

PROJECT PHILADELPHIA The neighborhoods

Mayor Street's plan to remake the face of the city divides its neighborhoods into six categories ranging from the most vibrant to the most devastated. The following is a look at one neighborhood in each category.

Strawberry Mansion: One 'reclamation' neighborhood

Here, the city would: Shore up neighborhood institutions and thriving blocks, but when neighborhoods are failing, begin to buy vacant homes and lots, and assemble them into sites for future development.

STRAWBERRY MANSION feels like an urban ghost town.

On every street there are rotting abandoned homes, shingles and awnings dangling precariously. The odor of burnt wood and urine drifts out of them. Trees grow through their rooftops and windows, resting on nearby electrical wires and threatening the houses next door. Trash fills yards and alleyways.

Yesterday, the streets were desolate. There are no stores or playgrounds here. Kids bounce on filthy mattresses or play in makeshift "clubhouses" made of plywood and discarded carpet bits. The kids nail plywood and a milk crate to telephones poles to play hoops.

Strawberry Mansion has been designated a "reclamation" area under Mayor Street's plan to remake the city. It is the designation for the neighborhoods with the most devastation.

You can see a hint of what is to come. Stand in the middle of some blocks and you can see three more blocks because of all the vacant land. Under Street's plan, reclamation neighborhoods will become even more vacant as abandoned buildings are bulldozed so large tracts can be marketed



Strawberry Mansion's Glenda Tate would rather see eyesores demolished than left standing. DAVID MAHALETT/DAILY NEWS

to developers.

Glenda Tate, 37, a neighborhood activist, is searching for some relief.

"I'd rather see this than have a house

next to me that is used as a hotel for prostitutes, a crack house, or a place where a kid could get hurt because they are running through it," she said pointing to an empty

lot filled with construction debris and trash. "I'm just hoping that he [Street] can do something to help communities like this one."

She doesn't think that neighbors who live on streets surrounded by abandoned homes will balk at the chance to move. But she realizes that when the houses come down, it could be years before new ones go up and that the city ought to make sure the surviving homes are not damaged by the demolition.

Her house sits next to an empty lot where an abandoned house was razed, and she's had nothing but problems since.

"My basement walls are caving in; moisture is coming in and damaging my ceiling," Tate said. "When they tear them down, they don't take the time to secure the houses next door."

Tate said she's praying that Street and City Council enforce the blight plan.

"Just look at my neighborhood," she said pointing to a row of crumbling houses.

"Don't you think we need a plan like this in place?" ■

—Yvonne Latty



PROJECT PHILADELPHIA Can it work?

Decay is in for a fight

But \$250M plan to improve neighborhoods has its hurdles

by Mark McDonald

Daily News Staff Writer



Glenda Tate, of Strawberry Mansion, stands in the doorway of an abandoned house in her neighborhood.

DAVID MAHALETT/DAILY NEWS

INSIDE THE PRINCE Music Theater, Mayor Street is watching the biggest political show of his life, the very reason, he whispers, that he got into politics a generation ago.

Good schools, decent jobs and safe streets — they're all important to him, but transforming broken-down neighborhoods into places of hope, that's what he wants.

As he watches his staff and consultants engage the media with a slide show on his \$250 million neighborhood transformation program, he says it is the last best hope to change the face of the city and he felt 40 years from now.

"We have to do this because if we don't, then turn out the lights. Put up your for-sale sign. That's the message we have to take to Harrisburg and Washington," he says.

And, as he has said all week in private briefings on his plan, "Are you ready to fight? I'm ready to fight," pumping his arm and smiling with pride.

What's clear after three days of briefings, private dinners with City Council and media trolley tours is that Street has set in motion what is surely one of the most ambitious efforts ever to change the city's future course.

Can he pull it off?

Will future Philadelphians look back at this show at the Prince as the beginning of the city's climb out of Rust Belt depression into a new world or will it fade as surely as Wilson Goode's North Philadelphia plan or Ed Rendell's empowerment zones?

Here are some of the hurdles Street faces in turning his vision into vibrant, rebuilt neighborhoods across the city:

■ His own political persona. Remember that, while neighborhood revitalization was a key part of his campaign, Street barely won election in 1999.

Remember, too, that his former Council district in North Philadelphia, a section likely to benefit heavily from his plan, is the

See PLAN Next Page

WHAT'S INSIDE

An example of a "steady" neighborhood is Green Lane in Roxborough.



Urban Warrior

First step: Enforce what's on the books. **Page 8.**

The neighborhoods

We examine target areas, talk to residents. **Pages 9-13.**

The suburbs

Schools still a big reason people move there. **Page 14.**

Plan a day

Daily Views

Editorial: Questions aside, we must make it happen. **Page 19.**

Elmer Smith: Lure new residents, but don't neglect those who have





A COMMUNITY UNITES

Where Were The Political Leaders?

All In The Family Group Associates, Inc. and The North Penn Village Outreach presented a lot and mural dedication in memory of the late George Alexander Patterson, a young man shot to death last year in a vacant lot on his way to work at Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC), 29th & Dauphin Streets.

Glenda Tate, president of All In The Family Group Associates, Inc. and the Rev. Warren H. Marshall, Jr., pastor of North Penn Baptist Church, pulled the community together to stop the violence. Rev. Marshall, a man of God, was tired of the funerals for the young men in the community lost to violence, and was determined to bring the men of the Village together to bring about positive activities in the area. Edward Flythe, a dedicated young man, working with the youth in the area, joined with the pastor to accomplish his goal.

To bring attention to the city and state that they meant business, a program was developed - this program included Glenda Tate, a Village resident, who had dedicated many months before this decision, in securing the troublesome empty lots in the Village that housed prostitution and drugs. She had worked hard to try to turn them into a place of beauty and with her group, All In The Family Group Associates, Inc., was attempting to develop plans to transform them into places of recreation and comfort for all. A memorial park to honor the slain in the area, was her dream, a temple for hope in the future.

Joining their forces, hopes and dreams, the day of celebration and ceremony began. The decedent lots had been cleared, a mural in honor of the slain was completed, the community gathered in commitment to a new era of pride in their neighborhood. The North Penn Baptist Church's Transportation Committee enthusiastically presented their Annual Bazaar on this particular day of celebration, giving a festive atmosphere to the occasion.

The day was successful, only marred by the lack of political leaders, city, state and national, obviously absent, though invited. Hopes and aspirations dashed, but not destroyed by their indifference.

Spotlight On Community Leaders

Glenda Tate and Edward Flythe:

A Couple Giving Back to the Community

I am very proud to write this article in salute this fine couple, Glenda Tate and her husband Edward Flythe - they have dedicated their energies to ensuring the rehabilitation and restructuring of their community, a community plagued with abandoned homes, drugs, and crime.

Together, they are giving their time and energies to save the future generations in the neighborhood, a area bounded from 29th Street to 24th Street - from Sedgley Avenue, Cumberland Street, in the 28th Ward - Division 3 and 7.

The name of the organization they have created is "All In The Family Group Associates, Inc." located at 2612 W. Gordon Street, Philadelphia, PA. Glenda is the president.

I am especially proud of her because she is a former student of mine, doing something positive and productive for the inner city youth, by setting up programs to target educational, recreational and life skills.

Studies "All In The Family" offer cover health, safety, drug, and gun control issues.

The organization began May 1994, when a group of parents met at the R.R. Wright Elementary School regarding the need for positive activities for the neighborhood children. This led to the parents, teachers and principal, J. Sawyer and North Penn Baptist Church pastor, Rev. Warren H. Marshall, Jr., donating their time and space and materials to move forward.

Glenda and Edward are in this fight together day and night, giving their all. The Memorial Dedication for George Alexander Patterson, was a culminating event of their efforts. Watch out for this couple, they are all that good and wonderful. Help them by giving of your donations and time, this is your chance to do something positive.



ALL IN THE FAMILY—All In The Family Group Associates, Inc. held its annual awards ceremony and Bar-B-Que recently at the Village Memorial Garden, 27th and York Streets. The group's Village Youth Program provides year round youth activities, such as sports, garden and lot projects and educational programs. More than 300 people participated in the day-long event awards for service were presented. Pictured: members of the Village Youth Program pose in front of mural in the Memorial Garden.

Photo by James Mosley



Children take part in community revival

We wanted to change abandoned lots into flower gardens and playgrounds, and give neighborhood kids a chance to participate in deciding how to beautify their neighborhood through gardening.

First, the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society allowed community youth to participate in a program that taught them how to take care of a garden.

In the fall of 1996, with the help of the United Way Day of Caring and area businesses and volunteers, the youth and the block captains cleaned several lots, and the site at Seventh and Emily Streets was given a new look. That spring, Penn students and the neighborhood youths they mentored developed the design for the mural through a contest.

With the design in hand, we contacted the Mural Arts Program, which provided the artist and other needed resources for us to make our dream come true.

The wall at 2015 S. Seventh St. went from rags to beauty. This mural has made a great difference in our neighborhood. The Snyderville Community Development Corp. is still involved with all of our partners in some way or other, and we continue to reach out to anyone we can in our efforts to rebuild our neighborhood.

C.B. Harris-Ramsue
Philadelphia

Full-scale program starts with a mural

We were hoping that the mural "It Takes a Village to Raise a Child" would unite the community in our stand to end the violence, drug abuse, disease and senseless deaths that plague our youth. We wanted to bring to life a lot in which a senseless death occurred and create a beautiful place where we could come together to celebrate life's accomplishments. A place for us to remember our loved ones by planting flowers, which brings new life in their memory.

Today at 27th and York Streets sits the "Village Memorial Garden," dedicated in memory of George Alexander Patterson, a young man who lost his life on this very lot while he was on his way to work. The lot, once an eyesore, now proudly complements the work of



Part of the mural "It Takes a Village to Raise a Child."

art painted by muralist Calvin Jones and continues to flourish with the support of many. We hope to keep improving yearly.

After taking on the task of developing the lot in 1995, we began organizing block captains and our youth to clean and beautify our neighborhood. We started a garden club to maintain the garden and clean lots. We started a sports program that now accommodates 300 youth from our area. We are working with local elementary and middle schools to develop an after-school program, and we are assisting teachers with overcrowding classrooms that hinder students' learning.

We are working with the city on plans to assist community members in getting their high school diploma or GED, as well as training that could lead them to jobs as teachers, teacher's assistants and crossing guards. The participants involved in this program also will receive training in parenting, time and income management, and housing and family counseling.

We are working with the necessary agencies and political figures to enhance city services needed to accommodate our community's growth and develop housing and commercial businesses in the area.

Glenda Tate-Flythe
Philadelphia

Coming Up on Voices

Next week: Things to remember on Memorial Day.
June 4: Elections 2003, Part 4: The Stealth Issues.
June 11: Philadelphia's unique jazz scene.
July 4: How Does Your Garden Make You Grow?
Questions? Call Kevin Ford, readers' editor, at 215-854-4543.