

FUCK A “CELLICON VALLEY”

AGAINST THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT
OF BARTRAMS NORTH AND SOUTH



The Master's Plans

After we heard rumors about UPenn developing the land around Bartram's North we did some research and discovered an evil plot. In 2013 a group of economists, developers, city planners, and other villains came up with the Lower Schuylkill Master Plan, a 143 page document envisioning a "21st century industrial district" in Southwest Philly along the Schuylkill river corridor. The report details massive development projects to be carried out over 20-25 years. Reading the report in 2023 provided us with some answers and many many questions.

The Master Plan is worth looking over carefully if you are someone who cares about environmental destruction and gentrification. You can find it online at https://www.design.upenn.edu/sites/default/files/LSMP_Small.pdf

The plan breaks up the development projects into three sections. The first is a Logistics Hub, connected to the Philadelphia Airport, whose recent expansion destroyed wetlands to build a cargo facility. We've already seen how this has gone down for the FDR meadows. The second is the Energy Corridor in South Philly, where they are currently focused on remediating decades of industrial pollution from oil infrastructure. The remediation is predicted to take years, then they're going build factories.

The third zone, the Innovation District, is the focus of this zine. Because it is closest to us, because it threatens the places we live in and love. In writing this zine, we hope that other people will look into the master plan and oppose gentrification as they see it manifest in their contexts.

The Innovation District consists of the Pennovation Center and the areas near Bartram's North and Bartram's South including some wild lands and spaces. We spend a lot of time in those spaces and despite what developers think, there is already vibrant activity, innovation, and life, we don't want to see the area get paved over and built up.

When we began this research we were looking to find information about one building and one development but what we have uncovered is a sinister plan to sell out our neighborhood in an attempt to position Philly to compete economically with Boston and New York. We reject gentrification in the name of progress. We reject this destruction of wild space. We reject the top-down reorganization of other people's lives.

The Innovation District

The Innovation District threatens to build a biotechnology campus in Bartram's North and Bartram's South/Gibson's Point. This would involve building a road from University City through Bartram's Village, and razing Bartram's Village public housing to make way for new mixed income housing.

The Lower Schuylkill Biotech Campus is part of what people at the University of Pennsylvania are calling "Cellicon Valley". It's an attempt to brand Philly as the next hi-tech hotspot for pharmaceutical companies and research institutions. Like Silicon Valley, Cellicon Valley is a bad and annoying idea that should never come to fruition. It's literally a scheme to capture, commodify, and sell us ways to live, by destroying and locking us out of the ways we live.

The master plan actually doesn't mention Bartrams Village too much, but it does show a road they plan to making run right through it. A 2020 plan called "Blossom at Bartrams" put out by the PHA, the PDIC and other people says they are going to "relocate" all the current residents out of their houses while a new fancy mixed income neighborhood is built. But don't worry the residents will get housing vouchers for temporary spots and "the right to return." I guess whenever the construction is over? Anyone who's been paying attention to the PHA could tell you that their wait-



View of Innovation District looking north to University City

list is over 20 years long and the organization is notoriously corrupt. Okay, I'm sure the old residents will be able to easily move back into their neighborhood and live side by side with the tech yuppies, who wanna live close by their jobs in biotech labs.

As of the writing of this zine, it seems like the city is still trying to get biotech firms and construction companies to place bids on the spot. They keep pushing back the deadline for proposals, so maybe it's proven to be a harder sell than they initially thought lol.

What we have noticed though is a number of small changes that have been made to Bartrams North that seem to be focused on making the space more palatable to investors. Most notably, in November 2022, a swath of underbrush and trees was cut down to make way for a chain link fence demarcating the border of the bike path. The fence sections off the site of the proposed biotech campus. Additionally a new gate was installed across the bike path sometime in December 2022.

The construction plans for Bartrams North and South are meant to act as "Priority Development Sites," paving the way for the rest of the Innovation District. Halting the development of these two areas could put a serious damper on the larger efforts to gentrify the neighborhood and domesticate the waterfront.

Consider this an invitation.

Resources

We really encourage everyone interested to look at the Master Plan document and begin snooping around. There's more info there than we can share here, and lots of leads to follow up on.

Some key players we have identified behind this part of the Innovation District plan are PHA, the PIDC, and their subcontractors. For more information about these groups and others associated with the Innovation District development you can visit our cryptpad document at: <https://anon.to/jaQy9f>

Lower Schuylkill Biotech Campus
<https://www.lowerschuylkillbio.com/>

The Philadelphia Housing Authority (PHA) already has a long history of displacement, gentrification, and corruption. In recent years they have faced numerous protests and occupations resulting from their warehousing of homes, evicting residents, and profit-motivated development. They have contracted Pennrose PHL LLC to turn Bartram's Village into mixed-income housing.

Address:

2013 Ridge Ave

Philadelphia, PA 19121

Website:

pha.phila.gov

Phone number:

215-684-4000

The Philadelphia Industrial Development Corporation (PIDC) funds and invests in development throughout the city. Their idea of revitalizing neighborhoods seems to be moving in wealthier residents and businesses.

They have contracted SW Bio Care LLC to build their proposed biotechnology campus, though at the time of this writing it's unclear if they have found anyone willing to take up the idea and run such a campus.

Address:

1500 Market Street

Suite 3500 West

Philadelphia, PA 19102

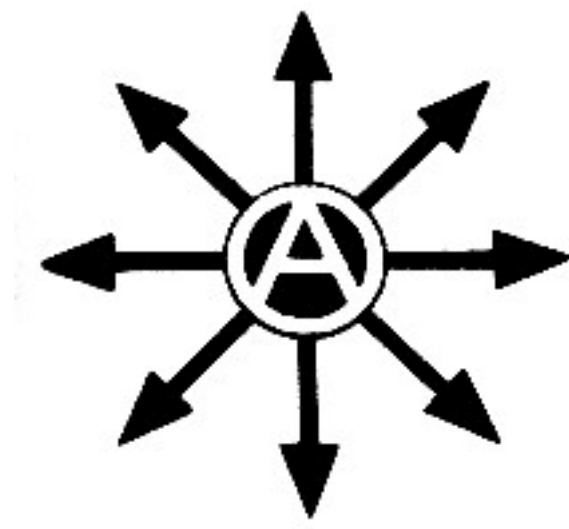
Websites:

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