How does the City of Philadelphia guide development?

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My experience:

As an intern in the Urban Design Division of the Philadelphia City Planning Commission, I was exposed to a variety of planning projects of different scales, enabling me to get a sense of the main goals and duties of PCPC, along with the processes and actors involved in urban transformation.

My work included:
- Creating graphic illustrations for urban renewal proposals (e.g., Lower Southwest);
- Creating a presentation map conveying the proposed redevelopment of the Lower Southwest District;
- Preparing presentation materials and graphic layouts for updates of the district plan implementation;
- Attending “workshop” public meetings which covered the review of large scale architectural projects, designation and preservation of historical buildings and commercial corridor improvements.

Learning experience:
By discovering urban planning and city management through the lenses of the Urban Design Division, I was exposed to a broad range of projects and phases of development, from vision to implementation to preservation and from master-planning to specific architectural features. Finally, this internship was aimed to be an exploration into a potential profession.

Vision: Plan and Design

Lower Southwest areas of future development

• Philadelphia2035;
  • For the first time in over 50 years, PCPC is preparing a comprehensive plan of the City to guide future development
  • Development is guided by three themes:
    • THRIVE
    • CONNECT
    • RENEW

• District Plan in Progress: Lower Southwest

Implementation and Renewal: Collaborate and Review

PHILADELPHIA 2035
IMPLEMENTATION BEGINS NOW

Inform - Engage - Update

Civic Design Review
• Major development projects are reviewed publicly;
• Chance for the developer to get feedback from PCPC and the community;
• The Urban Design provides recommendations focusing on:
  - how the building addresses the street;
  - the quality of the public realm;
  - impact on the neighborhood;
  - code compliance;

Storefront Improvement Program
• Revitalizes commercial corridors;
• Reimburses owners of commercial buildings for storefront improvements;
• Is an initiative of the Commerce Department, the Urban Design Division provides design recommendations;
• The Design Review group collaborates with the applicant to ensure preservation of neighborhood character and efficiency in using resources;

Historical Commission and Historic Designation Committee
• Preservation: The owner of a property listed on the Philadelphia Register is required to obtain approval from the Historical Commission prior to altering the exterior appearance of the building and/or site;
• Designation: Anyone can nominate a historical building, structure or object;

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