

# **NORTH CLAYMONT AREA MASTER PLAN**

## Summary of Community Workshop #1

February 3, 2016

5:00-8:30 PM

Archmere Academy (3600 Philadelphia Pike, Claymont, DE 19703)



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### **Summary of Community Workshop #1**

#### Overview

The first public workshop for the North Claymont Area Master Plan took place on February 3, 2016, from 5:00-8:30 PM, at Archmere Academy (3600 Philadelphia Pike, Claymont, DE 19703). There were approximately 100 attendees from the general public. As they signed in, attendees were given a survey, an agenda, and a summary of Task 1 (the existing conditions analysis).

The meeting began with a two-hour open house (5-7:00 PM), during which community members browsed display boards with information on existing conditions, draft goals, and elements of the Master Plan. Guests were invited to comment on boards using dots and sticky notes.

At 7:00 PM, Heather Dunigan (WILMAPCO) began the presentation with a project overview and description of findings from the existing conditions analysis. Sarah Woodworth (W-ZHA on the Consultant Team) supplemented the summary of existing conditions with a description of the market assessment findings. Next, Jenny Koch (Rhodeside & Harwell on the Consultant Team) summarized the findings from focus groups and advisory committee meetings that have been held to date. Meredith Judy (Rhodeside & Harwell) then described the preliminary draft goals and the activity for the rest of the event.

The presentation was followed by small group discussion activity. Participants worked in 11 groups of 5-8 people, facilitated by staff from partner agencies and members of the consultant team. The groups discussed their perceptions about the current state of North Claymont and shared their thoughts about the draft goals, including a prioritization order determined by each table. Following the small group discussions, a representative from each group reported back to the larger audience on (1) any goals that the group thought were missing or needed to be changed from the initial list and (2) the group's top three goals/priorities.

All of the materials from the workshop are posted on the project website (<http://www.wilmapco.org/ncamp/>). An electronic version of the survey was available on the website through 2/15/2016. Notes from the small group discussions and the survey are summarized in the remainder of this document.

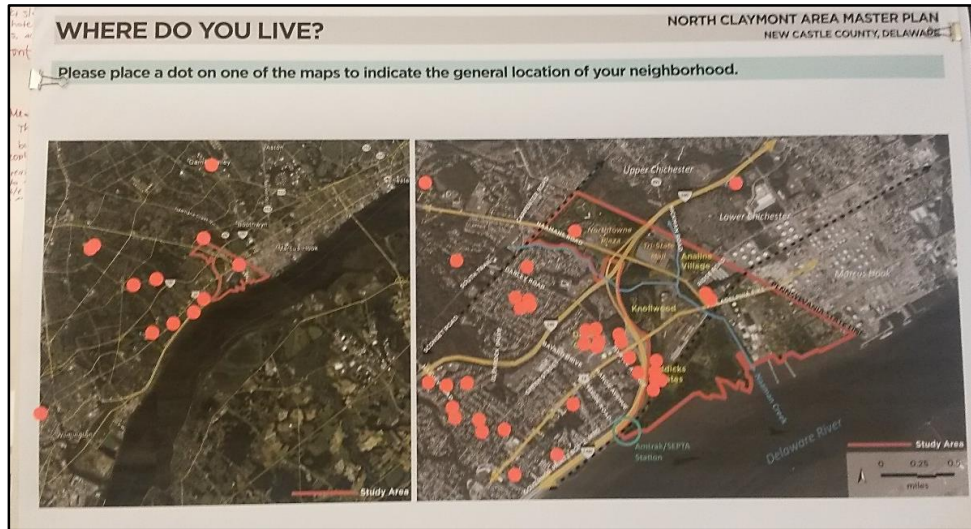
# NORTH CLAYMONT AREA MASTER PLAN

## Summary of Community Workshop #1

### Display Board Input

#### WHERE DO YOU LIVE?

Attendees were asked to place a dot on a map to indicate the general location of their neighborhood.



#### HOW HAVE OTHER AREAS ADDRESSED SIMILAR CHALLENGES?

These boards displayed three case studies that demonstrated ways that communities have addressed challenges similar to those faced in North Claymont. Attendees placed comments on two of the case studies.

##### Restoring Natural Assets (Ballast Point Park in Sydney, Australia)

- Comments: Along the waterfront; Amusement park.

##### Redevelopment of Large Commercial Properties (CityCenter in Houston, Texas)

- Comment: A' la "Claymont Renaissance Group" – Deny the Bauhaus [unable to read rest of comment]

#### DRAFT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES (\* means that others indicated agreement with a posted comment)

This board displayed the seven draft goals and asked that attendees write in their thoughts, including anything they thought was missing.

- "Promote Economic and Business Development" comments:
  - Passenger/Cargo Trans Shipment Center
- "Create a Safe and Welcoming Community" comments:
  - Rt. 13 (Philadelphia Pike) continues as a main truck route – Solution?

## NORTH CLAYMONT AREA MASTER PLAN

### Summary of Community Workshop #1

- “Improve Transportation Connections for All” comments:
  - Include a SEPTA rail line to connect DE to PHL airport (\*)
  - Include “bike route” signage
- “Increase the Network of Open Space and Recreation Facilities” comments:
  - Directly tie into Fox Point Park (\*\*\*)
  - Can Naamans Creek provide boat launch access to Delaware River (recreation)?
  - Place all open space/natural areas on the Delaware River into a conservation easement; reclaim and restore these into natural areas. The northern part of the riverfront is connected to Fox Point State Park and could easily be incorporated into the state system. Boat ramps?
  - The area where Naamans Creek enters the Delaware River was a large Native American “city” – perhaps Lenape. Area should be placed into special restrictive zone to protect possible artifacts.
- “Encourage Design that Enhances the Existing Community Context” comments:
  - More green frontage to the Robinson House
  - Accommodate/encourage mini-carts
  - Street trees/parking lot plantings
- “Foster a Variety of Housing” comments:
  - This is important
  - “Grey hairs” are a key market
- “Protect and Restore the Environment” comments:
  - Maximize attractive flood control ponds
  - Storm water run-off management

#### Additional goals/objectives suggested

- Access to waterfront, with potential for views and public access, restaurants, housing, and offices.
- Would like to see medical facilities, for the aging community. 55-65+ communities are all in PA; need some here.
- Peachtree Road – four bus stops close together with minimal activity. People can walk to stops. Should consolidate for more efficiency. One stop is on a blind curve.
- Especially like biking and recreation elements. Ensure bike racks have two points of contact on the frame.
- Need better ways to connect and get to destinations. Better connections between neighborhoods and to adjacent areas.
- No strip malls, please.
- Amusement park – something for kids and family, e.g., indoor ski slopes (at Meadowlands, NJ). This site has easy access. Would need hotels, and would benefit the state through tourism. Could have boat rides, access to water, and a water park.



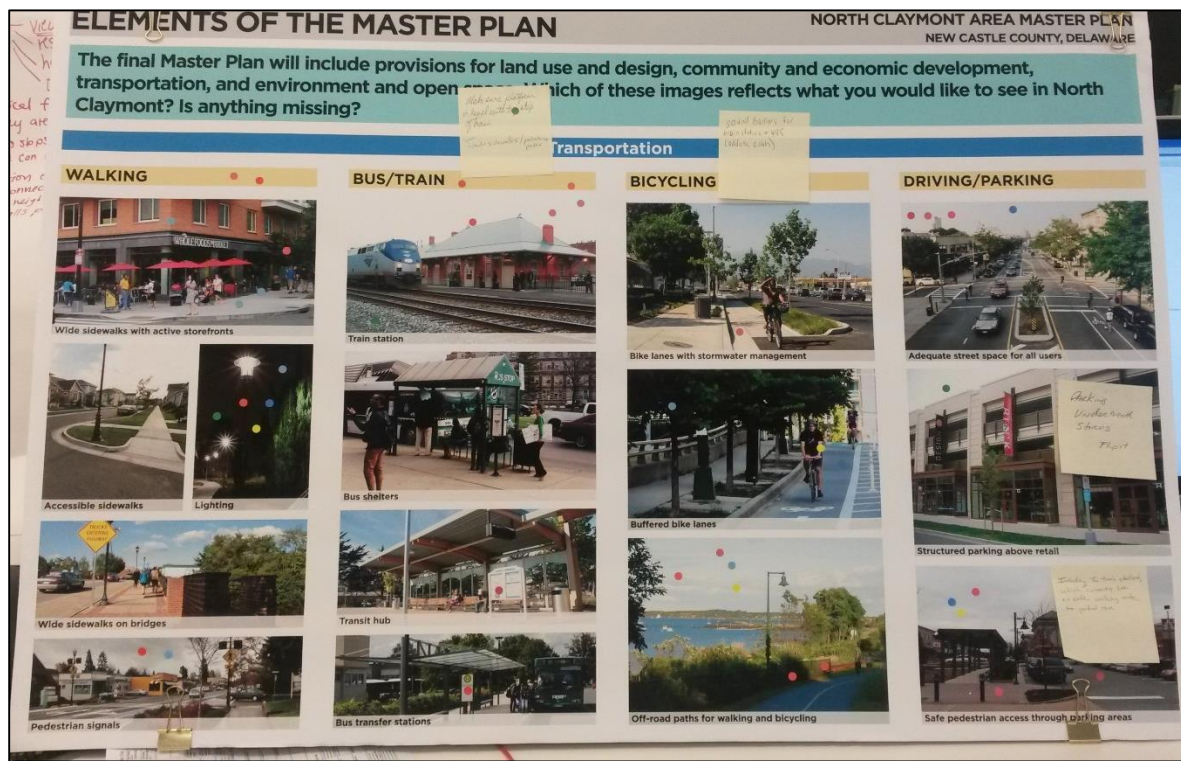
# NORTH CLAYMONT AREA MASTER PLAN

## Summary of Community Workshop #1

### ELEMENTS OF THE MASTER PLAN

For the Transportation, Land Use and Design, and Environment and Open Space elements of the master plan, meeting attendees “voted” on things that they would like to see in North Claymont using stickers placed on precedent images. Participants were also able to leave comments by writing on the boards or on sticky notes. Numbers below show how many people indicated that they wanted to see an element shown in a photo, or that they agreed to a posted comment.

### Transportation



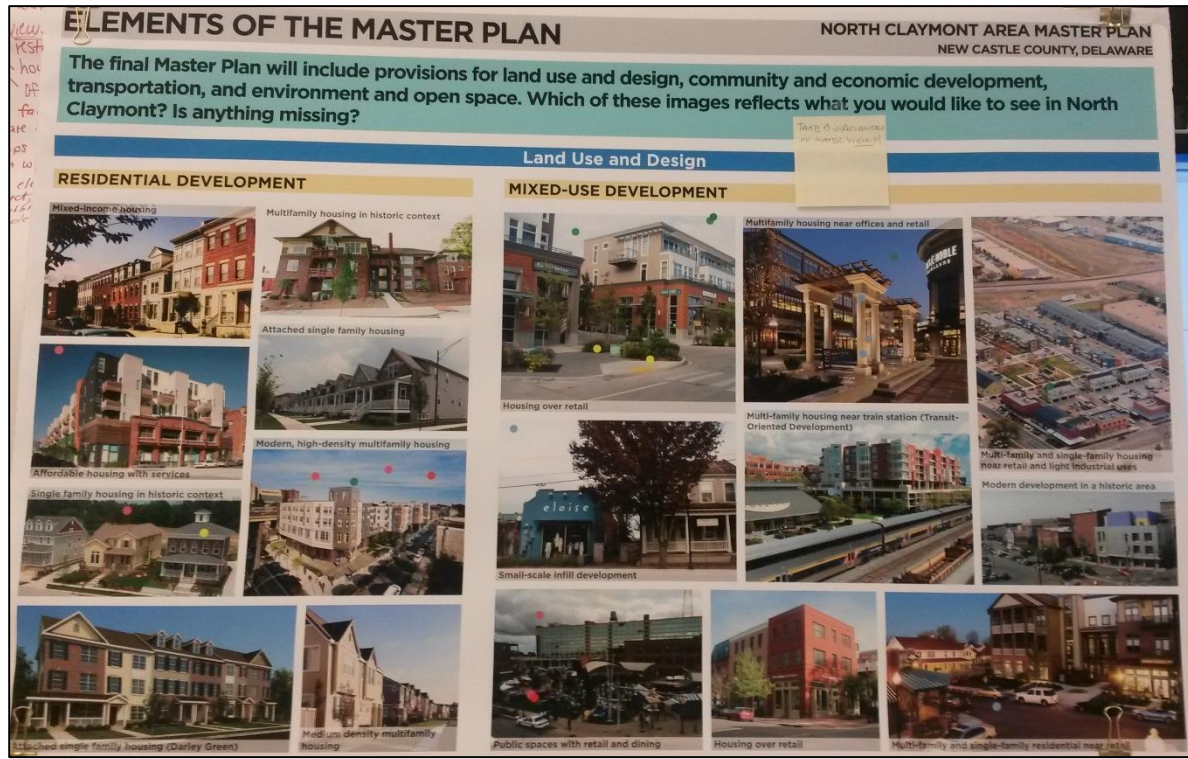
- General comments:
  - Sound barriers for train station & 495 (Addicks Estates)
- Walking (2 votes for general topic)
  - 5 – Lighting
  - 4 – Wide sidewalks with active storefronts
  - 2 – Pedestrian signals
- Bus/Train (2 votes for general topic)
  - 5 – Train station
  - 1 – Transit hub
  - 1 – Bus transfer station
  - Comments
    - 1 – Make sure platform is level with top step of train

# NORTH CLAYMONT AREA MASTER PLAN

## Summary of Community Workshop #1

- 0 – Include sidewalks/pedestrian paths
- Bicycling
  - 6 – Off-road paths for walking and bicycling
  - 3 – Buffered bike lanes
  - 1 – Bike lanes with stormwater management
- Driving/Parking
  - 5 – Safe pedestrian access through parking areas
  - 4 – Adequate street space for all users
  - 1 – Structured parking above retail
    - Comment: Parking underneath stores – flip it

### Land Use and Design



- General comments
  - Take big advantage of water views!
- Residential Development
  - 4 – Modern, high-density multifamily housing
  - 2 – Single-family housing in historic context
  - 1 – Affordable housing with services
- Mixed-Use Development
  - 5 – Housing over retail
  - 4 – Multi-family housing near offices and retail

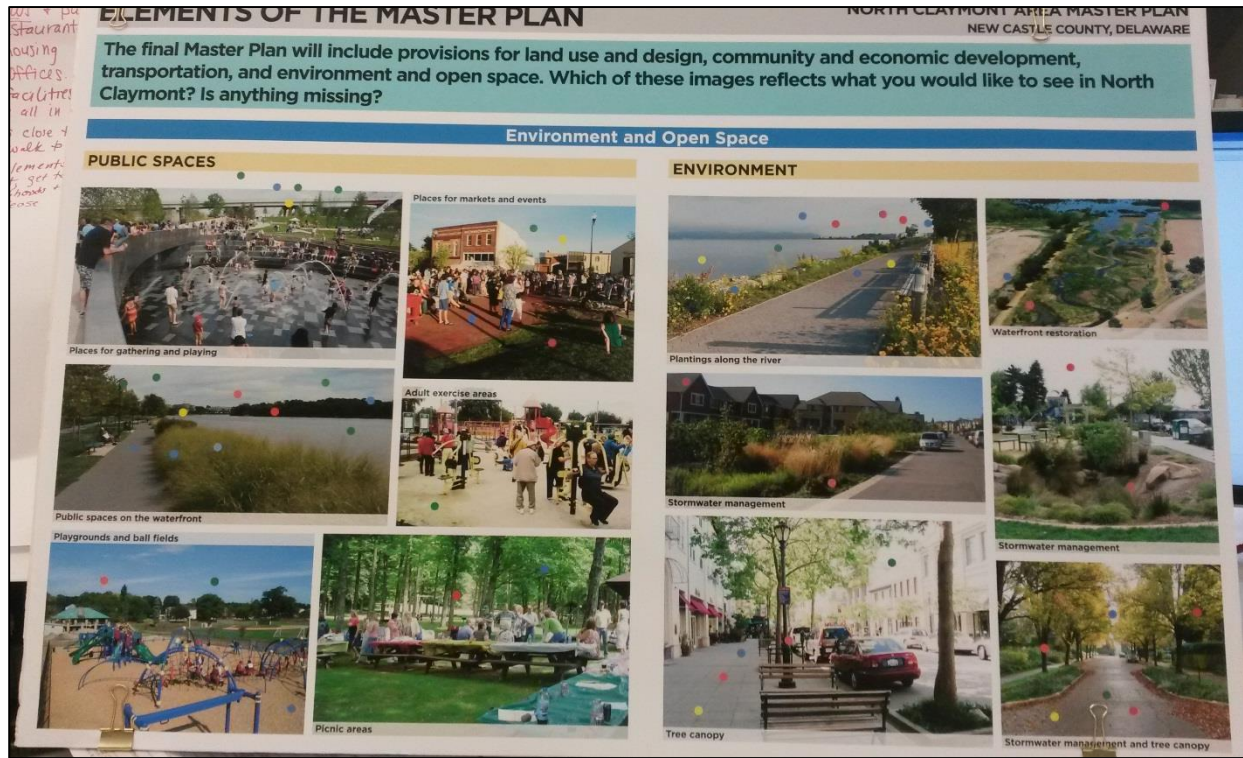


# NORTH CLAYMONT AREA MASTER PLAN

## Summary of Community Workshop #1

- 3 – Public spaces with retail/dining
- 2 – Multi-family housing near train station (Transit-Oriented Development)
- 1 – Multi-family and single-family housing near retail and light industrial uses
- 1 – Multi-family and single-family residential near retail
- 1 – Small scale infill development

### Environment and Open Space



- Public Spaces
  - 11 – Public spaces on the waterfront
  - 6 – Places for gathering and playing [splash park with green space]
  - 4 – Places for markets and events
  - 3 – Playgrounds and ball fields
  - 2 – Picnic areas
  - 1 – Adult exercise areas
- Environment
  - 10 – Plantings along the river
  - 6 – Stormwater management and tree canopy [bioswales/curb extensions on res. street]
  - 5 – Tree canopy [on main street with benches and parking]
  - 3 – Waterfront restoration
  - 2 – Stormwater management [rain garden with picnic area near playground]
  - 2 – Stormwater management [plantings/rain garden on residential street]





## **NORTH CLAYMONT AREA MASTER PLAN**

### **Summary of Community Workshop #1**

- **What types of businesses do you think are needed in this area? What would succeed?**
  - Good restaurant, not fast food (\*\*\*\*\*)
  - No more “affordable housing” – we have more than enough of that in Claymont. We need high end housing (\*\*\*)
  - Nicer/gourmet restaurants (\*\*)
  - Bakery
  - New retail
  - Senior housing, recreation and facilitation needs
  - Wilmington College or Del Tech campus
  - Deli
  - Coach or Outlets
  - Multispecialty doctor/dentist office
  - Medical facilities (Doctor offices, rehab)
  - Family restaurants
  - Dairy Queen
  - Bagel shop
  - Gym (\*)
  - Chipotle (\*)
  - High-end retail

## NORTH CLAYMONT AREA MASTER PLAN

### Summary of Community Workshop #1

#### Small Group Discussion Results

Results below summarize the input from the self-selected 11 small group discussion tables. At each table, the facilitator asked a participant to record notes on a form that listed the discussion questions. For the final question, participants used strips of paper with the goals written on them to physically place the goals in their preferred priority order. Blank strips were offered to allow participants to write new goals.

#### What do you like about the North Claymont Area today?

- Nearly all groups mentioned at least once that they liked the **location** of North Claymont, particularly because of the **easy transportation access, including proximity to the interstate, train, and several bus lines**. (18 mentions)
- Many groups mentioned **specific businesses or places** that they liked in Claymont, including Darley Green, the library, and other small and locally-owned businesses. (10 mentions)
- Many groups also felt that there is a **strong sense of community**, and they like that people in the community want to be involved in improvement efforts. (8 mentions)
- There was support for **recent revitalization efforts** and excitement about the **potential** for continued growth and redevelopment. (7 mentions)
- The **history and heritage** of the area are things that people also value. (6 mentions)
- Other characteristics that the groups listed include housing, affordability, good schools, and safety.

#### What concerns you about the North Claymont Area today?

- Though there was generally less agreement about the concerns related to North Claymont today versus the things people like, most groups mentioned **crime and/or safety** as major concern. (11 mentions)
- Another major concern was the **lack of economic vitality and business diversity**. (9 mentions)
- Several groups noted that the area is **not visually appealing**, due to the factors such as the demolition of the steel mill site, billboards, and poor property upkeep. (4 mentions)
- Other concerns that the groups listed include the need for more entertainment options, the lack of parks and open spaces, concerns about growth and sprawl, pedestrian safety and connectivity, and the challenges caused by the physical separation of the community by major roadways.

#### Are we missing anything from the goals?

- Many groups expressed the need **for more emphasis on pedestrian and bicycle connectivity**, including a potential Complete Streets policy and more trails. (5 mentions)

## NORTH CLAYMONT AREA MASTER PLAN

### Summary of Community Workshop #1

- There was also a focus on **education**, including both coordination with existing schools and a desire to see more adult education opportunities. (4 mentions)
- Several groups mentioned the need to **include both existing and new neighborhoods** in the plan, and **ensure that the benefits are felt by all**. (3 mentions)
- Some groups thought that there should be a goal related to ensuring that **adequate fire/police/EMS coverage** is provided along with any redevelopment or growth in the community. (3 mentions)
- There was also an interest in including goals related to **arts and culture**, and creation of a **destination**. (3 mentions)
- Other goals that the groups listed include protection of historic properties, provision of adequate oversight, a focus on the needs of seniors, and the need to create the political will to implement the plan.

#### Which goals are most important to you?

While each group reported on their top three priorities, many groups expressed their feeling that many of the goals rely on each other for success, and that no one goal can stand alone. Based on ranking the draft goals from 1 (**most important**) to 7 (**least important**), the average prioritization order and suggested edits were as follows:

Draft Goal	Average Ranking	Suggested Edits
Promote Economic and Business Development	2.8	Say "jobs" in the title. Include train station as potential driver. Attain revenue.
Create a Safe and Welcoming Community	2.9	
Improve Transportation Connections for All	3.0	
Increase the Network of Open Space and Recreation Facilities	4.5	Place for community gathering/arts and culture. River access. Connection to greenway.
Protect and Restore the Environment	4.9	
Encourage Design that Enhances the Existing Community Context	5.1	Reduce obvious contamination. Build on community strengths. Protection of historical assets and communities.
Foster a Variety of Housing	5.5	Multi-level senior. Affordable/townhouses; mixed-use.

Other suggested goals:

- Create a police sub-station (ranked #8 by one of the groups)
- Protect historic areas (ranked #5 by one of the groups)
- Create a strategy to create political will (ranked #2 by one of the groups)



## NORTH CLAYMONT AREA MASTER PLAN

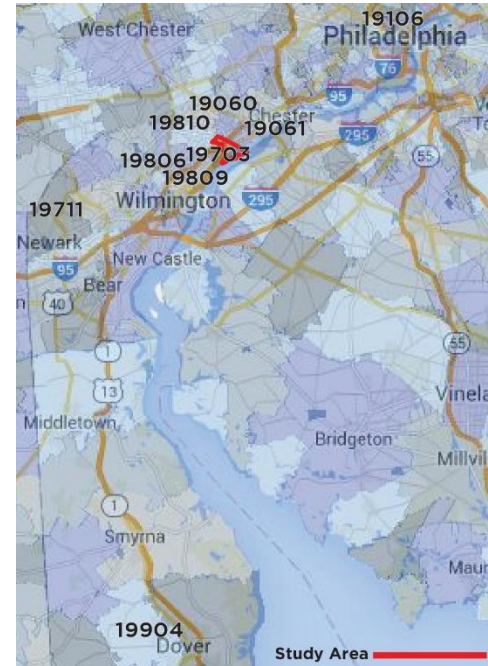
### Summary of Community Workshop #1

#### Survey Results

The results below are summarized from 89 responses, including 37 from the meeting, and 52 from the electronic survey posted on the project website and Facebook page.

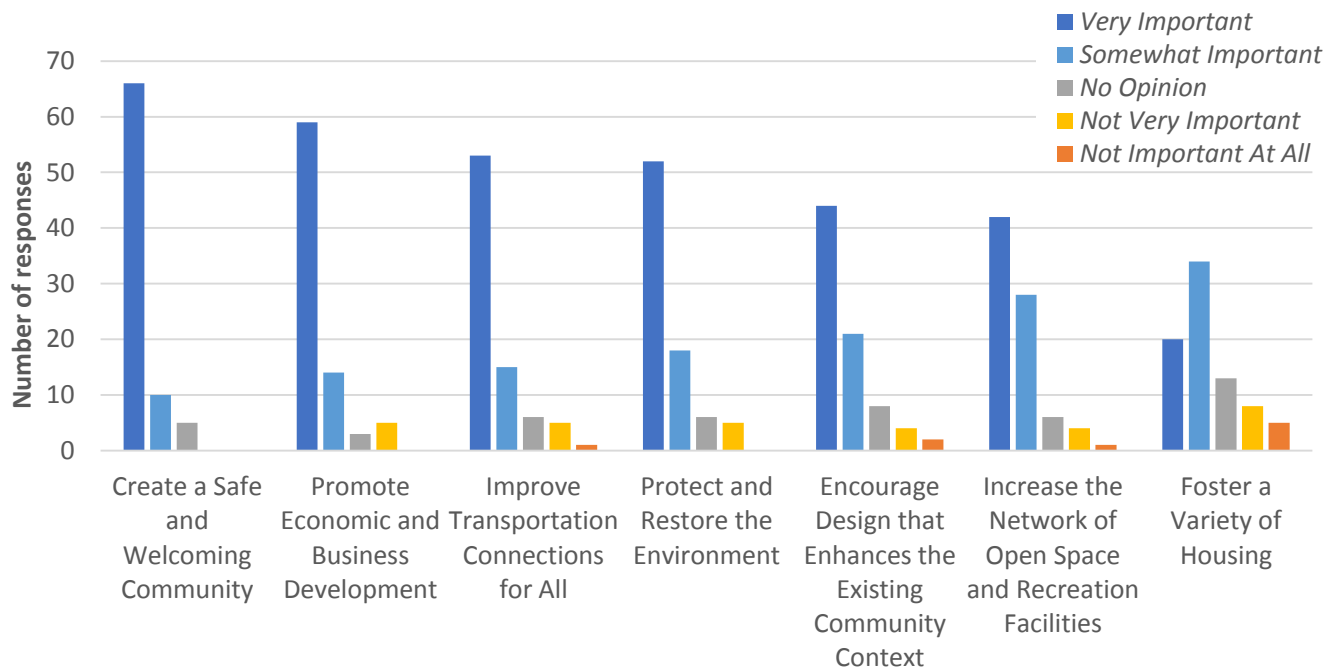
#### What is your ZIP code?

ZIP Code	Responses
19703	64
19810	8
19809	2
19806	1
19060	1
19106	1
19061	1
19904	1
19704	1
19711	1
No response	9
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>89</b>



#### Which goals are most important to you?

Survey respondents were asked to indicate the importance of each of the preliminary draft goals, with five choices to rank the seven goals. Results are shown in the chart below.



## NORTH CLAYMONT AREA MASTER PLAN

### Summary of Community Workshop #1

#### Are there any goals that are missing?

Many of the goals noted in responses to this question are already incorporated in the draft goals and objectives, and others can be easily incorporated into existing goals and objectives, when needed. Suggestions include:

- Access to the water, with potential new recreation and retail opportunities
- Enhanced bicycle and pedestrian connections
- Historic district
- Creation of an arts and culture destination, as well as entertainment destinations
- Improved regional and local transportation networks
- Enhanced safety, including provision of adequate fire/police/EMS services
- Benefits for existing neighborhoods as well as new developments
- Affordable housing
- Improved aesthetics

#### What are the top three benefits that you think could come out of this Plan?

These responses were open-ended. Responses were grouped into the general categories shown below.

Benefits (categories based on responses)	Responses
Economic development, including new businesses and new job opportunities attracted to the area	46
Improved community strength, resilience, and reputation	15
Transportation improvements, including walkability and access to the train station	12
Open space, parks, and recreation improvements	10
Better local shopping, dining, and entertainment	8
Local river access	6
Increased safety	6
Greater property values	6
Beautification	6
Revitalization/vitality	6
New residents, visitors, and shoppers	5
Better diversity of housing	5
Environmental improvements	4
More tax revenue	4
Better access to the community	3

## NORTH CLAYMONT AREA MASTER PLAN

### Summary of Community Workshop #1

What are your top three concerns related to this Plan?

Concerns (categories based on responses)	Responses
Safety and crime	19
Inability to implement and potential delays	14
Increased traffic	10
Environmental issues – e.g., more pollution related to industry, or lack of sufficient clean up	9
Noise and light pollution	6
Potentially irreversible changes to properties and missing out on opportunities - e.g., losing industrial zoning, breaking up large parcels, or not expanding waterfront access	6
Pedestrian access to train station and new development	5
Gentrification / increase in cost of living	5
Inclusion of existing community and surrounding neighborhoods in plan and process	5

#### Other Comments/Suggestions

- Market to hotels that want a water view. New businesses near train station will drive a need for more hotels.
- Explore opportunities for restaurants on waterfront.
- More affordable eateries.
- Claymont needs to be a place to go - stop - exit - recreate. We need decent restaurants and a recreational facility.
- Limit access points to 2-3 like a "gated community" so criminal activity would have to pass by security. Can we tie into PPL Park and PHL airport?
- Need health facilities, including doctors' offices and rehab services
- No housing; schools cannot handle too much traffic flow.
- The 420 acre, former steel manufacturing site demands a major east coast, multimodal transportation center. Delaware should not lose this prime opportunity for major economic advancement.
- Preserve the ban on heavy industry as required under the CZA
- The Amtrak Wilmington shops are threatened by sea level rise and more frequent flooding. The Wilmington shops should be moved to the old steel plant to keep this industry here.
- There should be a focus on ensuring individuals in Addicks Estates have access to the new train station. They should be able to reach the station by foot or bike without going to Philadelphia Pike.
- DART Rt 1 streetcar trolley.



## NORTH CLAYMONT AREA MASTER PLAN

### Summary of Community Workshop #1

- TriState mall area would be a great place for a Costco and/or BJ's. Bringing some high end stores would help boost Claymont.

#### Other Questions

- How do we compete with Newark for main station?
- Is there talk of buying our homes out?
- What happens to the old station?
- What is going to be done to increase inclusion of the already existing residential areas that are struggling, i.e., Greentree, Knollwood, Stoneybrook?
- What is going to happen to the old Levitz factory? It needs to be torn down and so does the old Wendys.
- What is the time frame for 1) sidewalks on Myrtle Ave and 2) moving the train station?
- Any discussion on adding noise wall b/w I-495 and bordering neighborhoods (i.e., Addicks Estates)?
- What is the timeline to get any of this started? Is there a date that plans will be solidified and choices made and identified in final place?

#### How did you learn about this community meeting?

Source of Meeting Information	#	Details (if provided)
Facebook	33	
E-mail announcement	23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design Review Advisory Committee (DRAC)</li> <li>• Claymont Renaissance Development Corporation (CRDC)</li> <li>• CCC</li> </ul>
Neighborhood or business association	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CRDC (3)</li> <li>• DRAC (1)</li> <li>• Stockdale Neighborhood Association</li> <li>• CCC</li> </ul>
Other - blog, organization, etc.	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sean Matthews call (2)</li> <li>• Darley Green</li> <li>• Notice at Advisory Council</li> </ul>
Print or online newspaper	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WILMAPCO newsletter</li> <li>• Stockdale Neighborhood Association</li> </ul>