Reducing Alternative Transportation Barriers to Federally Managed Lands in Southwest Philadelphia and Delaware County, PA

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Unit: John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum
Location: Philadelphia, PA

What is the Transportation Scholars Program?
The Public Lands Transportation Scholars program provides public lands with transportation professionals for six to 12 months who assist in transportation planning and implementation to help public lands reduce traffic, congestion and pollution while improving visitor experiences. These programs are designed to place individuals with substantial knowledge and expertise in transportation planning and related areas. *See footer for a list of sponsors.*

John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum

Authorized by Congress in 1972, the John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum is America's first Urban National Wildlife Refuge

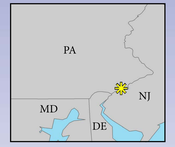
Currently the refuge is 993 acres in size, of which 200 acres are Pennsylvania's last remaining freshwater tidal marsh.

An important stopover for migrating birds along the Atlantic flyway; Heinz also supports a diverse array of terrestrial and aqauatic wildlife.

Providing environmental education to urban youth, as well as conservation awareness and outdoor experiences, are major refuge goals.

The refuge spans Philadelphia and Delaware Counties.

- Philadelphia Neighborhood:
  - Eastwick
- Delaware County Municipalities:
  - Tinicum Township
  - Folcroft Borough
  - Darby Township



The refuge is surrounded, and in places bordered, by large transportation and industrial uses. These include:

- Philadelphia International Airport
- Interstate 95
- Lower Darby Creek Area Superfund Site

Local Population (2015)

Local Transportation Network

Urban Conditions in Southwest Phladelphia and Delaware County

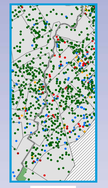
The Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) recognizes that urban areas present a strategic opportunity to reach new audiences that are currently not visiting nor aware of the Service. Refuges that are in the heart of where the people are located provide the best opportunity to engage new audiences. Building this constituency ultimately benefits the entire System and the broader conservation community by nurturing new supporters.

John Heinz has focused on the Kingsessing, Eastwick, and Paschalville neighborhoods of southwest Philadelphia.

The demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of these neighborhoods are often different from typical FWS visitors, as well as from other Philadelphia and Delaware County Residents:

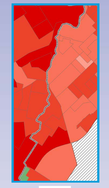
There are more people of color

	Phila.	Del Co.
White	45.1%	70.6%
Black	44.0%	21.4%
Asian	7.4%	5.6%
All Other	3.5%	2.4%
Hispanic/ Latino	14.0%	3.7%



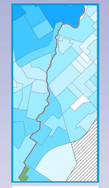
High school graduation rate is low

Percent High School Graduate Age 25+
Philadelphia: 81%
Delaware Co: 92%



Median household income is low

Median Household Income
Philadelphia: $37,640
Delaware Co: $64,174

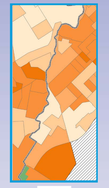


Fewer people own vehicles

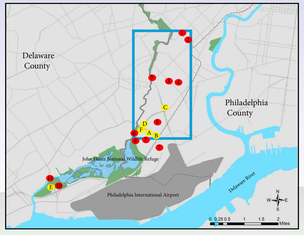
Number of Vehicles per Household
Philadelphia: 0.67
Delaware Co: 0.89

Many people rent their homes

Percent Rental, Occupied Housing Units
Philadelphia: 47%
Delaware Co: 30%



John Heinz Transportation Projects & Challenges



1. Unity Garden
2. Cecil St. Garden
3. Work with transportation network companies
4. John Heinz Refuge Shuttle
5. Cobbs Creek Connector Trail
6. New pedestrian/cyclist entrance
7. Integrate with nearest SEPTA stops
8. Install accommodating bicycle infrastructure
9. Participate in community planning processes
10. Redesign PA-420 parking lots
11. Promote new trail during PA-420 bridge redesign

= Focus Area

- A Poor Bicycle Infrastructure
- B Poor Transit Infrastructure
- C Large Intersection
- D Large Intersection
- E Interrupted Network
- F No Signage

Challenges

Poor or Missing Infrastructure

- Bicycle lane along 84th St
- Distance from refuge: ~0.25 miles
- Large, speeding vehicles, no protection

- Closest bus stop to John Heinz
- Distance from refuge: ~0.25 miles
- No curb cuts, poor signage, no shelter

Separation from Local Neighborhoods

- Intersection: Lindbergh Blvd & Island Ave
- Distance from Refuge: ~ 1 mile
- Total Lanes: 39

- Intersection: Lindbergh Blvd & 84th St
- Distance from Refuge: ~ 0.25 miles
- Total Lanes: 23

Lack of Community Integration

- Delaware County access points
- Along refuge border
- No signage, sidewalks, or connection to refuge land across road
- Less than 0.1 miles away from I-95

- Closest intersection outside of refuge
- Distance from Refuge:~0.25 miles
- Adjacent to three bus lines, on path towards rail station
- No signage for refuge

Potential Solutions

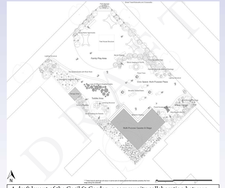
- Creation of the Cobbs Creek Connector Trail, an extension of a multiuse pathway that will connect a trail in West Philadelphia and John Heinz.
- Installation of important bicycle facilities at the refuge, such as bicycle racks.
- Increased pedestrian signage to facilitate pedestrian access from the nearest transit locations.
- Creation of a new entrance path, allowing a separated route for pedestrians and bicyclists to the visitor center and other refuge amenities.

Recently installed, US Fish and Wildlife Service-specific, bicycle racks by the Refuge Visitor Center.

- Development of a free, community shuttle that connects southwest Philadelphia residents with community resources and local green spaces. The shuttle ran as a pilot program over several weeks in October 2016.
- Potential partnerships with transportation network companies to increase the use of ridesharing, particularly from neighborhoods further from the refuge or with fewer transportation options.
- Work with PennDOT and local townships to create a multiuse path for safe pedestrian and cyclist access via Delaware County.
- Work with SEPTA to better integrate John Heinz with existing transit options.

The route of the John Heinz Refuge Shuttle during the October 2016 pilot program.

- Work with the local community to identify issues and projects important to them.
- Increase projects with local partners that share similar missions focusing on open space, conservation and environmental education (e.g. Cecil St. Community Garden).
- Become full participants in local planning initiatives that involve southwest Philadelphia neighborhoods or nearby Delaware County.
- Promote John Heinz and increase outreach through schools and other local community organizations.



A draft layout of the Cecil St Garden, a community collaboration between John Heinz and several local partners. Courtesy Philadelphia University

Sources:

Maps: ESRI, PASDA, City of Philadelphia, SEPTA, USFWS, DVRPC

Population: 2015 US Census Quick Facts, except (1): US Fish and Wildlife Service
Race/Ethnicity: 2015 Census Quick Facts
Percent High School Graduates, 25+: 2014 ACS 5 Year Estimates
Median Household Income: 2014 ACS 5 Year Estimates
Vehicles per household: 2014 ACS 5 Year Estimates
Housing Tenure: 2014 ACS 5 Year Estimates

Google Streetview

All Photos: Dan Brooks

Cecil Street Garden design courtesy Philadelphia University

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