

EASTWICK COMMUNITY FLOOD RESILIENCE STRATEGIES: RELOCATION IN EASTWICK

Relocation entails residents moving from an area of high flood risk to an area of lower, or ideally no, flood risk. Relocation in Eastwick could take different forms, such as community-wide scale (using the “land swap” concept developed by Eastwick United and supported by Drexel University) or on a resident-by-resident basis.

The land swap concept entails moving residents from the flood-prone Planet Streets near the convergence of the Darby and Cobbs creeks to new housing built on vacant city land. The City could demolish the original homes and turn that area into freshwater tidal wetland habitats that can absorb water during a flood, open space, and recreational trails linked to the Heinz refuge. We do not know how the swap would happen yet. Forming a community land trust is one way to ensure future developments meet the goals of the community. The land swap concept requires many agencies and non-profit or private sector partners to coordinate land ownership, home buyouts and housing construction. The land swap concept is new to Philadelphia, but other parts of the country have used them. Examples include Isle de Jean Charles in Louisiana; Edgemere in Queens, New York; and Newtok, Alaska.

Relocation in Eastwick could also be done on a resident-by-resident basis. This approach could be supported by the Property-Level Flood Mitigation Program being designed by the city, but more investigation will be needed to understand how this process would work.

Benefits and Challenges of Relocation

Benefits	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relocation moves vulnerable residents out of harm’s way. It would restore the natural floodplain where there once was housing, which can reduce upstream and downstream flooding. The land swap is a community generated concept that aims to maintain community cohesion by avoiding residents moving out of Eastwick. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relocation is the most complicated and time-intensive option on the table. The land swap concept moves residents to an area that is still vulnerable to flooding (even though it is less vulnerable than their current location). The land swap will require community consensus to be successful.



Realization Timeline:

~15–20 years



Lifespan:

Permanent



Potential Funding:

FEMA

- Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC)
- Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA)

Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and CDBG–Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR)

City Funding

Private Equity

Private Philanthropy

NOTE: This is a draft document. We are learning more about this measure all the time. Is information missing? Let us know at eastwick@phila.gov.

