



KEIM STREET GATEWAY PLAN

A Vision and Master Plan for the Keim Street Gateway



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REPORT PREPARED BY

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*All photos and graphics provided by MCPC or Pottstown Borough unless otherwise noted

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Pottstown, as sketched by T.M. Fowler from a hot air balloon in 1893. The Pottstown Iron Works and Bridge Works can be seen to the west of Keim Street, but the majority of the Primary Study Area (to the lower right of the picture) is still largely open ground. Notice the stream running under the rail lines leading to the river; the stream still runs today, but is channelized underground and runs under the buildings.



INTRODUCTION

Project Overview

Keim Street in Pottstown Borough is the key to revitalizing the legacy industrial area in southeast Pottstown. Due to Keim Street's importance of being a connecting street, as well as a mode for future access via the Keim Street Bridge and the Schuylkill River Trail, the borough has identified the redevelopment of this surrounding industrial area as a priority. To that effect, the task force has designated the area the "Keim Street Gateway." Combined with the recent installation of the Schuylkill River Trail and the expected rebuilding of the Keim Street Bridge to the south, the Keim Street Gateway area

presents a unique opportunity to make physical improvements that will improve multimodal circulation in the area, which can be implemented through this plan.

However, there are currently numerous challenges to leveraging the critical resource of the trail and Keim Street in general. While the district is home to many existing businesses and vacancy rates are low, the industrial area as a whole is underdeveloped, and will benefit from revitalization, repositioning, and reinvestment, which in turn will contribute to the

overall desirability of working, visiting, and living in the area. Additionally, the area suffers from deferred infrastructure investment and maintenance which, in turn, has led to the deterioration or neglect of pedestrian facilities within the project area. These include several missing or damaged sidewalk segments, the lack of curbing, and the excessive number and width of driveway curb-cuts in many areas. These challenges can nevertheless be overcome through careful planning and selective policy and zoning changes, which will be demonstrated in the following plan.



The northern section of Keim Street, designated the North Gateway, with the historic office building in the center.



Members of the Keim Street Gateway Task Force in front of the historic office building at 200 Keim Street

Goals

The following goals and priorities will guide Pottstown and this Plan, establishing a vision and reinvestment strategy for the Keim Street Gateway:

◇ *Support Economic Development*

Balance the needs of existing industrial businesses and users while also anticipating growth and the needs of future users. The Gateway area will continue supporting industrial uses while adding compatible new uses.

◇ *Enhance the Built Environment*

Support the development of new, high-quality and context-sensitive buildings, appropriately scaled to the street and to a multitude of users, as well as the revitalization of special existing buildings which contribute to the area's industrial heritage.

◇ *Increase Greening and Beautification*

Implement more greening through strategic plantings and design improvements while maintaining attractive amenities for residents, employees, and visitors.

◇ *Improve Circulation and Mobility*

Connect the residents, employees, and visitors to and within the area, as well as to the Schuylkill River Trail.

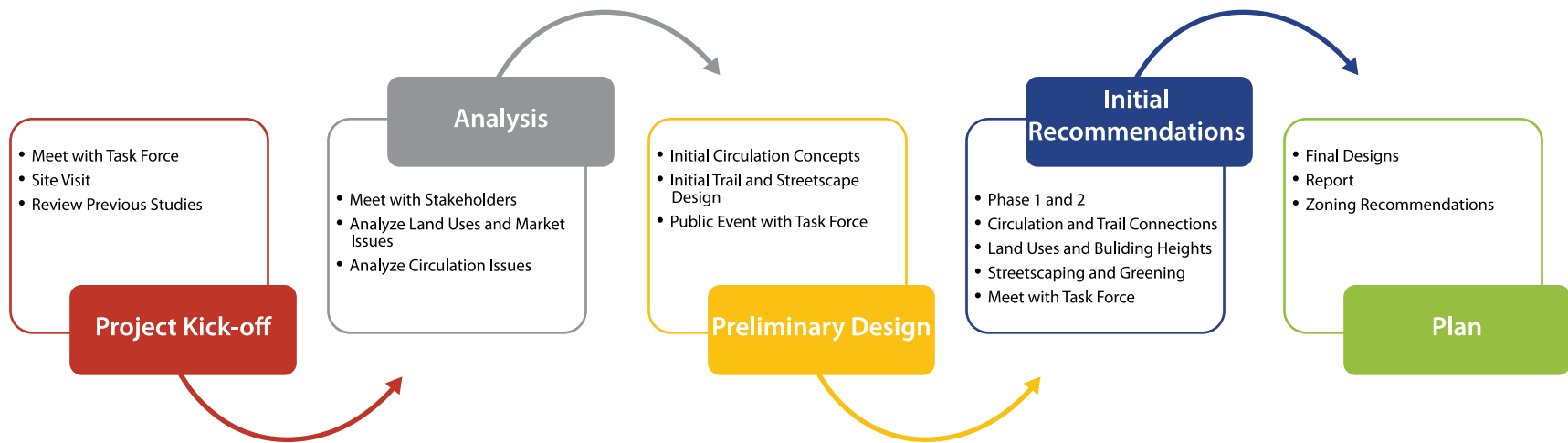
Process

Local stakeholders have been involved in the planning process through a Task Force, which has included representatives from the borough staff and elected officials, Pottstown Area Industrial Development, Inc. (PAID), residents, and property owners. The Task Force met on several occasions with the Project Team, held a public Open House as well as made a presentation to Pottstown Borough Council.

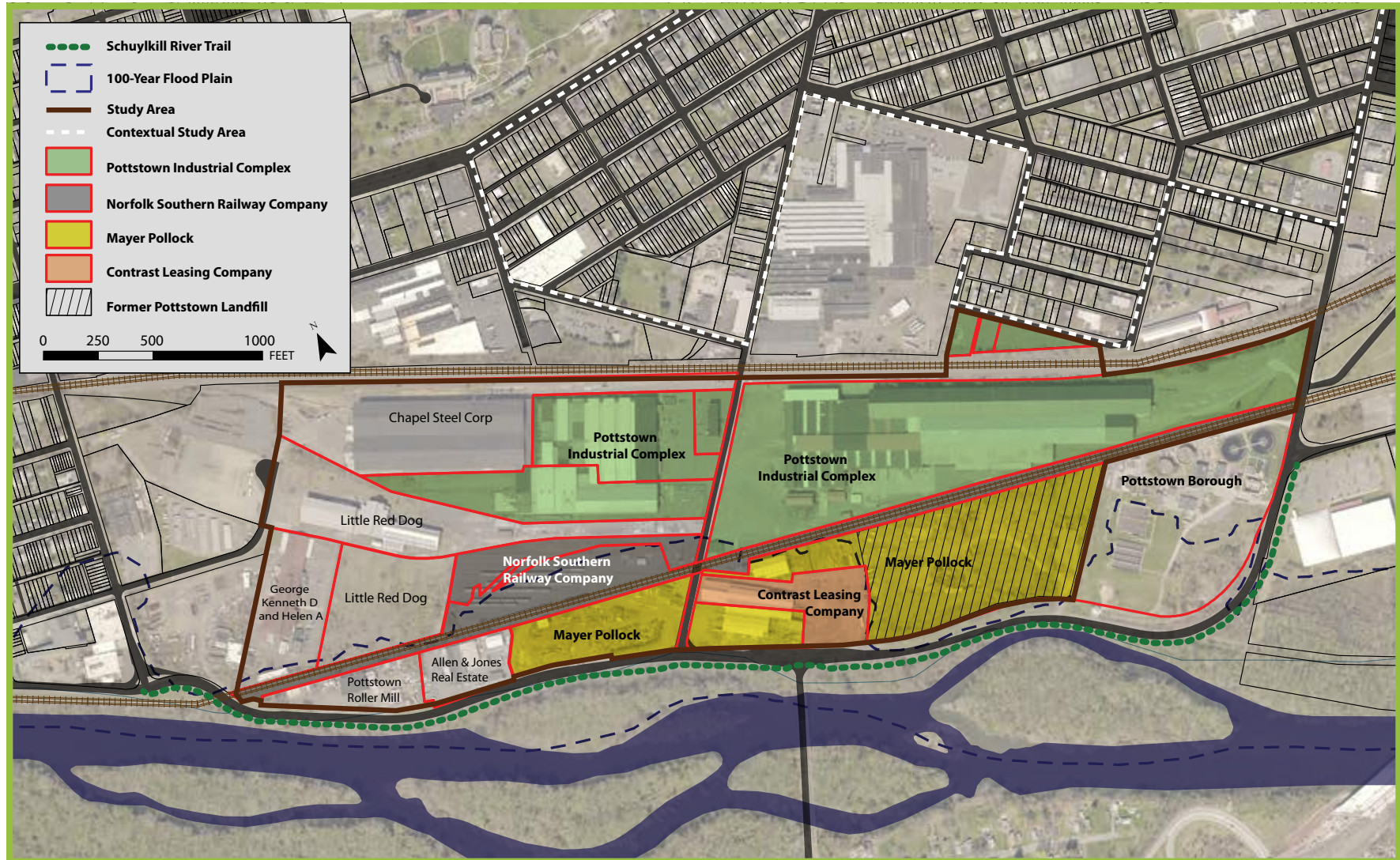
How to Interpret This Plan

The recommendations of the plan are aspirational in nature. The proposed physical designs, development layout, and treatments of the area represent what the borough prefers to see developed through the implementation of this plan and the zoning overlay to be adopted. However, it is expected that there will be some reasonable deviation from this plan according to the particular market conditions during the various stages of development.

Nonetheless, it is the express intent of this plan to represent borough policy positions concerning development character, placement of public improvements, and preferred uses. While it is anticipated that buildings and other associated infrastructure would be privately developed in accordance with the zoning ordinance, the borough hopes to be a partner in the revitalization of this area through project support and selected public investments in infrastructure.



Project Study Area with Ownership





SOUTH KEIM STREET TODAY

Location

For the purposes of this analysis, the neighborhood has been broken down into sections: the Primary Study Area and the Contextual Study Area. The Primary Study Area includes the former Bethlehem Steel complex, as well as the other industrial properties which can take direct access from Keim Street and Industrial Boulevard. Also included in this area are three parcels north of the northern rail line which were formerly part of the complex as well. The property of Dana Incorporated, located directly north of this area, was consciously not included in this study due to its location beyond the immediate trail connection and its relative disconnectedness due to the Norfolk Southern viaduct. No improvements or changes are proposed for the Contextual Study Area, composed of the residential neighborhood around Keim Street and to the north of the Primary Study Area, except as to improvements to Keim Street itself. The Contextual Study Area primarily provided the

study team with a reference population by which to judge the relative effectiveness of connectivity and amenity improvements to the corridor.

This site in Pottstown has been a center of industrial production and activity for over 100 years. Originally home to the Philadelphia Bridge Works, the Pottstown Iron Works and the McClintic-Marshall Construction Company, much of the area became a part of the Bethlehem Steel Pottstown complex. After the closure of Bethlehem Steel here in 1982, the entire complex was acquired by Industrial Investments in 1985, referred to as the Pottstown Industrial Complex, and has over the course of three decades subdivided and sold off some of the buildings to other concerns. Other companies in the area, such as Mayer Pollack Steel Corporation, have operated in the immediate vicinity since the late

1800s, while others, such as Contrast MetalWorks LLC, are relative newcomers to the district.

Keim Street is a main connector to the newly-constructed segment of the Schuylkill River Trail, which runs adjacent to Industrial Highway. The area itself consists of many large, legacy industrial buildings, many of which are still utilized for industrial uses, although not nearly as intensely as in the heyday of manufacturing in the early- to mid-20th century. Two freight rail lines cross east-to-west in this area, both of which are owned by Norfolk Southern Railway. The project area of interest includes the stretch of Keim Street starting at the northern end from just above the railroad overpass to Industrial Highway at the South, and encompasses the adjacent industrial and residential properties as indicated in the project area map.



Interior of a warehouse bay at the Pottstown Industrial Complex



Interior of Contrast MetalWorks building

The “reference population” of the Primary Study Area, and the Contextual Study Area from which residents of the district will come, are located within Census Tract 2088.02, which is generally representative of the borough at large.

Race and Ethnicity

The largest group: White Alone (77.08)

The smallest group: American Indian/Alaska Native Alone (0.16)

| Indicator | Value (%) | Difference |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| White Alone | 77.08 | -0.21 |
| Black Alone | 14.23 | +4.48 |
| American Indian/Alaska Native Alone | 0.16 | -0.01 |
| Asian Alone | 1.20 | -6.92 |
| Pacific Islander Alone | 0.16 | +0.11 |
| Other Race | 2.31 | +0.24 |
| Two or More Races | 4.87 | +2.33 |
| Hispanic Origin (Any Race) | 6.89 | +1.36 |

Bars show deviation from Montgomery County

INCOME



\$51,016
Median Household Income



\$24,874
Per Capita Income



\$64,712
Median Net Worth

KEY FACTS

3,163
Population



1,308
Households

37.9

Median Age

\$40,693

Median Disposable Income

EDUCATION

13%

No High School Diploma



42%
High School Graduate

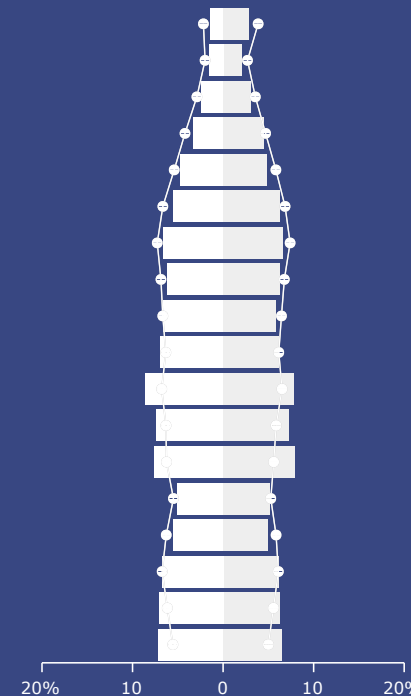


23%
Some College



21%
Bachelor's/Grad/Prof Degree

Age Pyramid



The largest group:
2019 Male Population
Age 35-39 (Esri)

The smallest group:
2019 Male Population
Age 85+ (Esri)

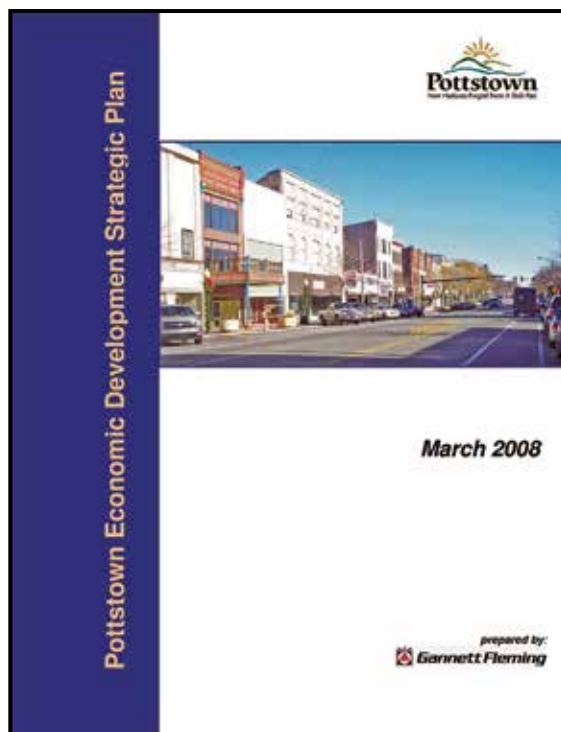
Dots show comparison to
Montgomery County

Source: ACS2017, ESRI 2019

Previous Relevant Plans

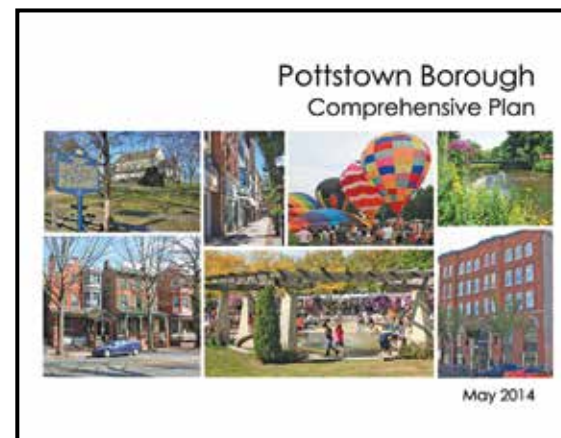
The Pottstown Economic Development Strategic Plan (2008) identified sites in the borough, including the Keim Street area chosen as the project area, as “opportunity sites and redevelopment areas” for which borough should stimulate and initiate redevelopment. The Strategic Plan especially calls for “specific plans for development of key areas and properties.” The Pottstown Comprehensive Plan (2014) reiterates and readopts this need to revitalize the opportunity sites and redevelopment areas indicated in the previous plan. Most recently, a team from Urban Land Institute (ULI) Advisory Service Program visited the borough in October 2019, whose report again reinforced the importance of economic development for Pottstown, particularly in the areas of workforce development and more effectively connecting local employers’ needs with existing school-based and nonprofit training programs.

While it does not directly impact the study area in question, the Keystone Employment and Economic Plan (KEEP) Specific Plan also bears some relevance to this plan for Keim Street. A multi-municipal plan produced for West Pottsgrove Township and Pottstown Borough, the KEEP Plan envisions large scale redevelopment of the Keystone Boulevard corridor, including the construction of the Keystone Boulevard extension, which is seen as critical to successfully redeveloping this area of southwest Pottstown. However, much of the area in



Pottstown Economic Development Strategic Plan, 2008.

question is in the floodplain, and key portions are even in the more restrictive floodway area, severely limiting development potential without extensive investment in a mitigation strategy. It is anticipated mitigation will be necessary for elevating properties out of the floodway using fill.



Pottstown Borough Comprehensive Plan, 2014



KEEP Specific Plan, 2018

Keim Street, 1970

The area in 1970, when Bethlehem Steel was still operational and Keim Street closed to traffic. Large traveling cranes occupied what is currently vacant ground between the major buildings and the street.



Keim Street, 2019

The area as it looks today. Keim Street is open and, while most of the existing structures are occupied by businesses, the area does not support the same of employees who formerly worked here.



Existing Land Use



Existing Land Use

Residential

The Primary Study Area itself is entirely nonresidential in nature, being zoned HM Heavy Manufacturing. It is in the Contextual Study Area to the north of the Norfolk Southern rail bridge where land uses are largely residential. Denser residential housing types, such as twins and rowhouses prevail, followed by single-family detached units.

Nonresidential

The Primary Study Area contains several heavy industrial concerns, including resource recovery, structural and plate steel fabrication, rail car repair, and industrial suppliers, as well as less-intense operations such as warehousing, storage, and construction supply. At the northern-most rail line, an additional three small vacant parcels lie between Sembling Avenue and the railroad. Owned by Pottstown Industrial Complex, these parcels formerly were used as satellite parking during Bethlehem Steel's operation, and were connected to the main complex by a tunnel and walkway underneath the rail line. While the Contextual Study Area is largely residential, there are a few existing industrial properties intermixed in the residential neighborhoods, particularly along Cross Street and Sembling Avenue/South Roland Avenue. In addition, mixed-use and offices predominate along High Street.



The historic office building at 200 Keim Street.



One of the former Bethlehem Steel buildings, now a part of the Pottstown Industrial Complex.



Buildings of Mayer Pollack and Contrast MetalWorks.

State and Marketability of Industrial Properties

Pottstown Industrial Complex, owned by Industrial Investments, enjoys an impressive level of occupancy, averaging above 85% occupancy, and therefore does not suffer from the common symptom of vacancy and dereliction typically seen in older industrial areas.

Since this area was settled and structures were first erected, it has been dedicated to industrial uses. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that there is risk for potential hazardous substances or contamination. Expansion or redevelopment of certain parcels, such as the former Pottstown Landfill where contamination and unstable soils do not permit any substantive development, will be complicated by the presence of contaminants. Leveraging stakeholder, landlord, and municipal participation in brownfield redevelopment planning will be crucial in creating any substantive revitalization potential.

Transportation Circulation Issues



Transportation and Circulation Network

Because of the sheer size of some of these industrial buildings, as well as the geographic barriers created by two railroads, Keim Street is the only street connecting the northern residential neighborhood to the Schuylkill River Trail for more than a half mile to either the east or west. As shown on page 14, the joint Borough-School District initiative, Walk and Bike Pottstown (2015), also identified this section of Keim Street as an “existing trail/bike lane” and major connector, further indicating the significance of this street to the neighborhood and to the borough-wide pedestrian/biking circulation network. See the Transportation Circulation Issues map on Page 12.

Pedestrian Circulation

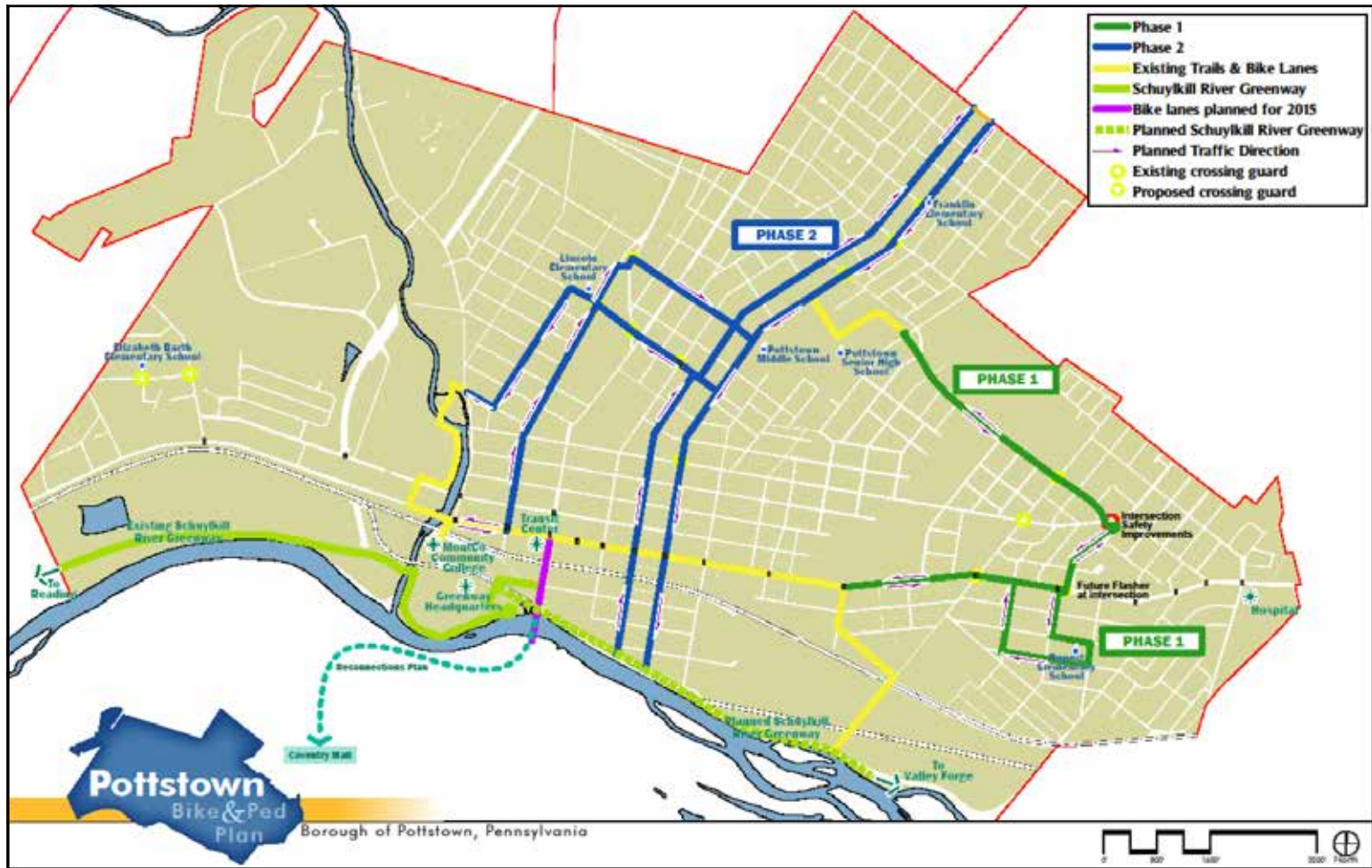
Immediately north of the study area, sidewalks are provided on both side of the street in almost all cases in the neighborhood, although there are sections which are in need of repair. Accessible curb ramps do exist at most intersections, but they typically are of older construction. Within the Primary Study Area, however, the presence of sidewalks is rarer. Where they are provided, sidewalks generally exist on one side of the street, which also tend to be broken up by several driveway access points. Accessible curb ramps in particular are missing from most crossings.



The pedestrians that manage to walk Keim Street have several curb cuts to cross, little to no shade, and obstructions in the right-of-way to avoid.



There are several segments of sidewalk in the area which are in need of repair or replacement.



Plan from Walk and Bike Pottstown

Bicycle Circulation

Although identified on *Walk and Bike Pottstown* as an “existing trail/bike lane,” Keim Street below Cross Street does not contain bicycle infrastructure or signage. Installed prior to the construction of the SRT on Industrial Highway, signage on High, Madison, and Cross Streets directs travelers in the



Signage on Cross Street directs trail user north on Keim Street towards High Street, not south to Industrial Highway and the Schuylkill River Trail.

direction of the Schuylkill River Trail, but once reaching Keim Street, redirects travelers north instead of south. Input was received as feedback from some bicyclists who presently attempt to cut through the Industrial Complex or down Keim Street to connect to the trail.

Vehicle Circulation

Due to the limited connectivity of streets in this area of the borough, it comes as no surprise that much of the vehicle traffic along Keim Street here is pass-through. One of the main influences of circulation in the area is the Norfolk Southern Rail Bridge at the northern boundary of the Primary Study Area. This bridge has an exceptionally low clearance, which prevents many trucks and other large vehicles from passing under it. This frequently redirects truck traffic back onto Keim Street and Industrial Highway, with frequent turn-around by drivers who may be unfamiliar with the restrictions.



The clearance of this Norfolk Southern rail bridge is too low for most large trucks and tractor trailers to pass under, forcing most traffic to return from Industrial Highway.



Trucks frequently need to make wide turns and, in some cases, make turnaround movements on Pottstown Industrial Complex property to reorient back to Industrial Highway.

Another key factor influencing circulation in this area is the long-closed Keim Street Bridge, which is the prime access to the US 422 ramp on the other side of the river on Keim Street in Chester County. Although there is only an eastbound exit and westbound entrance at this point on US 422, there is an assumption that the additional connectivity will boost economic development in the area for businesses. The anticipated work rebuilding the bridge here will include widening Industrial Highway, softening the curb radius at Keim Street and Industrial Highway, and adding a traffic signal at the bridge approach's intersection with Industrial Highway. Of particular interest is the inclusion of a sidewalk on the new bridge which will support pedestrian connectivity to the trail and across the river.

While the north side of the S. Keim Street area does generate heavy truck traffic, the lower section sees frequent turning movements in quick succession and generally limited to a small area. Because Mayer Pollack owns and maintains operations on both side of the street, there are frequent conflict points created by vehicles crossing from one side of the street to the other. Additionally, deliveries are accepted throughout the day in docks of buildings of Contrast MetalWorks as well as Mayer Pollack, fronting on this section of Keim Street. Occasional freight trains pass the at-grade crossing on S. Keim Street area at least daily, as well.

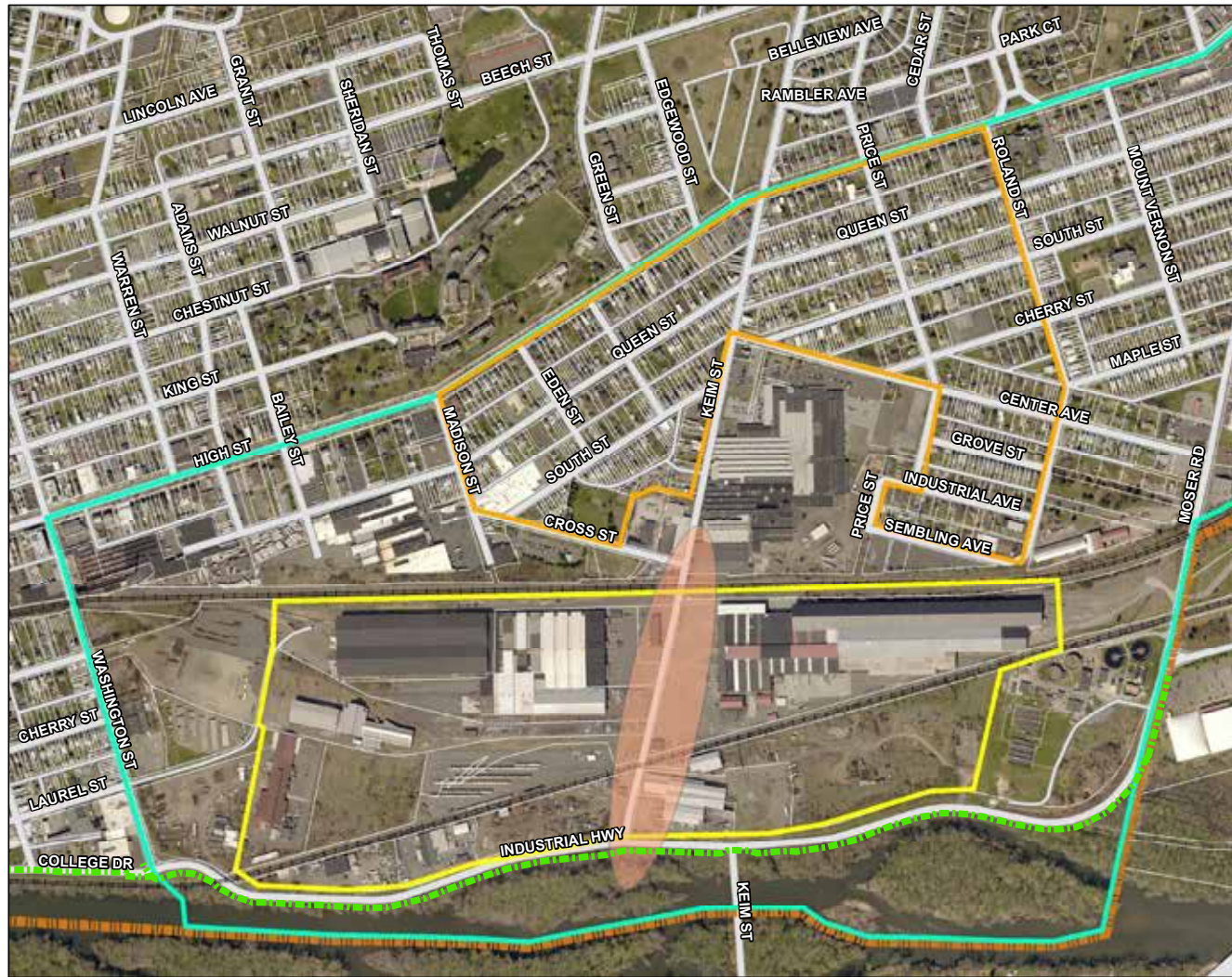


Small operators, or 'scrappers,' use the scale in front of Mayer Pollack's office building to weigh in their load. Vehicles entering and exiting the scale.



KEIM STREET GATEWAY OPEN HOUSE

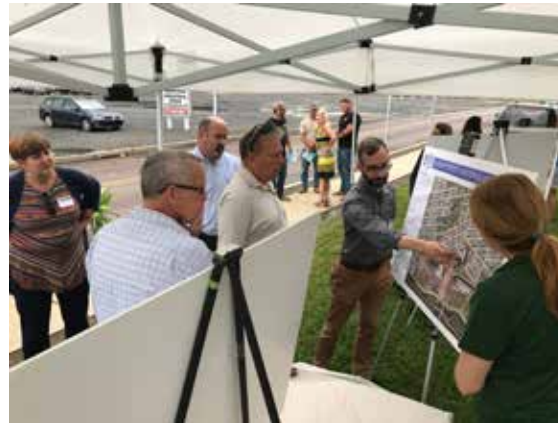
*Keim Street
Gateway Overlay
Project Study Area*



Poster of the Keim Street Gateway Overlay Project Study Area from Public Event



Open House attendees listen to presentations by the project team, ask questions and give their feedback.



Open House participant voting for their preferred focus topics with individualized comments typically written on the reverse side of play-money bills.

Stakeholder Feedback

On July 23rd, 2019, the Project Team held an Open House in the afternoon through the early evening which introduced the community to the project and created interactive experiences to solicit feedback. Over 60 people, a majority of whom were Pottstown residents walking from their homes in the Contextual Study Area, attended the Open House. Overall, residents were supportive of reinvestment and revitalization strategies in the area, particularly of the introduction of uses which could be both supportive and complementary to the existing businesses on site like retail or restaurants, as well as potential new destinations such



A DonutNV food track, a local business, was a complete hit and was an example of the tactical urbanism techniques used for the event.

as athletic or fitness facilities, among other ideas. Increased connectivity to the Schuylkill River Trail was also supported by a number of attendees, including representatives from the Hill School, who see it as a regional amenity to attract new residents and investment.

Summary

It is evident that there are many challenges to enhancing the connectivity of the area with those residential neighborhoods to the north, as well as to improving the overall vehicle circulation alleviating traffic movements which either conflict or create trespass situations. Solutions will require cooperation on the part of the borough as well as individual property owners and prospective developers. However, there are significant opportunities to leverage redevelopment potential to provide transportation improvements through the development process, and utilizing design standards and conceptual plans as guides by which future development should adhere.

Development in the Primary Study Area has been divided into two phases: Phase 1 and Phase 2. The dashed lines indicate the intended Gateway Overlay area under which this plan would be developed. Originally focusing on Keim Street alone, the Task Force concluded to expand the intended overlay area to include significant Industrial Highway frontage, to take advantage of Riverfront views and access. Areas set back further from Keim and Industrial were not included in the overlay area, as the Task Force believed areas further set back from street frontages were more appropriate to remain heavy industrial.

Future Land Use





RECOMMENDATIONS

The Plan

Full build out of this plan and the future development of the area certainly will not occur overnight. A main objective of this plan has been to minimize disturbance to the operation of existing businesses, with the hope increasing the overall investment and value of the area by improving infrastructure and identifying strategic investments in amenities and assets. Therefore, progression of this plan will proceed incrementally in phases: first through infill with

minimal effort from the borough, then evolving into larger-scale redevelopment as the market gains momentum. We anticipate that this will take place in two major phases: a short-term phase focusing on infill development along the upper frontage of Keim Street, designated the North Gateway and a longer-term phase encompassing the larger parcels along Industrial Highway and lower Keim Street, designated the South Gateway.

To realize the improvements described in this plan, we recommend a zoning overlay be adopted, focused upon proposed land uses fronting on Keim Street and Industrial Highway as shown on Figure 5. The overlay will permit additional uses and design schemes in the HM Heavy Manufacturing District in this selected area, in exchange for certain design standards and improvements in fulfillment of this plan.



The existing, heavy industrial businesses along Keim Street and Industrial Highway.

Phase 1 focuses on the infill development of the North Gateway. New buildings are oriented to the street and accessible to pedestrians with streetscaping amenities.

Phase 1 Keim Street Streetscape Plan



Short Term – Phase 1

This phase focuses development along the Keim Street frontage in particular, with a special emphasis on streetscaping and physical improvements to Keim Street as well, but also focuses on the reservation of a future trail connection. Development in this phase will be more context sensitive, as the operability of the existing industrial buildings must be maintained. The development will also be more pedestrian-scaled, have a more intimate relationship to the street, and function as an attractive, mixed-use development. Anticipated build out is between five and ten years.

Built Environment

The development scheme for Phase 1 utilizes the large, unoccupied space on each lot between the existing buildings and Keim Street. Formerly occupied by traveling cranes, these large spaces present an opportunity to fill in underutilized areas and rebuild the fabric of the street, creating a sense of enclosure for pedestrians and focusing activity closer to the street. Inspired by the remaining historic office building, small mixed-used buildings are proposed in the arrangement shown in Figure 6. These buildings are meant to reflect the massing, relationship to the street, and overall architectural style of the historic office building. Such buildings would be mixed-use, and accommodate new uses such as office space, retail, and restaurant opportunities. Residential uses will not be permitted at this stage in order to maintain the desired nonresidential and employment-based character of this section.

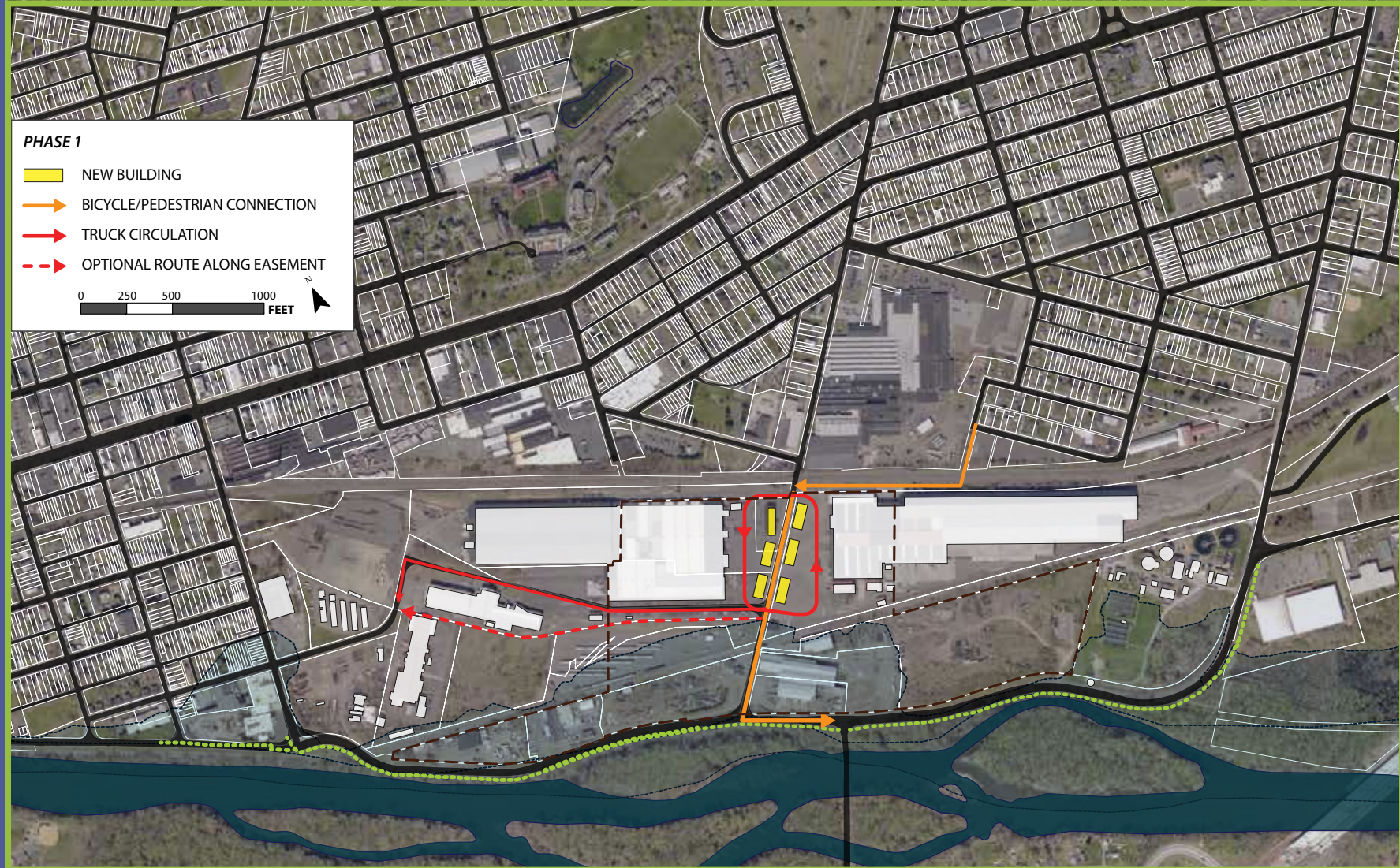
Phase 1 Illustrations of Keim Street Streetscape



Proposed Phase 1 development as seen looking south (top) and north (bottom).

Circulating the new development in this area, a corridor is reserved for trucks and other vehicles accessing the existing Complex buildings, as well as maintaining a more predictable circulation pattern for trucks unable to pass under low-clearance Norfolk Southern bridge. Moreover, an additional road is proposed as an alternate connection to the west through the private section of Laurel Street and eventually to Washington Street.

Keim Street Connectivity-Phase I



Circulation Improvements

Reservation of a future trail alignment which for the North Gateway connects the upper residential neighborhood with the Schuylkill River Trail is accommodated into the massing plan of Phase 1 development. Actual provision of the separated trail or cycle track would not be provided until Phase 2, when redevelopment below the at-grade rail crossing is completed for the South Gateway and a full connection can be made. Nonetheless, development will be required to maintain a setback from the street sufficient to meet the sidewalk and pathway standards as is shown on page 27.

As stated earlier, the low-clearance Norfolk Southern bridge at the North Gateway severely restricts options for truck circulations. Since the limitation of truck traffic encroachments into the residential neighborhood is highly desirable, we are not proposing an alteration of this condition at this time. Instead, a connection through the interior, west of Keim Street, out to Washington Street is proposed as an alternate connection to help relieve anticipated increases in future truck traffic, as illustrated in Figure 9. Additionally, a goal of Phase 1 will be to improve circulation and prevent the trespass of vehicles turning around on private property. This will be accomplished through the reservation and construction of drive aisles for heavy truck and other industrial traffic intending to service the loading bays of the Pottstown Industrial Complex buildings.

This will also develop a “circuit” around the Phase 1 development. This circuit delineates the desired truck routes in the area and dramatically reduces the need for multiple curb cuts.

It has been determined that due to the circulation patterns inherent in the business operations of Mayer Pollack and Contrast Metalworks, creating a continuous separated bike and pedestrian connection from the development above the at-grade crossing down to Industrial Highway and to the Schuylkill River Trail is not feasible in Phase 1 of this plan. However, on-road “sharrows” are proposed on Keim Street to alert and remind motorists that cyclists are permitted on public streets here.

Lastly, there is an abandoned tunnel and walkway under the north railroad line which connects two pieces of the Pottstown Industrial Complex property separated by the railroad. While further evaluation is necessary to determine feasibility for engineering and accessibility requirements, renovating this tunnel presents a unique opportunity to connect the residential neighborhood to the north with the Keim Street area and, eventually, the Schuylkill River Trail. Such a project also honors the area’s local industrial heritage.



While further evaluation is necessary to determine feasibility for engineering and accessibility requirements, adapting this tunnel presents a unique opportunity to connect the residential neighborhood to the north with the Keim Street area and, eventually, the Schuylkill River Trail.



It’s likely a whole new staircase, as well as a new accessible route, would be necessary to revamp this tunnel walkway.

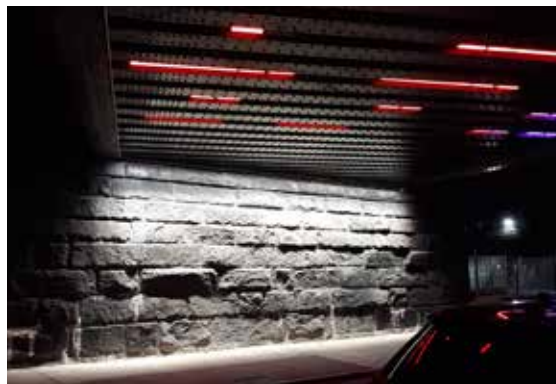
Greening and Beautification

While the new buildings proposed for Keim Street in this Phase will evoke and pay tribute to the industrial heritage of Keim Street, greening and beautification improvements proposed will promote modern best practices in design and landscaping. As the industrial centers historically developed, aesthetic and greening concerns were understandably passed over in favor of the more utilitarian and “no-frills” design common at the time. As a result, there are few trees in the area. To remedy this, we propose a complement of street trees for Keim Street, as well as liberal amounts of building-frontage greening, parking island greening, and other improvements. Attractive street and building lighting, scaled appropriately for the users of this new development, will also be implemented.



Passing under the Norfolk Southern Bridge .

The success and marketability of Phase 1 of this development is highly dependent on the physical conditions of the rail bridge, which is the northern gateway to the area. A safe, inviting passageway is needed to encourage visitors and present an attractive entrance to the area. Therefore, we propose that this area receive a treatment akin to the examples shown here. Attractive, innovative lighting design would be provided, sidewalks would be repaired and cleaned, and graffiti would be removed and even be discourage via the installation of public art or murals, which may be applied to both the abutment walls as well as the bridge itself.



Innovative lighting projects like these examples under the old Reading Viaduct in Philadelphia have the ability to create both a safe and well-lit corridor, as well as designing a unique and creative experience for visitors.



View looking north toward the Norfolk Southern Bridge, which presents a beautification opportunity.

Phase 1 development along upper Keim Street envisions a more intimate level of pedestrian-centered design. Street trees, outdoor spaces such as plazas and dining areas, and generous sidewalk and trail widths create inviting spaces for visitors, employees, and customers. These elements also soften the more industrial features of the area, while also accommodating the existing industrial users through the reservation of drive aisles and the combination of access points for more efficient circulation. Even the building design contributes to this concept. Using features such as brick and large window openings encourages more ground-level activity, while the feeling of enclosure created by the placement of buildings close to the street makes visitors more comfortable and encourages them to stay longer.



Pedestrian and Bicycle Circulation Design Improvements

Due to the phasing of this plan, a direct, separated route to the Schuylkill River Trail will only be feasible once redevelopment occurs south of the rail crossing on Keim Street (i.e. the South Gateway area). However, there will be several improvements made to pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure in this Phase in the North Gateway area.

Crossings at all intersections will be updated with markings, and missing or damaged sidewalk sections in the immediate area will be replaced. Anticipating no major dimensional changes to the road profile of Keim Street itself, the proposed cross-section instead impacts the right-of-way outside the cartway, providing generous sidewalk right-of-way for pedestrians, and the reservation of a separated path for cyclists and other users connecting to the trail, to be fully constructed in the future up to multi-use trail standards. In Phase 1, however, the reserved area may be designed and constructed as a continuation of adjacent sidewalk area. Bicycle “sharrow” markings on Keim Street itself are recommended to indicate that bicycles are permitted on public streets. Throughout the area, the provision of covered bicycle parking and storage opportunities will be encouraged through the development process.

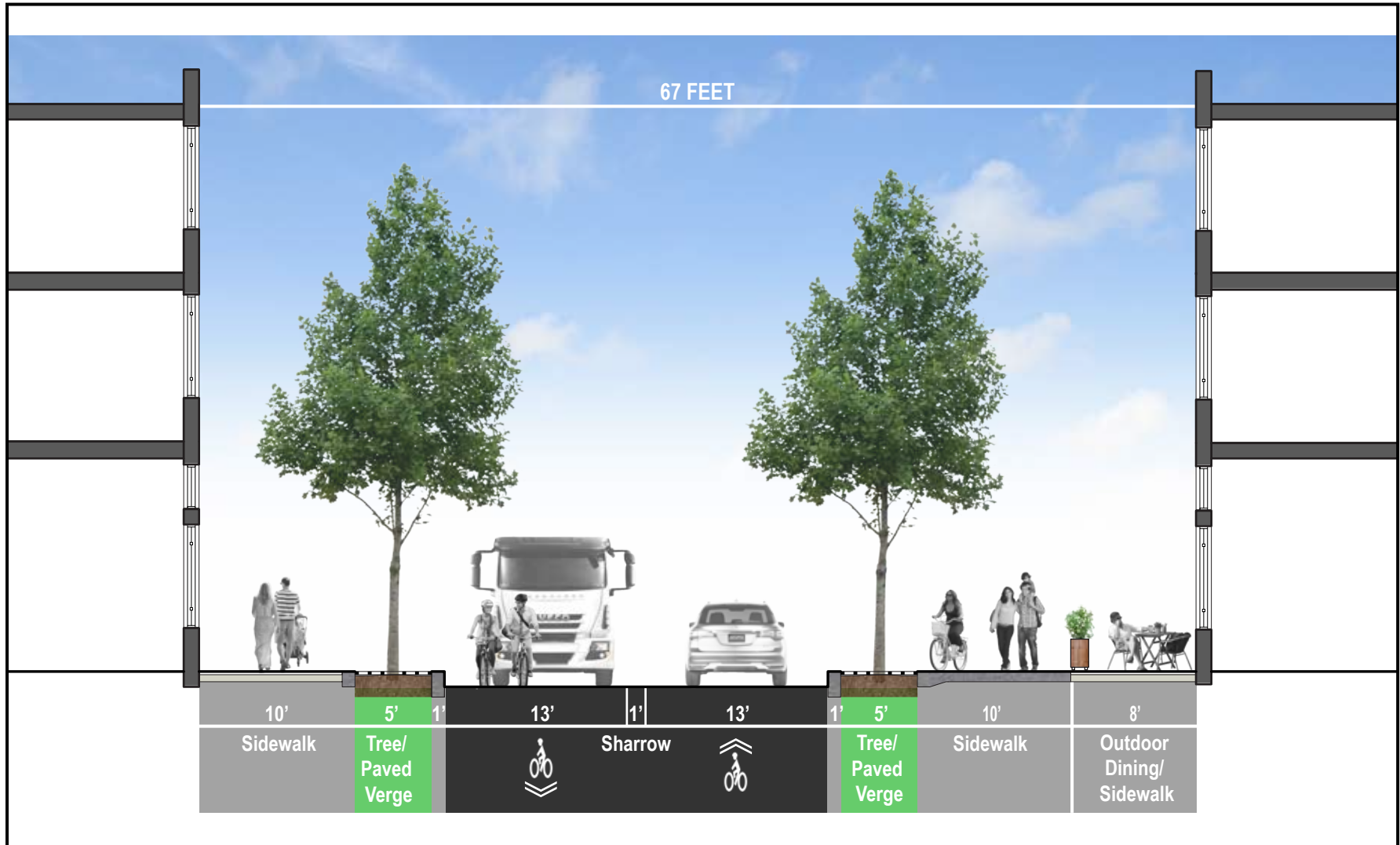


The at-grade Norfolk Southern crossing, which lacks sidewalks and a bicycle safe surface, presents a challenge for pedestrians and bicyclist alike.



Bicyclist exiting Keim Street onto Industrial Highway must ride in the travel lanes since there is no opening in the guide rail along the Schuylkill River Trail.

Keim Street Section, Phase 1



This Cross Section of Phase 1 development only reserves the space for the trail connection on the east side of Keim Street. In the meantime, the space reserved for the trail will add to the generous sidewalk area for patrons and visitors to use.

Beautifying the bridge will go a long way toward refreshing the image of the area, as well as create a pleasant and inviting gateway to the district.



This plan shows the relative heights of existing and proposed buildings. It is anticipated the heights of buildings along Industrial Highway will vary according to the floodplain avoidance method is; some buildings will be elevated above an at-grade parking area, while other buildings will be banked into new fill areas.

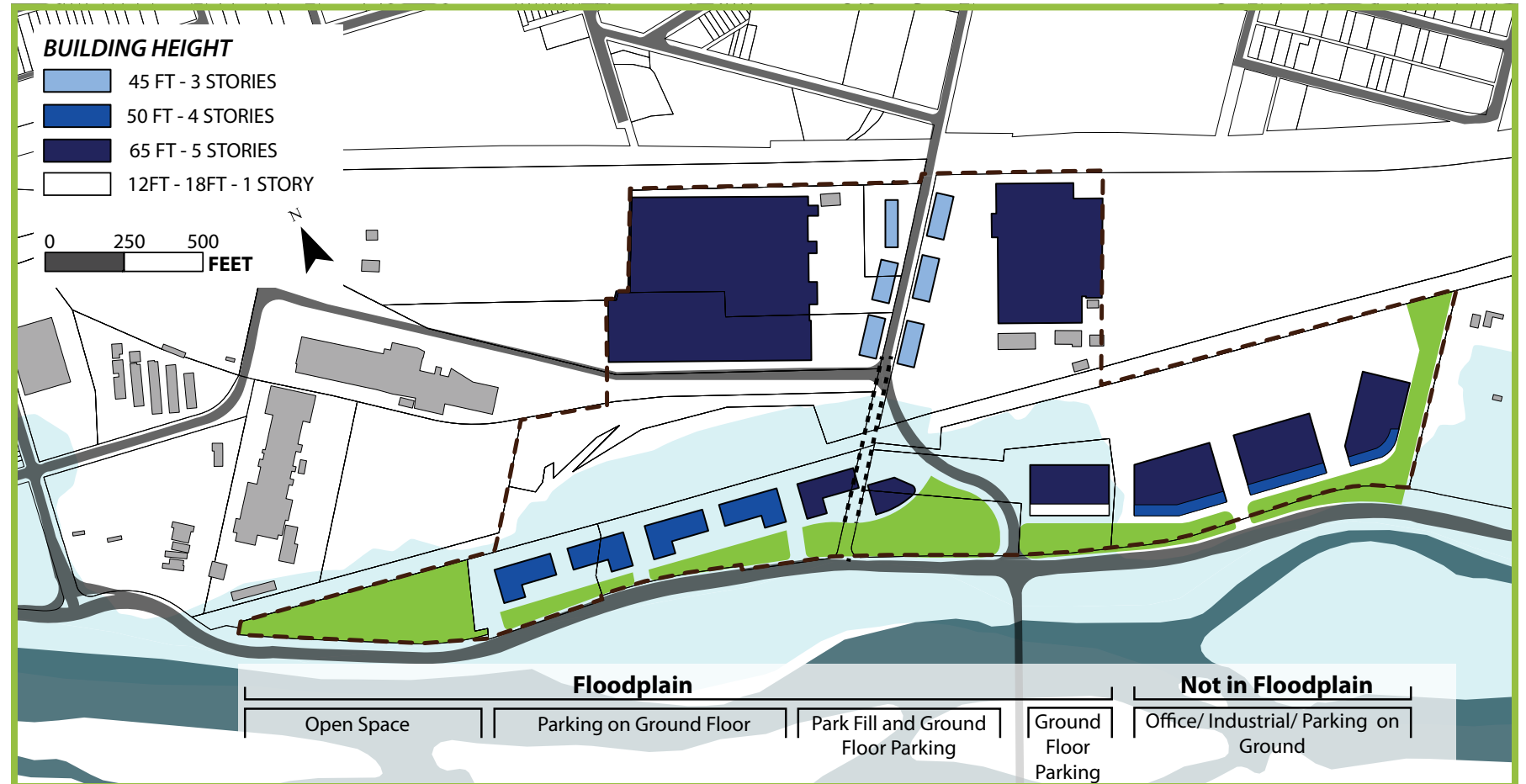
Long Term – Phase 2

Progression into Phase 2, we anticipate, will be more gradual in its pace, and will be more dependent upon external factors such as market forces, as well as the availability of funding for environmental studies and remediation efforts. Moreover, it will be dependent upon a larger number of individual property owners' disposition. Nevertheless, we believe that large-scale redevelopment along Industrial Highway will be the most successful if accomplished by coordination with and through the consolidation of multiple properties, or via joint applications among several owners. Because of the complexity involved in this stage of the redevelopment scenario, including any extensive remediation and cleanup efforts, the anticipated full build out of this phase is between 15 and 20 years.



The whole area along Industrial Highway could be redeveloped in Phase 2.

Building Heights



Phase 2 Plan



Phase 2 anticipates the entire remaking of lower Keim Street and Industrial Highway the South Gateway. This includes the redevelopment of the properties along Industrial Highway, the realignment of S. Keim Street to form a 90-degree intersection with the Keim Street Bridge and Industrial Highway, and the installation of a full trail connection to the Schuylkill River Trail, among other improvements. As the real estate market evolves in this area, it's also anticipated that the frontages of the the major east and west Pottstown Industrial Complex buildings may undergo more extensive adaptation and reuse.

Built Environment

Phase 2 will see the majority of the development occur along Industrial Highway. While the Keim Street development of Phase 1 will be smaller in scale and oriented to sidewalks and other pedestrian amenities, Phase 2 development will instead take advantage of larger footprints and taller buildings

to incentivize economic development potential. Also unlike Phase 1, Phase 2 development will be less concerned with negotiating existing circulation patterns and users, benefiting from the “clean slate” development of the sites in question. The plan above shows proposed building locations.

As the proposed Future Land Use map illustrates on page 18, frontage along Keim Street is designated mixed use, which will continue the mixed-use character of the corridor all the way to Industrial Highway, as well as significant industrial and office to the east of Keim Street on Industrial Highway.

Phase 2 Flyover, Looking East



Significantly, this phase will also accommodate the potential for residential development on Industrial Highway to the west of Keim Street. Proposing this will maximally leverage the riverfront views and direct access to the Schuylkill River Trail and new open space. While warehousing and logistics are contributing to much of new industrial growth in the region, due to such shipping giants as Amazon, this kind of new construction development in the Keim Street Gateway, would be discouraged under

this plan's focus. The limited available land qualified for redevelopment and the increased cost of redeveloping brownfield sites, as well as the quality of the design amenities proposed for the area, would create ideal conditions for higher-tier office and industrial concerns.

Understanding that the KEEP Plan further upriver will rely on building up the land out of the floodplain and floodway, this plan's approach is to

minimize the hydrologic impact on the Schuylkill River by insisting instead on elevated buildings. Parking will be permitted beneath these elevated buildings, attempting to minimize the additional impervious coverage, while simultaneously utilizing the terracing effect of these elevated structures for large outdoor patios and platforms, thereby creating more amenity space.

Illustrations of Proposed Residential and Office/Industrial Buildings

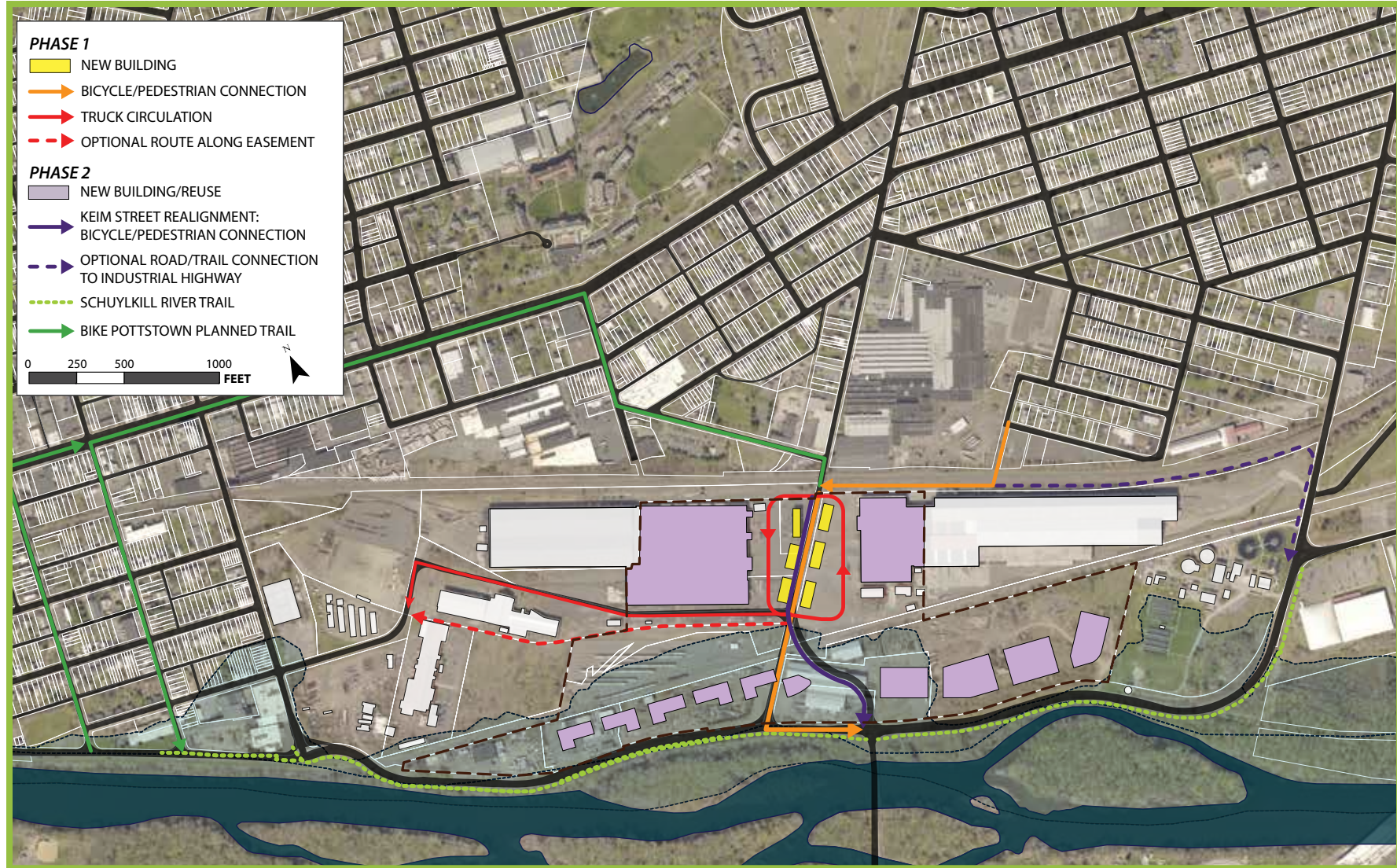


These are typical building design prototypes envisioned for the residential buildings (top left) and office and industrial buildings (bottom left) of Phase 2. These buildings will be elevated over parking, with the resulting deck being leveraged for generous outdoor space for residents and employees facing the riverfront. Anticipated residential densities will range from 20 to 35 units per acre. The plan for the office and industrial could create upwards of 200,000 to 300,000 square feet of floor area dedicated to office and industrial uses, which could include but is not limited to research and development, high-end manufacturing, small-scale or artisanal fabrication or development, coworking space, and general office uses. Warehousing and other space-intensive uses, however, would be discouraged in this particular area. Anticipated to be greater in height than the residential buildings to the west, the office and industrial buildings have step-backs on the upper floors to de-emphasize the increased height, which has the added benefit of creating additional outdoor patio space as amenities. All of the buildings along Industrial Highway will have a generous setback from the street to accommodate green space as a buffer (below).

Closeup of Phase 2 Flyover, Looking East



Keim Street Connectivity – Phase 2



Phase 2 Flyover, Looking West



Circulation Improvements

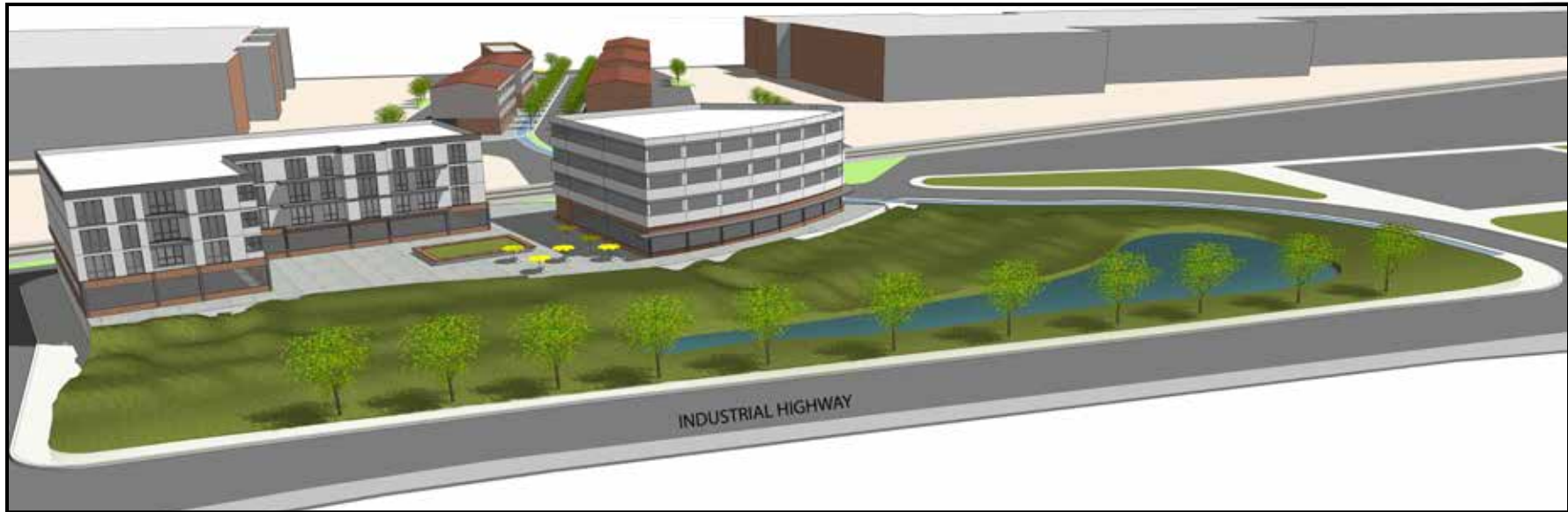
As mentioned earlier, it is unlikely a formal, separated pedestrian and bicycle route to the trail can feasibly be brought through the South Gateway of Keim Street below the at-grade rail crossing until such time as the southern properties are prepared to redevelop or significantly alter their operations. Once redevelopment is enabled, a full separated connection will be possible when the space reserved in Phase 1 for the trail connection will be used to install the actual connection in Phase 2.

Since there will be considerable effort to establish an at-grade trail-connection crossing with Norfolk Southern, the plan takes advantage of large-scale redevelopment by proposing a realigned Keim Street to create a standard four-way intersection with the Keim Street Bridge, which is anticipated to be open at the completion of the realignment. This new intersection will act as a central node of activity and distinction, being the confluence of enhanced access to the area via the Keim Street Bridge, paired with

the alignment of the trail connection and installation of a new central park and water feature.

In consideration of potential flooding impacts in the new development, a rear access drive is provided which will run parallel to Industrial Highway, providing a secondary means of egress off site to expedite evacuation of residents and employees.

Proposed New Open Space



The buildings situated around the new gateway park at Industrial Highway and Keim Street will be at the location of several amenities, so they have been designated as mixed use (including dining and active retail opportunities) and premium residential. Additional outdoor plaza and dining areas will leverage the green space offered as well as attract Schuylkill River Trail users to pull off for a slight detour.

Greening and Beautification

A critical project proposed in the Phase 2 design will be a Gateway park and open space designated for the new intersection of Keim Street and Industrial Highway. This new park space would create a true gathering space right at the proposed Gateway to the corridor (and to Pottstown generally) via the Keim Street Bridge.

Overall, additional greening would be prioritized for the frontages of lots abutting Industrial Highway, where the setbacks for larger buildings can accommodate it and the floodplain areas where naturalization can occur.



The industrial area on the north side of Industrial Highway will be redeveloped into a Gateway Park with a better connection to the Schuylkill River Trail.

A Ground-Level View of a Proposed Office Building



A view from ground level of one of the planned office/industrial buildings on east Industrial Highway.

New Keim Street Alignment



A view of the new gateway park created with the realignment of Keim Street with the Keim Street Bridge. The new trail connection down to the Schuylkill River Trail will parallel the realigned Keim Street and make the crossing of Industrial Highway at a new signalized intersection here.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Circulation Design Improvements

In the North Gateway area, the area reserved for the multi-use trail connection down to the Schuylkill River Trail will be retrofitted and formalized. Appropriated signage and transition materials will be provided between adjacent sidewalk area and the trail connection will be implemented in order to separate users and provide predictable transition points between the two areas.

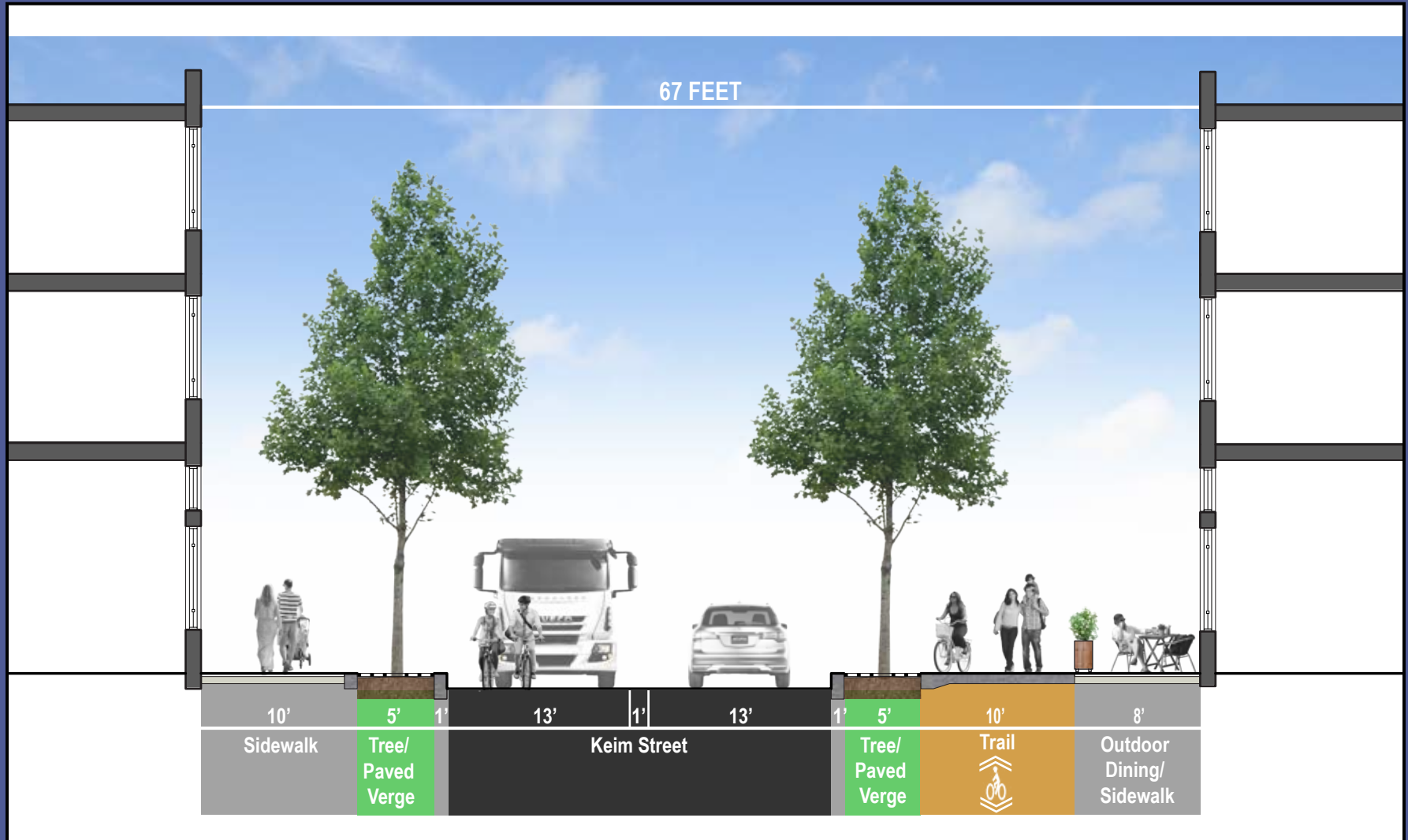
At the South Gateway, the trail connection will be continued and formalized adjacent to the newly-aligned Keim Street at its intersection with Industrial Highway and the approach to the Keim Street Bridge. Crossing treatments will be implemented at this intersection. As development progresses along Industrial Highway, sidewalks will be added within the right-of-way as well



The newly aligned Keim Street will create a 4-way intersection at Industrial Highway, lining up with the new Keim Street Bridge across the Schuylkill River.

In Phase 2, the trail connection will be formalized (in orange) within the North Gateway cross-section of Keim Street.

Keim Street Section, Phase 2



Policy Priorities

Repositioning and Marketing the Gateway Area

Trends in industrial and manufacturing capabilities have shifted greatly in the past 30 years; in fact, the era of large-scale, labor-intensive manufacturing or fabrication of the kind Bethlehem Steel represented may very well be over. Although it's acknowledged that the face of industry will continue to change drastically as new technologies emerge, this plan does not envision that the area will transition completely away from being an industrial center.

Actually, many of the industrial spaces in this district contain flexible open layouts, “heavy” infrastructure such as rail sidings for rail connections, relatively low rents, enabling Pottstown Industrial Complex and others to maintain a market. However, there is significant room for growth and evolution. New innovations in fabrication, such as 3D printing and “maker spaces” empower individuals and grant a whole new flexibility to manufacturing, and may represent a brand new opportunity to attract a talented, innovative workforce through this kind of small-scale manufacturing. To that effect, it is

recommended that future investment be leveraged specifically for marketing and positioning this area to attract these kinds of outfits. Such an investment could be by PAID or another nonprofit or governmental body dedicated to the area.

Additionally, since many of the employers in this area have admitted that attracting skilled and willing employees continues to be difficult, we also recommend that there be a workforce development component integrated into one of the potential new developments resulting from this plan. Specifically, a workforce development organization or trade school might be recruited to occupy one of the new tenant spaces created by the new development. Such an effort could create a supportive cluster of businesses and development groups which, in turn, could create a pipeline for local residents to be matched with local businesses seeking employees on the corridor. While a particular organization or sponsor has not yet been determined, we recommend that it be a consideration in future development scenarios.

Brownfield Remediation Strategies

We believe that the Pottstown Borough and PAID should actively begin work with the Montgomery County Redevelopment Authority (RDA) to comprehensively plan for brownfield planning and remediation of the several sites in the overlay area.



View of the brownfield landfill along Industrial Highway with Contrast Metalworks in the foreground.



The Schuylkill River in front of the Keim Street Gateway.

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