

# NORTH BROAD TAP

Maintaining Physical & Social Infrastructure Along North Broad



## About the Urban Land Institute

The Urban Land Institute (ULI) was established in 1936 as a nonprofit educational and research institute. It is supported by more than 45,000 members in 82 countries representing all aspects of land use and development disciplines. ULI's mission is to provide leadership in the responsible use of land to create and sustain thriving communities worldwide. ULI Philadelphia has more than 900 members in the Philadelphia District Council, which includes the Philadelphia metropolitan area, Central Pennsylvania, Delaware, the Lehigh Valley, and Southern New Jersey. ULI provides guidance to nonprofits and municipalities seeking solutions to land use challenges. Its Technical Assistance Panels objectively evaluate specific needs and make recommendations on implementation in an atmosphere free of politics and preconceptions. ULI member and non-member professionals provide their expertise in a voluntary capacity and each has signed an agreement to prevent current and potential conflicts of interest.

## About the Curtis Infrastructure Initiative

The ULI Curtis Infrastructure Initiative aims to build a movement to promote infrastructure solutions that are equitable and resilient and that enhance long-term community value. By creating new global and strategic partnerships, providing technical assistance, building capacity at the local level, and acting as a feedback loop to promote the most innovative and effective best practices, the Curtis Infrastructure Initiative will ensure the success of ULI's mission to positively shape the future of the built environment.

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## ULI Advisory Services: National and Global Programs

Since 1947, the ULI Advisory Services program has assembled well over 700 ULI-member teams to help sponsors find creative, practical solutions for complex land use challenges. A wide variety of public, private, and nonprofit organizations have contracted for ULI's advisory services. National and international panelists are specifically recruited to form a panel of independent and objective volunteer ULI member experts with the skills needed to address the identified land use challenge. The program is designed to help break through obstacles, jump-start conversations, and solve tough challenges that need an outside, independent perspective. Three- and five-day engagements are offered to ensure thorough consideration of relevant topics. An additional national offering is the project analysis session (PAS) offered at ULI's Fall and Spring Meetings, through which specific land use challenges are evaluated by a panel of volunteer experts selected from ULI's membership. This is a conversational format that lends itself to an open exchange of ideas among diverse industry practitioners with distinct points of view. From the streamlined two-hour session to the "deeper dive" eight-hour session, this intimate conversational format encourages creative thinking and problem solving. Learn more at [americas.uli.org/programs/advisory-services/](https://americas.uli.org/programs/advisory-services/). Distinct from Advisory Services panels, TAPs leverage local expertise through a half-day to two-day process.

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## ULI Advisory Services: District Council Programs

The goal of the ULI Advisory Services program is to bring the finest expertise in the real estate field to bear on complex land use planning and development projects, programs, and policies. The ULI Philadelphia technical assistance panel (TAP) program has assembled over 187 ULI-member teams in service of ULI's mission to provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide. Drawing from its local membership base, ULI Philadelphia conducts TAPs offering objective and responsible advice to local decision-makers on a wide variety of land use and real estate issues ranging from site-specific projects to public policy questions. The TAP program is intentionally flexible to provide a customized approach to specific land use and real estate issues. In fulfillment of ULI's mission, this TAP report is intended to provide objective advice that will promote the responsible use of land to enhance the environment. An additional local offering is the project analysis forum, which offers a shorter format for district councils to employ local member expertise to address regional land use challenges. Panelists are land use professionals uniquely positioned to address the specific challenges at hand, and provide in-depth, project-specific, and pragmatic recommendations. The intimate, conversational format encourages creative thinking and problem solving between the panel and the sponsor. Learn more at [www.philadelphia.uli.org](https://www.philadelphia.uli.org)

Looking north toward the Broad, Germantown and Erie intersection



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Landscaping along North Broad Street.



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

“Public spaces were an essential part of community health and wellbeing, and a key aspect of how we achieve the overall mission of improving quality of life in the Philadelphia region.”

*–The William Penn Foundation testimony at the Pennsylvania Democratic House Policy Committee, Aug 10, 2021.*

Along the North Broad Street corridor, there is potential for landscape improvement, greening projects and economic development. The North Broad Street Renaissance has been championing such engagement and improvement efforts and has had success in getting greening projects off the ground. However, the organization has faced challenges in securing sustainable funds for infrastructure maintenance and capital projects.

The panel observed the need for green space and articulated the numerous benefits such a community amenity brings - both to the residents and to the landscape. Some of the maintenance challenges stem from the city’s reliance on community groups for upkeep, while other challenges arise from fluctuating funding streams without consistent revenue. Access to funding can also be difficult for an organization that lacks sufficient staff capacity, and competitive regardless of organizational capacity.

The panel’s recommendations are concentrated on ways to improve revenue streams and work

with existing stakeholders to leverage assets and develop additional resources. This will allow North Broad Renaissance, and similar community organizations, to become an independent financial entity that is sustainable for the foreseeable future so that landscape improvements and community engagement efforts may continue. A greater level of maintenance and care would lead to less extreme heat, more economic opportunity, and less violent streets - a benefit which can be felt by the entire surrounding community.

## BACKGROUND

North Broad Renaissance serves a roughly 4 mile stretch of North Broad Street from City Hall to Germantown Avenue. There are residential neighborhoods on either side of North Broad, and a major transportation hub connecting residents with all parts of the city. The population is primarily Black (46 percent), with residents of various races identifying as Hispanic/Latino making up a growing share of the population in the past few decades. The North District, which includes adjacent communities along the northern half of North Broad Street, as compared to the city of Philadelphia, has a smaller population with four or more years of college (2 percent as compared to 25 percent), higher rates of poverty (46 percent as compared to 26 percent, and a lower median income (\$22,241 compared to \$37,192). The district economy is dominated by healthcare and education services, and connected by multiple forms of transportation, including SEPTA subway service, bus, and regional rail.

The North Broad Renaissance is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the improvement, maintenance and vitalization of the North Board Corridor.

In 2016, the North Broad Renaissance solicited responses from the community ahead of releasing a five-year strategic plan.

Four areas of focus were identified to improve and support overall quality of life:

- Keeping North Broad Clean and Safe
- Maintaining and Improving Green Space along North Broad
- Marketing North Broad to the Community and Visitors, and Communicating with Stakeholders
- Ensuring Innovative, Strategic and Diverse Business Attraction, Business Retention and Business Development



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Panelists gather on small traffic island at Broad, Germantown, and Erie.





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Beautification improvements at Butler Triangle.

In 2019, the organization finalized research for its next five-year strategic plan. Maintaining green and open space continued to be a priority.

On April 16, 2020, the City of Philadelphia adopted the AARP Livable Communities Action plan, which identified three key focus areas to help make Philadelphia a more livable community. Open and Green spaces was one of the areas, noting that vibrant outdoor and public spaces are key elements of an age-friendly community. The plan also stated that every neighborhood should have a basic green infrastructure that includes tree planting, public and community gardens, and green stormwater management solutions.

A representative from North Broad Renaissance indicated that there was interest from philanthropic groups about supporting new green projects, but that creating a project would not be successful without a long term plan for maintenance and upkeep. Identifying sustainable revenue streams to create and maintain equitable investments in open and green spaces continues to be a challenge in low-income Black and Brown communities.

The Covid-19 pandemic illustrated how essential outdoor public space is to the wellbeing of a community. These options do not exist in many low-income Black and Brown communities, and these are the systemic infrastructure challenges that the Technical Assistance Panel seeks to address along the North Broad Street corridor.

As an example, in 2017, the Broad, Germantown, and Erie add (BGE) Project became a joint effort between city departments and neighborhood organizations.

The project's goals are to:

- Make the intersection safer through proposed changes to traffic flow.
- Create new public spaces by adding two new plazas that will reflect a community-driven design.
- Create jobs and support businesses by way of increased funding and grants.
- Honor local history with a team of neighborhood history enthusiasts focused on historic buildings, photo essays, history collections, and public art and markers.

History has shown that city priorities can change with new administrations and city leadership. As a result, understanding how to maintain and care for this area is one of the major concerns to be addressed in the TAP. Identifying a sustainable model for maintaining this physical and social infrastructure is critical to the overall health and vitality of the North Broad neighborhoods and could lead to best practices for maintenance challenges in other Black and Brown communities.

## THE PROCESS

The North Broad Renaissance, a Special Services District, engaged ULI Philadelphia to convene a Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) with the overall goal of examining strategies for the creation and maintenance of green spaces for the four miles along North Broad Street and as a way to create replicable models in similarly under resourced communities.

The two-day TAP convened on June 22nd at the Shriners Children's Hospital on North Broad Street in Philadelphia. The Panel spent the morning touring the study area, and the afternoon was devoted to interviewing approximately 30 stakeholders - community members, city officials, private and nonprofit organizations with familiarity of city planning, parks, and the North Broad Street Corridor.

On the second day, the Panel re-convened to share what it had learned and formulate its recommendations. At the end of the second day, stakeholders and the general public were invited to hear the Panel's presentation of its findings and recommendations.

### What did we learn from our meetings with stakeholders?

Several themes came up in the stakeholder interviews that the panelists took into account when forming their recommendations. These include:

- Lack of institutional involvement and consistent city support along North Broad Street
- The importance of economic and workforce development along North Broad.
- The need for building relationships with residents, businesses and institutions to support a vibrant and equitable neighborhood.
- The demonstrated value of green/public space infrastructure



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Panelists convene at Shriners' Hospital along North Broad Street.

### Inconsistent institutional involvement and city support

Stakeholders, in general, wanted to see a more holistic approach to community planning and maintenance, and a greater city-wide investment in parks and public spaces. Multiple interviewees emphasized the good that could come out of a meeting space and the unmet potential of North Broad Street in serving as a community hub.

Multiple stakeholders felt the city should be held accountable for capital improvements and maintenance, including the maintenance of the parks, landscapes and infrastructure on North Broad Street. Stakeholders also spoke of a history to North Broad that has stripped away green space and public meeting spaces, and how more should be done to bring those back and instill a sense of community.

Stakeholders spoke of different funding opportunities that North Broad could take advantage of, including the Taking Care of Business (TCB) Clean Corridors Program, which currently provides sidewalk sweeping support for an area of North Broad from Spring Garden to Erie. The TCB program also helps serve nearby areas, such as the BGE triangle through

funding for partner organizations, like Called to Serve CDC. Critical to the success of this program is its ability to fund ongoing maintenance and service. They also spoke of challenges that a small organization like North Broad Renaissance would face in applying for more grant and city funding, including having a small staff of one, lack of organizational support, and fewer established wins and financial resources that are seen as attractive to potential funders and investors.

### Economic and Workforce Development

Stakeholders brought up the need to create a “virtuous cycle” by which public space redevelopment and greenery improvements would create work opportunities for the residents of the area and instill a sense of pride and belonging by making such improvements. The need to prioritize workforce and economic development over green spaces was brought up, though many stakeholders acknowledged that both can be accomplished and one didn’t need to be prioritized in lieu of another.

Stakeholders commented on the proposed creation of a Business Improvement District (BID), which had received the first green light from City Council during the week the TAP occurred. While several stakeholders questioned whether a BID along North Broad could be successful, panelists and those familiar with the process believed that if done properly, the model could facilitate critical investments along the corridor, creating value for stakeholders over time.

Observations were also made that some parts of the city have enough resources and volunteers to create a “friends of” group for a park to keep it clean, or give a \$10 a month contribution via an app called Glitter to hire trash pickup services. An area like North Broad doesn’t have those same resources to do so, and would need to rely on alternative funding models.

### Building Relationships

Questions were raised about the uneven involvement of Temple University, and if the major university located on North Broad could also be included in conversations about how to improve the green space of the area. In



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Plans show future improvements for the Butler Triangle along North Broad Street.

another area of the city, the University of Pennsylvania, Drexel University and Amtrak collaborated to improve the local area by creating the University City District (UCD), which had been considered successful in making streetscape and greenery improvements.

### Demonstrated Value of Green/ Public Space Infrastructure

The panel observed and documented the demonstrated value of green space and public space, and for the purposes of this report and in support of the NBR project, will articulate some of the benefits.

Use and access of well-maintained, accessible public space is a pleasure and a basic need<sup>1</sup>. It also has been connected to improved health outcomes, particularly mental health<sup>2</sup>, which can lead to reduced health care costs. The addition of green spaces is associated<sup>3</sup> with less stress, more exercise, and fewer feelings of depression and worthlessness<sup>4</sup>, and a reduction in gun violence<sup>5</sup>.

For physical health, the access and availability of green spaces is a heat island mitigation measure<sup>6</sup>, which improves health outcomes in the event of heat emergencies. Green space and tree canopies also create cooling mechanisms, which lead to a reduction in energy consumption and particulate reduction. In Philadelphia, the North Broad region is documented as a priority area (with parts considered a top priority) in the Philadelphia Heat Vulnerability Index.

The addition of well-maintained and designed green spaces can also reduce crime near a vacant lot, which can lead to lower rates of incarceration. The green spaces can have the effect of traffic calming, which is notable in North Broad as these green spaces initially began as a traffic calming project to improve a dangerous intersection.

Financially, green spaces increase property<sup>7</sup> value which yields greater tax revenue. The benefits of green spaces include improved perceptions of the area and the ability to attract private real-estate investment. It can improve retail districts and encourage existing retail tenants to improve properties. Evidence shows that well-maintained spaces increase property values, and such spaces can reduce the costs associated with the negative characteristics outlined above - including health outcomes and gun violence.

### Questions Posed by Sponsors

Prior to the TAP, the sponsors provided ULI with a list of issues they would like to see addressed. These included:

**1. What is the community return on investment from infrastructure and open space maintenance and what burdens or inequities are created by lack of adequate maintenance?**

- a. What are the full range of benefits to sustainable maintenance plans, both financially and otherwise, including economic development and healthy community outcomes?

- b. What is the initial cost to the public sector and where can the city identify resources or savings because of these investments?

**2. What potential policies could be implemented to address issues of infrastructure equity in low income Black and Brown communities?**

- a. Are there existing policies that are either positively affecting or hindering these efforts?
- b. Can new policies be implemented to address any identified shortcomings?
- c. What recommendations can be implemented in the short, mid and long term to address infrastructure equity?

**3. When barriers to engagement exist for local stakeholders, how do you deliver a project that results in positive community impact? How do we redefine engagement during the maintenance of open and green spaces compared to design / conceptual phases?**

- a. What roles do or could community benefit agreements or similar tools play in sustaining investments in public space and infrastructure investments?

**4. What are the opportunities and benefits for engaging the private sector into being a permanent support for this effort?**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.epa.gov/G3/green-streets-and-community-open-space>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6324526/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://academic.oup.com/aje/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6324526/>

<sup>5</sup> [https://injuryprevention.bmj.com/content/19/3/198.short?g=w\\_injuryprevention\\_ahead\\_tab](https://injuryprevention.bmj.com/content/19/3/198.short?g=w_injuryprevention_ahead_tab)

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.phila.gov/media/20190719092954/HP\\_R8print-1.pdf](https://www.phila.gov/media/20190719092954/HP_R8print-1.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> <https://americas.uli.org/the-case-for-open-space-why-the-real-estate-industry-should-invest-in-parks-and-open-spaces/>

# OBSERVATIONS



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Panelists tour areas of North Broad Street.

The panel noted the following observations in the site tour, stakeholder interviews, and subsequent conversations. These observations were used to formulate recommendations for the panel.

The lack of support for infrastructure and maintenance is an issue that North Broad faces, though it is an issue that many communities - especially low-income - face nationwide. Low-income communities especially lack financial and institutional support and are faced with the challenge of improving and maintaining infrastructure with limited resources.

The panel noted that the perception of North Broad was “less of a corridor, more of a thoroughfare,” likely due to its function as a multi-modal transportation nexus. But this means that there are dangerous driving conditions and traffic safety issues - no curb cuts exist

on the sidewalks, and many of the sidewalks are in disrepair and difficult to navigate. The panel felt BGE in its, in its current form, was inhospitable to pedestrians and cyclists. While plans are underway to redesign BGE to make it safer and better suited to pedestrians and traffic, there have been questions regarding its long term maintenance. There is minimal tree cover, little neighborhood identification, and numerous commercial vacancies. Even the Nicetown-Tioga Library, a public space which serves the community, has limited daytime operating hours.

The panel noticed the activities during the walking tour largely included people passing through as commuters, and people gathered at tables in the one available green space. There were also signs of drug and alcohol use.

There is promising ongoing development along North Broad which signaled to the panel that additional economic, workforce, and transit opportunities were possible and would be forthcoming. These developments include: the Beury Building being renovated as a hotel, the Beury II mixed-use development coming to the current location of the Checkers Drive-through location, and the SEPTA renovation of the elevator and public plaza at Erie Triangle.

In conversation with stakeholders and in observations by panelists, it was noted that North Broad received few city services and had minimal institutional involvement. There were no sanitation or utility services observed, and large institutions played an inconsistent role in the North Broad Renaissance.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

The TAP panelists listened to all the stakeholder concerns and spent time discussing some of the best ways forward, taking into account the history of North Broad, the surrounding community, and the panelists' own professional expertise.

The recommendations take into account the following pragmatic policies and strategies:

1. Engage Local Businesses at the Triangle
2. Enhance Marketing and Communications Opportunities
3. Monetize Assets
4. Develop a Policy Framework for Resource and Financial Independence
5. Evaluate, Refine and Realign NBR's Mission and Strategy

## 1. Engage Local Businesses at the Triangle

The panel heard from several stakeholders about the interest and appetite in Night Markets as a way to engage local businesses and support local entrepreneurs. Such community-driven programming, whether a BBQ demonstration by a local business owner or a storytelling hour for kids at the local free library, would bring people together, utilize the green space, and be able to connect the mission of the North Broad Renaissance with the larger community. The goal of such events would be to activate all ages and demographics, and have programming that appeals to a wide range of audiences at different times of day.

Another suggested night event would be a "Get to Know North Broad Night Market" which could feature local artists and musicians. The event could source vendors, pop-up shops and food trucks from within one mile of the triangle. This would be yet another reason to celebrate the community space, and to get more buy-in for its upkeep and importance from the neighborhood.

## Case Study: Charm City Night Market in Baltimore, MD.

This large-scale event is organized by Baltimore's Chinatown Collective, with a goal of highlighting and celebrating Asian art, culture, food and business in downtown Baltimore's historic Chinatown. The market features food stalls, live performances, local artists and makers. The one-night celebration spans all ages and ethnicities and has drawn over 12,000 people since beginning in 2018.

## 2. Enhance Marketing and Communications Opportunities

The panel recommends enhancing marketing and communications efforts to engage the community and generate advertising revenue. This would begin with a marketing and communications audit to better understand the website user interface and functionality. It would include updating content to receive a larger share of search traffic and drive more quantifiable traffic to local businesses with outbound link tracking. Such analytics and traffic increases would demonstrate quantifiable economic impacts locally, and the ability to track outbound links in Google analytics would also help shore up support among community businesses.

The panel also recommends a marketing and communication change of perception on North Broad Street: rather than being perceived as a "dividing line," North Broad should be rebranded as a "convening corridor." The panel also recommends looking to tie the local events, such as the Broad Street Run and Philly Free Streets, to North Broad, as



NBR's website highlights achievements and engagement opportunities.

this will help adjust the perception of the area and create greater continuity and connectedness with the larger region.

Finally, the panel recommends utilizing a strategy with the dashboard and Google analytics to show how NBR's engagement is driving traffic and business to local businesses. Understanding how much site traffic is landing on the page, where it is coming from, and where the outbound links are headed will help show a value-add by NBR, and will in turn foster a positive relationship between local businesses who see this partnership as one that is good for their economic development.

For social media, the panel recommends the audit mentioned above and to do a deep dive into what social media platforms are working well for NBR, and what should be added or paused. By looking and analyzing the metrics, this will better allow NBR to see where their strengths lie and the best way to communicate with their intended audience.

### 3. Monetize Assets

The panel recommends that North Broad Renaissance explore the option of monetizing assets that currently exist in the area. This would include both digital and infrastructure assets.

The digital assets and sponsorship opportunities exist through the website, email list, and database

of local users and businesses. There are also social media assets which can be leveraged for sponsorship opportunities.

For infrastructure assets, several options exist for monetization, including "big bellies" which wrap around garbage cans, or interactive digital street kiosks. These interactive digital kiosks can be a value-add to the neighborhood by providing real time traffic and transit information, or other data points of interest to the community, as well as host advertisements and sponsorships. NBR can also conduct pedestrian counts to quantify efforts and community impact of such additions.

### 4. Develop a Policy Framework for Resource and Financial Independence.

Of chief concern to the success of the North Broad Renaissance's future efforts are the organization's ability to stay financially solvent. Such financial solvency will be necessary for the creation of projects, like the green spaces, but also for the ongoing maintenance and repairs.

The panel came up with several action items for resource development with the goal of becoming financially independent.

- **Create a Business Improvement District.**  
The panel is supportive of the NBR's effort to create a BID and applauds the progress in receiving passage through the City Council. Continued efforts to shore

#### University City District in Philadelphia.

The University City District is a Special Services District supported by Drexel University, the University of Pennsylvania, and Amtrak in improving the surrounding neighborhood. This differs from a Business Improvement District because its ratepayers participate voluntarily. A BID requires an act of legislation and assessments are levied based on property values. Because the key UDC stakeholders are non-profit or state-owned entities, they all make voluntary contributions instead.

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North Broad serves as a critical transit hub, serving users from across the region.

up support for the BID and formally create it will be beneficial both to the economic revitalization of North Broad Street as well as the surrounding community. The BID would need to be recertified every five years, but can continue to provide direct support.

- **“Adopt a Highway”** model for block improvement. Utilizing the “adopt-a-highway” model, NBR can improve the business district by having community groups or businesses adopt blocks and take responsibility for the cleanliness and maintenance. Currently Live Nation supports half of the NBR landscaping and maintenance. This presents an opportunity to engage with larger institutions along the corridor and deepen those relationships.
- **Community Benefit Agreements.** This is a tool that NBR can use to work with a developer to support specific things that the community would be interested in having in the area. One example of a Community Benefit Agreement in the area is the mixed-use development, Residences at the Beury, from Shift Capital. This was the project that BGEC (Broad Germantown and Erie Coalition) members negotiated a CBA around. It was notable that NBR was strategically not a member of BGEC, as they

were all Resident Community Organizations (RCOs) from nearby neighborhoods. Such projects can take different approaches and funding supports, but such an arrangement could produce funding in perpetuity for partner organizations and allow NBR to achieve more financial independence with a dedicated revenue stream. While not a member of BGEC, NBR is well positioned to share the model with other community organizations along the corridor.

- **Individual contributions and corporate sponsorships.** As mentioned in a previous recommendation, corporate sponsorship can play a role in ongoing maintenance of a block or aspect of the NBR corridor. Naming rights are also a way for businesses or individuals to take ownership and responsibility for one aspect of the shared community space.
- **Grant agreements.** The panel recommends exploring various grant agreements, including participating in the Commonwealth’s Keystone Communities program, although we acknowledge this takes dedicated staff time and can vary widely on the return. Without dedicated staff to go after grants, this can be a high hurdle to overcome.





Consistent cleaning and maintenance a high priority in high-traffic areas along North Broad Street.

- **Establish earned revenue stream.** The panel recommends exploring the option of developing a fee for service or for-profit entity to capitalize on organizational expertise. Common models may include offering consulting around workforce development and community engagement services or providing direct cleaning and greening services to organizations outside of the NBR borders.
- **Real estate land lease.** Work with elected officials and leverage the expertise of NBR board members to establish additional real estate land lease agreements, similar to that of the relationship between NBR and Live Nation, whereby NBR can benefit and reinvest in areas expected to see increasing land values.
- **Partner with Philadelphia Water Department for Stormwater Management and Greening.** The Philadelphia Water Department collects fees for stormwater management, and is involved in greening efforts. The panel recommends NBR look into exploring a partnership with the water department to create more green space, using stormwater fees as a possible revenue source. From a policy perspective, how the water department collects and manages stormwater and municipal fees could be an opportunity to allocate additional funds to underrepresented neighborhoods like NBR.

## 5. Evaluate, Refine and Realign NBR's Mission and Strategy

The panel observed that the NBR linear service area overlaps with disparate communities and interests, many of which are represented by represented by RCOs. RCOs, however, have grown in size and sophistication since they were first established in 2015. The panel recommends that NBR respond to that evolution in a similar manner and consider diversifying its board and recruiting major institutional partners as “advisors” or “advocates.”

Suggested institutional partners include, but are not limited to: representatives from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the city of Philadelphia, SEPTA, Amtrak, the Pennsylvania Convention Center, PAFA, Laborers District Council, Temple University (Main Campus), Temple University Health System, Shriners Hospital, large tenants including the MET (Live Nation) and hotel operator (Beury Building), and private developers. Though the panel commend's NBR's strong relationships with many of these community groups, which has been brought about by vigilance and attention to the shared community needs - an advisory board, without necessarily a governance role, could still be beneficial in shoring up support and bringing diverse stakeholders together. This would be one way to provide formal institutionalized engagement within these groups which builds a solid foundation for NBR's future growth and development, and continue to maintain strong relationships within the community.

The panel also recommends that NBR align its operations and engagement with its larger strategy. This includes staffing additions. The panel learned that due to Covid-19, NBR - like many organizations across the country - went through a staffing shortage and this led to an increased reliance on consultants and vendors.

Going forward, the panel recommends that NBR rely less on outside consultants and more on employees from the area, who can develop expertise and maintain local engagement, as well as help develop a sense of pride for the area. This also has the

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Current transit infrastructure.

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Landscaping at Butler Triangle.

added benefit of keeping funds generated by NBR and its supporters in the community it is designed to serve. The panel understands that NBR has done in-community hiring for work as-needed on a contract basis, meeting the current needs of the organization. The panel feels that additional organizational capacity, in the form of traditional full time employees, and expertise will be needed as NBR continues to grow

and take on more ambitious projects. Financial support for additional staffing capacity could come from a BID, which will also be needed to take on larger and more impactful projects.

The panel also recommends that NBR adjust its approach to volunteering. While volunteerism is a noble activity and plays a crucial role in community support, such “free” time is in short supply in low-income communities. The panel is supportive of NBR’s efforts to develop a small stipend for volunteers to engage in local participation. Similar to the recommendation of hiring from within the community, this will have the added effect of boosting engagement and pride, while adding to the economic development of the area.

Finally, the panel recommends that NBR increase its stakeholder engagement, by creating positions designed to liaise and serve with varied interests in the community. These stakeholder engagement areas include, but are not limited to, government relations, an RCO liaison, business organizations and Chambers of Commerce, Faith-based organizations, and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), including community centers, child care and recreation centers. The panel also acknowledges that NBR has had significant success with creating the North Broad Business Roundtable, and the consistent work it takes to convene such disparate stakeholders, often not formally aligned with a traditional community organization. The panel recommends building on this success to engage more businesses and stakeholders. NBR is uniquely situated to serve as a bridge between the formal organizations and informal stakeholders; creating open dialogue and connection between disparate stakeholders and traditional community organizations will allow NBR to serve as a valuable resource both to businesses and community members as their role as a leader expands. It will also help shore up success of the BID to have multiple stakeholders on common ground.

## CONCLUSION

There is ample evidence that green spaces play an essential role in communities - for the mental and physical health of residents and for the economic development and surrounding property values of the area. While groups like North Broad Renaissance have taken formidable steps in creating such green spaces and landscape improvements, it has been a challenge to find ways and funds to maintain those spaces.

The panel applauds the community improvement efforts and has levied recommendations on ways to become more financially solvent so that NBR will not have to rely on fluctuating funds, nor be dependent on city services, to maintain and improve its area. It is our sincere hope that some of these recommendations can be effectively implemented so that more improvements and green space can be created. The panel also has recommended exploring several policy options with respect to municipal fees

and the Business Improvement District to shore up dedicated funding sources.

But as with all community work and funding sources, the efforts to find, apply and secure funding take a great deal of time and staff resources. We hope that NBR continues to invest in its staff and involve more people from within the community, and we believe that the work being done by Shalimar Thomas is commendable. Ms. Thomas' energy for the corridor is apparent, her efforts appreciated and progress notable.

For our neighborhoods and cities to thrive, we need strong leadership, dedicated residents and robust investment. The panel is hopeful that using some of the recommendations detailed in this report will allow North Broad to achieve these benefits and do so in a way that the neighborhood, and by extension the wider Philadelphia region, is able to reap the benefits for years to come.



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L to R Panelists - Richard Asirifi , Jayne Spector, David McHenry, Vaughn Ross, David Mercuris, Gina Lavery, Josh Yeager, Terrence J. McKenna, Kenneth Johnson

## PANELISTS

### Gina Lavery,

#### Co-Chair

#### Senior Vice President, Econsult Solutions, Inc.

Gina is Senior Vice President and Principal of Econsult Solutions, Inc. (ESI), where she has led a range of projects for ESI, primarily focused on urban planning, real estate, and transportation—particularly where these areas intersect with economic development. This work has included developing economic and fiscal impact studies to support major development projects, providing advisory services on incentive programs and public financing for private and public sectors clients across the US, and supplying market insights for clients making real estate decisions. Prior to joining ESI, Gina was a research analyst for Jones Lang LaSalle, where she was responsible for market research and analysis within the Greater Philadelphia commercial real estate market. From 2009-2016, Ms. Lavery worked at the University of Pennsylvania, in various roles within the Office of Government and Community Affairs. Ms. Lavery received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science and European History from the University of Pennsylvania and earned a Master of City and Regional Planning degree from Penn's Weitzman School of Design. She is actively engaged in ULI Philadelphia, Lambda Alpha Philly, and Commercial Real Estate Women Greater Philadelphia.

### Jayne Spector,

#### Co-Chair:

#### Design Director, Langan

Jayne is a Landscape Architect and Director of Design at Langan, specializing in the redevelopment and sustainable reuse of urban, historic and brownfield sites. She is a licensed landscape architect, currently practicing in 20 states and internationally. Jayne holds a

Master's Degree from the University of Pennsylvania and a BLA from Rutgers University and instructed courses and studios at both universities. She has published articles on sustainable urban development and cultural landscapes. Her book, Dockyard to Esplanade explores best practices for leveraging our industrial heritage in the redevelopment industrial waterfronts.

### Richard Asirifi,

#### Landscape Architecture Intern, Langan

Richard is an urban planner, designer, and collaborator with international experience in the combined disciplines of architecture, landscape design, community and neighborhood planning. He enjoys every aspect of a project's completion, from the regional site analysis to pedestrian details. His experience spans a broad range of projects from planning to built work, including working on pedestrian safety initiatives in New York City as part of the City's vision zero initiatives, developing Trenton's renaissance plan to fuel economic developments within Trenton's Capital District and helping shape the future various municipalities in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Passionate about sustainable design, Richard continues to explore avenues to build environments in innovative ways to create liveable and enjoyable places.

### Kenneth Johnson,

#### Architect, Architecture, Urban Design, and Policy LLC

Kenneth is the owner of several firms including Architecture, Urban Design, and Policy, L.L.C. a firm based in The Philadelphia Navy Yard and ArchiPolicy Design Build L.L.C. a Delaware State registered entity focused on real estate development. His architectural practice focuses on residential, mixed use and small commercial projects including new construction, additions, and renovations.

He is a member of Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity, The National Organization of Minority Architects (“NOMA”), The Barristers’ Association of Philadelphia, Inc. (an association of black attorneys), The American Planning Association (“APA”), and the Urban Land Institute (“ULI”). He is currently the President of PhilaNOMA i.e. the local chapter of NOMA. He has been invited to join the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (“NCARB”) FY23 Experience Committee and NCARB FY23 ARE 5.0 Item Development Subcommittee: Practice Management. He has been previously a member of the NCARB ARE 5.0 Development Committee. Kenneth Johnson has a Professional Bachelor of Architecture degree from Illinois Institute of Technology where he graduated with honors. He holds both a Juris Doctorate (JD) and Master of City Planning (MCP) degree from the University of Pennsylvania and has taken Master of Business Administration (MBA) courses at the Yale School of Management.

**David McHenry,**  
**FAIA, Principal, Erdy McHenry Architecture**

David has advanced the design profession at the intersection of design practice and architectural education, building a foundation for an integrated work process in his lectures and leading by example with his built work. Over the course of more than 30 years in practice, David has developed and shared a practice model that expands the opportunity to shape the built environment and the public realm advocating an integrated approach to project delivery, weaving innovative business processes into an award-winning practice that is a model for firms throughout the United States. After completing his architectural education David completed his MBA at Temple University with a concentration in Real Estate and Urban Land studies. Over the course of more than 35 years in practice, David has developed and shared a practice model that expands the role and influence of the architect utilizing an integrated approach to project delivery, weaving innovative business processes into an award-winning practice that is a model for firms throughout the United States. David’s work, particularly since co-founding Erdy

McHenry in 1999, has been recognized by the AIA with more than 30 design awards including 2 Gold Medals and 4 Silver Medal and by local and national press - both in professional journals and across the general media.

**Terrence J. McKenna,**  
**Gilbane Building Company**

Terrence is Senior Project Executive and member of the senior management team of the local Gilbane Business Unit responsible for operations and business development including project acquisition, profit/loss and end to end project management.

Terrence has over 30 years of experience, providing at-risk construction, program management and real estate development services at national and local levels with a focus on gaming, hospitality, multi-family, public bidding and Private-Public Partnerships (P3). Terrence is a seasoned builder and real estate development executive experienced in the execution of large, complex real estate development and construction projects, ranging in value from \$30 million to \$700 million, totaling in excess of \$6+ billion. Terrence is a leader of all activities from initial project conception through project close-out. Terrence has a proven track record providing consulting and business development services in support of construction and real estate development projects, as well as managing corporate operations associated with such services on an agent basis.

**David Mercuris,**  
**SVP Development, The Goldenberg Group**

David has worked in real estate for The Goldenberg Group for 20 years. He was the development lead on Goldenberg’s first residential project, the adaptive reuse of The Ayer building from office to condominium. He has worked on number of other residential projects, student housing at Temple University, multifamily in Center City, a variety of acquisitions for the company and participates in the People Helping People Foundation, Goldenberg’s charitable arm. He is an organizer of St Christopher’s

Hospital for Children annual Reach Out and Read Basketball Tournament which promotes literacy, feeding off his passion as a pickup basketball junky. Prior to Goldenberg, David worked at The Seagram Company Limited in Strategy and Finance. He has been involved with ULI for 20 years, and is on the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Advisory Board and Urban Plan Committee. He has a BS in Food Science and Technology from the University of California at Davis and an MBA in Finance and Accounting from Columbia University. He and his wife live in Philadelphia and love spending time with their family.

**Vaughn Ross,**  
**Founder, Rvesta**

Vaughn is the founder and principal of Rvesta, a consulting practice that works to enact lasting, positive change in cities by meeting the policy or organizational goals of clients in the fields of economic development, real estate development and city planning, transportation and infrastructure, and government advisory policy. Vaughn believes he can bring a unique consultative approach to clients by balancing unconventional thinking, generated by intellectual curiosity, with his lived experience as a high-level government administrator in one of America's largest cities.

Vaughn previously served as First Deputy Chief of Staff to Philadelphia Mayor Jim Kenney from 2016-2021. In his time with Mayor Kenney, he retained a portfolio of departments focused on economic development including: the department of Planning and Development; Commerce Department; and the Office of Transportation, Infrastructure, and Sustainability. On behalf of the Mayor's office, he maintained relationships with a number of external, quasi-governmental, and non-profit partners including: the Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce; Philadelphia Industrial Development Corporation; Philadelphia Convention and Visitors Bureau; Greater Philadelphia Hotel Association; SEPTA; DVRPC; and the Mayor's Fund for Philadelphia.

Vaughn has extensive experience working with Philadelphia community-based organizations such as registered community organizations, business improvement districts, community development corporations, neighborhood violence prevention partners, and faith-based institutions.

**Josh Yeager,**  
**Co-Founder, Bright Brothers Strategy Group**

Josh is a co-founder of Bright Brothers Strategy Group, a people-first, data-driven consultancy that works with cities, districts and DMOs on strategic planning, MarCom and placemaking. Josh is a seasoned strategist with over 27 years' experience in marketing, communications, and business consulting. He is the account lead for Bright Brothers' clients; handling marketing, communications, planning, events, activations and overall strategy. He is a "man of letters" and works in tandem with the team to deliver powerhouse results, creative, copy, plans and placemaking deliverables.

Josh is active in placemaking and planning circles, served as a subject matter expert (SME) and developed curriculum for the International Downtown Association's AICP-accredited Leadership in Place Management (LPM) certification, has been an IDA Pinnacle Award Juror, and was on the IDA Top Issues Council for Place Branding/Making. Josh completed seven terms on the Tempe Tourism Office's Board of Directors, and as an adamant preservationist and armchair historian, served on the Design Advocacy Group's (DAG) Historic Preservation Task Force in Philadelphia, where he frequently testifies before the Historic Preservation Commission to help save precious properties and one-of-a-kind vernacular architecture. A master trends watcher and futurist, Josh frequently researches and authors industry Trends Reports and develops a bi-weekly industry newsletter, the Bright Brothers Bulletin.

## STAKEHOLDERS PARTICIPANTS

**AARP**

**Called to Serve CDC**

**City of Philadelphia Commerce Department**

**City of Philadelphia Planning Commission**

**Community Members and Leaders**

**Delaware River Waterfront Corporation**

**Fairmount Park Conservancy**

**Mosaic Development**

**North10**

**Office of Council President Darrell Clarke**

**Office of Transportation, Infrastructure,  
and Sustainability**

**Philadelphia Association of CDC's**

**Philadelphia Horticultural Society**

**PIDC**

**Preservation Alliance**

**SEPTA**

**Shift Capital**

**Shriner's Children's Hospital**

**State Representative Darisha Parker**

**State Senator Shariff Street**

**Tioga District & TPP Capital Holdings**

**Zion Baptist Church**



# Philadelphia

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