Development Strategy grant, funded by the City of Philadelphia Department of Commerce for the North Fifth Street Revitalization Project (N5SRP), a project of the Korean Community Development Services Center in Olney. Heritage Consulting Inc. is the consultant working with the N5SRP on this effort.

After review of the raw notes from the SWOT Workshop, we are making the following observations and recommendations to solve some short-term problems discussed during the SWOT workshop held on July 28, 2015 at St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church. Forty two people attended the event, including three merchants.

The workshop participants were generally upbeat and positive about the direction and pace of change on the North Fifth Street commercial corridor. They pointed out both the good and the bad, but were interested in how to quicken the pace of positive change in the shopping district. There is genuine pride about the neighborhood, with the diversity of both residents and businesses being its primary strength. All thought these were important attributes to brand and promote. While all agreed that language and cultural barriers exist, they wanted the N5SRP to be a key player in gathering merchants, property owners and the community together to forge a better North 5th Street for all to enjoy.

The N5SRP has decided to utilize the Main Street Four Point Approach™ for its commercial district work. Main Street is a volunteer driven, historic preservation based, economic development program, which has been successfully used for the last 35 years in cities large and small. Most of the issues discussed at the SWOT cannot be solved by the North 5th Street Revitalization Project alone. Partner organizations and volunteers will be needed to lead committees to implement further change.

The first part of this memo identifies opportunities where direct action by N5SRP's newly formed committees and volunteers can solve problems in the near term. Our observations and recommendations are organized into the appropriate Main Street Four Point committee.

At the end of the memo, we offer a summary of the major issues discussed during the SWOT where the N5SRP can expand their already high quality existing partnership with other nonprofit and city partners and the City's Commerce Department to attempt to make progress towards solving some of these pressing issues.

We hope these observations and recommendations are useful and feed into the larger effort to build a committee structure to support the long term improvement of this vital commercial corridor.

Organizational issues (about which N5SRP has some control)

ORGANIZATION COMMITTEE: Gather money and volunteers, and communicate about our revitalization work to the public.

North 5 Street Revitalization Program Staff

Observations

- The community recognizes the effort of the N5SRP to revitalize the corridor especially around cleaning, event planning, grant writing, and branding.
- The community trusts the N5SRP to act as the voice of the corridor in dealings with City Hall and city programs.
- Philip Green and Stephanie Michel are recognized for their professionalism, dedication, and vision.
- There is concern about government funding drying up as a potential threat to the revitalization effort.

Recommendations

- N5SRP needs more volunteers and a working committee system to implement projects that SWOT participants wish to see in the commercial corridor.
- The N5SRP needs to diversify the program's revenue sources to offset the continued reliance on Commerce Department grants for staffing the revitalization effort and cleaning the corridor.
- Advisory Board members need to be recruited to provide a clear vision, oversight, and to work with staff and consultants to implement a strategy to support the N5SRP for the long term.
- Committee leaders and co-leaders are needed to help implement the variety of projects listed here.
- Work should continue and be accelerated to recruit, retain and reward volunteers serving on committees and for events.
- Additional staff for outreach may be helpful to expand revitalization efforts if funds can be identified.
- N5SRP could consider recruiting volunteers from area schools to help with community events and activities.

Communications

Observations

- N5SRP needs to communicate more to encourage participation in its events and to further its mission to improve the corridor.
- There was general agreement that residents don't know about the N5SRP, its work or broader goals.
- SWOT participants do not have one place to go to get information on events or happenings in the neighborhood since the demise of the *Olney Times*.
- Inter-neighborhood communication threatens the reputation of Olney, specifically in media coverage, which tends to focus on crime.
- There is a need to highlight the more positive news about the neighborhood.
- Not everyone in the neighborhood has access to the internet via smart phone, tablet or computer.
- There are a variety of languages spoken in the corridor and efforts to translate all of the N5SRP program should be ongoing.

Recommendations

- There is a need for more communication, especially with business owners about incentives, promotion and N5SRP initiatives in the corridor.
- N5SRP needs to communicate more about the project itself. It needs a new mission statement, vision statement, and clear goals and objectives to be more effective as a corridor advocate. Work with the Advisory Board and Committees to create this document within the next six months.
- Create a brochure or welcome packet about the services of N5SRP and have it translated into Korean, Spanish and French. Circulate it widely.
- There is little information about North 5 Street businesses and merchants online. Customers are often unable to tell when businesses are open or which services or goods they offer. The new N5SRP web site will have a business directory, but more can be done to provide detailed information online about corridor businesses.
- Because a significant portion of the neighborhood has no access to the internet, N5SRP could establish a regular monthly local e-newsletter, but must also circulate a paper version along the corridor to encourage intra-community communication and create a more positive image of the commercial corridor.
- Continue to build the N5SRP email list, so that the newsletter becomes the local resource for news about North 5th Street.
- Some kind of online community calendar would be helpful where all local groups could post their events.

DESIGN COMMITTEE: Create a clean, safe, green and attractive commercial corridor

Corridor Cleaning

Observations

- SWOT participants recognize that the corridor is cleaner since street cleaning was started and big belly trash cans were installed.
- The corridor is cleaner, but there are still issues that negatively impact cleanliness including poor separation of trash and recycling in trash cans and illegal dumping.
- There is inconsistent trash pickup by the city.
- Regular clean up days organized by N5SRP are helping to address trash in lots and in problem areas.

Recommendations

- The N5SRP should continue to undertake quarterly clean-up programs to address short dumping and accumulation of litter in the corridor.
- Continue to alert merchants about any changes to regular trash pick-up dates by the Sanitation Department as the N5SRP has done in the past.
- Work with the Sanitation Department about big belly trash cans, especially recycling which seem to be broken.

Safety and Crime Issues

- SWOT participants said that the neighborhood is safer, but that safety hangs in a delicate balance as security and crime awareness were top of mind.
- There has been an increased police presence, both with police on bikes and on horses, which SWOT participants view as a positive change.
- The city's SafeCam program has been used on the corridor and it is appreciated.

Recommendations

- N5SRP should encourage more business owners to participate in the SafeCam program to add more surveillance on the corridor.
- Continue using the three police logs currently in the corridor, and to work with Officer Hoppe to encourage officers to sign them consistently. Add more log books as needed.
- SWOT participants complained about dark sections of the corridor where additional pedestrian lighting is needed.
- Continue to investigate other options such as solar and LED technologies and learn from other corridors nationwide how they address dark sections of their corridors.
- Some pedestrian crossings are unsafe according to SWOT participants.
- N5SRP could spread the word about using the "Everyblock" e-mail notification tool, which automatically generates crime reports for a zip code. Encourage everyone to get Officer Hoppe's daily crime report via email.
- N5SRP could report crime stats regularly in its e-newsletter and promote widely any positive change.

Parking

Observations

- There was an overall consensus that parking is a weakness in the commercial district.
- Double parking is a major concern on North 5 Street, and especially in front of the schools.

- The community was split between those who felt free parking would be an asset to the corridor and those who felt it was a threat due to low turn-over of parking spots, which could threaten businesses on the corridor.
- Business owners expressed frustration that they could not park near their businesses without feeding a meter.
- Parking enforcement is lax on the corridor and around schools, where double parking is an issue.
- Additional research is needed about the parking needs in this corridor.

Recommendations

- N5SRP should work with merchants and their staff members so they understand why parking in front of their store prevents customers from parking there and has a direct impact on their store sales every day.
- Reinvigorate a merchant led effort to install parking meters in the lower part of the corridor. Work with the Philadelphia Parking Authority to study how this can happen.
- Continue to work with the Philadelphia Parking Authority parking meter enforcement in the corridor.
- N5SRP should work with merchants to identify safe parking locations near to their stores for merchants and their staff members to park.
- Determine what research is needed about the parking needs in this corridor, and identify funding to study and make recommendations to solve these problems.

Streetscape

Observations

- SWOT participants were positive about the corridor as a neighborhood asset and its further potential.
- The corridor is well-connected to public transit.
- Pedestrian traffic on the corridor was cited as heavy, but it was noted that there should be more foot traffic.
- There were complaints about storefront signage along the corridor, it is viewed as substandard, unattractive and lacking in continuity.
- Renovation efforts are mostly focused on the street level.
- There is an overall desire for a more uniform/attractive look on the corridor.
- Expanded seating options for al fresco dining options for restaurants should be investigated and N5SRP should advocate for legislation to be introduced if needed.
- The R8 rail road bridge is a local landmark, but it is not maintained by its owners.
- Most of the streetscape discussion was focused on design, there was also an underlying concern for safety.
- There was a call for additional pedestrian lighting.
- SWOT participants wanted more street trees on the corridor.
- Create a Greening Task Force to implement tree and flower planting throughout the corridor
- Repainting of road lines was also brought up as an opportunity.

Recommendations

- Encourage merchants and property owners to use the city's Storefront Improvement Program (SIP) now that its vendor requirements have been revised.
- Welcome signs or gateways into the area can be branded to support Olney's revitalization effort, and N5SRP should investigate funding opportunities.
- SWOT participants noted that many upper floors along the corridor are neglected and need repair. The SIP program can be utilized to encourage further investment if the property is owned by the merchant.
- Collaborate with merchants to come into compliance with local property maintenance ordinances.
- SWOT participants were interested in additional seating—benches—throughout the corridor but especially at bus stops.
- N5SRP staff is interested in using creative placemaking and tactical urbanism techniques to quickly and cheaply improve blighted areas on the corridor. Specifically, murals, playful wayfinding signage, solar powered lighting and temporary seating could be used to make the railroad at 5th and Sommerville into a more inviting passageway for pedestrians.
- The N5SRP has worked with the Community Design Collaborative pro bono architects in the past and perhaps can reach out to them again for assistance with storefront signage and storefront design for merchants/property owners willing to use the SIP program.
- SWOT participants were interested in street banners and sidewalk murals, both are potential sponsorship opportunities for local business.
- N5SRP should continue the Park (let) program, it is viewed positively by SWOT participants and provides needed seating and chairs and open space along the corridor.
- N5SRP could create design guidelines, or contract another organization to create storefronts and signage guidelines to encourage a more unified/attractive look for the corridor

PROMOTION COMMITTEE: Create retail and special events and promote our corridor

Corridor events, promotions and activities

Observations

- Ethnic diversity was cited as the corridor's strongest asset which should be marketed widely.
- More social events could be helpful to engage community residents.

Recommendations

- N5SRP should work with merchants to develop more retail events to drive customers into stores and increase sales.
- Work with merchants to identify retail events (designed to ring cash registers that day) that would be useful for specific market niches or specific locations (north end of corridor, south end of corridor etc.)
- N5SRP should organize an Ethnic Food themed retail event with corridor restaurants.
- A well-organized Restaurant Week or similar type of special event could help promote the diversity of ethnic restaurants on the corridor and introduce it as dining destination.

ECONOMIC RESTRUCTURING COMMITTEE: Understand the corridor's trade area and help retain existing business and recruit new ones.

Business Mix

- Ethnic diversity of the Olney corridor was viewed as its greatest strength according to SWOT participants.
- Diversity of business types, was also called out as an asset, especially its family-owned restaurants. The following businesses were cited as favorite local businesses P.J.'s Breakfast, Los tacos, Chi Mac Korean Chicken, and Oteri's Bakery.
- SWOT participants want a way to control the business types that come into the corridor in order to add more variety to the business mix.
- There is an oversupply of nail salons, beauty suppliers, and bars.
- SWOT participants would like to see more stylish boutiques and clothing outfitters (that sell something other than scrubs).
- There was an interest in some type of anchor store for the corridor to drive traffic into the rest of the corridor.
- There were suggestions for a chain restaurant like Chipotle and for a Wawa.
- Other suggestions for new business types include family-oriented stores, a roller rink, and an art gallery with framing, which could showcase local artists.
- SWOT participants noted the lack of coffee shops, internet cafes, street vendors, and al fresco dining options as a weakness of the corridor.
- Vacant storefronts and a high turnover rate are threats to the stability of the corridor.
- Disengaged property owners were noted as one of the corridor's weaknesses.
- SWOT participants indicated that storefront tenants were not necessarily property owners.
- There were concerns that property owners had little interest in investing in the continued revitalization of the corridor.
- SWOT participants were unclear about who the targeted customer base is for the corridor, the size of the trade area and implied that they do not actually shop there.

Recommendations

- The N5SRP needs a retail market analysis to understand who currently shops in the corridor, the business to attract based on the trade area and community demographics.
- N5SRP could collect and post information about current corridor business hours and services on Google Maps so that potential customers have an easy method of finding that information.
- Work closely with the City Planning Commission staff when they begin work on the District Plan for this neighborhood to explain the planning and zoning challenges in the corridor. Get their recommendations on outdoor dining, zoning changes, and overlay zones as needed.
- Continue to work with merchants on visual merchandizing, signage, and clean-up of cluttered storefront displays to showcase trendy clothing and quality merchandise being offered in the corridor now.
- The NFSRP can do more to help property owners to recruit quality businesses by working with the Wharton or Temple Small Business Development Centers to encourage quality merchants with business plans to locate to the corridor.

- N5SRP should become the “go to” place for anyone wishing to open a small business in the Olney corridor by providing their most up to date hot list, demographics, incentives and introductions to landlords with space to rent.

External issues (N5SRP can influence, but not control)

Governmental, Non-Profit and Service Organizations

- SWOT participants expressed overall satisfaction and appreciation for the multitude of services offered in the neighborhood. Key service providers include the Greater Olney Library, non-profit organizations, St. Paul’s Church and other faith based centers.
- SWOT participants were enthusiastic about the recent Mural Arts program starting in Fischer Park. Thus, there was a call for more public art throughout the neighborhood.
- There was interest in publically available Wi-Fi on the corridor.
- SWOT participants want the Bike Share program expanded into Olney.
- Church closings in the neighborhood were a concern.
- SWOT participants complained about the lack of political clout in the neighborhood and a general feeling of marginalization. They feel they lack control over key issues in their neighborhood such as zoning, permitting, and code enforcement. They also said they lack the ability to influence elected officials.
- Attendees representing elected officials at the SWOT meeting were quick to point out that the neighborhood has a low voter registration and turnout rate, and that the community cannot expect quality representation without voting.

Schools and Youth

- SWOT participants identified local schools as a strength, weakness, opportunity, and threat.
- While schools are an important neighborhood asset, there is certainly room for improvement, especially in areas like job training.
- Safety in schools is also a concern, and there was a call for cameras near schools to ensure safety.
- The schools are threatened by the current Philadelphia School District restructuring and turmoil, which has led to school closings in the area.
- Aside from schools, youth activities and jobs were identified as substandard. Olney youth are given little options aside from loitering for after-school and summer activities. The youth needs more activities, like the Police Athletic League, service opportunities, and summer jobs.
- Recreational centers in the neighborhood have not been rehabilitated recently. Neighbors are going to other rec centers outside the community.

North 5 Street Revitalization Program

SWOT Meeting 7/28/15

Raw Notes

Strengths Green

Opportunities Blue

Weaknesses Red

Threats Orange

All comments from the SWOT meeting July 28 are listed here, none have been removed, or revised

North 5th Revitalization Staff and Organization

- Knowledgeable-people understanding the scope of work what the needs are
- Loyalty-people trust N5SRP and show up for meetings
- Brings people together-events in general
- 5th St revitalization-cleaning, diversity, and plentiful businesses, execution of event planning, resilience dedication, patience, branding vision, planning
- Can see results of organization
- Staff makes city programs accessible
- Good management
- Good liaison with city hall
- Very responsive
- Friendly and professional
- 5th St Revitalization
- Phillip
- Stephanie
- More social events for community
- 5th St needs larger staff
- Business owners not brought into community enhancement-business owners not from neighborhood

Cleaning

- Clean streets
- Much cleaner (x2)
- Daily cleaning
- Cleaner streets-have an actual street cleaner (x2)
- More trash cans and recycling
- Poor separation of trash and recycling
- Illegal dumping
- Inconsistent trash pick-up by City

Safety and Crime Issues

- Police presence
- There are now police on horses
- Bike police patrol

- SafeCam program
- Pedestrian walkways safety
- Crime alerts
- More visible police presence
- Safety
- Crime awareness
- Safety
- No bike officer and patrol
- Police-community relations at national level could affect the local level

Parking

- We need free parking
- We need merchant parking that is free near-by
- Stop double parking near school
- Stop the double parking (2x)
- Delivery trucks double parking-

Communications

- Need one source for community announcements
- N5SRP is good at getting the word out
- Not enough residents know about N5SRP
- Needs to be a merchant/shopper parking lot
- Communication about what's happening in Olney
- More communication with community involvement (x3)
- Modern equivalent of the Olney Times/ community newspaper (x2)
- Media coverage-negative perception of community-need more positive

Streetscape

- Good public transportation along North 5 (x4)
- 5th Street is a main transportation corridor
- Storefronts are improving
- Highly trafficked corridor
- Better lighting on North% St for pedestrians (x3)
- Need more trees (x2)
- Public seating like benches (x2)
- More uniform look on corridor (x2)
- Gateways near bridges (like those in the Northeast like Tacony & Holmesburg)
- Need more facade improvements to the entire façade (not just first floor)
- Create more parklets (parking spot turned into outdoor eating)
- More attractive design scheme on corridor More tables to eat outside
- Something like restaurant week
- More new storefronts
- Make over storefronts and streetscapes
- We want street banners
- Repaint street lines
- Sidewalk murals for businesses

- Lighting for trees
- Storefront signage needs improvement
- Pot holes
- Lighting for pedestrians is needed
- Rail Road bridge-owned by SEPTA and Conrail leads to neglect, no one "owns it" to make improvements

Businesses

- Ethnic diversity of local businesses (x5)
- Diverse business types
- Constantly changing and improving
- Family owned businesses
- Access to childcare services, there are many daycare services in the area
- Ethnic restaurants, we have a lot
- Services from different organizations
- Shopping
- P.J.'s Breakfast
- Los Tacos
- Chi Mai Chicken Korean Chicken
- Oteri's Bakery
- Supermarkets nearby
- Baker's Row
- More variety in businesses along corridor-currently a lot of nail salons, beauty supply, bars
- Want something more along the line of stylized boutiques (something more than scrubs) (x4)
- Control shop types, we have too many of some types
- Roller hockey rink
- Better family-oriented stores
- Find tenants for vacant storefronts
- We need an anchor store-
- Chipotle or Wawa please!
- An art gallery with framing would be good
- We need more information about businesses and merchants online-businesses post hours on Google Maps
- Branding ethnic food attractions-food tour
- High turnover rate with business
- Not enough foot traffic
- Replicated businesses, same ones over and over again
- Disengaged property owners
- No coffee shop or internet cafes
- Lack of street vendors and al fresco dining
- Businesses need to accept credit/debit, they don't trust us
- Who shops here? What is the customer base? Do people in the neighborhood shop here?
- Logan Triangle development-could pull business away

Governmental, Non-Profit, Service Organizations

- Mural Arts program starting in Fischer Park

- Greater Olney Library
- Dedication of St. Paul's
- Nonprofits
- Faith based centers
- Want public Wi-Fi everywhere on the Corridor (x2)
- Collaborating with Churches
- Library to be stronger and more engaged for community arts and culture
- We want the rental bike share program here
- More public Art
- City funded Storefront improvement program has been changed, so we can use it again
- Fire code enforcement is needed
- We need to help expand young entrepreneurs
- Fear that Economic Development funding runs out
- Lack of community approval for new business, we want some say over zoning changes
- N 5th St every politician's boundary but not primary area of concern
- Lack of political clout in community
- Lack of funding, fear of decline in funds
- Permits and activity are linked
- Lack of federal funds and grant money
- Church closings
- Community is not empowered to make changes
- Voting and lack thereof in community

Olney Community Involvement

- Pride (2x)
- Loyal and Committed Residents
- Embraces diversity-community is very diverse
- Community togetherness
- Progress being made, and that we want progress
- History
- Olney is busier than it used to be
- Community garden middle of fisher park
- More organized than ever before
- Community involved
- Olney has affordable housing
- Parks
- Unity-within community-need more community events (x2)
- We could use some historical signs/ markers
- Collaborating with Logan-connectivity
- More monitoring in Fisher Park, drugs and other inappropriate-activity is getting out of hand
- We need more jobs in community
- Celebrate ethnic diversity here
- Revitalize community day
- No active community associations more than a block long
- Senior citizens-organized walks
- We need to cultivate our ward leaders

- Language barriers for everyone
- Cultural barriers
- Lack of communication between different cultures
- Lack of community centers, both are in disrepair, need more rehab funds and staffing
- Crime in the park-neighbors especially having issues-drugs, sex, loud music, parties
- Economic struggles for many area residents
- Economy has not recovered in Olney
- General sense of helplessness in community
- Lack of control over real estate-don't like what's happening with real estate
- Vandalism
- Immigration reform
- Unemployment
- Foreclosures in the area
- Home maintenance is often poor
- Stray animals
- Lack of jobs for the 21st century
- Homelessness
- High property tax
- Health and affordable health insurance
- Population shifts due to gentrification
- Senior citizens unable to age in place-forced to go outside community
- Slumlords
- People are reluctant to change in general
- Drug deals
- Transient population

Schools and Youth

- Schools
- Stronger/more youth groups for service opportunities (x3)
- Summer jobs and activities for kids
- School improvement
- PAL for kids
- More safe spaces-for kids
- Cameras near schools for kids' safety
- Improve schools-need to train kids for next step in their lives
- Lack of youth engagement
- Loitering-no alternatives for children/residents for activities-always people on street corners
- Bullying
- School closings in the area