



Transit Oriented Communities  
Ambler Station Area Concept

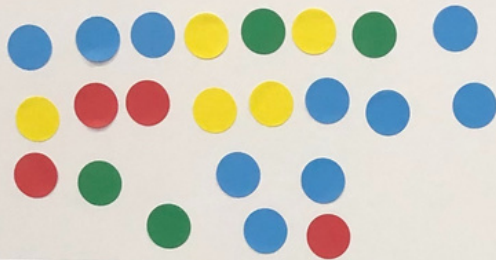
# SEPTA Station Area Concept & Proposed Joint Development Process

STAGE	Station Concept Development	Developer Solicitation and Selection	Project Refinement	Permitting and Construction
ACTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SEPTA gathers community feedback to finalize the Ambler Station Area Concept.</li> <li>SEPTA works with Ambler Borough and Montgomery County on zoning code and Comprehensive Plan updates that reflect the community's and SEPTA's vision for the station.</li> </ul> <div data-bbox="544 1060 657 1165" style="border: 1px solid blue; border-radius: 50%; padding: 5px; display: inline-block; background-color: #0056b3; color: white; text-align: center; width: 40px; height: 40px; line-height: 40px;"> <p>We are here</p> </div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The SEPTA Board authorizes finding a development partner through a competitive process.</li> <li>The Ambler Station Area Concept is used as the basis for development partner evaluation.</li> <li>SEPTA updates the community on developer partner selection.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The selected development partner progresses architectural design.</li> <li>Additional community meetings for project input are held.</li> <li>The SEPTA Board approves developer agreements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Borough reviews zoning and building permits for approval.</li> <li>Construction drawings are finalized.</li> <li>Construction begins and the project is occupied and completed.</li> </ul>

**We want your input.**

**How do you access downtown Ambler and Ambler Station?**

Walking



Biking or other micromobility



SEPTA Bus



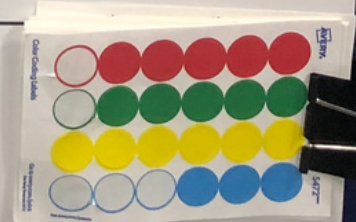
Dropped off by car



Commuter Parking



Other



**We want your input.**

**How should parking be managed?**

Shared parking that meet the needs of commuters, visitors, and the development must be balanced while encouraging more active transportation and multi-modal access.

Less parking  
more TOD

Wake coffee  
customers use  
the parking  
lot. Leave them  
some space!

more parking spaces  
not fewer please!  
however, not a multi-level  
parking lot.

Multi-Story  
lot

We need less congestion  
development doesn't  
Not more.

Parking - Fully used

Multi-story parking garage

Parking ratio for residential

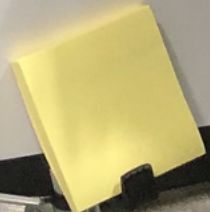
traffic management with drive ways

Prevent overnight parking  
Limit "all day" parking - enough for train commuters,  
but not the whole lot.

Senior Housing

More parking + Solar panels + permeable surfaces +1  
+2

shared parking (existing  
lot kinda serves this function  
already)



## We want your input.

### What uses would you want to see here?

Ideas for building uses, businesses, and housing mix can be shared with potential development partners.

pizza place

Service all the other new TOD developments popping up in Ambler

Concerns about new commercial competing with existing businesses

- set backs from Main St.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING COMPONENT

3 story buildings, Not 4. + 1

Concern about flood management

Open space + 1 + 2 !!

Please don't block the view of our historic gem, the Boiler House, from Main Street. (yes)

DOG PARK + 1

Building should match character of Ambler.

- Green space / set backs - welcoming - trees

Bicycle maintenance facility

NO MORE LUXURY Townhomes and apartments

Public plaza w/  
public art, seating -  
better/bigger than the  
one by CVS

**We want your input.**

**What Public Amenities should a development here provide?**

As SEPTA seeks potential development partners, what public benefits would you like to see included? This includes design of the open space, public art, and station access.

EAC - Tree Tenders + 1  
groups

Partnerships

improvement of  
open space and  
landscape upgrading

Zadoof Plaza for recreation  
community center + 1  
~~Public Plaza~~

Water retention!

Interactive art - make music,  
zen garden, chalk,  
"color it in" mural

Accessible  
stroller access

- Open space +1 +1

- How many trees  
will the open  
space support? +1 +1

All residential housing. No commercial.

Senior housing.

Pedestrian safety

Butler bus

Stop for

Butler Ave bus -

- consider @ bus  
station - closer  
to platform

How will you verify  
any building/development  
will not disturb under-  
ground asbestos?

Secure bicycle  
parking/storage

- Trains need to  
pull up further  
to clear Butler

Water Retention!!  
Maintain historic  
character!

# Ambler Station Existing Zoning Regulations

### Redevelopment Overlay District

Ambler's zoning ordinance defines a Redevelopment Overlay District (ROD) that adds additional permitted uses, increases allowable density, and reduces parking requirements with the intent of allowing Transit Oriented Development

### Commercial District:

- Allow retail and restaurants
- Allow hotels
- Allow parking garages
- No residential use
- No mixed use
- Max building coverage: 80%
- Max building height: 40 ft

Existing Commercial zoning allows some uses and design that would meet SEPTA's goals

This parcel does not qualify for the ROD because it is under 4 acres and has less than 750 foot frontage on a public street. It is part of the Floodplain Conservation District because of Tannery Run

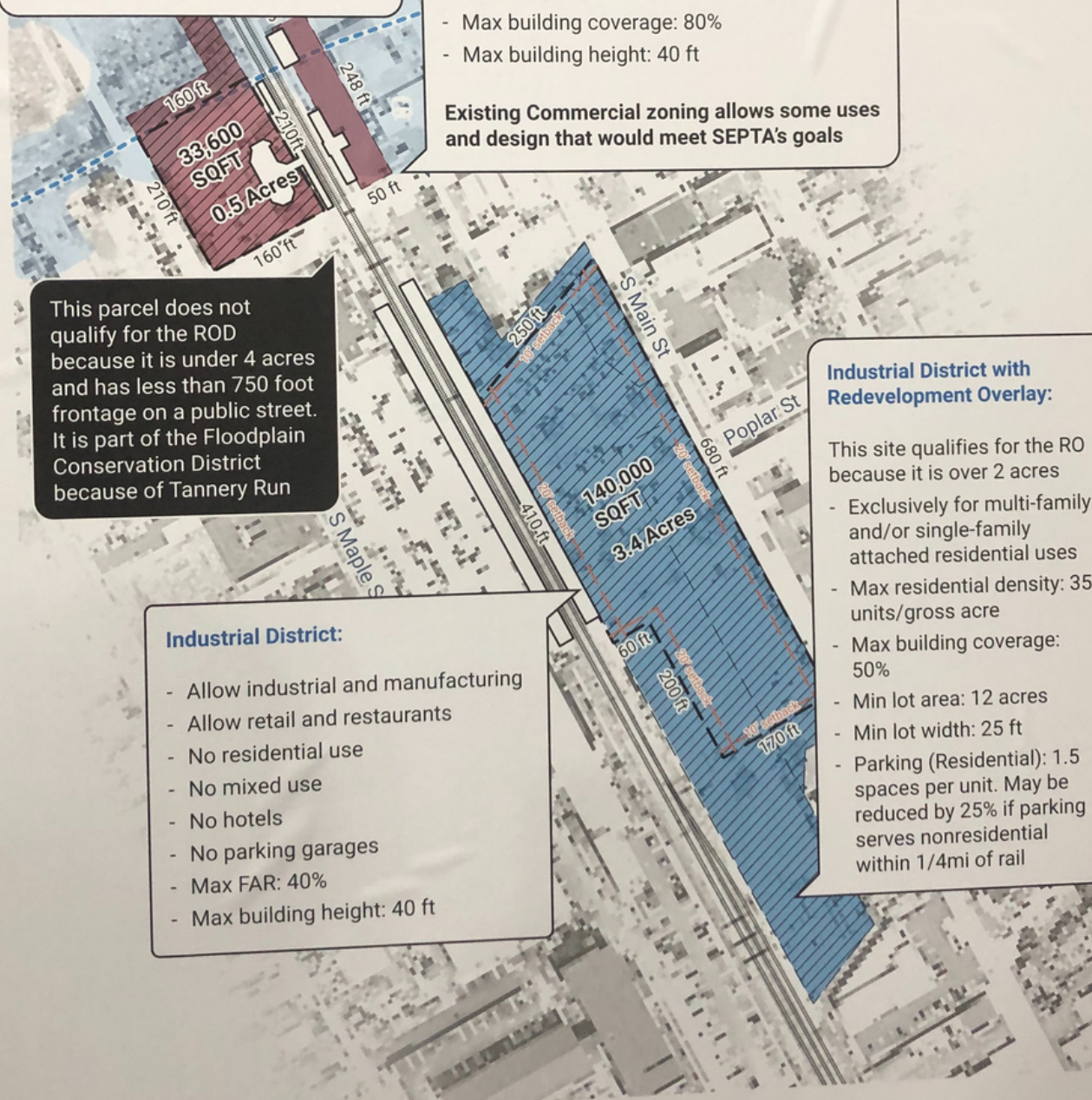
### Industrial District:

- Allow industrial and manufacturing
- Allow retail and restaurants
- No residential use
- No mixed use
- No hotels
- No parking garages
- Max FAR: 40%
- Max building height: 40 ft

### Industrial District with Redevelopment Overlay:

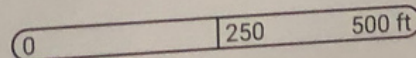
This site qualifies for the RO because it is over 2 acres

- Exclusively for multi-family and/or single-family attached residential uses
- Max residential density: 35 units/gross acre
- Max building coverage: 50%
- Min lot area: 12 acres
- Min lot width: 25 ft
- Parking (Residential): 1.5 spaces per unit. May be reduced by 25% if parking serves nonresidential within 1/4mi of rail



- C - Commercial
- I - Industrial
- - Tannery Run Creek

- ▨ RO - Redevelopment Overlay
- - Development Envelope
- Special Flood Hazard Area



# Ambler Station Area Concept



# Redeveloping surface parking fills a hole in lively Downtown Ambler. Multistory development can include shared parking and create a clear pedestrian pathway to the station.

A new development can strengthen downtown Ambler. New housing and additional retail spaces adds activity, supporting the existing businesses and drawing more.

New green spaces offer residents and visitors places to relax and gather while also collecting stormwater.

The pedestrian gateway at Poplar Street will provide neighborhood access from the east, while an added pedestrian crossing over the tracks

south of the station will improve pedestrian connectivity.

By directing vehicles into the site off of Butler Avenue, South Main Street will have less traffic and be a more friendly place to walk and bike to the station.

## Ambler's charm can be integrated and enhanced by Ambler Station's SAC.



Northbound on N Main St. at Butler Ave.



Ambler Regional Rail Station



Westbound on Butler Ave. at Main St.



Eastbound on Butler Ave.



The area round Ambler Station serves as a 'Town Center' -- a mixed-use, higher-density area that provides services for a larger area and supports multi-story development.

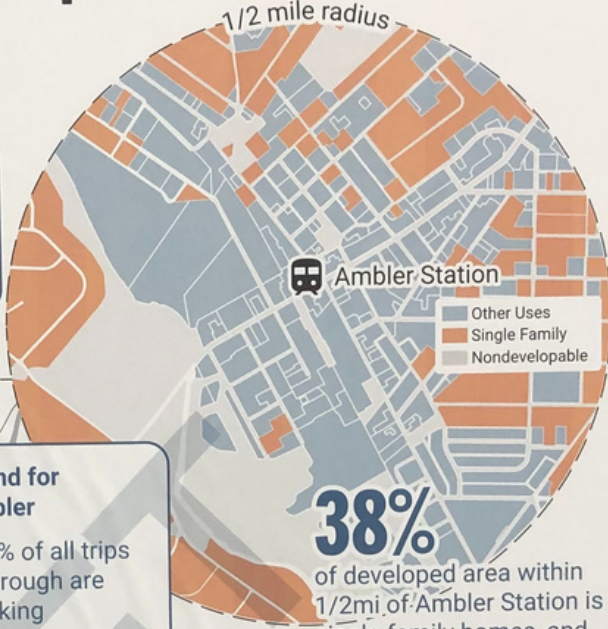
**1,010**

Passengers/  
 Weekday

\*Prepandemic Ridership

**Ambler Station has high ridership**

- Ranked #16th for Regional Rail passengers per weekday among SEPTA Stations \*Prepandemic Ridership



**38%**

of developed area within 1/2mi of Ambler Station is single-family homes, and

**4,378**

people live within 1/2mi of Ambler Station.

**There is demand for walking in Ambler**

- Currently, 13% of all trips in Ambler Borough are made by walking
- There's potential for even more— 10% of driving trips ending in Ambler are shorter than 1 mile, a reasonable walking distance for many people

**40 min**

Travel time to  
 Center City

This is better than rush hour car commute times, and competitive with off-peak car travel

**The site is well situated near commercial activity**

- Butler Pike is a thriving regional shopping, dining, and cultural destination

**SEPTA Parking Lots at Ambler:**

**4.93**

Acres

**588**

Parking Spaces

**There is demand for more multi-family units**

- There is recent multi-family growth
- Ambler has a young population

Retail spaces are at

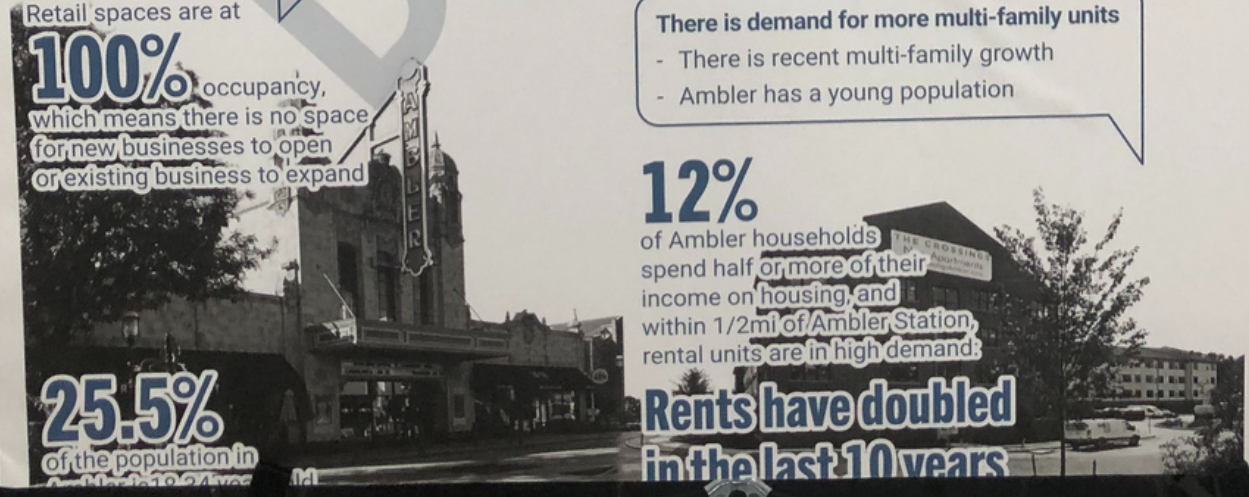
**100%** occupancy, which means there is no space for new businesses to open or existing business to expand

**12%**

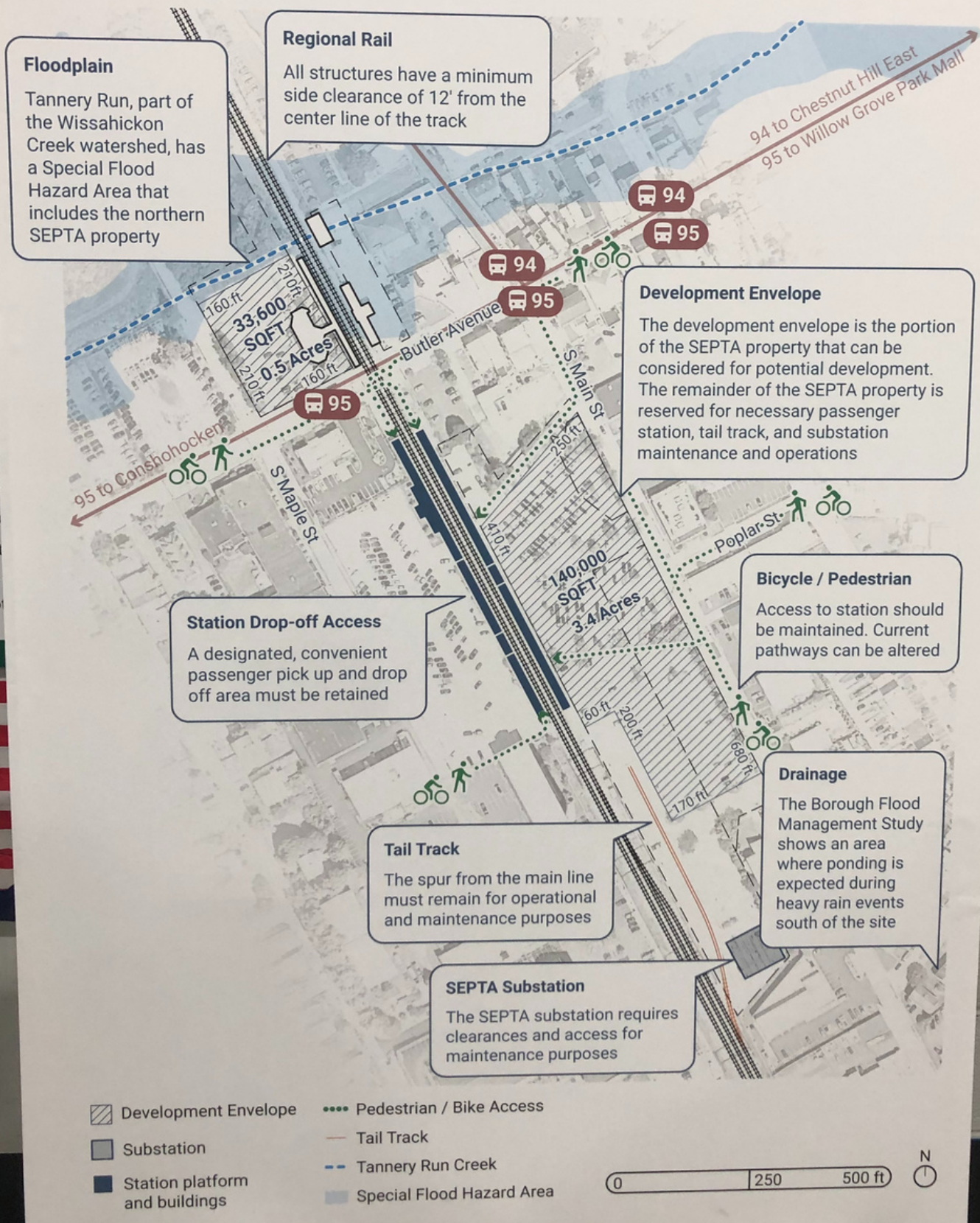
of Ambler households spend half or more of their income on housing, and within 1/2mi of Ambler Station, rental units are in high demand.

**Rents have doubled in the last 10 years**

**25.5%**  
 of the population in  
 Ambler, PA, lives



# Ambler Station Existing Conditions



**Floodplain**

Tannery Run, part of the Wissahickon Creek watershed, has a Special Flood Hazard Area that includes the northern SEPTA property

**Regional Rail**

All structures have a minimum side clearance of 12' from the center line of the track

**Development Envelope**

The development envelope is the portion of the SEPTA property that can be considered for potential development. The remainder of the SEPTA property is reserved for necessary passenger station, tail track, and substation maintenance and operations

**Station Drop-off Access**

A designated, convenient passenger pick up and drop off area must be retained

**Bicycle / Pedestrian**

Access to station should be maintained. Current pathways can be altered

**Drainage**

The Borough Flood Management Study shows an area where ponding is expected during heavy rain events south of the site

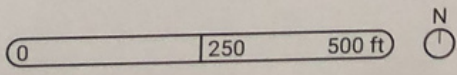
**Tail Track**

The spur from the main line must remain for operational and maintenance purposes

**SEPTA Substation**

The SEPTA substation requires clearances and access for maintenance purposes

- Development Envelope
- Substation
- Station platform and buildings
- Pedestrian / Bike Access
- Tail Track
- Tannery Run Creek
- Special Flood Hazard Area

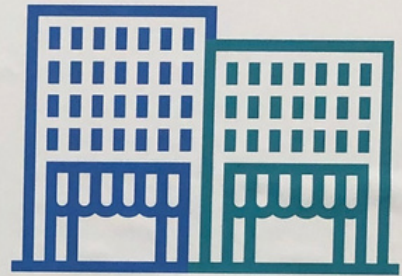


## **Ambler's vision for the SEPTA Regional Rail station area encourages the development of communities where people can live, work, and enjoy the distinctive character that makes Ambler so attractive.**

Ambler Borough has been proactive in planning its future. Ambler's thoughtful zoning regulations enable context-sensitive redevelopment. The following station area design standards, which heavily draw from previous planning efforts and the existing zoning ordinance, lay out SEPTA and the Borough's vision for the SEPTA Ambler sites.

### **Land Use: Housing & Commercial**

Uses could include multi-family housing, retail and services such as a daycare, pharmacy, laundry, or gym, and public uses (which could include development area bonuses). Housing should be a mix of market rate and workforce housing.



### **Density: Multi-story**

A building of four to six stories that covers most of the site, with minimal setbacks from the road.

### **Site Access and Vehicle Circulation**

Maintain station access for passenger pick-up/drop-off. Pedestrian and bike access to the station from East Butler Avenue and South Main St, which particular attention to their experience using Poplar Street. All vehicle access to the site will be off of Butler Avenue and South Main St with a minimum number of driveways.

### **Parking**

Preservation of commuter parking while keeping in mind capacity at Fort Washington Station. Parking should be shared for the station commuters and development uses and should not exceed more than one space per housing unit.

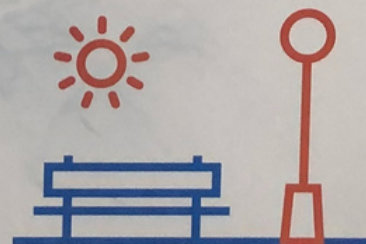


### **Urban Design**

Inclusion of public spaces such as parks and plazas as a gateway to the station and development. Consideration of stormwater management across the group of properties. Pleasant streetscape with wide sidewalks, bike racks, and street trees.

### **External and SEPTA Needs**

Improvements to nearby sidewalks and intersections. Consideration of space needed for continued SEPTA operations and maintenance.



# Ambler Borough has already undertaken many studies that include Ambler Station. This Station Area Concept includes those findings.

## What is a Station Area Concept?

The Ambler Station Area Concept (SAC) is centered on SEPTA's properties and how future development can align with Ambler Borough's plans for the station and SEPTA's drive for Transit Oriented Communities. The SAC illustrates the site's possibilities and limitations, as well as its development strategy.

## Ambler's Planning Context is Strong.

Ambler Station's potential for Transit Oriented Communities has long been recognized. The DVRPC has identified it for its competitive transit travel time, walkability, market activity, and planning context.

In 2011, the Borough completed a **Transit Revitalization Investment District Study (TRID)**. TRID is a method to encourage private development near transit and capture increased value for future investment in transit and other public amenities.

The study found that Ambler has potential for new development that can strengthen the community's economic base, contribute new transit ridership, and provide funding for enhanced streetscapes, parking for businesses, and the overall quality of life of residents.



## Other Recent Studies in Ambler Include:

- *Ambler Borough Strategic Plan: Transition to 100% Renewable Energy from 2020 to 2050* (2020)
- *Ambler Borough's Open Space Plan Update* (2019)
- *Flooding and Stormwater Management Plan for Ambler Area Watersheds* (2014)
- *Comprehensive Plan Update* (2013)
- *Finding Space: A Parking Action Plan for the Borough of Ambler* (2008)
- *Ambler Vision Plan Update* (2005)
- *Ambler Borough Comprehensive Plan* (2001)

Notes the sustainability benefits of more compact development on SEPTA's underutilized land and of promoting walking, cycling, and using transit.

Tannery Run, part of the Wissahickon Creek watershed, has a flood area that includes the northern SEPTA property.

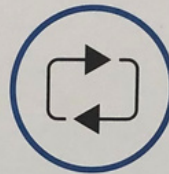
Updated the vision for Ambler, including recommending specific projects such as incentivizing development around rail transit.

# SEPTA is creating a comprehensive Transit Oriented Communities (TOC) program as part of its efforts to deliver a seamless, lifestyle transit network.

SEPTA Forward sets the vision for a Lifestyle Transit Network: **a frequent, easy to use, and integrated transit system** that can be used for any sort of trip--whether it's a 9-to-5 commute, reverse commute, heading to school, errands, or leisure activities.

SEPTA is creating a Transit Oriented Communities (TOC) program to deliver a **seamless lifestyle transit network**.

This program will support SEPTA's efforts to implement its strategic plan and align with **the vision of transit at the core of our region**.



Frequent



Easy to Use



Integrated

