

**PROPOSAL
EMAN GRANTS COMMITTEE**

JANUARY 26, 2021

**“East Mt. Airy Block-by-Block”
Community Equity, Historic Preservation & Planning Considerations**

Goal: to survey and evaluate East Mt Airy, south of Gorgas Lane, to better understand blocks, districts or individual properties that may be at risk for development pressure, and to prepare East Mt Airy to be included in protections that may be afforded if Tiered Historic Districts are made part of the Zoning Code. In addition, this survey will allow EMAN LUDZ to instigate planning and preservation efforts on it’s own, independent of future changes to the code, all with the overarching goal of making development in Mt Airy more sustainable and equitable, while recognizing the benefits of the change if done in a creative and inclusive way.

The Land Use, Development & Zoning Committee (LUDZ) of EMAN offers the following proposal for using a portion of EMAN’s grant allocation:

Over the past 2 years LUDZ has reviewed over a dozen projects representing EMAN as the RCO in the the zoning variance process. Again and again, we hear from neighbors that they support development, but do not want what is being proposed. We also hear “what we are seeing doesn’t “fit in””. In addition, many of these proposals involve the demolition of existing structures, and in the recent case of the Meehan House, the demolition of a structure with historic and cultural significance. During this same time period, there have been many more projects happening in EMA that are “by-right”, involving demolition and/or resulting in built structures that “don’t fit in”.

We’ve seen in particular this sort of development pressure in the southern blocks of Mt Airy (below Gorgas?). Many of these blocks are also areas of lower to moderate income, whose owners are often not equipped with the resources to resist such pressure. For instance, demolition may occur on one half of a twin house resulting in problems for the other half but with no recourse for action or protections for the remaining half. There may be pollution, storm water and safety concerns as well.

Historic preservation is one of the few tools available in Philadelphia to guard against this sort of development, however, it is often seen as a burden to property owners who once a property or district is listed, must adhere to strict standards when making improvements which are often more expensive than if historic standards are not applied. As an alternative to this, some neighborhoods (Society Hill, Powelton Village, Strawberry Mansion) now have Neighborhood Conservation Overlays (NCOs) that attempt to regulate scale and certain features as a means to address the not fitting in problem. However, NCOs do not have demolition protection like an historic district. Another preservation tool that has been used in other cities including New Orleans and Chicago are Tiered Historic Districts (THDs) also know as Preservation Lite. THDs allow for lighter levels of regulations or could even just be designated as “no demolition” blocks, meaning that they are subject to agency review prior to permits being issued. In communication with Phila City Planning we understand that there is support in City Council and at City Planning for implementation of such THDs in the near future. We want to be ready to be part of the first wave of such change when it is applied to the zoning code. We believe that “East Mt Airy Block-by-Block” is the appropriate tool to get us started on this mission.

To this end we propose that EMAN contract with The Keeping Society for \$3000 to survey in a broad manner the areas referenced above to identify historic and/ or at-risk assets. The Keeping Society has extensive experience in advocating for and securing preservation protections to neighborhoods, districts and structures in the City of Philadelphia including recently the Joseph Meehan House and the Lutheran Seminary Historic District. <http://keepingphiladelphia.org/>. We have attached samples of what we anticipate to be delivered as part of this work.

Please feel free to contact us if you need further information or have questions.

Jeffery Hayes
Land Use, Development & Zoning

East Mt. Airy Block-by-Block

Community Equity, Historic Preservation, & Planning Considerations

Johnson Street between Germantown Avenue and Chew Street



East Johnson Street between Germantown Avenue and Chew Street contains three blocks that should be considered for historic preservation protections, as well as zoning and planning considerations in order to protect the built environment, which are assets to the community at-large. Perhaps the most significant surviving consideration is the extant estate houses that date to the second half of the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries with surviving landscapes in some places. These vignettes in each of the three blocks might comprise a potential historic district. In addition, there are also Heritage Blocks in two of the three blocks that should be protected from future demolition.



Above are two examples of intact nineteenth century estate-like properties that are rare surviving historic resources. **These property types are currently vulnerable to purchase, subdivision, demolition, and dense redevelopment with no oversight.**

East Mt. Airy Block-by-Block

Community Equity, Historic Preservation, & Planning Considerations

East Duval Street between Germantown Avenue and Chew Street



Between 1895 and 1910, this development of twenty-eight attached row houses was completed to form 79-133 E. Duval Street, northeast of Germantown Avenue. While many buildings have been individually altered, the row is largely intact, despite the fact that three of the buildings have been demolished. Heritage Block designation could safeguard from future demolition and structural damage, while also ensuring that new construction is sympathetic to the extant row.

ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

7.1 AIR QUALITY

Improve air quality within the city and the region

- 1. Reduce overall and per capita contributions to air pollution.
- 2. Reduce overall and per capita greenhouse gas emissions by 45 percent by 2035.
- 3. Reduce air temperature during the warm season in the city.

7.2 WATER QUALITY

Improve the quality and management of water and wetland resources

- 1. Improve the quality of city and regional water sources.
- 2. Restore and create urban stream banks and tidal wetlands along watersheds.
- 3. Support stormwater regulations set by the Philadelphia Water Department to capture stormwater on-site and reduce flooding damage.

7.3 TREE COVER

Increase tree coverage equitably across the city

- 1. Increase the overall tree canopy across the city to 30 percent.
- 2. Enhance the city's forests to create a total of 7,200 acres.
- 3. Support tree planting and stewardship within the city.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

8.1 CULTURAL, HISTORICAL, & ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES

Support sensitive development that preserves and enhances Philadelphia's multifaceted past

- 1. Preserve culturally, historically, and architecturally significant buildings, sites, structures, and districts. ✓
- 2. Rehabilitate abandoned industrial infrastructure for new uses and reuse industrial buildings to create new neighborhood anchors. ✓
- 3. Preserve and reuse all "at risk" historic anchor buildings and commercial corridor buildings. ✗ ✓

- 4. Protect archaeological sites. ✓
- 5. Ensure maintenance and management of cemeteries and religious properties. ✓
- 6. Preserve historically significant viewsheds and landscapes. ✓
- 7. Preserve cultural and ethical traditions, places, and resources. ✓

8.2 HERITAGE TOURISM

Expand tourism programs to highlight cultural and historic heritage and to increase spending on heritage tourism

- 1. Create new and enhance existing tourism programs based on various cultural experiences unique to Philadelphia.
- 2. Demonstrate sustainable practices in visitor activities and facilities.

↑?

PUBLIC REALM

9.1 DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

Enhance and improve the walkable form with buildings and spaces that have appropriately scaled heights, massing, and setbacks

- 1. Preserve the walkable scale of the city. ✓
- 2. Ensure that new development reinforces the urban scale. ✓

9.2 URBAN DESIGN

Elevate public demand for good design in the public realm

- 1. Apply sound design principles to guide development across the city.
- 2. Create welcoming, well-designed public spaces, gateways, and corridors.
- 3. Link public art with major capital initiatives.
- 4. Ensure maintenance and protection of public art.





EAST MT. AIRY
NEIGHBORS

Feet First Philly Public Space Enhancement Mini-Grant Application

Name of Institution/Applicant: East Mt. Airy Neighbors Safety and Placemaking Committee
Address of applicant: 7301 Germantown Avenue
Location of project: The intersections of Vernon Rd. and Sprague Street; Belfield Ave and Montana St.
Main contact: Kristin Crandall, EMAN Safety and Placemaking Committee Co-Chair
Email: kascrandall@gmail.com
Phone: 503-425-9284

East Mt Airy Neighbors (EMAN) is thrilled to reply to the Feet First Public Space Enhancement Mini-Grant RFP. EMAN's Safety and Placemaking Committee is already involved with and committed to public safety and beautification efforts in the East Mt. Airy community, and this mini-grant will provide an opportunity to help us move forward in addressing an area in our neighborhood that is currently very dangerous and in need of attention, but that has the potential to be both a safe and highly valuable public space. EMAN proposes a temporary demonstration at two key intersections (detailed below), with the immediate goal of enhancing walkability and pedestrian safety, with the longer-term goal of engaging the community in a community visioning and planning effort that can lead towards a larger transformation of these spaces.

There are two very important intersections where the community is looking to pursue public space enhancements. The first, Vernon and Sprague, is an extremely dangerous intersection with frequent car and pedestrian accidents. It is marked by a concrete triangle currently covered with trash, weeds and 3 unused planters. This intersection serves as a major route for residents to get to and from Stenton Station. The second intersection, located three blocks south at Belfield Ave. and Montana St., is marked by a similar yet larger concrete triangle covered with trash, weeds, but without planters. EMAN has selected these intersections for the temporary demonstration for a number of reasons, including neighbor concerns about the level of danger and the need for traffic calming. Both locations have concrete triangles that are currently being under-utilized, and are located in areas that could make them key nodes in the community.

In addition to being nearby the remarkably busy Stenton train station and along the busy 18 bus route, these intersections are centrally located within the racially-, ethnically- and income-diverse East Mt. Airy community. Enhancements to these intersections would be enjoyed by a large swath of community members, and would also help connect the northern and southern parts of East Mt. Airy together in a way that is very much needed. Nearly 11,000 people, comprising approximately 4,300 households, live within a half-mile walking distance of the two triangles. The area represents a diverse mix of homeowners and renters, with homeownership around 68%. In addition to having long been an area of purposeful racial integration (with a majority Black population around 82%), East Mt Airy is a neighborhood that mirrors the income diversity of the entire city within one community. Residents do, however, have underlying health concerns (for example, an estimated 17% of adults in the neighborhood have been diagnosed with diabetes), thus underpinning the need to improve pedestrian safety and interest.¹ It is worth nothing that the nearby and similarly dangerous intersection at Ardleigh and Vernon is already being targeted for a roundabout and stormwater management project as part of the City's 2035 plan.

¹ All neighborhood data is from the Census 2014-2018 American Community Survey and accessed through PolicyMap.

7301 Germantown Avenue ~ Philadelphia, PA 19119
www.eastmountairy.org 215-242-4170

info@eastmountairy.org



EASTMTAIRY



EMAN19119



EMAN19119



EAST MT. AIRY
NEIGHBORS

EMAN sees a temporary demonstration as the ideal way to meet the immediate goals of making these intersections safer for pedestrians while also seeding a community planning effort that will serve to maximize the utility of these public spaces in the longer term. Among the activities that EMAN plans to pursue as part of the temporary demonstration include: re-painting the barely visible crosswalks to make them highly visible, painting the curbs of the triangles in bright colors to draw attention to them, painting STOP before the stop signs (view image #2 in the slideshow [here](#) as an example), lowering the stop signs by 3 feet, installing new plants in the existing under-utilized planters, and putting a garbage can outside of the Grand Food Market at Vernon and Sprague.

In addition, EMAN plans to install a community vision board where residents and passersby can learn of the upcoming community planning meetings related to these intersections as well as provide their feedback and ideas about how they would like to see these spaces used in the long term. EMAN has already engaged with numerous community members, including nearby block captains and committee people, and there is overwhelming support for safety and public space improvements at these triangles. This temporary demonstration will help to address immediate safety needs while also providing the seed that can galvanize the neighborhood and help bring about long-term improvements in this important area of our wonderful neighborhood. If granted the award, EMAN proposes to procure the materials in February and March of 2021 and do the temporary demonstration in April 2021.

Description	Cost
6 liters of temporary paint from Green Street Media (~\$72/liter plus shipping)	\$500
Outdoor Chalk Board and Outdoor Chalk	\$285
Outdoor Trash Can	\$354
Paintbrushes	\$150
Clean up materials (Garbage & leaf bags, gloves)	\$28
Plants for the 3 planters on the Vernon and Sprague triangle	\$ 250
Total	\$1567.00



What is the idea/project? Please provide some detail in a short paragraph.

The East Mount Airy Anti-Racism Committee (ARC) proposes a speaker series to begin in the calendar year of 2021 in conjunction with the West Mount Airy Race Matters event Speaker Series. The WMAN Race Matters Speaker Series is already underway. We are currently in the process of coordinating with WMAN the final Race Matters Speakers Series to make a smooth transition from the initial concerted effort by WMAN to the ongoing EMAN Speaker Series. The EMAN Speaker Series is designed to provide a forum for shared experiences through reading followed by a community forum with the invited author. The initial budget for this speaker series is \$500 to provide a stipend for the author and funds for purchasing an initial allotment of books for distribution.

Does this project have ties to the work of a specific committee? If so, which? And if so, is it a new project or an existing project?

Yes, this project has ties to the Anti-Racism Committee (ARC). This is a new project.

Approximately how much money would be needed for the idea/project in 2021?

\$500

Does the idea/project align with one or more of the guidelines?

1. Serve our neighbors in East Mt Airy YES
2. Address the original Fund priority areas:
 - Aging - YES
 - community development -YES
 - youth - YES
 - mental/physical dis/ability – YES
3. Address Mt Airy 2025 priorities - YES
4. Funds are prioritized for areas of the neighborhood with less financial resources - YES
5. Helps raise additional funds or awareness of East Mt Airy Neighbors - YES