

PRATT ENSLEY

FRAMEWORK PLAN

PRATT CITY +
DOWNTOWN ENSLEY

LAND USE

HOUSING

ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT

PARKS + TRAILS

TRANSPORTATION

APPENDIX D: STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY AREAS

DECEMBER 2018



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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. WHAT IS A STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY AREA (SOA)?

Strategic Opportunity Areas (SOAs) are locations in which investments, public improvements and regional interest are focused in order to spur growth and development that can spread to multiple neighborhoods in a community. Most SOAs are centered either around existing community assets (schools, parks, hospitals, churches) or previously developed sites that are currently underutilized or vacant (shopping centers, industrial parks, historic districts). In general, parcels located within an SOA have the highest likelihood of having their current zoning and land use changed to allow for mixed use.

The Pratt Ensley Framework Plan has identified two Strategic Opportunity Areas based on community input, field surveys, and prior planning efforts, in which public investment (infrastructure improvements), community involvement (neighborhood leaders and nonprofits), changes in zoning and land use (mixed-use districts), and financial support (grants and loans) will yield the greatest benefit and opportunity for reinvestment within the Pratt and Ensley Communities. The two SOAs are Pratt City and Downtown Ensley.

1.2. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN CONNECTION

The **Comprehensive Plan** goes to great lengths to recommend the identification and prioritization of Strategic Opportunity Areas (SOA). The **Comprehensive Plan (7.8)** recommends areas as SOAs if they have “market potential, presence of employment centers, location in relation to current and future plans for transit improvements, momentum from existing activities, and good urban form.” Because of their potential and impact on their surrounding communities, the **Comprehensive Plan (7.12-7.16)** recommends prioritizing transit-oriented development, economic incentives, and infrastructure in SOAs. This appendix concurs and recommends several ways to make SOAs a priority, both in this appendix and in the Pratt Ensley Framework Plan.

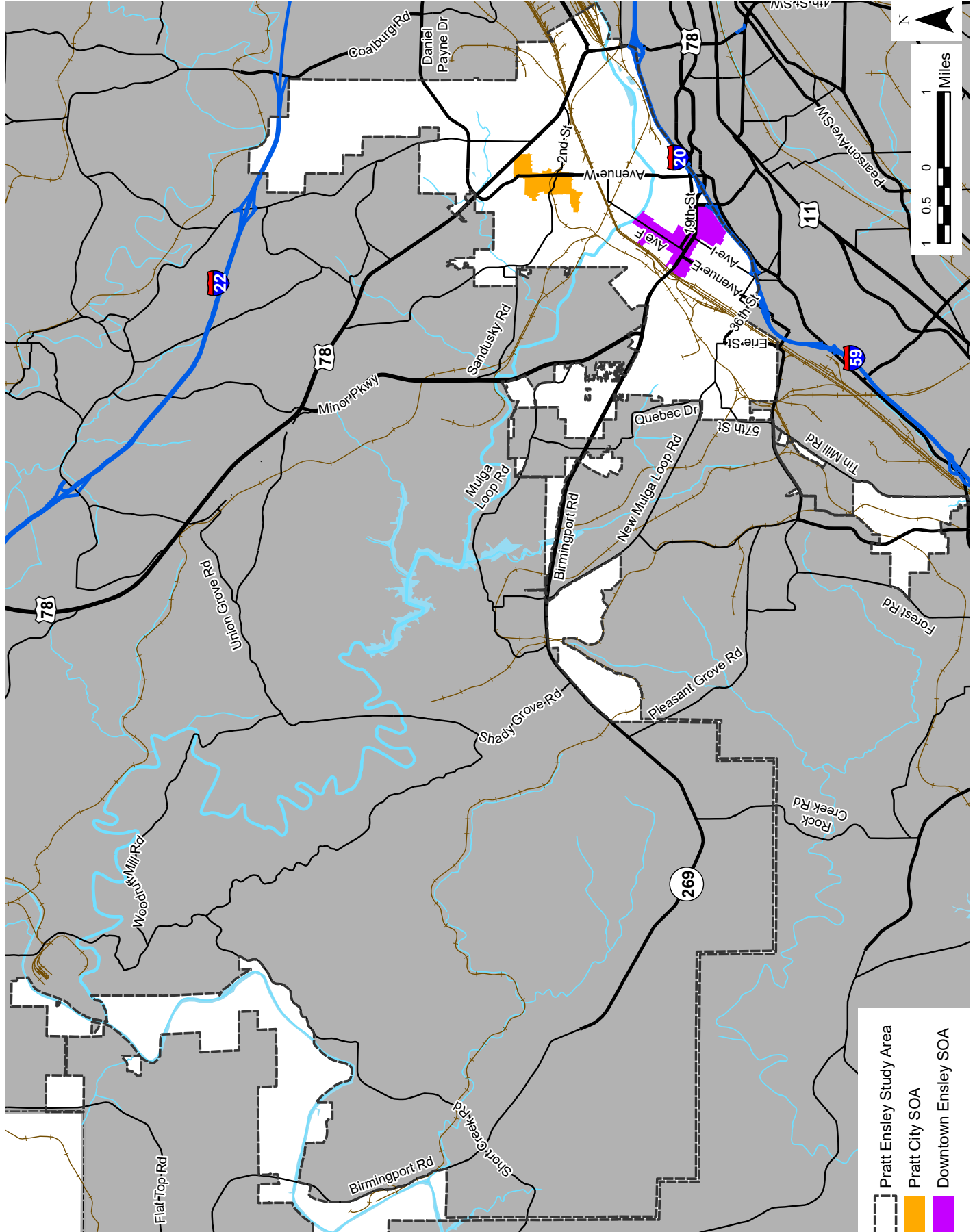
NEEDS

- MORE MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT
- IMPROVE VACANCY RATES
- ADDITIONAL RETAIL, OFFICE, AND RESTAURANTS
- ATTRACT ADDITIONAL RESIDENTS AND DAYTIME POPULATION
- GROCERY STORE AND ACCESS TO FRESH FOOD
- PROMOTE HOMEOWNERSHIP

OPPORTUNITIES

- REDEVELOPMENT OF VACANT AND UNDERUTILIZED RETAIL
- PARTNERSHIPS WITH THE CITY, PRIVATE INVESTORS, AND NONPROFITS
- NEW HOUSING ON VACANT PARCELS
- NEW AND PROPOSED DESTINATION PARK SPACES
- ACCESS TO MAJOR ROADWAYS AND HIGHWAYS
- DEVELOPMENT OF US STEEL GREENFIELD/ BROWNFIELD SITES

Figure 1.1: Pratt Ensley Strategic Opportunity Areas





PRATT CITY LIBRARY

READ.
DESIGN



CHAPTER 2

PRATT CITY SOA

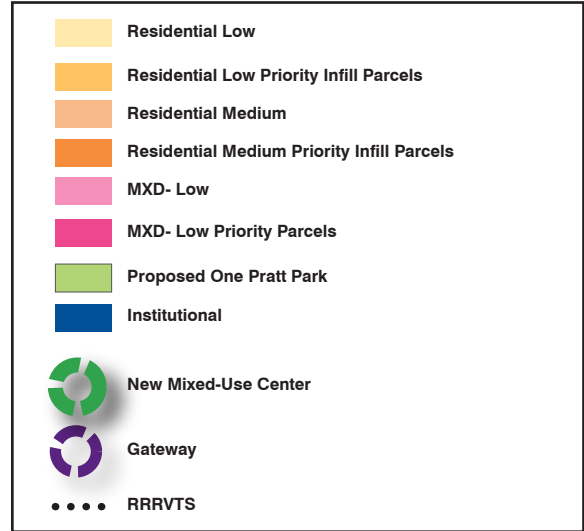
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9:00 A.M. - 2:00 P.M.
Sundays
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2.1. INTRODUCTION

Portions of the North Pratt and Central Pratt neighborhoods fall within the Pratt City Strategic Opportunity Area, the majority of which received extensive damage from the April 27, 2011 tornado event. In general, the Pratt City Strategic Opportunity Area is bounded by Bankhead Highway (US 78) to the north, Carline Avenue and 3rd Street to the south, Beech Street and Avenue W to the east, and vacant US Steel land and the neighborhoods surrounding Sandusky Elementary School (closed) to the west. The center of the SOA is the intersection of Hibernian Street and Dugan Avenue / Avenue W, where the City of Birmingham has completed a series of redevelopment projects as part of the recovery of the April 2011 tornado. These recovery efforts include: Pratt City Library, Fire Station 18, infill housing construction, and proposed One Pratt Park.

The objectives of the Pratt City SOA are:

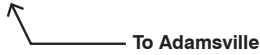
- Development of mixed- use low pedestrian oriented corridor along Dugan Avenue/Avenue W
- Redevelopment of the Carline Avenue Historic District into retail village
- Development of diverse infill housing on vacant parcels (as the population continues to expand)



One Pratt Park (Source: TSL Landscape Architecture & Macknally Land Design).

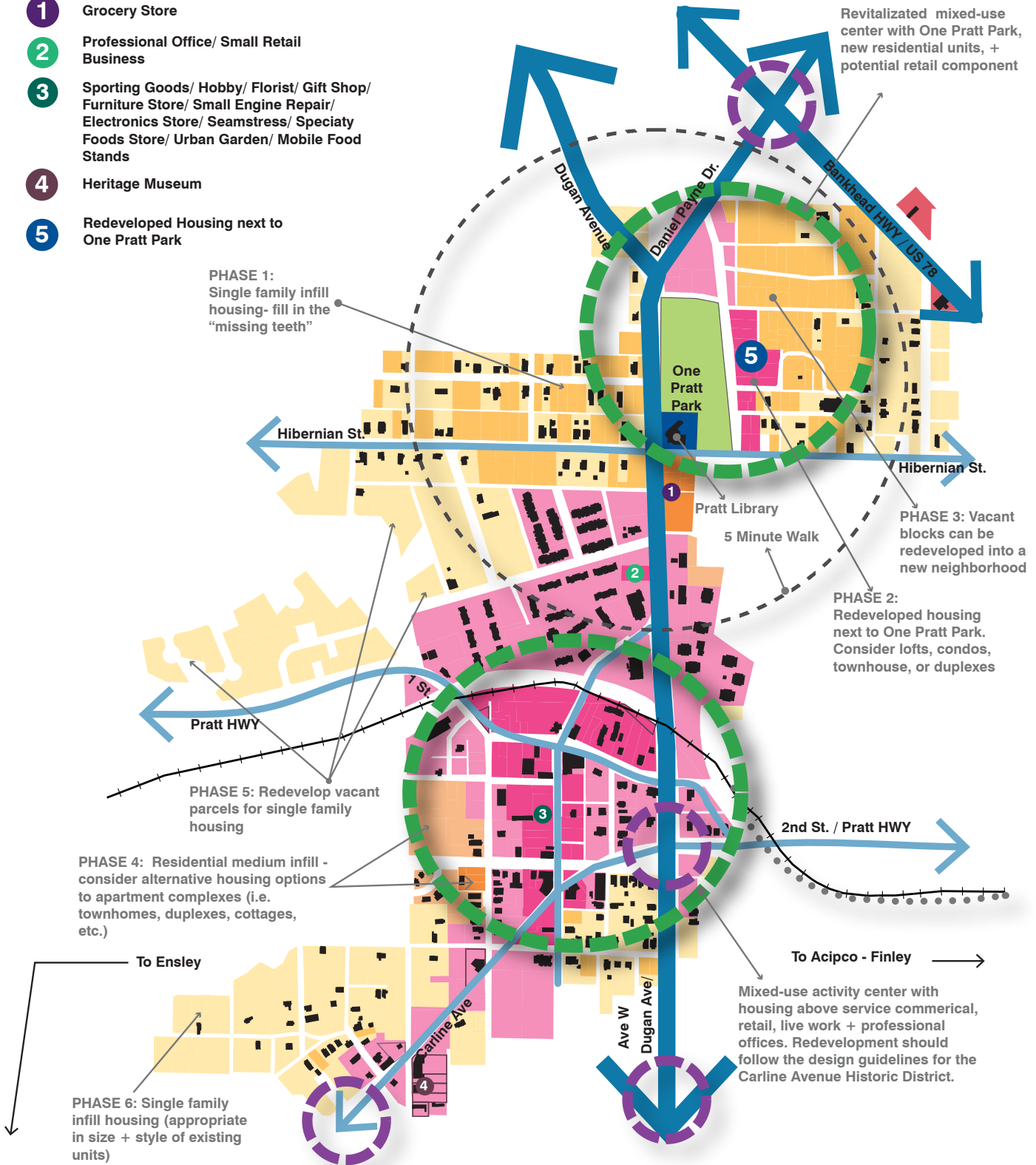


Figure 2.1: Pratt City Concept Map



Potential Uses as Identified by the Market Analysis:

- 1 Grocery Store
- 2 Professional Office/ Small Retail Business
- 3 Sporting Goods/ Hobby/ Florist/ Gift Shop/ Furniture Store/ Small Engine Repair/ Electronics Store/ Seamstress/ Specialty Foods Store/ Urban Garden/ Mobile Food Stands
- 4 Heritage Museum
- 5 Redeveloped Housing next to One Pratt Park



2.2. GOALS, STRATEGIES, AND ACTIONS

COMMUNITY RENEWAL

A STRATEGY

MAKE FRESH PRODUCE MORE ACCESSIBLE TO RESIDENTS.

Wrench icon Action 1

Introduce tax incentives to encourage grocers to locate within the Pratt City Strategic Opportunity Area.

- ✦ **Possible Site:** corner of Dugan Avenue and Hibernian Street
- ✦ **Site Description:** This site (parcels assembly required, see **Figure 2.1 and 2.5**) sits across from the Pratt City Public Library and totals 1.6 acres. The location is ideal for commercial uses that may include a grocery store (Aldi or Walmart Neighborhood Market).
- ✦ **Potential Incentives:**
 - ✦ New market tax credits
 - ✦ Tax abatement
 - ✦ Subsidize rent
 - ✦ Healthy Food Financing Initiative

Wrench icon Action 2

Partner with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama to host healthy cooking classes at One Pratt Park (currently classes take place at Railroad Park) once the park is complete.

The City should consider partnering with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama to offer a “Get Healthy in Pratt” series modeled after the “Get Healthy on the Railroad” series at Railroad Park. Expanding the program to One Pratt Park would enable residents located in the western area of Birmingham to have greater access to healthy food, and become better educated about nutrition. Currently, the “Get Healthy on the Railroad” series includes five free healthy nutrition classes, once a month from April to August. The first 100 participants to sign up receive free produce and a recipe card so they can easily replicate the dish at home. Led by local nonprofits, all produce is sourced from local farmers through REVS Urban Food Project.

B STRATEGY

SUPPORT NEW AND QUALITY HOUSING OPTIONS AND HOMEOWNERSHIP THROUGH POLICIES, PROGRAMS, AND PARTNERSHIPS.

Wrench icon Action 1

Provide incentives to promote affordable housing options.

- ✦ **Low Income Tax Credits:** Provides housing to households at or below 60% of median income. Allows for allocation of affordable units within a development/ building and requires that these units be kept affordable for 15 years to receive 10 years of tax credit.

- ✦ **New Market Tax Credit:** Assist small developers and building owners by allowing credits to be sold (or syndicated) to investors who can use them. This also helps larger developers by allowing them to use the credits directly. The loan aids developers and private owners with bridging the gap between cost of construction and lease rates available to support the construction.
- ✦ **Innovative Funding Source:** The City could partner with banks that need to meet Community Reinvestment Act obligations in forming a local Community Development Financial Institution. The City could leverage this partnership to offer funding outside of the regular market rate appraisal process to nonprofits, private housing developers and public agencies.
- ✦ **Parking Reduction for Attached Units and Priority Building Permit Processing:** This would apply to developments that dedicate at least 15% or 20% of its available units to affordable housing.
- ✦ **Inclusionary Housing Ordinance:** The ordinance would provide bonuses for affordable housing as well as housing for disabled individuals. Create a program, entity, or partnership to oversee its compliance.

In addition to the aforementioned incentives, the City could also market the following state programs to residents through the City's website:

- ✦ **Step Up Mortgage Program:** Started in 2000, the program assists homeowners with meeting costs for down payment, closing costs and prepaid items. AHFA offers down payment assistance in the form of 10 year second mortgages, and 30-year fixed rate first mortgages for households earning \$97,300 or less.

- ✦ **Mortgage Credit Certificates:** Can be paired with Step Up program funds, provides a tax credit to reduce federal taxes for qualified homebuyers by a percentage of the annual mortgage paid per year. Range of 20% to 50% Mortgage Credit Certificates based on Income.
- ✦ **The Alabama Housing Trust Fund:** Provides housing for individuals and families below 60% Area Median Income. The committee will be housed within the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs. The goals of the trust fund include: flexible source of funding for affordable housing, achieve economic stability, revitalize blighted neighborhoods, economic growth, and add to the supply of affordable homes in both rural and urban areas.



Action 2

Promote the use of permitted Accessory Dwelling allowances in the City's Zoning Ordinance to increase the affordable rental stock.

Permitting the construction of accessory dwelling units (ADU's) or "granny flats", on new and existing single family home lots would, over time, increase the affordable rental housing stock. ADU's would provide homeowners with flexibility and potential source of income, while also making homeownership more attainable through the increased income generated by the rental property. Moreover, ADU's can also allow aging parents or grown children to live independently yet nearby. Those interested in building an ADU on their property should consult the **City of Birmingham Zoning Ordinance Chapter 4, Section 2, Page 136.**



Action 3

Work with HABD, private developers, non-profits and other organizations to infill single and multi-family housing on underutilized properties.

Development should be concentrated in Strategic Opportunity Areas designated for residential medium density. Housing types such as single family detached houses, duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes should be encouraged to allow for diverse family sizes, ages and income levels. Cottage developments - clusters of six to twelve homes on a single site ranging from 768 to 998 square feet – should also be encouraged. Cottages could serve as an affordable housing alternative for families and individuals, such as Baby Boomers, looking to downsize. Single family cottage developments were added to the City's Zoning Ordinance in 2015 as part of a rewrite of the document. These types of residential developments are permitted in the following zoning districts D-4, R-4A, D-6, MU-L and MU-M. For additional information please review the single-family cottage development standards that can be found in **Chapter 3 of the current Birmingham Zoning Ordinance**. See **Figure 2.1** for areas to target for infill housing in the Pratt City SOA.



Action 1

Utilizing the One Pratt Plan, support the construction of One Pratt Park along Dugan Avenue/ Avenue W in Pratt City.

On April 27, 2011, a tornado leveled much of the Pratt Community. Mayor Bell sent a letter to the American Institute of Architects (AIA) requesting design assistance in recovery and rebuilding of Pratt City. The AIA accepted this request, and created a Regional and Urban Design Assistance Team (R/UAT) to create a strategy for recovery and revitalization of Pratt City.

One Pratt Park was one recommendation that came out of this effort. In April of 2016, a community workshop was held to gain community input for One Pratt Park, to be located along Dugan Avenue/ Avenue W, between Lafayette and Hibernian Street. Residents identified the following design elements to be included in the park: a central civic space for residents and visitors; diverse recreational spaces for various activities; a secure, safe, durable, and maintained park; educational opportunities; and the potential for the site to be an economic catalyst. Recently, on April 27, 2017, six years after the devastating tornado, the City broke ground on One Pratt Park, designed by Tom Leader Studio.

GREEN SYSTEMS



STRATEGY

EXPAND RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR RESIDENTS.





STRATEGY

UTILIZING LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT AND BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES, RETROFIT EXISTING RIGHTS-OF-WAY TO REDUCE STORMWATER RUNOFF.



Action 1

Develop a system of green streets.

A green street is a natural stormwater management approach that uses plants and soil to slow, filter and cleanse stormwater from streets. Traditional stormwater management directs runoff into pipes. A green street manages stormwater at its source, where rain falls. This infrastructure is recommended by the **Comprehensive Plan (13.13)** to assist the City’s stormwater management system. Some of the benefits of green streets include:

- ✖ Protect water quality in rivers and streams by removing up to 90% of pollutants.
- ✖ Replenish groundwater supplies, absorb carbon, and improve air quality and neighborhood aesthetics.
- ✖ Provide green connections between parks and open space.
- ✖ Improve pedestrian and bicycle safety by calming traffic.
- ✖ Reduce peak stormwater flows and overflows that can lead to sanitary sewer backups, as well as other public health concerns.

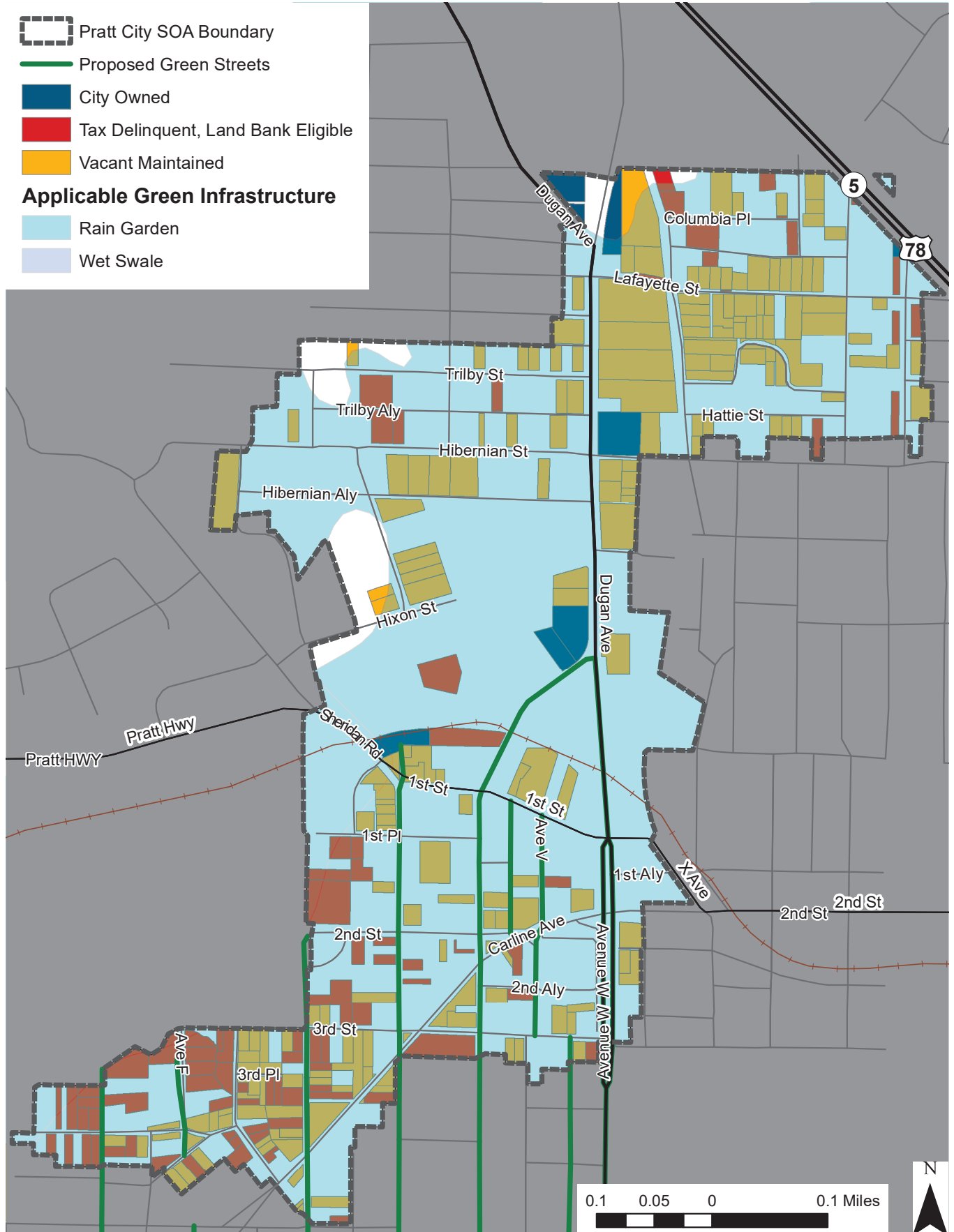
The following streets have been identified for green street infrastructure (see **Figure 2.2**):

- ✖ Avenue T
- ✖ Avenue U
- ✖ Avenue W

WHAT IS A GREEN STREET?



Figure 2.2: Pratt City Green Infrastructure Map



ECONOMIC VITALITY



STRATEGY

UTILIZE A VARIETY OF INCENTIVE PROGRAMS AND DEVELOPMENT TOOLS TO ENCOURAGE REINVESTMENT IN THE PRATT CITY STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY AREA.



Action 1

Assist local businesses, developers, and other entrepreneurs with gap financing.

The City, working in collaboration with local businesses, developers, and other entrepreneurs, should work to secure the following programs, grants and other funding resources:

- ✦ **U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) 504 Program:** Assists small businesses with the acquisition, construction, expansion, and renovation of land and buildings through long-term, fixed asset financing.
- ✦ **Economic Development Agency Revolving Loan Fund Program (EDA RLF):** Provides businesses within the City of Birmingham with direct loans for acquisition of land, buildings, and equipment.
- ✦ **HUD's Section 108 Loan Guarantee Program:** Allows communities to issue funds guaranteed by CDBG towards large-scale economic revitalization projects in neighborhoods that lack private investment.



New Market Tax Credits: Assists small developers and building owners by allowing credits to be sold (or syndicated) to investors who can use them. This also helps larger developers by allowing them to use the credits directly. Loans aid developers and private owners with bridging the gap between cost of construction and lease rates available to support the construction.



Action 2

Advocate for local businesses and employers to utilize State of Alabama business tax incentives / credits.



Full Employment Act of 2011: Businesses with 50 or fewer employees may receive a one-time income tax credit equal to \$1,000 per new job paying over \$10 per hour. The credit is available in the tax year during which the employee has completed 12 months of consecutive employment. The employer must have a net increase in the total number of full time employees in Alabama on the last date of each tax year during which employees are hired for which the employer claims a credit, over the number employed in Alabama as of the last day of the tax year immediately preceding the first employment year. The increase must equal or exceed the number of newly hired employees for which a credit is sought by one employee for each newly hired employee for whom a credit is being sought for the current year, plus one employee for all employees for whom credits were claimed in prior years.



Heroes for Hire Tax Credit of 2012- Employee Credit: This credit is available to qualified employers as an additional credit against the Alabama income tax liability in the amount of \$1,000 for hiring full time recently deployed and now discharged

unemployed veterans. The new hire must be 1) a resident of Alabama at the time of entry into military service or mobilized to active, federal military service while a member of the Alabama National Guard or other reserve unit located in Alabama; 2) received an honorable or general discharge from active, federal military service within the two-year period preceding the date of hire; and 3) has certification by the Department of Labor at the time of hire by either collecting or being eligible to collect unemployment benefits or having exhausted his or her unemployment benefits.

- ✦ **Heroes for Hire Tax Credit of 2012- Business Start-Up Expense Credit:** This credit is available to recently deployed and now discharged unemployed veterans who start their own business. The amount of this credit is up to \$2,000.00. To qualify the recently deployed unemployed veteran must hold at least 50 percent ownership interest in the business, which must be located in Alabama and show a net profit of at least \$3,000.00 for the year in which the credit is taken. The recently deployed unemployed veteran is not allowed to claim this credit if an employer has claimed a hire credit for him or her under the Heroes for Hire Tax Credit Act of 2012.

- ✦ **Neighborhood Infrastructure Incentive Plan Credit:** Under Alabama law, this credit is available to homeowners and business owners who form a neighborhood infrastructure authority in existing neighborhoods to manage and finance local projects. The credit provides for organization of such authorities and to provide a tax credit of 10 percent of the amount of the assessments paid by individuals and businesses that participate in infrastructure authority projects, not to exceed \$1,000 credit in any tax year, for a period not exceeding 10 successive tax years.

- ✦ **New Market Tax Credits:** Assists small developers and building owners by allowing credits to be sold (or syndicated) to investors who can use them. Also helps larger developers by allowing them to use the credits directly. Loans aid developers and private owners with bridging the gap between cost of construction and lease rates available to support the construction.

- ✦ **Others:** Visit <http://www.madeinalabama.com/business-development/recruitment-and-retention/taxes-and-incentives/>



Action 3

Continue to promote the Pratt Community's status as a Commercial Revitalization District.

The City of Birmingham's commercial revitalization districts have unique design guidelines. Like local historic districts, new construction and exterior renovations must be brought before the Design Review Committee for approval.



STRATEGY

ENCOURAGE RETAIL DEVELOPMENT THAT IS SUITABLE FOR THE PRATT CITY STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY AREA.



Action 1

Recruit businesses based on the potential identified in the market analysis.

A number of retail and business opportunities were identified in the market analysis through an assessment of spending potential and consumer spending patterns. The two communities possess several opportunities in terms of additional retail demand in certain sectors. For the Pratt community, these

industry groups include Automobile Dealers, Department Stores, Clothing Stores and Full-Service Restaurants. There is also a significant leakage of over \$3 million (\$3,675,137) in terms of Grocery Store activity within the area. The leakage within the grocery store sector affirms the critical need for a grocery store within the Pratt City Strategic Opportunity Area.

The Market Analysis recommends the following opportunity sites in Pratt City Strategic Opportunity Area:

- ✦ **513 – 709 Dugan Avenue/ Avenue W:** These seven properties, adjacent to the Pratt City Public Library, are currently vacant parcels most of which front Dugan Avenue/ Avenue W within the heart of the Pratt City redevelopment area. The combined properties total 5.4 acres and possess high visibility within a centralized location. Though the area has been recently discussed for a park/open space location, the site is in a prime location for commercial development. Possible commercial uses include a grocery store (Aldi or Wal-Mart Neighborhood Market), and/or ancillary neighborhood commercial retail such as a pharmacy, clothing stores, sporting goods, hobby, and music stores. Additional uses may include professional office space.
- ✦ **Dugan Avenue/ Avenue W & Hibernian Street:** This site, at the corner of Dugan Avenue/Avenue W and Hibernian Street, sits across from the Pratt City Public Library and totals 1.6 acres. The location is ideal for commercial uses that may include a grocery store (Aldi or Walmart Neighborhood Market), and/or other neighborhood commercial retail such as a pharmacy, clothing stores, sporting goods, hobby, and music stores. Additional uses may include eating and drinking establishments such as a deli, café, grill, or coffee shop.
- ✦ **208 Dugan Avenue/ Avenue W:** This single site adjacent to Birmingham Fire Station #18 is approximately 0.3 acres (13,068 SF) in size. The small lot size and limited parking space narrows the potential uses. Due to these restrictive factors, it is recommended that uses include professional services, such as tax services, an attorney office, pest control services, or a small retail establishment such as an ice cream parlor, bakery, florist, or art supply store.
- ✦ **1st Street & Avenue U:** This area includes thirty-six parcels and approximately 9.6 acres. Much of the existing property and structures are vacant and tax delinquent. While some uses are residential, most of the area consists of underutilized commercial properties and constitutes much of Pratt City's former commercial core. Broad redevelopment of this area is recommended in order to re-establish retail and commercial services to Pratt City. These sites are primarily vacant lots that average 11,700 square feet (0.27 acres) and are ideal for small retail and service businesses to serve specific, niche market demands in the community. Many lots may be combined to accommodate larger redevelopment projects. Local small business owners and sole proprietors are best suited at these locations. It is recommended that local leaders work with the property owners and area business incubators, farmers markets, and community organizations to provide financial incentive and opportunities for those looking to start a business. Suggested business types for these locations include:
 - ✦ Sporting Goods/Hobby
 - ✦ Florist/Gift Shops
 - ✦ Furniture Stores
 - ✦ Small Engine Repair

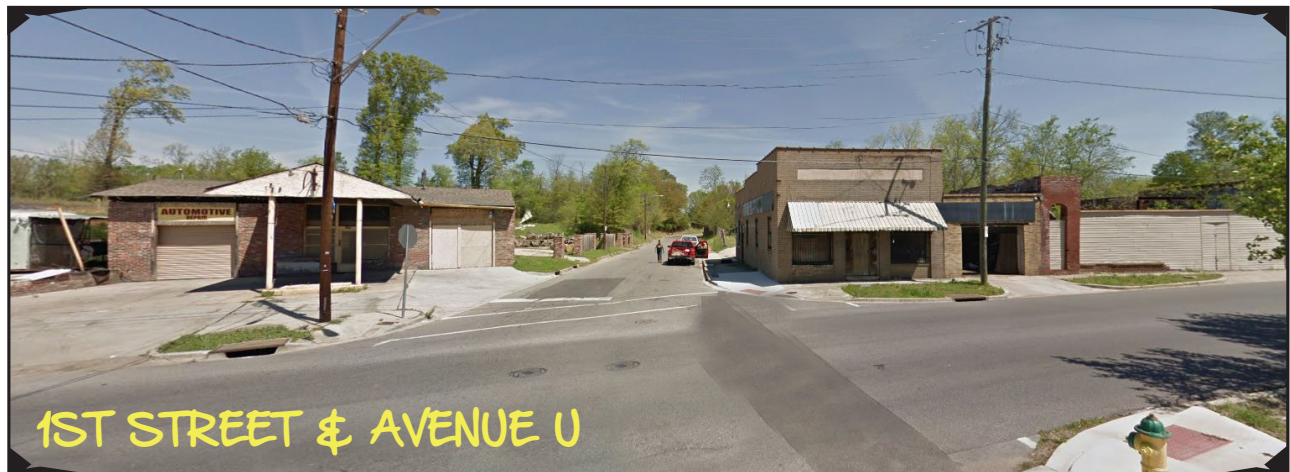
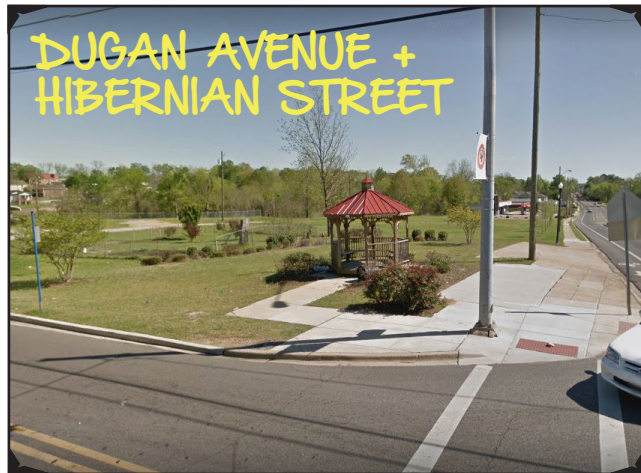
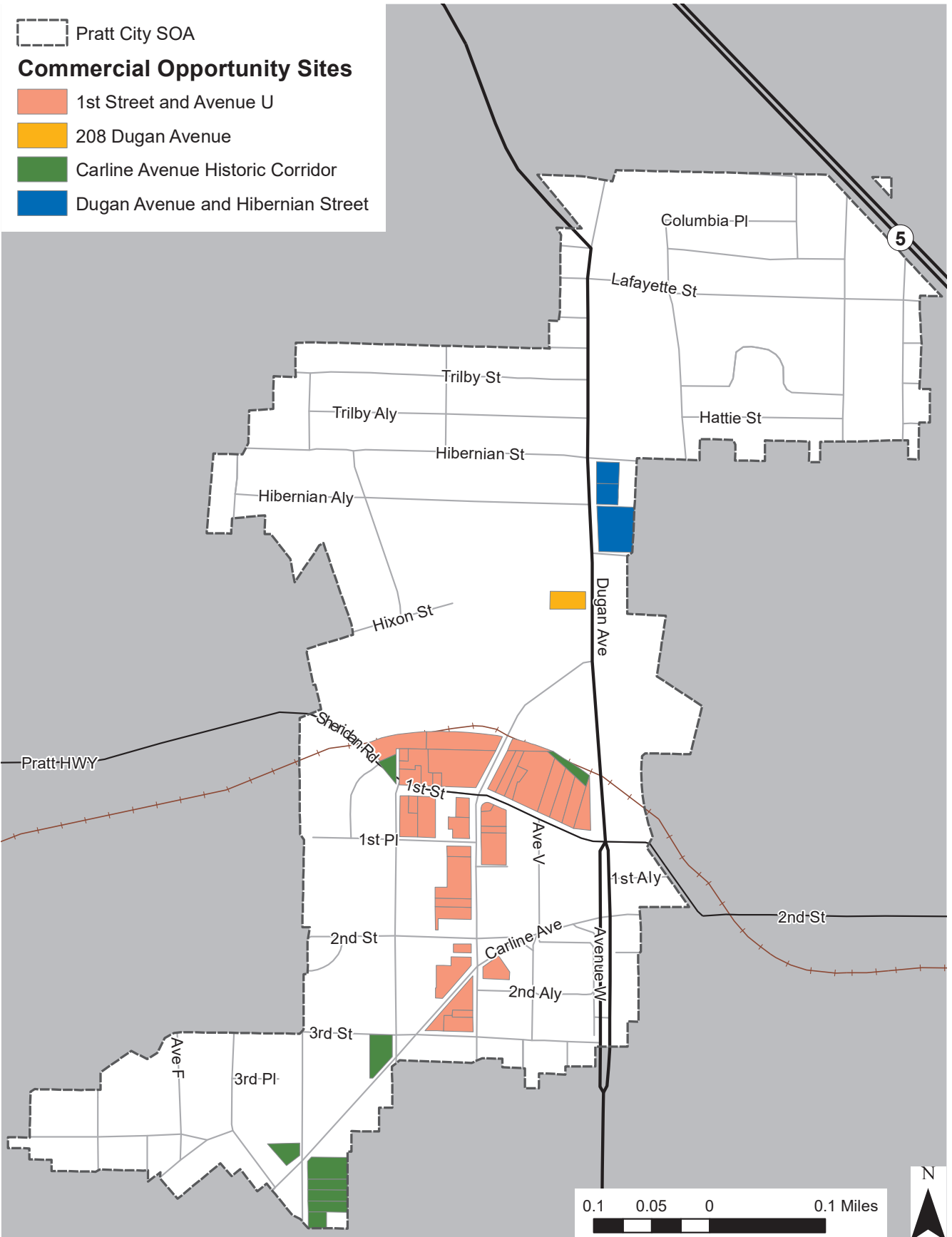


Figure 2.3: Pratt City Catalyst Sites



- ✦ Electronics Store/Repair
- ✦ Seamstress/Taylor
- ✦ Specialty Foods (Ethnic, Seafood, Meats, Vegetables, Bakery)
- ✦ Urban Garden
- ✦ Mobile Food Stands (Fresh fruits and vegetables)

✦ **Carline Avenue Historic Corridor:** Extending from Avenue W to Avenue G, the Carline Avenue Historic Corridor stretches approximately 1,900 feet and includes the Pratt City Historic Business District. With approximately fifteen commercial buildings located along the corridor, many are vacant or underutilized. This corridor has particular community value in terms of its significance as a heritage site. The corridor joins the residents of the past with the residents of the present as a shared connection. Heritage with nostalgia brings together the elements of the past with the elements of the present, and can provide an economic catalyst through Heritage Tourism. Recommendations include revitalization of the area through the restoration of the historic commercial buildings as points of interest in promotion of the Carline Avenue Historic Corridor. An established Pratt City Heritage Center and Museum could further this effort. Additionally, a connection to existing or proposed trail systems can establish the corridor within a larger trail system, aiding in the promotion of the corridor and area. The addition of signage and site branding is also recommended, i.e., colored or stamped sidewalk. Reuse of the historic buildings may include a Post Office, General Office, Heritage Center/Museum, Farmers Market, or Urban Gardens/Public Space.



Action 2

Develop a Pratt City Merchants Association, and form a subcommittee specifically for the Pratt Strategic Opportunity Area.



Action 3

Incentivize, recruit, and attract a grocery store within the Pratt Strategic Opportunity Area.

See **Community Renewal, Strategy A, Action 1, page 16.**

TRANSPORTATION



STRATEGY

BUILD A MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION NETWORK THAT PROVIDES A WIDE RANGE OF TRANSPORTATION CHOICES TO CONNECT THE PRATT CITY STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY AREA TO THE GREATER BIRMINGHAM AREA.



Action 1

Implement the 2016 Birmingham Sidewalk Master Plan.

The 2016 Birmingham Sidewalk Master Plan includes a sidewalk inventory of the entire city, which is useful for



understanding the areas of poor sidewalk conditions. The data is used to divide sidewalk priorities into four categories: short-term, mid-term, long-term and no sidewalks recommended. **Table 2.1** lists the recommended short-term (0-5 year) sidewalk construction and repair projects from the Birmingham Sidewalk Master Plan that are in the Pratt City SOA.

TABLE 2.1: Short Term Sidewalk Projects identified in the Birmingham Sidewalk Master Plan

SEGMENT	RECOMMENDATION
South Hampton K-8 SRTS Routes	Sidewalk needs repair; see Figure 2.6 for the exact location of the Safe Routes to School.



Action 2

Prioritize replacement and installation of sidewalk segments identified by residents to facilitate improved pedestrian travel within the Pratt City SOA.

The following streets were identified by residents:

- ✖ Hibernian Street
- ✖ Pratt Highway
- ✖ Carline Avenue



Construct sidewalk on left side of street.

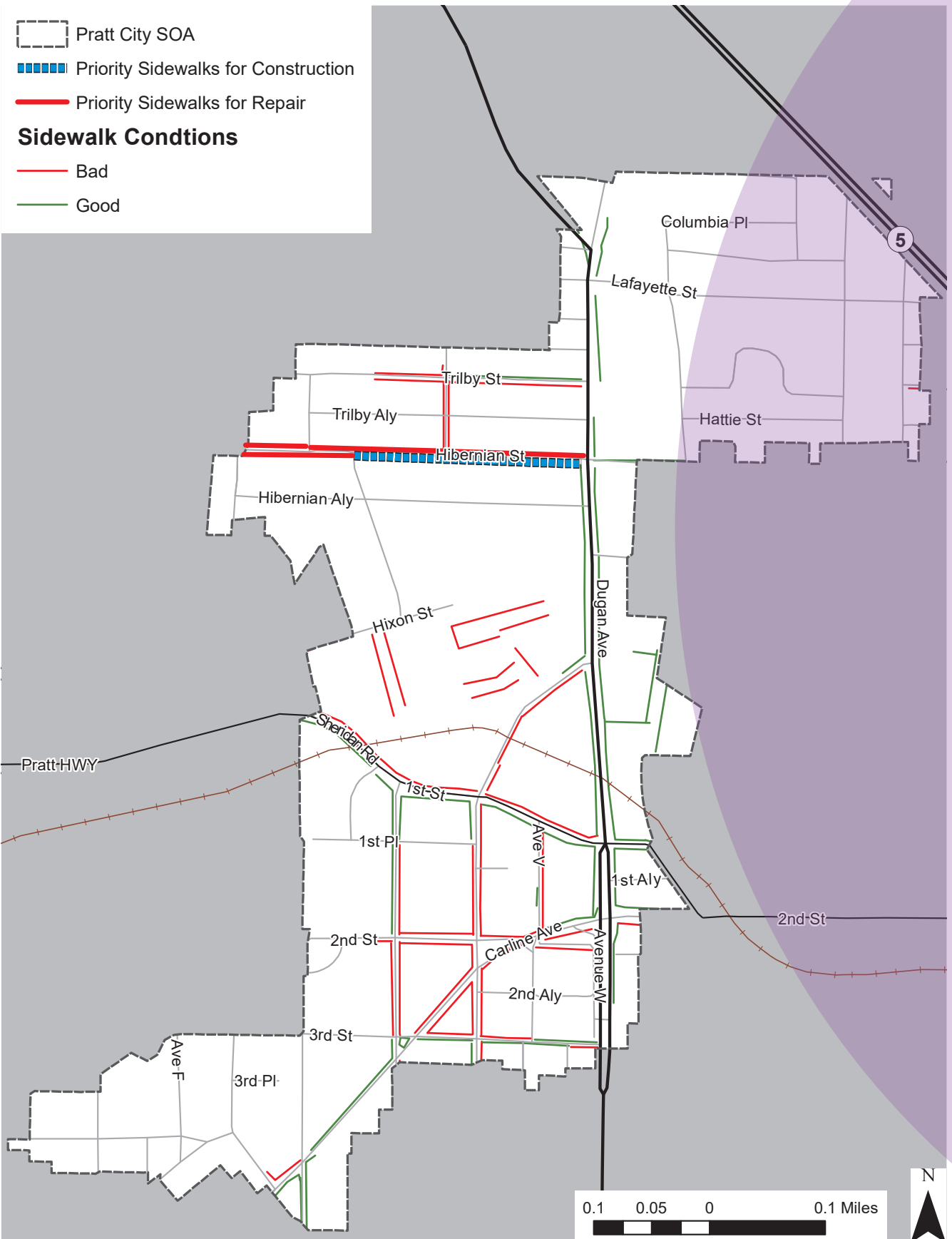


Construct sidewalk on right side of street.



Repair cracks and holes in sidewalk.

Figure 2.4: Pratt City Sidewalk Conditions Map



SIDEWALK SUITABILITY ANALYSIS

LOCATIONS WITH THE HIGHEST POTENTIAL DEMAND FOR WALKING

Measures of the built environment were used to develop a composite score of the potential demand for walking within the Pratt City SOA. As a different methodology for looking at sidewalk needs, a suitability analysis was developed as part of the Framework Plan process and was used to develop walking demand scores. The suitability analysis normalizes scores (ranging from 0 to 100) for each measure, weights each measure, and then combines them into a composite score. Individual property parcels in Pratt City SOA were used as the unit of analysis. The result was a suitability score and ranking of each parcel's potential demand for sidewalks or walking, relative to every other parcel in Pratt Ensley Area. The scoring criteria for the sidewalk suitability analysis is summarized in **Table 2.2**. Some suitability factors were weighted higher than others.

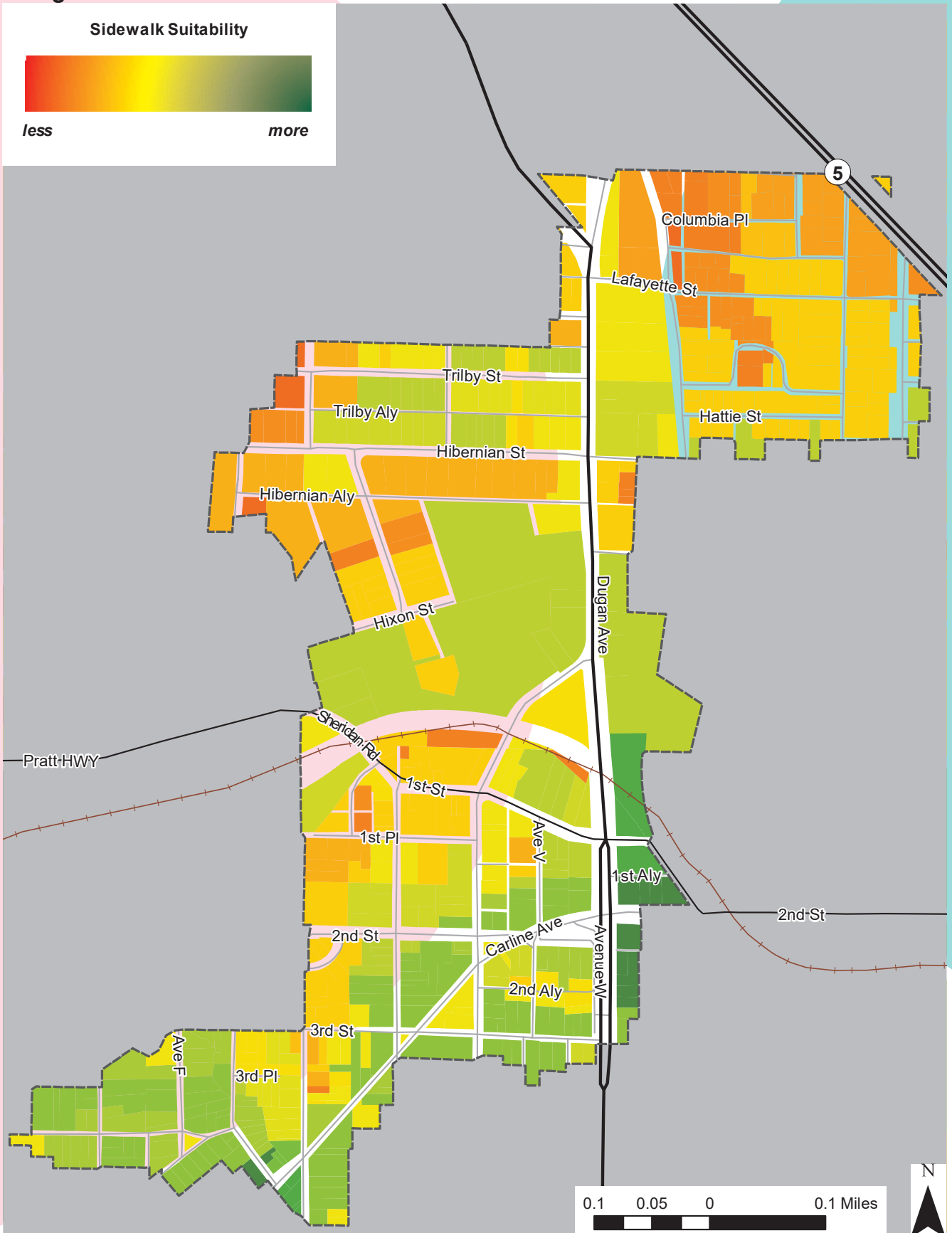
TABLE 2.2: Sidewalk Suitability Analysis - Scoring Criteria to Determine the Highest Potential Demand for Walking

SUITABILITY FACTORS	DESCRIPTION OF THE SUITABILITY FACTORS	WALKING DEMAND: SUITABILITY WEIGHTING (0 TO 10)
Population Density (based on 2010 Census Block Groups)	The higher the population density of the Block Group that the parcel is contained in, the higher the suitability score.	High (9)
Percent of the Population that is Minority (based on 2010 Census Block Groups)	The higher the percentage minority population of the Block Group that the parcel is contained in, the higher the suitability score.	Medium (6)
Proximity to existing sidewalks	Awards a parcel if it is located within 30 feet of an existing sidewalk.	High (9)
Proximity to a commercial / retail land use	The closer the commercial / retail land use, the higher the suitability score.	Medium (6)
Major Employers (over 250 people) within ¼ mile	Awards a parcel if it is within ¼ mile of a major employer (over 250 people) in the area.	Medium (6)
Public schools within ½ mile	Awards a parcel if it is within ½ mile of a public or private school.	High (9)
Parks within ¼ mile	Awards a parcel if it is within ¼ mile of a park.	High (9)
Recreation center within ¼ mile	Awards a parcel if it is within ¼ mile of a recreation center.	Medium (6)
BJCTA Transit stop within ¼ mile	Awards a parcel if it is within ¼ mile of a transit stop.	High (9)
ZYP Station within ¼ mile	Awards a parcel if it is within ¼ mile of a Zyp Station.	Low (3)
Developed or a vacant parcel	Awards a parcel if it is located on developed land.	Low (3)
Major College or University within ¼ mile	Awards a parcel if it is within ¼ mile of a major college or university is within ¼ mile	Low (3)
Proximity to 3 or 4-way intersections (more walkability in these areas)	Awards a parcel if it is located close to a 3-or-4-way intersection.	Medium (6)

The sidewalk suitability analysis is intended to be used as a supporting guide for implementing sections of the Birmingham Sidewalk Master Plan. While the Birmingham Sidewalk Master Plan identifies specific segments for sidewalk repair and construction, the suitability analysis details general areas that have the highest demand for walking (based on the suitability factors).

The locations with the highest demand for walking or need for sidewalks that scored in the top five percentile in the sidewalk suitability analysis, are shown in dark green in **Figure 2.5**. The map also shows the existing sidewalk network when overlaid onto the sidewalk suitability map. This helps to highlight any critical gaps in the sidewalk network, such as along Slayden Avenue, 17th Street South, Ridge Place, Avenue E, (from public input).

FIGURE 2.5: Sidewalk Suitability Analysis - Locations with the Highest Potential Demand for Walking



IDENTIFYING HIGH PRIORITY SIDEWALK + GREENWAY SEGMENTS

Table 2.3 is intended to be used as a combined cross-reference table to determine which sidewalk segments in the Pratt City SOA should be noted as a high priority for implementation. The table notes if a segment is listed in need of repair or construction in the 2016 Birmingham Sidewalk Master Plan, if it is identified in the 2010 Red Rock Ridge and Valley Trail System Plan, if it is in an area of potential high demand for walking (based on the Sidewalk Suitability Analysis), and if it was noted by citizens throughout the Framework Plan public involvement process as a segment that needs repair or desired for new sidewalk construction.

According to this table, the highest priority sidewalk segments in the Pratt Ensley Birmingham Area include:

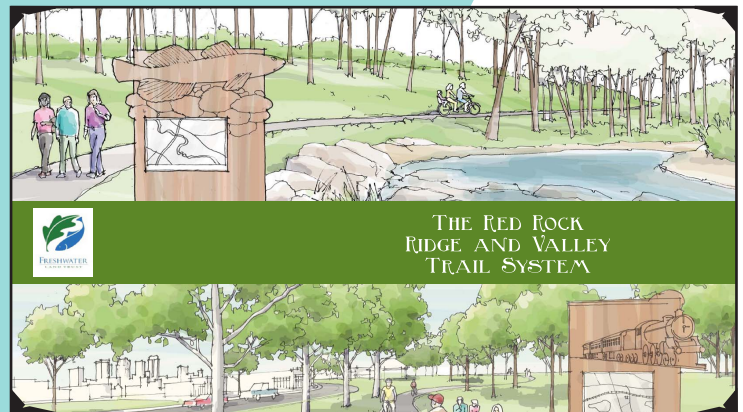
- Carline Avenue between Avenue T and Avenue W
- South Hampton K-8 SRTS Routes

TABLE 2.3: Identifying High Priority Sidewalk and Greenway Segments

SIDEWALK OR GREENWAY / TRAIL SEGMENT	PRIORITY IN BIRMINGHAM SIDEWALK MASTER PLAN	IS THE SEGMENT IDENTIFIED IN THE 2010 RRRVTS PLAN?	SUITABILITY ANALYSIS SCORE	NOTED IN PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS.
Carline Avenue between Avenue T and Avenue W	Mid-Term (Repair)	No	Very High	⊗
South Hampton K-8 SRTS Routes	Short-Term (Repair)	Yes	Very High	⊗
Dugan Avenue between Hibernian Street and Lafayette Street	Mid-Term (Construction)	No	Medium	✓

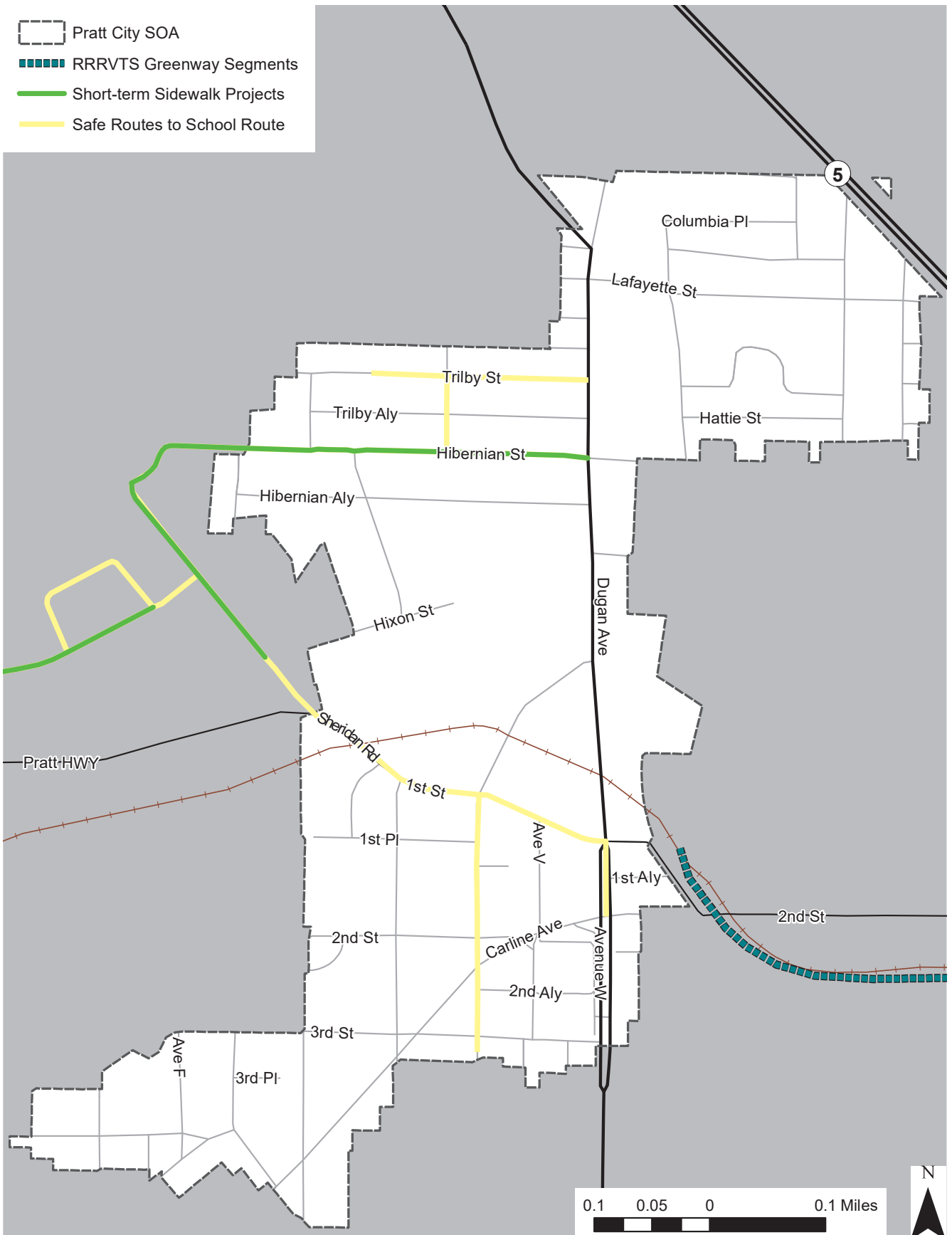


The Birmingham Sidewalk Master Plan (Source: Goodwyn Mills and Cawood)



The Red Rock Ridge and Valley Trail System Master Plan (Source: The Fresh Water Land Trust)

FIGURE 2.6: Priority Greenway and Sidewalks Segment Map





Action 3

Make bicycling a viable transportation alternative to Pratt-Ensley residents by creating a connected on-street bicycling network.

Bicycling can provide an excellent form of transportation for lower income residents who live further away from transit stops to access stops more quickly and efficiently. **Table 2.4** and **Figure 2.7** detail potential bicycling routes for the Pratt City SOA based on public involvement, STRAVA data, the proposed Red Rock Ridge and Valley Trail System, and the B-Active Plan Level of Traffic Stress Analysis. Based on the road segments' LOC score routes this plan recommends the following bicycle infrastructure:

- ✖ Provide an important connection to job centers, transit, off-road greenways, and other destinations
- ✖ They are a barrier to bicycling due to the high level of stress they induce upon bicyclist.

Recommendations for potential bicycle infrastructure are identified by a road segments' Level of Comfort (LOC) score as identified by the B-Active Traffic Stress Analysis. This plan recommends the following bicycle infrastructure based on a road's LOC definition:

✖ **LOC 1 or 2:** "Sharrows" or signage stating, "share the road" may be appropriate on street segments with an LOC score of 2 or lower. Typically, streets with an LOC score of 1 or 2 are residential streets with low speed limits and low traffic counts. For this reason, these streets do not have specific recommendations (other than signage), as they can provide a comfortable cycling experience without bicycling infrastructure.

✖ **LOC 3+:** Physical separation of bicyclist and pedestrians is desirable, and a 5-foot (minimum) striped bike lane is needed.

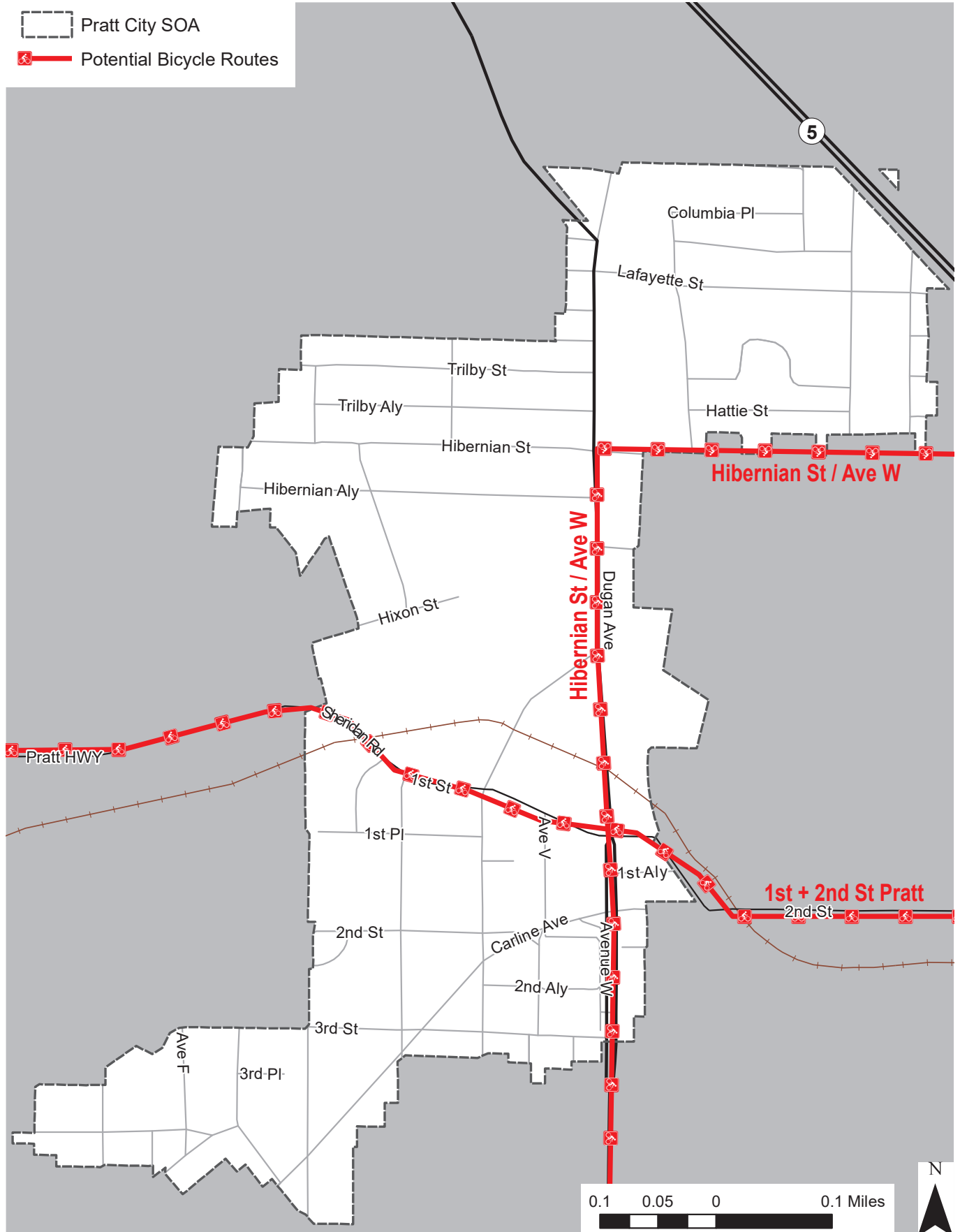
The following roads should be considered for appropriate bicycling infrastructure (specifically bike lanes or protected/buffered bike lanes) when other road improvement projects such as resurfacing occur along these roads:

- ✖ 1st and 2nd Street and Pratt Highway to Bankhead Highway
- ✖ Hibernian Street and Avenue W

TABLE 2.4: Proposed On-Street Bicycle Segments

ROAD SEGMENT	LOC SCORE	PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT?	NEAR TRANSIT STOP?	NEAR GREENWAY?	ON-ROAD RED ROCK SEGMENT
1st & 2nd St/Pratt Highway to Bankhead Hwy	3/4	Yes	Yes, provides connection	Yes, provides access	Yes (Pratt Highway Trail)
Hibernian Street	4	Yes	Yes, on route	Yes, provides access	Yes (Avenue W Trail)

FIGURE 2.7: Potential On-Street Bicycle Infrastructure Map





STRATEGY

IMPROVE WAYFINDING.



Action 1

Implement pedestrian wayfinding along Dugan Avenue/ Avenue W and Hibernian Street to key sites such as the Pratt Library, One Pratt Park, Carline Avenue Historical District, and sites along the Pratt Heritage Trail (sites listed below).

- ✖ Pratt City Library
- ✖ Irish Hill
- ✖ Fraternal Cemetery
- ✖ Prison Camp
- ✖ Supervisor's House
- ✖ Pratt City Mines
- ✖ Commissary
- ✖ Railway Shops
- ✖ Coke Ovens

- ✖ St. Catherine's Church
- ✖ Pratt Mines Cemetery
- ✖ The Bottom
- ✖ Carline Station
- ✖ Mt. Moriah Church
- ✖ Driftracks
- ✖ Old Methodist Church
- ✖ Pratt Elementary
- ✖ Pratt Junction
- ✖ Thomas Furnaces
- ✖ Republic Street
- ✖ Historic Thomas
- ✖ Scott School
- ✖ Roberts Cemetery



SOUTH PARK HERITAGE WALK CONCEPT PLAN

VISION PLAN
PROPOSED IMPROVEMENT AREAS:

1. Chavis Way
2. John P. Top Greenway Community Center
3. Person Street
4. Person Street
5. Carolina Trailways
6. MLK Jr. Memorial International
7. Mt. Hope Cemetery

PARTNERS: Several organizations have agreed to work together to make this vision a reality. They include:
 South Park - East Raleigh Neighborhood Association (SPERNA)
 District Citizens Advisory Council
 City of Raleigh Parks and Recreation Department
 HCDU Center for all Design, Development, Design Studio
 Raleigh - Westside Council of HCDU Alumni Association
 Raleigh City Museum
 Richard B. Hesterman Library
 Wake University
 Wake State, Business Community



STRATEGY

IMPROVE SAFETY.



Action 1

Conduct studies and regularly review relevant data at high accident locations to support operational changes and designs that improve safety.

Crash data from the Critical Analysis Reporting Environment (CARE) software was used to identify crash locations throughout the Pratt City SOA for the period from 2014 to 2016. Crash locations are shown in **Figure 2.8**. Over the past three years, approximately 45 crashes occurred in the Pratt City SOA. None of the crashes resulted in fatalities. 6 of the crashes (13.3%) resulted in non-incapacitating injuries.

Dugan Avenue/ Avenue W had the most crashes, 5 of which involved injuries. **Table 2.5** highlights the intersections with the highest number of crashes throughout the Pratt City SOA.

It is recommended that the City study and address some of the safety and operational issues along Dugan Avenue / Avenue W where many crashes have occurred. Safety improvements could range from adding turn lanes, improving sight distance and managing access. The City should also consider adding red light cameras at key intersections where accidents have been caused by cars running red lights.



TABLE 2.5: Intersections with the Highest Number of Crashes (2014 – 2016)

INTERSECTION/SEGMENT	TOTAL # OF CRASHES	# CRASHES INVOLVING IN JURIES
Dugan Avenue /Avenue W	21	5
1st Street Pratt	9	0
Hibernian Street	5	0
Dugan Avenue and 1st Street Pratt	9	2
Dugan Avenue and Hibernian Street	13	1



Action 2

Develop context sensitive traffic calming programs along Dugan Avenue / Avenue W and Hibernian Street.

Traffic calming can improve neighborhoods and major streets for living, walking and bicycling. As neighborhood residents express concern about the speed, volume and type of cut-through traffic in their neighborhoods, the City of Birmingham's Traffic Engineering Department staff should conduct traffic calming studies as a direct response to targeted concerns. The recommended traffic calming study would be intended to evaluate a focused area with engineering measures in mind to change driver behavior and compel drivers to slow down or use more appropriate travel routes. This might include strategies to alter the physical roadway with measures such as edge lines, chokers, chicanes, traffic circles, road diets, speed humps and raised crosswalks. Other efforts might include operational strategies such as enhanced police enforcement and speed displays.

Chapter 12 of the City of Birmingham Comprehensive Plan included a Traffic Calming & Active Transportation Safety Toolbox to address a variety of potential improvement areas including high vehicle speed traffic calming treatments, high traffic volume control treatments, pedestrian intersection safety enhancements, pedestrian safety crossing improvements, and bicycle accommodations contributing to traffic calming. These treatments include intersection narrowing to decrease pedestrian crossing distances and exposure to traffic, methods to divert and reduce through traffic on neighborhood streets, and measures to reduce travel speeds where speeding has been a problem. Any of these traffic calming

initiatives must be balanced against the need for delivery and utility trucks to access businesses and residents in a neighborhood. The City's Traffic Engineering Department should target the previously mentioned high incident intersections and residential areas to implement a comprehensive traffic calming policy.



STRATEGY

ENHANCE EXISTING PUBLIC TRANSIT SERVICE.



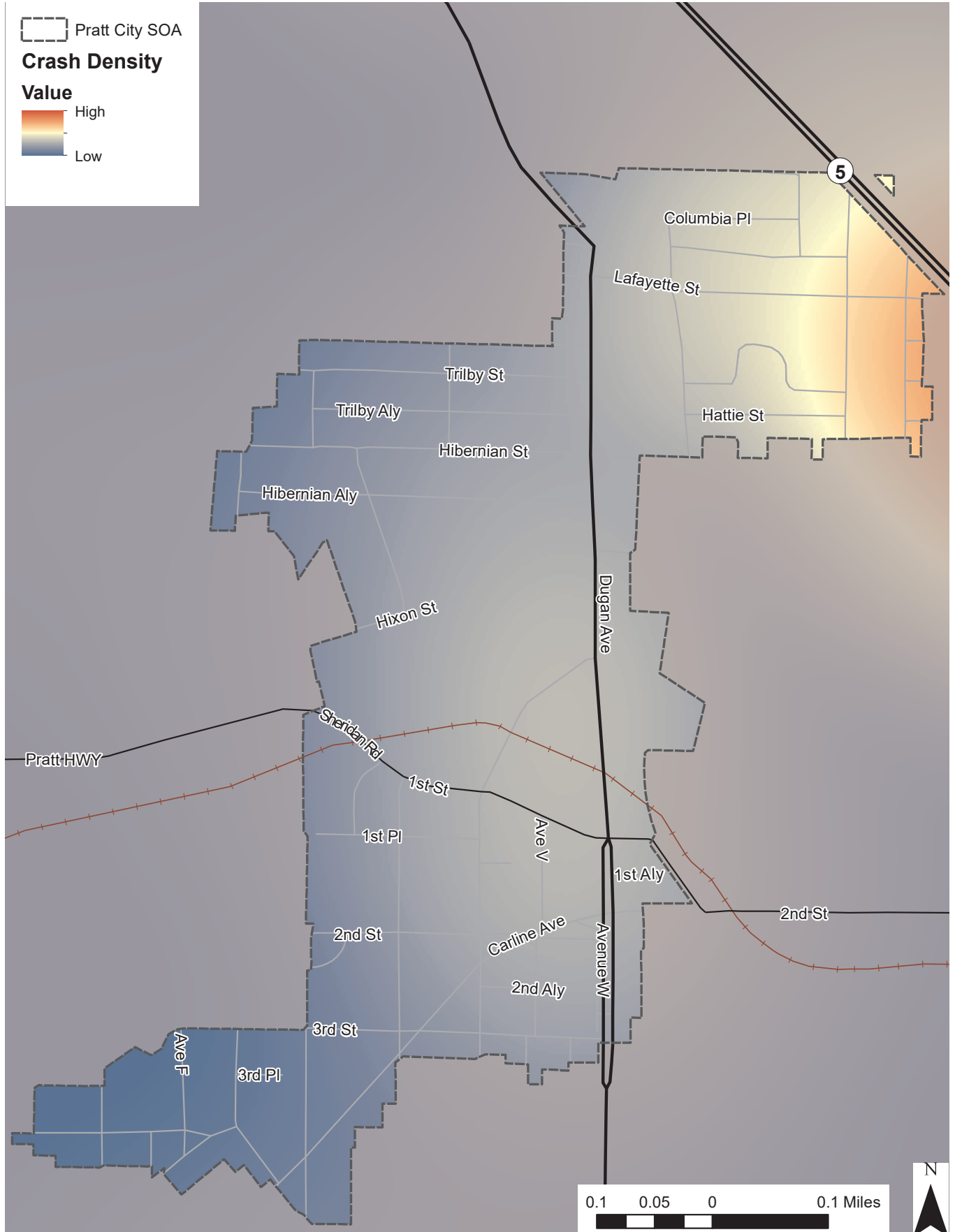
Action 1

Work with BJCTA to implement the phased improvements to Route 6 (Pratt/Ensley) as recommended in their 2017 Transit Development Plan.

In 2017, BJCTA released their Transit Development Plan phasing recommendations for improving bus service frequencies and realignments to routes. According to the plan, the following improvements are recommended to **Route 6**:

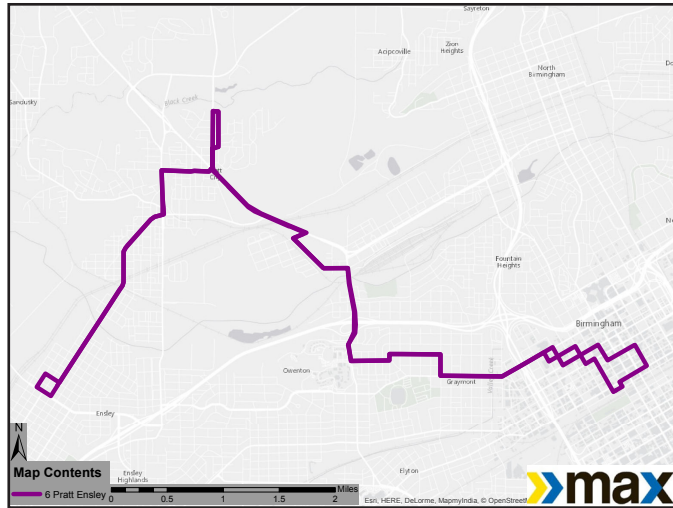
The Pratt / Ensley route currently serves riders in the Ensley Central and Pratt communities with stops at the Department of Motor Vehicles and Downtown Ensley. Proposed Phase 1 improvements include increasing the frequency of buses to every 30 minutes during peak hours, and run every 60 minutes during off peak hours and on Saturday. In addition, it is recommended that service end at midnight rather than 11:45 PM. Proposed Phase 2 improvements include realigning the route to originate/terminate at the Cherry Avenue apartments and also realign the route to originate/terminate at the proposed Five Points West Transit Center (to connect to the Bus Rapid Transit service).

FIGURE 2.8: Crash Concentration Map



Improvements will help to enhance ridership on the proposed East-West BRT service since the existing local bus routes can serve as feeder lines into the BRT service.

FIGURE 2.9: Route 6 (Pratt/Ensley)



Action 2

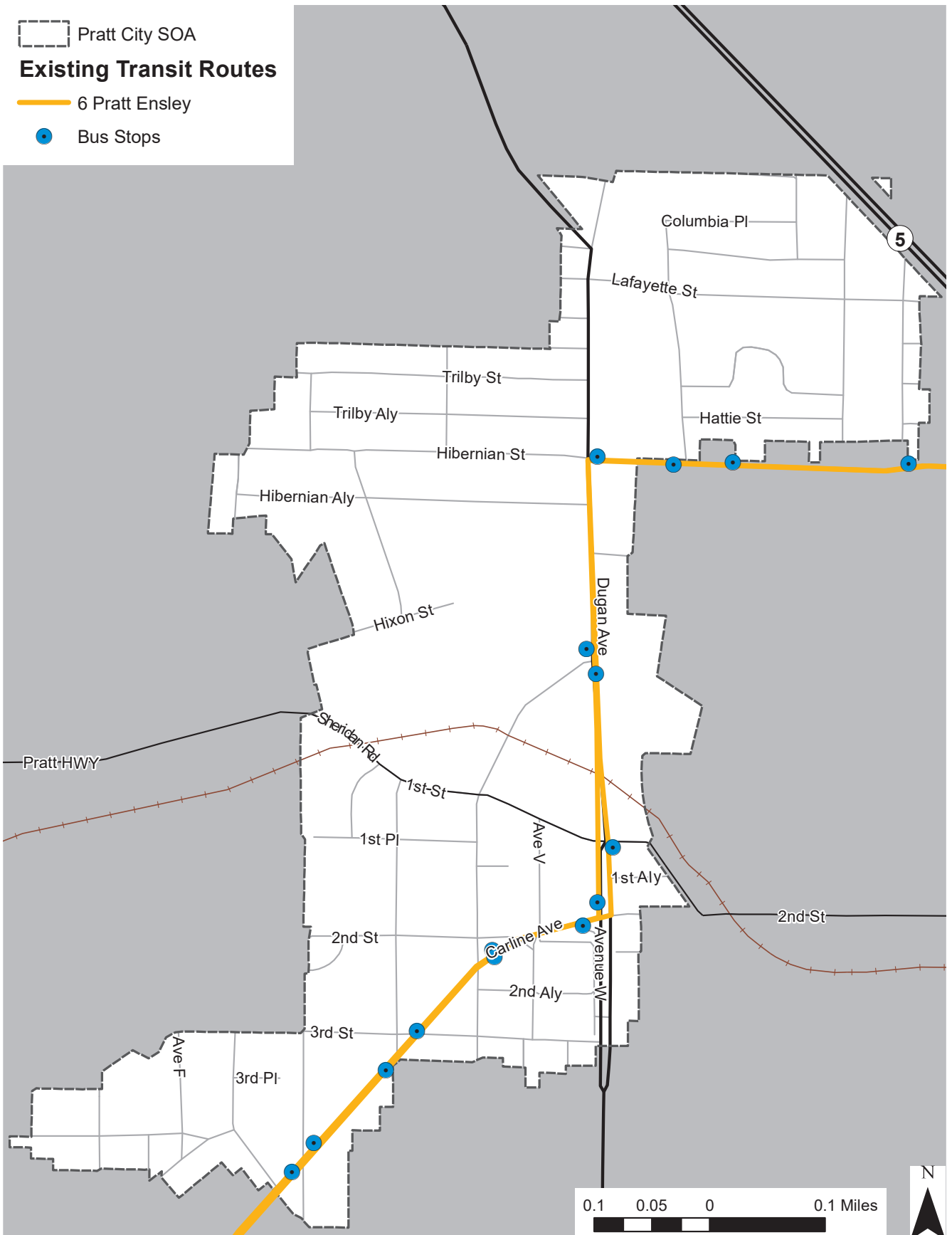
Improve local transit stops and amenities.

Improvements to transit stops and amenities contribute to the experience of riding public transportation. As part of this effort, bus stops and shelters are recommended to be improved and upgraded to reflect the modern city that Birmingham is striving to become. Visually appealing bus stops can offer transit riders a safe and physically comfortable wait experience, and can help to change the character of the communities. Transit stops also should include a higher level of bus shelter design to provide additional comfort and amenities to encourage ridership. These amenities might include transit technology provisions and other passenger amenities/enhancements and apps such as Next Bus™ (reliable real-time arrival information), electronic schedules, bike racks, security cameras, etc.

Integrating technological design such as solar panels adds to a bus shelter’s aesthetic appeal while also contributing to the power grid. Depending on how much power is yielded, the shelter could have LED lighting denoting the stop and possibly ads so that waiting at night would not be a fearful or uncomfortable situation. Bus shelters should be strategically placed in areas relevant to the interest of riders, such as bakeries and newsstands, and places that are open late. Bus shelters should be set back to not disturb pedestrian traffic. Every optimized stop should have a shelter that allows visibility of coming buses. Shelters with poor visibility force riders to leave the shelters to watch for the bus that could potentially create a safety concern.



FIGURE 2.10: BJCTA Routes and Stop Map



FUTURE LAND USE

A STRATEGY

IMPLEMENT THE FUTURE LAND USE MAP/ PLAN TO ALLOW FOR MIXED-USE LOW DEVELOPMENT AND ENCOURAGE MORE SERVICES AND RETAIL WITHIN WALKING DISTANCE TO RESIDENTS.

Wrench Icon Action 1

Implement the Future Land Use Map/ Plan to allow for mixed-use low development (from Hibernian Street to 3rd Street).

During the planning process for the Pratt Ensley Framework plan, there was an expressed desire by stakeholders to allow a mix of uses within the Pratt City Strategic Opportunity Area. Implementing the Future Land Use Map to allow for mixed-use low will enable a wider range of compatible uses and create a central gathering place – an urban village- for surrounding residents as redevelopment occurs. Existing institutional uses and school campuses are to remain within the SOA. A comparison of the existing and future land use scenarios can be found in **Table 2.6**.

TABLE 2.6: Pratt City Strategic Opportunity Area Future Land Use

LAND USE DESCRIPTION	EXISTING SCENARIO	FUTURE SCENARIO
Residential- Low	✓	✓
Residential- Medium	✓	✓
General Commercial	✓	⊘
MXD-Low	✓	✓

Wrench Icon Action 2

Amend the zoning ordinance as needed to correspond with the proposed future land use plan.

MIXED USE LOW



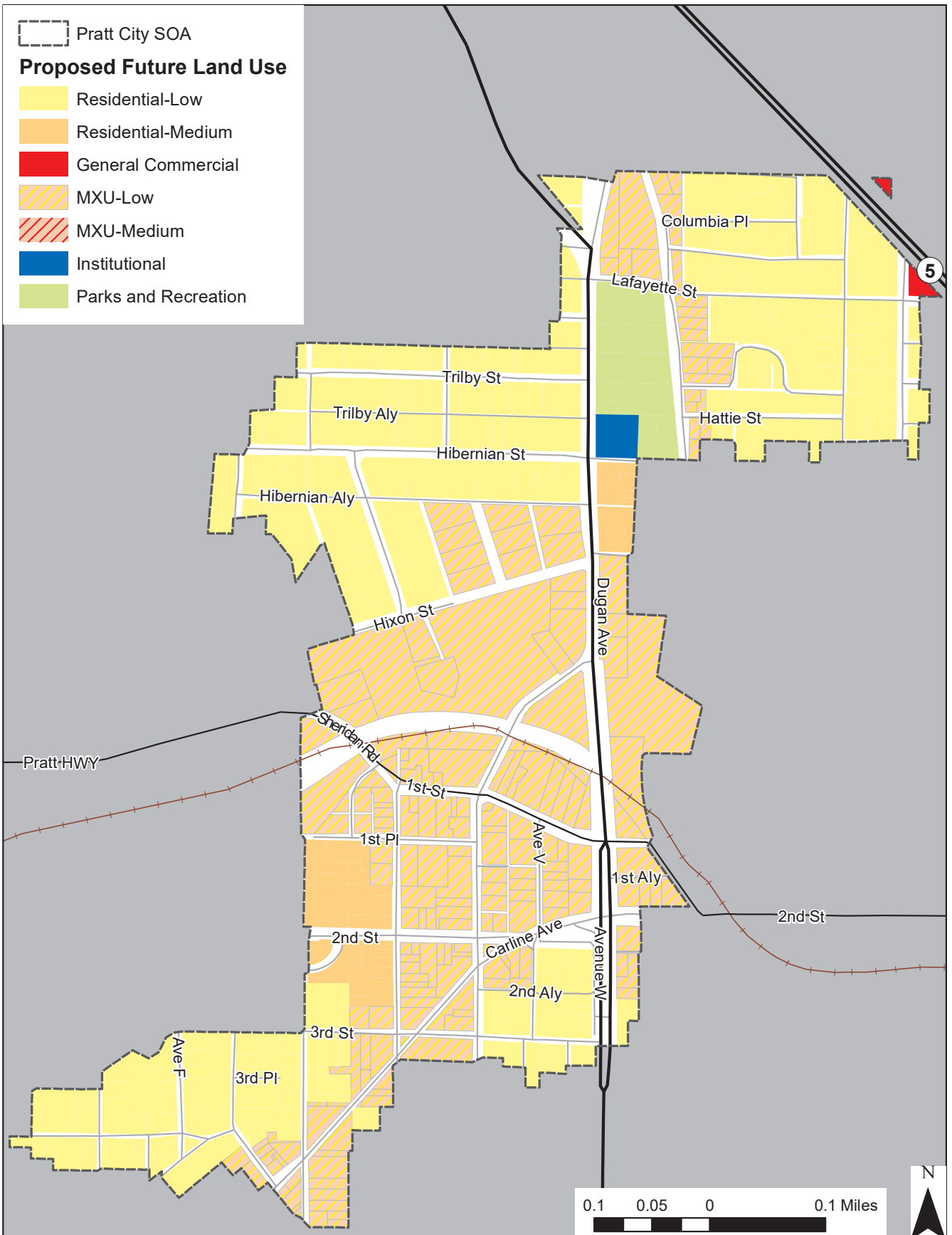
RESIDENTIAL MEDIUM



RESIDENTIAL LOW



FIGURE 2.11: Pratt City Proposed Future Land Use Map (2018)





Ramsey McCormack Building (Source: Abandoned Southeast)



CHAPTER 3

DOWNTOWN ENSLEY SOA

3.1. INTRODUCTION

Downtown Ensley is one of the remaining areas outside of Birmingham’s city center that has maintained a dense urban network of streets and structures, many of which are still in good shape and feature significant architectural details. For this reason, Downtown Ensley was dedicated as Commercial Revitalization District to encourage redevelopment and investment within the Ensley and Tuxedo neighborhoods. While development has been slow, several businesses are thriving thanks to the ongoing efforts of the City, REV Birmingham, Ensley Alive, Bethel Ensley Action Task Force (BEAT) and others.

What’s more, the City is considering a series of redevelopment projects that could be the catalyst needed for additional private development. BEAT has announced and is seeking investors for Ensley Junction, a large-scale redevelopment project that includes the following components: a dynamic active park, Ensley Junction Flats, and the Western Health Center Renovation.

Not only is Downtown Ensley expected to experience substantial revitalization, but its location to the city center (6 miles) and Interstate 20/59 uniquely positions it to become the next bedroom community of the City of Birmingham. Moreover, 20th Street Ensley (Birminghamport Road), Avenue I, and Avenue E provide direct access to Interstate 20 and is an ideal location for industries such as logistics and shipping, which could generate additional opportunities for employment by local residents.

The objectives of the Downtown Ensley SOA are:

- Redevelopment of Downtown Ensley into a thriving mixed-use neighborhood and retail district
- Promote pedestrian walkways and green spaces in commercial zones
- Provide a variety of housing types for future generations
- Create new connections to the Downtown city center by providing multiple transportation options for residents.



Ensley Junction (Source: [BEAT Builds](#))



(Source: [Washington Park](#))

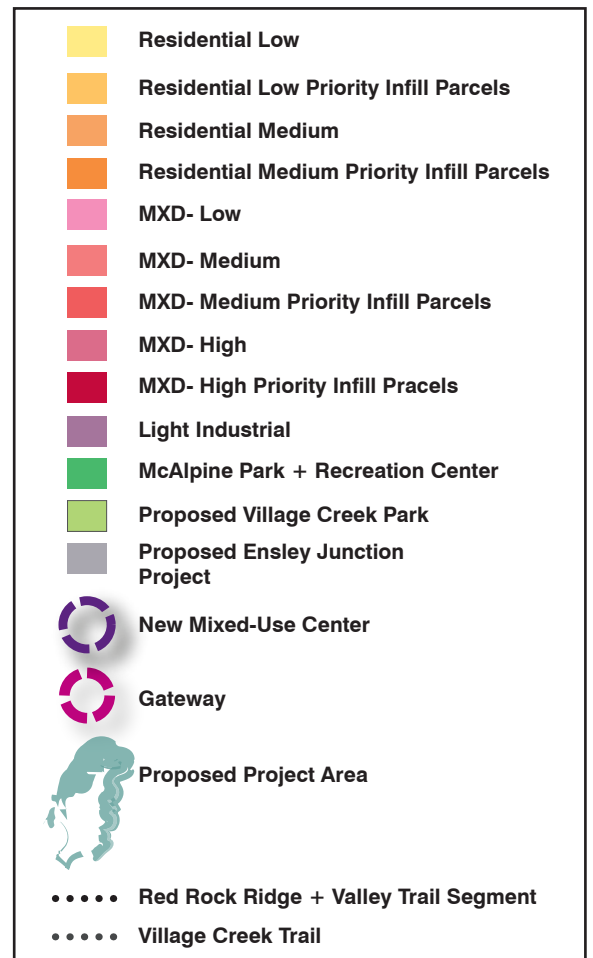
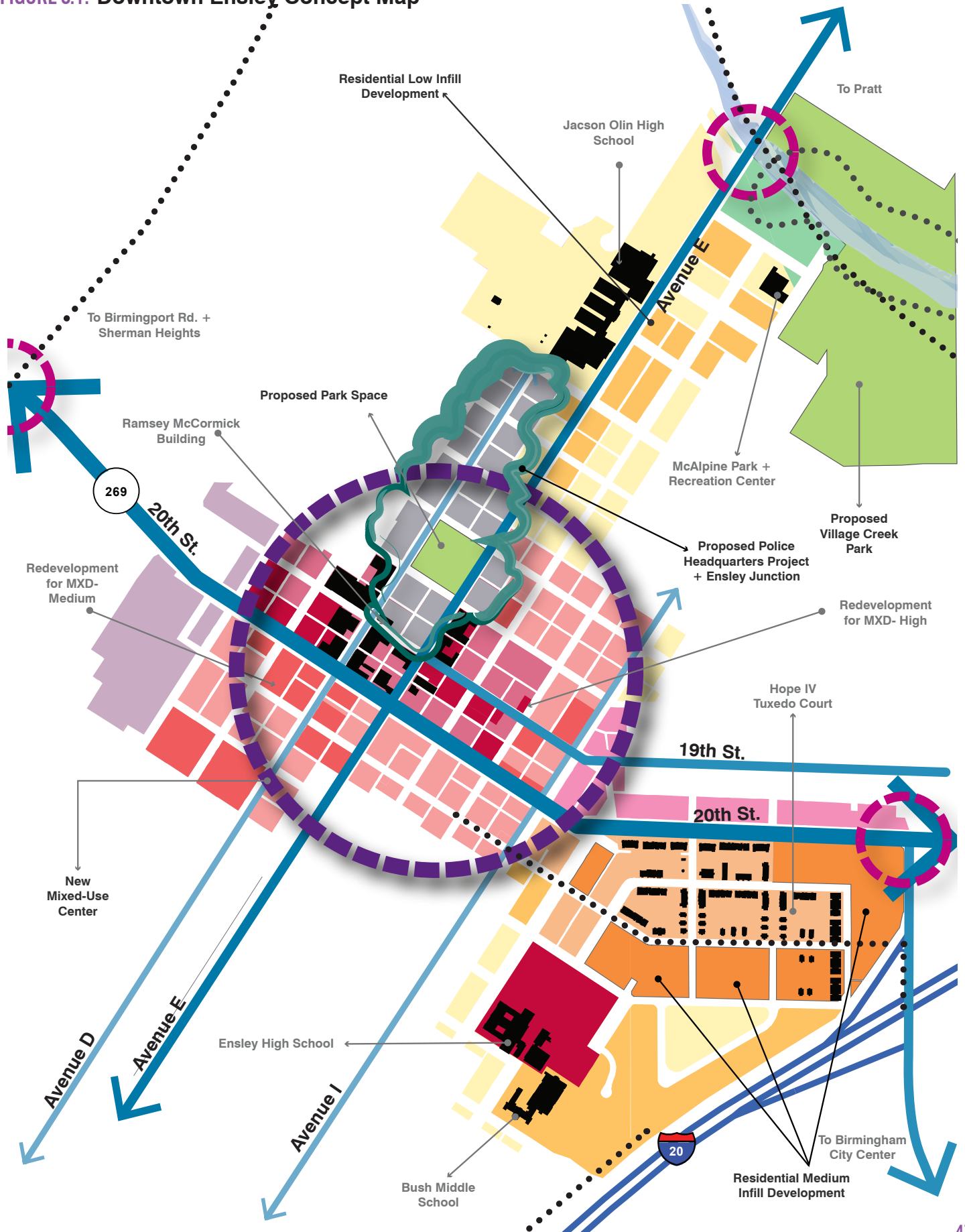


FIGURE 3.1: Downtown Ensley Concept Map



3.2. GOALS, STRATEGIES, AND ACTIONS

COMMUNITY RENEWAL



STRATEGY

RENOVATE AND CLEAN UP BLIGHTED PROPERTIES.



Action 1

Work with local faith-based organizations, Habitat for Humanity, and the Bethel Ensley Action Taskforce to renovate blighted properties.

Faith-based organizations should collaborate with the City to create a faith-based initiative that focuses on renovating houses while teaching community members construction skills (see Service Over Self program in Memphis, TN). With the help of the City and the financial backing of banks, faith-based organizations could create access to quality affordable housing for residents while simultaneously offering enough renovated housing units to allow the market to work without assistance.

Faith-based organizations should work with Habitat for Humanity, Bethel Ensley Action Taskforce, and Lawson State Community College to renovate houses in the Pratt Ensley Area. Habitat for Humanity builds new houses, but also does renovation, while the latter can provide skilled student labor in carpentry

and plumbing. Working together, these entities could conduct a block-by-block renovation over the course of one or more years as part of a Rock the Block® initiative in neighborhoods with a high concentration of blighted properties (see **Figure 3.2**). Faith-based organizations can participate on a rotating basis, with each organization having the opportunity to take part in the renovation efforts and provide sweat equity in the form of volunteers.



Action 2

Enact an adaptive reuse ordinance.

An adaptive reuse ordinance makes the reuse of vacant buildings easier by minimizing certain zoning and code regulations for reuse projects. Currently, reuse projects are required to meet the same regulations as new developments. The City should adopt an adaptive reuse ordinance in areas with concentrations of historic and underused buildings. Specific zoning requirements that the ordinance would reduce for reuse projects include parking, setbacks, and density. The City should work with architects, engineers, and developers to find out which requirements are the most difficult obstacles when redeveloping. If successful, the ordinance could increase the number of rehabilitations and reduce the demolition of older buildings.

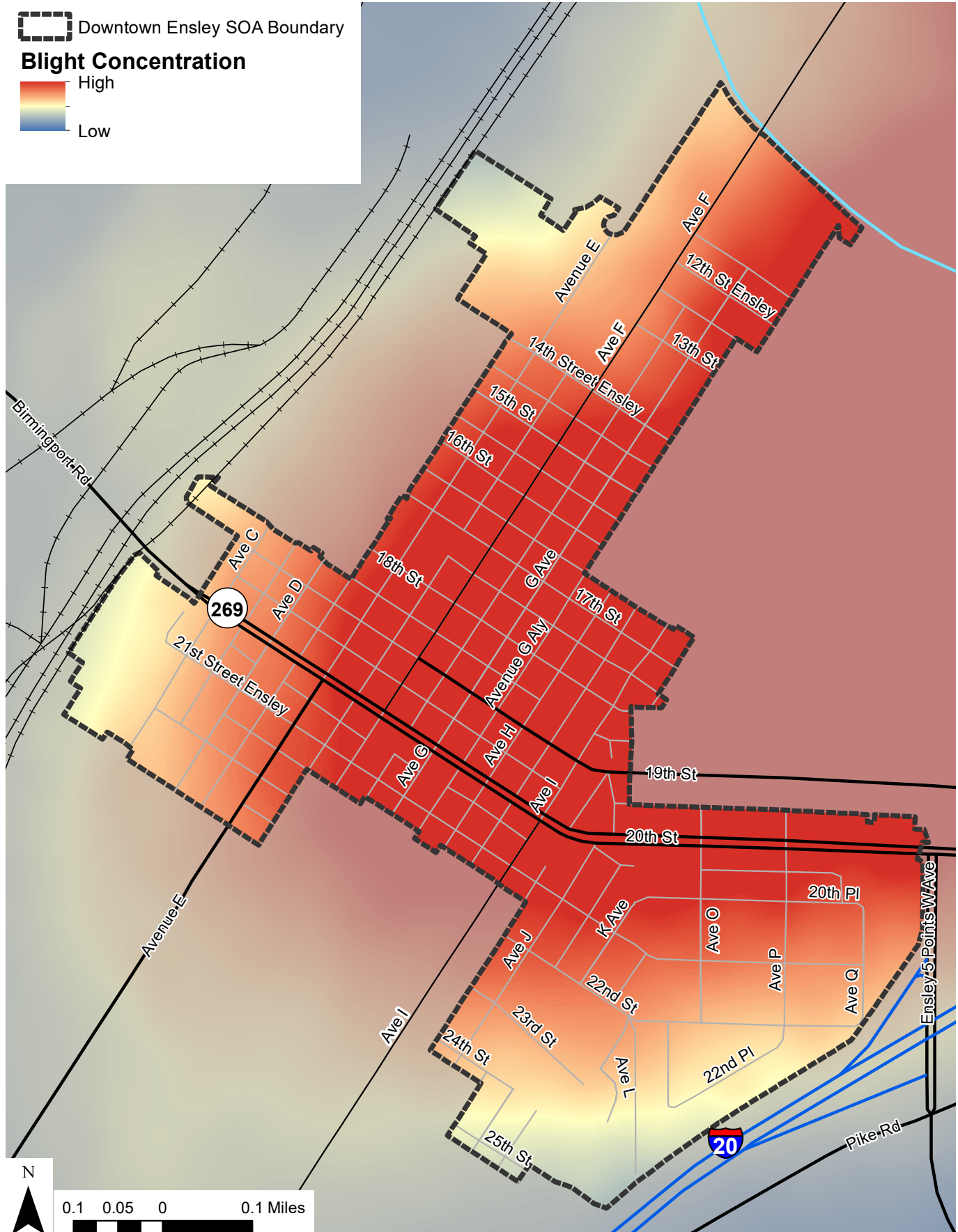


Action 3

Repurpose publicly-owned abandoned facilities to meet the needs of the community.

Buildings such as schools and offices can be repurposed to meet the current needs of the community. In the Downtown Ensley SOA, there are two closed schools: Council Elementary School and Ensley High School. These closed schools could be repurposed into a

FIGURE 3.2: Downtown Ensley Blight Concentration Map



senior care facility, community recreation center, small business incubator, or family resource center, facilities that are lacking in some communities. For a more detailed assessment, see **Economic Vitality, Strategy C, Action 1 & 2, page 68-69** of this document.

B STRATEGY

CREATE A SAFER BUILT ENVIRONMENT.

Action 1

Dedicate additional police patrol to areas in/near crime hotspots.

Downtown Ensley features several crime hotspots (see **Figure 3.3**). For this reason, efforts should be made by the Birmingham Police Department to concentrate more officers within the Strategic Opportunity Area. Known perception of crime activity in communities hinders development and attracts more malevolent activity.

C STRATEGY

MAKE FRESH PRODUCE MORE ACCESSIBLE TO RESIDENTS.

Action 1

Promote existing community gardens in Ensley.

Currently, two community gardens exist in Downtown Ensley. The first is run and operated by the Bethesda Life Center, and enables residents to lease garden beds to produce fresh produce. For more information, please contact the Bethesda Life Center at 205-788-2200. The second, and newest garden, is located at the McAlpine Recreation Center and was built in conjunction with Oasis Gardens Ensley.

Action 2

Introduce tax incentives to encourage grocers to locate within the Downtown Ensley Strategic Opportunity Area.

Possible Location: 20th Street Ensley

Potential Incentives:

- ✦ New market tax credits
- ✦ Tax abatement
- ✦ Subsidize rent
- ✦ Healthy Food Financing Initiative

D STRATEGY

IMPROVE THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT.

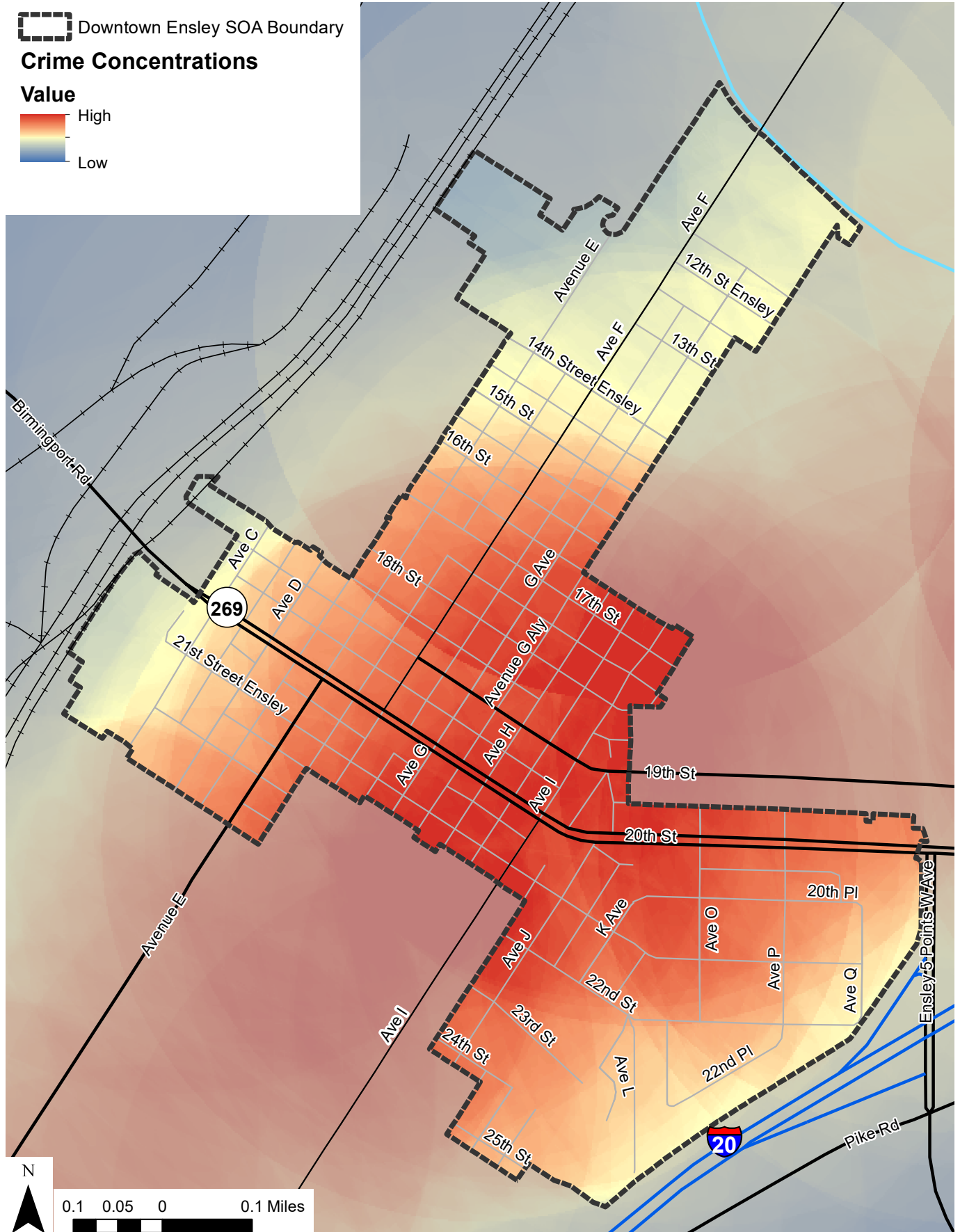
Action 1

Encourage facade improvements for commercial buildings with a tax abatement program.

By promising a tax abatement for only the improved value of the property for a certain number of years, the City could encourage business owners to liven up their facades, especially in the Downtown Ensley Strategic Opportunity Area.

In the past, the City offered façade and storefront improvement rebates up to 20% of costs through the Commercial Revitalization Program. However, over the years, the program’s funding has decreased. Instead of reviving the Commercial Revitalization program, this tax abatement program could provide a cheaper alternative.

FIGURE 3.3: Downtown Ensley Crime Concentration Map





Action 2

Continue working with REV Birmingham to create pop-up events and make temporary streetscape improvements in commercial areas.

Pop-ups are temporary projects that have an overall objective of neighborhood revitalization. Pop-ups allow citizens to work together to make small thoughtful changes to improve their community and sense of place. They can come in many shapes and sizes ranging from multi-day festivals, to small-scale art, to temporary storefronts.

REV Birmingham has held small and large-scale events to enliven underperforming commercial areas through entertainment and improvements. For example, the nonprofit has done great work in the Ensley community with events such as: Ensley Eats, Art on the Block, Shop Small, and Ensley Jazz House. Other pop-up events include:

- ✦ Temporarily converting vacant storefronts into spaces for emerging businesses to convey vibrancy
- ✦ Temporarily closing a street for a block party, festivals, and other activities
- ✦ Transforming unused on-street parking into platforms for dining areas, vegetation, or displays
- ✦ Organizing community volunteers to clean up sidewalks and landscape elements, paint building facades, and make minor repairs to signs and entrances



STRATEGY

SUPPORT NEW AND QUALITY HOUSING OPTIONS AND HOMEOWNERSHIP THROUGH POLICIES, PROGRAMS, AND PARTNERSHIPS.

The Ensley community faces several challenges regarding housing – it’s old, dilapidated, vacant, and often an owner cannot be identified. In fact, 76% of Ensley’s housing units were built prior to 1970 and 49% of the population spends one-third or more of their income on housing. Moreover, the median home value in Ensley is a mere \$84,372 (2015) compared to Birmingham’s average \$87,100 (2016). Even worse, the average cost of construction plus land for a new 3 bedroom, 2 bath, 1,400 SQFT home in Ensley is approximately \$150,000, but the market rate for the home is only \$75,000. There is no financial incentive for developers to build homes within Ensley, unless a subsidy from the government or some other entity is found. For this reason, the plan recommends that the City of Birmingham partner with developers, nonprofits and other organizations to construct quality housing options within the Ensley community.



Action 1

Provide incentives to promote affordable housing options.

- ✦ **Low Income Tax Credits:** Provides housing to households at or below 60% of median income. Allows for allocation of affordable units within a development/ building and requires that these units be kept affordable for 15 years to receive 10 years of tax credit.
- ✦ **New Market Tax Credit:** Assist small developers and building owners by allowing credits to be sold (or syndicated) to investors who can use them. This also helps larger developers by allowing them to use the credits directly. The loan aids developers and private owners with bridging the gap

between cost of construction and lease rates available to support the construction.

- ✦ **Innovative Funding Source:** The City could partner with banks that need to meet Community Reinvestment Act obligations in forming a local Community Development Financial Institution. The City could leverage this partnership to offer funding outside of the regular market rate appraisal process to non-profits, private housing developers and public agencies.
- ✦ **Parking Reduction for Attached Units and Priority Building Permit Processing:** This would apply to developments that dedicate at least 15% or 20% of units to affordable housing.
- ✦ **Inclusionary Housing Ordinance:** The ordinance would provide bonuses for affordable housing as well as housing for disabled individuals. Create a program, entity, or partnership to oversee its compliance.

In addition to the aforementioned incentives, the City could also market the following state programs to residents through the City's website:

- ✦ **Step Up Mortgage Program:** Started in 2000, the program assists homeowners with meeting costs for down payment, closing costs and prepaid items. AHFA offers down payment assistance in the form of 10 year second mortgages, and 30-year fixed rate first mortgages for households earning \$97,300 or less.
- ✦ **Mortgage Credit Certificates:** Can be paired with Step Up program funds. Provides a tax credit to reduce federal taxes for qualified homebuyers by a percentage of the annual mortgage paid per year. Range of 20% to 50% Mortgage Credit Certificates based on Income.

- ✦ **The Alabama Housing Trust Fund:** Provides housing for individuals and families below 60% Area Median Income. The committee will be housed within the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs. The goals of the trust fund include: flexible source of funding for affordable housing, achieve economic stability, revitalize blighted neighborhoods, economic growth, and add to the supply of affordable homes in both rural and urban areas.



Action 2

Partner with nonprofits for rent-to-own housing programs.

A rent-to-own housing agreement allows a buyer to pay monthly rent for a set amount of years with an option to purchase the house while renting it. This arrangement provides time for buyers to improve their credit score, save up for a down payment, and receive financial education. Communities can benefit from these arrangements because they create homeowners out of renters, and homeowners are usually more motivated in maintaining their property and engaging in the community. The properties used for the programs may be owned by a nonprofit, a community land trust, a private developer, or a homeowner interested in selling.

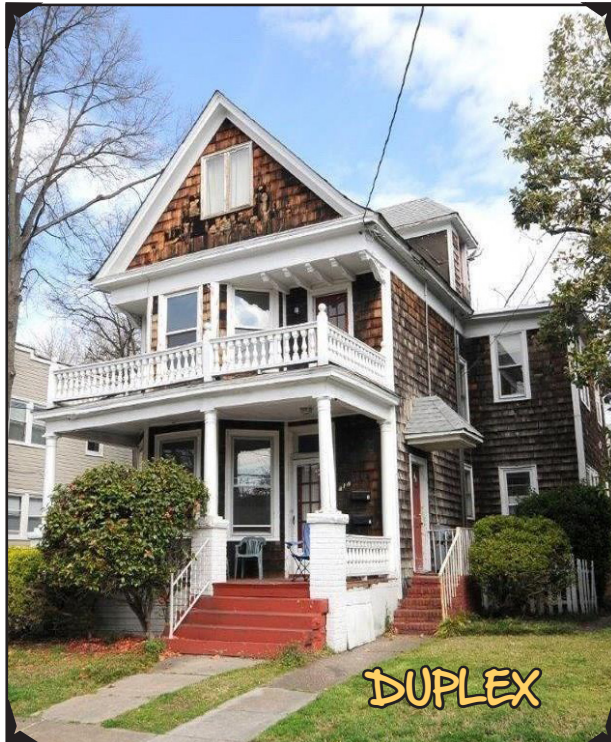
Several nonprofits in Birmingham are already engaging in rental assistance, rent-to-own programs, and financial education. The City should connect and partner with these nonprofits to assist them and possibly expand any rental assistance programs to rent-to-own programs. Through partnering with these organizations, the City would also have more awareness of these programs in case any problems arise.



Action 3

Collaborate with Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) to increase access to capital for homebuyers and developers.

As a specialized financial institution that works in areas which are underserved by traditional financial institutions, CDFIs provide affordable home mortgage loans and home improvement loans for low-income and first-time home buyers. CDFIs also offer affordable housing loans for developers and provide technical assistance and education for first time home buyers. At the time of this document’s publication, there were only two certified CDFIs in Birmingham: Venture South and NRS Community Development Federal Credit Union. The City and community leaders should work with Venture South and NRS Community Development Federal Credit Union to increase access to capital for home buyers and developers.



Action 4

Work with HABD, private developers, nonprofits and other organizations to infill single and multi-family housing on underutilized properties.

Development should be concentrated in Strategic Opportunity Areas designated for residential medium density. Housing types such as single family detached houses, duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes should be encouraged to allow for diverse family sizes, ages and income levels. Cottage developments - clusters of six to twelve homes on a single site ranging from 768 to 998 square feet – should also be encouraged. Cottages could serve as an affordable housing alternative for families and individuals, such as Baby Boomers, looking to downsize. Single family cottage developments were added to the City’s Zoning Ordinance in 2015 as part of a rewrite of the document. These types of residential developments are permitted in the following zoning districts D-4, R-4A, D-6, MU-L and MU-M. For additional information please review the single-family cottage development standards that can be found in Chapter 3 of the current Birmingham Zoning Ordinance. See **Figure 3.1** for areas to target for infill housing in the Downtown Ensley SOA.





CASE STUDY: BEAT ENSLEY

Founded in 1991, the Bethel Ensley Action Task Force (BEAT) empowers local residents to transform their community through healthy living, affordable homes, and engaging community spaces. Originally focused on the blighted area immediately surrounding Bethel A.M.E Church, BEAT has grown into a catalyst for revitalization throughout the Greater Ensley area. In the past several years, BEAT has:

- Built 51 units of new, high-quality affordable homes and rental options, including 33 single-family homes and 9 duplexes / 18 units, with another 12 in progress;
- Developed a neighborhood park with playground, basketball courts, cookout and reception areas and green spaces;
- Opened a new community center adjacent to Bethel A.M.E. Church;
- Replaced blocks of dilapidated shotgun homes, empty burned-out lots and dirt roads; and
- Invested over \$2 million in infrastructure upgrades, including newly paved streets, sewers and drainage systems, street lights, sidewalks and curbs.

BEAT accepts no public funds for maintenance of its public park, community center, landscaping, or affordable housing units. Rather, maintenance is funded entirely by revenues generated by its affordable rental homes. These revenues are therefore redirected back into the community, creating a permanent and self-sufficient financial basis for continued community renewal.

The Strategic Opportunity Areas (SOAs) outlined in this Framework Plan highlight specific locations ripe for investment by community partners such as BEAT. As the Pratt City SOA contains the core of the area destroyed by the 2011 tornado, it possesses abundant properties suitable for additional affordable homes, particularly at the intersection of Hibernian Street and Dugan Avenue. BEAT, which has primarily focused its efforts in the Ensley community, could become a catalyst for bringing residents back to the heart of Pratt as well.

In Ensley, the Strategic Opportunity Area encompasses the downtown core, Tuxedo Junction, and the Avenue E corridor – BEAT's traditional area of focus. There remain many opportunities to attract residents back to Ensley with affordable homes and rental units, opportunities in which BEAT can continue to play a leading role.

For more information on BEAT affordable housing, please visit their [website](#).



ENSLEY JUNCTION

Bethel Ensley Action Task Force (“BEAT,” see page 55) has partnered with the City of Birmingham, local businesses and foundations, and thousands of volunteers to create Ensley Junction, a comprehensive revitalization initiative in the heart of the Ensley Strategic Opportunity Area (SOA). Centered on the 1700 block between Avenues E and F, Ensley Junction can reignite investment in downtown. The project will replace several blocks of urban blight with a dynamic park surrounded by new commercial space, affordable housing, educational and health facilities serving the local community, as well as an entrepreneurial / small business center. Ensley Junction will become a cornerstone of the community’s rebirth.



The project will consist of three core components. First, a dynamic fountain park, designed by internationally-renowned landscape architect Walter Hood, will occupy a full city block in the heart of the development. Designed through public input and for public use, the park will feature green spaces, interactive water fountains, a concert area, walking paths and other features requested by the community. The park will become the centerpiece of the project, and a true destination for western Birmingham.

Second, a new three-story mixed-use building known as Ensley Junction Flats will overlook the park. The Flats will bring to downtown Ensley 48 new affordable residential units, over 16,000 square feet of retail space, including a new bank branch, a pre-Kindergarten provider and a K-12 after-school program.

Finally, the vacant 24,000 square foot Western Health Center will be completely renovated. On the first floor, BEAT will recruit a quality healthcare provider to offer general health and dental services for the community. On the second floor, a new entrepreneurial center / business incubator will direct private sector investment into the Ensley community by supporting start-up businesses.

Ensley Junction is estimated to create or relocate over 140 permanent jobs to downtown Ensley. Its three-legged approach will bring a financially-sustainable center of activity to the heart of the community. With nearly 30,000 residents within a five-minute drive of the new center, Ensley Junction will catalyze the community’s resurgence as a regional destination. The project will be instrumental in the development of the Ensley SOA. For more information on Ensley Junction, please visit their [website](#).



GREEN SYSTEMS

A STRATEGY

EXPAND RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR RESIDENTS.

🔧 Action 1

Create a pedestrian green space in Downtown Ensley.

There are several plans that call for a pedestrian green space in Downtown Ensley. For example, the Bethel-Ensley Action Task, Inc (BEAT)'s plan for Ensley Junction, recommends a dynamic active park. The park would occupy a full city block in Downtown Ensley and be a destination for western Birmingham. BEAT believes that residents within a 5-mile radius would use the park on a regular basis, and residents outside of this radius would drive to attend special programs and events. Nearly 30,000 people live within 5 miles of the park. Key elements in the park would include:

- ✖ Green spaces designed for educational, recreational and fitness activities
- ✖ Special features for seniors and senior activities
- ✖ Walking and running path with exercise stations
- ✖ Playground in support of pre-K/youth
- ✖ Interactive recreation fountains
- ✖ Concert/movie reception area
- ✖ Food trucks and kiosks for food retail

While the City of Birmingham would own the park, it would be managed by

BEAT through the creation of a Park Conservancy nonprofit. This scenario is similar to how Railroad Park is managed, but without the need for ongoing City funding as the budget needed for park maintenance/landscaping would be generated from rents in Ensley Junction Flats.

B STRATEGY

ENSURE PARKS AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES ARE SAFE AND WELL-MAINTAINED.

🔧 Action 1

Update and maintain Ensley Park.

According to residents, Ensley Park, located on the southeastern edge of the SOA, needs more funding allocated for continued maintenance. The following projects have a dedicated funding through the Phase II Park Bond. In total, Ensley Park has been allocated \$184,722.00 in funding for renovation.

- ✖ Provide 2 sets of accessible bleachers
- ✖ Replace tennis courts
- ✖ Address drainage between tennis and basketball courts
- ✖ Provide lighting upgrades between tennis and basketball courts

🔧 Action 2

Update and maintain McAlpine Park.

Located on the northeastern edge of the Downtown Ensley SOA, the following projects have dedicated funding through the Phase II Park Bond. In total, McAlpine Park has been allocated \$27,222.00 in funding for renovation.

- ✖ Provide 2 sets of accessible bleachers.

While the above projects have been funded, more could be done to maintain McAlpine Park. Throughout the public involvement phase of this project and the Freshwater Land Trust Park Assessment (2015), the following maintenance and improvement projects were recommended for McAlpine Park.

- ✖ Replace air-conditioning unit in the recreation center
- ✖ Provide free WIFI for residents to use
- ✖ Increase landscaping in and around park area
- ✖ Update the bathrooms
- ✖ Construct a large pavilion for residents to use
- ✖ Provide picnic area
- ✖ Provide more trash cans



Action 2

Continue working with the Village Creek Human and Environmental Justice Society, Inc. to increase access to recreational facilities for residents.

The Village Creek Human and Environmental Justice Society (VSC) was founded in 1983 by Dr. Mable B. Anderson, and is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit group, whose goal is to restore water quality of Village Creek to improve residents', business owners', and property owners' quality of life. The Village Creek Society has several initiatives related to recreation in the Pratt and Ensley communities, including:

- ✖ **The Village Creek Trail** travels along the banks of Village Creek, and goes through the following communities: Ensley, Pratt, North Birmingham, Northside, East Birmingham, East Lake, and Roebuck South- East Lake. In total, the proposed trail is 24 miles.

- ✖ **Proposed MORO Park (Village Creek Park):** Located between McAlpine Park and Tuxedo Park, the proposed MORO park will extend along Village Creek through the Ensley and Pratt Communities. The overall project area consists of 76 acres, 65 of which are owned by the City of Birmingham. Amenities proposed for the park include a 3.6- acre pond, outdoor classrooms, amphitheater, children's playgrounds, community gardens, soccer fields, baseball fields, tennis courts, interpretive nature trails, a concession building, and a park maintenance building. The park is intended to serve as a venue for sports, education, and entertainment.



STRATEGY

UTILIZING LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT AND BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES, RETROFIT EXISTING RIGHTS – OF – WAY TO REDUCE STORMWATER RUNOFF.



Action 1

Install green systems on blighted or vacant properties to reduce stormwater runoff and flooding in flood prone areas.

Green system projects that absorb and retain stormwater should be installed on tax-delinquent and publicly owned properties in the Downtown Ensley SOA to reduce stormwater runoff and alleviate flooding (for specific locations see **Figure 3.5**). Properties in more environmentally sensitive areas and those with the greatest possible impact should be prioritized. These green system projects could be installed by the City, neighborhood associations, and private individuals.

FIGURE 3.4: Downtown Ensley Green Systems Map

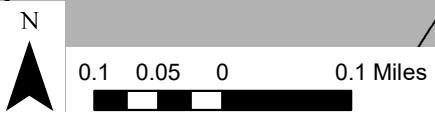
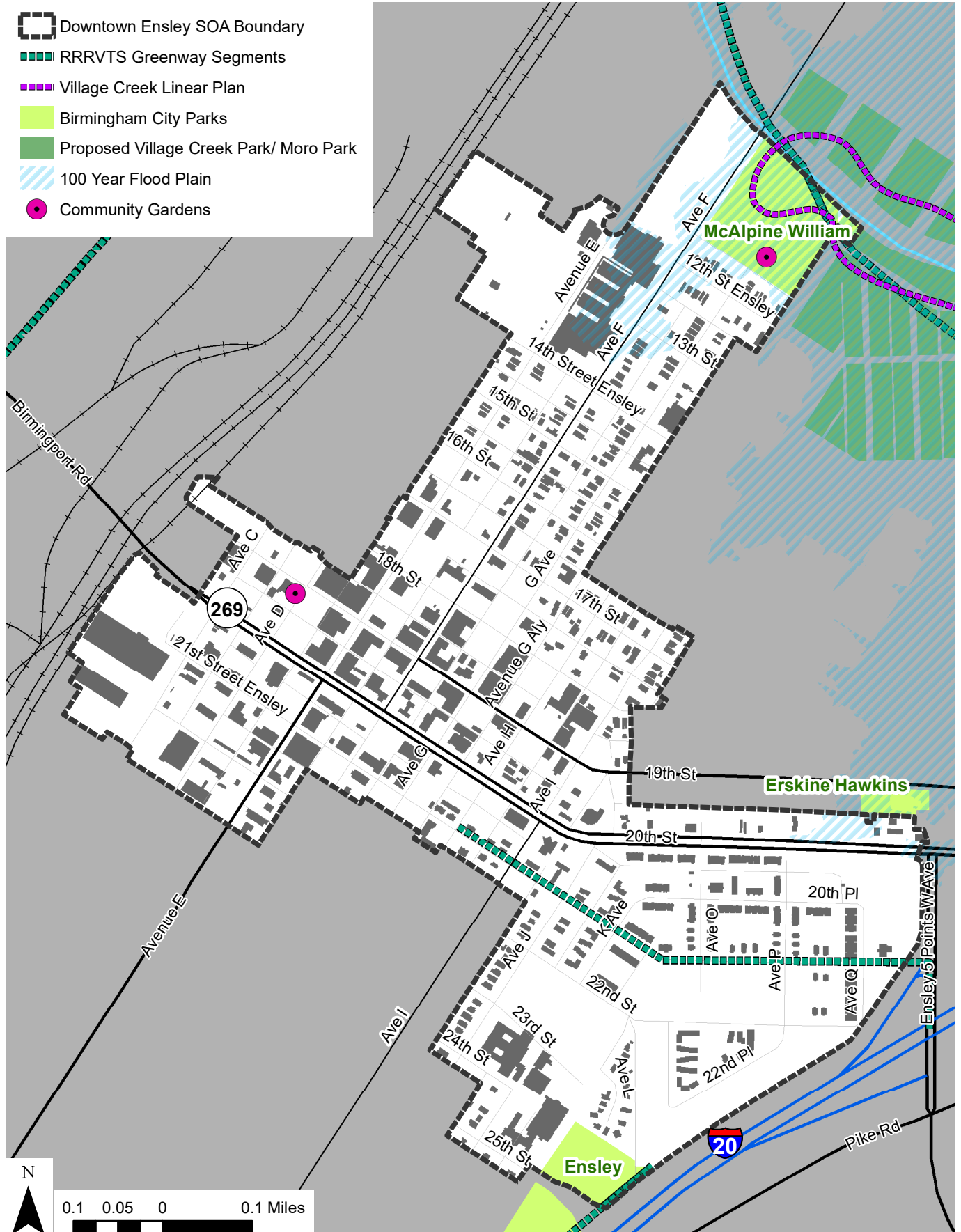
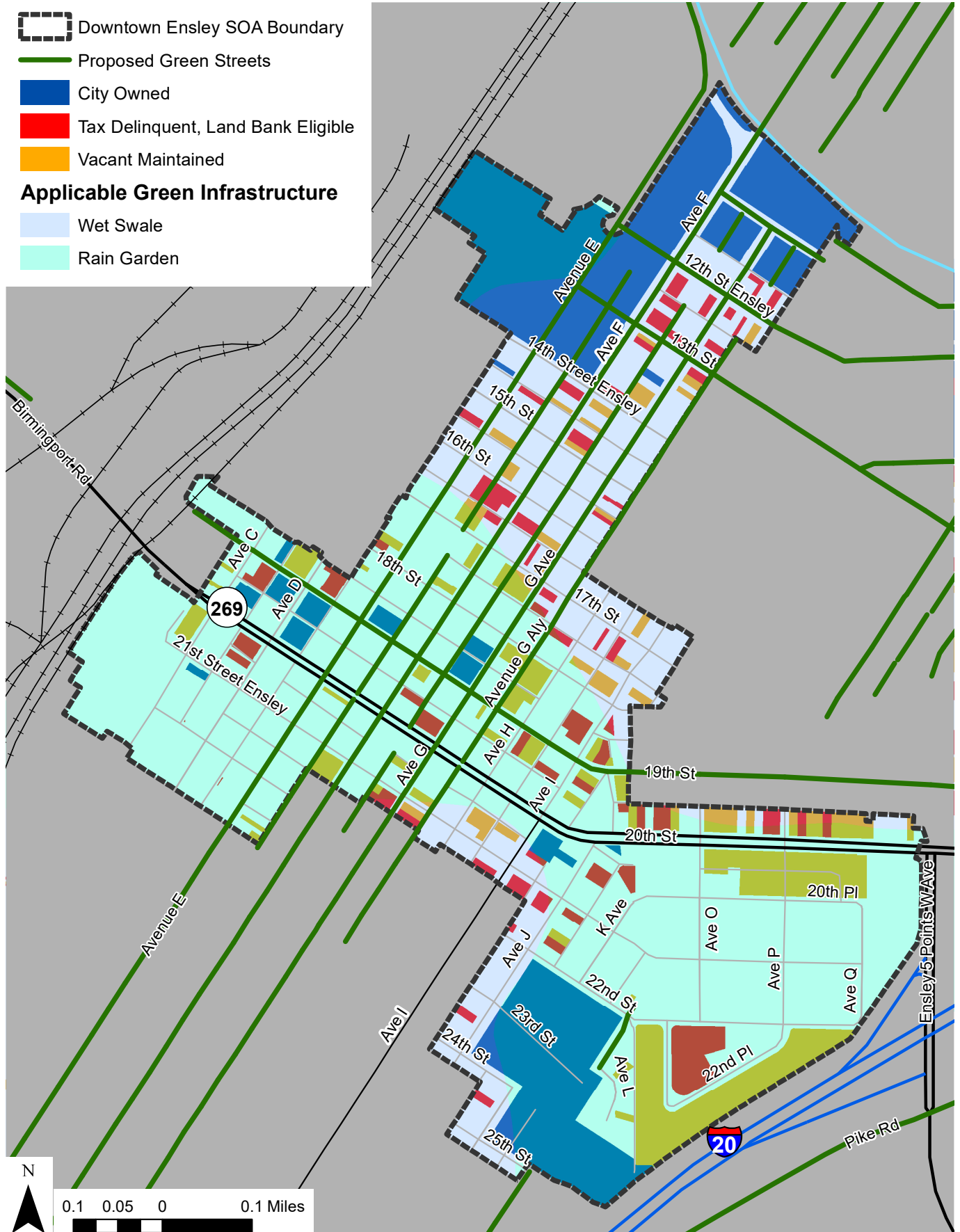


FIGURE 3.5: Downtown Ensley Green Infrastructure Map





Action 2

Develop a system of green streets.

A green street is a natural stormwater management approach that uses plants and soil to slow, filter and cleanse stormwater from streets. Traditional stormwater management directs runoff into pipes. A green street manages stormwater at its source, where rain falls. This infrastructure is recommended by the **Comprehensive Plan (13.13)** to assist the City's stormwater management system. Some of the benefits of green streets include:

- ✘ Protect water quality in rivers and streams by removing up to 90% of pollutants.
- ✘ Replenish groundwater supplies, absorb carbon, and improve air quality and neighborhood aesthetics.
- ✘ Provide green connections between parks and open space.
- ✘ Improve pedestrian and bicycle safety by calming traffic.
- ✘ Reduce peak stormwater flows and overflows that can lead to sanitary sewer backups, as well as other public health concerns.

The following streets have been identified for green street infrastructure (see **Figure 3.5**):

- ✘ 11th Street
- ✘ 12th Street
- ✘ 13th Street
- ✘ 19th Street Ensley
- ✘ Avenue E
- ✘ Avenue F
- ✘ Avenue G



Action 3

Implement priority projects from the Village Creek Watershed Management Master Plan.

The Village Creek Watershed Management Plan identifies 2 priority projects that are just outside the boundary of the Downtown Ensley SOA, the Village Creek Park and Stream Channel Improvements and the Ensley Works Redevelopment Initiative. It is important to note that these are both long term visionary projects and subject to funding.

- ✘ **Village Creek Park and Stream Channel Improvements:** Village Creek Park, at the same location as MORO park mentioned earlier in this plan, extends between Avenue F and Avenue V through South Pratt and Ensley and includes the redevelopment of 42 acres of residential property. The plan includes modifications for a high flow channel. The proposed park is programed to include a 3.6-acre pond that will be used to treat storm water, outdoor classrooms, a lake, amphitheater, children's playground, community gardens, pecan harvesting grove, baseball & softball fields, soccer fields, tennis courts, basketball courts, interpretive/nature trails, biking and walking trails, parking areas, restrooms, and a concession building.
- ✘ **Ensley Works Redevelopment Initiative:** Constructed in 1888, Ensley Works, an abandoned steel mill, is owned by U.S. Steel's USS Real Estate division, and occupies 600 acres in the Ensley Community. Presently the site is dominated by smoke stacks, a hot metal mixer, and a few brick structures from the steel mill. Kudzu, an invasive plant, has taken over the sites ponds and coal pits, and remains a danger to trespassers. Over the

years, several planning efforts have taken place to transform the site into a mixed use, transit oriented, activity center. However, before the site can be reimagined into a vibrant city district, several City departments and funding must come together. In the meantime, bioretention cells throughout the site have been recommended in order to retain contaminated runoff, and improve Village Creek’s overall water quality.



Action 1

Construct new storm shelters within a 5-minute walk of residents.

Four storm shelters have been proposed for the Ensley Community, 3 of which are inside the Downtown Ensley SOA. The first is located at Hope IV Tuxedo (1401 20th Street). The second shelter has been proposed at Ensley Park, located at 2700 Avenue L. The third and fourth storm shelters have been proposed at Bethel AME Church (1524 Avenue D) and Abyssinia Church (2301 Avenue E). See Figure 3.6 for proposed storm shelter locations.

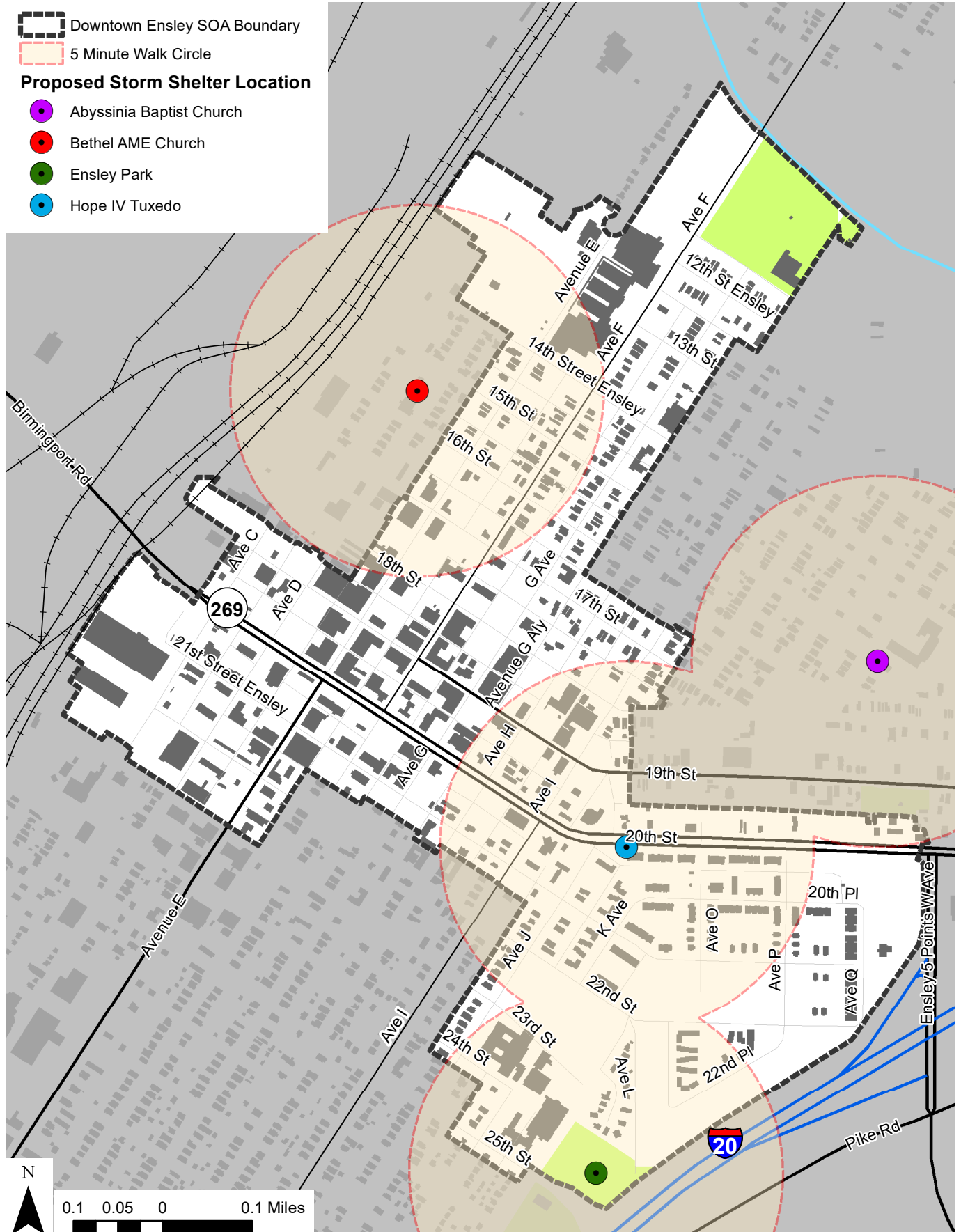


STRATEGY

UTILIZING LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT AND BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES, RETROFIT EXISTING RIGHTS -OF- WAY TO REDUCE STORMWATER RUNOFF.



FIGURE 3.6: Downtown Ensley Proposed Storm Shelters Map



ECONOMIC VITALITY

A STRATEGY

UTILIZE A VARIETY OF INCENTIVE PROGRAMS AND DEVELOPMENT TOOLS TO ENCOURAGE REINVESTMENT IN THE DOWNTOWN ENSLEY STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY AREA.

Wrenches icon Action 1

Assist local businesses, developers, and other entrepreneurs with gap financing.

The City, working in collaboration with local businesses, developers, and other entrepreneurs, should work to secure the following programs, grants and other funding resources:

- ✦ **U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) 504 Program:** Assists small businesses with the acquisition, construction, expansion, and renovation of land and buildings through long-term, fixed asset financing.
- ✦ **Economic Development Agency Revolving Loan Fund Program (EDA RLF):** Provides businesses within the City of Birmingham with direct loans for acquisition of land, buildings, and equipment.
- ✦ **Revolving Loan Fund Program (RLF):** The Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham operates a revolving loan fund (RLF) that provides supplemental financing for expanding and new businesses located in Jefferson County, when projects will result in the creation of new permanent jobs.

RLF funds may be used in conjunction with SBA 504 and 7(a) guarantees, commercial loans, mortgage loans and other public sector revolving loans. Visit their [website](#) for more information.

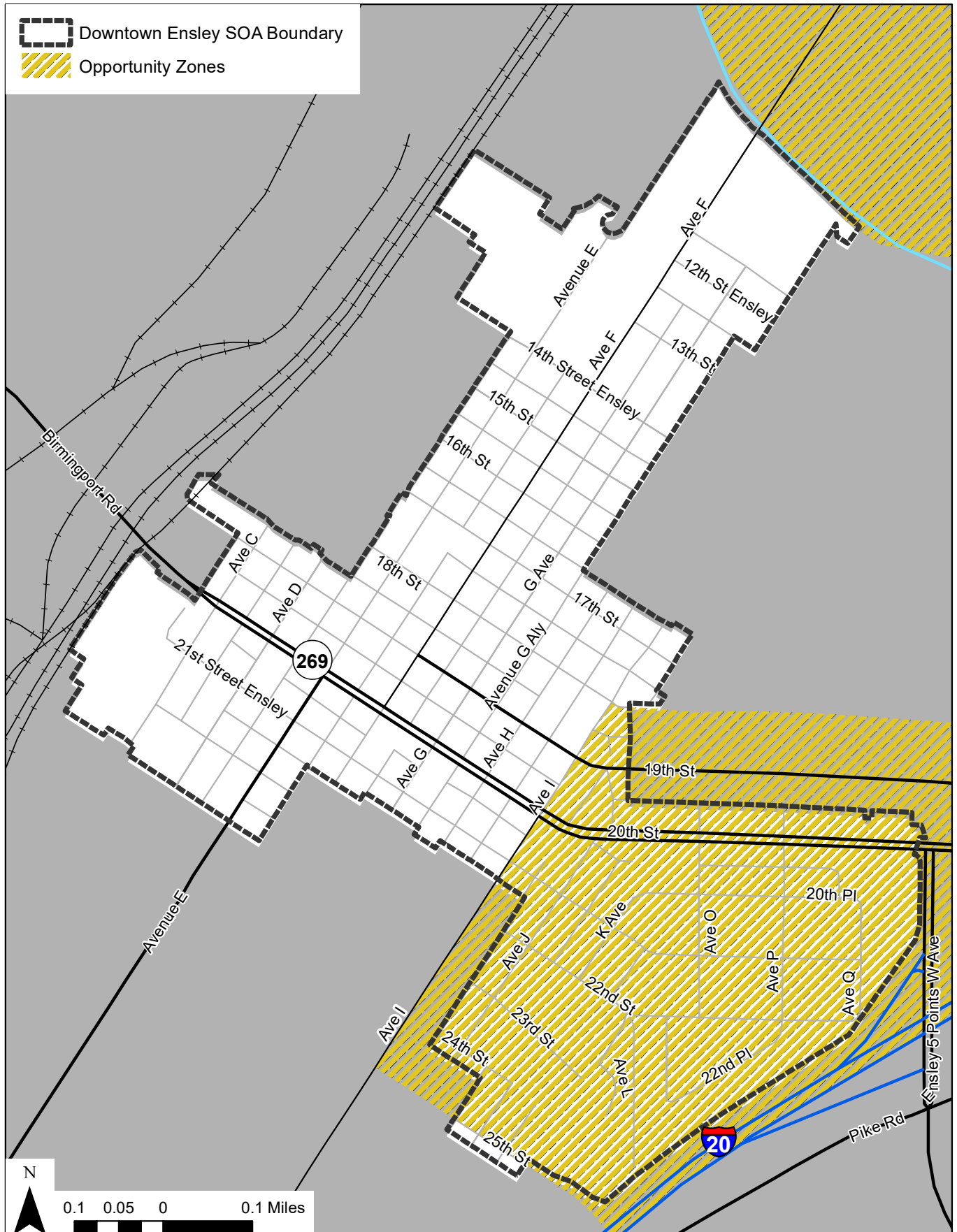
- ✦ **Revolving Loan Fund: Microlending:** The Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham operates a Microlending program that provides small businesses with affordable loans of \$35,000, or less for working capital or the acquisition of materials, supplies, furniture, fixtures, or equipment. Terms vary based on the project. Visit their [website](#) for more information.
- ✦ **HUD’s Section 108 Loan Guarantee Program:** Allows communities to issue funds guaranteed by CDBG towards large-scale economic revitalization projects in neighborhoods that lack private investment.
- ✦ **New Market Tax Credits:** Assists small developers and building owners by allowing credits to be sold (or syndicated) to investors who can use them. This also helps larger developers by allowing them to use the credits directly. Loans aid developers and private owners with bridging the gap between cost of construction and the lease rates available to support the construction.

Wrenches icon Action 2

Encourage new investment within Opportunity Zones.

Opportunity Zones were added to the tax code by the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act in December 2017. They are an economic development tool designed to spur economic development and job creation in distressed communities. The program offers provides tax benefits to investors, by enabling investors to defer tax on any prior gains until the investment is sold, exchanged, or until December 31, 2026 (whichever comes first) , so long as the gain is reinvested in a Qualified

FIGURE 3.7: Downtown Ensley Opportunity Zones Map



Opportunity Fund. Moreover, if the investor holds the investment within the Opportunity Fund for at least 10 years, the investor would be eligible for an increase in basis equal to the fair market value of the investment on the date that the investment is sold or exchanged. See **Figure 3.7** for the Opportunity Zones in the Ensley SOA.



Action 3

Continue to promote Downtown Ensley status as a Commercial Revitalization District.

The City of Birmingham’s commercial revitalization districts have unique design guidelines. Like local historic districts, new construction and exterior renovations must be brought before the Design Review Committee for approval.



STRATEGY

ENCOURAGE RETAIL DEVELOPMENT THAT IS SUITABLE FOR THE PRATT CITY STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY AREA.



Action 1

Recruit businesses based on the potential identified in the market analysis.

A number of retail and business opportunities were identified in the market analysis through an assessment of spending potential and consumer spending patterns. The two communities possess several opportunities in terms of additional retail demand in certain sectors. For the Ensley community, there is greater demand versus supply in terms of retail spending in the following sectors; General Merchandise Stores, Full Service and Limited Service Restaurants, and Auto Parts Stores. There is also a

significant leakage of over \$3 million (\$3,675,137) in terms of Grocery Store activity within the Pratt Ensley Area. The leakage within the grocery store sector affirms the critical need for a grocery store within the Downtown Ensley Strategic Opportunity Area.

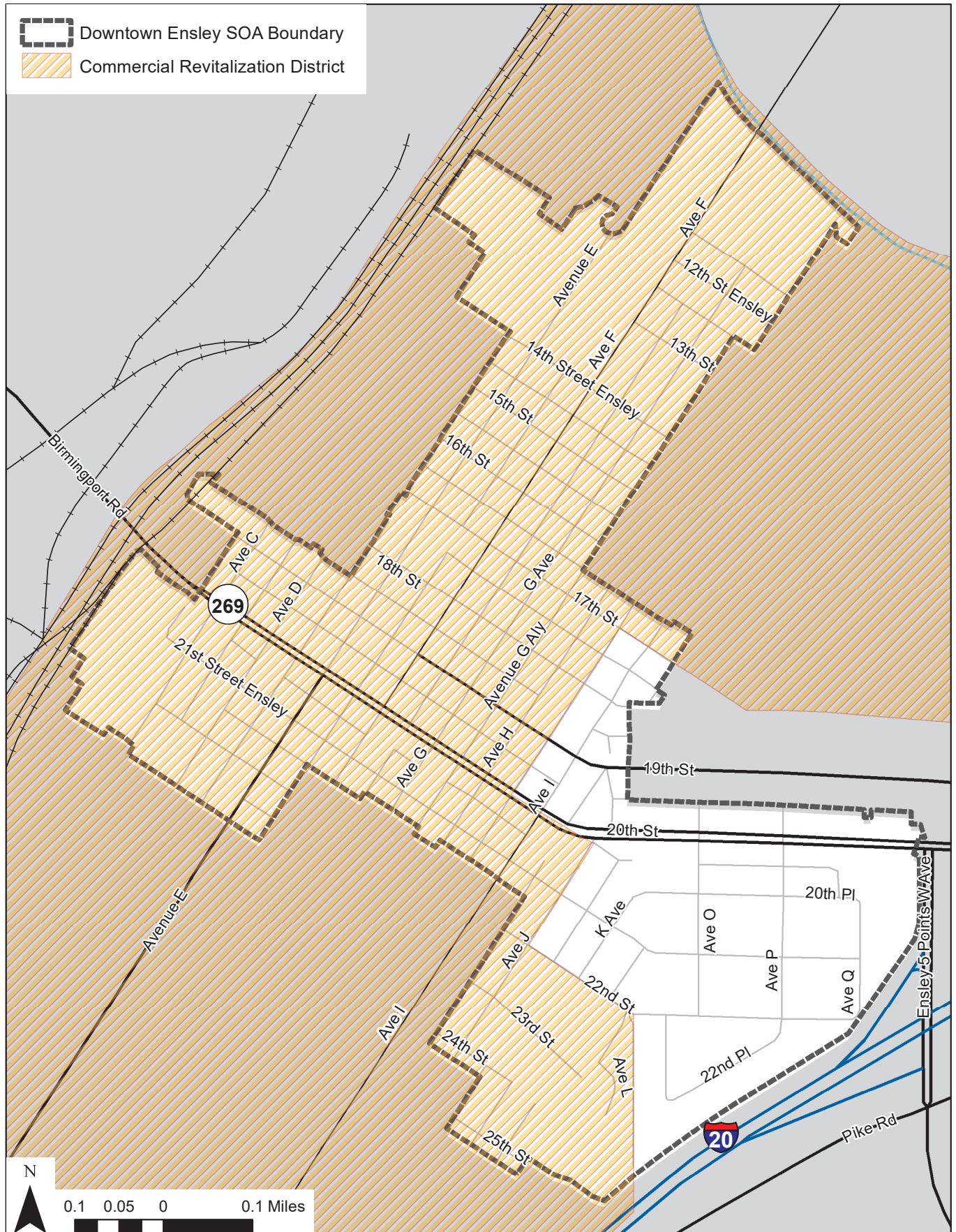
The Market Analysis recommends the following opportunity sites in the Downtown Ensley Strategic Opportunity Area:



20th Street Ensley Historic Commercial District:

Once a local center of commercial strength, the Ensley Commercial District has witnessed a significant decline in community activity. Over the decades, shifting labor trends, residential preferences, and an aging housing stock have contributed to a decrease in land values, incomes, and property investment in Ensley. Consequently, the once thriving commercial district has become largely vacant. Though the Ensley Commercial District was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2010, the financial incentives made available from this designation have been slow to bolster commercial investment. Primarily encompassing blocks between Avenues C and F and 18th and 21st Streets Ensley, the District consists of approximately 92 structures (42 dilapidated/deteriorated), 31 tax delinquent properties (15 Land Bank Qualifying), and 79 businesses employing an estimated 376 workers. Area revitalization can be approached through both small and large redevelopment initiatives with the guidance of an established redevelopment authority. It is recommended that the City conduct a detailed block-by-block assessment of each property/lot/structure in order to inventory the complete condition of each property and the extent of any structural and/or environmental deficiencies. A redevelopment plan should include

FIGURE 3.8: Downtown Ensley Commercial Revitalization Map



mixed land uses, compact and clustered design with an appropriate range of housing choices, a walkable and transit oriented transportation network, and construction standards that complement the existing historic and cultural assets of the area. Residential retention and attraction as well as job creation will be key to successful revitalization efforts. The redevelopment of this area will serve as a significant catalyst for additional reinvestment in the greater Ensley Community, providing a range of new housing options and employment opportunities. Suggested economic development efforts include:

- ✦ A supermarket and pharmacy for area residents would benefit the community and increase corridor activity. A grocery venue would serve as a commercial anchor for broader retail development in the area while providing area residents convenient access to healthy food choices. Many of the area’s existing grocery establishments are limited in terms of fresh food selections. Suggested grocery establishments ideal for the existing market and that operate within smaller construction parameters include Aldi or Walmart Neighborhood Market. Pharmacy recommendations include CVS, Walgreens, or Rite Aid.
- ✦ The Ensley Commercial District is ideal for mixed use redevelopment with retail, office, and residential components. Additional compatible uses include daycare and child educational services, healthcare, civic uses, restaurants, delis, bakeries, sporting goods, and general merchandise stores. The area is ideal for taking advantage of its location along a primary corridor and existing residential concentrations. Working through public and private partnerships, a mixed-use

redevelopment effort will provide a diverse and sustainable environment that can revitalize the community and bring investment into Ensley.



Action 2

Working with Ensley’s Merchant Association, form a subcommittee specifically for the Downtown Ensley Strategic Opportunity Area.



Action 3

Incentivize, recruit, and attract a grocery store within the Downtown Ensley Strategic Opportunity Area.

See **Community Renewal, Strategy B, Action 2, page 50 of the Pratt Ensley Framework Plan.**



STRATEGY

DISPOSE OF OR REUSE PUBLICLY OWNED SITES.



Action 1

Council Elementary School (1400 Avenue M):

This former elementary school once served as a neighborhood focal point. Occupying approximately 3.5 acres, this site is ideal for reuse and can once again serve as a community asset. The site is surrounded by residential with few institutional and commercial uses in the area. A nursing home or assisted living facility will make long term use of the property while providing housing and nursing care to the community’s growing senior population. It may be possible to utilize the existing structure, preserving the visual character and community sentiment for the building. Additionally, a senior care facility would provide employment opportunities to

local residents. The use of government housing assistance funds and public-private partnerships to further assess the viability of a senior care facility should be considered.



Action 2

Ensley High School (2301 Avenue J):

The former Ensley High School location, located adjacent to the Bush Middle School property and near the Tuxedo Terrace residential development, is approximately 10 acres in size. Reuse of this property as a job training center or business incubator would be beneficial to community residents who are interested in owning a small business. It would provide a business and employment catalyst for the community while providing employment opportunities. Partnerships with local colleges, financial institutions, and the business community will help support these efforts. Through the provision of managerial and technical assistance, low rental rates, and shared access to basic office services and equipment, opportunities for local economic development can be encouraged for the Ensley Community. Such a use would also provide a revitalization catalyst for Downtown Ensley.



STRATEGY

MAKE THE DOWNTOWN ENSLEY SOA AREA MORE ATTRACTIVE FOR RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT BY REDUCING BLIGHT AND CRIME.



Action 1

Increase police presence and improve response time.

Improving the overall response times in emergency and criminal situations is vitally important to the general public. With the possibility of both the Police and Fire Headquarters moving to a centrally located area in Downtown Ensley this could have the potential to vastly improve response times for the Pratt and Ensley communities. Additional police presence should be provided for those crime hotspot areas as mentioned in **Community Renewal, Strategy B, Action 1, page 50** of the Framework Plan. Particular areas of concern for Downtown Ensley includes 19th Street and Avenue W.



Action 2

Reduce negative perceptions by working with the local and national media to promote the positive aspects and changes taking place in Downtown Ensley.

Consider working with Ensley Alive in a coordinated effort to promote and highlight community efforts taking place within Ensley and the surrounding area. Ensley Alive, was founded in 2013 and is a group of individuals dedicated to the community's renaissance. The focus of the group is highlighting the spirit and the people of Ensley as it looks to achieve revitalization throughout the community. Revitalization efforts in Downtown Ensley should be highlighted in the years to come as major achievements for the Ensley community.

TRANSPORTATION

A STRATEGY

BUILD A MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION NETWORK THAT PROVES A WIDE RANGE OF TRANSPORTATION CHOICES TO CONNECT THE DOWNTOWN ENSLEY STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY AREA TO THE GREATER BIRMINGHAM AREA.

Wrench Icon Action 1

Implement the 2016 Birmingham Sidewalk Master Plan.

The 2016 Birmingham Sidewalk Master Plan includes a sidewalk inventory

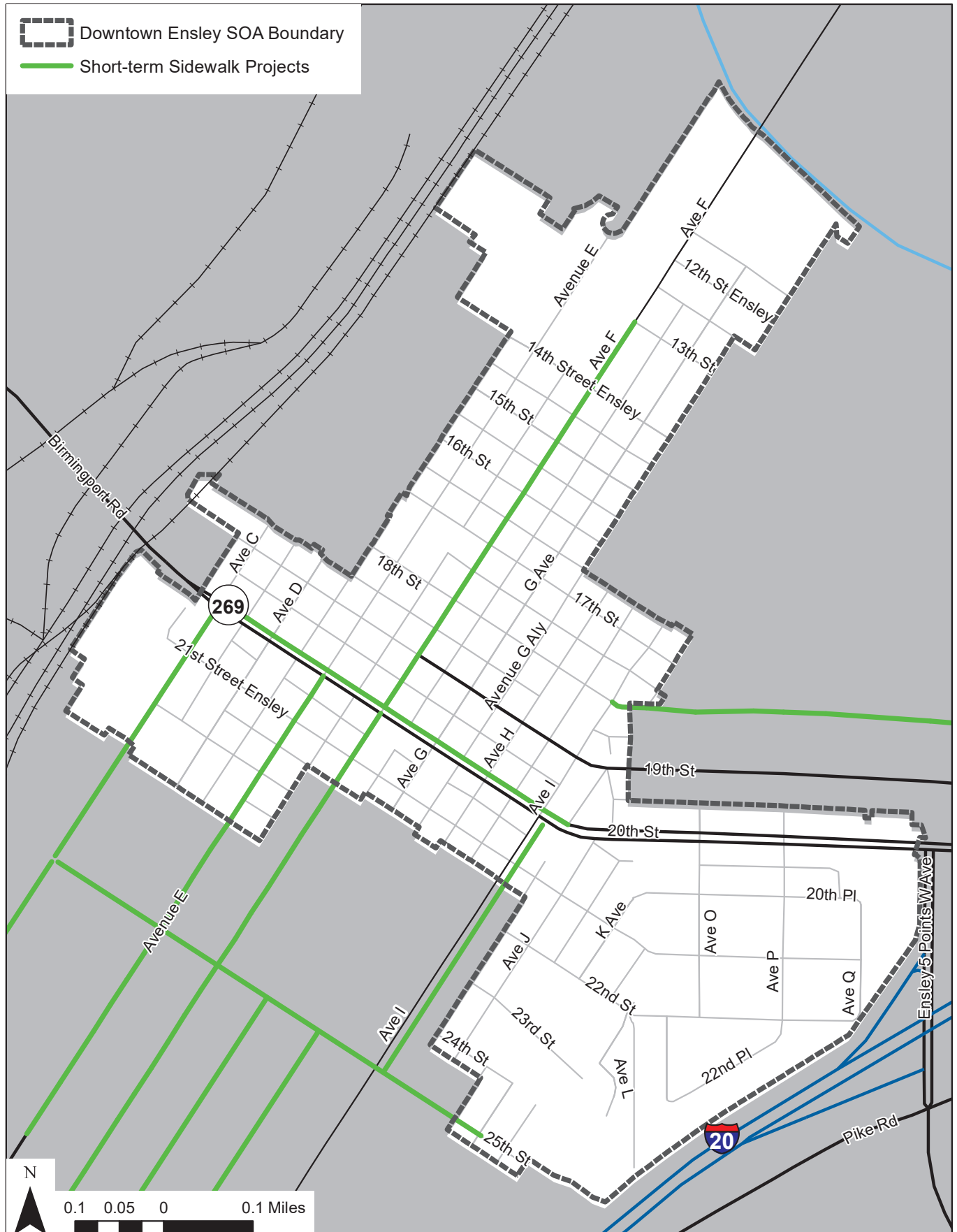
of the entire city, which is useful for understanding the areas of poor sidewalk conditions. The data is used to divide sidewalk priorities into four categories: short-term, mid-term, long-term and no sidewalks recommended. **Table 3.1** lists the recommended short-term (0-5 year) sidewalk construction and repair projects from the Birmingham Sidewalk Master Plan that are in the Downtown Ensley SOA.



TABLE 3.1: Short Term Sidewalk Projects identified in the Birmingham Sidewalk Master Plan

SEGMENT	RECOMMENDATION
Baker Elementary and Bush Middle Schools SRTS Routes	Sidewalk needs repair; located on a transit route; located in an area that is identified as a mixed-use area for future land use planning.
20th Street between Avenue C and Avenue J	Sidewalk needs repair; needs construction of a new sidewalk; part of the proposed Red Rock Ridge and Valley Trail System; located on a transit route; located in an area that is identified as a mixed-use area for future land use planning; located in a medium density residential area.
18th Street between Avenue I and Avenue S	Sidewalk needs repair; needs construction of a new sidewalk; located on a transit route and located in an area that is identified as a mixed-use area for future land use planning.
Avenue F between 13th Street and the 21st Street Alley	Sidewalk needs repair; located in a low density residential area and located near Jackson Olin High School.

FIGURE 3.9: Downtown Ensley Short-term Sidewalk Projects



SIDEWALK SUITABILITY ANALYSIS

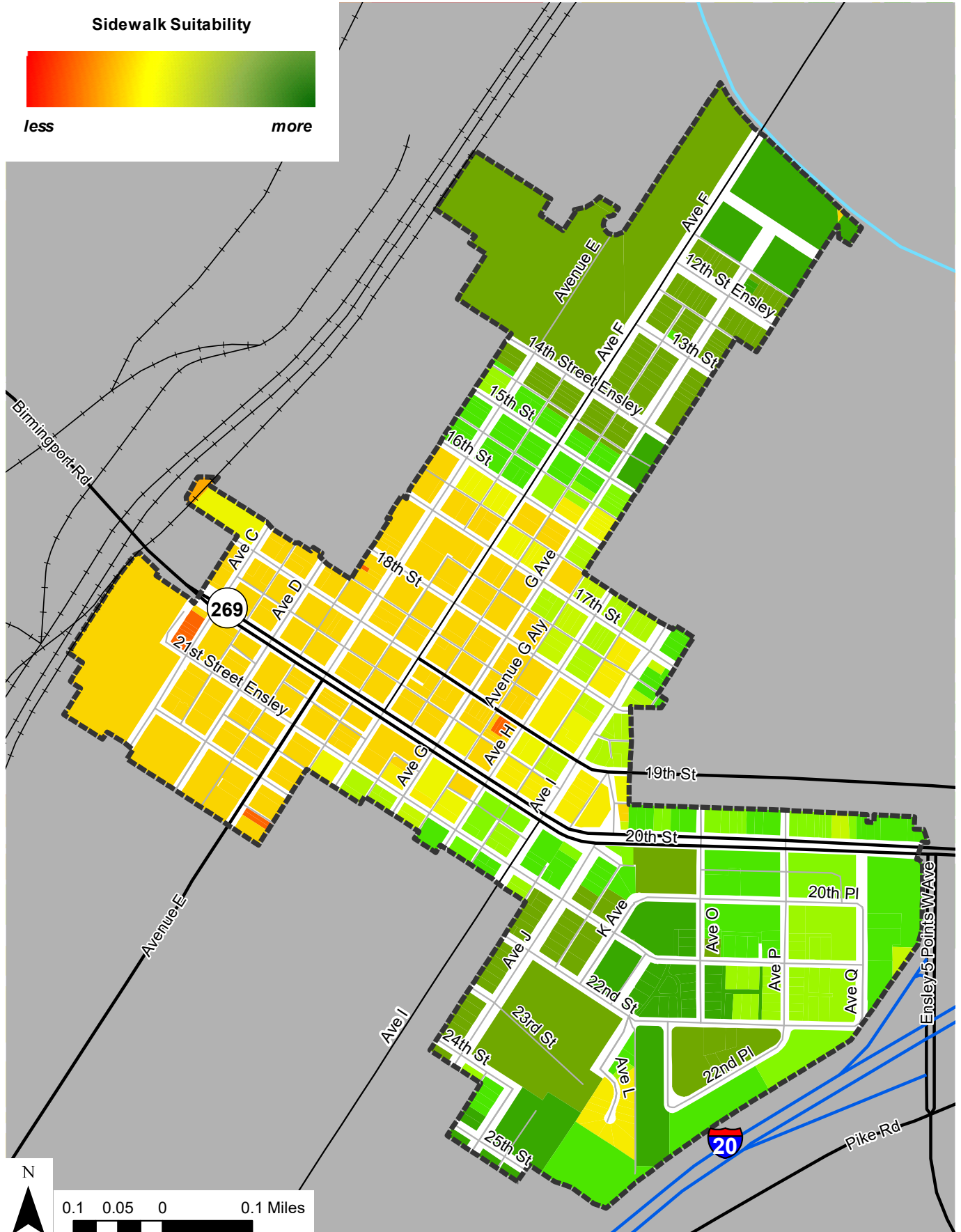
LOCATIONS WITH THE HIGHEST POTENTIAL DEMAND FOR WALKING

Measures of the built environment were used to develop a composite score of the potential demand for walking within the Downtown Ensley SOA. As a different methodology for looking at sidewalk needs, a suitability analysis was developed as part of the Framework Plan process and was used to develop walking demand scores. The suitability analysis normalizes scores (ranging from 0 to 100) for each measure, weights each measure, and then combines them into a composite score. Individual property parcels in Downtown Ensley Area were used as the unit of analysis. The result was a suitability score and ranking of each parcel’s potential demand for sidewalks or walking, relative to every other parcel in the Pratt Ensley Birmingham Area. The scoring criteria for the sidewalk suitability analysis is summarized in **Table 3.2**. Some suitability factors were weighted higher than others.

TABLE 3.2: Sidewalk Suitability Analysis - Scoring Criteria to Determine the Highest Potential Demand for Walking

SUITABILITY FACTORS	DESCRIPTION OF THE SUITABILITY FACTORS	WALKING DEMAND: SUITABILITY WEIGHTING (0 TO 10)
Population Density (based on 2010 Census Block Groups)	The higher the population density of the Block Group that the parcel is contained in, the higher the suitability score.	High (9)
Percent of the Population that is Minority (based on 2010 Census Block Groups)	The higher the percentage minority population of the Block Group that the parcel is contained in, the higher the suitability score.	Medium (6)
Proximity to existing sidewalks	Awards a parcel if it is located within 30 feet of an existing sidewalk.	High (9)
Proximity to a commercial / retail land use	The closer the commercial / retail land use, the higher the suitability score.	Medium (6)
Major Employers (over 250 people) within ¼ mile	Awards a parcel if it is within ¼ mile of a major employer (over 250 people) in the area.	Medium (6)
Public schools within ½ mile	Awards a parcel if it is within ½ mile of a public or private school.	High (9)
Parks within ¼ mile	Awards a parcel if it is within ¼ mile of a park.	High (9)
Recreation center within ¼ mile	Awards a parcel if it is within ¼ mile of a recreation center.	Medium (6)
BJCTA Transit stop within ¼ mile	Awards a parcel if it is within ¼ mile of a transit stop.	High (9)
ZYP Station with ¼ mile	Awards a parcel if it is within ¼ mile of a Zyp Station.	Low (3)
Developed or a vacant parcel	Awards a parcel if it is located on developed land.	Low (3)
Major College or University within ¼ mile	Awards a parcel if it is within ¼ mile of a major college or university.	Low (3)
Proximity to 3 or 4-way intersections (more walkability in these areas)	Awards a parcel if it is located close to a 3-or-4-way intersection.	Medium (6)

FIGURE 3.10: Downtown Ensley Sidewalk Suitability Analysis





Action 2

Build out segments of off-road trails as identified in the Red Rock Ridge and Valley Trail System.

The Red Rock Ridge and Valley Trail System (RRRVTS) is a 750-mile trail master plan for Jefferson County that was completed in 2010 as a joint effort between the Freshwater Land Trust, the Jefferson County Department of Health and the Health Action Partnership. The plan contains six primary trails that often follow the area’s waterways and that could connect the region together. Sidewalks and bike lanes are designed to stretch into communities and neighborhoods and improve access to these main trails. The core elements of the RRRVTS consist of off-road / shared use trails that are designed to accommodate bicyclists, pedestrians and other non-motorized trail users. The off-road trails are intended to be constructed through parks, or along existing linear corridors such as abandoned railroad lines, utility rights-of-way or waterways.

The plan calls for several trails throughout the Downtown Ensley SOA. In addition, public involvement throughout the Framework planning process indicated a high desire for off-road trails to provide additional green space and recreational opportunities for residents. **Table 3.3.**

lists the proposed RRRVTS off-road trail segments that are shown throughout the Downtown Ensley SOA. The network of proposed trails is shown in **Figure 3.11**. As funding, land and rights-of-way become available, it is recommended that the City partner with the Freshwater Land Trust to implement the off-road trail segments in the RRRVTS plan that are proposed throughout the Downtown Ensley SOA.

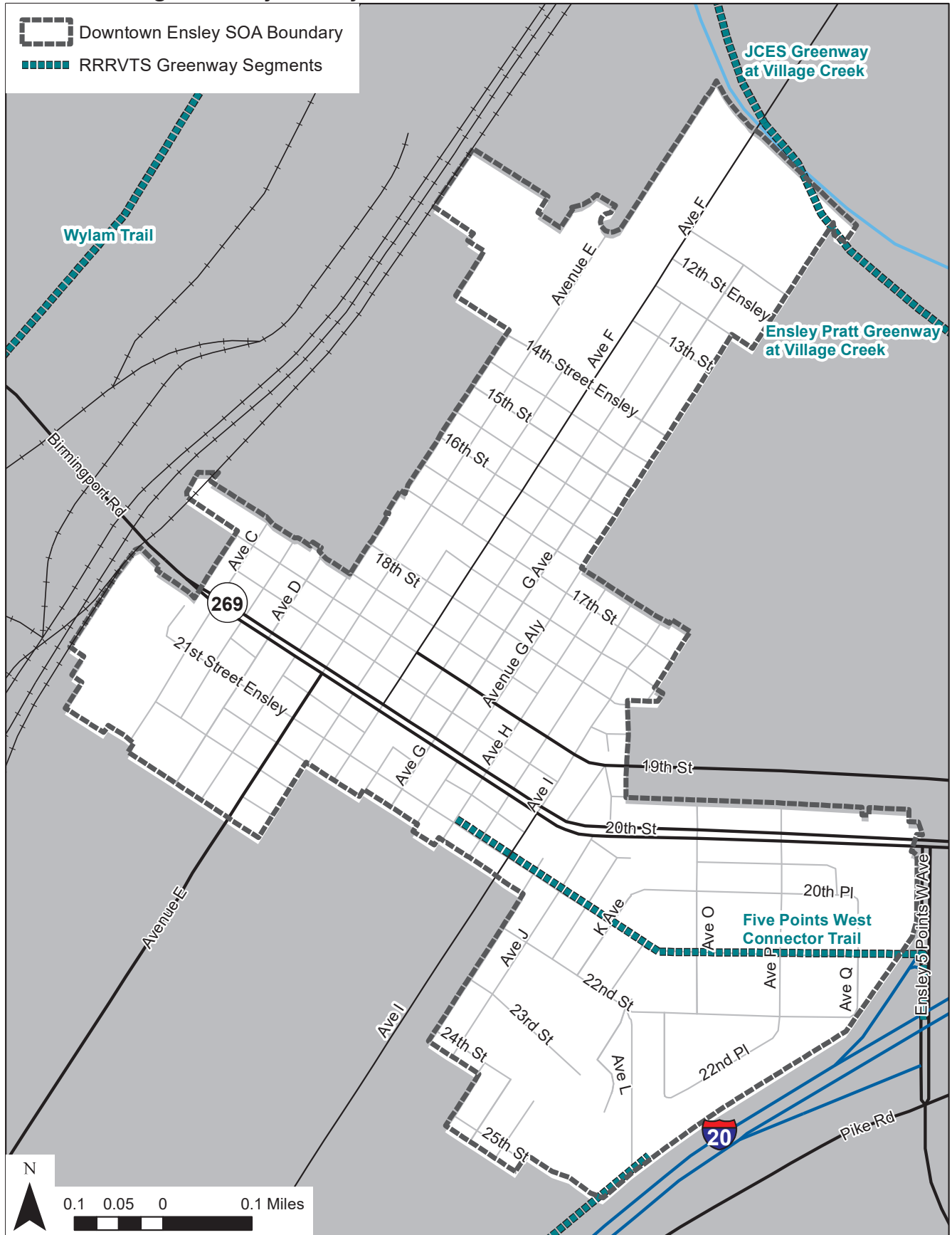


TABLE 3.3: Proposed off Road Trails Segments from the Red Rock Ridge and Valley Trail System

RRRVTS SEGMENT NAME	RRRVTS TRAIL TYPE*	LENGTH (MILES) – WITHIN THE DOWNTOWN ENSLEY SOA
Five Points West Trail	Bike lanes with Sidewalk	0.54
Ensley Pratt Greenway at Village Creek	Shared-Use Greenway	0.07
Ensley Park Trail	Shared-Use Greenway	0.07

Source: Red Rock Ridge and Valley Trail System (visit <http://www.redrocktrail.org/pdfs/Red-Rock-Ridge-and-Valley-Trail-System.pdf> to view segment descriptions)

FIGURE 3.11: Downtown Ensley Proposed Off-Road Trail Segments from the Red Rock Ridge + Valley Trail System



IDENTIFYING HIGH PRIORITY SIDEWALK + GREENWAY SEGMENTS

Table 3.4 is intended to be used as a combined cross-reference table to determine which sidewalk and greenway/trail segments in the Downtown Ensley SOA should be noted as a high priority for implementation. The table notes if a segment is listed in need of repair or construction in the 2016 Birmingham Sidewalk Master Plan, if it is identified in the 2010 Red Rock Ridge and Valley Trail System Plan, if it is in an area of potential high demand for walking (based on the Sidewalk Suitability Analysis), and if it was noted by citizens throughout the Framework Plan public involvement process as a segment that needs repair or desired for new sidewalk construction. Additionally, it should be noted that while a greenway segment may be listed as “Low” in terms of sidewalk suitability it should be considered that greenways provide important recreational opportunities and well as valuable off-street bicycling connectivity and a “Low” score regarding sidewalk suitability should not rule the segment out for implementation especially if there is a high public demand or it could serve to connect large populations via bicycling.

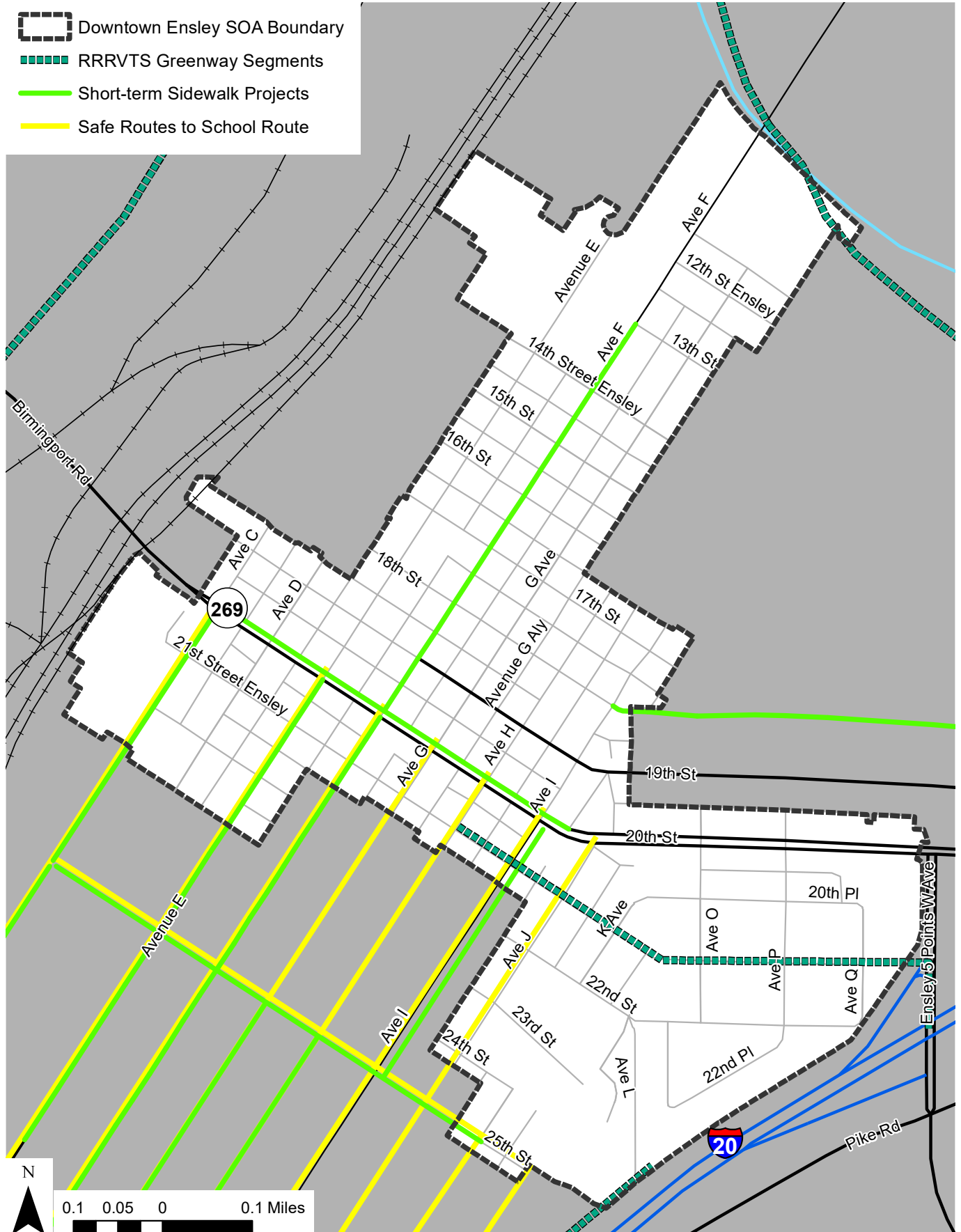
According to this table, the highest priority sidewalk segments in Downtown Ensley Strategic Opportunity Area include:

- Baker Elementary and Bush Middle School’s SRTS Routes
- Five Points West Trail
- Ensley Park Trail
- 18th Street between Avenue I and Avenue S

TABLE 3.4: Identifying High Priority Sidewalks and Greenways Segments

SIDEWALK OR GREENWAY / TRAIL SEGMENT	PRIORITY IN BIRMINGHAM SIDEWALK MASTER PLAN	IS THE SEGMENT IDENTIFIED IN THE 2010 RRRVTS PLAN?	SUITABILITY ANALYSIS SCORE	NOTED IN PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS.
Baker Elementary and Bush Middle School’s SRTS Routes	Short-Term (Repair)	Yes	Very High	✓
20th Street between Avenue C and Avenue J	Short-Term (Repair/Construction)	No	Medium	✓
Five Points West Trail	NA	Yes, (Bike Lanes with Sidewalk)	Very High	✓
Ensley Pratt Greenway at Village Creek	NA	Yes (Greenway)	High	✓
Ensley Park Trail	NA	Yes (Greenway)	Very High	✓
18th Street between Avenue I and Avenue S	Short-Term (Repair/Construction)	Yes, 5 Points West Trail (Bike Lanes w/ Sidewalk)	Very High	✓

FIGURE 3.12: Downtown Ensley Priority Greenway and Sidewalk Segments Map





Action 3

Make bicycling a viable transportation alternative to Pratt-Ensley residents by creating a connected on-street bicycling network.

Bicycling can provide an excellent form of transportation for lower income residents who live further away from transit stops to access stops more quickly and efficiently. **Table 3.5** and **Figure 3.13** details potential bicycling routes for Downtown Ensley SOA based on public involvement, STRAVA data, the proposed Red Rock Ridge and Valley Trail System, and the B-Active Plan Level of Traffic Stress Analysis. Routes are primarily identified because they:

- ✦ Provide an important connection to job centers, transit, off-road greenways, and other destinations
- ✦ They are a barrier to bicycling due to the high level of stress they induce upon bicyclist.

Recommmendations for potential bicycle infrastructure are identified by a road segment's Level of Comfort (LOC) score as identified by the B-Active Traffic Stress Analysis. Based on a road segment's

LOC score, this plan recommends the following bicycle infrastructure:

- ✦ **LOC 1 or 2:** "Sharrows" or signage stating, "share the road" may be appropriate on street segments with an LOC score of 2 or lower. Typically, streets with an LOC score of 1 or 2 are residential streets with low speed limits and low traffic counts. For this reason, these streets do not have specific recommendations (except for signage), as they can provide a comfortable cycling experience without bicycling infrastructure.
- ✦ **LOC 3+:** Physical separation of bicyclists and pedestrians is desirable, and a 5-foot (minimum) striped bike lane is needed.

The following roads should be considered for appropriate bicycling infrastructure (specifically bike lanes or protected/buffered bike lanes) when other road improvement projects such as resurfacing occur along these roads:

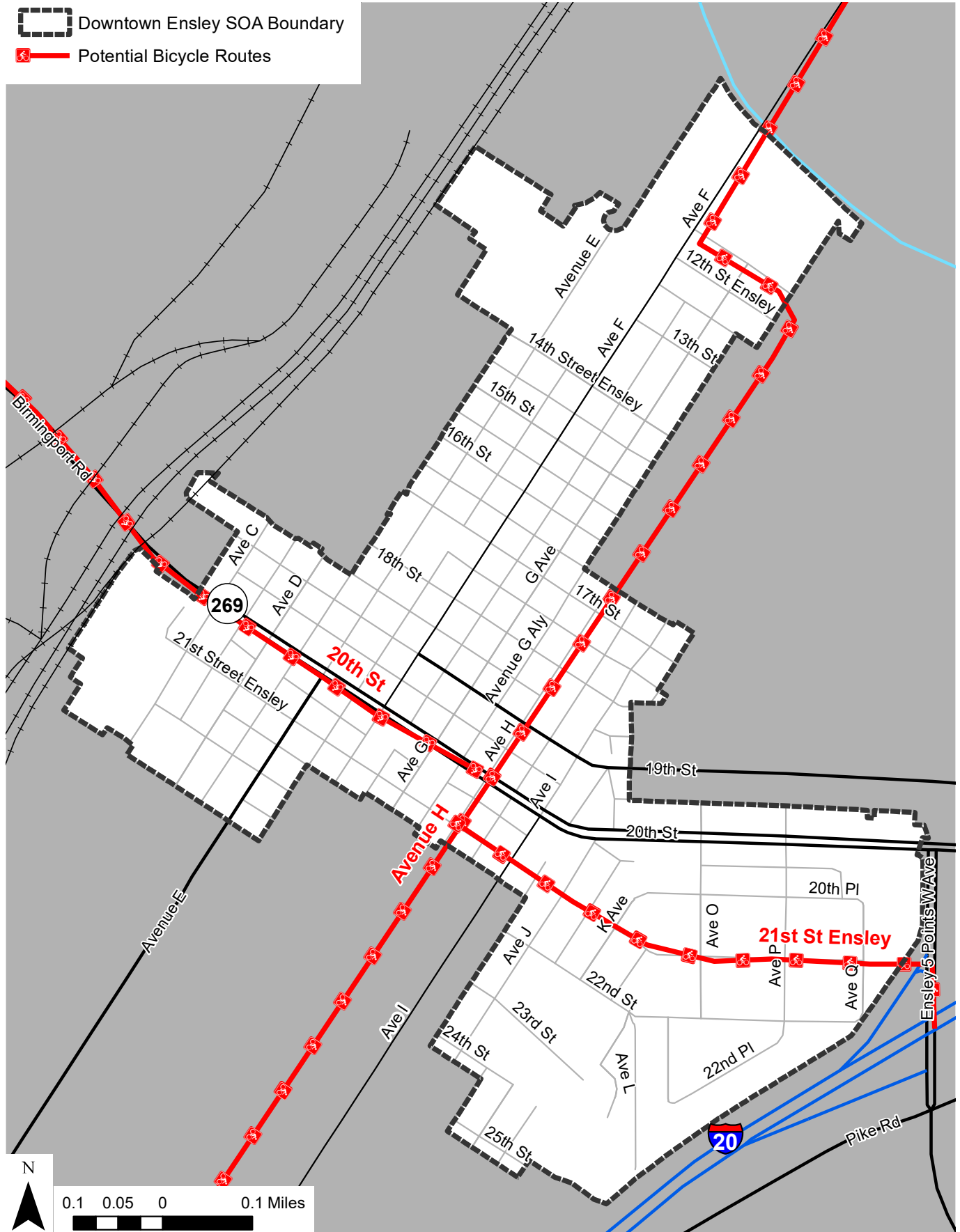
- ✦ 20th Street Ensley
- ✦ 21st Street Ensley
- ✦ Avenue H Ensley

TABLE 3.5: Proposed On-Street Bicycle

Segments

ROAD SEGMENT	LOC SCORE	PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT?	NEAR TRANSIT STOP?	NEAR GREENWAY?	ON-ROAD RED ROCK SEGMENT
20th Street Ensley	4	Yes	Yes, provides access	Yes, provides access	Yes (AL North-South Bike Route)
Avenue H Ensley	1	Yes	Yes, on route	Yes, provides access	Yes (Avenue H/F Trail)
21st Street Ensley	1	Yes	Yes, provide access	Yes, provide access	Yes (5 Points West Trail)

FIGURE 3.13: Downtown Ensley Potential On-Street Bicycle Infrastructure Map





Action 4

Create a Streetscape Master Plan for 20th Street and 19th Street Ensley.

20th and 19th Street Ensley are two popular roadways in and out of the Ensley Central community. For this reason, the City should consider creating and implementing a streetscape master plan to enhance the identity of major roadways in Ensley in order to make Downtown Ensley a more pleasant place to walk.

Elements of Streetscape Master Plans include:

- ✦ Right-of-way configuration
- ✦ On-street parking
- ✦ On-street service
- ✦ Loading and maintenance conditions
- ✦ Curb and sidewalk utility infrastructure
- ✦ Overhead utilities
- ✦ Street lights
- ✦ Sidewalks
- ✦ Crosswalks and signal infrastructure
- ✦ Sidewalk café spaces
- ✦ Storefront signing
- ✦ Public art
- ✦ Decorative pavers, planters, street trees, street furniture and trash receptacles.



Action 1

Enhance wayfinding between major sites.

In addition to improving physical connectivity with sidewalks and bike lanes, incorporating wayfinding signage in communities informs pedestrians and cyclists about where major amenities are located and how far away they are. The **Comprehensive Plan (9.11)** recommends wayfinding as one way to geographically situate tourists and residents. Local examples of wayfinding are the signs used along the Red Rock Ridge and Valley Trail System.

Neighborhood associations, nonprofits, The Ensley Merchants Association, Ensley Alive, and businesses should work together to identify which major sites or areas should be included on directional signs. Major sites and areas include parks, commercial districts, historical sites, and civic institutions. These coalitions could then work with the City’s various departments to put these signs in highly visible areas for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Examples of wayfinding signs within the Downtown Ensley SOA include:

- ✦ Ramsey McCormick Building
- ✦ Ensley Works
- ✦ Ensley Theater
- ✦ Belcher Nixon Building
- ✦ Christopher Columbus Hall
- ✦ Village Creek Park
- ✦ Tuxedo Junction



STRATEGY

IMPROVE WAYFINDING.



STRATEGY

IMPROVE SAFETY.



Action 1

Conduct studies and regularly review relevant data at high accident locations to support operational changes and designs that improve safety.

Crash data from the Critical Analysis Reporting Environment (CARE) software was used to identify crash locations throughout the Downtown Ensley SOA for the period from 2014 to 2016. Crash locations are shown in **Figure 3.14**. Over the past three years, approximately 163 crashes occurred in the study area. General crash trends indicate that 66 of the crashes (40.49%) occurred on the interstate, federal, or county roads. One crash (0.61%) resulted in 1 fatality, which occurred on Bush Boulevard. 162 of the crashes (99.38%) resulted in non-incapacitating injuries.

Table 3.6 highlights the intersections with the highest number of crashes throughout the Downtown Ensley SOA.

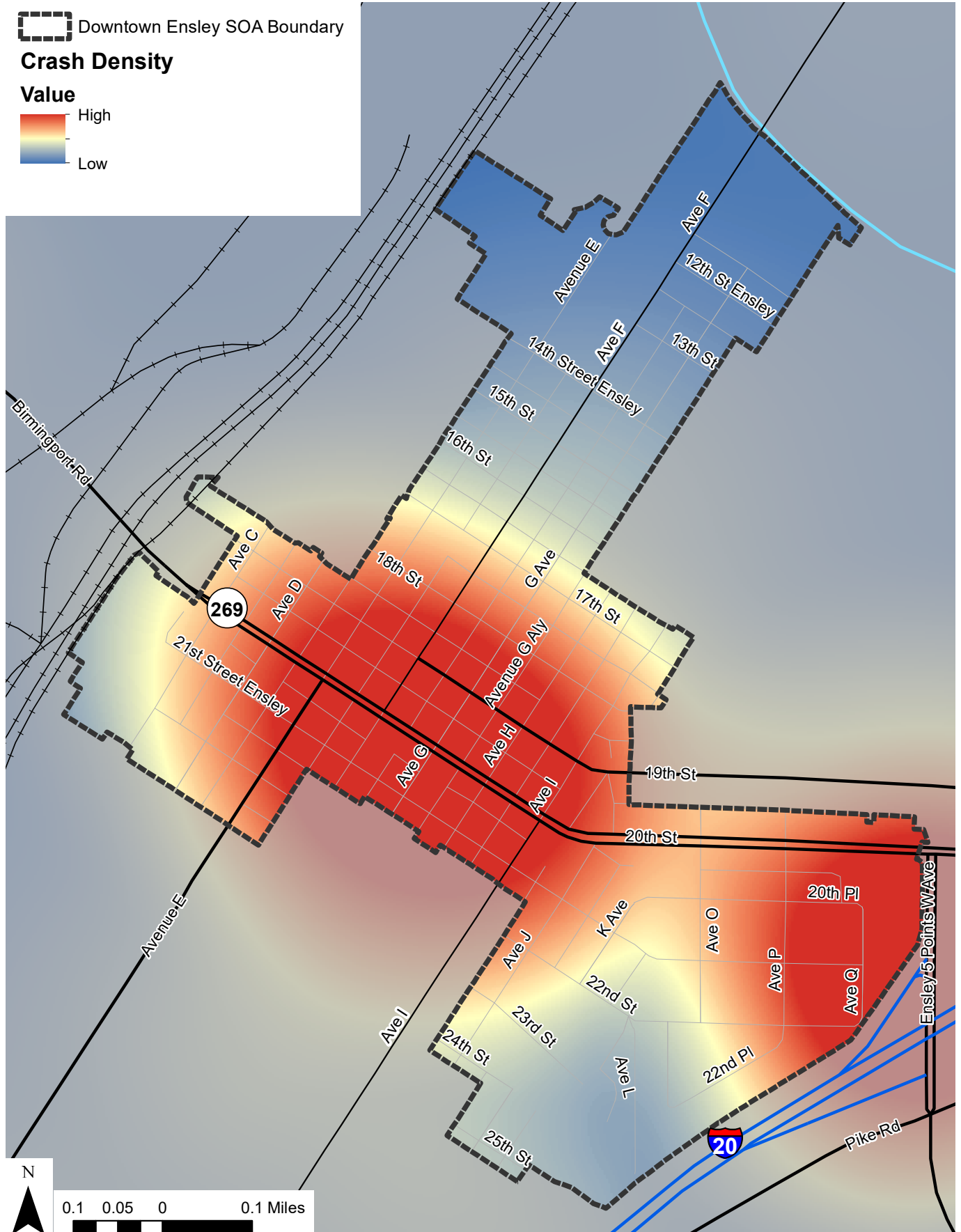
It is recommended that the City study and address some of the safety and operational issues along I-59 / 20th Street Ensley where many crashes have occurred. Safety improvements could range from adding turn lanes, improving sight distance and managing access. The City should also consider adding red light cameras at key intersections where accidents have been caused by cars running red lights.



TABLE 3.6: Intersections with the Highest Number of Crashes (2014 – 2016)

INTERSECTION/SEGMENT	TOTAL # OF CRASHES	TOTAL # OF FATALITIES	# CRASHES INVOLVING INJURIES
20th Street Ensley	64	0	13
19th Street Ensley	19	0	1
Avenue V	12	0	2
Avenue I	9	0	2
Avenue F	8	0	1
Avenue E	7	0	1
18th Street Ensley	6	0	0
Avenue D	6	0	0

FIGURE 3.14: Crash Concentration Map





Action 1

Develop context sensitive traffic calming programs along 20th Street Ensley, Avenue E, and Avenue I.

Traffic calming can improve neighborhoods and major streets for living, walking and bicycling. As neighborhood residents express concern about the speed, volume and type of cut-through traffic in their neighborhoods, the City of Birmingham’s Traffic Engineering Department staff should conduct traffic calming studies as a direct response to targeted concerns. The recommended traffic calming study would be intended to evaluate a focused area with engineering measures in mind to change driver behavior and compel drivers to slow down or use more appropriate travel routes. This might include strategies to alter the physical roadway with measures such as edge lines, chokers, chicanes, traffic circles, road diets, speed humps and raised crosswalks. Other efforts might include operational strategies such as enhanced police enforcement and speed displays.

Chapter 12 of the City of Birmingham Comprehensive Plan included a Traffic Calming & Active Transportation Safety Toolbox to address a variety of potential improvement areas including high vehicle speed traffic calming treatments, high traffic volume control treatments, pedestrian intersection safety enhancements, pedestrian safety crossing improvements, and bicycle accommodations contributing to traffic calming. These treatments include intersection narrowing to decrease pedestrian crossing distances and exposure to traffic, methods to divert and reduce through traffic on neighborhood streets, and measures to reduce travel speeds where speeding has been a problem. Any of these traffic calming initiatives must be balanced against

the need for delivery and utility trucks to access businesses and residents in a neighborhood. The City’s Traffic Engineering Department should target the previously mentioned high incident intersections and residential areas to implement a comprehensive traffic calming policy.



Action 2

Improve crosswalks at signalized intersections in the Downtown Ensley SOA to improve pedestrian safety. Priority intersections include:

- 20th Street Ensley and Avenue I
- 20th Street Ensley and Avenue F
- 20th Street Ensley and Ensley Avenue



STRATEGY

INVEST IN TRANSPORTATION MAINTENANCE.



Action 1

Conduct studies and regularly review relevant data at high accident locations to support operational changes and designs that improve safety.

Crash data from the Critical Analysis Reporting Environment.



STRATEGY

ENHANCE EXISTING PUBLIC TRANSIT SERVICE.



Action 1

Work with BJCTA to implement the phased improvements to Route 5 (Ensley/Wylam) as recommended in their 2017 Transit Development Plan.

In 2017, BJCTA released their Transit Development Plan phasing recommendations for improving bus service frequencies and realignments to routes. According to the plan, the following improvements are recommended to Route 5:

- ✦ The Ensley / Wylam route currently serves the Ensley Central and Ensley West communities with stops at the Wylam Library, Sherman Heights and Oakridge. Proposed Phase 1 improvements include increasing the frequency of buses to run every 30 minutes during peak hours, and every 60 minutes rather than 100 minutes on Saturday. Proposed Phase 1 improvements also include eliminating fixed trips to Wylam, replacing service to Wylam with on-demand service, modifying the route to Crosstown and providing services from Ensley to the proposed Five Points West Transit Center (to connect to the Bus Rapid Transit service).



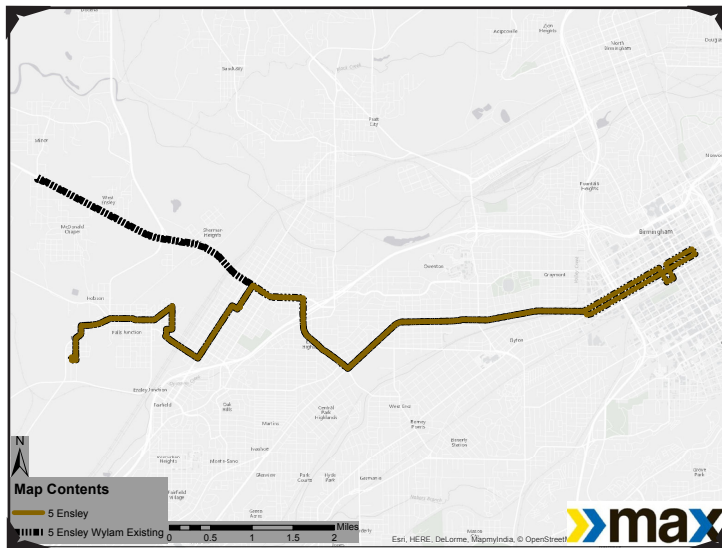
Action 2

Work with BJCTA to implement the phased improvements to Route 6 (Pratt/Ensley) as recommended in their 2017 Transit Development Plan.

In 2017, BJCTA released their Transit Development Plan phasing recommendations for improving bus service frequencies and realignments to routes. According to the plan, the following improvements are recommended to Route 6:

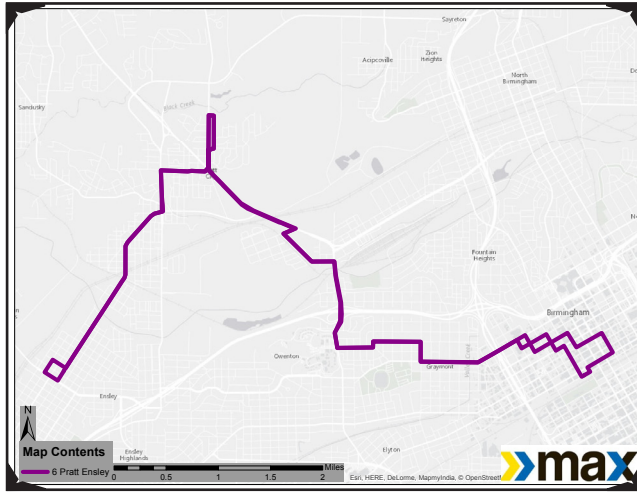
- ✦ The Pratt / Ensley route currently serves riders in the Ensley Central and Pratt communities with stops at the Department of Motor Vehicles and Downtown Ensley. Proposed Phase 1 improvements include increasing the frequency of buses to run every 30 minutes during peak hours, and every 60 minutes during off peak hours and on Saturday. In addition, it is recommended that service end at midnight rather than 11:45 PM. Proposed Phase 2 improvements include realigning the route to originate/terminate at the Cherry Avenue apartments and also realign the route to originate/terminate at the proposed Five Points West Transit Center (to connect to the Bus Rapid Transit service).

FIGURE 3.15: Route 5 (Ensley/Wylam)



Improvements will help to enhance ridership on the proposed East-West BRT service since the existing local bus routes can serve as feeder lines into the BRT service.

FIGURE 3.16: Route 6 (Pratt/Ensley)



Action 4

Improve local transit stops and amenities.

In 2017, BJCTA released their Transit Development Plan Improvements to transit stops and amenities contribute to the experience of riding public transportation. As part of this effort, bus stops and shelters are recommended to be improved and upgraded to reflect the modern city that Birmingham is striving to become. Visually appealing bus stops can offer transit riders a safe and physically comfortable wait experience, and can help to change the character of the communities. Transit stops also should include a higher level of bus shelter design to provide additional comfort and amenities to encourage ridership. These amenities might include transit technology provisions and other passenger amenities/enhancements and apps such as Next Bus™ (reliable real-time arrival information), electronic schedules, bike racks, security cameras, electronic schedules, etc.

Integrating technological design such as solar panels adds to a bus shelter’s aesthetic appeal while also contributing to the power grid. Depending on how much power is yielded, the shelter could have LED lighting denoting the stop and possibly ads so that waiting at night would not be a fearful or uncomfortable situation. Bus shelters should be strategically placed in areas relevant to the interest of riders such as bakeries and newsstands and places that are open late. Bus shelters should be set back to not disturb pedestrian traffic. Every optimized stop should have a shelter that allows visibility of coming buses. Shelters with poor visibility force riders to leave the shelters to watch for the bus that could potentially create a safety concern.



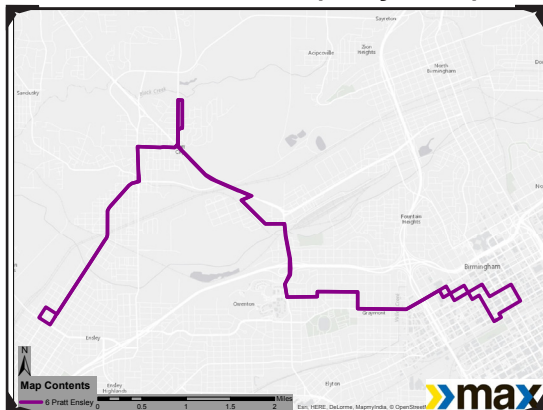
Action 3

Work with the BJCTA to implement the phased improvements to Route 38 (Graymont) as recommended in their 2017 Transit Development Plan.

In 2017, BJCTA released their Transit Development Plan phasing recommendations for improving bus service frequencies and realignments to routes. According to the plan, the following improvements are recommended to Route 38:

- ✦ The Graymont route serves the Ensley West and Pratt Communities and has major stops at the Ensley Post Office, Western Health Clinic, and Downtown Ensley. Proposed Phase 1 improvements include extending the PM service hours from 9:30 PM to midnight.

FIGURE 3.17: Route 38 (Graymont)



FUTURE LAND USE



STRATEGY

BUILD A MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION NETWORK THAT PROVIDES A WIDE RANGE OF TRANSPORTATION CHOICES TO CONNECT THE DOWNTOWN ENSLEY STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY AREA TO THE GREATER BIRMINGHAM AREA.



Action 1

Implement the Future Land Use Map/ Plan to allow mixed-use development and encourage more services and retail within walking distance to residents.

During the planning process for the Pratt Ensley Framework plan, there was an expressed desire by stakeholders to allow a mix of uses within the Downtown Ensley Strategic Opportunity Area. Implementing the Future Land Use Map to allow for mixed-use low will enable a wider range of compatible uses and create a central gathering place – an urban village- for surrounding residents as redevelopment occurs. Existing institutional uses and school campuses are to remain within the SOA. A comparison of the existing and future land use scenarios can be found in **Table 3.7**.

TABLE 3.7: Downtown Ensley Strategic Opportunity Area Future Land Use

LAND USE DESCRIPTION	EXISTING SCENARIO	FUTURE SCENARIO
Residential- Low	✓	✓
Residential- Medium	✓	✓
MXD-Low	✓	✓
MXD- Medium	✓	✓
MXD-High	⊘	✓
Light Industrial	✓	✓
Parks and Recreation	✓	✓
Open Space	✓	✓

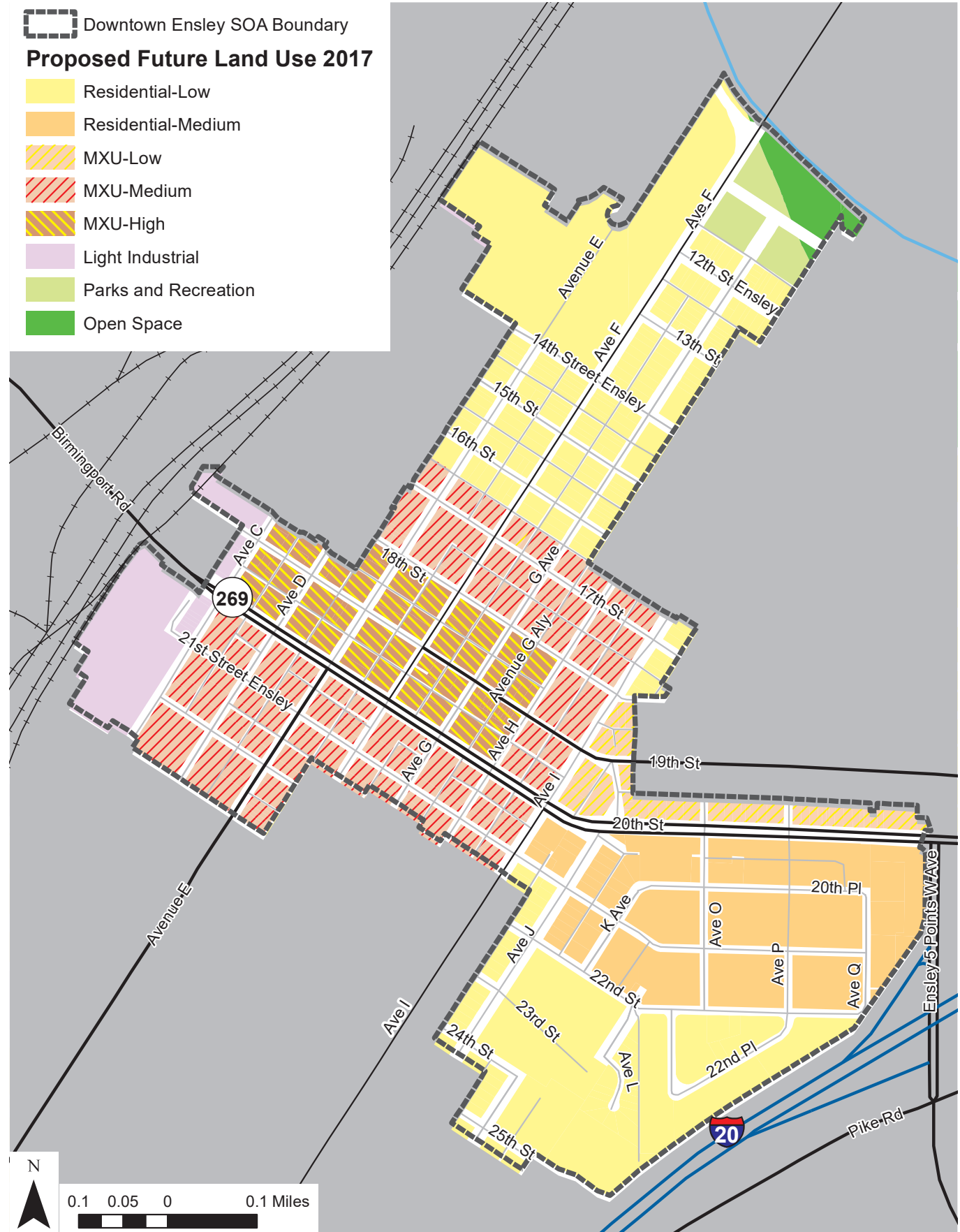


Action 2

Amend the zoning ordinance as needed to correspond with the proposed future land use plan.



FIGURE 3.18: Downtown Ensley Proposed Future Land Use Map (2017)



APPENDIX D:
SOAS