

Why is Art-O-Mat project important?



Why this corner?

- West Center City had six liquor stores within six blocks. The City purchased this liquor store and one other to improve quality of life in WCC.
- When the City examined the crime data, it was evident that the liquor store/laundromat (501 W 7th St) and the adjoining residential property (503 W 7th St) were a detriment to the health and safety of the West Center City neighborhood.
- The properties in question (501 & 503 W. 7th St) have had multiple incidences of code violations (55) and reported crimes.
- Some of the apartments were declared Unfit for Human Habitation by the Department of Licenses and Inspection and there were seven reported crimes at 501 W 7th St..
- Washington St is not only a major thoroughfare through the city but has been considered an invisible, but very real, barrier in the community. We have completed five projects, including a large park, along 7th St to bridge the neighborhood with the downtown and purposefully extend into WCC.
- The Art O Mat is on a highly visible corner not only to WCC residents but to the Wilmington corporate community. This project will signal positive changes that are community based.

The City becomes property owner in 2018

- 501 and 503 were purchased by the City for \$392,027.92 in June 2018.
- 503 was transferred to the Wilmington Neighborhood Conservancy Land Bank who subsequently demolished the property for approximately \$70,000 in January/February 2019.
- The City of Wilmington has stabilized and prepared 501 West 7th St for development in September 2019 by having the asbestos abated, a new roof installed and demolition of the interior to the studs for approximately \$30,000.

Wilmington Alliance's role in the Art O Mat

- Wilmington Alliance was approached by the City in 2018 to renew the exploration of the Art O Mat project first proposed to the City in 2016.
- The Alliance was able to fundraise from the Welfare and Longwood Foundations to rehab the building in 2019.
- The Alliance would take ownership of the building and the vacant lot.
- The Alliance is fully funded to rehab and fit out the space and continues to fundraise to provide multiple years of activity in this space.
- We anticipate the rehab cost to be \$250,000. Providing free programming and property maintenance costs increase our investment over the next five years to be close to \$600,000.

Wilmington Alliance's investment in West Center City

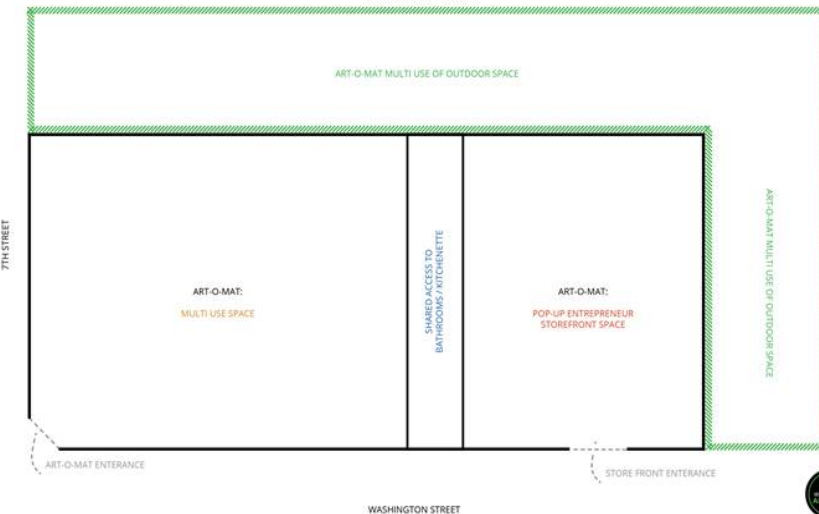
- The Alliance and our partners have made significant investment in WCC including the newly completed and remediated park at 7th and West totaling \$1.3 million.
- The Rock Lot, completed in 2017, was transformed for \$65,000 and has been offering free programming for the past three years.
- Public art throughout the neighborhood represents \$260,000 in investment in art and artists
- The Alliance has offered free, high quality events and activities for the community since 2016.

What will happen at the Art-O-Mat?



ART-O-MAT

ART-O-MAT MULTI USE OF OUTDOOR SPACE



How will this space serve the community?

- The Art O Mat is an open, collaborative and welcoming space that will serve as a point of outreach and enrichment for the community.
- The Art O Mat will be a multi-use space. We will continue to use the arts to engage community and this space will provide a year round venue for our successful arts related programming. This space will enable the Alliance to create a permanent home for projects and broaden both the community we are able to serve and the frequency with which we are able to provide programs and events.
- The Art O Mat space will also be able to host Wilmington's artists as a gallery space and showcase talent, thus creating community pride.
- There is currently no other space in the West Center City neighborhood that can dedicate its space to showcasing local arts and culture.

How will this space contribute to wealth building for community residents?

- Our work in the community has also revealed that hyper-local support around financial literacy and entrepreneurship is needed in WCC. This space will host classes, workshops and events and bring those resources into the neighborhood. These opportunities will be linked with the pop-up retail storefront in this building.
- Wilmington Alliance plans to utilize the Art O Mat as an one-stop shopping concept where aspiring and current local entrepreneurs can be connected to the existing resources provided by our partners.
- We will bring partners with relevant resources to WCC where residents can access them easily.
- The Alliance is currently developing two spaces in West Center City that will support entrepreneurs. The Kitchen Incubator and the pop-up retail storefront that is part of the Art O Mat. There is no other space or opportunity like this in WCC.

How will the pop-up retail space be used?

- Within the Art O Mat building there are two separate spaces; one will be open multi-use space and the other a pop-up retail space. The retail space has its own storefront and will be available for a revolving group of entrepreneurs to test their concept and gain experience.
- This space will be a stepping stone for entrepreneurs and key to gaining experience to build a business.
- In conjunction with the Art O Mat, and only two block, away, we are developing a Kitchen Incubator space. This pop-up space will also be available to those entrepreneurs.

Our partners?



Who are our partners in this space?

- The community of West Center City.
- An advisory group comprised of five community members will be convened for all activities related to Art O Mat.
- Our partners 4Youth Productions will provide youth programming.
- The Alliance is currently building education and implementation partnerships for financial literacy and entrepreneurial support.
- The Alliance is partnering with the Launcher program for support of our culinary entrepreneurs.
- The Alliance is also partnering with the Pete du Pont Freedom Foundation to build an Equitable Entrepreneurial Ecosystem in Wilmington (E3 Wilmington), that will work to address the needs of entrepreneurs from the underserved areas of the city.
- The Alliance has strong partnerships with whom we have completed many successful programs and projects. We will utilize these partners for the benefit of the community in the Art O Mat space.
- The Wilmington Alliance's Board of Directors is in full support of this project and as representatives of the corporate community understand that building community starts at the hyper-local level.

Will the Alliance always own the building?

- The Alliance's first priority is to help stabilize this corner and provide an opportunity for positive interactions to replace negative ones.
- The Alliance hopes to foster a local entrepreneur into a business owner, who at one point in the future, will serve the community from this location.

Priority project for 2020

- The Alliance has made the Art O Mat a priority project because of the critical importance for positive change and opportunity for the community at that corner.
- The City made it a priority to signal change and improvement for this neighborhood.
- This is a catalyst property for the redevelopment of other residential and commercial properties in the area.

Design and Construction Partners

- Breckstone Architects, a local firm, will be working with Wilmington Alliance to design the space to be beautiful and functional.
- The Challenge Program, who has built the furnishings for our projects, The Rock Lot and 7th and West, will be employing their trainees on the construction of the Art O Mat. The trainees are at-risk youth from Wilmington's neighborhoods who receive construction trades training, mentorship, assistance in earning a high school diploma or GED and job placement services.
- Aaron Reeves, a Wilmington-based African-American entrepreneur, who has been our electrician on past projects, will do the electrical work.
- Our commitment to the workforce and entrepreneur development, in Wilmington, will guide our search for additional trades needed in the construction.