LINWOOD AND ATHENS AVENUE
MASTER PLAN
Presentation for Phase I

- Planning Process for Master Plan
- Study Committee
- Present Phase I - Inventory & Analysis Drawings
- Community Feedback Q&A
- Next Steps – Website, Questionnaire & Conceptual Design

26 February 2008 - Public Meeting
DESIGN PROCESS

Phase I - Inventory and Analysis

Phase II - Site Program and Conceptual Design

Phase III - Development of Selected Design Concept
STUDY COMMITTEE

Study Committee - Township staff and key community members

Task - Oversee the design process and be your representatives
PHASE I

INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS DRAWINGS: The story of Ardmore’s past and present
THE HISTORY OF ARDMORE

Why did the Welsh settle in the area?
The land was **prime farmland** with many springs and streams.

The map does not show **buildings, only springs and water courses**

Ardmore, in particular, was known for its **flat topography** which was very suitable for farming.
Ardmore has always been a residential and commercial center. In 1796 Red Lion Inn was built at Lancaster and Greenfield Avenue—it was hotel, general store and center of activity in Ardmore until it closed in 1914 a casualty of prohibition.

During the late 1820’s there was a push to open the western area of Philadelphia for development. In 1832 the first portion of the Philadelphia and Columbia Railroad opened and was part of the Main Line of Public Works hence our name!

Our site sits near the headwaters of the West Branch of Indian Creek.
The Urbanization of Ardmore

By 1880 Ardmore was mainly wooden sidewalk, mud roads and a few gas lights—the one exception was Lancaster Ave know then as the Philadelphia and Lancaster Turnpike which was paved in 1796. It was the first road in the U.S. to be paved with macadam.

By 1896 the Railroad Atlases no longer showed stream courses or springs, but buildings and proposed subdivisions.

Our site is part of a subdivision along Linwood Avenue between Athens and Argyle and is owned by the Hamilton family.
In 110 years, from 1851 to 1961, the Township lost 195 farms.

With the housing boom after WWII and the expressway built in 1951 the Township saw enormous growth.

In 1967 the Neighborhood Improvement Program began and in 12 years had set aside 513 acres for new parks and playgrounds, and 184 acres for new schools.

Land becomes more valuable and in the 1930’s the house once owned by the Hamilton family is demolished to built the new Christian Science Church. In 1950’s another home owned by the Hamilton Family is torn down for the parking lot where our site is today!
The comparison of the Township of 1851 to 2008 shows Ardmore remains the economic hub of the Township, functioning most like a small but very diverse town. Ardmore is a prime growth area in the Township, but streams have been filled and open space developed. Ardmore has the highest density of housing and people making this park even more important for our quality of life.

We want to tie our small park and environs into the cultural, social and ecological structure of the Township.
ECOLOGICAL, CULTURAL AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE

It involves recognizing that, in some way, all things are connected.
REGIONAL PARTNERS

We looked at Regional Partners in the Township such as the Elementary Schools, Conservancy organizations, Haverford College, Lankenau Hospital and the Lower Merion Historic Society.
LOCAL PARTNERS

The local map shows who might use the park: Churches, Montessori schools, Neighbors, Community Organizations and what local green spaces are in the area- such as the tot lot on St Paul’s and South Ardmore Park
Ecological Structure

BY PLACING OURSELVES IN A LARGER CONTEXT WE ARE REMINDED
OF THE WORLD WE LIVE

watersheds

potential habitat
corridor & patches

birds

water drainage

sunstudy

plant communities

lowland appalachian-oak forest

ENVIRONMENTAL STRUCTURE
Linwood & Athens Avenue Park Master Plan
Township of Lower Merion • Department of Parks and Recreation
Ardmore has the least amount of tree cover in the Township, the least amount of open space and the most people so all our natural resources are very important.

Watersheds: Cobbs Creek and West Branch of Indian Creek and the East Branch of Indian Creek

Major green spaces: Patches of green that need linkages

Proposed linkages: Tree lined streets, Vegetated rail corridors, Streams or a contiguous Backyards

Why: Cover, food, stopping places
The Park lies in two different watersheds.

The sun study looked at the amount of shade seasonally and over the period of a day. The tree locations show the microclimates and where the lack of shade impacts the site.
The circulation study indicates how cars and people use the neighborhood.

- **Major pedestrian** routes are Linwood and Athens Avenue
- There are some streets with no or unsafe sidewalks
- There are unsafe intersections
- Lancaster and Wynnewood Avenue are main arteries and keep traffic off of neighborhood streets
- There is a proposed pedestrian and bicycle network plan for possible connections
Site = 18 times smaller than South Ardmore Park
Site = **about 200’x200’**
Three Bears Park = **25’x65’**

Site = **half the size**
of Teardrop Park

Site = ¼ the size of
Rittenhouse Square
The inventory & analysis process is about discovery.

- It is about learning who the community is and what you want.
- Learning about the history, ecological systems and cultural networks.
- Learning about circulation patterns, understanding scale and thinking about use.
- We heard your desire to remember what this place used to be and where you’ve come from.
- We heard your interest in a place that is flexible, offers social opportunities and places to play, have fun.
- We heard your enthusiasm for a place that is connected to the larger ecological region.
- The opportunity and the challenge of creating this park will be about balance.
- Balancing the ecological piece with the human piece – neither dominates, both can inform the other.
- Balancing the different needs within the community to ultimately create an inspiring and genuinely innovative place.
What do you imagine in this Park?
landforms

artforms
surfaces
vertical elements
connectors

water
Question & Answer

site plan

NOTES
SOL: S. Olney Land — land that is almost extensively covered with development is classified as S. Olney Land because the original soil features have been obliterated by construction activities and grading.

view south on Linwood Ave.

view north on Linwood Ave.

view east on Athens Ave.

view west on Athens Ave.

360° panorama

EXISTING CONDITIONS
Linwood & Athens Avenue Park Master Plan
Township of Lower Merion • Department of Parks and Recreation
NEXT STEPS

Feedback from Community: public meetings, website, study committee, questionnaires, charrettes

Township Website: Master Plan drawings, meeting minutes and questionnaires will be posted to website throughout planning process

Questionnaire: Fill out tonight, send back to Township or complete on website
Land Becoming More Valuable
Natural Resources Disappearing

Shade Tree Commission formed in 1931

The house owned by the Hamilton Family is torn down to make way for the Christian Science building.

The Hamilton family had owned houses on both corners of Athens Avenue and Linwood Ave since the late 1880’s.