East Falls Neighborhood
Stormwater Management Plan:
Engaging Residents in Action

Philadelphia University
WILLIAM PENN FOUNDATION
EAST FALLS
Office of Watersheds
THE PENNSYLVANIA HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY
Phase I

- Why we are doing this
- Getting the EFDC to understand the issues (thanks PWD and PHS!)
- Figuring out marketing for meetings
- Studying the area

*We are glad to be a laboratory!*
East Falls: *a useful stormwater laboratory*

Hillside location above a river

Diverse landscapes, land uses, residents, features

Committed residents
East Falls Neighborhood Stormwater Management Plan

- Identified optimal places for further investigation

- Looked at existing conditions, constituencies, land uses, etc

- Stormwater management intervention possibilities
Five sites selected for community input: Queen Lane Reservoir, Midvale Avenue Locations – Library, School, SEPTA Station, Business District

Community Design process
• Stormwater management education
• Community input
• Marketing message: *improve the look of the neighborhood*
Splitting between public improvements and residential

- Can’t do public improvements without community support
- Our focus on residential
- While we have learned lessons, they seem easily transferable
Language issue: Stormwater *is* what?

- Sounds like a serious storm, not just rain
- River flooding is well known problem but its cause it not understood
- Not sure where the rain water goes
- Treated/untreated water – what’s the difference
- Rainwater retention seems like it could cause problems – bumpouts are dangerous
This is scary!

“Stormwater Retention areas”
Plan: Do not use this word:

Stormwater

Plan: Do not think like this:

Education

Focus on what MOTIVATES people

How can we make our neighborhood nicer looking?
Marketing Materials
Public participation
Initial Study Recommendations

• Rapid Response: *New Design, Rain barrels and planter at Septa Station*

• Residential Priorities: *Desirable rain barrels, enhance green strips*

• Public Priorities: *Midvale Avenue streetscape, SEPTA station planning study*
Phase II

- Residential engagement
- Public improvement on Midvale Avenue
- Complete Streets planning
Workshops

• Add Green, Add Value – improving the value of your home. Real estate agent
• Native plants
• Rain Barrels and installation
• Chanticleer: low water garden design

Door prizes, flyering, emails, Facebook, Web page
Let’s do something concrete and visible

- Stormwater retention basin
- SEPTA station planters
- Station rain barrels
- Station planters
- Gateway Planters – June 1
Marketing Materials

Logo – East Falls with a Twist!
A special invitation to the Friends of the Library

YOU can help change the face of East Falls!


(Including the Library, Midvale Avenue, the grounds of Mifflin School, Queen Lane and the Reservoir...)

We’ll have Design ideas for your yard or planters!

Location: Falls of Schuylkill Library

April 12, 2007

4 p.m. – 6 p.m. design open house
6 p.m. – 8 p.m. residents participate in design brainstorming

Door prizes and gardening tips!

This project is a joint effort of PWS, the Philadelphia Water Department/Office of Watersheds, Philadelphia University, the EPA, EarthTone, and is being led by the East Falls Development Corp.

Design ideas that come out of this session may later be transformed into projects which we can implement when we get funding.

For more information, please contact Gina Snyder, Director, (215) 848-8684 or gsnnyder@eastfallsdevelopment.org.

RSVP by April 1: let me know if you plan to come.
Marketing Materials
Motivation: nicer looking street: Midvale Avenue Planning
Looking for the “aha” moment…
Motivation: Traffic Calming

Initial reaction: NO
Now, we have advocates
What’s next:

• Doggy doo – causes people to brick up area between sidewalk and curb
• Rain barrels – installation
• Yard design incentives
• Dealing with vandalism to rain barrels
• Queen Lane bumpouts
Measuring Success – only part way through

- Want to be careful and measure differences in behavior, if any
- Baseline data
- Student counters
What are the challenges?

- Competing interests: Tension between parking for train and stormwater retention
- Who cares?
- Don’t just focus on the converted means a lot of work
- Younger rowhome owners are more difficult to connect with than single family, older owners
What are the benefits?

• Advocates for change
• Connections between homes, streets and neighborhoods
• Installation of more rain barrels
• Greater understanding of relationship between the river and the built environment
What do we have now?

- Stormwater retention in parking lot
- 8 barrel system w/ signage at Train Station
- Planters and meadow at Station
- Bumpouts coming in near reservoir for PWD and traffic calming
- Rain Barrels at homes
- Container gardens
A new day in East Falls

WE COLLECT

It rains 42 inches a year in Philadelphia. This roof produces 16,464 gallons of runoff in a year, which would fill these 8 rain barrels 38 times.
A new day in East Falls