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Draft For Public Comment

**SPRUCE HILL**

**COMMUNITY RENEWAL PLAN**



JUNE 13, 1995

**SPRUCE HILL COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION**  
**(SHCA)**

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1941  
The first of the year  
was a very busy one  
and the work was  
done in a very  
efficient manner.

The second of the year  
was also a very busy one  
and the work was  
done in a very  
efficient manner.

1942

The first of the year

## ***Introduction***

Spruce Hill, which is bounded by Woodland Avenue to the south, Market Street to the north, and 39th and 46th Streets to the east and west, is a quintessential Philadelphia place. It overflows with the greatest American architecture and urban design of the late nineteenth century. Its abundance of trees, shrubs, and flowers evokes lush cities of the West Coast. Its people, no longer the residents of one of America's first suburbs, are city dwellers passionately determined to renew their neighborhood. The *Spruce Hill Community Renewal Plan* is designed to help them do so.

The *Plan* has been developed by the Spruce Hill Community Association's Community Development Task Force in conjunction with the Center for Community Partnerships of the University of Pennsylvania. The *Plan* has been made possible by the energy and enthusiasm of the many more residents who surveyed the buildings on their blocks, answered neighborhood needs surveys, and participated in focus groups and meetings.

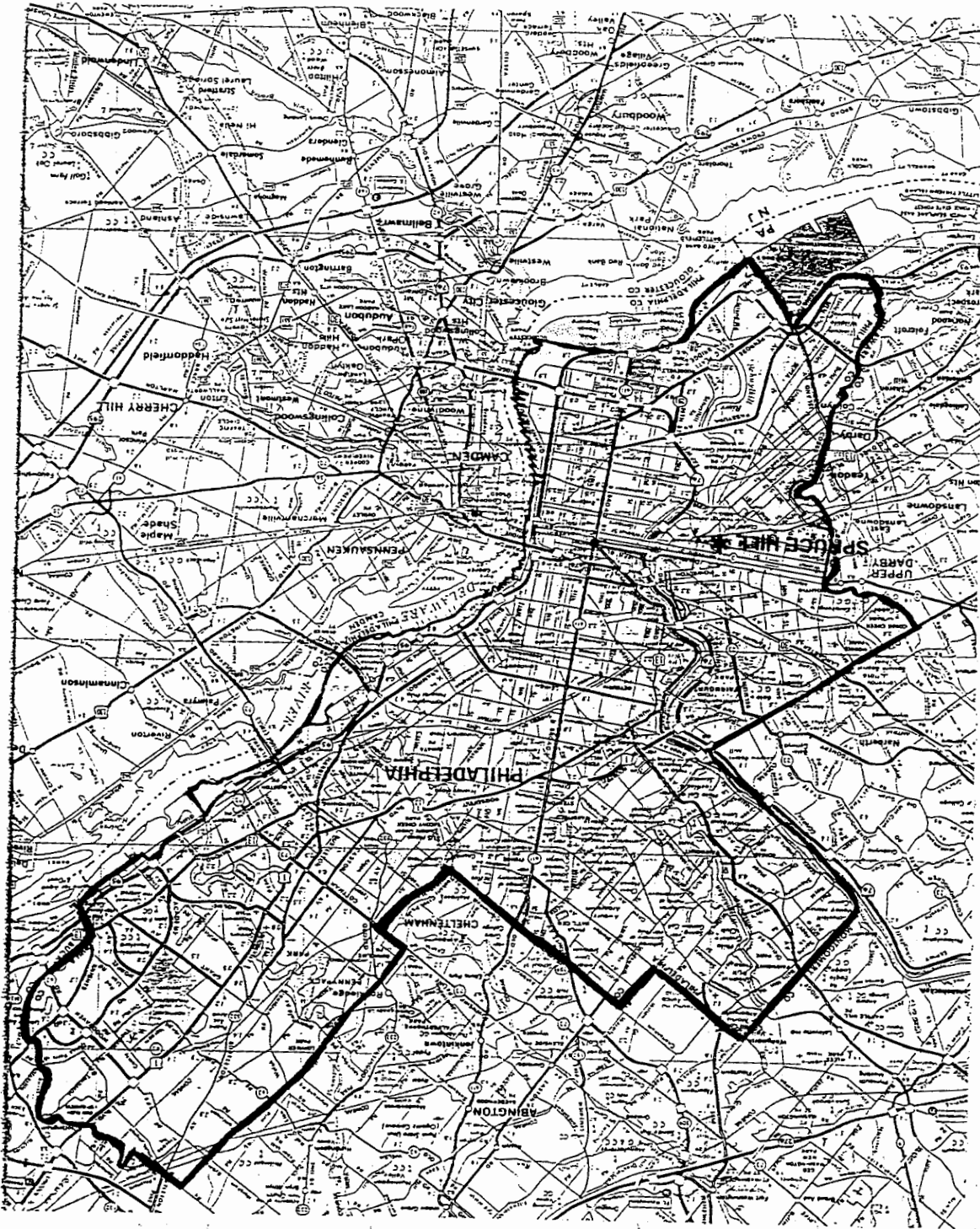
Of course, this draft is only the beginning of Spruce Hill's renewal. This is a *draft for public comment*, which means if it is to be useful, it requires that concerned citizens and other stakeholders take the time to respond to its strategies. Also, a series of focus groups will be convened this summer to gain additional input and ideas. The final draft of the *Plan* will be completed early in fall 1995. At that time, all Spruce Hill residents, businesses, organizations, institutions, and any other concerned entities including the City of Philadelphia, will have the responsibility of turning words to action, deterioration and decline to renewal. This document is designed to be used as a guide, a reference, a framework, a mediator, and a voice for a community with over 16,000 members. Many of the recommendations of the *Plan* are directed towards specific entities. However, most of the recommendations are intended to serve guidelines and are directed more generally.

Send all comments concerning the *Spruce Hill Community Renewal Plan* to:

Spruce Hill Community Association  
Community Development Task Force  
257 S. 45th Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19104

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PLEASE NOTE: THIS IS AN INITIAL DRAFT OF A VERY COMPLICATED DOCUMENT. NOT EVERY SECTION IS COMPLETE. NOR ARE ALL THE ACCOMPANYING GRAPHICS AND SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS INCLUDED.



*Spruce Hill in a Regional Context*

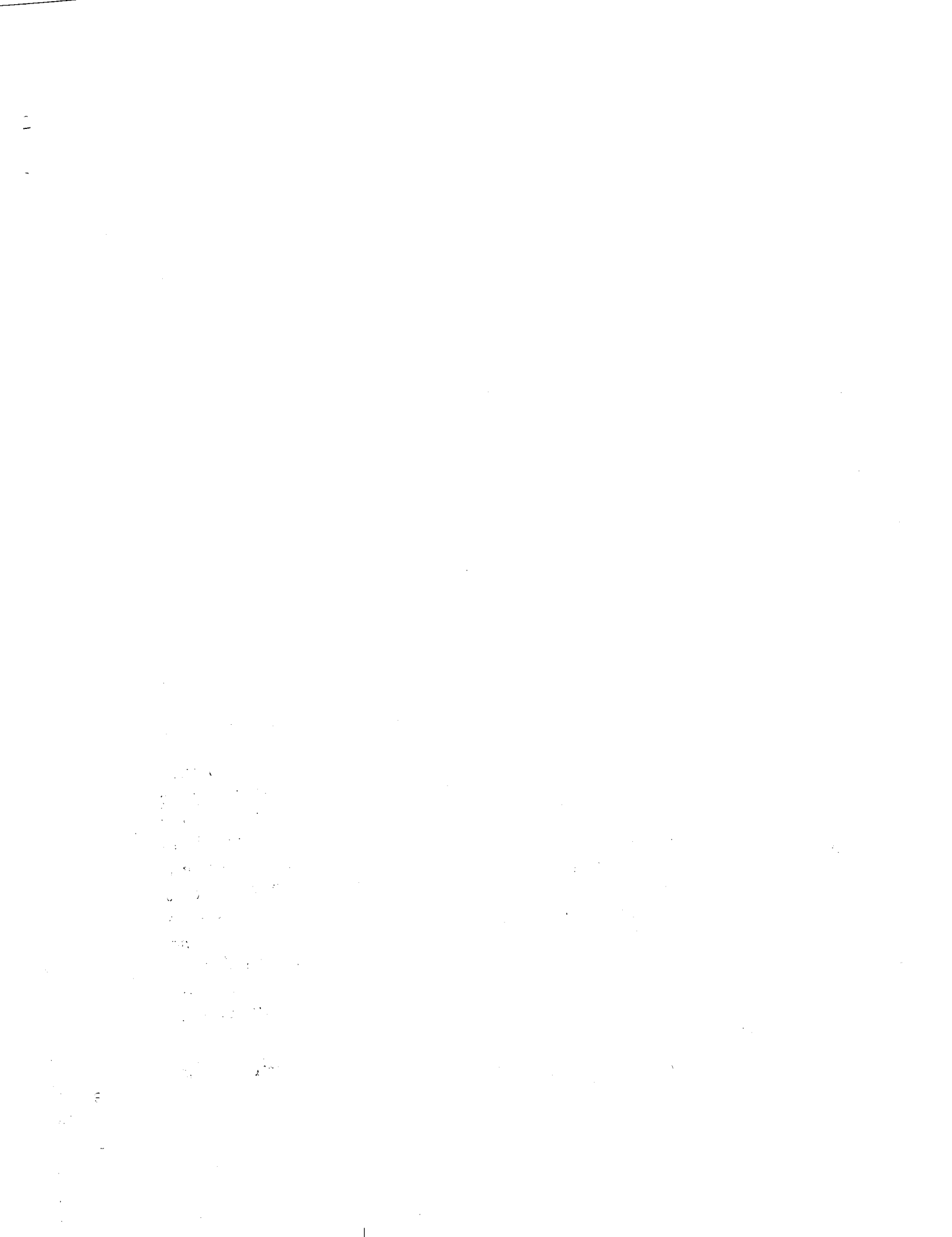
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# Section I - Background



## ***A. Planning Principles and Strategic Assumptions***

It is important for those using this document to fully understand what it is and what are its major assumptions. The Spruce Hill Community Renewal Plan is a set of strategies developed by neighborhood residents in conjunction with professional planners which sets an agenda for transformation of the neighborhood. It is at once a broad-based plan to improve several aspects of Spruce Hill and a call for specified steps to be taken by various entities and organizations in and around Spruce Hill. It is a clear outline of the priorities, interests, concerns, and creative ideas of the citizens of Spruce Hill. It is not a list of isolated and unrealistic recommendations, but rather a set of interlinked and synergistic strategies for renewal. The *Plan* is intended for use by all local residents, leaders, organizations, businesses, institutions, and future investors as a “jumping-off point” for a new course of action in Spruce Hill.

There is a definitive set of strategic assumptions which guide this plan:

- (1) To sustain a neighborhood’s revitalization, there must be investment in human resources, organizations, institutions, amenities, and housing.
- (2) Renewal of Spruce Hill demands investment from several key sources: local institutions, local, state and federal government, businesses, residents, foundations, private developers, and others.
- (3) Spruce Hill competes with other city and suburban communities for residents of most income levels, but specifically exists in a niche market in the Philadelphia region. Here are some defining qualities of this niche: older city mixed with close-in suburban neighborhood feel, distinctive architecture, easy access to central city employment and cultural amenities, and a highly academic atmosphere.
- (4) Spruce Hill desires a racially and economically diverse population. Current demographic trends show decreasing economic diversity. Therefore, it is necessary both to foster diversity and an increase in the number of middle income households.
- (5) There are specific reasons why middle-income families and individuals avoid Spruce Hill: poor public schools/expensive private schools, poor day care opportunities, no after school care, high home maintenance costs, poor quality

retail, perceived lack of safety, and few recreation facilities.

## **B. Planning Process**

The planning process has involved a series of steps to ensure that the *Spruce Hill Community Renewal Plan* is a resident-driven strategy. Resident input is largely responsible for shaping the specific strategies found in the *Plan*. The following steps were taken:

- (1) The Spruce Hill Community Association appointed David Hochman and Patrick Starr co-chairs of a 13 member community development task force. The task force is comprised of a diverse (with respect to race, housing tenure, income, expertise) group of Spruce Hill residents. The task force maintains full responsibility for the final version of the *Spruce Hill Community Renewal Plan*. A list of task force members is found on the inside cover of the plan.
- (2) Professional support and development of the *Spruce Hill Community Renewal Plan* was provided by the University of Pennsylvania's Center for Community Partnerships. The planning team was led by the Center's Project Coordinator N.R. Popkin with assistance from Anne Marie Flatley, Deborah Mahanger, Gregory Nesmith, and Harmon Zuckerman.
- (3) The task force sponsored a neighborhood survey, designed to gain input on community needs ranging from city services and education to housing, taxes, and retail. Fully 191 individuals responded to the survey, which was published in the *Weekly Press*. The survey is found in the appendix of this document. The summary of survey responses is found in section II-C.
- (4) Individual community members and business owners were interviewed. This includes leaders of city-wide organizations whose work impacts on Spruce Hill.
- (5) Focus groups of neighborhood residents, business owners, and organizational and political leaders were conducted to help shape the goals of the plan and specific strategic recommendations. At the end of the planning process, nine individual focus groups of 4-7 participants each will have provided input to the plan.
- (6) Representatives of the Oakland CDC in Pittsburgh visited Spruce Hill and

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discussed their experiences with the task force, the Spruce Hill Board of Directors, and senior administrators of the University of Pennsylvania.

- (7) A Spruce Hill Town Meeting was held in which over 50 members of the community were updated on the progress of the plan, informed of its scope, and shown illustrative maps of building conditions, status, use, and occupancy. Residents were also given a chance to learn about two other Philadelphia community revitalization cases: Manayunk and North Philadelphia.
- (8) The draft plan was presented to the public for comment officially on June 13, 1995 at the Spruce Hill Community Association board meeting and specifically to Philadelphia City Councilwoman Jannie Blackwell and Carol Scheman, Vice President of Government, Public, and Community Affairs of the University of Pennsylvania.

### ***C. Neighborhood Goals***

These goals serve, first and foremost, to shape the planning process and direct the *Plan's* strategies. To a significant event, the goals were developed by the SHCA Community Development Task Force. They were altered and refined by two different focus groups. Though these goals are ranked in order of importance, each is a necessary component of the whole. The success of this effort is dependent on the realization of all of these interlocking goals:

- (1) *Increase the rate of owner-occupancy while respecting and addressing the need for a diversity of housing types that respond to a range of income levels*
- (2) *Increase the strength of the Spruce Hill Community Association and other community-based organizations while improving linkage among all neighborhood organizations and institutions*
- (3) *Radically improve public and private education in and around Spruce Hill*
- (4) *Strengthen the "social capital" of Spruce Hill, such as the linkages among neighbors, streetlife, and neighborhood pride and respect*
- (5) *Significantly improve the retail areas in and around Spruce Hill*
- (6) *Develop formal relationships with the University of Pennsylvania and engage Penn in Spruce Hill's long-term strategy*
- (7) *Reduce crime and the perception of crime in and around Spruce Hill*
- (8) *Increase the cleanliness of Spruce Hill*

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## Section II - Neighborhood Analysis





## A. *Neighborhood Demographics*

The primary data source for the demographic analysis of Spruce Hill is the 1990 U.S. Census. This analysis measures change in Spruce Hill over the last decade. It also indicates the potential for community renewal in Spruce Hill. Part of this analysis involves comparing Spruce Hill with two other neighborhoods in Philadelphia, Mt. Airy and Fairmount. These particular neighborhoods were chosen because of their similarity to Spruce Hill in terms of size, historical development, and housing type. They also display the economic diversity higher home ownership rates that Spruce Hill must strive to reclaim. The indices that are analyzed below are population, race, age, household income, employment, and housing. In comparison to the other two neighborhoods, Spruce Hill maintains a more transient and younger population with lower household incomes. It is a place less amenable to raising families.

### **POPULATION AND RACIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SPRUCE HILL REGION BY CENSUS TRACTS\***

	1970	1980	1990	Change in Population 1970 - 1990
<b>Total Population</b>	37,071	34,573	34,910	-6%
<b>African-American</b>	35%	36%	38%	+2%
<b>White</b>	62%	53%	50%	-25%
<b>Asian</b>	<i>n/a</i>	7%	12%	+82%**
<b>Hispanic***</b>	.3%	.1%	3%	+86%
<b>Other</b>	3%	2%	.7%	-43%

\* Data from U. S. Census by census tract. Census tracts analyzed: 77, 78, 79, 86, 87, 88.

\*\* Change measured from 1980-1990

\*\*\* Hispanic is a category of both African-Americans and Whites.

- Though the Spruce Hill region experienced an overall decrease in population from 1970, the population increased slightly between 1980 and 1990. This is in contrast to Philadelphia's population, which has steadily decreased.
- The African-American population has remained relatively constant while the White population has experienced some decline.

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- The Asian population of the region has grown significantly since 1980, as has the Hispanic population.

**POPULATION AND RACIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SPRUCE HILL NEIGHBORHOOD\***

	1980	1990	Change in Population
<b>Total Population</b>	16,430	16,231	-1%
<b>African-American</b>	21%	24%	+12%
<b>White</b>	66%	59%	-11%
<b>Asian</b>	10%	15%	+55%
<b>Hispanic**</b>	2%	3%	+1%
<b>Other</b>	3%	2%	-1%

\*Data analyzed by census blocks from the 1980 and 1990 U. S. Census.

\*\*Hispanic is a category of both African-Americans and Whites.

- Philadelphia's total population declined by 6% between 1980 and 1990.
- In contrast to the city, the total population of Spruce Hill has remained relatively stable and racially diverse.
- While the White population has experienced a significant decline, the African-American and Asian populations have experienced increases in population.

**AGE CHARACTERISTICS IN COMPARISON TO THE CITY AND OTHER NEIGHBORHOODS\***

	<b>SPRUCE</b>	<b>FAIRMOUN</b>	<b>MT. AIRY</b>	<b>CITY</b>
<b>AGE RANGE</b>	<b>% TOTAL</b>	<b>% TOTAL</b>	<b>% TOTAL</b>	<b>% TOTAL</b>
<b>Less Than 6</b>	5.75%	6.41%	8.60%	9.88%
<b>7 - 11</b>	2.88%	3.99%	6.61%	6.54%
<b>12 - 17</b>	2.67%	5.00%	7.63%	7.49%
<b>18 - 21</b>	<b>21.83%</b>	4.09%	5.44%	6.44%
<b>22 - 29</b>	<b>31.32%</b>	20.11%	10.18%	13.92%
<b>30 - 34</b>	9.73%	11.41%	7.88%	8.53%
<b>35 - 44</b>	11.67%	17.45%	17.35%	13.37%
<b>45 - 54</b>	4.74%	9.24%	13.16%	9.52%
<b>55 - 61</b>	3.00%	4.87%	6.88%	6.23%
<b>62 - 69</b>	2.51%	7.20%	8.00%	7.62%
<b>70 - 79</b>	2.19%	7.03%	5.79%	7.08%
<b>80+</b>	1.71%	3.21%	2.47%	3.37%
	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

\*Data analyzed by census tract from 1990 U. S. Census by census. Census tracts for Fairmount include: 134, 135, and 136. The census tracts for Mt. Airy include: 253, 254, 255, 256, 258, 261, and 262.

- Only 11% of Spruce Hill's population is under 17 years old. This is in stark contrast to the city and Mt. Airy, where the under-17 population is approximately 23%. This shows that families are leaving Spruce Hill as children reach school age.
- Over 50% of the population of Spruce Hill is between the ages of 18 and 29. This high figure can be attributed to the large number of university students. In the city as a whole this age group represents only 20.36% of the population. In Fairmount and Mt. Airy this age group represents 24.2% and 15.62% of those populations, respectively.
- The 30 to 54 years age group, which is typically the highest-income group, comprises only 26.14% of Spruce Hill's population. While this is a significant percentage, it is much smaller than the (approximately) 38% for Fairmount and Mt. Airy.
- The over 55 age group in Spruce Hill is only 9.41% of the population. Again, this figure is in stark contrast to the city and the other comparable neighborhoods, in which this age group represents about 23% of those populations. The low figure for this age group in Spruce Hill is indicative of the transitory and unstable nature of the neighborhood.

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**COMPARISON OF HOUSEHOLD TYPE BY AGE OF HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD\***

**Household Type: Family**

	SPRUCE HILL	MT. AIRY	FAIRMOUNT
<b>TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS: % FAMILY</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>43%</b>
<b>AGE RANGE of HOUSEHOLD HEAD:</b>	<b>% TOTAL</b>	<b>% TOTAL</b>	<b>% TOTAL</b>
15 - 24	7%	2%	4%
25 - 34	36%	13%	24%
35 - 44	25%	28%	24%
45 - 54	11%	22%	14%
55 - 64	11%	18%	13%
65 - 74	6%	12%	12%
75 YEARS AND OLDER	4%	5%	9%
	100%	100%	100%

**Household Type: Non Family**

	SPRUCE HILL	MT. AIRY	FAIRMOUNT
<b>TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS: % NON FAMILY</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>57%</b>
<b>AGE RANGE of HOUSEHOLD HEAD:</b>	<b>% TOTAL</b>	<b>% TOTAL</b>	<b>% TOTAL</b>
15 - 24	31%	5%	9%
25 - 34	34%	13%	30%
35 - 44	16%	16%	19%
45 - 54	6%	16%	12%
55 - 64	5%	18%	9%
65 - 74	5%	20%	11%
75 YEARS AND OLDER	3%	12%	10%
	100%	100%	100%

\*Data analyzed by census tract from the 1990 U. S. Census.

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•Of all households in Spruce Hill, only 34% are families. Of these households, over 60% have heads of household between the ages of 25 and 44 years. This is in contrast to the comparable neighborhoods, whose heads of family households are more diverse in age. In Spruce Hill, as the age of the heads of household increases, the percentage of families declines significantly. This loss of family households reflects the poor quality of neighborhood public schools. Spruce Hill parents with school-age children often opt to leave the area to avoid paying for private school, as the public ones, to many parents, are not even an option.

•Non-family households comprise 66% of all households in Spruce Hill. Of these households, 65% have heads of households between the ages of 15 and 34 years. This is an indication of the presence of the large student population in the region. The neighborhoods of Mt. Airy and Fairmount have much smaller percentages of non-family households. Their non family households also tend to have household heads that are more diverse in age.

**1990 INCOME BY HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD\***

*HOUSEHOLD HEAD: UNDER 25 YEARS      HOUSEHOLD HEAD: AGES 25 - 34*

	SPRUCE HILL	FAIRMOUNT	MT. AIRY		SPRUCE HILL	FAIRMOUNT	MT. AIRY
% H H < 25 YEARS	23.1%	6.7%	2.4%	% H H: 25-34	34.4%	27.2%	13.3%
<b>INCOME</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>INCOME</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
LESS THAN \$5,000	27.82%	19.83%	7.63%	LESS THAN \$5,000	16.17%	6.37%	3.87%
\$5,000 TO \$9,999	17.11%	15.99%	2.97%	\$5,000 TO \$9,999	9.77%	4.07%	7.89%
\$10,000 TO \$14,999	14.64%	10.66%	36.02%	\$10,000 TO \$14,999	9.96%	6.00%	4.26%
\$15,000 TO \$24,999	19.29%	26.65%	31.36%	\$15,000 TO \$24,999	23.51%	15.19%	14.94%
\$25,000 TO \$34,999	11.99%	13.65%	3.39%	\$25,000 TO \$34,999	17.41%	14.87%	23.37%
\$35,000 TO \$49,999	7.56%	9.17%	16.10%	\$35,000 TO \$49,999	12.72%	19.68%	24.38%
\$50,000 TO \$74,999	1.09%	2.13%	2.54%	\$50,000 TO \$74,999	5.69%	17.75%	17.88%
\$75,000 TO \$99,999	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	\$75,000 TO \$99,999	3.28%	9.81%	1.78%
\$100,000 OR MORE	0.50%	1.92%	0.00%	\$100,000 OR MORE	1.49%	6.26%	1.63%
	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%		100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

\*Data analyzed by census tract from 1990 U. S. Census.

•Over 23% of the heads of household in Spruce Hill are under 25 years old. Of those household heads, over 78% had incomes less than \$25,000. These figures are indicative of the large university student population, which tends to rely on part time

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jobs and student loans for income. Including parental aid, however, would serve to adjust income figures for this group significantly higher.

- The large number of household heads with incomes less than \$25,000 also effects the poverty rate of Spruce Hill. The poverty rate in 1990 for Spruce Hill was about 35%, as compared to 20% for the City. Of the individuals below the poverty line in Spruce Hill, 51% are between the ages of 18 and 24 years old.

- Of the heads of household in Spruce Hill between the ages of 25 and 34, only 23% have incomes greater than \$35,000. In contrast are Fairmount at 53.5% and Mt. Airy at 45.67%.

*HOUSEHOLD HEAD: AGES 35 - 44*

*HOUSEHOLD HEAD: AGES 45 - 54*

	SPRUCE HILL	FAIRMOUN	MT. AIRY		SPRUCE	FAIRMOUNT	MT. AIRY
<b>% HH: 35 - 44</b>	18.9%	21.2%	24.4%	<b>% HH: 45 - 54</b>	7.6%	13%	20.2%
<b>INCOME RANGE</b>	<b>% TOTAL</b>	<b>% TOTAL</b>	<b>% TOTAL</b>	<b>INCOME RANGE</b>	<b>% TOTAL</b>	<b>% TOTAL</b>	<b>% TOTAL</b>
LESS THAN \$5,000	7.65%	6.29%	5.33%	LESS THAN \$5,000	8.04%	6.39%	3.23%
\$5,000 TO \$9,999	8.00%	2.27%	2.50%	\$5,000 TO \$9,999	10.12%	2.71%	3.64%
\$10,000 TO \$14,999	3.69%	4.68%	1.90%	\$10,000 TO \$14,999	12.58%	3.79%	2.36%
\$15,000 TO \$24,999	23.42%	12.58%	15.48%	\$15,000 TO \$24,999	10.69%	18.29%	11.37%
\$25,000 TO \$34,999	19.12%	16.25%	11.46%	\$25,000 TO \$34,999	14.29%	7.68%	15.57%
\$35,000 TO \$49,999	16.53%	20.60%	22.55%	\$35,000 TO \$49,999	22.99%	18.07%	24.01%
\$50,000 TO \$74,999	11.65%	15.99%	25.51%	\$50,000 TO \$74,999	15.89%	26.62%	22.68%
\$75,000 TO \$99,999	7.08%	9.57%	11.08%	\$75,000 TO \$99,999	3.12%	9.42%	11.37%
\$100,000 OR MORE	2.86%	11.77%	4.19%	\$100,000 OR MORE	2.27%	7.03%	5.79%
	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%		100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

\*Data analyzed by census tract from 1990 Census

- Only 18.9% of heads of household in Spruce Hill are between 35 and 44 years old. Of those household heads, over 39% have incomes greater than \$35,000. In comparison, over 63% of the 35- to 44-year-old household heads in Mt. Airy reported incomes greater than \$35,000. In Fairmount, over 57% reported incomes greater than \$35,000.

- For heads of household between the ages of 45 and 54 in Spruce Hill, about 44% had incomes greater than \$35,000. Fairmount and Mt. Airy have much higher percentages (about 63%).

**1990 EDUCATION CHARACTERISTICS\***

EDUCATION LEVEL	SPRUCE HILL	CITY
Less than 9th Grade	5%	11%
9 - 12, No Diploma	10%	24%
High School Graduate	13%	33%
Some College, No Diploma	14%	12%
Associates Degree	4%	4%
Bachelor's Degree	25%	9%
Graduate/Professional Degree	29%	6%

\*Data by census tract from the 1990 U. S. Census.

•Spruce Hill is a well-educated community, with 58% of the population having some form of a higher degree. Philadelphia reports that only about 19% of its population has some form of higher degree. However, the average household income for Spruce Hill is lower than it is for the city as a whole; there is the potential for higher income in Spruce Hill.

**1990 EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY\***

	SPRUCE HILL	CITY
Health Services	12%	13%
Education Services	31%	9%
Retail	11%	16%
Other	45%	63%

\*Data by census tract from the 1990 U. S. Census.

•In Spruce Hill, the health service and education industries have a tremendous influence on the local economy, as they employ about 43% of the population.

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**1990 HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS\***

<b>STATUS</b>	<b>SPRUCE HILL</b>	<b>FAIRMOUNT</b>	<b>MT. AIRY</b>	<b>CITY</b>
<b>OCCUPIED</b>	88%	79%	87%	89%
<b>OWNER</b>	11%	32%	63%	55%
<b>RENTER</b>	77%	47%	24%	34%
<b>UNOCCUPIED</b>	12%	21%	13%	11%

\* Data by census tract from the 1990 U. S. Census.

- Both Fairmount and Mt. Airy, which contain a large number of apartment buildings, have higher owner-occupancy rates than Spruce Hill.
- When the blocks with the large apartment houses and student housing are removed, the owner occupancy rate in Spruce Hill rises, but only to about 17%.



## ***B. Real Estate Market Analysis***

The real estate analysis focuses chiefly on Spruce Hill's housing market.

### **(1) *Basic Trends***

In general, the following five to ten year trends are occurring in Spruce Hill real estate:

- (a) Diminishing city-wide quality of life and recently competitive Center City property values have caused property values of Spruce Hill's owner-occupied buildings to drop by about 20% since their peak in the late 1980s.
- (b) In order to raise property values at sale, more and more single-family buildings are being converted to multi-family use, creating a speculator's market. In fact, in the 1980s, there was a 20% drop in the number of owner-occupied buildings.
- (c) Simultaneously, as quality of life in the neighborhood has diminished, the existing rental demand has dropped. This is mostly due to an exodus of 780 Penn graduate students from 1990 to 1994.
- (d) High on-campus Penn rents (\$645/month for 7 months) have pushed rising numbers of undergraduate students to live, in high densities, in Spruce Hill. Since 1990, the number of undergraduates living in the community has increased by 893, while the total number of housing units has decreased.
- (e) Undergraduates have not replaced graduate students for demand of rental units. Instead, their demand is significantly focused on single-family homes in which they can live in groups of 5-10 (each student paying, on average, only \$150 - \$350 per month), and not on the one and two bedroom apartments favored by graduate students.
- (f) The missing demand for apartments has been filled by comparatively lower income tenants, reducing market rents and, subsequently, investment in property management and repairs.

**CHANGE IN PENN OFF-CAMPUS STUDENT POPULATION - 19104  
ZIPCODE**

STUDENTS	1990	1991	1992	1994	% Change* (1990 - 1994)
UNDERGRADUATE	2,238	2,420	3,024	3,131	+40%
GRADUATE	2,543	2,368	1,722	1,763	-31%

\*Data for 1993 is unavailable.

(2) *City and Regional Trends*

Spruce Hill's market is affected by the regional housing market and that of the city of Philadelphia. Regionally, in the last year, home prices increased by 11%, with city values generally continuing to drop. In Center City, only two of six zip codes posted increases in home sales in 1994. Five-year trends are even less positive. All but one Center City zip code has shown decreases in sales price since 1990 and most of those decreases have been significant, ranging from 21% to 44% (see table below).

**AVERAGE HOME SALES VALUE, CENTER CITY**

CENTER CITY	Average '94 Price	Five-Year Trend
Center City West	\$205,148	+6%
Midtown	\$92,325	-32%
Center City East	\$111,619	-44%
Society Hill	\$138,352	-28%
Fairmount	\$85,492	-21%
East Spring Garden	\$48,725	-33%

The Central Philadelphia housing market has yet to recover from the recession of 1990-92 and continues to negatively affect University City housing markets, which include those of Spruce Hill, Powelton Village, Garden Court, Cedar Park, Squirrel Hill, and Walnut Hill. This is because the relative parity between Center City and University City rents and the absolutely higher quality of life in most Center City

neighborhoods makes living in University City less attractive.

(3) *University City and West Philadelphia Trends*

1994 home sales in West Philadelphia were generally steady and somewhat lower in 1994 than 1993. Like the rest of the city, five-year trends in home values are down, but not as much as in Center City (see above table). University City prices were higher in 1994 than they were in 1993 but have dropped considerably in some neighborhoods since 1990.

**AVERAGE HOME SALES VALUE, WEST PHILADELPHIA**

WEST PHILADELPHIA	Average '94 Price	Five-Year Trend
Southwest	\$35,800	0%
East	\$47,013	-17%
West Market	\$26,195	+13%
Wynnefield	\$48,698	8%
Overbrook	\$59,112	-9%

University City, which comprises parts of the "East," "Southwest," and "West Market" sections of West Philadelphia showed some improvement in sales and sales prices in 1994. Prices increased nearly 8% to an average of \$93,602. Of note is the increase by 11 homes from 1993 to 1994 in sales over \$125,000. Nearly 100 sales of Garden Court Condominiums doubled the number of sales in University City in 1994, but if factored into average sales price, reduced it significantly. On the whole, sales activity has increased in University City by nearly 40% since 1991.

(4) *Spruce Hill Market*

In 1994, 37 single-family homes sold in Spruce Hill at an average price of \$94,870. This figure is comparable to that of University City as a whole (\$93,602). Sales values in Spruce Hill also compare well to those in Fairmount (\$85,492, 99 sales) and Mt. Airy (\$102,815, 124 sales), the two other Philadelphia neighborhoods used for comparison in the Neighborhood Demographics section.

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There are two important factors to consider in analyzing Spruce Hill real estate trends, and they both call into doubt the usefulness of a discussion of single-family house sales. First, very few housing units in Spruce Hill (11%) are single-family homes. Second, it is not clear how many of the 37 sales were to investors interested in converting the homes into multi-unit buildings. As this is a common occurrence in Spruce Hill -- many large houses are now home to 5 to 10 undergraduate renters per year -- it is not unlikely that a significant number of properties were sold to investors. Conversion to multi-occupancy raises the expectation of an increased income flow from the property and inflates its market value.

In any case, the \$94,870 average sale price is an indication that if an objective of the Spruce Hill community is to reconvert multi-unit structures to single-family homes, it can be expected that a typical building will cost a reconverter more than \$94,870.

This brings the analysis, finally, back to the demand side of the equation. While significant investment in the supply of housing in Spruce Hill is laudable, it will not be successful unless there is demand for quality rental and owner units. And this will not occur unless real improvements are made in the quality of life available to people in Spruce Hill.

### C. *Results of Neighborhood Survey*

The following is a results summary of the Spruce Hill Community Association Survey. The Survey was conducted to determine community residents' general perception of Spruce Hill, its neighborhood services, and its commercial/shopping needs. The Survey was distributed on two occasions: Election Day 1994 and the Spruce Hill Fall Clean-Up Day 1994. It was also printed for response in the *Weekly Press* on March 17, 1995. There were 191 respondents to the survey. Of the respondents, 74% were homeowners. This percentage is between six and seven times higher than Spruce Hill's percentage of home ownership. Consequently, the results of the Survey are not a true representation of the population as a whole.

#### **GENERAL PERCEPTIONS OF SPRUCE HILL - CONCERNS\*:**

CONCERNS	rank 1	rank 2	rank 3
CRIME	151	19	2
LITTER/TRASH	96	59	20
HOUSING DETERIORATION	90	56	11
SCHOOLS	51	59	39
HOUSING ABANDONMENT	51	67	34
CITY SERVICES	34	82	31
PROPERTY TAXES	29	44	71
FINDING PARKING	16	20	76
AFFORDABILITY	17	34	90

\*Rank 1 represents the number of times a concern was ranked 1, 2, or 3 out of 9. Rank 2 represent the number of times a concern was ranked 4, 5, or 6. Rank 3 represents the number of times a concern was ranked 7, 8, or 9.

- Spruce Hill residents are overwhelmingly concerned about crime in their neighborhood. Other major concerns of residents include litter/trash and housing deterioration.

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**GENERAL PERCEPTIONS - POSITIVE ATTRIBUTES\*:**

POSITIVE ATTRIBUTES	rank 1	rank 2	rank 3
LOCATION/ACCESS	137	41	4
SENSE OF COMMUNITY	66	56	41
DIVERSITY OF PEOPLE	61	51	22
AFFORDABILITY	40	59	58
PLEASANT SURROUNDINGS	40	64	45
ARCHITECTURE	31	46	47

\*Rank 1 represents the number of times an attribute was ranked 1 or 2 out of 6. Rank 2 represents the number of times an attribute was ranked 3 or 4. Rank 3 represents the number of times an attribute was ranked 5 or 6.

• Respondents chose location/access as Spruce Hill’s greatest attribute. A sense of community and the diversity of people were also suggested as their reasons for living in Spruce Hill.

**LOCAL AREA CONCERNS\*:**

CONCERNS ABOUT BLOCK:	rank 1	rank 2	rank 3	rank 4
CRIME	122	28	5	1
LITTER/TRASH	95	46	10	0
UNCARING LANDLORDS	83	21	18	9
CAR VANDALISM/THEFT	67	35	12	3
HOUSING DETERIORATION	48	56	15	4
DRUG SALES	39	26	13	8
HOUSING ABANDONMENT	22	28	33	12
NOISE	16	49	25	7
NO ORGANIZATION	13	24	22	33
LACK OF TREES	6	20	23	37
GRAFFITI	3	25	38	14

\*Rank 1 represents the number of times a respondent ranked a concern as 1, 2, or 3 out of 11. Rank 2 represents the number of times a respondent ranked a concern as 4, 5, or 6. Rank 3 represents the number of times a respondent ranked a concern as 7, 8, or 9. Rank 4 represents the number of times a respondent ranked a concern as 10, or 11.

• Crime, litter/trash, and uncaring landlords are residents’ top three concerns about their blocks. Residents are also concerned about car vandalism and theft, housing deterioration, and drug sales.

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**NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES\*:**

NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES	rank 1	rank 2	rank 3	rank 4	rank 5	DON'T USE
LITTER ENFORCEMENT	112	21	20	7	9	5
SHOPPING	27	44	59	35	12	3
TRASH/RECYCLING COLLECTION	17	22	58	59	20	5
EDUCATION	20	14	18	10	3	66
PARKS/ RECREATION	12	33	52	38	8	37
POLICE	10	27	67	58	18	8
HEALTH SERVICES	12	12	20	34	28	74

\*Rankings represent a scale from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent).

- Litter enforcement was ranked overwhelmingly by respondents as the poorest-performed neighborhood service.
- Police were rated as adequate or above average.
- The majority of community residents feel that Spruce Hill's educational opportunities are below average. 51% of respondents do not use local educational facilities. Some respondents noted that they send their children to private schools to avoid using the public schools.

**COMMERCIAL/SHOPPING NEEDS - CONCERNS\*:**

CONCERNS ABOUT LOCAL SHOPPING:	rank 1	rank 2	rank 3	rank 4
CRIME	77	43	20	8
QUALITY OF BUSINESSES	65	31	22	9
LITTER/TRASH	54	63	25	5
TYPES OF SERVICES	39	33	40	23
PANHANDLING	39	40	15	21
DETERIORATION	34	28	41	19
PARKING	28	26	20	47
ABANDONMENT	18	18	25	46

\*Rankings represent a scale from 1 (of greatest concern) to 4 (of least concern).

- When shopping in the area, crime and quality of businesses are residents' greatest concerns.
- Many respondents noted that they will not shop in the area, and consequently do most of their shopping elsewhere, such as in Center City or the suburbs.

**COMMERCIAL/SHOPPING NEEDS - WANTED BUSINESSES\*:**

RANK	BUSINESSES MOST WANTED:	VOTES
1	GARDEN CENTER	98
2	SIT-DOWN RESTAURANTS	92
3	SUPERMARKETS	90
4	BANKING	74
5	SPECIALTY RETAIL	61
6	CLOTHING RETAIL	54
7	ART GALLERIES	54
8	HAIR CARE	28
9	CONVENIENCE STORES	25
10	NIGHTCLUBS	20
11	HEALTH SERVICES	16
12	CAR CARE	15

\*Rank 1 is most desired.

•Community residents in Spruce Hill showed a strong interest in acquiring a garden center, quality sit-down restaurants, and supermarkets.

\* \* \*

The neighborhood residents surveyed perceived crime and litter/trash to be the greatest concerns of their blocks and of Spruce Hill in general. In addition, housing deterioration and uncaring landlords were also frequently chosen as concerns. With respect to shopping in the neighborhood, residents frequently expressed concern about crime and the quality of the businesses. Many residents responded that they had no knowledge of block meetings or their block captain's identity.



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## Section IIIa - Neighborhood-Wide Strategy



## *A. Neighborhood-Wide Strategies*

Neighborhood-wide strategies focus on developing a set of amenities in Spruce Hill. This largely involves building on what already exists and fixing several difficult problems. The goal of implementing a set of neighborhood-wide strategies is to be able to market Spruce Hill as an exceptional place for individuals, families, and students to live. The set of present and required amenities for Spruce Hill includes the following:

- Good schools for children
- Job opportunities for adults
- Safety
- Quality housing for people of all income levels
- A strong sense of community *and* diversity
- Unique architecture and neighborhood design
- High quality retail services

Presently, Spruce Hill possesses all of these amenities, but to widely varying degrees. Therefore, the strategies designed to develop the above set will involve varying degrees of investment and emphasis.

### *(1) Radically Improve Local Schools*

A distinct disincentive to living and raising a family in Spruce Hill is the disastrously inadequate public schools. The following map indicates the feeder areas for public elementary schools in and around Spruce Hill. Spruce Hill children, at least by definition of the feeder areas, attend Locke (K-5), Lea (K-8), Drew (K-8), and Wilson (K-5). The data provided by the School District of Philadelphia indicates that a paucity of these schools' students are testing in the highest quartile in national reading and mathematics tests (see below table). Ranked by performance on national standardized tests, Spruce Hill schools placed 107th (Drew), 112th (Locke), 130th (Lea), and 160th (Wilson) out of the 171 public elementary schools in Philadelphia.

**SPRUCE HILL ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS - 1993**

**READING SCORES: % Scoring in Highest National Quartile\***  
**GRADE LEVEL**

SCHOOL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
LOCKE	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
LEA	7	4	1	3	5	1	5	14
DREW	6	2	3	4	5	3	5	8
WILSON	0	12	6	0	0	NA	NA	NA

**MATH SCORES: % Scoring in Highest National Quartile\***  
**GRADE LEVEL**

SCHOOL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
LOCKE	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
LEA	3	6	1	7	6	5	6	11
DREW	1	10	4	4	11	3	12	7
WILSON	4	0	3	3	2	NA	NA	NA

\*Source: School District of Philadelphia.

Clearly, the schools are not developing children who are able to excel in school, which means that the children of today will face unnecessarily severe challenges competing in a global workforce as adults. This is potentially disastrous for Philadelphia. For Spruce Hill, it means that its children will be less likely to qualify for acceptance to Penn, Drexel, or Pharmacy. For families in Spruce Hill, it means that they must be able to afford to send their children to private school, move to a location that offers excellent public education, claim a false residence to get their children into Powell or Greenfield (better public schools), or send their children to one of the four worst elementary schools in the city.

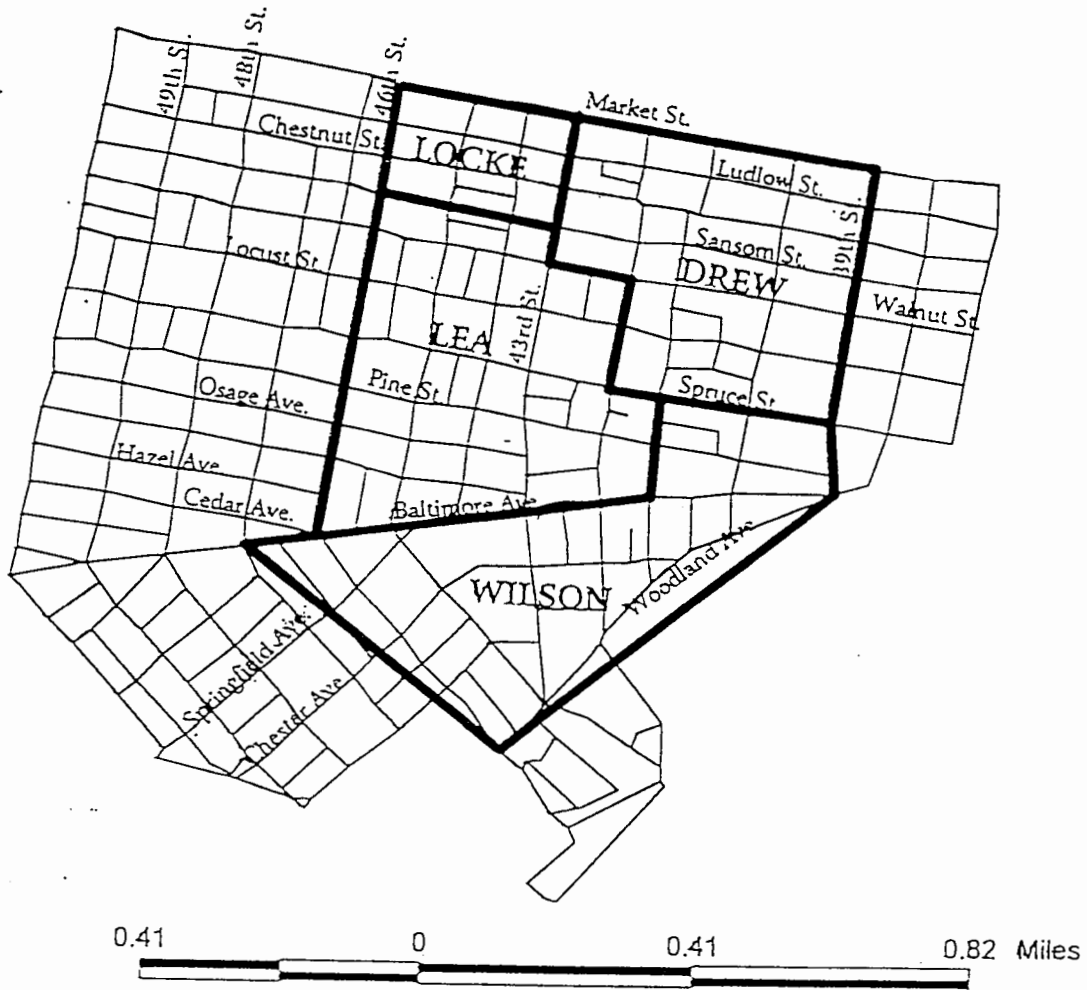
This plan serves as the “jumping-off point” for developing Spruce Hill schools into local amenities. Please note, however, that most of the students in each of the schools live outside of Spruce Hill and this strategy must not be developed by SHCA alone.


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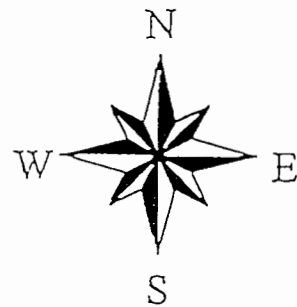
### Initial Steps:

- (a) Reassess the boundaries of school feeder areas to better utilize available space and to enable the SHCA to better target its strategies. Specifically: the boundary between Wilson and Lea should be shifted north to increase Wilson's enrollment (see below maps). Currently, Lea is overcrowded and unmanageable with 1,068 students and Wilson is underenrolled with only 287 students. Also, change the boundary of Drew to include the part of Spruce Hill which feeds into the Locke School, thereby helping to ensure that neighbors attend the same school.
- (b) Work with Penn and the West Philadelphia Partnership to start extensive West Philadelphia Improvement Corps (WEPIC) programs at Lea and Drew. This process has begun at Wilson and is coincident with the Center for Community Partnerships's commitment to working extensively with the University City H.S. and West Philadelphia H.S. clusters.
- (c) Make targeted test scores and other goals for achievement public knowledge so that the entire community is aware of the effort in each school and all residents can focus on school improvement.
- (d) Continue to highlight neighborhood children who excel in school in the Spruce Hill newsletter.
- (e) Work with the University City New School to establish it as a Penn-affiliated charter public school with emphasis on enrolling local children. This continues to be an effort of the UCNS board. It is in the early stages of planning but, seen through to fruition, will have an immense impact on Spruce Hill. The quasi-public, charter UCNS would be the city's first school of that type and would continue to provide its current level and type of education.
- (f) Run a campaign to have all institutions, businesses, and organizations in Spruce Hill focus resources and energy on the elementary schools, such as the adoption of Wilson by the SHCA and College of Pharmacy.

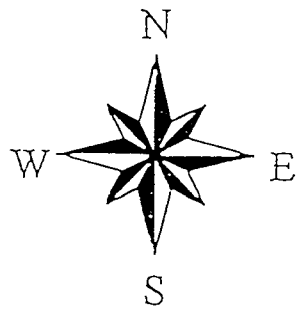
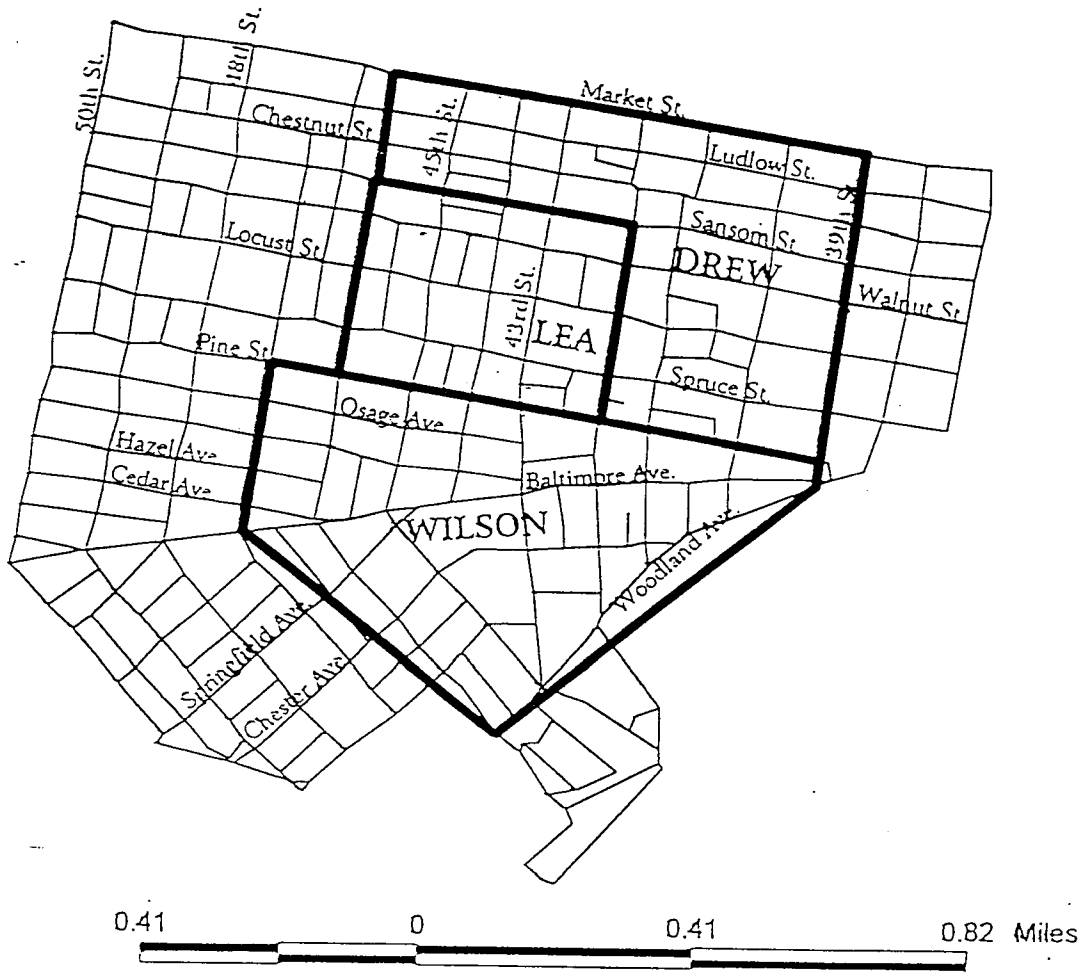
# School Feeder Areas




 Streets



# Proposed Changes for School Feeder Areas



 Streets

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- (g) Address the needs of working families by creating after-school programs for children, such as the program in which Penn students supervise afternoon and Saturday sports at Wilson.
- (h) Support Montessori and desegregation programs at Wilson Elementary School.

### (2) *Provide Job Opportunities to Residents*

One of Spruce Hill's most enviable amenities is its proximity to the huge employment centers of Center City and University City. On pleasant days, even a downtown office is within easy walking distance. Should they choose to ride, residents are connected to these areas by quick and convenient public transit.

Unlike the Center City employers, University City employers would benefit immediately and directly from a hiring policy that favors Spruce Hill and West Philadelphia residents. These people, with steady jobs, would be more apt to make repairs on their homes or even buy a house instead of renting an apartment. This would increase the stability, safety, and value of the neighborhood in which employer and employee alike are stakeholders. Also, institutions and businesses that hire local residents would need to make less of a provision for employee parking and lost worker-hours due to traffic jams on commuter roadways.

Spruce Hill's major employers should be convinced of the wisdom of a hiring policy that favors local residents. The upshot of the adoption of such a policy would be a "win-win" situation.

### (3) *Reduce Crime*

The effect of crime is both broad-reaching and personal, plus many of the gradations between. The effort to reduce crime must take place on all of those gradations. Spruce Hill is developing strong local forces to combat crime. Mel-Lo Town Watch, SOMAD, and Sansom-Walnut-Chestnut Concerned serve as a strong visual force against crime. The SHCA must continue to support and make permanent these efforts. Linkages must be established between each town watch, the various block associations, the Police Mini-Station, the Penn police, and town watch organizations in other University City neighborhoods.