

2020 Edmund N. Bacon Urban Design Awards

Student Design Competition Preview

\$25 | per entry at the time of submission

\$5,000 | First Prize Award

Sign up now for more information www.PhiladelphiaCFA.org

IMPORTANT DATES

August 1, 2019: Full Competition Packet released + Competition opens

November 22, 2019: Final date to submit entries

February 2020 (date TBD): Awards Ceremony in Philadelphia



Founded in 2006 in memory of Philadelphia's iconic 20th century city planner, Edmund N. Bacon [1910-2005], this annual program honors both professionals and students whose work epitomize excellence in urban design. Each year, a professional who has made significant contributions to the field of urban planning is selected to receive our Edmund N. Bacon Award. In addition, the winners of an international student urban design competition, envisioning a better Philadelphia, are honored with our Edmund N. Bacon Student Awards. The combined awards ceremony is hosted in Philadelphia each February.



THE BIG PICTURE: REVEALING GERMANTOWN'S ASSETS

Cheltenham Avenue is the heart of the Germantown business district in northwest Philadelphia. The most economically diverse neighborhood in the city, Germantown is an African American community which bridges the economically disadvantaged neighborhoods of North Philadelphia to the east with the wealthier Mount Airy and Chestnut Hill neighborhoods to the west. The Cheltenham Avenue shopping district benefits from two regional rail stations (along different train lines) and one of the busiest bus stops in the city, located midway between the stations. In addition, the southern end of the shopping district is just steps from the expansive Wissahickon Valley Park, one of the most wild places in Philadelphia, visited by over 1 million people each year.

Since the 1950s, many factors have reshaped the Cheltenham Avenue shopping experience from a pedestrian one to a more car-centric one. There is a high concentration of empty storefronts, neglected properties, buildings modified with inexpensive materials, parking lots, and fast food restaurants. In contrast with nearby Germantown Avenue, which features a greater density of historic building stock, the buildings along Cheltenham are typically low density one- to three-story structures with massive expanses of surface parking and vacant parcels. In addition, some property owners are preventing development by holding onto vacant buildings and underutilized lots, speculating that their investment will increase in value - while simultaneously adding to depreciated property values and a lowered quality of life. Despite the level of commercial vacancy, this thoroughfare serves as a connector and maintains a high volume of pedestrian and transit-oriented activity.

How might this historic shopping district be designed to better support the local community, improve safety and accessibility for pedestrians (and all modes of transit), and help reveal all the nearby amenities available to shoppers: from public parks and swimming pools to historic homes and urban farms?

Sign up for program updates and reminders at www.PhiladelphiaCFA.org! You will receive helpful reminders and, on August 1st, the Official Competition Packet (with full rules and regulations). The competition is open to all college or university students (undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral) who will be matriculating during the Fall 2019 semester. Recent graduates who are not enrolled full-time for Fall 2019 courses at a college or university are not eligible to participate.

As you develop your ideas for this year's competition, consider:

Wayfinding

Germantown is full of and surrounded by many amazing amenities and public spaces including nearly twenty public parks, libraries, over 15 historic house and museums and attractions, and even a little-known indoor public pool that's open year-round. How can good urban design help reveal these and other community assets to residents and visitors to the Cheltenham Avenue shopping district?

Transportation

The Cheltenham Avenue shopping district is served on both the northern and southern ends by SEPTA Regional Rail stations: Germantown Station and Cheltenham Avenue Station. In addition, one of the busiest bus stops in the city is located in the middle of the neighborhood's shopping district at the intersection of Cheltenham Avenue and Greene Street. How could all three stations be better connected for pedestrians and how could these stations' locations be better revealed to pedestrians on the street? In addition, how could this shopping district be better designed to support pedestrians, bikers, families, and people with mobility, vision, and hearing differences?

Public Space

While there are many beautiful public parks in Germantown, the Cheltenham Avenue shopping district is relatively inhospitable to those seeking cover from sun and rain or seeking spaces to gather, rest, relax, and play. What opportunities could be created for respite or play along this commercial corridor? Are there any lessons that can be learned from the challenges faced by the Maplewood Pedestrian Mall's design, located just a block east of Cheltenham Avenue?

Effective Use of Land

Quite a bit of the land on either side of Cheltenham Avenue is dedicated to open-air parking. Some buildings and properties along the Avenue are underutilized and being held by owners hoping to cash in on rising property values; in the meantime, many storefronts remain vacant. While understanding that some parking is necessary in a shopping district, and that not all properties can be constantly occupied by stores and restaurants, how might the owners of these two types of properties be encouraged to make better use of them for the community in the near-term?

RESEARCH RESOURCES



Neighborhood Data

2020 Competition Site | [Philadelphia 2035 Upper Northwest District Plan](#) | [OpenDataPhilly](#) | [Germantown Opportunity Zone](#) | [Germantown United Community Development Corporation](#) | [Maplewood Pedestrian Mall Studies + Plans](#) | [PlanPhilly journalism about Germantown](#) | [Historic Germantown](#) | [City Data for Germantown](#) | [Friends of the Wissahickon](#)

Planning Resources

[PHL Complete Streets Handbook](#) | [Vision Zero PHL](#) | [PHL Playstreets Initiative](#) | [NATCO Design Guides](#) | [National Street Service](#) | [Kaboom's Play Everywhere Playbook](#) | [PHL Storefront Improvement Program](#) | *Book: How To Study Public Life by Jan Gehl + Birgitte Svarre*

We strongly encourage proposals from diverse teams which include individuals from a variety of fields: architecture, urban planning, design (industrial, graphic, etc.), landscape architecture, public health, economic development, environmental science, real estate law, business, or other fields which might bring innovative ideas to your proposal. Proposals from diverse teams have historically done best in this competition.

For more information on the awards, including summaries of past competitions and images of winning entries, please visit: www.PhiladelphiaCFA.org. Information in this brief in preliminary and details may change when the Full Competition Packet released in August.



Attend

Presented annually in late Winter, the Edmund N. Bacon Award + Better Philadelphia Challenge programs are open to the public. Visit our website www.philadelphiacfa.org for ticket pricing and location.

Volunteer

Stimulate your creativity while connecting with a network of people who share your passion. You'll instantly become an insider with information on new and exciting exhibitions, lectures, and events on the built environment. Complete our volunteer form at www.philadelphiacfa.org/volunteer.

Sponsor

Our annual competition and prestigious awards ceremony spotlight your organization on the international stage, attracting attention from outstanding students, urban practitioners, and national politicians while promoting visionary ideas for our city's future. Contact Kristie Bergey, kb@philadelphiacfa.org, for more information.

About the Center for Architecture and Design

The Center provides Philadelphia with educational programs, exhibitions, and a public space to explore architecture, urban planning, and design, allowing visitors the opportunity to understand how these disciplines affect us all in our daily lives. Using our city's distinctive breadth of architecture, pioneering urban design, and manufacturing heritage as the foundation for conversation, we educate the public through talks, exhibitions, publications, hands-on workshops, design competitions, festivals, and children's programming. The Center also serves as the physical home for AIA Philadelphia and the Community Design Collaborative.

About Edmund N. Bacon

Philadelphia's most iconic city planner, Ed Bacon [1910-2005] was Executive Director of Philadelphia's City Planning Commission from 1949-1970 and is the only city planner to ever grace the cover of Time Magazine. His impact on Philadelphia's urban environment began with his epic 1947 A Better Philadelphia exhibition, which drew nearly 400,000 people over five weeks to its visionary displays covering two floors of Gimbel's Department Store.

1218 Arch Street
Philadelphia, PA 19107
215.569.3186
philadelphiacfa.org

Mon-Fri: 9am - 5pm
Saturdays: select workshop dates