1. INTRODUCTION

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This report marks the third installment of the Urban Studies Program’s studies of rapid neighborhood change in Philadelphia. It was produced by the members of the Urban Research Methods (URBS 200) class during the Spring 2016 semester. The previous two years, the classes produced reports on Point Breeze and Mantua/ Powelton Village.

All of these neighborhoods are experiencing rapid change of one form or another. In Point Breeze, we discovered that the rapid population changes of the South of South neighborhood had moved across Washington Avenue and were affecting the northern sections of Point Breeze. Mantua/ Powelton Village were facing a quite different pattern as developers had used the features of the new city zoning code to produce student housing without having to seek permission of the city or neighborhood groups. As a result, students from Drexel and, to a lesser extent, Penn had become a visible presence in the neighborhood.

The 2016 class focused its energy on Chinatown North/ Callowhill, a neighborhood within Center City, immediately north of the Vine Street expressway between 8th and Broad Street. Although all of the neighborhoods have experienced rapid change, CNN stands out for its magnitude and persistence of change. Between 1940 and 2014, the neighborhood has gone through virtually a total makeover three times. When we first looked at the neighborhood in the 1940 census, we found an industrial neighborhood, interspersed with boarding houses and family households of a diverse mix of social classes and ethnicities. With the advent of urban renewal during the 1960, the area was targeted for the wrecking ball. By the time of the 1980 census, the neighborhood had gone through a “near death” experience, its population a fraction of what it had been four decades earlier. For the next twenty years, the neighborhood functioned as home to a variety of marginal populations, ranging from the Eraserhead scene
made famous by David Lynch to a number of homeless shelters. Finally, particularly since the
turn of the 21st century, the neighborhood has been “discovered” by the Philadelphia
condominium juggernaut. It is now gaining population and becoming less poor and more white.

Of course, whenever one studies neighborhood change in the early 21st century, the G-
word comes into play. I have encouraged my students to resist it. If the same word can be
applied to three neighborhoods with such different trajectories as Point Breeze, Mantua, and
Callowhill, one should be suspicious that the term has much meaning. Yet, despite my
entreaties, the students insist on using the word and come away from the course convinced that
they have found one more example of this ubiquitous process.

The report is organized around the major units of the course. During the first weeks of
the semester, we explore historical sources, including manuscript censuses and maps. During
the remainder of February and March, the students use census data and the PHMC Community
Health Survey to learn to use data to make an argument. After Spring break, the course focused
on qualitative methods, and the students designed and administered interviews to a variety of
groups within the neighborhood. In 2016, the students decided to focus their interviews around
the perception of the built environment of Chinatown North/ Callowhill.

Students wrote papers at the end of each unit. Then in the final weeks of the semester,
groups of students synthesized the papers for each unit. Thus, the entire class in a sense shares
authorship for the report. I have listed the members of the synthesis group in charge of each
topic at the beginning of the chapters.
2. HISTORY

Megan Brookens, Evan Cernea, Olivia Graham, Tess Kerins, and Emma Singer

I. Introduction

The Chinatown North/Callowhill section of Philadelphia has had numerous identities throughout history, thanks to its placement near the rail yards and therefore use as an area of industry. It became a booming area of industry as the railroad was laid in the 1830s. The 1940 Census of the area showed that most of the residents were boarders and lodgers, but there were a mix of African-American and white residents, albeit the two groups were located in different locations in the neighborhood. By this time, however, many residents were unemployed and those that were not worked low-skill, low-wage jobs. Although a large portion of residents was from Pennsylvania, many were also from other areas of the country or the world. With the introduction of the Vine Street Expressway in the 1960s, Callowhill was divided from the Center City area, contributing to decline. As de-industrialization continued, residents began to move out and vacant spaces began to appear, becoming largely apparent in a 2005 aerial photo. Today, these large industrial areas have been transformed into parking lots or other empty spaces and the neighborhood as a whole is characterized by the existence of homeless shelters and food pantries, while simultaneously having an increase in more upscale restaurants, bars, and condos.

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These changing identities are important to contextualize our understanding of the neighborhood. Construction of the Convention Center as well as a need by Chinatown to expand has contributed to fluidity in the boundaries of the neighborhood. The apparently conflicting groups of people currently residing in the neighborhood may not actually conflict, because their definition of the neighborhood’s boundaries are different than those that we use. There are changing definitions of ownership and belonging within the neighborhood, but having a contextual and historical understanding of the various identities that characterized Chinatown North/Callowhill throughout time allows us to better understand these dynamics.

II. Data and Methods:

We have constructed this history section by analyzing numerous demographic maps as well as analyzing articles and sources that discuss Chinatown North/Callowhill and its history. We have divided history into five sections; Railroads, Immigration, Deindustrialization, Urban Development, and Recent Developments within the area. We have chosen these topics of study because they are most relevant and enlightening regarding the history of the neighborhood.

III. Railroads

Railroads define Chinatown North’s early history. The Baldwin Locomotive Company was first authorized to build a railroad along 9th street from Willow Street
north through to Spring Garden in March of 1833. The development of this railway and its resulting branches became pivotal to the eventual industrialization of the neighborhood. The 1858-60 Philadelphia Atlas shows that in just 25 years, track had been laid throughout the neighborhood, which connected it to areas around Philadelphia and the Northeast at large. A coal and lumber yard had been established on Broad Street that eventually became the rail yard for both the Pennsylvania and Reading Railroads, the two major companies which controlled coal shipping and transport through the region through the 19th century. Abutting both sides of railroad on Noble Street are multiple industrial industries, including a dye shop, a foundry, and a flourmill. Below, a photo shows the factories alongside the new railroad on Noble Street. Access to the nearby railroad was crucial for shipping these products out to the region at large, and reducing transportation costs to shipment allowed these industries to maximize their profit margin. The clustering of these industries in proximity to the railroad suggests that the industrial nature of the neighborhood was in part defined by

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the existence of the railroad.

Reading Railroad Viaduct, 12th Street Bridge (1898). Source: PhillyHistory.org

Railroad corridors continued to proliferate in the neighborhood’s boundaries. The 1862 Philadelphia atlas (Figure 2) shows even more rail corridors running through the neighborhood and an increase in competition from other rail companies trying to cash in on the success of the neighborhood’s industrial nature. Several railway corridors entered and ran horizontally through the district – one along Vine Street and the other along Noble Street before cutting down at 9th Street to run along Willow Street until the Delaware River. Two railway corridors run vertically through the district up 2nd and 3rd Streets. There is another major railway depot in the neighborhood for Germantown & Norristown Railroad Depot at 9th and Green Streets with the vertical

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railway eventually merging along the Willow Street horizontal line. The Germantown and Norristown Railroad emerged after the aforementioned Philadelphia and Reading companies in an attempt to compete and draw from their successes. Early industrialization’s success in the Philadelphia region relied on the development of railroads, and the neighborhood acted as a headquarters for many of the major companies that spearheaded this revolution.
The 1895 Philadelphia Atlas (Figure 3) shows that the progression of the industrial movement deeply ingrained rail networks into the fabric of the neighborhood. This map shows that the Reading and Pennsylvania Railroad rail yards extended even further into the neighborhood than before. Importantly, Hoopes & Townsend, a major Philadelphia manufacturing firm of nuts and bolts located next to it, grew to become “probably the largest of the kind in the United States, if not the world.” The firm was connected with other industries in the immediate neighborhood and the region at large because it manufactured industrial parts that were required in the production of many other industrial goods, such as cars and assembly lines. Locating one of Philadelphia’s largest manufacturers adjacent to the major rail yards indicates that the neighborhood’s proximity to railway transportation made it important in the industrial fabric of Philadelphia at the turn of the 20th century.

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8 Wilbur, History of the Bolt and Nut Industry of America, 110.
It is most important to note that the Reading Viaduct was also developed during this period of industrialization. The viaduct was completed in 1893 in an attempt to get trains off the street, as there had been an increasing incidence of people being struck and killed by railcars passing through the neighborhood. This development speaks to the changing nature of the neighborhood at the turn of the century. Once purely industrial, the neighborhood became concerned with the health of its residents and modified its transportation infrastructure as a result of these concerns. The changing

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character of the neighborhood is best reflected through an examination of immigrants in Philadelphia, including their housing patterns and occupations.

IV. Immigration

Callowhill has always been home to immigrants. In fact, the land that the neighborhood inhabits was first owned by Jurian Hartsfield, who came to Philadelphia from Germany or the Netherlands. Since then, Callowhill has seen a rotating door of immigrants from around the world. The immigrant roots of the neighborhood and the wide range of Callowhill residents that these roots have resulted in may help to shed light on why some consider Callowhill a contested space today.

Immigration in Philadelphia can be tracked in waves, beginning in the 1840s and ending a few years after the end of World War II. During the 1840s and 1850s, immigrants began arriving in Philadelphia in huge numbers. This first wave was comprised of “old” immigrants, including Irish, German, and British citizens who were drawn to Philadelphia for its abundance of manufacturing jobs. As there was no concentration of cheap housing, this wave settled in homes all over the city,\(^\text{10}\) including some in Callowhill.

During the 1840s, Callowhill was considered one of Philadelphia’s finest neighborhoods. Affluent Quakers, rich from Philadelphia’s industrial boom, were its main residents. They built large homes and decorated the Spring Garden Street median

with fountains, sculptures, iron fencing and trees. Immigrants who settled in Callowhill typically did so because it was close to the industrial factories that they worked in. The city of Philadelphia had yet to develop efficient modes of transportation, which meant that a small distance between work and home was essential. Most immigrants lived in smaller, cheaper houses than their Quaker neighbors, and boarding with others was a common practice.

Around the turn of the century, the composition of the city began to change as the rate of building growth increased and transportation improved. Wealthier Philadelphia citizens no longer had to live within walking distance of work and began to utilize more forms of transportation. In Callowhill, the city decided to renovate Spring Garden Street and remove the medians to make room for more motor vehicles. What was once a scenic boulevard became a noisy, urban road. Following these changes, many of the wealthier residents started to move away from Callowhill and into the suburbs surrounding Philadelphia. Able to afford the transportation necessary to commute into the city, they left behind a neighborhood of concentrated and cheap housing.

Large houses, once owned by rich Quaker families, were converted into boarding and tenement houses in order to accommodate the new wave of immigrant workers

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13 Kyriakodis, *Hidden City Philadelphia*.
flooding into Philadelphia.15 These “new” immigrants were mostly Italians, Polish and Russian Jews who arrived in large numbers until around 1914. They typically found work in industrial positions and were drawn to Callowhill, like the wave before them, for its close proximity to the factories.16 The 1942 Land Use Maps reveal the prevalence of three-story multiple family homes throughout Callowhill. They can be seen densely packed between other smaller homes and factory buildings.17 Census Data from the same year shows that many of these smaller homes were inhabited by immigrant families while the multiple story homes served as housing for lodgers (up to 8 or 10 in some cases).18 By the late 20th century, Callowhill had evolved to accommodate for these single immigrant lodgers, with restaurants providing, “meals for single men who sought work in the coal yards, factories, and Locomotive Company”19

It is important to note that throughout all of the history discussed, African Americans were consistently marginalized due to racism. Unlike the white immigrants of the first and second waves, African Americans were turned away from industrial jobs and tended to be pushed into segregated neighborhoods due to discriminatory redlining practices.

15 Kyriakodis, Hidden City Philadelphia.
16 Hershberg, The Annals of the American, 70.
17 “1942 Land Use Maps,” produced by the Works Progress Administration, courtesy of the Free Library of Philadelphia
18 “1940 United States Federal Census,” courtesy of Ancestry.com
Unable to use factory jobs as paths to greater opportunities, most African Americans worked menial jobs as domestics or unskilled workers. Post-World War II Philadelphia, saw a third wave of immigration, referred to as the “newest” immigrants. These were mostly African American individuals who were migrating North from states in the Southeast. They typically settled in the old and deteriorated neighborhoods like Callowhill that had belonged to previous generations of immigrants. Although these houses were still located near factories, between 1930 and 1970, manufacturing activity started to move toward the suburbs. This left many African Americans throughout Philadelphia and Callowhill, in poor, mostly black areas, with few opportunities for work.  

Today, Callowhill remains a home to many immigrants. These numbers only seem to be increasing as the population of Chinatown continues to rise and push its

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boundaries northward across the Benjamin Franklin Parkway. It will be interesting to see how this modern wave of Asian immigrants impacts and is impacted by the Callowhill neighborhood.22

V. Deindustrialization

In the early to mid-1900s, Philadelphia saw industrial growth and an influx of workers migrating to the area from all over. Through examination of the 1942 Land Use Map produced by the Works Progress Administration and the updated 1962 Land Use Map, we found that the land in Chinatown North/Callowhill was primarily used for industrial and commercial use during these decades.23 Some of the industries in the area we saw in our analysis of these maps also included textile factories, a hat factory, an envelope company, a lamp factory, locomotive factories, Forbes Co., and Goodman, Loeb, and Co, and American ICB co. Along with the industries came increased commercial use, parking lots, and large lodger apartments for the factory workers. Further examination shows that many vacant lots in the 1942 map ended up being taken over for commercial use by the 1962 map. There were still several vacant lots in 1962, but the land was generally getting taken up more. The area around American ICB Co., for example, changed from vacant lots to commercial use and also saw several parking lots popping up.

“The Baldwin Locomotive Works, at Broad and Spring Garden Streets, employed hundreds of workers who lived in the immediate area around the factory.”

Before the early 1990s, the sewing industry was also very noticeable in the Callowhill neighborhood. However, industry in the United States experienced a decline after the 1970s and by the mid-1990s many laborers had lost their jobs to cheaper laborers based in other countries. As deindustrialization continued, neighborhoods with a large industrial composition such as Chinatown North/Callowhill were seeing drastic decline as well. After deindustrialization, the neighborhood became the site of abandoned factory buildings, warehouses, and row houses. Many of the parking lots used for these industries were also no longer used and continue to consume public space in the neighborhood today.

Furthermore, a period of “urban renewal” grew out of the lingering effects of the industrial era in an effort to combat the “blight” of old boarding houses and migrant, homeless workers that populated the area. The homeless population in the mid-1900s

24 Library Company of Philadelphia.
in Philadelphia consisted of mostly “casual, unskilled laborers willing to do hard, temporary work in such fields as manufacturing, construction, railroads, mining, and farm labor.” At the time, the homeless population tended to cluster “north of Market Street and east of Broad Street, centered around Eighth Street between Vine and Arch Streets,” in an area known as Skid Row. The area’s association with the homeless population began back in the late 1800s with the establishment of additional charity organizations such as the Sunday Breakfast Association, which is still operating today. Twenty-four years of effort coordinated by social and development organizations in Philadelphia effectively replaced Skid Row with the Vine Street Expressway and newer buildings. By 1976, nineteen flophouse hotels and other establishments related to the Skid Row population had been destroyed to combat this urban blight. In that year, the Darien Hotel, a two-story building with 135 meagerly furnished rooms, was demolished. The “$1.50-a-night” rooms in the Darien resembled many of the other cheap, substandard accommodations that originally drew this population to the area.

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26 Ibid.
27 Ibid.
The Darien Hotel in 1973, three years before it was demolished.

The homeless population still lives in the area concentrated near the Sunday Breakfast Association. The tension between the homeless population and renewal efforts continues, however, these types of projects have been further developed in recent years.

VI. Recent Development

The Callowhill neighborhood has experienced “slow development” since the “departure” of industrial activity that followed the implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement. Callowhill had been a hub for the sewing industry, and following the signing of the agreement between the United States, Canada and Mexico, a lot of labor was moved overseas\(^\text{28}\). Following this period of deindustrialization, many of the spaces within this neighborhood were targeted for residential conversion. New

\(^{28}\) Hua Zong and Ariane Pepsin, *Philadelphia Neighborhoods*. 
development is the apparent result of new zoning plans promoted by the Philadelphia City Planning Commission. These new plans will allow old industrial spaces to become luxury loft apartments 29.

In addition, many of the high-rise or loft buildings being developed today were initially for industrial or commercial use. For example, the Goldtex Apartments, a luxurious 163-unit building located at 315 N. 12th St., used to be a sewing factory. Now, like many other newly renovated buildings in the area, the once abandoned factory features amenities such as a rooftop deck. 30

The Goldtex apartment building during its construction and renovation.

Rezoning the area to take away even more of the industrial type of zoning has become a project of the Philadelphia Chinatown Development Corporation and the

29 Ibid.
30 Ibid
Callowhill Neighborhood Association. Chosen 300 Ministries, Inc. opposes the zoning plan, however, because as a homeless shelter, they believe development of old industrial areas will force the people they serve out of the neighborhood.

The community had organized in the past to fight city-sponsored developmental efforts such as the Vine Street Expressway, but the Callowhill Neighborhood Association (CNA) was formed in 2001 with the goals of promoting “a cohesive community of residents, businesses and institutions while retaining the diversity and character of the area.” Its creation was a product of the city’s attempt to construct a baseball stadium in the area. Sarah McEneaney, a neighborhood activist, was interviewed for this research had this to say about the group’s development:

“A bunch of us met each other when there was no neighborhood association. There was a fight against putting the baseball stadium there in 2000. They wanted to tear down a large chunk of the neighborhood. They considered it blight. We mobilized also with some people in Chinatown. When that was over we looked around at each other and decided to form a neighborhood association.”

According to Philly History’s blog, they formed in order to “assist with neighborhood development” through community clean up and other such activities.

The population of the Callowhill area grew by “27.7 percent between 2000 and 2010,” and the amount of households grew by almost three thousand during the same

\[31\] History, Callowhill Neighborhood Association, Callowhill.org.
\[32\] Deborah Boyer, The PhillyHistory Blog.
decade. The conversion of factory space into residential lofts is cited as the reason for this change, along with the “increasing immigrant population” that Chinatown proper is facing. The Vine Street Expressway seems to serve as a physical barrier to the neighborhood’s spatial expansion; according to a 2014 article in Philadelphia Neighborhoods, many residents of Chinatown Proper don’t want to cross the highway despite the dire need for space. This creates a tension that brings to light the historical nature of this place as one of transience: the Callowhill Neighborhood Association prefers to keep its historical name while the Chinese community refers to the space as “Chinatown North.”

This transient identity means that the names used to define the neighborhood are more fluid. The *Callowhill Neighborhood Association* page asserts that the boundaries are Vine St. to Spring Garden St., and Broad St. to 8th St. However, the City’s Comprehensive Plan, as part of Philadelphia2035, separates the neighborhoods of Poplar, Callowhill, and Chinatown north instead of grouping them all together. Although we refer to the area as Chinatown North/Callowhill, it is sometimes referred to with only one or the other of those names. Furthermore, there are additional names utilized by residents and visitors alike.

The City of Philadelphia’s City Planning Commission put forth new zoning recommendations, aimed at converting a lot of industrially-zoned areas into residential

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33 Zong, Hua and Ariane, *Philadelphia Neighborhoods.*
34 Ibid.
35 Ibid.
ones, in 2013 as part of a strategic plan that will be discussed in more detail later on in this report.

Recent neighborhood developments endorsed by the city include the plans for Viaduct Rail Park, construction that would revitalize the abandoned elevated railway that cuts through the area to create a walking path and increase the amount of green space. Inspired by the Highline in New York, the endeavor hopes to up both property values and urban mobility. The city has earmarked one million dollars to aid in its development.36

3. THE CHANGING DEMOGRAPHY OF CHINATOWN NORTH/ CALLOWHILL

Camara Brown, Brooke Edwards, Senna Lamba, and Serena McNiff

Introduction:

Since the year 1940, the neighborhood of Chinatown North/ Callowhill has undergone significant change. This chapter analyzes these changes through exploring the aggregate census data on a number of different topics. We will start by discussing race and ethnicity, followed by a section on age, family and household structure, educational attainment, employment and industry involvement, income and poverty and finally, income support. Through the aggregate census data, we looked at the neighborhood of Chinatown North/ Callowhill between the years of 1940 and 2014, and compared it to the rest of Philadelphia.

Chinatown North’s population greatly decreased from 1940 onwards and only in the most recent census has shown signs of growth. In 2014 the population was less than half the population in 1940. The total population of tract 13B and 14B was 7,185. The 1960 census shows the population of these two areas decreased by about 50% to 3,606. Chinatown North’s population continued to fall through 1980 when the total population of tract 126 and tract 127 dropped to a mere 787 residents, reaching an all time low. The only increase in population size came after 1980; by 2014 the population had reached 2,666. While Chinatown North’s population has gone through such dramatic fluctuations, Philadelphia’s total population has slowly decreased over time. This reveals how the neighborhood’s population changes are occurring somewhat independently of overall trends in Philadelphia. Although the population of this neighborhood is not at the same place as it was in 1940, Chinatown North’s population seems to be on the rise.
From analyzing the census data from the 1940, 1960, 1970, 1980, and 2010-2014 census surveys, we found that overall the neighborhood transitioned from a primarily industrial white area into a mixed-race, more highly educated neighborhood still undergoing change.

Data & Methods:

The methods for this project involved using Social Explorer to explore the aggregate data and statistics of the neighborhood between 1940 and 2014. The 2014 data is a five-year American Community Survey file based on five 1% samples from 2010-14. The class was broken into smaller groups based on topics, and each group decided on specific Census years to focus on in their data. The neighborhood studied was the neighborhood today known as Chinatown North. The boundaries for this neighborhood are roughly the Vine Street Expressway, Broad Street, Spring Garden Street and 8th Street. In the 1940 and 1960 Census Surveys, this area was divided into two different tracts, tract 14B and tract 13B. Tract 14B is bounded by North Broad Street, Green Street, Vine Street and North 10th Street. Tract 13B is bounded by North 10th Street, Green Street, North 6th Street and Vine Street. In the 1980 data, the tracts have the same borders but tract 14B is then labeled as tract 126 and tract 13B is then labeled as tract 127. In the 2010 census, these two tracts were combined into one tract, labeled tract 376. Therefore, when looking at the older census surveys, we looked at both tracts individually and combined.

Working in groups of three to four, each team member used Social Explorer’s mapping technology to analyze his/her respective category across the neighborhood across the Census years. The topics that groups focused on included: race, age and ethnicity, family and household structure, educational attainment, employment and
industry involvement, income and poverty, and income support. Each group exported their data from Social Explorer to Microsoft Excel, allowing us to analyze the data and notice particular trends. The group then collaborated and shared data, and compared the data across the categories and years to discuss significant trends and patterns. The data and statistics for the city of Philadelphia overall were also examined for each census survey.

There were a few limitations to the study. First of all, the fact that the neighborhood was split into two tracts during the years of 1940-1980 and then later combined into one tract made it more challenging to analyze trends over time, especially given the fact that the two tracts differed quite significantly in certain demographics over the years. In addition, some topics were not part of the census in the earlier surveys, for example, family and household structure was not clearly delineated in the Social Explorer until 1970. The census data categories for employment also differed throughout the census years, which consequently limited our ability to consistently track changes in industry involvement. Furthermore, there was very limited data provided about certain topics, such as ethnicity, which made it difficult to get a sense of certain demographics of the neighborhood.

_Race & Ethnicity:_

When analyzing Race, Ethnicity, and age in Callowhill/Chinatown North using the census, we must understand two factors that affect the statistics and results. First, as mentioned above, until the 2010-2014 census, Chinatown North/Callowhill was divided into two sections—13B and 14B. Using Social Explorer we could analyze each track individually and both tracts together, for the sake of succinctness this section will only analyze the statistics where both tracts were analyzed together. Secondly, in terms of
ethnicity, Hispanic was only added to the 1980 Census. Therefore, some of the statistics concerning race and ethnicity are skewed because of this exclusion. We don’t believe there were many Hispanic or Latinos in the neighborhood before the 2000s or so, but we still must keep that in consideration when analyzing our data.

From our research on Social Explorer, we found that in 1940 Chinatown North/Callowhill was more diverse than the greater Philadelphia population in terms of race and ethnicity. In 1940, the area that comprised this neighborhood was divided into two tracts: 13B and 14B. In these two tracts combined the population was 75.5% white, 23.8% black, and .2% other. In Tract 14B, white residents made up 85% of the population, while black residents made up 13% of the population. 1.8% of the population was classified as other, with no specifications. Tract 13B was similar but had a slightly lower percentage of white residents, with black residents making up 29% of the population and white residents making up 71% of the population. Philadelphia at that same time period had a population that was 86.9% white, 13.0% black, and .1% other. This census shows that for both this neighborhood and Philadelphia at-large there was not a large amount of diversity, but still the two tracts combined were more diverse than the greater Philadelphia.

Although “foreign born” was the only category in the 1940 census for ethnicity and the category was exclusively for white people, our neighborhood still proved to be more diverse in terms of ethnicity compared to the greater Philadelphia area. In Philadelphia, foreign-born white residents comprised only 15% of white residents in the city. In Chinatown North/Callowhill, there were 1,354 foreign-born white people, which is about 25% of the total White population of the neighborhood. Almost a quarter of the white residents in the neighborhood were immigrants and were born somewhere else. In
Chinatown North/Callowhill the highest “foreign born” groups were Lithuanian at 20.2%, Russian at 19.4%, and Polish at 9.1%. In comparison, Philadelphia today still lists Russian as one of the largest ethnic groups at 22.9%, followed by Italian at 20.4%, and German at 9.4%. However, all these “foreign born” are of European descent and most of the immigrants come from just a few countries with the remainder coming from many other countries but with a far lower percentage of individuals. Still, this neighborhood shows to be more diverse racially and ethnically (in terms of the white population). The 1960 census shows us that the neighborhood is following the trend of Philadelphia where the white population is decreasing while the black population and the foreign born population is also decreasing. Tract 14B is a bit more representative of the greater Philadelphia population. In 1960, when we look at the demographics for both tracts combined, the percentage of white residents is 43.4%, the percentage of Black residents is 55.8% and the percentage of “other race” is .9%. In tract 14B, the white population decreased by 18.8% from 1940, to 66.2%, whereas the black population increased by 19.6% from 1940, to 32.6%. 1.2% of the population is classified as “other race.” The racial demographics in tract 13B underwent a greater change; the white population decreased by 39.6% from 1940, to 31.4% while the black population increased by 38.9% from 1940, to 67.9%. .7% of the population is classified as “other race.” In the city of Philadelphia overall, the percentage of white residents also decreased from 1940, to 73.3%, while the percentage of black residents increased to 26.4%. Both tracts individually have a lower percentage of white residents than the city overall and a higher percentage of black residents than the city overall. However, tract 14B is more representative of the city of Philadelphia, with a majority white population and minority black. In terms of ethnicity, Chinatown North showed a decrease in the foreign born
population from 1940 to 1960. The census revealed that 6.1% of the population in both tracts combined is foreign born, a decrease from 1940, while 6.4% of the population is native-born of foreign or mixed parentage.

From 1960 to 1970, the gap between the percentage of white and black residents in poplar decreased, which was representative of a greater trend in Philadelphia as well. In 1970 in Chinatown North/Callowhill, the white population increased to 53.7% while the black population decreased to 46.7%. In Philadelphia, there is still a more than 30% difference between Black and White; the white population decreased to 65.8% and the black population increased to 33.6%. Also, a really interesting category in the 1970 census compared to the 1940 one was the Spanish Origin or Descent Indicator which had two categories and then two subgroups. The categories were native and foreign born which was split into naturalized or alien. For both Chinatown North/Callowhill district and Philadelphia over 90% of the population was native born.

In 1980, the neighborhood of Chinatown North was still split into two census tracts. When we look at the two tracts individually, we see slightly different racial makeups. Tract 126, which was previously labeled as tract 14B, continues to have a majority white population, however the white percentage dropped from 66.2% (in 1960) to 42% white. The black population also dropped slightly to 28%, while the Asian population was at 3.7%. 25% of the population is classified as “Other” race with no specifications. In tract 127, previously known as tract 13B, the population was majority black. The black percentage increased from 67.9% (1960) to 72%, while the white population dropped to 20%, and the Asian population increased very slightly to .8%. It is interesting to see how sharply the two census tracts differ in terms of their racial makeup. In terms of ethnicity, there is an extremely limited amount of data available. The only data provided tells us
that 19% of residents in both tracts were of Spanish origin. However, as the two tracts merge in 2014, we also looked at the data for the tracts combined. The population in both tracts combined was predominantly black (52%), with a white population of 32% and an asian population of 2.1%. This was not completely reflective of Philadelphia overall in 1980, because in that year Philadelphia was majority white.

While Philadelphia underwent a sharp increase in the percentage of black residents between 1960 and 1980 and a decline in the percentage of white residents, Chinatown North had opposite trends in terms of its racial geography. There was an increase in the percentage of white residents and a decrease in the percentage of black residents. In addition, there was a sharp increase of Asian residents at this time, uncharacteristic of Philadelphia as a city. For example, there was an increase in white residents in the neighborhood to 48%. This is very different than the general trend of Philadelphia, where there was, historically, “white flight” from the city. The second shift was a drastic decrease in black residents down to 25%. Therefore, the area’s majority and minority races switched places. Finally, the last shift and probably the most surprising is the sharp increase in Asian residents. The percentage went from 2.1% in 1980 to 20% Asian in 2000 to 21% asian in 2014 . This change did seem to happen gradually over those 35 years, considering the population for track 126 for Asian alone was 15.21% and track 127 was 28.748%. By 2000, the Asian population was where it would be for the next decade to come. Again, this does not reflect the larger city of Philadelphia, where the percentage of asian residents increased by only 5% from 1980 to 2014.

For the 2010-2014 census, the census was changed slightly with respect to certain racial categories. For example, they began to treat “Hispanic” as a distinct category regardless of race. They ended the use of the term “Negro” and offer new ways to
identify Middle Easterners. The race category was expanded as well to include Black or African American, American Indian and Alaska Native Alone, Asian Alone, some other race and two or more races. From the 1940 census to the 2014 census, you can see a distinct increase in the number of countries present on the census, which shows the amount of diversity in the United States as well as a shift towards a more inclusionary census that recognizes the diversity present.

Overall, in terms of race and ethnicity, from 1940-2014, there have been three main trends. Firstly, the black population has increased significantly in Chinatown North until the year 1960 and then decreased significantly. In Philadelphia as a city, the black population has continued to increase gradually since 1940. Secondly, the Asian population has increased significantly in Chinatown North/Callowhill which is not representative of the Philadelphia. Lastly, the neighborhood has become more ethnically diverse.

Figure 1. Racial composition, Chinatown North/Callowhill, 1940-2014
Figure 2. Racial composition, Philadelphia, 1940-2014
Age:

In terms of Age in 1940, Chinatown North/Callowhill had an older population than Philadelphia in general. The largest age group for this neighborhood was 45 to 49 years old, whereas the largest age group for Philadelphia in general was 20 to 24 years. Perhaps this difference was caused from a holdover of industrial workers who had lost their jobs during earlier periods of decline but had stayed in the neighborhood because of their social ties. Census information from the enumeration districts that include
Chinatown North neighborhood corroborates this conclusion; the neighborhood was filled with male older, underemployed White people living in boarding homes.

In general, the aggregate census data from the 1940, 1960, 1980 and 2014 census suggests that the predominant age population in this neighborhood has shifted from older adults, mainly 45-54 year olds, to younger adults, as in 25 to 34 year olds. While these trends tend to differ when looking at 13B/tract 127 and 14B/tract 126 independently, the data from the combined population of these areas reflects the increase in younger adults over time. In 1940, 10.8% of the combined population of 13B and 14B was 45 to 49 years old. This population was the largest age group in the total area and independently in 13B and 14B holding 10.5% and 11.4% of the population respectively. In 1960 while the total population of the neighborhood continued to decrease, the 55 to 59 year old population became the largest age group in the combined area, with 9.7% of the population. During the baby boom of the 1940s, the under 5 years old age [MS1] category was the 2nd most populous age group in the combined 13B & 14B area with 9.6% of the total population. When looking at the areas independently, the under 5 years old category was the most populous for tract 14B with 9.1% of the population and the 55 to 59 year old category was the most populous for 13B with 11% of the population.

Figure 3: Chinatown North/ Callowhill: 1940 and 1960 Census Age Trends
By 1980, the predominant age group was 25 to 34 year olds that made up 13.1% of the total population of tract 126 and tract 127 combined. Again, there are variations when we analyze tract 126 and tract 127 independently. The predominant age group in tract 127(13B) shifted from under 5 year olds to 65 to 74 year olds. The predominant age group in tract 126 (14B) shifted from older adults at 55 to 59 year olds to the younger adults from 25 to 34 years old. In 2014, the largest age group by far was the 25 to 34 year olds, which held practically a third of the total population of this area at 32.8%

Proportionally, this neighborhood has a far greater population of young adults compared to the greater Philadelphia area where 25 to 34 year olds constitute 17.2% of the population. The second most populous age group in Chinatown North is 18 to 24 year olds with 17.5% of the population. The aggregate data shows a clear increase in younger adults in Chinatown North coupled with a recent increase in population overall.
In terms of age and gender, the largest age group for males has been middle aged for most of the time and males have grown to be mostly older than the females. In 1960, the 18-34 year-old age group took up the largest percentage at 33.47% in tract 126 and the 35-64 year olds took up the largest percentage in tract 127 at 44.52%. By 1980, 18-34 year olds still held the greatest percentage at 33.4%, but in tract 127 the largest age group was the under 18 group at 36%. Then in 2010, the 35-64 age group had the largest percentage by far with 54.19%. In 1980, 2000, and 2010 in tract 126 and 127 respectively, the median male age by population went from 32.3 to 35.6 to 36.2 and from 26.67 to 37.5 to 36.2. As mentioned previously, the predominant age group of men shifted over time and fluctuated, but the neighborhood has clearly been mostly a neighborhood for middle-aged men. In terms of females, women tended to be slightly older than the men. In 1960, 200, and 2010 in tract 126 and 127 respectively, the median female age by population changed from 32 to 29.5 to 30.3 and 43.64 to 44.4 to 30.3. As the data shows, men started off in 1980 with a younger median age (32, 26.67) compared to females (32, 44.4), but over time the median age for male (36.2) began to rise higher
than females (30.3).

For women, the predominant age decreased overall. For females, in 1960 in tract 14B the largest age group was 35-64 year olds with 38% of the female population; in 13B the largest age group was also 35-64 year olds with 43% of the population. 35-64 year olds stayed the largest age group in tract 126 with 32.9%, and in tract 127 the largest group moved to 65 and above with 34%. By 2010, 46% of the population was between the ages of 18 and 34 years old.

Family & Household Structure:

We also looked at family and household structure in the neighborhood. Specifically, this refers to the types of households present in an area: including the presence of children in a household, the split between married and unmarried couples, the quantity and types of group quarters, and the racial distribution within and across households. Family households are households with two or more individuals related by blood, marriage or adoption. We faced a few limitations as family and household structure was not clearly delineated until 1970. In addition, there was an inconsistency of baseline variables across the decades of census data provided by Social Explorer. The tracts also changed.

In the 1940 census data, we see that 26.7% of residents in the neighborhood were boarders or lodgers, compared to only 7.8% of the entire Philadelphia population. 50.9% of the population in the neighborhood lived in a married-couple family households, whereas 75% of the Philadelphia population lived in a married-couple family household. 7.6% of the population were males living alone, compared to only .8% of the Philadelphia population.

In 1970, there were 642,145 occupied households in Philadelphia and 890 in
Chinatown North, with a population of 2,019. While 89.3% of Philadelphians overall lived in family households, only 54.6% of people in Chinatown North/Callowhill lived in family households. In addition, while 56.6% of all households in Philadelphia were composed of married husband-wife couples, only 17.6% of households in Poplar were married couples. 26.8% of families in Poplar were married couples with a child under the age of 18, compared to 38.7% in Philadelphia county. In terms of ‘other family’ households, such as single parent households, 3.4% of households in Chinatown North had a single male head of the family, while 32% of households in the neighborhood had a single female head of family. These percentages for Philadelphia county overall were 1.2% and 18.9%, respectively. Finally, 15.8% of individuals in Chinatown North were found to live in non-institutionalized group quarters, such as rooming houses. In Philadelphia, only 2.3% of the population lived in group quarters. Overall, we find that in 1970, compared to Philadelphia, our neighborhood had a smaller percentage of family households, a smaller percentage of married couple households, a smaller percentage of married couples with children, and greater percentages of ‘other family’ households and group quarter living.

The situation was similar in 1990. The total population of Philadelphia decreased to 1,585,777 with 603,075 households and the population of our neighborhood decreased to 1,034 with 474 households. In Philadelphia, 97.2% of the population lived in households at this time, while 2.8% lived in group quarters. In Chinatown North, 90.8% of the sample lived in households, while 9.2% lived in group quarters, reflecting a decrease in the percentage of residents living in group quarters as compared to 1970. 32.9% of households in our neighborhood were identified as family households, and 67.1% were non family households, while the county had opposite trends, with majority
family households. In Chinatown North, 16.2% of households were married-couple
family households, while the remaining 16.7% of family households were designated as
‘other family’ households. 1.9% of households had male single parent heads of
households, and 14.8% of households had single female parent household heads. In
Philadelphia overall, 37.7% of households were composed of married-couple families
and 25% were classified as “other family” households, with 4.8% of households with a
single male parents, and 20.3% of households with a single female parents. In terms of
children, 32.2% of households had one or more residents under the age of 18, while in
Chinatown North only 18.4% of households had residents under the age of 18. Overall,
we find that in 1990, compared to Philadelphia county, our neighborhood had a smaller
percentage of households, a smaller percentage of family designated households, a
smaller percentage of married-couple family households, a smaller percentage of married
couples with children households, and a greater percentage of group quarter living. These
trends are very similar to those of 1970, the only significant change is that in 1970, our
neighborhood had greater percentages of ‘other family’ households compared to the rest
of the city, whereas in 1990, the neighborhood has smaller percentages of male single
parent and female single parent household heads as compared to Philadelphia.

In 2010, the two census tracts merged to one census tract. The neighborhood had
1,106 households compared to 599,736 households in Philadelphia. Compared to 1990,
the number of households in Philadelphia decreased and the population decreased to
1,526,006, while the population of our neighborhood actually increased to 2,986. The
average household size for the county was 2.45, while the average household size for
Chinatown North was 1.99. In our neighborhood, family households made up 31.9% of
all households, married-couple families made up 19.8% of households, while ‘other
family’ households made up 12.1%. However, in Philadelphia, family households comprise 56.8% of all households, with married couple families making up 28.3% of households, and ‘other family’ designations comprising the remaining 28.5%. As we can see, our neighborhood had a smaller percentage of family households, and a smaller percentage of married couple family households. In the ‘other family’ households in Chinatown North, 8.8% of households had a single female head of household, while 3.3% had a single male head of household. These percentages for Philadelphia county were 22.5% and 6% respectively, both slightly higher. 13.5% of households in Chinatown North had residents under the age of 18, while 30.2% of households in the county had residents under the age of 18, suggesting that our neighborhood has a slightly older population. Of the remaining 68.1% of non family households in Chinatown North, 46% were a single person living alone, and 22.1% were householders not living alone. In Philadelphia, 34.1% of households were a single person living alone and 9.1% were a householder not living alone. 26.2% of Chinatown North’s population lived in group quarters, compared to 3.8% for Philadelphia. This group includes institutionalized group quarters (2% of the neighborhood’s population) and non-institutionalized group quarters (24.2% of the population). The non-institutionalized population in Philadelphia was only 2.5% of the total population of the city. This may be due to the presence of shelters for the homeless in our neighborhood. In terms of racial distribution, 52% of households in Chinatown North had white heads of households, while only 46% of households in Philadelphia did. 23% of households in our neighborhood had black heads of households, a decrease from 1990, while the statistic for the city was 42%. The percentage of Asian heads of households in our neighborhood increased from 1990 to 19.7% and increased in Philadelphia overall to 5.2%. 
In conclusion, compared to the city of Philadelphia, Chinatown North continuously had a smaller percentage of households, possibly indicative of the fact that the neighborhood was once a primarily industrial area. There was a decrease in family households between 1970 and 1990, and a decrease in the percent of married-couple family households. However, between 1990 and 2010, there was a slight increase in the percent of married-couple family households. Chinatown North has always had a larger percentage of people living in group quarters compared to Philadelphia overall, with a big increase in this percentage from 1990 to 2010. This reflects the presence of a variety of housing facilities in the neighborhood, including emergency and transitional shelters for the homeless. There has been a consistent decrease in the percentage of total households with one or more people under the age of 18 in Chinatown North, which may be due to the neighborhood’s low presence of family households.

Table 3: Percentage of Households Consisting of Married-Couple Families in Chinatown North and Philadelphia over time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Chinatown North %</th>
<th>Philadelphia %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
<td>56.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
<td>37.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>19.8%</td>
<td>28.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Education:

We next looked at the population’s educational attainment, a key determinant in
employment and income later in life. In order to be able to observe education levels at different points over time, we used census data on Social Explorer from 1940, 1970, and the American Community Survey 2010-14. The data categories differed by decade with 1970 and 2010-14 data providing a demographic breakdown of educational attainment by both race and gender while 1940 only provided a gender breakdown. In this analysis we will compare the educational attainment of the Chinatown North/Callowhill population with the overall Philadelphia population in order to provide a framework to ground data patterns. Additionally, we will look at educational breakdown by race and gender (when the data is available) to understand demographic trends occurring within the population. While the educational attainment of the Chinatown North/Callowhill population has historically been lower than Philadelphia, attainment has greatly increased in recent years. While people in the neighborhood are receiving Bachelor’s and professional degrees at high percentages, there are also high percentages of people receiving high school or less than high school education. This gap between the most and least educated can be tied to a number of other trends in the neighborhood.

In 1940, the Chinatown North/Callowhill population had a much lower level of educational attainment than Philadelphia. Only 15% of the population 25 years and over in the neighborhood had some high school education or more, while in Philadelphia this rate was more than double at 32.9%. The overwhelming majority of the neighborhood’s population only completed some elementary school education (71.1%) meaning that most of the population was uneducated. It is likely that the majority of people did not continue past an elementary education because it was not a necessity for employment. During this time period, many of the primary work sectors were labor-intensive and low-skill service positions, which did not require a high level of education. Consequently education was
likely not prioritized simply due to the demands of the job market.

It is also important to note that the Chinatown North/Callowhill neighborhood was disproportionately male—women comprised only 32.7% of the population. Women were more likely to have some high school education or more than men (14.9% for men; 16.76% for women). This gender gap in education could be due to men leaving school to enter the workforce, while during this time period women were underrepresented in the workforce. The majority male population in the neighborhood could help us in part to understand the lower educational attainment given labor demands. But we would then expect for there to be a gap between male and female educational attainment in Philadelphia, which is not the case. In Philadelphia, the rates of some high school or more are roughly equal for both men and women (cannot confidently come to this conclusion given that the difference in education between men and women in this neighborhood is fairly small. Also, for Philadelphia as a whole, the male educational attainment for some high school or more is slightly higher than female attainment.

Figure 5. Percent of adults with some high school or more, Philadelphia, 1940
* Neighborhood of Chinatown North/Callowhill is located in the two census tracts inside the blue square. The lighter shading of the neighborhood in comparison to the surrounding regions shows the lower educational attainment of the neighborhood.

Although the educational attainment in Chinatown North/Callowhill had greatly increased by 1970, the neighborhood still was significantly less educated than Philadelphia. 45.9% of the population 25 years and over completed high school, about a third less than in Philadelphia where 66.5% of people did. Only 7.5% of adults in Chinatown pursued a college education while in Philadelphia 12.2% of the population did. The 1970 census data included more categories than the 1940 data allowing us to look at connections between race and education, in addition to gender. In terms of gender, women had slightly higher educational attainment; however, the gaps were not
particularly significant. Educational attainment by race revealed a significant gap in college education between white and black people. Although white and black people completed high school or more at a fairly similar level (48.2% of white population; 42.6% of black people), white people completed college at a rate over four times as high as black people. The lower percentage of black people attending college was a national and county-wide trend; however, it was especially prevalent in the neighborhood of Chinatown North/Callowhill.

The recent American Community Survey data from 2010-2014 shows that overall the population is more educated than in past decades; however, there is a growing gap between the most and the least educated. In Chinatown North/Callowhill, 22.5% of people 25 years and over had less than a high school education, 25.9% completed high school, and 26.4% held a Bachelor’s degree. In Philadelphia County, 18.6% had less than a high school education, 34.4% graduated high school, and 14.2% held a Bachelor’s degree. This data reveals that people in the Chinatown North/Callowhill neighborhood are receiving their Bachelor’s degrees at a significantly higher rate than in Philadelphia County as a whole. However, at the same time, there is a higher percentage of people not completing high school, consequently leaving them in a very difficult state given the growing need for education for employment. Looking at this data, we would expect to see many people employed in high-skilled professional jobs requiring a degree while also seeing many people struggling to find work in the formal economy without a high school education. The education breakdown by gender shows that women in this neighborhood had higher educational attainment overall. A third of women hold Bachelor’s degrees or higher in this area while only about one fifth of men do. This gender gap in education is reflected in the high number of homeless men who likely lack high school or college
education. Overall the significant increase in people with Bachelor’s and professional degrees could largely be a direct product of new investment in the area drawing in highly educated people to new residential spaces.

Table 4. Educational Attainment for Census Tract 376 (Chinatown North/Callowhill) vs. Philadelphia County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistics</th>
<th>Census Tract 376, Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania</th>
<th>Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population 25 Years and over:</td>
<td>1,967</td>
<td>1,009,812</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less Than High School</td>
<td>443</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Graduate (includes equivalency)</td>
<td>509</td>
<td>25.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>520</td>
<td>26.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s degree</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional school degree</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctorate degree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall we saw that the Chinatown North/Callowhill population was less educated than Philadelphia County as a whole. Given the type of employment and the low need for education during the 1940s and possibly even the 1970s, the consequences of lower educational attainment were likely not as great as they are today. Today we live in a society with a growing demand for higher education for gainful employment. This trend is reflected in the growing number of people with Bachelor’s and professional degrees. However, it is essential to also look at the opposite end where there is still a large percentage of people not receiving their high school education. Economically there are incentives to cater to the nation’s top, as developers have done in this neighborhood.
with investment in lofts and high-end establishments. The impact of educational attainment can be seen throughout the other categories we have analyzed regarding the Chinatown North/Callowhill population.

Employment:

A population’s employment status and industry involvement is intertwined with a number of other demographic statistics including educational attainment, income, and poverty rates. Nationally the type of work and the rates at which people are employed have changed over time reflecting shifts in the economy and the needs of the labor market. As discussed in the history chapter, this neighborhood was once primarily an industrial neighborhood, therefore, even before looking at the employment data, we expected that the 1940 occupation types would primarily be industrial type service work. Given the large number of people with Bachelor’s degrees in the area in our most recent census data on education, we would expect to see many people currently employed in professional work. However, we would also expect to see many people struggling to find employment given the high percentage of people with a high school education or less in the neighborhood. For this section, we analyzed census data from 1940, 1970, and 2014 allowing us to look at changes over time and to analyze education and employment concurrently.

The breakdown of the primary types of occupation has dramatically shifted over the past seventy years. The 1940 census data only recorded nine categories while the 1940 and 2000 census data included 54 categories and subcategories, which is likely reflective of the growing number of industries and types of occupation. In the 1940 occupational breakdown for Chinatown North/Callowhill, the most popular occupations were service workers (except domestic), operatives/kindred workers, and sales/kindred
workers. Thirty years later the occupational breakdown for 1970 largely mirrors the 1940 data with the top occupations including service workers (except private households), clerical/kindred workers, operatives (except transport), and craftsmen/foremen/kindred workers. These most popular occupations are generally positions not requiring a high level of education. The 2000 and 2010 data reveals a completely different picture. In both the 2000 and 2010 data for the neighborhood, the top three occupations were management, business and financial operations; professional and related occupations; and productions operations. While it is difficult to analyze without descriptions of the occupations, it is clear that this work requires a higher level of education than the occupations of the decades prior. For both the 2000 and 2010-14 data, the percentage of people employed in these professional occupations was higher for Chinatown North/Callowhill than the city average. The dramatic shift in occupation type matches our hypothesis given the increases in educational attainment.

Figure 6 1940 Occupation by Type for Chinatown North/Callowhill vs. Philadelphia

This industry shift in Chinatown North/Callowhill is correlated with changes in
the built environment of the neighborhood itself. The traces of the neighborhood’s industrial and manufacturing past can be seen simply from walking down the streets. Many of the historic industrial buildings, factories, and warehouses remain in the neighborhood; however, many of these spaces are being repurposed for new developments (such as luxury lofts) that cater to a more upper class population. The area also has a number of shelters likely reflecting the high percentage of people who are unable to support themselves in the current labor market.

Another important factor to analyze is gender and employment, and specifically the impact of women entering the workforce. In 1940, in both Chinatown North/Callowhill and in Philadelphia County there were about two men in the workforce for every woman. By 2010, women were dominant in the workforce with an employment rate of 65.8% compared to 63% for men. As we saw in the education data, women also received professional degrees at a higher rate than men. Looking at the high percentage of women with advanced education entering the workforce helps to explain the occupational shifts to some degree. Overall for both women and men, the unemployment rate across time had been higher in Chinatown North/Callowhill until recent years. Employment in the neighborhood increased greatly for both genders between 2000 and 2010. This is especially significant for males given the decrease in male employment in Philadelphia County. These increases in employment could partially be explained by the increases in the college-educated population in the neighborhood.

Figure 7.Unemployment rate, males, Philadelphia 2000

*
* The neighborhood lies within the blue circle.

Figure 8. Male unemployment rate, Philadelphia, 2014
The lighter shades in the blue circle representing the neighborhood shows that unemployment rate has decreased.

Reflecting on the changes in employment since 1940 reveals many logical trends. For instance, over time more and more women entered the workforce largely reflecting women’s progress in the country. Women in this neighborhood now are becoming more educated and have a higher employment rate than men. Over the past seventy years, occupation type has shifted from industrial and service-oriented positions to more professional type positions requiring higher levels of education. The neighborhood still suffers from high rates of people outside of the labor market likely because they lack the skills for education or employment. With the new developments designed to attract a professional middle and upper class to the area, it is unclear how lower-income classes will be affected and what the built environment of the neighborhood will look like in decades to come given the neighborhood’s occupational and educational shifts.

Figure 9. Percent of men employed, Chinatown North/Callowhill and Philadelphia, 1940-2014
Income and Poverty:

We also studied income and poverty levels in the neighborhood over time. Since the earliest census records of median household income and poverty were in the 1980 census, we only analyzed the 1980 and 2000 census as well as the ACS 2010-2014 file. In 1980, the population of Chinatown North had significantly lower income levels.
than Philadelphia according to all three of the measures we analyzed. Chinatown North had a median household income of $18,491 in 1980, which was less than half of the median household income of the county of Philadelphia ($40,047). The area also had a higher percentage of people living below the poverty line than in Philadelphia as a whole. In the Chinatown North area, 46.3% of people were below the poverty line versus only 20.6% of Philadelphia. Another measure of poverty that we analyzed was the ratio of income to poverty level. According to this measure, 74.3% of the population in the Chinatown North area was considered to be “doing poorly”, meaning that their calculated ratio was below 1.99, whereas only 42.7% of Philadelphia’s population was in this category. However, there was a large difference in median household income between the two tracts making up our neighborhood in 1980. Census tract 126 was the western area of the neighborhood and had a significantly higher median household income, almost three times higher than tract 127.

In 2000, the wealth disparity between Chinatown North and Philadelphia decreased. The percentage of people in Chinatown North that were considered to be “doing poorly” according to the ratio of income to poverty level decreased from 74.3% in 1980 to 65.3% in 2000. In Philadelphia county, this percentage increased by a small margin, from 42.7% in 1980 to 43.4% in 2000. However, the percentage in Chinatown North remains high compared to the rest of the city. Meanwhile, within the area itself, the wealth disparity between census tracts 126 and 127 increased even more as the median household incomes were $45,252 and $10,660 (adjusted for inflation to match value in 2014) respectively.

In the 2010-14 ACS, we found that the population of Chinatown North grew both in size and income since the 2000 census. The population grew from 1,562 to 2,025 in
2010 and the median household income essentially doubled from $25,162 in 2000 to $52,679 in 2010-14. In keeping with the increase in income levels, the poverty levels in Chinatown North decreased, from 33.9% of the population living below the poverty line in 2000, to only 7.8% in 2010. The percentage of the population considered poor or struggling by the ratio of income to poverty level also declined between 2000 and 2010-14, from 65.3% to 40.4%. Interestingly, as Chinatown North experienced a boom, the rest of Philadelphia saw a decline in population as well as a decreased median household income. Furthermore, the percentage of people deemed poor and struggling in Philadelphia increased from 43.4% to 45.8%. 2010 was the first year in which Chinatown North had higher income levels and lower poverty levels as compared to Philadelphia as a whole.

In conclusion, the disparity of poverty and income levels between Chinatown North and the city of Philadelphia decreased between 1980 and 2014. Chinatown North experienced a general upward trend with regards to median household income overtime, as well as a decrease in percentage of people considered poor or struggling. On the other hand, the city of Philadelphia experienced an overall decrease in median household income and an increase in the percentage of people considered poor or struggling.

Figure 11. Income and poverty, Chinatown North/Callowhill, 1980-2014
Income support

We also looked at measures of income support data such as percentage of households with public assistance. This measure has changed greatly over time. In 1980, 45.4% of households in Chinatown North received public assistance income, as compared with the city of Philadelphia, which had only 17%. By 1990, the percentage in Chinatown North dropped to 15.3%, about a third of what it was in 1980. After a slight
increase in 2000 to 16.5%, this number continued to drop over the years to 3.1% in the 2010-14 ACS data. Throughout all of the years, Chinatown North had greater percentages of households receiving public assistance than the city. However, by 1990, Chinatown North was very close to Philadelphia levels (15.3% and 14%). By 2000, the neighborhood remains fairly consistent, but the city’s percentage decreased to around half of their 1990 levels. While the city’s levels stayed constant after 2009, the Chinatown North levels fluctuated, reaching a low in 2010.

Social security income was another measure that we analyzed for income support over time. Similar to the public assistance income, Social Security Income dropped dramatically between 1980 and 1990, from 43.3% of households with social security income to 18.4% of households. After this initial drop of over 50%, this percentage stayed fairly constant over the years, with fluctuations of just a few percentage points, dropping to 15.6% in 2000, then to 14.3% in 2010-14 ACS data. Additionally, there are some measures on the ACS that combine food stamps and income support, although only in the last three surveys. The percentage of households with SSI, cash public assistance income, or food stamps/SNAP increased dramatically from 24% in 2012 to 29.1% in 2013, and then jumped to 47.6% in 2014, doubling from two surveys prior.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, we found that the neighborhood of Chinatown North/ Callowhill has undergone significant change in the years between 1940 and 2014. In terms of race and ethnicity, the neighborhood changed from a primarily white area to a mixed race area today. The neighborhood also shifted from a neighborhood with a larger percentage of older residents to a neighborhood with a larger percentage of younger residents today. The neighborhood has always been less of a residential neighborhood, with a smaller
percentage of households and family households compared to the city of Philadelphia overall in every census survey. In 1940, the neighborhood had a relatively lower rate of educational attainment compared to Philadelphia overall, but in the latest census, there has been an increase in the percentage of residents with Bachelor’s degrees, making it higher than the percentage for Philadelphia as a city. In recent years, there has been an increase in the percentage of residents without a high school degree in the neighborhood, creating an education gap in Chinatown North. In terms of employment, overall, the neighborhood has moved from a primarily industrial area into a more professional area today. In terms of income and poverty, the disparity in poverty between Chinatown North and the city of Philadelphia has decreased throughout the years, but our neighborhood has had higher levels of income support consistently between 1940 and 2014.
4. COMMUNITY HEALTH

Sarah Starman, Taylor Hosking, and Kyle Kobilka

Introduction

It has long been recognized that adequate care for one’s health and well-being is among humanity’s most primal of needs, and that a failure to properly provide this usually results in a failure of higher-level functions. The same is true for communities, and thus it is essential to study community health. Poor community health is both a cause and a result of other problems that plague society like crime, economic and racial inequality, and limited social mobility. Using data to see how poor community health manifests itself is the first step to understanding how a particular need is not being met. For example, if it is found that a community suffers from a high rate of mesothelioma, it would probably be a smart idea to check for asbestos. The recent lead-water crisis in Flint, Michigan, is a good example of how a failure to adequately care for a community’s health might cause severe social strain and dire human consequences. Thus, when trying to form a complete picture of Chinatown North and its relationship to Philadelphia as a whole, it is critical to examine health and healthcare within the neighborhood.
We studied seven facets of community health: 1) barriers to healthcare; 2) chronic conditions; 3) health insurance; 4) current health status; 5) nutrition; 6) neighborhood perception; 7) community engagement. Because the last two topics relate more other chapters in this report, this chapter focuses only on the first five topics. We compare how those variables were distributed in the City of Philadelphia and in Chinatown North to see if there were meaningful differences in the community of interest, as well as the relationship of health variables to independent variables. The goal of this chapter is to summarize the findings in each of the five categories and to compare the overall health of the Chinatown North Community to health of the city and provide in-depth analysis for each topic.

**Methodology**

All data for this section, Community Health, is taken from the Public Health Management Corporation’s Community Health Survey for the years 2008 through 2015, for the city of Philadelphia. This includes over 14,000 responses from city residents, who were asked a variety of questions about their health and demographic characteristics, primarily over the phone. When analyzing Philadelphia, all cases in the sample are considered. Chinatown North is approximately defined as the area bordered by Spring Garden Street, Broad Street, the Vine Street Expressway, and 6th Street, which is just north of Philadelphia’s Center City area and Chinatown proper. However, the Community Health Survey does not examine this neighborhood specifically. Instead,
between 2008 and 2012, it designated a larger area that encompassed Chinatown North but extended much further north, with the northernmost boundary as W. Montgomery Avenue. The Community Health Survey calls this larger area “Poplar/Ludlow/Yorktowne,” and it will be referred to simply as Poplar from here on. While this area is larger than the specific neighborhood we are studying, it is the closest proxy to Chinatown North that was available. In 2015 we were able to use the zip code 19123 as a proxy, which encompasses Chinatown North as well as most of the Northeast quadrant of central Philadelphia. The map below shows the relationship between Chinatown North and the proxies that we used for the neighborhood.

![Map comparing Chinatown North, Poplar/Ludlow/Yorktowne, and 19123 zip code](image)

Figure 1: The Poplar/Ludlow/Yorktowne area compared to Chinatown North, with the 19123 zip code superimposed.
Unfortunately, only a few hundred responses were obtained from this area, making it slightly difficult to understand trends and make predictions about community health.

The Community Health Survey was conducted over landline and cellular telephones with individuals over the age of 18. In Philadelphia (and other participating counties) all households with telephone access were eligible, but were selected specifically to ensure that the sample was geographically diverse and representative of all subpopulations. However, PHMC did note that they purposefully oversampled older respondents, and that some of the randomly selected individuals did not participate, which impacts the data. Additionally, a potential issue arises because the health characteristics of individuals with telephone access may differ from individuals without telephone access, which additionally biases the survey. Despite these shortcomings, however, the Community Health Survey provides relatively representative and useful data.

This section on community health is divided into five general categories: Nutrition, Chronic Conditions, Current Health Status, Barriers to Health, and Insurance. In each of these categories, there were multiple variables. For example, the nutrition category analyzes receipt of food stamps (GETSTAMP), receipt of WIC (GETWIC), and perceived quality of groceries (GROCERY), and chronic conditions looked at rates of issues such as asthma and diabetes. Our findings in each category will be explained and analyzed section by section.
First, the distribution of health variables within the Philadelphia sample and then the Poplar sample will be described. A variety of statistical tests were used to determine whether any differences between the Poplar and Philadelphia samples are statistically significant. A T-Test was used occasionally, but we chose to primarily use a chi-squared statistical test. In a chi-squared test, an asymptotic significance (2-sided) of less than .05 indicates that we can state – with 95% confidence – that any differences that exist between the Poplar sample and Philadelphia sample are generalizable to the population at large. After the distribution of variables is examined, we move on to test the relationships between the health variables and variety of independent demographic variables. Again, a variety of statistical tests were used. The chi-squared test was often used to determine if the relationships between these variables could be extrapolated from the samples to the Poplar and Philadelphia at large. A gamma statistic was typically used to measure the percentage reduction in error (PRE) that is obtained when a particular independent variable was known before predicting their response to the health variable questions. Therefore, PRE is a measure of the strength of the relationship between variables. Finally, adjusted residuals were additionally used to test the strength of relationships between independent variables and health variables. The adjusted residual is essentially a t-test that tests whether the actual cell value is significantly different from what one would expect if there were no relationship between the two variables. Therefore it can be used to identify cells that are either over- or under-represented in the table.
Nutrition

We evaluated three nutrition variables: the rate of receipt of food stamps (GETSTAMP), the rate of receipt of WIC (GETWIC), and the perceived quality of groceries (GROCERY). Food stamps and WIC are both government benefits that allow people under a certain level of gross monthly income (less than $3234 for a family of four) to purchase food. We assume that food stamps and WIC represent a barrier to good nutrition for residents. Low-income individuals must choose between food and other essential costs, such as housing and transportation. While food stamps and WIC are supposed to ameliorate this difficult situation, they are rarely enough to cover a full month’s food costs, let alone an expensive, nutrient-rich diet. Along with being asked whether or not they received food stamps or WIC, survey subjects were asked how they would rate the quality of groceries in their neighborhood: excellent, good, fair, or poor.

In the Poplar sample, 24.2% of residents received food stamps, and 6.8% received WIC. The data for the city of Philadelphia as a whole did not significantly differ, with 23.9% of respondents receiving food stamps and 5.2% receiving WIC. According to this data, we might be tempted to assume that Poplar has a slightly higher rate of food stamp receipt and WIC receipt. However, the chi-squared test for statistical significance does not support this assumption. The chi-squared value for food stamps is .913 and the ch-
squared value for WIC is .361. Both of these values are significantly over the .05 threshold for 95% certainty.

The perceived quality of groceries in Poplar also barely differed from the perceived quality of groceries in Philadelphia. The table below shows the values for both samples.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Philadelphia</th>
<th>Poplar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% who responded “excellent”</td>
<td>34.3</td>
<td>34.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% who responded “good”</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>42.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% who responded “fair”</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% who responded “poor”</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Clearly, residents in Poplar and Philadelphia feel similarly about their access to food. Indeed, in the chi-square test the asymptotic significance is .995, which is drastically higher than the necessary .05 to be able to generalize.

The data becomes more interesting when looking at how the three nutrition variables are correlated with different demographic variables. We examined the effect of age, race, marital status, and educational attainment on all three variables, and additionally tested the relationship between poverty and quality of groceries. We found interesting
relationships between many of the independent demographic variables and the nutrition variables as well as significant differences between the Poplar and Philadelphia samples.

In both Poplar and Philadelphia as a whole, individuals who were single were more likely to receive food stamps than those who were married. In the Philadelphia sample, the adjusted residual for the married group was +25.7 for not receiving food stamps, whereas for the single group it was +16.8 for yes receiving food stamps. This indicates that a marital status of single is correlated with food stamp receipt. The same relationship existed in the Poplar group as well; in Philadelphia, the chi-squared significance level was .000, while in Poplar it was .004. Additionally, being African-American was a statistically significant predictor of food stamp receipt in both Philadelphia and Poplar, with a significance level of .000 for both samples. Finally, the relationship between age and food stamps was found to be statistically significant and differed between Poplar and Philadelphia. In the Philadelphia sample, there was a strong relationship between age and food stamps. Members of the 18-39 age cohort were the most likely to receive food stamps and the likelihood declined for each successive age group. The chi-squared asymptotic significance came to .000. In contrast, in Poplar, the older age groups were successively more likely to receive food stamps than the younger age groups, with a chi-square significance of .001. Therefore, Philadelphia and Poplar were similar in terms of the relationship between food stamps and demographics, except in terms of age.
WIC receipt, intriguingly, was not affected by age, even though WIC and food stamps are both types of public food benefits. Additionally, WIC receipt was correlated with marital status and race only in the Philadelphia sample and not within the Poplar sample. However, WIC receipt does appear to be related to educational attainment. Those who receive a high school education or less were much more likely to receive WIC than those who have received at least some college. In the Philadelphia sample, knowing an individual’s level of educational attainment reduces error in guessing whether or not they receive WIC by 13%. This same relationship exists in the Poplar sample and is statistically significant as well, although slightly more tenuous because of the small sample size.¹

Finally, perceived quality of groceries was tested against the same four variables as food stamps and WIC: age, race, marital status, and educational attainment. Only marital status was found to be correlated with the perceived quality of groceries in both the Poplar and the Philadelphia samples. Again, individuals who were married rated their groceries relatively higher than those who were single, and this relationship was statistically significant with chi-squared values of .000 for both samples. Because the relationships between perceived quality of groceries and age, race, and educational attainment were unremarkable, we also tested the relationship between perceived

¹ Additionally, it is important to realize that only households with women and children qualify for WIC (hence the name Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children). However, our sample did not focus just on these households - it focused on all households. Because we did not analyze WIC eligible households alone, our analysis may be spurious.
quality of groceries and poverty. The poverty variable used was beneath 100% of the poverty line. In Philadelphia, it was clear from a simple frequency table that the non-poor sample respondents were more likely to rate their neighborhood’s groceries as Excellent or Good than poor respondents, and less likely to rate them as Fair or Poor. This relationship proved significant and knowing whether a Philadelphian is poor or not poor was estimated to reduce the error in guessing their grocery quality rating by 4.4%. Looking at a simple frequency table for Poplar, the same trend was evident: non-poor residents were more likely to rate their groceries as Excellent or Good than poor residents, and less likely to rate them Fair or Poor. However, because of the small sample size, statistical analysis did not support the generalization of this trend to the rest of the Poplar sample, as the chi-square value was significantly larger than .05 at .857. Therefore it is unclear whether there is no relationship between poverty and perceived quality of groceries in Poplar, or if the sample size was simply too small.

The foremost trend that emerges from the nutrition data is that there is definitely a correlation between low socioeconomic status and poorer nutrition. For example, lower educational attainment is the strongest predictor of WIC receipt, and living below the poverty line is the strongest predictor of lower perceived quality of groceries. Being single - which is typically associated with reduced income compared to two-person households - also predicts food stamp receipt, WIC receipt, and perceived quality of groceries. This is true in both Philadelphia and Poplar and highlights the fact that lower socioeconomic status impacts nutrition and therefore quality of life. This speaks to a
lived reality of those residents of Philadelphia, and Poplar, who are disadvantaged by their low income or low educational attainment.

Additionally, the way that Poplar differs from Philadelphia is also important to discuss. The primary difference is the relationship between age and food stamps, as discussed above. The reason that this relationship is opposite in Poplar and Philadelphia is unclear from the data. As we know, the receipt of food stamps is based on income and therefore inextricably tied to poverty. Therefore, in Poplar, the age groups that are the most likely to experience poverty and interact with the welfare system are different from the same age groups in Philadelphia. Perhaps this is related to the disproportionate number of homeless shelters and homeless individuals in the Poplar neighborhood. This could potentially impact the relationship between age, poverty, welfare, and nutrition, causing the difference between the two samples.

**Current Health Status**

To examine current health status we primarily looked at the self-reported responses of current health status. The results didn’t show a conclusive or noticeable difference in the self-reported health status of the neighborhood residents compared to the average for Philadelphia. But we were still able to spot some noticeable differences in health status among the different socioeconomic groups within the neighborhood population.
Health status, the dependent variable, was analyzed with respect to employment status. Employment status is broken down into various categories: employed full-time, retired, employed part-time, unemployed but looking for work, full time student or job training, unable to work or disabled, homemakers, unemployed, and not looking for work. The health status categories are excellent, good, fair, or poor health.

When looking at health status compared to employment status in the neighborhood, the first thing to notice is that the neighborhood is generally on the healthier side with 40% of respondents claiming excellent health followed by 35% in good health, 18% in fair health and 6% having poor health. Among the people who responded that they have excellent health, 53% were employed full-time, 12% employed part-time, 12% retired, 9% unemployed looking for work, and 3% unable to work/disabled. These percentages are significantly affected by the proportion of people in each category (employed full-time had over 3,000 respondents while unable to work/disabled has less than 200 respondents) but even so it seems clear that fully-employed people are healthier than marginally or unemployed people. When looking at percentage of respondents who said they are in poor health the unemployed/disabled population and the retired population stand out. Among the respondents who claimed poor health 54% are unable to work/disabled, followed by 24% retired, 9% employed full-time and 5% employed part-time. The unable to work/disabled category was the only group whose most common response was not excellent or good health, with 51% responding that they have poor health.
Overall, despite being unable to tell whether the neighborhood has better or worse health than the Philadelphia average, a majority of respondents in the neighborhood reported that they were either in good or excellent health. Perceived health status was also greatly affected by employment status with full-time employed and part-time employed people having better health than retired people or those unable to work. This points not only to a socioeconomic factor but also a significant influence of age as well. The association between employment status and health was much stronger in the neighborhood compared to the greater Philadelphia region. This could perhaps be due to the young professional presence in the neighborhood; if employment is geared towards particular well-paying industries, this may impact the strength of the relationship between employment and health status as well as individuals’ perceptions of their own health.

**Barriers to Health**

When examining barriers to health in the neighborhood we looked primarily at two variables: those who were sick but did not seek care due to cost and those who were sick but did not fill their prescription due to cost. Even though the neighborhood has a slightly larger percentage of people living under 100% of the poverty rate, results showed that people within the neighborhood are overall more likely to be able to afford seeking care and filling prescriptions compared to Philadelphia County. We found that
14.1% of the population in Philadelphia was sick but did not seek care due to cost and 17.9% of the population could not afford prescription medication due to cost, these percentages were only 5.4% and 8.6% in Chinatown North, respectively. From this data we can also see that more people were able to afford to seek care than fill their prescriptions in Philadelphia and in the neighborhood.

Next we examined the same two questions looking specifically at those who are under 100% of poverty and under 200% of poverty to see if there was a significant breaking point between these two groups. It was also an area of interest because people under 130% of the poverty rate are eligible for Medicaid as of January 2015, which in theory could mean that they have greater access to medical care. The results showed that there was not a big difference in the actual mean values as we changed the definition of poor from 100% of the poverty level to 200%. The poor population that was sick but did not seek care due to cost was 20% for people under 100% of the poverty level and only went down to 19% for people below 200% of the poverty line. Similarly, looking at the question about prescription medication affordability we see that 23% of people under 100% of the poverty level were unable to afford prescriptions and the number again only goes down by 1 percentage point when we look at the same response for the group below 200% of the poverty line, to 22%.

The results indicated that residents of the neighborhood are more able to afford health care compared to the Philadelphia population despite having slightly more people in
poverty in the neighborhood. It’s possible that this has to do with the neighborhood’s centralized location within the city, which could put people in greater proximity to a range of healthcare facilities. Since homeless shelters have a significant presence in the neighborhood, it’s also possible that shelters or other non-governmental organizations help to secure healthcare access for residents.

The results also showed that people below 200% of poverty and people below 100% poverty are almost identical in their ability to afford health care or prescription medication. Two conclusions could be drawn from this finding. The first is that even those individuals whose income exceeds the poverty - up to twice the maximum income of a poor family - face the same or similar barriers to health care as those who are designated poor. This would indicate that healthcare is difficult to afford even for those individuals who technically are not poor. Conversely, the second conclusion that could be drawn is that households that are poor or very poor do not face additional barriers to health care compared to households that live between 100% and 200% of the poverty line. The first interpretation leads to the conclusion that health care is still a cost burden for a significant number of households, which is problematic. The second leads to the conclusion that access to health care has been successfully expanded to individuals below the poverty line. More research would help determine which is the case and indicate whether or not health care is a primary concern in the neighborhood.

Health Insurance
Health insurance coverage is an essential part of maintaining good health because it allows an individual to access and afford medical treatments. Unfortunately, not all people are covered by health insurance, usually because the cost is too high. Despite the Affordable Care Act recently mandating that all individuals purchase (or be provided with) coverage, there are still many uninsured people in society who do not have access to basic healthcare. Generally, uninsured individuals represent the poorest members of society. Among a population, overall health can be gauged by the level of insurance coverage.

In addition to the Community Health Assignment, the class analyzed health insurance in Chinatown North in the Aggregate Data Analysis assignment that included geographic data from the American Community Survey (ACS) and other sources. The ACS found that individuals in Chinatown North are more likely to be uninsured than other Philadelphians (21.4% vs 14.2%), likely a result of the area being a relatively low-income community for the 5-year study period (2010-2014). Further, the data demonstrates that of those with health coverage, individuals are much more likely to have private health insurance rather than public health insurance (Medicare or Medicaid). That individuals in Chinatown North are more likely to be uninsured than the rest of Philadelphia can be visualized in the following map.
Figure 2: Lack of health insurance in Chinatown North compared to surrounding areas.

Another measure of health insurance coverage is the average household expenditure on health insurance. A side-by-side comparison of average household health insurance expenditure by block groups in 2008 and 2015 revealed an increase in relative health care expenditure in Chinatown North during that period. In 2008, households in the block groups comprising Chinatown North were spending relatively average amounts on health insurance, with block groups representing the second, third, and fourth quintiles of average local health insurance expenditures. In 2015, however, those same block groups all fell into the fourth quintile, the second highest spending group. This data is consistent with that found in Table 1, as Chinatown North has a higher proportion of people with more-expensive private health insurance than the rest of Philadelphia.
Similarly, this is consistent with gentrification taking place in the neighborhoods surrounding Center City between 2008 and 2015.

Race

Next, levels of health coverage were compared among various racial groups, an independent variable. Beginning again with the city as a whole, a frequency analysis found that People who identified themselves as Latino have the highest uninsured rate in the city, at 24.7%, followed by Biracial, Multiracial, Asian, Other, Black, Native American, and lastly White at 7.7 uninsured. A chi-square tests found the relationship between health coverage and race to be significant at \( p = 0.000 \), and somewhat strong with Gamma = -0.349. By limiting the data to just Poplar and running the same tests, the class found that, much like in the rest of the city, Latinos have the highest uninsured rates in Poplar at 31.8%. One marked difference is that an uninsured rate for Blacks is much lower in Poplar than the rest of the city (5.6% vs 14.1%). Additionally, every singly White person was insured in Poplar. Like the entire Philadelphia sample, this relationship was significant in Poplar at \( p = 0.000 \), and the relationship was stronger with Gamma = -0.713.

Poverty

The class then examined the relationship between health coverage and poverty. Respondents whose income fell below 200% of the poverty index. The ACS data estimated that 51.5% of residents in Census Tract 376 had an income below 200% of the
poverty index. In the entire city the poor were uninsured at a rate of 18.7% and the non-poor were uninsured at a rate of 8.6%, a significant relationship at p = 0.000. In Poplar, the uninsured rate was 16.3% among the poor and just 1% among the non-poor. These results suggest that the non-poor in Poplar are more likely to be better off than the non-poor elsewhere in the city. Similarly, with regards to health coverage the poor fare about the same in Poplar as they do elsewhere.

**Chronic Conditions**

The Community Health Survey asked respondents whether or not they have suffered from two relatively common chronic conditions – asthma and diabetes. It should be noted that diabetes sometimes occurs only during pregnancy. While “only during pregnancy” was a valid response for having suffered from diabetes, its frequency for the entire sample was just 0.3%, and is thus ignored in this analysis. As a baseline for comparison, the team of students first found the frequencies of these conditions in Philadelphia as a whole. The sample shows that 14.4% and 18.1% of Philadelphians have ever suffered from diabetes or asthma, respectively. Limiting the sample to just Poplar shows that 12.7% and 17.8% of those living in Poplar have ever suffered from diabetes or asthma, respectively. To determine whether or not there was a significant difference in the prevalence of diabetes between Poplar and the rest of Philadelphia, the group ran a crosstabulation to find the adjusted residuals for “yes/no” answers. The results of that
Crosstabs: Asthma

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Q3a Ever had Asthma?</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poplar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest of city</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>2650</td>
<td>11966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within Rest of City</td>
<td>18.1%</td>
<td>81.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within Q3a Ever had Asthma?</td>
<td>98.7%</td>
<td>98.7%</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>-.1</td>
</tr>
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<td>Count</td>
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<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within Poplar</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
<td>82.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within Q3a Ever had Asthma?</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adjusted Residual</td>
<td>-.1</td>
<td>.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>2685</td>
<td>12128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within Poplar</td>
<td>18.1%</td>
<td>81.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

crosstabs can be found in the tables below, which demonstrate a non-significance difference between Poplar and the rest of Philadelphia for both asthma and diabetes.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% within Q3a Ever had Asthma?</th>
<th>100.0%</th>
<th>100.0%</th>
<th>100.0%</th>
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</table>

Crosstab: Diabetes

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<tr>
<th>Poplar Rest of city</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<th>No</th>
<th>Only during preg</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>2133</td>
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<td>Poplar</td>
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<td></td>
<td>12644</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Rest of City</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
<td>85.3%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td></td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Q3d Ever had Diabetes?</td>
<td>98.8%</td>
<td>98.6%</td>
<td>97.4%</td>
<td></td>
<td>98.7%</td>
</tr>
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<td>Adjusted Residual</td>
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<td>-.6</td>
<td>-.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poplar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Poplar</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
<td>86.8%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td></td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Q3d Ever had Diabetes?</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>.6</td>
<td>.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>12473</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>14618</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### Age

One of the independent variables the class identified to analyze with regards to chronic conditions was age. Again beginning with Philadelphia as a whole, the class found the frequencies of those with diabetes and asthma for the difference categories of the independent variables. First the students found that the rate of those having suffered from diabetes increased with age. For example, just 6.3% of those aged 18-39 in the sample indicated they had ever suffered from diabetes, while 28.9% of those aged 60-74 had suffered. Crosstabulation found that the adjusted residuals for each age category were greater than 2, meaning that there is a statistically significant relationship between age and diabetes in Philadelphia as a whole. The strength of this association was found by calculating eta-squared for each variable. The associations were somewhat strong, as knowing someone’s age increases the ability to predict whether they have diabetes by 5.6% (eta-square = 0.056), and knowing whether someone has diabetes increases the ability to predict their age by 4.5% (eta-squared = 0.045). Limiting the sample to just Poplar reveals a similar relationship, with the prevalence of diabetes increasing from just 2.5% among those aged 18-39 to 34.8% among those aged 50-59. Unlike the rest of Philadelphia, the prevalence of diabetes in Poplar drops for older age groups, to 28.6%
among those aged 60-74 and then to 10% among those older than 75. Again, crosstabulation revealed that each adjusted residual was greater than two, meaning that there is a statistically significant relation between age and diabetes in Poplar. Calculation of eta-squared revealed that the strength of association was somewhat stronger in Poplar than it is in Philadelphia. For the Poplar sample, knowing someone’s age increases the ability to predict whether they have diabetes by 8.4% (eta-square = 0.084), and knowing whether someone has diabetes increases the ability to predict their age by 9.9% (eta-squared = 0.099).

A frequency analysis of asthma by age shows that the prevalence of asthma decreases with age in the entire Philadelphia sample. The sample found that the prevalence of asthma decreased incrementally from 20% of those aged 18-39 to 11% of those older than 75. An ANOVA table found that F is greater than 2 and the significance of this relationship was 0.000, a significant relationship. Despite the significance, the strength of the relationship was quite weak; knowing someone’s age increases the ability to predict whether or not they have had asthma by 0.5% (eta-squared = 0.005). Limiting the sample to just Poplar revealed much more variation by age in the prevalence of asthma than in the rest of Philadelphia. In Poplar, 18% of 18-39 year olds, 23% of 40-49 year olds, 8% of 50-59 year olds, 28% of 60-74 year olds, and 0% of those 75% suffered from asthma. An ANOVA table revealed this to be a non-significant relationship/

**Smoking**
The second independent variable analyzed was whether or not an individual was a smoker, as it is well-understood that smoking cigarettes has many negative health effects. Those identified as smokers are those who answered “yes” to having smoked more than 100 cigarettes. Surprisingly, perhaps, analysis of the entire Philadelphia sample found that 19% of smokers and 18% of non-smokers suffered from asthma, a non-significant difference. Similarly, the association was extremely weak, perhaps non-existent at eta-squared = 0. There was a more pronounced difference in Poplar, however, between smokers and non-smokers in the prevalence of asthma. In Poplar, 25% of smokers suffered from asthma, compared to just 14% of non-smokers. Due to the small sample size, however, this result was still insignificant. It also might be worth to note that because 100 cigarettes is an unrefined and arbitrary measure of whether or not someone is a smoker. A different measure of “smoker” may have provided stronger results.

In the entire Philadelphia sample, 17.1% of smokers suffered from diabetes, and 12.0% of non-smokers suffered. This 5.1% difference represents a significant difference in the prevalence of diabetes between smokers and non-smokers in Philadelphia. Similarly, smokers comprised 55.6% of people who have had diabetes, and only 45.4% of these who have not had diabetes. Closer examination found that smokers in Poplar are more likely to suffer from diabetes than smokers in Philadelphia (24.2% vs 17.1%). At the same time, non-smokers in Poplar are less likely to suffer from diabetes than non-smokers in Philadelphia (6.2% vs 12.0%). In Poplar, smokers made up a greater
percentage of those suffering from diabetes relative to the rest of the city (66.7% vs 55.6%). This suggests that smoking is more strongly associated with diabetes in Poplar than it is in the rest of the city.

**Discussion & Conclusion:**

The data was relatively inconclusive about the actual health status of neighborhood residents compared to Philadelphia at large, but residents do seem to have less access to health services and there appear to be distinct groups within the neighborhood who are healthier than others. The Community Health Survey data initially appears to indicate that residents of Chinatown are more likely to be insured, a positive marker of health care access. The survey data shows that 4.6% less individuals in the Poplar area are uninsured compared to the Philadelphia average and the percentage of uninsured Blacks in Poplar (5.6%) is significantly lower than the city average (14.1%) despite the low socioeconomic status of Blacks in the neighborhood. However, more specific census data clearly indicates that residents of Chinatown North are much more likely to be uninsured than residents of other parts of the Poplar area, with a total uninsured rate of 21.55%. This is a very important difference between Chinatown North, the surrounding neighborhoods, and Philadelphia as a whole. It also calls into question the validity of using the Community Health Survey to study health in Chinatown North, because it demonstrates that the neighborhood may differ significantly from the data collected for
“Poplar/Ludlow/Yorktowne.” Our ultimate finding is that residents of Chinatown North have decreased access to healthcare, an important issue that could have a significant impact of quality of life.

Among the neighborhood residents there appears to be a trend that younger and employed individuals are healthier and more capable of seeking care than older, unemployed, or impoverished individuals. People who are retired or unable to work were the most likely to report that they have poor health, while the groups most likely to report excellent health were students and fully-employed people. The influence of age also jumped out when looking at the data on food stamp (TANF) recipients. In Philadelphia people 18-39 are most likely to receive food stamps, but in Chinatown North this relationship changes and the older age groups are significantly more likely to be on food stamps. This points to the larger trend that older people in the neighborhood are often of lower socioeconomic status and this data could also have to do with the presence of the homeless population which is overwhelmingly older, black, single men. Food stamp receipt was also most likely among single individuals. Unattached residents were also more likely to think that their groceries were of lower quality. It was also clear that socioeconomic status affects perceived health as well as ability to afford care. This came through most clearly when looking at the data on the effect of employment status on self-reported health status as well as comparing poor and non-poor residents’ ability to afford seeking care and filling prescriptions.
Overall, it is clear that there are significant differences among the residents of the neighborhood as it regards their actual health status and their access to health care, which are greatly influenced by the resident’s age, race and socioeconomic status. Young white professionals and students appear to have the best health while older unemployed or impoverished minorities have lower health status. Furthermore, the neighborhood suffers from low rates of health care insurance which increases the risk of residents suffering burdensome health care costs or forgoing care altogether because it is too expensive. More research could look into the cause for this decreased access to health care and the effects of the quality of care they receive.
5. SENSE OF COMMUNITY

Victoria Meyer, Sivan Mills, Robyn Oster, Elena Rohner, and Travis Shingledecker

Introduction:

Our findings indicate Callowhill/Chinatown North is an area of ambiguity. In this chapter we present our main findings in order to demonstrate the lack of unity, identity, and consistency within the neighborhood. Our discussion is based on interviews conducted by the class and the Public Health Management Corporation’s (PHMC) research on participation and social capital. The interviews we conducted provided common themes and insights about residents’ and visitors’ perceptions of the area’s name, demographics, social change, and sense of community that we otherwise would not have learned from the quantitative data discussed in previous chapters. First we discuss the data and methods we used to collect the surveys. Next we examine our main findings, including how participants either described the area as having many names or no name at all, observed diverse populations, and characterized the area as up-and-coming and improving, but still needing help. Finally, we analyze the PHMC data.

Methodology:

Community Health Surveys

That data collected from the community health surveys was part of the Community Health Data Base Southeastern Pennsylvania Household Health Survey, administered by Public Health Management Corporation, used in the previous chapter. The dependent variables examined here in relation to sense of community are: “How willing are neighbors to help each other?”, “I feel I belong in my neighborhood”, and “Do you feel that people in your neighborhood can be
trusted?” These variables were looked at in the context of whether the respondent was foreign born and what the race of the respondent was. The community perception of Poplar was also compared to the community perception of all of Philadelphia. The responses in these surveys enabled us to use SPSS software for statistical analysis.

**Interviewing: Community Involvement and Vision**

The entire class collaborated to create a uniform set of questions that all students used while conducting their interviews in Callowhill/Chinatown North. These questions were considered in conjunction with Michael Patton’s methods of developing questions. We went through numerous questions and tried to eliminate as many excess questions as possible. The predetermined questions pertained to three main themes: sense of community, homelessness, and built environment. These interviews were both conducted in person and over the phone with residents, people who worked in the neighborhood, and people simply passing through the neighborhood. These interviews were conducted over the first two weeks of April by all students in Urban Studies 200: Urban Research Methods.

**Names, Boundaries, and Lack of Identity:**

A universal theme we saw across our interviewees was an inconsistent name for the neighborhood. There are identities, but they are not cohesive. Many talked about how they perceived it as more than one neighborhood. We found that there was a consistent inability/unwillingness to identify or name the neighborhood. We received a variety of answers or, at times, a comment stating that the neighborhood did not have a name. Very rarely did we receive a response that was in accordance with the research we had conducted previously,
which consistently identifies the boundaries we have defined as “Chinatown North/Callowhill.”

A few respondents who acknowledged the names we had been exposed to through previous research seemed to show the most resentment towards the neighborhood’s identity and expressed the idea of Chinatown North/Callowhill as a contested space. One interviewee sighed in resentment towards the question and was not sure what the neighborhood was called. However, he stressed, “It’s not Callowhill.” Our previous research into the history of the neighborhood and the disputed name of Chinatown North/Callowhill revealed an ambiguous identity. The fact that none of the people we interviewed really called the neighborhood either of those names was unexpected.

When asked about the name of the neighborhood, multiple people could not attribute a name to this specific neighborhood. The few that did, however, did not use the same name. One was pulled from popular culture, basing the name of the neighborhood on the name attributed to it by a film producer, the “Eraserhood.” One person originally answered that he might call the area just “Spring Garden” and then later decided that the neighborhood was called the “Loft District” because of the new loft apartments being erected in the area. Some respondents simply said they would refer to the neighborhood by the street corner they were on. Others said that they normally just state the general location of their workplace when asked. Overall we saw responses that exemplified a general confusion regarding a neighborhood identity.

Additionally, the large amount of change that is occurring in the neighborhood may also contribute to this seeming lack of unified identity. Responses ranged from the most common, “Spring Garden,” to “Loft District,” “Center City North,” and “Eraserhood.” Not only did the
responses vary among interviewees, but many respondents seemed taken aback by the question. People seemed genuinely stumped when we asked, “Does this neighborhood have a name and what would you call it?” While it is common for an area to have a few names, the difference here was the difficulty that interviewees had thinking of any name at all. This made it clear that the neighborhood does not have a distinct name - a unified identifier. There were so many different names given in response to the question of what the neighborhood is called, including Northern Liberties West, Fairmount East, Callowhill, North of Chinatown, Center City North, Between Fairmount and Chinatown, Center City, Fairmount, Fringe of Northern Liberties, North of Northern Liberties, Loft District, and Spring Garden. This lengthy list of names is a testament to the lack of any unified identification of the neighborhood, particularly because many of them rely on qualifications of other neighborhood names, simply stating relation to another place, rather than having a unique name and identity of its own.

This problem may seem trivial, but it is indicative of a larger problem in the neighborhood and in Philadelphia. Because there is no name, there is less unity; it is hard to mobilize residents to feel pride and attempt to collectivize to cause change without these residents being able to all identify where they live. For example, the owner of Sazon called the neighborhood “splintered” and said that there was “not a big community” and that although people in the neighborhood generally get along with each other, he “can’t see them really doing anything together.”

As we discussed in class, the name of a neighborhood is not an inanimate, detached concept; rather, it is a strong political tool. If you care about the commercial space, calling it “Spring Garden” may be most beneficial. If you want it to become an extension of Chinatown,
calling it “Chinatown North” is best. If you want it to become the sight of new upscale
development, calling it “Loft District” is advantageous. Another trend, however less common
than anticipated, was that a few respondents indicated that some residents of Chinatown
proper had begun to refer to the neighborhood as an extension of the community on the other
side of the Vine Street Expressway. It is no surprise, therefore, that a neighborhood that is
under constant change and is being pulled in many directions by many interests would have
such diversity in what it is called. One respondent specifically spoke at length about the politics
of the naming convention in the neighborhood and how the use of a specific name defines
“who gets ownership” of the space.

This lack of a name and identity speaks to the neighborhood’s current state of
transition. One interviewee, who seemed acutely aware of the neighborhood’s current state of
transition, put it simply: “It’s either called Chinatown North or Callowhill depending on who
you’re asking.” While this statement makes it seem very black and white, it points to how the
identity of the space largely depends on two perceived populations in the area—the historic
Asian populace and the young professionals and artists. Nonetheless, this was one of the only
instances in which respondents spoke of the schism between the two groups. One of the major
findings from the interviews is that Chinatown North is a neighborhood that lacks a singular,
unified identity. This, in turn, has created an “identity void” that many different organizations
have defined and are attempting to manufacture into their own space.

The neighborhood’s connection to Center City and downtown was another recurring
theme we found that contributes to its lack of identity. When asked about attractive or
desirable places to visit in the area, many respondents quickly connected positive aspects of the
neighborhood with Center City. Many mentioned the neighborhood’s proximity to Center City and the transportation providing easy access to downtown as attractive parts or the only attractive feature of the neighborhood. Some respondents even stated that the neighborhood itself is considered downtown or Center City when asked to identify the name of the neighborhood. Some respondents believed that the neighborhood is one that lacks a community identity due to its marginal location in relation to Center City. It was common that people did not even call the neighborhood anything or thought of it as an extension of Center City. One respondent hinted at the idea that it does not really have a name; she said, “It’s not quite Center City and not close enough to Northern Liberties/Fishtown.” She informed us that she does not give it a name and simply says that Union Transfer is on Spring Garden.

**Populations and Diversity:**

Another theme we saw in our research of the neighborhood was the broad range of people in the neighborhood. Nearly all interviewees said that the neighborhood was diverse. While some mentioned diversity in terms of race, age, and socioeconomic status, many did not elaborate on how it is diverse or how diversity affects the neighborhood and sense of community.

However, despite the diverse groups within the one neighborhood, there is not complete integration between the groups. The neighborhood has pockets of individuals with similar ethnic, language, and other characteristics, and these individuals live and/or work in the same parts of the neighborhood. Different groups seem to congregate in certain areas, and
there is not a common language shared by all, both of which may make it difficult to form a
strong sense of community.

Two major populations we encountered were the homeless and the housed. Specifically, there is a strong dichotomy and division between the young professionals who live in lofts in the neighborhood and the poor and transient population who reside in and around the homeless shelters and methadone clinics in the neighborhood. Residents’ views on the homeless population varied vastly; while some were sympathetic, others viewed the homeless as a nuisance, and others simply noted the great disparity between populations within the neighborhood. Those who viewed the population negatively cited areas around Sunday Breakfast Rescue Mission and small alleys including Pearl Street where the homeless gather as places to avoid and the shelter as a negative aspect of the neighborhood. Some interview respondents also considered the homeless to be a threat to safety. Despite not mentioning homelessness in the interview questions, respondents gave answers that referenced the homeless population to many questions, indicating the central role the population and the stigmas surrounding it play in the neighborhood and in the sense of community, or lack thereof. Although some groups, such as the Asian Arts Initiative are trying to bridge the gap between the homeless population and the rest of the population in the neighborhood, it seems that many, and particularly the new population moving into the loft buildings, view the homeless population as an old blight that should be moved out of the neighborhood.

Similarly, as there is a divide between the homeless and those that live in the lofts, there is a more general divide between lower and higher income residents and workers, as well as between life-long (or, more generally, long term) residents who have seen the neighborhood
evolve, have deep connections to the neighborhood, and care deeply about its affairs, and those who have come to the neighborhood more recently, who largely overlap with the group of young, wealthy, loft-dwellers moving in. The neighborhood is also diverse in that it consists of both residents and workers who do not live in the neighborhood.

There are also many ethnicities present in the neighborhood. While this can have benefits for building a well-rounded community, it can also impede community by leading to sections of particular ethnicities and families within these areas (Cantonese and Russian families, specifically, according to one interview) that are reluctant to sell their real estate to development companies in order to keep the land “in the family’ to preserve the character of the neighborhood. This land is both commercial and residential, and the refusal to sell is a barrier for development, as the options for development are limited for people outside of the ethnic groups.

Although most respondents expressed that neighbors get along and would help each other, the distinct and sometimes opposing groups can split the neighborhood and create divides that prevent the creation of a strong sense of community beyond a superficial level of believing neighbors will help each other or get along. As one interviewee put it, for example, discussing the wealthy loft-dwellers and lower-income populations in public housing, “They don’t have negative interactions, but not positive ones either.”

*Neighborhood Change:*

*Gentrification*
A word that came up frequently in interviews was “gentrifying” or “gentrification.” Across interviewee categories, residents, workers, and visitors, all noted that the neighborhood has improved over the past 10 to 15 years. Almost everyone drew a direct link between neighborhood improvement and new infrastructure projects. The conversion of old warehouses into shiny, hipster loft apartments gives the neighborhood a new “feel”—perhaps best described as “urban edgy” by Bufad’s manager. This has attracted young professionals, such as recent graduates from Temple and Drexel, and families, ostensibly spurring gentrification of a neighborhood traditionally occupied by lower classes and racial minorities. The neighborhood is becoming “artsy,” but still retains a “historic and gritty” feel. It is this new Bohemian trend that is attracting a younger, whiter, hipster population. One interviewee noted that there seemed to be an overflow of people moving into the neighborhood from Northern Liberties.

As with most instances of gentrification, different populations perceive the change differently. Business owners seem torn between the pros and cons. One owner said he appreciates the gentrification because it has attracted a new customer base, more specifically “the gays, hipster, and artists,” who have wider palates. As a result he has received more business. However, he does not like how gentrification is changing the residential parts of the neighborhood—he has witnessed a lot of change as “restaurants and condos are going up pushing out the poor.” Long-time residents of the neighborhood can no longer afford to live there, which he sees as problematic, primarily because it creates a schism between old and new residents. New residents, he said, do not have the same connection to their community, which significantly changes the neighborhood’s character. As more renters and buyers move in, there
is a distinct decrease in sense of community. Another interviewee noted that these neighborhood improvements have begun to affect how residents and others feel about the neighborhood. While he has seen improvements such as more openness and inclusion, he also noted that there is a lack of interaction between people living in the new apartments and those in public housing. He also stressed the resulting lack of community cohesion.

Another interviewee, who self identified as white and upper-middle class, noted that the neighborhood is diverse but that “super-gentrification” is going to radically change that within ten years. She estimates that there will increasingly be people like her moving into the neighborhood, which she surprisingly saw as a bad thing. However, she did mention the perks of rising housing prices.

This trend of gentrification results in starkly different populations: the young professionals versus the homeless. And there is clearly some tension, or a sense of unease, coming from both residents and workers in the neighborhood regarding this homeless population. A woman living on 13th and Callowhill obviously felt like there are certain blocks that, while “safe,” should nevertheless be avoided because of this population.

Bridge gap between feeling and seeing a sense of community

Many residents noted a gap between feeling and seeing a sense of community. Residents are either inside of their lofts or in other parts of the city because there are no spaces that encourage people to walk around the neighborhood. This made residents feel disconnected from their neighbors. One resident explicitly mentioned the negative impact of

¹ This informant seemed to talk about a wider area that includes the public housing projects well north of the neighborhood we were studying.
the prevalence of empty parking lots, and high fences throughout the neighborhood are a feature of concern. Another possible contributing factor to this disconnect between feeling and seeing community is the lacking community contribution made by people who work in the neighborhood. Many workers who were interviewed could not comment on the neighborhood sense of community because they do not spend any time in the neighborhood outside of work. This led to the conclusion that this worker population cannot contribute to the life of the community—yet they represent a large population within the neighborhood that does have potential to make a positive impact.

Along with this trend, many residents simply feel as if no one in the neighborhood knows each other. One interviewee mentioned that she does not “really know the names of her neighbors” but “knows the names of her neighbors’ dogs.” She even discussed wanting a dog to help her meet more people. Additional observations corroborated this concept. Two people were observed stopping on the street to chat about their dogs. One woman said, “Hey Bruno,” to the dog, but did not mention the owner’s name. After discussing their dogs, they parted ways with a brief “See you later.”

*Need to improve the perception of the neighborhood:*

Despite the improvements made to the neighborhood, most interviewees agree that improvements are needed.

One resident mentioned that she would love to see more open, green spaces where residents can go to meet up and interact. This would work to improve the neighborhood’s problem of poor foot traffic. While “destinations” such as Cafe Lift and Bufad, have contributed to the neighborhood’s upward trend, adding a park where people could interact outside would
be a visible sign of community for passersby. This type of initiative to increase community in open spaces has been successful in the past. For example, a synagogue in the neighborhood took down a fence that had been closing it off from the rest of the community and had been instilling a sense of insecurity. After the removal of the fence and other renovations, there was an influx of congregants moving into the neighborhood and using neighborhood institutions (living in the neighborhood and frequenting the restaurants and other such institutions, as opposed to living elsewhere and coming to the neighborhood only for the synagogue) and an enhanced sense of community. Another interviewee also expressed the desire for some sort of organization that unites residents and businesses to increase collaboration and understanding of the unique wants and needs of the various community members. One interviewee said that the neighborhood only bonded well through big events such as “the Pope’s Visit” and “the Fourth of July.” Such an organization could work to create more events to foster this sort of collaboration.

One example of an organization that is working towards this end is the Asian Arts Initiative, specifically through its Pearl Street Project. The vision for the Pearl Street Project is to transform four blocks of neglected alley into a community asset that will bring together neighborhood residents and bring outsiders in to revitalize the area. They have already put together a “Community Feast,” in which people from the lofts, homeless shelters, and many cultural groups ate together, representing most members of the neighborhood. The culmination of their first stage of planning was their “Pearl Street Block Party,” in which hundreds of community members were present, again representing the diverse reaches of the district. Their efforts are bringing community members together who otherwise might not have
a space in which to form a community or to meet each other. Moving forward, they will work with local artists and community members to create transformative spatial pieces to make the neighborhood more inviting and the art accessible to everyone.

*Community Health Surveys: Community Perception:*

Using the PHMC data as previously mentioned, we examined the sense of community and community cohesion. The results from the cross tabulations tables seem to indicate that there is a lower sense of community or community cohesion. That being said, it is important to keep in mind that these questions have low sample sizes and therefore may not reliably reflect the perceptions of the community (Poplar is a much smaller area with fewer respondents than Philadelphia as a whole has).

“How willing are neighbors to help each other?”

Using the figures gathered from a cross tabulations table in SPSS, it was indicated that 13.9% of people within Poplar thought their neighbors were always willing to help each other and 28.5% of people within Poplar thought that their neighbors were often willing to help each other. 37.5% of people in Poplar thought that neighbors would help sometimes, 13.2% thought that neighbors would rarely help, and 6.9% thought their neighbors would never help. These figures indicate that there is a low sense of willingness to help within the community. One notable figure is the comparison between Poplar and the rest of the city in regards to having neighbors who are always willing to help. That is, 23.3% of the rest of Philadelphia responded that neighbors would always help--approximately 10% points higher than that of Poplar.
The average score for respondents in Philadelphia who felt neighbors would help each other was 2.58, which means the average would fall between “often” and “sometimes.” The average score for those in Poplar was 2.70, which would also fall between “often” and “sometimes.” In all of Philadelphia, it was shown that there was a minor difference between how U.S.-born respondents felt in regards to this question and how foreign-born respondents felt in regards to this question—the mean value for U.S.-born was 2.55 and for foreign born was 2.74. In regards to race, the eta values suggest that knowing race would only reduce mistakes in guessing a neighbor’s willingness to help each other by 0.9%. In Poplar, it is interesting to note that 24.6% of black residents thought neighbors were willing to help while 10.5% thought neighbors were never willing to help.

“I feel I belong in my neighborhood.”

According to the cross-tabulations created in SPSS, it was indicated that 21.1% of people in Poplar strongly agree and 66.3% of people in Poplar agree that there is a sense of community. These figures are similar to the percentages within Philadelphia – 27.2% strongly agree and 54.6% agree there is a sense of community. This finding supports the point that was articulated in the “Populations and Diversity” section. That is, although people in the neighborhood feel there is a sense of community, they struggle to express how this sense of community is manifested, as although the large majority feel there is a sense of community, many do not believe their neighbors would help (and as explained later, many do not trust their neighbors), which would be indicators of a sense of community.
In regards to this question, the average score for Philadelphians who felt they belonged in their neighborhood was 1.96, which means a positive feeling is shared amongst most Philadelphians. The average score in Poplar was quite similar at 1.92, which also means that most in Poplar felt that they belonged in the neighborhood as well. We used a compare means test to determine whether foreign-born status or race informed this sense of belongingness across the city of Philadelphia. Using the eta squared values, in all of Philadelphia, it was determined that knowing someone’s foreign born status would only improve our ability to guess how much they felt they belonged by 0.4% and knowing someone’s race would only improve our ability to guess how much they felt they belonged by 0.9%. These figures were then limited to Poplar. In Poplar, it was determined that knowing someone’s foreign-born status would improve our ability to guess how much they felt they belonged by 2.5%. In Poplar, the eta squared of .014 also shows that there is not a very strong relationship between knowing the respondent’s race and then guessing if they felt they belonged in Poplar.

“Do you feel that people in your neighborhood can be trusted?”

In regards to this question of trust in Poplar, the cross-tabulations table indicates that 7.6% of people and 57.9% of people either strongly agree or agree that people in their neighborhood could be trusted. On the other side of the spectrum, 26.2% of people and 9.9% of people disagreed or strongly disagreed that their neighbors could be trusted. These findings seem to indicate that there is a substantial part of the community that distrusts their neighbors.

By running a crosstab function in SPSS for the context of race, it was revealed that only 32.4% of respondents who strongly agreed that their neighbors could be trusted were black
and only 31.5% of the respondents who agreed were black. It seems that a disproportionate number of black residents in Philadelphia feel their neighbors cannot be trusted. In Poplar, black respondents were likewise divided on agreeing and disagreeing while almost all of the white respondents thought that their neighbors could be trusted.

**Conclusion:**

The interviews we conducted and the PHMC data demonstrate many findings about sense of community and involvement that we otherwise would not have understood from quantitative data alone. We found that Callowhill/Chinatown North is an area that lacks identity. Our interviews demonstrated that while some people live in the neighborhood, many people only work in the neighborhood and many visitors come to the neighborhood for specific attractions, like food and art, and then leave immediately after, contributing to the lack of community involvement. The people who do live in the neighborhood describe it as a neighborhood experiencing change. Previously, it was a more run down neighborhood with less upscale attractions, but now old industrial buildings are being replaced with lofts and new sit down restaurants. Our interviewees discussed the changing demographics of the neighborhood residents, ethnically and economically. While people mostly agreed they could rely on their neighbors, they also sensed a lack of connection to the individual people who make up their neighborhood. Despite indications of neighborhood improvement, there is still work to be done to create of unity, identity, and consistency within the neighborhood.
6. THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Marielle Berkman, Alexandra Gurley, Sydney Hard, Maurin Mwombela, and Ariela Osuna

Introduction

The built environment in Chinatown North/Callowhill gives clues to the current state of the neighborhood and how the neighborhood may be able to grow and accommodate the needs of its residents and visitors. Currently, it appears that the lack of clear physical boundaries contributes to the neighborhood’s relatively ambiguous identity. For the sake of this research, Chinatown North/Callowhill is bound by Spring Garden Street, Vine Street, Broad Street, and 8th Street. According to the Philadelphia City Planning Commission, Callowhill is bound by Spring Garden, Broad, Race and 11th Streets and Chinatown North is bound by the Vine Street Expressway, Spring Garden, 11th and 9th Streets.\(^1\) The distinction between the two neighborhoods is also related to the history and future of each neighborhood. Callowhill is described as an industrial district that is currently being transitioned into a mixed-use, live/work community. Chinatown North contains a mix of uses and represents the northward expansion of Chinatown, which sits right below the Vine Street Expressway. The Philadelphia Industrial Development Corporation, in its 2010 Industrial Land Use Survey, identifies the Callowhill Industrial Area as the area between 2nd and 9th Streets, Vine and Spring

Garden Streets.\(^2\) There appears to be inconsistency in the neighborhood’s identification, both nominally and geographically, even in the city’s official documents.

Similarly, many interview respondents did not seem to have a clear sense of the neighborhood’s boundaries. While we never asked them specifically to describe what they understood as the boundaries of the neighborhood, they often responded to questions by implying that they were in Center City. In many instances, individuals even referred to the neighborhood as part of Center City. It would have been interesting to see what physical boundaries and barriers they would have used to describe the Chinatown North/Callowhill neighborhood. The Vine Street Expressway, which is Chinatown North/Callowhill’s southernmost boundary, contributes to the neighborhood’s marginal relation to Center City. As such, the neighborhood is located on the fringes of Philadelphia’s core, physically separated by its most important highway. It is possible that the extents of the neighborhood might not be known because the neighborhood lacks a central monument or a cohesive element. Perhaps the planned Reading Viaduct Rail Park can fill this void in strengthening the identity of the neighborhood in the built environment.

The formal vocabulary of the neighborhood’s architecture is clearly post-industrial. While other neighborhoods in Philadelphia have quintessential rowhouses to their name, Chinatown North/Callowhill has abandoned factories and rail tracks. Factories have been transformed into lofts, and storage facilities are becoming event venues or restaurants. When asked what they found attractive in the physical

\(^2\) Ibid.
environment, respondents often replied by rejecting the idea of the neighborhood as attractive at all. Chinatown North/Callowhill has a gritty, smokestack feel. It is an aesthetic far from your typical white-picket-fence appeal. Nonetheless, there is an inherent beauty in this aesthetic; it is able to vividly show the layers of Philadelphia’s history. Some respondents interviewed shared that they were in the neighborhood for a film project and were specifically searching for this grungy, torn-down atmosphere. Most famously, David Lynch drew inspiration from this neighborhood for his eerie cult movie “Eraserhead,” which has earned the neighborhood the nickname “Eraserhood.” The preservation of this aesthetic, coupled with contemporary architecture that shows reverence to the post-industrial vocabulary, allows Chinatown North/Callowhill to express its state of transition.

**Data and Methods**

In our paper, we utilize both our classmates’ validation papers and their interview papers. The validation papers were important for our group’s study of the built environment of Chinatown North/Callowhill. The validation papers focused on understanding the general layout of the area in terms of businesses, restaurants, social services, residential areas, etc. We reviewed these papers and used the data in order to determine what establishments are actually present in the neighborhood and how the student completing the assignment perceived them. Many students gave insight into how the neighborhood was constructed visually, which is very important for analyzing
the built environment. The interview papers similarly helped us to understand how neighborhood users understand and conceptualize the space.

Finally, we used both Social Explorer and PolicyMap. These resources provided us with both a historical and current overview of the community in terms of demographics, real estate, health, jobs and more. Combined with our firsthand understanding of the neighborhood, this numerical and visual data allowed us to understand the various factors that influence and are influenced by Chinatown North/Callowhill’s built environment.

**Residential**

When combining all of the data from the validation assignment, as well as the interviews conducted in the neighborhood, housing was a topic that frequently appeared. The recurrent theme is that there is an influx of new residential spaces or hotels that will occupy Chinatown North/Callowhill in the coming years. The difference is that these new spaces are intended for a demographic separate from the one that currently inhabits and uses the space. A common interview conversation was one about the lack of residents and the lack of noticeable housing. Also discussed was the trend of new apartment complexes coming into the area. The validation assignment indicates that many of the buildings in the area, some of which were home to residents at one point in time, could have had apartments above the street-level storefronts. The dilapidated structures led to a perception of the area as run-down. Therefore, the influx of new and more modern residential developments (such as the Goldtex Building at 315
N 15th Street) was viewed in a positive light to some. To others, the old buildings that are being converted into condominiums are perceived as pushing out the poor, as well as the artist, community that once inhabited the area. Rents are increasing and many people cannot afford to live in these new spaces. However, according to one of the interviewees, in comparison to Center City housing, the apartments and condominiums are less expensive and still centrally located downtown.

The Reinvestment Fund conducted Market Value Analysis (MVA) and created maps for the years 2001, 2008, and 2015. The neighborhood’s residential component has changed over the course of these three different time periods. The data from 2001 were evaluated based on eight market types. In 2008, data were measured using nine market types. In 2015, ten market types were used to cluster the data. 2001’s Chinatown North/Callowhill neighborhood can be divided into three market types according to Reinvestment Fund’s MVA: “Non-residential,” “Transitional Steady,” and “Distressed.” The non-residential sections of this neighborhood do not have data that can be analyzed. However, the “Transitional Steady” area means that home prices were steady, there were population shifts, and the value in the real estate market had not increased overtime. In the distressed portion of the neighborhood, there were
low home prices, physical decay, much older homes, more vacancies, publically assisted housing, and a substantial population loss. When analyzing our validation assignment, we can see that this trend holds true in 2016.

In 2008, most of the Chinatown North/Callowhill neighborhood consisted of “Steady 1D” with one area, 12th and Vine Street to 10th and Noble Street, being classified as “Transitional E.” “Steady 1D” means that the area had relatively high home ownership, few vacancies, and relatively high, yet stable, home prices. “Transitional E” indicates that the area had high and steady home prices but also was evaluated for population shifts. This is compared to Philadelphia as a whole at this time.\textsuperscript{3}
Looking at the data provided by PolicyMap for the year 2015, we can see that the entire neighborhood is purple, which means “Regional Choice.” This is classified as high-income prices, relatively low foreclosure rates, and a low percentage of owners that occupy the buildings compared to the citywide average. Approximately 13.4% of all single-family residential parcels are condominiums. The Philadelphia Office of Property Assessment claims that 5.1% of all new residential properties were built between 2008 and 2015. 8.8% of residential properties currently have building permits. These last three data points validate the rise in new construction that was highlighted in our validation assignment and our interviews. Additionally, while some respondents briefly mentioned the new loft buildings that are being developed in the area, not many of them further discussed the matter.

The Chinatown North/Callowhill neighborhood is beginning to blend into Center City; there is rise in residential buildings, the creation of new public transportation lines, and increasing opportunities for business and entertainment. Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) will add more transportation lines that run in and out of the Chinatown North/Callowhill neighborhood. This will incentivize consumers that work in Center City and other areas of Philadelphia to pay less in rent while still having a convenient commute to work everyday. Social Explorer provides information dated from 2014 that claims 24.4% of the workers in the census tract that are over the age of sixteen take a car, truck, or van to work. The data indicate that it is most common (41.7%) for people to walk or ride a bike to work. Half of the workforce commutes for less than twenty minutes. If we put both of these data points together, we see that it is most common for people to live close enough to walk or bike to work. In terms of infrastructure, this eliminates the number of parking spaces needed in the area. Many of the people surveyed in 2014 (14.3% of workers over the age of sixteen) also work from home and therefore do not need to use transportation resources.6

Many interview respondents heavily discussed the homeless presence as part of the built environment of Chinatown North/Callowhill. A homeless individual is defined as someone without a home and therefore living on the streets. That being said, the homeless population tended to be seen as an aspect of the physical environment by our interview subjects. The men that attend Sunday Breakfast Rescue Mission often occupy areas surrounding 13th Street. Several interviewees discussed this physical space as an

area that should be avoided. This 13th Street block tends to have less foot traffic than the rest of the neighborhood. One respondent, who works at a health clinic that supports the men of Sunday Breakfast Rescue Mission, commented that she does not want to see her clients outside of her work context. Additionally, she feels uncomfortable and at-risk when passing through this particular area due to the men that physically occupy the space.

**Commercial**

As a class, we looked critically at the businesses, restaurants, and bars and their effects on the built environment of Chinatown North/Callowhill. The general trend reflected in our validation papers and interviews was that businesses are overtaking and renovating the old, abandoned parts of the neighborhood, leading to a more attractive environment. Bars and restaurants were considered the most successful and “attractive” parts of the neighborhood. When discussing the renovation of these establishments, many interview respondents had a generally positive attitude towards them. They stated that physical improvements make the area more visually appealing: “The discussed developments are residential... as well as commercial (in the case of “good restaurants” and venues like Union Transfer). These incoming establishments are viewed almost entirely positively.”⁷ In addition, these establishments were among the few places that interview respondents recommended to visit. This has to do largely with the aesthetic appeal of these restaurants. On the other hand, some respondents had a

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different view of the newly established bars and restaurants coming into the neighborhood. Many believed that although these businesses bring in new revenue and make the built environment a positive and more appealing space, they are “pushing out the poor” and making it hard for past residents to afford the area.8 The new restaurants are appealing to a slightly younger and wealthier demographic. Therefore, we see how renovating and restructuring the built environment has its consequences for many of the residents and population.

In addition, through our validation assignments, many students in our class commented on the fact that restaurants and bars were amongst the most successful businesses compared to small businesses, housing, and non-profit organizations. One of our classmates noted, “From this investigation, I noticed that independent private restaurants and bars are the most visibly welcome and well-funded compared to non-profit social service organizations.”9 In addition, in our validation assignments many students discovered that new restaurants and bars had taken over old businesses. These two facts are a result of the changes the neighborhood is currently undergoing. Multiple people are traveling to the area for restaurants, bars, and entertainment because they work here. However, they are not patronizing the other small businesses or community-oriented establishments.

Overall, the newer businesses and restaurants make up the “developed” areas of Chinatown North. The older businesses (such as printing shops and bodegas) and restaurants were not mentioned by any of our interview respondents. This may represent a physical manifestation of the gentrification and change that this particular neighborhood is currently undergoing.

Entertainment

Even prior to conducting research, our class was aware of Chinatown North/Callowhill’s arts and culture component. This was reaffirmed in our validation of community resources, which revealed twenty-four entertainment-related establishments. The neighborhood is home to numerous art galleries, concert venues, studios, museums, and production houses. In fact, one resident called the neighborhood “perfect for art lovers” due to the abundance of galleries.\(^\text{10}\) In particular, several interview subjects named the Asian Arts Initiative, a multidisciplinary art center that celebrates the experiences of Asian Americans, as an example of the neighborhood’s

artistic character as well as an anchor for the community. Many referenced Union Transfer and Underground Arts; these concert venues are examples of the development of spaces for entertainment and leisurely activities in the neighborhood.

The artistic nature of Chinatown North/Callowhill is physically apparent due to the presence of large, colorful murals throughout the neighborhood. A cashier at Bufad, a pizzeria, said that murals are one aspect of the neighborhood that she would share with first-time visitors. She noted a new housing development that aims to provide people with the experience of “living among murals,” which is another example of the neighborhood’s recognition as a creative outlet. Another individual whom we spoke to explained that “although one can’t measure Bohemian,” the neighborhood is observably “artsy,” which is leading it to attract a “younger, whiter, hipster population.”11 In this way, the built environment is actively bringing about neighborhood change.

Nevertheless, the majority of individuals who we spoke to did not seem particularly interested in or knowledgeable about the art and music scene. Most

11 Ibid.
interview subjects do not spend much time in the neighborhood outside of work and feel that there is a definitive lack of leisure activities available. This was reflected in their hypothetical recommendations to visitors: people generally suggested landmarks outside of the scope of Chinatown North/Callowhill, such as LOVE Park and City Hall. When neighborhood galleries and venues were mentioned, they were discussed in a relatively off-hand manner. While critical to the built environment, the high density of entertainment options did not seem to be central to our interview subjects’ routines or perceptions of the neighborhood.

Underground Arts, 1200 Callowhill Street
Savery Gallery, 319 N 11th Street

The Future

The Chinatown North/Callowhill neighborhood has a complex built environment that exists due to the constant, uneven change that takes place throughout the area. Furthermore, the area will be experiencing much more change in the coming years. A number of development projects have been started and many more have been proposed. The most comprehensive change that will take place will happen as a part of the Philadelphia 2035 plan, a blueprint for citywide development that has recently been accepted by the city government.

The goal of the plan is to continue the development that has been increasing since the late 90s. Now that the population is steadily growing, it is important that the
city continues to attract both residents and businesses. The plan recognizes that the downtown area is well developed and that it is a strong base upon which other growth can occur. One of the main goals of the plan is to create growth in “industrial legacy” areas since they have available land, connections to utilities, access to transportation, and diverse labor and customer markets. The plan identified the Chinatown North/Callowhill neighborhood as one such area.

The Philadelphia 2035 Plan outlines the specific strategy for how the Chinatown North/Callowhill neighborhood will change up until 2035. Many of these recommendations fit perfectly into the citywide plan for land use and zoning reform, improved infrastructure, open space, green infrastructure, and other public investments. It segments the area north of Vine Street into five sections: Poplar, Callowhill, Chinatown North, Superblocks, and Waterfront. The area we studied is part of the area designated in Philadelphia2035 as Callowhill, some of the area described as Chinatown North, and part of the area described as Superblocks.

The plan outlines the three goals for the neighborhood: thrive, connect, and renew. All of the proposed development is done within this framework and each of the projects is related to this in some way. In order to be improved, the planners decided that neighborhoods must continue to grow and exploit their natural advantages in order to thrive. The neighborhoods must also be connected in order for the improvements in one area to positively impact the entire city. Finally, certain aging structures and areas need to be renewed in order to bring the surrounding neighborhoods into the future.
Before outlining the strategy, the authors discuss some issues that exist in the area. The plan mentions that this entire area receives relatively little attention compared to the rest of the Central District, the area that includes Center City and areas further north. This means that the comprehensive plan will have to change that dynamic and encourage developers and other key players to become more invested. The plan also mentions that development that has been completed in recent years has not been coordinated between neighborhood groups. This has led to competing initiatives and has prevented complementary initiatives from recognizing their shared goals.

The plan addresses a number of issues within the neighborhood, including the need to transition large industrial parcels into 21st century industrial and other uses, strengthen the Ridge Avenue and Spring Garden Street commercial corridors, and reduce the impact of large physical barriers, including the viaduct, the Vine Street Expressway, and I-95. Besides being cut off from Center City by the Vine Street Expressway, the area also has very little green space. Furthermore, rezoning in the area did not lead to a new booming industrial center. Instead, there now exists a hodgepodge of medical, electronics, and office supply businesses surrounded by huge parking lots.

There are also a number of substantial assets in the area that can help make the transition smoother. As previously mentioned, there has been growth in residents and businesses in the area recently; this creates a good base for future development. The authors of the plan also mention that the neighborhood has an active and engaged constituency. This means that city officials and developers can (and should) consult with
neighborhood organizations about some of the proposals in order to optimize their function. The plan also mentions that the area is ideal for modern businesses that require industrial space, especially in the Superblocks area.

The general plan for the area involves significant new development of both residential and commercial buildings, especially in mixed-use structures. The plan involves using zoning to help with more efficient land use. Much of the neighborhood is zoned as industrial, which prevents residential and commercial buildings. Additionally, this zoning leads to residential and commercial structures being built adjacent to industrial areas. Another goal is to build on the great vehicular and transit access and fix the lack of space for bikes and pedestrians. There are also a number of projects meant to add green space to the area, including the Spring Garden Greenway. The plan includes the preservation of historic buildings. However, most of the historic buildings are further west into the Callowhill neighborhood than our study area covered.

The plan includes specific goals for the subsections of this larger neighborhood. In Callowhill, the plan mentions the need to improve the use of the industrial character and infrastructure in the area, to infill and reuse existing historic structures, and to convert the Reading Viaduct into a green space. In Chinatown North, the plan mentions that past development plans have negatively affected the area and reduced its land use. It also discusses how the viaduct is a hindrance to expansion and the creation of new housing. The plan mentions that the Philadelphia Chinatown Development Corporation (PCDC) is not excited about the creation of the viaduct park. PCDC is worried that it may hinder the creation of affordable housing and may lead to continued development that
excludes lower income residents. The plan states that the Superblocks area needs a denser street grid and stronger connections to neighboring areas.

The plan does not only give a general outline of its goals; rather, it also gives some specific development proposals and discusses how they fit into the three goals. There are a number of concrete ideas listed under the category of “thrive.” The first is a mixed-use gateway at Spring Garden and 12th, right at the corner of our study area. This is intended to be a welcoming introduction to the neighborhood and to create a sense of distinction. Another project is revitalizing Ridge Avenue with mixed-use buildings, street level green space, and better streets. This is intended to optimize the potential of this long and important corridor. A third proposal includes new open space in the Superblocks area. This is intended to expand the amount of green space in the area and replace some of the vacant lots.
There are also projects designed to help the neighborhood better connect with the rest of the city. The street improvements planned for a Ridge Avenue greenway will make it safer for pedestrians and bicycles to navigate through the areas. There are also proposals for highway crossing improvements, both functional and aesthetic. This will make entering and exiting the neighborhood easier and will make traveling through the neighborhood more pleasant, hopefully leading to more visitors to the area. In order to incorporate the increased traffic to the neighborhood, there is also a proposed parking structure at 6th and Noble Streets.

Finally, there are projects that are designed to renew the area. There is a proposed Gateway Park between 10th and 11th Streets and Wood and Pearl Streets that
will help improve the green space. Along with other small parks, this greening will hopefully promote more investment in the area. Another proposal is for a screening to cover the PECO plant, which is an unpleasant feature of the neighborhood. Most importantly, however, is the plan to turn the crumbling viaduct into an elevated park. This would divert some of the street traffic, beautify the area, and lead to more investment. Along with gradually turning the viaduct into a park, the plan proposes building other green spaces around it like athletic fields and improved lighting and art under the viaduct. Many people, especially business owners, are excited by the viaduct plan, but some residents and community institutions fear that it will lead to increased gentrification.12


Proposed green spaces in Chinatown North/Callowhill