



Pittsburgh Regional Transit

Brushton Station ETOD Study

April 2026



Community Workshop #1
Summary



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WORKSHOP FRAMEWORK

PURPOSE

The community engagement session was designed to gather resident input to proactively shape development on City-owned properties near the future Brushton Station on the East Busway. The session focused on ensuring that new transit investment benefits existing Homewood/Brushton residents first and that development reflects community priorities before the station is constructed.

FORMAT & APPROACH

The workshop was structured as a drop-in, open-house style event. This was to allow participants to arrive and leave at their convenience during the three-hour window.

Attendees could move freely among multiple stations, each focused on a different topic. DCP, PRT, and Gensler staff were present at each station to explain activities, answer questions, and document feedback.

Facilitators emphasized listening, inclusivity, and community-led discussion. The session acknowledged the relationship between transit investment and neighborhood change and reinforced that this planning process is intended to be proactive, transparent, and accountable to residents.

Input gathered will directly inform the future site plans, as well as the policy and program recommendations to be placed in the study.



Figure 1: Community engagement flyer for event

Community Design Workshop

 **Monday, April 13**

 **4:30 to 7:30pm**

 **Homewood-Brushton YMCA**
7140 Bennett Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15208

Goals

We want to understand what Homewood residents want to see developed on City-owned property near the future Brushton Station on the East Busway.

We'll have options for what can feasibly be developed on a few key sets of City-owned property, based on community input from past plans, like the Homewood Community Plan and the OBB Cluster Plans.

What is TOD?

Transit-oriented development (TOD) is compact, mixed-use development near transit that supports walking, biking, and public transportation. It helps create vibrant, connected communities by reducing car use and improving access to jobs and services.



Scan this QR code to go to the EngagePGH page for this project. We'll have additional opportunities for feedback posted here if you can't make it.



STATION 1

OVERVIEW

OBJECTIVE:

To orient participants to the ETOD study and gather values-based input on what the development process should get right, what it should avoid, and who should benefit first from new investment.

ACTIVITY:

Participants engaged with the presented study context material, including the proposed PRT station & future development plan, the ETOD study area walkshed, and the identified site selection criteria. Staff captured comments through facilitated conversations and written responses on sticky notes.

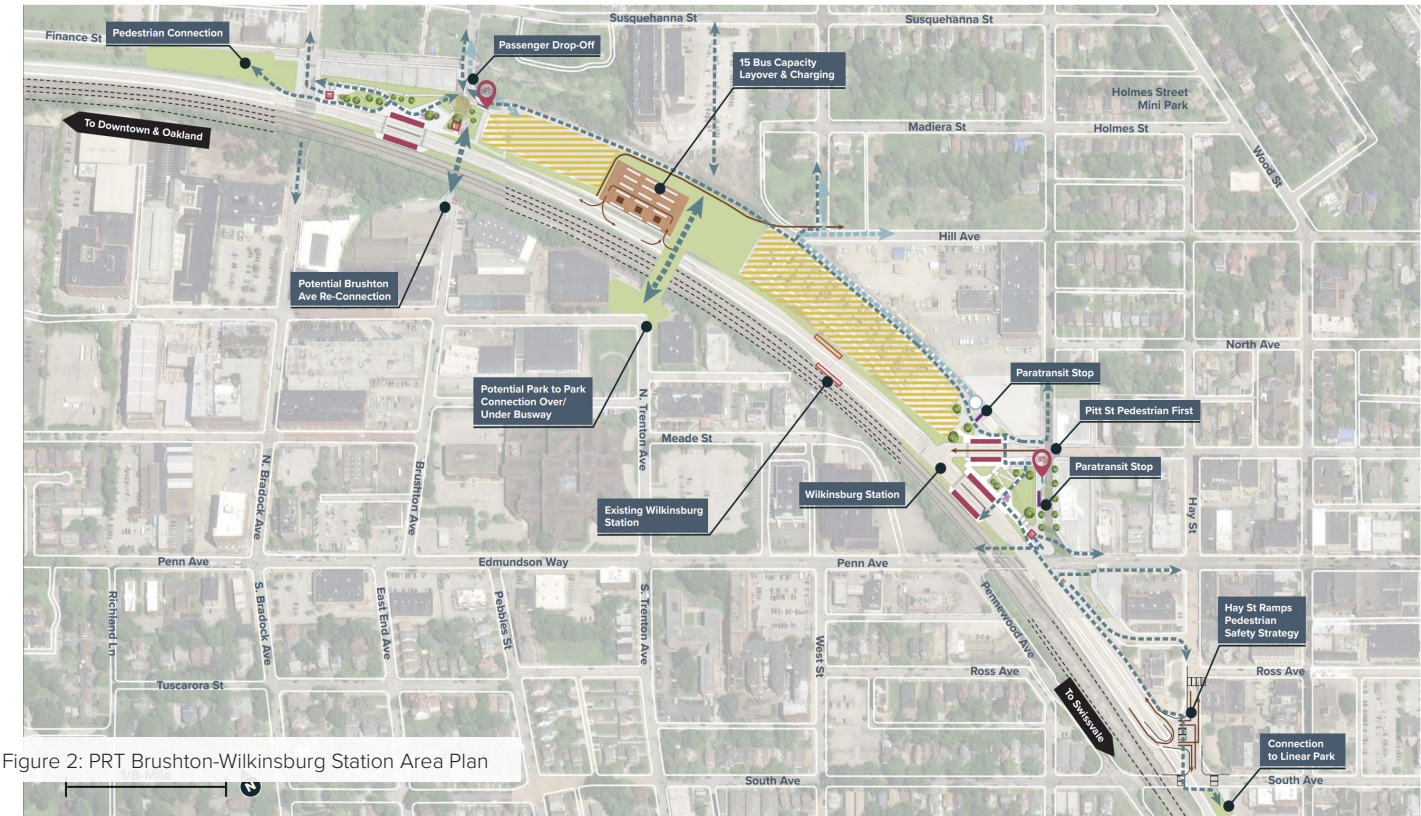


Figure 2: PRT Brushton-Wilkinsburg Station Area Plan

OUTCOMES

FEEDBACK

- Safety on the path to the station access points is a major concern. Rosedale residents already feel cut off from the station.
- The current site of the station is avoided by residents due to:
 - Traffic danger for pedestrians
 - Poor sidewalk conditions
 - Minimal/no street lighting
 - Many vacant lots and inactive storefronts
- The street doesn't just feel unwelcoming. It's literally less safe because there's no one around to notice if something goes wrong.
- The sidewalks around the station have gaps, and the bike connectivity needs attention across the walkshed.
 - Some path conditions go from good condition, to bad, then back to good.
 - Kelly and Hamilton are bikeable, but the rest of the walkshed is a challenge.
- New development should be kept in proximity to the stations to be realistic about walking distances.
- Stormwater management is an opportunity, not simply an infrastructure challenge. Especially when placed in existing naturally green spaces.

Station 01 | Welcome & Introduction

TODAY'S OBJECTIVES

Figure 3: Station 1 - Study Context Boards

We want to understand specifically *what Homewood residents want to see developed* on property owned by City of Pittsburgh near the future Brushton Station.

- **Understand community priorities** around housing, businesses, open space, and neighborhood character near the proposed station
- **Identify concerns about potential development** and how residents can benefit
- **Ground future development options** from past community plans (like the Homewood Community Plan)
- **Build accountability by capturing community input that can be translated into concrete policies and commitments** for future developers

WHAT IS TOD?

TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT (TOD) is a planning approach that focuses on creating compact, higher-density, mixed-use communities within walking distance of high-quality transit, such as busways or rail stations.

At its core, TOD integrates housing, retail, jobs, and public spaces around transit to make it easier for people to access daily needs without relying on a car.

These areas are typically designed to be walkable, bike-friendly, and well-connected to surrounding neighborhoods.

TOD often centers around fixed transit infrastructure—like the MLK Jr. Busway—which provides reliable, frequent service and creates a strong foundation for long-term community investment and growth.

WHY TOD MATTERS:

- **Improves access and mobility**
Makes it easier for residents to reach jobs, schools, and services using transit, walking, or biking.
- **Supports local economic development**
Encourages new businesses, increases foot traffic, and can boost long-term neighborhood investment.
- **Creates more housing choices**
Promotes a mix of housing types and affordability levels near transit.
- **Reduces car dependence**
Leads to fewer car trips, lower transportation costs, and reduced traffic and air pollution.
- **Builds stronger, connected communities**
Activates public spaces and supports a more vibrant, inclusive neighborhood environment

WHAT TOD CAN LOOK LIKE:

- Apartments or mixed-income housing near the station
- Ground-floor retail or community-serving businesses
- Safer, more comfortable pedestrian and bike connections
- Public spaces like plazas, parks, or gathering areas
- Improved transit station amenities and access
- A vibrant, inclusive neighborhood environment

NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT TIMELINE



ETOD STUDY PROGRESSION TIMELINE

Mar. 12	Apr. 13	May 7	May 20	Jun. 22	July - Ongoing
ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING #1	PUBLIC DESIGN WORKSHOP #1	ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING #2	PUBLIC DESIGN WORKSHOP #2	ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING #3	IMPLEMENTATION

Recent Planning Work Timeline



Summaries & Takeaways

1 Operation Better Block Cluster Plans (2015)

Summary
A neighborhood-wide framework that aligns all clusters into a coordinated, equitable development strategy centered on people, place, and shared investment.

Key Takeaways

- High development potential near transit, but poor infrastructure character need to make connectivity improvements
- Investments from transit investment + coordinated planning
- High-quality PRT land as a key redevelopment opportunity
- Call for a station area plan (now underway)

2 Wilkinsburg Comprehensive Plan (2015 Update)

Summary
Revised investment strategy for downtown and urban core development.

Key Takeaways

- Strong support for transit-oriented development (TOD)
- Focus on transit-oriented development + transit-oriented development
- Prioritize pedestrian, bike, and transit-oriented development
- Engage stakeholders + partnerships

3 Connecting Wilkinsburg TRID Study (2019)

Summary
Expanding infrastructure + development through transit-based.

Key Takeaways

- High development potential near transit, but poor infrastructure character need to make connectivity improvements
- Investments from transit investment + coordinated planning
- High-quality PRT land as a key redevelopment opportunity
- Call for a station area plan (now underway)

4 Wilkinsburg Consolidation Study (2020)

Summary
Expanding infrastructure + development through transit-based.

Key Takeaways

- High development potential near transit, but poor infrastructure character need to make connectivity improvements
- Investments from transit investment + coordinated planning
- High-quality PRT land as a key redevelopment opportunity
- Call for a station area plan (now underway)

5 Envision 2070 - Citywide Mobility Plan (2021)

Summary
Long-term mobility vision based on equity, climate, and systems.

Key Takeaways

- Transit-oriented development + transit-oriented development
- Focus on transit-oriented development + transit-oriented development
- Prioritize pedestrian, bike, and transit-oriented development
- Engage stakeholders + partnerships

6 PRT TOD Evaluation (2021)

Summary
Review of TOD + highlights risks and opportunities.

Key Takeaways

- Transit-oriented development + transit-oriented development
- Focus on transit-oriented development + transit-oriented development
- Prioritize pedestrian, bike, and transit-oriented development
- Engage stakeholders + partnerships

7 Homewood Community Comprehensive Plan (2022)

Summary
Expanding infrastructure + development through transit-based.

Key Takeaways

- High development potential near transit, but poor infrastructure character need to make connectivity improvements
- Investments from transit investment + coordinated planning
- High-quality PRT land as a key redevelopment opportunity
- Call for a station area plan (now underway)

8 Homewood Mobility Plan + Safety Study (2022)

Summary
Expanding infrastructure + development through transit-based.

Key Takeaways

- High development potential near transit, but poor infrastructure character need to make connectivity improvements
- Investments from transit investment + coordinated planning
- High-quality PRT land as a key redevelopment opportunity
- Call for a station area plan (now underway)

9 PRT Brushton & Wilkinsburg Station Area Plan (2023)

Summary
Expanding infrastructure + development through transit-based.

Key Takeaways

- High development potential near transit, but poor infrastructure character need to make connectivity improvements
- Investments from transit investment + coordinated planning
- High-quality PRT land as a key redevelopment opportunity
- Call for a station area plan (now underway)

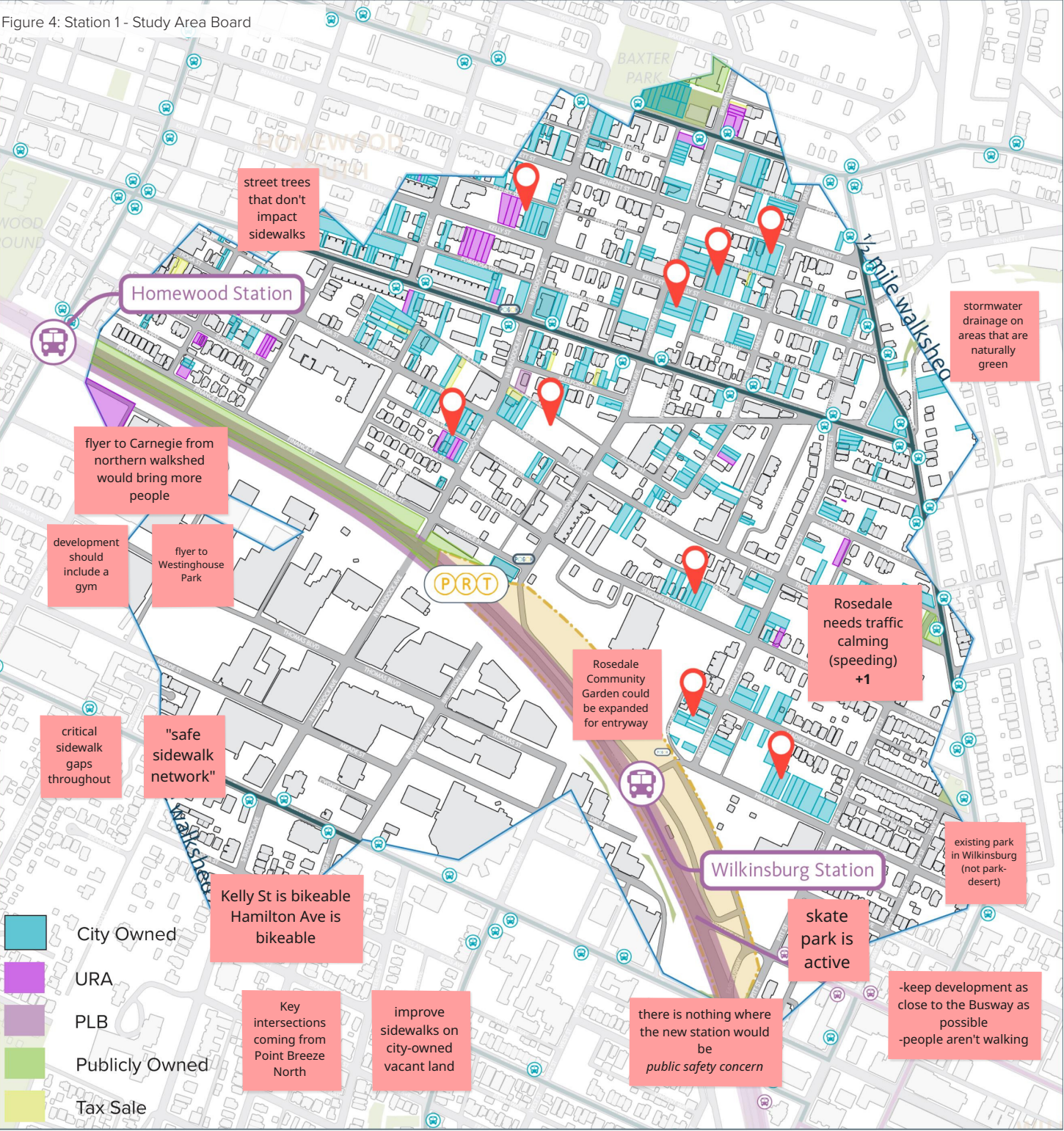
10 Vacant Lot Strategy (2024)

Summary
Expanding infrastructure + development through transit-based.

Key Takeaways

- High development potential near transit, but poor infrastructure character need to make connectivity improvements
- Investments from transit investment + coordinated planning
- High-quality PRT land as a key redevelopment opportunity
- Call for a station area plan (now underway)

Figure 4: Station 1 - Study Area Board



STATION 2

OVERVIEW

OBJECTIVE:

To understand how residents currently move through the neighborhood and identify connections, routes, and public realm improvements needed to support access to the future Brushton Station.

OUTCOMES

BOARD NOTES

- Several place of interest were noted:
 - Faison K-8 Arts Academy
 - ALDI
 - 7800 Susquehanna
 - Rosedale Community Garden
 - YMCA
 - Coliseum
 - Enson Market
 - East End Food Co-op
 - McDonalds
- Penn Ave - West St intersection identified as an area with multiple destinations
- Hamilton - N Homewood intersection identified as a good area to build upon

ACTIVITY:

Participants interacted with a large, plotted study area map. They marked key destinations (work, school, errands, services) and traced out common travel routes whilst identifying barriers and unsafe conditions and highlighting priority corridors for investment. Staff captured comments through facilitated conversations and written responses on sticky notes.

STICKY NOTES

- Resident interest in busway station near Bakery Square [greater area POI] - displaying need for improved access to Larimer/Bakery Square

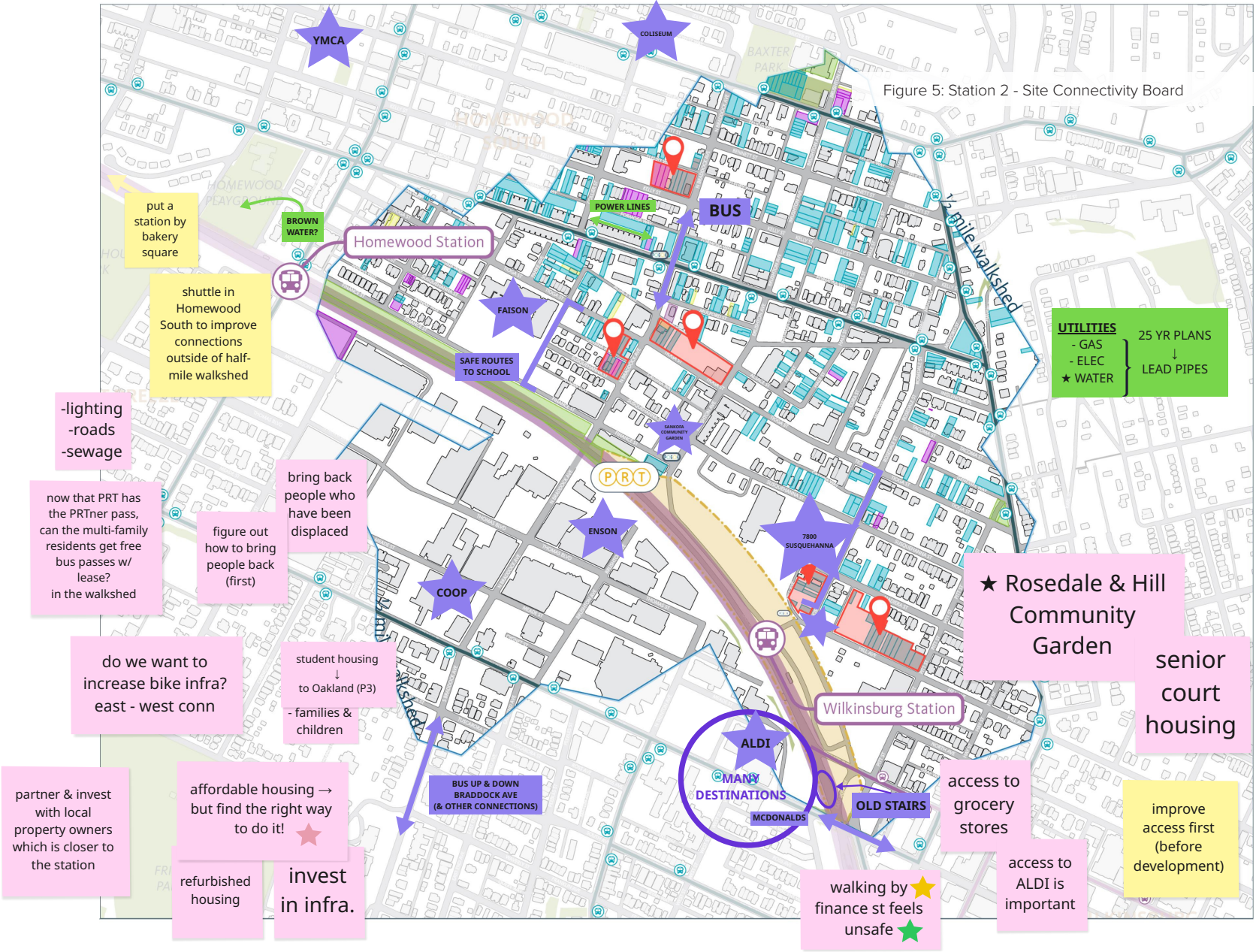


Figure 5: Station 2 - Site Connectivity Board

- Finance St identified as “feeling unsafe.”
- Improved access to affordable grocery stores is a high priority - ALDI in the area, but more could be done to 1-access ALDI and 2-develop alternative stores in the neighborhood
- Interest in student housing as access to the P3 bus route to Oakland could make the area attractive to students who live off-campus and commute via transit

OVERALL

- Priority is to fix infrastructure and utilities issues before development. Potentially setting up a 25-year improvement plan

- to address lighting, road and sidewalk conditions, sewage, and clean water access.
- Give displaced residents priority in returning with regard to new development
- Improve neighborhood access to available transit
- North-South bus connection along N Braddock
- East-West bike connection routes
- Potential neighbor shuttle to improve access outside of half-mile walkshed [East Hills, etc.]

STATION 3

OVERVIEW

OBJECTIVE:

To define preferred building types, neighborhood character, and land uses that should guide realistic and context-appropriate site design.

ACTIVITY 1 - ELIMINATION GAME:

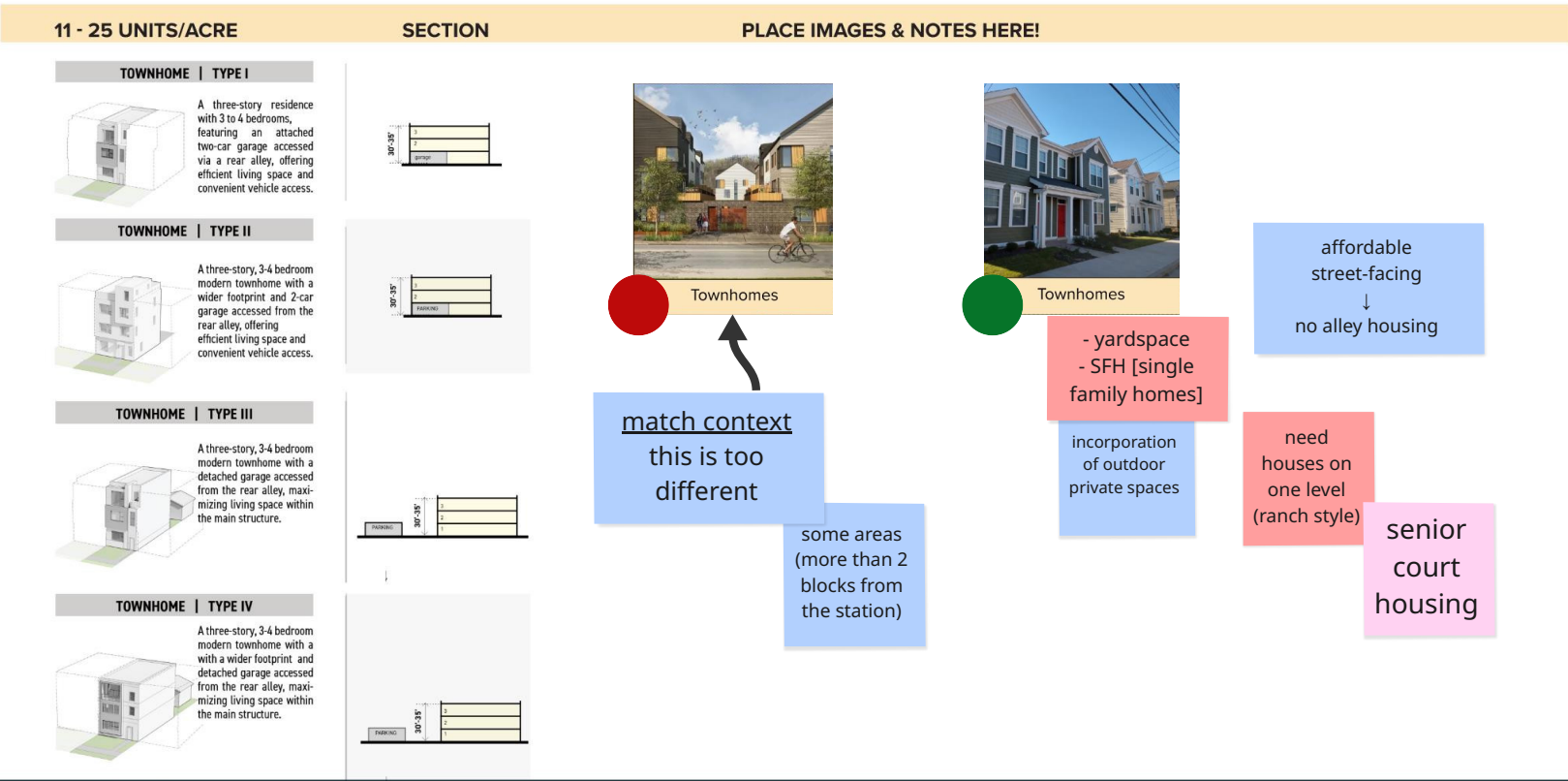
Participants reviewed image cards of different building types. They discussed what feels right versus out of place, appropriate scale and density, preferred ground-floor uses and outdoor spaces, as well as who each development type serves.

OUTCOMES

HOUSING

- On housing, the preference was clear: homes should face the street, be affordable, include private outdoor space, and not rely on rear alley access.
- Single-family and townhome-scale buildings were generally preferred over larger apartment buildings, and residents specifically called for housing that works for seniors - including single-story ranch-style homes and small clustered “court” housing arrangements.
- When shown images of mid-rise apartment buildings, opinion was split, with some residents open to the idea and others uncomfortable with the scale.

Townhomes



Mid-Rise Multifamily



Figure 6A: Station 3 Activity 1 Boards

OUTCOMES

RETAIL

- On retail, residents were equally clear about what they want and what they don’t.
- There’s already an abundance of corner stores in the neighborhood — residents aren’t asking for more.
- Instead, they want small, locally-owned shops, a neighborhood-scale grocery, a brewery, a fitness center, and spaces sized for unique businesses rather than national chains.
- Any retail should support the residential character of the area rather than overwhelm it.

OFFICE & INNOVATION

- For office and workspace, residents were modest in their asks: small business incubator space, co-working options, and a firm requirement that any workspace be fully accessible.

COMMUNITY

- For community facilities, early childhood education - daycares and kindergartens - was the top ask, alongside outdoor gathering spaces with good lighting and greenery.

OPEN SPACE

- When it came to open space, residents pushed back on the idea of adding more vacant-feeling green space.
- The neighborhood already has open land that isn’t being used well; if new open space is created, it should have a clear purpose, like a skate park, an amphitheater, or a bike safety training area for kids.

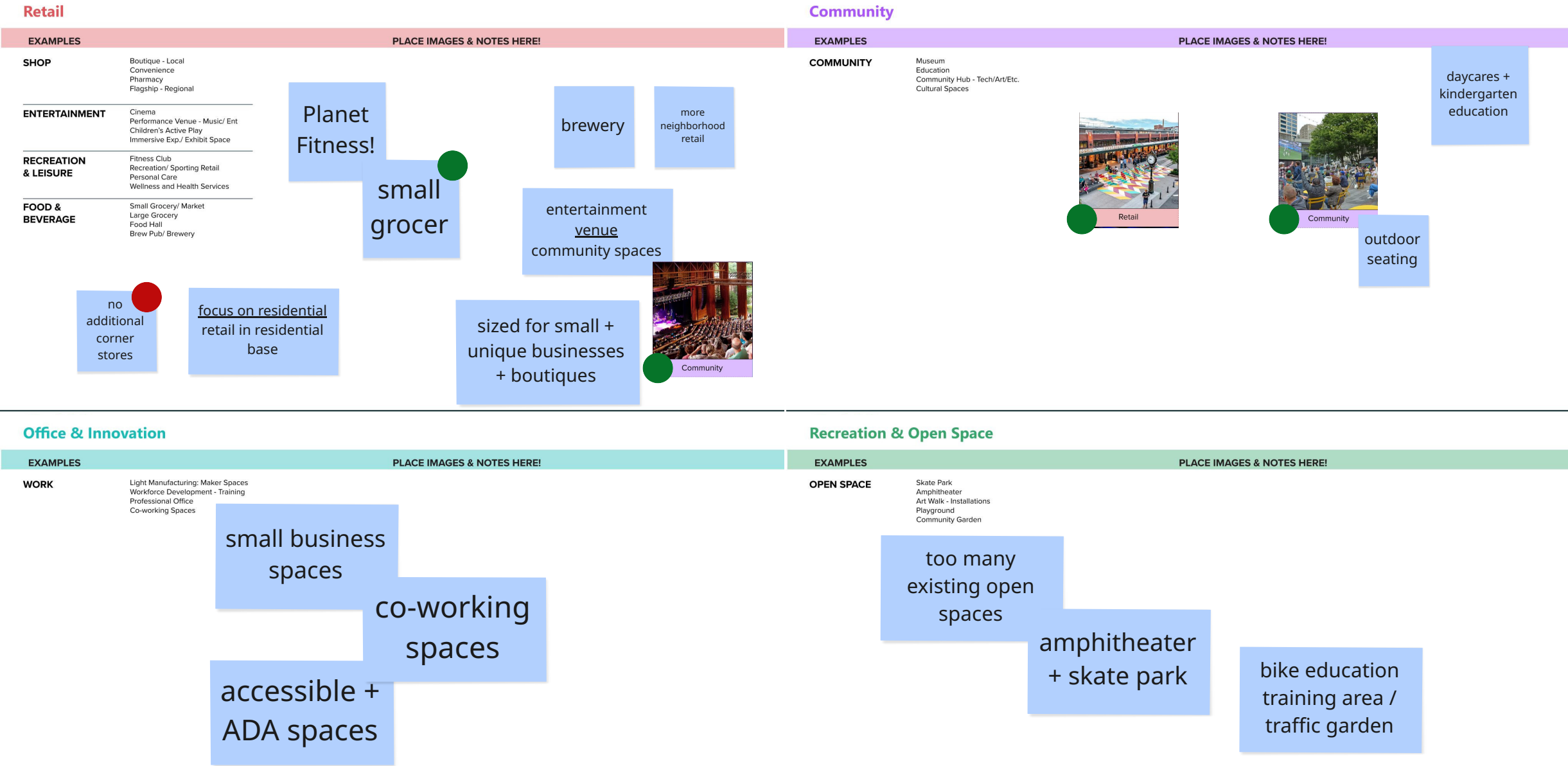


Figure 6B: Station 3 Activity 1 Boards



OVERVIEW

ACTIVITY 2 - SELECTED SITE PRESCRIPTIONS:

Participants used the reviewed image cards and sticky notes to prescribe selected potential development sites with community-preferred uses and architectural character.

OUTCOMES

SITE 1

- Near Susquehanna and N. Braddock, residents saw potential for a mix of housing types — including senior housing specifically — with ground-floor retail along N. Braddock Avenue to keep the street active. They also suggested that investment focus on the parts of the site closest to existing activity on Susquehanna Street rather than starting from scratch on the edges.

SITE 2

- Site 2 generated no feedback, which may reflect uncertainty about the location or simply a lack of time.

SITE 3A

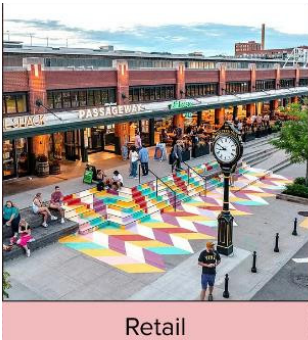
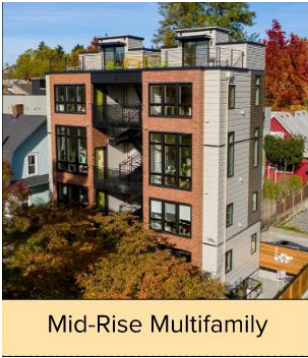
- Residents placed the most pointed note of the entire engagement: “concerns about gentrification.” The fear that new development will price out the people who already live here is real, and it was expressed directly on the map. Residents who did engage with Site 3A suggested smaller-scale retail and a mix of uses rather than large-scale development.

SITE 3B

- Residents flagged a stormwater management opportunity — a concern that has come up repeatedly in this part of the neighborhood.

SITE 4

- Near Kelly Street, the message was straightforward: whatever gets built here should look like it belongs next to the existing homes across the street. New development should respond to its neighbors, not ignore them.



smaller retail
space
mix of uses

mix of
multifamily +
single family

develop closer
to investment
on Susquehanna

opportunity
for senior
housing

ground
floor retail
along N.
Braddock



Potential Site 3A: Pitt - Hill - Madiera
Potential Site 3A: Rosedale - Hill - Madiera



Potential Site 4: Kelly - N Braddock - Bennett

respond to
buildings
across the
street



City Owned
URA
PLB
Publicly Owned
Tax Sale

Figure 7: Station 3 Activity 2 Boards

CONCLUSION & NEXT STEPS

CONCLUSION

The April 13th session made clear that Brushton and Homewood residents have a detailed, grounded vision for what responsible development near the future Brushton Station should look like, and equally clear ideas about what it should not. Residents are not opposed to change. They want investment that works for the people already here: affordable homes at a human scale, local businesses that serve the neighborhood, safe streets to walk on, and a real seat at the table as plans move forward.

The concerns raised- particularly around displacement, infrastructure, safety, and neighborhood character- are not obstacles to planning. They are the plan. Addressing them directly will determine whether this transit investment strengthens the Brushton community or repeats patterns of development that have displaced residents elsewhere.

NEXT STEPS

Based on the input gathered, the following actions will guide the next phase of the study:

- Findings from this session will be incorporated into the site feasibility analysis and used to shape draft site plans for each potential development site
- Draft site plans will be brought back to the community for review and further feedback in a future engagement session
- Infrastructure priorities identified by residents will be shared with relevant City departments and PRT for coordination
- Anti-displacement strategies will be explored as part of the policy and program recommendations in the study

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Fix the basics first - residents want sidewalks, lighting, roads, and utilities addressed before new buildings go up
- Safety getting to the station is a barrier today - traffic, poor sidewalks, and no street lighting make the walk feel dangerous, especially for Rosedale residents
- Returning displaced residents should have first priority in any new housing
- New development should be affordable, street-facing, and fit the scale of the existing neighborhood
- Senior and accessible housing is an unmet need - ranch-style[one-level] and court-style housing were specifically requested
- Retail should be small, local, and neighborhood-serving - no chains, no additional corner stores
- Early childhood education and community gathering spaces are the top community facility priorities
- Keep new development close to the station - residents are realistic that people won't walk far
- Gentrification is a real and present concern, especially for the Rosedale-area sites





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PORT